VINDOBONAE MMXVII

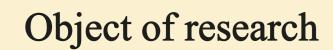
XV. INTERNATIONALER KONGRESS TÜR GRIECHISCHE VIND LATEINISCHE EPIGRAPHIK

Lex coloniae – lex municipii: The Roman municipal laws in Republic and Empire.

Recent discoveries of new fragments in Spain and Romania have presented an opportunity to take a fresh and interdisciplinary approach to this field of research.



The locations of municipal charter fragments in the territory of the Imperium Romanum © Pelagios-Project (http://pelagios.org/maps/greco-roman/about.html)



Over the course of the last two centuries many fragments of bronze tablets have been discovered on the soil of the former western Roman empire containing parts of municipal charters of municipia and colonies with Roman respectively Latin right. Each charter established the institutions of the town they were published in and guaranteed the rights and obligations of its citizens.

With every new discovery our knowledge of Roman municipal laws and the process of its development increases. Yet the researcher is also forced to constantly adapt his or her point of view regarding this object of research.

So far we know very little about the contents of the various charters, with the exception of the so-called lex Flavia municipalis, a corpus consisting of overlapping fragments relevant to no less than 9 different municipia in the Roman province Baetica with Latin rights. Our understanding of more than 80% of the content of this law is now mainly owed to the "lex Irnitana", found in 1986.

The content of the other fragments varies strongly, from the insights of the lex Ursonensis, presenting us with about 50 sections of a Caesarian colonial charter, to other very small fragments, like the one found in Lorch, Austria, the ancient Lauriacum. But few words can offer substantial information—as in the case of the lex Lauriacensis—regarding the ongoing publishing process of municipal charters in times of the emperor Caracalla and the connection of these laws to older ones in both wording and content.

Through the analysis of the surviving fragment's contents we can learn a great deal about the complex system of political and social rules of a town under Roman authority, from the procedure of municipal courts and elections to the seating order at local games.

Through close comparison of every fragment we can gather information about the evolution of the municipal laws which took place in Rome itself. By means of some kind of matrix-law the Roman authorities developed a corpus of provisions for municipia and colonia of different statuses. Whenever a new charter was created on the basis of these provisions, small or sometimes considerable changes took place. These changes can be traced through the parallel provisions of surviving fragments.

Aim of my Ph.D. project

As already mentioned, recent discoveries of unknown municipal charters have shed new light on previous discussions and hypotheses regarding Roman municipal laws.

In particular, the publication of the lex Troesmensium by Werner Eck (ZPE 200, 2016) showed that we can prove both consistency and variation in the texts of different municipal laws over time and throughout towns of different status and even whole regions.

We now know, for example, that over a period of 100 years a section about the assignment of town senators for embassies was drafted according to the exact same text, varying only by individual words, although the compared town charters are in one case of a Latin municipium (lex Irnitana) and in the other of a Roman one (lex Troesmensium).

The chapter in the lex Troesmensium also contains a small insertion of a new regulation. The extent of this addendum can clearly be determined and therefore it offers insight into the composition process of this particular charter in the time of Marcus Aurelius.

By the examination of parallels like these I hope to establish a theory regarding the process of drafting and passing Roman municipal laws.

For my research project I not only gather and analyze all known fragments but also order them in a systematic way, which allows me to examine them by means of an interdisciplinary approach, combining methods of history, philology and textual analysis.

This research project is of interest for those scholars who are interested in the processes through which Rome created and passed certain laws, organised its subordinate towns, and disseminated its law and culture—a process which is often described as romanisation.

My Ph.D. project, supervised by Fritz Mitthof and Loredana Cappeletti (both university of Vienna), is expected to be finished by the end of 2018.



The lex coloniae Iuliae Genetivae "Ursonensis" (created 45 BC, republished in Flavian times) © Luis García, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8763745

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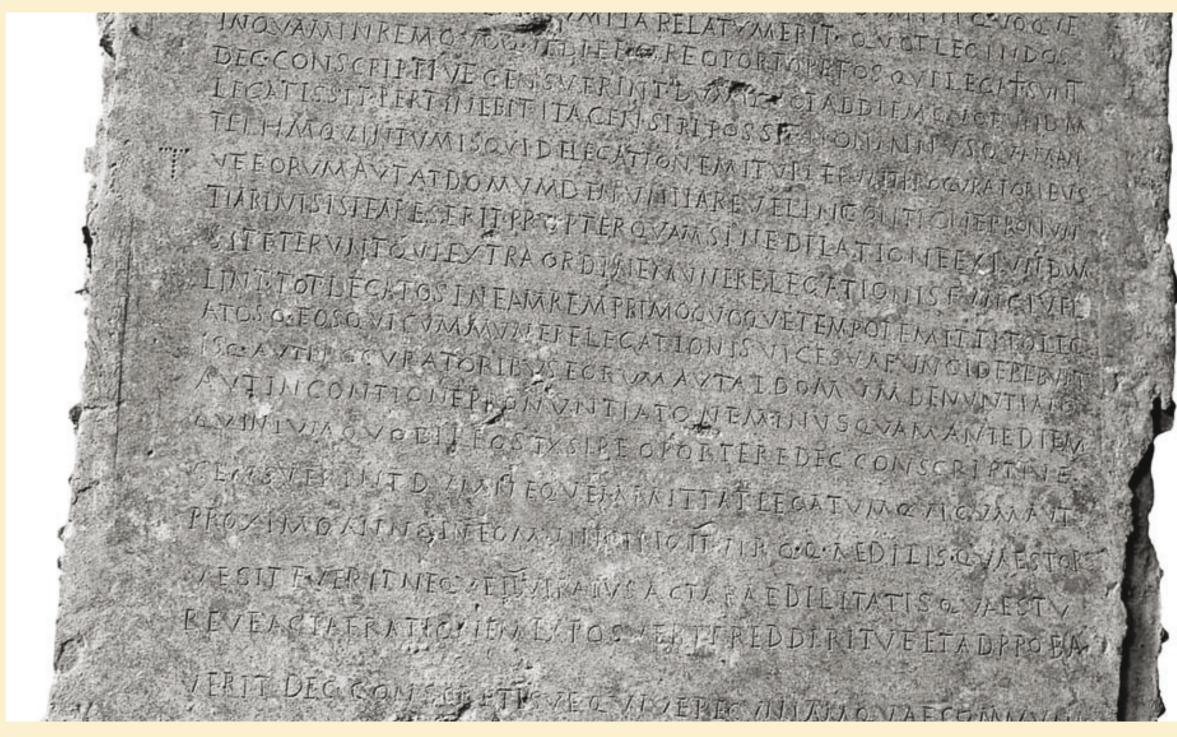
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Reproduction of chapter 64 of the lex municipii Flavi Malacitani (published between 81 and 96 AD) © https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leyes_romanas_de_Malaca.jpg#file



The newly discovered lex Troesmensium (published between 177 and 180 AD)
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