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Abstract:	Sometimes maligned as inferior poetry and frequently as derivative in relation to its well-established literary cousin, inscribed epigram has nonetheless enjoyed a resurgence in recent times as a worthy academic pursuit in its own right. My research continues this trend. Whereas previous studies of epigram have contained a much narrower thematic focus, I pursue a holistic account of its development between 750 and 480/79 BCE. In this sense it is the first broad historical account of epigram to be attempted. In my first chapter, I outline my methodologies in defining inscribed verse, describing dialect, and dating objects. The principles of <i>metricisation</i> ', 3D dialect', and guidelines for indicating chronological uncertainty are three of my main contributions to these subfields. I catalogue 29 inscribed epigrams in my second chapter that either postdate or were overlooked by previous collections. In my third chapter, I investigate the beginnings of epigram, disassociating it from the invention of the alphabet and arguing for its coexistence with, not dependence upon, literary poetry; the relationship between the two should not be defined as hierarchical. Chapter Four is a case study of epigram 750-600 BCE. I argue that local and interregional networks of epigram can be identified based upon dialect, alphabet, literary theme, and style of monument or object. Local networks were competitive in nature, while interregional were intimately intertwined with the affairs of the Corinthians and the Euboeans. Chapter Five is a case study of epigram 600-480/79 BCE. I argue that the previous networks became less pronounced, but that inscribed epigram evolved in style (literary and material) and theme (particularly public and mini-epinikia - athletic epigram); something of a koine culture of epigram can also begin to be discerned. The results of my research are manifold, highlighting scale - spatial considerations - as an important delineator in how we assess epigram, and 3D dialect, object, script, and literary theme as important signatures that were actively manipulated by commissioners of epigram to communicate messages of local identity and rivalry.
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