



XVII CONGRESSVS INTERNATIONALIS EPIGRAPHIÆ GRÆCÆ ET LATINÆ

BONONIÆ MMXXVII | 30th August– 4th September 2027

Panel 25: Writing, Monuments, and Power in the Mediterranean Roman Expansion and Monumental Inscriptions (2nd–1st Centuries BCE)

Chairs: Francisco Beltrán Lloris, María José Estarán Tolosa

Between the late third century BCE and the first century BCE, the Mediterranean world experienced a significant expansion in the use of writing, evident both in its growing intensity and geographical diffusion, as well as in the diversification of its functions. This development coincided with Roman expansion throughout the Mediterranean and with the increasing intensity of contacts and communication among communities across all its shores.

Among the most significant innovations of this period was the emergence of monumental epigraphy in Latin language, for which antecedents can be identified in earlier centuries, particularly in Greek-speaking areas such as the Aegean, Sicily and Magna Graecia. Other manifestations of monumental inscriptions are also attested in Phoenician contexts, in the southwest of the Iberian Peninsula, and in various parts of Italy; these, however, were rare isolated, restricted phenomena lacking continuity.

In Rome, especially during the second and first centuries BCE, inscriptions multiplied on stone and metal supports with the express purpose of publicizing their messages through prominent placement in frequented spaces and the adoption of monumental formats. Whereas previously such texts were confined largely to the religious sphere, new forms now appeared and proliferated: honorific statue bases, boundary markers and milestones, inscriptions associated with triumphs and the display of booty, as well as texts commemorating building projects or recording the decisions of assemblies, the senate, and magistrates on bronze tablets. The majority of these were closely associated with senatorial aristocratic families. The pursuit of visibility was also transferred to the funerary sphere, where, from the first century BCE in particular, other social groups—most notably freedmen—played an increasingly active role.

This development was closely linked, on the one hand, to the urban transformation and architectural programmes that Rome undertook as a result of imperial expansion —largely of Hellenistic inspiration but with original developments—; and, on the other, to the desire for affirmation and self-representation, both individual and familial, on the part of aristocratic elites, competing with their peers and asserting their status before an





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increasingly significant public opinion. Similar phenomena can also be observed in various cities and sanctuaries of Italy and the provinces, not only through the initiatives of newly settled Romano-Italic populations, but also through the active participation of local elites.

This panel seeks to examine the manifestations of power and strategies of self-assertion articulated both in the western and eastern Mediterranean through monumental inscriptions. Particular attention will be devoted to epigraphic expressions of a distinctly Roman character promoted mainly by the authorities—milestones, large-format bronze tablets, statue bases, building inscriptions, termini and texts associated with booty such as the *tituli Mummiani*—as well as to those commissioned by local authorities and elites in Italy and the provinces, including honorific and building inscriptions and those relating to fortifications. Testimonies in other languages, as well as conspicuous monumental funerary inscriptions, will also be considered.

Particular cases are represented by manifestations of monumental epigraphy in Latin, or bilingual inscriptions—Latin and Greek—produced in the eastern provinces of Hellenic culture, where building initiatives undertaken by governors and other magistrates can be identified (such as the milestones of Mn. Aquilius or Cn. Egnatius), as well as by the activity of the community of Italic *negotiatores* established in the port of Delos or, complementarily, the incorporation of Latin speaking population into previous epigraphic practices as in the sanctuary of Samothrace.

The organizers of this panel invite participants to submit proposals for papers addressing (though not limited to) the following topics:

- Epigraphic manifestations by magistrates, local authorities, or individuals displaying power through publicly exhibited texts, with particular emphasis on building or honorific inscriptions, booty inscriptions, though other categories (legal texts, milestones, funerary inscriptions) are not excluded.
- The spatial contexts of such inscriptions: city walls, sanctuaries, public or highly frequented buildings.
- Diachronic case studies tracing the evolution of monumental epigraphy.
- Comparative studies on the development of monumental inscriptions across different Mediterranean regions.
- Comparative analyses of specifically Roman monumental epigraphy and inscriptions commissioned by local elites, with a focus on regional particularities.

The geographical scope of the panel includes the Roman territories of the western and eastern Mediterranean, encompassing the Italian Peninsula; chronologically, it covers the second to first centuries BCE. Where possible, proposals should also consider earlier written expressions predating Roman epigraphic practices.





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