

Spätantike und byzantinische Epigraphik – Abstracts

Antonio E. Felle: Examples of “in-group” epigraphic language: the very first inscriptions by Christians

Some very early Christian inscriptions have been attributed to a time-span between the second half of 2nd century and the first half of the 3rd AD. These - very few - inscriptions, the very first epigraphs by Christians, display a focused use of recurrent textual elements and *anaglypha*, unusual in the contemporary epigraphic praxis. These words and images, probably related to the religious identity of the buyers of the epigraphs, constitute a limited but very significant example of an “in-group” epigraphic language deliberately closed to non-Christians and shared only by the initiates, that use it in different regions and cities, both in the East and in the West.

Un esempio di linguaggio epigrafico “chiuso”: le prime iscrizioni di cristiani.

Alcune tra le più antiche iscrizioni attribuite a committenza cristiana, rinvenute sia in Oriente (Asia Minore e Grecia settentrionale) sia in Occidente (essenzialmente a Roma), sono state datate ad un periodo compreso tra la seconda metà del II secolo e la prima metà del secolo III. Queste - poche - testimonianze, le più antiche iscrizioni di cristiani, mostrano un uso mirato di elementi - sia testuali sia figurati - ricorrenti e, d'altra parte, anomali rispetto alla loro contemporanea prassi epigrafica. Questi termini e queste immagini, con ogni probabilità connessi alla identità religiosa dei committenti delle iscrizioni, costituiscono un piccolo ma significativo esempio di un linguaggio epigrafico “interno” ad un gruppo, deliberatamente chiuso ai non cristiani e, all'opposto, condiviso solo dagli iniziati, e comune tra cristiani di regioni e città anche lontane.

Arkadii Avdokhin: From clean hands to pure faith: christianizing officials' virtues in Late Antique honorific inscriptions in Greek

This paper will explore one particular aspect of change in the vocabulary and phrasing of late antique (3rd–6th centuries AD) Greek honorific inscriptions. As I will argue, in this period the traditional civic set of virtues of officials celebrated in honorific epigraphy was in a subtle but decisive drift towards values inspired by the contemporary Christian moral and doctrinal discourse.

Honorific epigraphy has been approached as a means of recording and translating civic values which shaped perceptions of the elite in the later Roman empire. Inscriptions on statues of officials therefore functioned as ‘civic mirrors’ (O. van Nijn) inscribing the public space of the cities with visible manifestations of ideal ethical codes for the elite. My paper will take its general cue from the seminal study E. Forbis looking at ‘municipal virtues’ as reflected (and imposed) in inscriptions. While late antique epigrams on officials have increasingly been the subject of studies since the pioneering work by L. Robert, Christianization of Greek honorific epigraphy has not attracted much attention.

Three major strands of Christianizing honorific monuments through epigraphy can be tentatively pointed out. First, the ‘forced’ epigraphic Christianization: the incision of crosses or Christian sacred acronyms (e.g. *XMI*) on statues of officials, as e.g. the statue of Oecumenius in Aphrodisias (as well as other statues from the city). This could be done either by original sculptors in an attempt to comply with the religious expectations of implied viewers or by other cultural actors who felt that exclusively ‘civic’ discourse was inadequate. Second, developing deliberately Christian discourse in reference to the officials celebrated in late antique honorific epigrams. Examples include the epigram on Mouselios, *praespositus sacri cubiculi*, inscribed c. 420 AD in the Philadelphion at Constantinople, which stresses his ‘pure faith in God-Logos’ (πιστεύων καθαρῶς ὡς Θεός ἐστι Λόγος). Third, shaping the style of epigrams on ecclesial figures like bishops along the lines of civic honorific inscriptions. Among possible instances of this strand is e.g. the inscription on a statue of Nikolaos (*API 22*) interpreted as an

epigram on the local bishop (Alexandria, 6th c. AD).

The shift away from the discourse of *καθαρά χεῖρες* (a *topos* in epigrams on local governors in late antiquity) to the vocabulary of *πιστεύειν καθαρῶς* is a significant change in the ‘civic mirrors’ on urban display, which is illustrative of how cityscapes were Christianized through the inscribed word.

Christoph Begass: Metrische Inschriften als Quelle für senatorische Karrieren in der Spätantike

Einen Großteil unserer Kenntnisse über den Verlauf senatorischer Karrieren in der Kaiserzeit verdanken wir epigraphischen Zeugnissen, die die Ämterlaufbahn der Geehrten akkurat wiedergeben. Im Laufe der Spätantike änderte sich jedoch die Form der senatorischen (Selbst-)Darstellung radikal. Da die katalogartigen Inschriften senatorischer Karrieren spätestens ab dem 5. Jh. n. Chr. vollständig verschwunden sind, stellt sich die Frage, ob und wie die zahlreich vorhandenen metrischen Ehreninschriften dieser Zeit zur Kenntnis der Senatsaristokratie dieser Zeit beitragen können? In meinem Beitrag werde ich zeigen, dass sich diese Versinschriften nicht in gelehrten Anspielungen erschöpfen; vielmehr lassen sich auch hier weiterhin Spezialausdrücke und Wendungen isolieren, die auf die Bekleidung bestimmter Ämter verweisen. Unter Ausschöpfung des gesamten epigraphischen Materials, das uns zur spätantiken Senatsaristokratie zur Verfügung steht, werde ich anhand ausgewählter Beispiele vor Augen führen, welchen Regeln die spätantiken Ehreninschriften folgen und wie somit diese Quellengattung auch für genuin historische Fragestellungen fruchtbar gemacht werden kann. Auf dieser Grundlage können diese Inschriften einen wichtigen Beitrag leisten, Karrieren des 4.–6. Jhs. zu rekonstruieren.

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Mustafa Sayar: Ein neues Leben zwischen Ebene und Gebirge. Neue spätantike und frühbyzantinische Siedlungen auf dem ostkilikischen Taurusgebirge

Im Laufe der letzten Jahrzehnte sind auf den südlichen Ausläufern des Taurus zahlreiche kleine Siedlungen aus der Spätantike sowie aus frühbyzantinischer Zeit entdeckt worden.

Im Rahmen dieses Beitrages werden hauptsächlich die spätantiken und frühbyzantinischen Siedlungen auf dem ostkilikischen Taurusgebirge anhand der neugefundenen Inschriften vorgestellt.

Die Inschriften, welche die Namen von Personen und ihre Funktionen im sakralen Bereich beinhalten, sind meistens an den Kirchen angebracht oder sie stehen auf den Mosaikböden. Sie sind in das 5. und 6. Jahrhundert zu datieren.

Diese Inschriften können sowohl Hinweise zu den neuen Urbanisierungsprozessen in *Cilicia secunda* geben als auch die Lokalisierung bisher nicht näher identifizierter Siedlungen ermöglichen.

Catherine Saliou: Espace urbain et mémoire des empereurs en Orient dans l'Antiquité Tardive

Le point de départ de cette communication sera un inventaire des édifices et espaces urbains désignés du nom d'un empereur connus par les inscriptions dans l'Orient romain (p. ex. l'*Hadrianeion* de Césarée Maritime ou le *phoros Arkadiakos* de Sidé) On confrontera cet inventaire à celui qu'il est possible de dresser à partir des sources littéraires : l'un des objectifs de la communication envisagée sera en effet d'évaluer la spécificité de l'apport de l'épigraphie à la connaissance de la toponymie urbaine. On dressera une typologie des édifices concernés (sanctuaires, bains, forums, basiliques...), et des inscriptions elles-mêmes (inscriptions de construction, de restauration...). On étudiera ensuite les conditions de visibilité de ces inscriptions dans l'Antiquité tardive. On s'interrogera enfin sur les interprétations dont ces inscriptions et ces toponymes impériaux pouvaient faire l'objet, ce qui permettra d'engager une réflexion sur le rôle des inscriptions dans la construction des mémoires et des identités collectives.

Ida Toth: How Dark was the Dark Ages of Byzantine Epigraphy?

Whereas the questions of periodization and appropriate terminology remain contested, the epigraphic evidence of the Byzantine Dark Ages (roughly coinciding with the period of the imperial policy of *iconomachia*) tends to be viewed only in the context of the decline of late antique written culture. Whereas the demise of secular learning and of the traditional systems of power and patronage certainly had some, and even considerable, impact on the production of inscriptions between the late seventh and ninth centuries, situating the diminishing epigraphic habit in the totality of changes which transformed the late antique world yields a more nuanced picture of this process. By way of bridging the gap between textual and material evidence, this communication will attempt to determine if the Dark Ages constitutes a distinct era in Byzantine epigraphy. It will also aim to demonstrate how the extant inscriptional material relates to other written, archaeological and visual sources for the period, and in what way it contributes to our better understanding of the complex structure, dynamic and shape of Byzantine society in the early Middle Ages.

Georgios Pallis: Ancient Texts in Byzantine Context. Remarks on the Function of Ancient Greek Inscriptions Reused in Byzantine Church Architecture

A remarkable number of ancient Greek inscriptions is found incorporated in the outer facades of Byzantine churches, especially in southern Greece. As many of them have the form of rectangular blocks with smooth surfaces, it generally seems that they were treated by the medieval masons as stones useful in the process of construction or even as decorative elements. Nevertheless, in several cases their new placement shows a certain respect to the written word they bear and poses intriguing questions: Up to which extent were the ancient texts readable by medieval viewers? What kind of new values and meanings could these inscriptions acquire in their eyes? And finally, what evidence do they provide us about the function of inscribed word in Byzantium? These issues will be discussed through selected examples from continental and insular Greece.

Anna M. Sitz: Epigraphy and Oral Tradition: "Seeing the Image" in Byzantine Cappadocia

A traditional assumption made about Byzantine epigraphy is that the text written on paintings, stones, or mosaics originated as text written on parchment or vellum. In this unidirectional view of epigraphy, elites or professional poets composed epigrams on paper; these poems could then be gathered into a collection, such as the Palatine Anthology. Patrons could then choose an epigram appropriate for a space or object. Alternatively, a patron could commission a text

especially for a decorative program, which would presumably be written on scraps of paper before being transferred to paint or mosaic.

The above scenarios undoubtedly account for the majority of Byzantine inscriptions in churches or on objects, but I argue that some inscriptions originated not on paper but in oral traditions. That Byzantium, like Rome and Greece, was an oral as well as literary society has been acknowledged by scholars such as A. Papalexandrou (2007). Papalexandrou has drawn attention to “voiced texts,” inscriptions that were meant to be read aloud in churches. S. Gerstel and B. Pentcheva have independently documented how sound interacts with Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture. But documenting an oral tradition (rather than opportunities for oral reactions to inscriptions) is more difficult, because by their very nature oral traditions are invisible to us.

I present here material from an article (April 2017): three painted texts from ninth-eleventh century Cappadocian churches that I argue represent one of our only pieces of evidence for a Byzantine oral tradition. Two of these short texts have been published incorrectly, and new readings are given here based on on-site documentation of the painted inscription at the Eđri Taş Kilisesi in the Ihlara valley. Composed of paired, non-metrical five syllable lines, I suggest that these rhythmic lines represent a sort of apotropaic “jingle” that was a part of popular devotion associated with images of the cross:

Ὅρῶν τὸν τύπον, τίμα τὸν τόπον· μικρὸς ὁ τύπος, μεγάλη δόξα

Seeing the image, honor the place; small is the image, great is (the) glory.

The “seeing the image” trope has been commented on by D. Feissel (1980) and A. Rhoby (2009) in connection with late antique Greek grave markers, but the persistence of this phrase in middle Byzantine Cappadocia has not been noted because of the previous incorrect publication of the relevant inscription by N. and M. Thierry (1964).

Moving beyond the material presented in my article, I examine oral traditions in both late Roman inscriptions/graffiti (such as acclamations) the Byzantine world more broadly and the way that these traditions offer a window onto non-elite epigraphic culture.

Estelle Ingrand-Varenne: Incorporating the name in the image and the image in the name. Comparison between Byzantine and Latin Inscriptions

Among the numerous possibilities to combine words and images, medieval written culture develops a specific arrangement for certain types of words: names, placed on either side of a figure, generally its head. This communication device, very common in the 12th-13th in the Western Latin world (wall paintings, stained glass windows, gold or enameled objects), is certainly the best *modus operandi* in the medieval mind to show the identity by the language, the writing and the material. The image penetrates into the name, whereas the word embraces, even incorporates the representation, creating a new iconic unity. This layout is in the heart of a constellation of questions which touch the history of writing and the linguistics, the iconography and the anthropology. The origin of this arrangement is linked to Byzantine inscriptions and portrait, where image and name combine in a common definition of sign. But beyond this influence, an accurate comparison shows discrepancies in the use of this process between the Latin and the Byzantine world. Word break, type of the figure and placement of the name are visible clues that reveal a different approach to the word, the body and the sacred. This communication would like to explore these similarities and differences in the use of this epigraphic layout between Byzantine and Latin inscriptions in order to understand the semantic and syntactic relation at stake, in a common idea of the writing, conveyed by the Christian culture.

Alexandra-Kyriaki Wassiliou-Seibt: Paläographie und Gesamterscheinung der Siegel im Vergleich zu den Inschriften

Byzantinische Bleisiegel zählen aufgrund der darauf angebrachten Inschriften zu den bedeutendsten Quellen für die Erforschung der Gesellschaft und des Staatsapparats, zumal deren Inhalt auf die Personalien der Siegelinhaber ausgerichtet ist. Diese waren – abgesehen von Kaiser und Patriarch – fast ausschließlich Funktionäre des Staates und der Kirche. Die Schriftlichkeit auf diesen mit Hilfe einer Siegelzange (*bulloterion*) beidseitig bedruckten Kleinobjekten (ihr Durchmesser beläuft sich zwischen 11 und 25 mm) zur Bestätigung der Originalität und Authentizität des Inhalts von Dokumenten öffentlicher und privater Natur, an denen sie angebracht waren, beginnt in der Regel im 6. Jh. und erreicht durch die Angabe von Familiennamen ihre inhaltliche Vollständigkeit im 11. Jh.

Grundsätzlich handelt es sich um eine Art Kurzgebet des Siegelinhabers an die Gottesmutter bzw. Gott oder Heilige (letzteres wenn es sich um versifizierte Inschriften handelt), das auf einem vorgegebenen standardisierten Aufbauschema basiert: Anrufung, Vorname, Titel(n), Funktion, Funktionszugehörigkeit, geographischer Bereich (wenn der Funktionär in der Provinz tätig war), Familienname(n) oder in metrischer Art (ohne vorgegebenes Aufbauformular), wobei letzteres in der Regel kurz vor der Mitte des 11. Jh. eintritt. Anhand der obigen Erläuterungen stehen Inschriften und Siegellegenden inhaltlich und strukturell gewissermaßen in Relation zueinander.

Wie steht es aber mit der Paläographie auf Siegeln und Inschriften in synchroner und diachroner Weise? Welche Art von gemeinsamen Ligaturen, Kürzungen, Zierelementen u. dgl. sind auf beiden festzuhalten und für welche Zeit? Wirken sich Elemente der sogenannten *epigraphischen Auszeichnungsmajuskel* (der Terminus geht auf Herbert Hunger zurück) auf die Siegelinschriften aus bzw. wird dort auch die Minuskel eingesetzt? Welche paläographischen Besonderheiten sind ausschließlich den Siegeln vorbehalten? Diesen und ähnlichen Fragen widmet sich unser Beitrag und versucht – ausgehend von den Siegeln – auf Konvergenzen und Divergenzen, insbesondere auf synchroner Ebene, zu den Inschriften aufmerksam zu machen, wobei das *tertium comparationis* datierte Inschriften bilden. Zur Veranschaulichung werden nicht zuletzt Inschriften von Stiftern bzw. Gründern bestimmter Monumente mit ihren Siegellegenden paläographisch verglichen.

Sophia Kalopissi-Verti: Palaiologan church inscriptions in urban centers and in the countryside as a means of defining social identities

In the present paper inscriptions of Palaiologan churches in the urban centers and in the countryside will be examined. Comparisons among church inscriptions in urban centers - Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Mistras - demonstrate shared cultural perceptions of the aristocratic circles. Furthermore, the examination of epigraphs in churches in the countryside, especially in the Byzantine Peloponnese, show that local aristocracy imitates the preferences and sophisticated taste of the urban nobility as revealed by the placement, the content and the linguistic form of the inscriptions.

Vasiliki Tsamakda: Die griechischen Inschriften Kretas aus der Zeit der venezianischen Herrschaft (13.-17. Jh.)

Im Vortrag wird ein Überblick über Form, Inhalt und kulturhistorische Bedeutung dieser Inschriften gegeben.

Diese liegt v.a. in der Vermittlung wertvoller historischer, kirchengeschichtlicher, soziologischer und kultureller Informationen sowie zusätzlicher wichtiger Hinweise, die für Kunsthistoriker und Philologen aufschlussreich sind.

Christos Stavrakos, Dimitrios Liakos: Traditions and Inscriptions: Truth or Lies?

In the late byzantine period and in the first centuries of the ottoman occupation of the Southern Balkan various traditions are created in order to connect Christian monuments with the glory and fascination of Byzantium.

Various buildings from Epirus through Thessaly to Mt. Athos create traditions according to them they were imperial or aristocratic byzantine foundations.

In the written patriographical sources various persons and legendary facts are connected to the foundation and the subsequent development of some monasteries: Emperors and empresses are mentioned as patrons and donors of luxury objects; former emperors in the last years of their life were tonsured and die on Athos; also, miracle facts happened in several monasteries influencing the monastic life and the ritual.

In this paper will be discussed the adaptation of some traditions to the inscribed material, taking into account the historical context favoring this peculiar process. We will comment the authentic but also the false given information, since in some inscriptions bits of truth existed, as it was attested by the archaeological data, yet in other examples the written mentions are entirely unfounded.