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Editor's Note: Literary and Material Culture in Hellenistic Greece

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It is a real pleasure to introduce the second of our four clusters on literary and material culture. In the call for papers, material culture was defined broadly as everything from economic, political, and social practices to the actual conditions for the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts (be they oral or written). Literary culture was defined as the poetics (or prosaics) of conventional genres, the works of specific authors, or individual texts. This cluster devoted to *Literary and Material Culture in Hellenistic Greece* features four papers that together form a coherent suite. They each represent in their own fashion the way in which the most exciting work done in philology today crosses the boundaries of the text, not to leave it behind, but to expand and enrich it.

The first paper, by Craige Champion, "Empire by Invitation: Greek Political Strategies and Roman Political Inventions in the Second Century BCE," features an analysis of the dynamics between local Greek political conflict and Roman imperial power. By carefully examining the inscription (*Syll.*^{3} 684) of a letter from the Roman praetorian proconsul to Macedonia on unrest in Achaean Dyme, this paper reveals that power emanates less from the imperial center than from a more dialectical and unstable set of interactions between center and periphery that helps shape the empire to come.

With Patricia Rosenmeyer's "From Syacuse to Rome: The Travail's of Silanion's Sappho," we move from the dynamics of Roman hegemony to the personal and political expropriation of Greek culture. The case in point is Verres' theft of a famous statue from Syracuse. Rosenmeyer examines Cicero's prosecution of Verres, as well as what can be gleaned from the literary and art historical record, to reconstruct what can be known of the statue itself, its position in its original Greek community, and the contests and contexts that could either legitimate or delegitimate a Roman who made off with such work.

Where Rosenmeyer investigates the changing functions of a given work of art depending on whether it was still in its original context or it had been removed to a private home or a public monument, Sean Gurd examines the poetics of presence in a series of ecphrastic epigram's on Timomachus's unfinished Medea. This painting had been acquired by Julius Caesar and housed in the temple of Venus Genetrix. In "Meaning and Material Presence: Four Epigrams on Timomachus's Unfinished *Medea*," Gurd deploys a distinction developed by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht to examine the ways in which a series of epigrams in the Anthology of Planudes make use of the fragmentary nature of Timomachus's painting to produce an experience of "nonlinguisitic bodily engagement" precisely through their verbal art.

We continue to examine the poetics of the epigram in Regina Höschele's "The Traveling Reader: Journeys through Ancient Epigram Books." Höshele contends that the composers of later epigrams self-consciously deployed an older poetics of inscription in the new context of the literary collection. The epigram in each case directly hails the reader in mid-career, but where the funerary inscription bids the weary traveler to linger for a moment before passing on his or her way, the literary epigram bids the reader to both linger and continue to read. The traditional poetics of inscription is thus recast to serve a double purpose: to draw attention to the individual text and to cause that text to be reread in the context of a larger itinerary.