



# XVII CONGRESSVS INTERNATIONALIS EPIGRAPHIÆ GRÆCÆ ET LATINÆ

BONONIÆ MMXXVII | 30<sup>th</sup> August – 4<sup>th</sup> September 2027

## Panel 19: The Authorship of Ancient Epigraphic Documents Magistrates, Draftsmen, and Cutters

Chairs: Davide Amendola, Emilio Rosamilia

To the untrained eye, ancient official inscriptions may appear as artifacts that came into being fully formed. Over the last decades, however, scholars have increasingly recognized that inscriptions are the outcome of multiple intermediate stages and processes, which can only be partially reconstructed and often with considerable effort. This shift stems both from a renewed interest in the materiality of writing in documents from the Greek and Roman past – an issue that the proposers have recently explored as co-editors of a collective volume (*Text, Layout, and Medium. Documents from the Greco-Roman World Between Epigraphy and Papyrology*, Florence 2024) – and a longstanding concern with ancient archives, archival practices, and documents.

Research has consistently emphasized that the materiality of inscriptions is crucial for reconstructing the sequence of processes involved in their production. The layout of each text – conceived as a combination of *mise en texte* and *mise and page* – is the outcome of multiple decisions taken by all the individuals involved. Moreover, preliminary versions of a document may leave subtle traces in the final version. For instance, signs originally intended for archival copies could be transcribed into the drafts delivered to the letter-cutter, who then carved them, leaving behind index fossils of earlier stages of the same text. In addition, studies of the craftsmen engaged in the production of epigraphic documents – such as Stephen V. Tracy's work on Athenian stone-cutters – have shed new light on these artisans and their practices, and may prove essential for understanding how they were selected.

At the same time, the text of an official inscription may occasionally shed light on the processes behind its production and even mention the individuals involved. Most Greek decrees open with the name of their proposer(s); publication clauses regularly provide details about individuals who were entrusted with overseeing the crafting and public display of the final inscription, as well as where it was to be set up; and some temple accounts even preserve the names of the humble letter-cutters who were paid to engrave them. Ancient documents also offer valuable insights into other aspects of the publication process: secretaries, copies, and archives are all explicitly mentioned.

While much recent research has examined the interplay between preliminary drafts and archival documents – now lost to us – on the one hand, and the surviving hard copies on stone or bronze on the other, this panel seeks instead to focus on the individuals that played a role in shaping inscriptions, whether issuing officials, secretaries, or craftsmen. In doing





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so, we aim to shed light on the people who effectively authored epigraphic documents, restoring them to their rightful place in history and providing a framework for better understanding the dynamics and agents behind the publication of official inscriptions.

Possible presentation topics include:

- The role of public slaves and other clerks in the redaction of documents;
- The design of and responsibility for the layout of inscribed documents;
- The criteria behind the selection of one cutter – or group of cutters – over another;
- The adjustments required in the transition from perishable to permanent media;
- The role of magistrates, secretaries, and cutters in determining the final appearance of an inscribed document;
- The availability and use of templates in drafting or inscribing documents;
- What ancient documents – especially publication clauses – reveal about the people involved in the process.

The wealth of evidence from Athens has given the city a prominent position in the study of the interactions between preliminary, archival, and permanent versions of the same document. Proposals focusing on Athens and its inscriptions are therefore particularly welcome. At the same time, special attention will be given to proposals involving case studies from other regions of the ancient Greek world, so as to complement and nuance the Athenian evidence. We also welcome presentations that explore comparable problems in inscriptions written in languages other than Greek, especially in the domain of Latin epigraphy.

