Roman Voices

Epigraphy in ancient Catania
New research on the Bloomberg finds
Latinization in the Roman north-west

'Voci di pietra': voices of stone from ancient Catania

Jonathan Prag

Among the epigraphic projects hosted in the Faculty of Classics is the *I.Sicily* corpus. This is an ongoing project to build a digital corpus of the inscriptions of ancient Sicily, and can be found at http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk. The aim is to bring together complete digital editions of all of the inscriptions from ancient Sicily, in all languages, between the Archaic period and Late Antiquity. In the first instance efforts have concentrated on inscriptions on stone (3,250 records to date, with an expected final total nearer 5,000), but texts on bronze and other materials will be included in due course. The corpus is constructed using the common digital standard XML schema, 'EpiDoc', and then made accessible through a web interface.

Since *I.Sicily* is intended to be a true corpus, and not simply a text database, we place great emphasis upon the need to conduct an autopsy of every text. This entails working closely with the museums of Sicily, and a key element of the project is a database of archaeological collections (built by Dr. Michael Metcalfe): http://sicily.classics.ox.ac. uk/museums. Inscription records are linked to museum records, so that as part of the corpus we are able automatically to generate individual museum catalogues, serving the needs not only of researchers but of the museums themselves – there is currently a lack of professional epigraphers in Sicily and most of the museums lack access to the necessary expertise and resources to catalogue the often extensive material held in their stores.

This has resulted in a growing number of collaborative projects to study and catalogue the epigraphic collections of the Sicilian museums. Among the most exciting of these has been a substantial five-way collaboration in Catania, between *I.Sicily*, the Museo Civico of Catania, the Comune di Catania, the CNR-ISTC, and the Liceo Artistico Statale "M.M. Lazzaro". The Museo Civico of Catania, housed in the Norman Castello Ursino, holds a substantial collection of c. 500 inscriptions, based upon two major 18th century collections, of which half are from Catania and half come from the city of Rome (many of which are antiquarian copies or fakes).

Although these were mostly catalogued some 15 years ago, there is a need for a more comprehensive study. Daria Spampinato of the CNR-ISTC coincidentally initiated the EpiCUM project (Epigrafe del Castello Ursino Museo) to build a digital catalogue, and this formed the basis for the collaboration, with the two projects dividing the hosting of the Sicilian and Urban material between them. However, a means was needed by which we could locate and catalogue all the material, and for this we turned to the Liceo Artistico Statale M.M. Lazzaro in Catania, a large, art-focused state secondary school. The collaboration was made possible firstly through the existence of the Italian 'alternanza scuola-lavoro' programme, which requires and supports a substantial period of work-experience for school students in collaboration with local employers and other organisations: in this instance, classes spent a week at a time in the museum, working on studying, cleaning and recording the inscriptions and other objects. In addition, the project received the support of a TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) Knowledge Exchange Fellowship, which provided the funding to enable the creation of an exhibition in the museum – 'voci di pietra'.

Over the course of the year 2016/2017 the school students not only recorded the
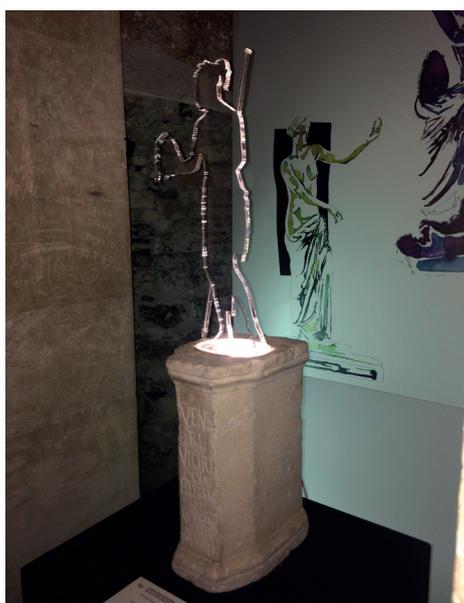
Reconstruction of a columbarium wall with four Roman funerary inscriptions attached.

inscriptions (and learned about the epigraphy of Roman Catania), but they also worked with a conservator to clean and restore the 35 inscriptions selected for the exhibition. The exhibition was divided over three rooms on the main floor of the Castello Ursino, with an introduction to epigraphy and the epigraphic languages of the island in the first room; a selection of public inscriptions (honorifics, dedications and building inscriptions) from the Roman *colonia* of Catania in the second; and a sequence of funerary inscriptions from the city in the third, ranging across the first to fifth centuries AD in Latin, Greek and Hebrew. The students prepared the materials for the exhibition, across a wide range of media. As well as drawings and paintings of inscriptions and associated elements of Roman Catania they built a reconstruction of a columbarium to house some of the funerary inscriptions and designed the information panels.

As well as researching the background to a number of the inscriptions, they explored the iconography associated with the dedications and their statues and produced their own interpretations based upon the ancient evidence – for the 'Genius' of ancient Catania, the 'pious brothers' of Catania myth (twins, who rescued their parents from the lava of Etna), and Venus Victrix, from a dedication in nearby ancient Hybla.

Inscription recording the 'Voci di pietra' exhibition, carved by the students of Liceo M.M. Lazzaro.

VOCI DI PIETRA
MUSEO CIVICO CASTELLO URSINO
ISTC - CNR
OXFORD UNIVERSITY
LICEO ARTISTICO M. M. LAZZARO
CATANIA

14 LUGLIO 2017

CIL 10.7013 = ISicily 0297: statue base for Venus Victrix, with perspex silouhette reconstruction.

The school works in digital media as well as classical art forms, and the students also produced two video installations, one on the myth of the 'pious brothers', and a second on the actual practice of epigraphy. For the latter they researched both modern and traditional techniques of letter-cutting, tracking down a retired Catanese stonemason and recording an interview with him. Inspired by this, they also jointly produced a spectacular marble inscription recording the production of the exhibition.

The exhibition was opened in July 2017 by the Mayor of Catania to very positive press coverage (regional and national), and is intended to remain open indefinitely, so if you find yourself in Catania, do visit! The work of the students was recognised by the award of a prize from the Italian Ministry of Education for the best such project in Sicily, and in October 2017 the prize enabled a group of 20 students from the school (some of whom had never been abroad) to visit Oxford and London. The exhibition is now providing inspiration to other museums and schools on the island, and with further support from TORCH we very much hope to repeat what has been a fantastic experience as we continue to catalogue the island's inscriptions.

Roman London's First Voices: a stylish postscript

Roger Tomlin

In *CSAD Newsletter No. 20*, I described the Roman stylus tablets found by Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA) in their excavation of the Bucklersbury site in the City of London, before it became the European headquarters of the media giant Bloomberg: 'thin wooden panels usually about 140 by 100 mm, of which one face (sometimes both) was recessed to take a thin coating of black beeswax. They were inscribed with a needle-pointed stylus, the wax being coloured black so as to contrast with the bare wood when it was exposed.' They date from the first half-century of Roman London, when an immigrant community of craftsmen, merchants and traders brought literacy to Britain. Their writings include the City's first financial document, as Mr Bloomberg remarked in his speech celebrating the new building: this tablet is dated 8 January 57, and a freedman called Tibullus writes to Gratus, another freedman, promising to pay him 105 denarii in respect of goods sold and delivered.

Reading these texts was a fascinating challenge, for they were found deep in the silts of the Walbrook. This is a tributary of the Thames, now buried in sewers and culverts, whose waterlogged deposits create the anaerobic conditions that preserve wood and other organic material; but although they duly preserved the wood of the tablets, they unfortunately dissolved the wax coating. In consequence the writing surface is lost, and the only tablets to be legible are those of which the stylus has cut into the underlying wood: the writing is a ghost of the original, which prompted MoLA to make a modern replica, wax and all. They even brought it to Oxford and photographed me sitting on my sofa, scratching a laboured imitation of Roman cursive into the wax.

This tablet is a replica, but the stylus is genuine – the only stylus I had to hand. It too came from the Bloomberg excavation, and I was studying it for inclusion in the MoLA final report, of which *Roman London's First Voices* (2016) is the first volume. The stylus is the shape and size of a modern pencil, an octagonal iron rod 132 mm long, 5 mm thick, pointed at one end, wedge-shaped at the other. Use the sharp end to write in the wax, and the blunt end as an eraser; rub out a mistake, literally, then smooth the wax over and write in the correction. A whole book has been written to classify Roman styluses, but this one is not very unusual – except in being itself inscribed. It has eight facets, and inscribed on alternate facets are minute, dot-punched letters only 2 mm high. Despite the stylus being nineteen centuries underground (it was found in a deposit dated to c. AD 62–65/70), the lettering is surprisingly legible. It has gone in places, of course, and some double-guessing is required, but MoLA provided me with high-resolution photographs of all eight facets, of which here are two, the first inscribed, the second plain.

I used these photographs to make a drawing, while I examined the original under a microscope: as I did so, I wondered, how ever did the Roman craftsman see to punch his minute letters? Here is my drawing and transcript.

ab urbe v[e]n[i] munus tibi gratum adf(e)ro

acul[eat]um ut habe[a]s memor[ia]m nostra(m)

rogo si fortuna dar[e]t quo possem

largius ut longa via ceu sacculus est (v)acuus

'I have come from the City. I bring you a welcome gift with a sharp point that you may remember me. I ask, if fortune allowed, that I might be able (to give) as generously as the way is long and as my purse is empty.'

The inscription turns out to be metrical, four lines of iambic senarii forming two couplets, somewhat like English blank verse. But what do they mean? I will spare you the details of my double-guessing and my defensive footnotes, but I think the stylus, or rather the donor, is addressing the recipient. It is a 'Present from Rome', a 'pointed' present, literally so, but also because it will 'sting' the recipient into 'remembering' the donor. *aculeus* is a 'point' or 'sting', and it anticipates the assonance of *sacculus* ('purse') and *vacuus* ('empty'). The second couplet is an apology, obscurely expressed, that the writer is not being more generous: it is a long way from Rome, and he has no money. This is a literary conceit, like Catullus offering his friend Fabullus dinner, provided he brings the food: Catullus' own purse is already full ... of cobwebs (*plenus sacculus est aranearum*). The donor is being generous, at least potentially so: his purse is quite as long as the distance to Rome, and quite as full of emptiness.

This poem, if not quite in the Catullus class, is an extraordinary thing to find in the London mud. Inscribed styluses have been found in other Roman provinces, notably one from Switzerland which says *di te servent, amor amorum*: 'May the gods preserve you, (my) love of loves.' But these inscriptions are all much shorter; none of them has so much to tell us as the Bloomberg stylus: in its way, it is as striking a witness to literacy in Roman Britain as the tablets themselves.

Photos: Museum of London Archaeology

Computational Imaging of t
Collaborative Scholarship a

Taylor Bennett

A multi-disciplinary team at the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (CSAD) is collaborating with the departments of Archaeological Science and Computer Science, and Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA), to conserve and study a trove of 405 Roman stylus writing tablets that were discovered in 2010-2013 during excavations for Bloomberg L.P.'s new European headquarters in the City of London. Dating from the late AD 40s into the 80s, they are the earliest handwritten records of daily life in the first-century Roman settlement of *Londinium* (modern London). The aim is to capture digital images of the tablets using a newly designed illumination dome, and to develop new algorithms and methods to extract as much

visual information from the tablets as possible in the hope of yielding new insights into the period of settlement before and after the Boudican rebellion, *c.* AD 60-61. We also hope to increase public awareness and engagement with the process of decipherment as well as the fascinating history of the tablets themselves.

The tablets were used for commercial, administrative and legal purposes, such as contracts and inventories. There are also financial accounts, legal documents, and educational material. When they were no longer needed, the tablets were apparently discarded with other rubbish along the lower reaches of the River Walbrook. It would be nearly two millennia before they were recovered during recent excavations.

Dr. Roger Tomlin's articles in this Newsletter as well as Newsletter 20 describe the challenges of deciphering the faint traces of messages incised with a metal stylus on wooden supports that would once have contained wax. So far, about ninety of the Bloomberg tablets have been partially deciphered by Dr. Tomlin, using a combination of direct observation with raking light, microscopy, and examining digital images of the tablets, each lit from four low-angle lighting positions. These initial transcriptions were published by MoLA in the monograph *Roman London's First Voices* (Tomlin, 2016).

As an aid to epigraphy, the CSAD recently acquired a specially designed hemispherical light-array dome with 128 LEDs for capturing digital surrogates of the tablets using a technique called Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). The dome is capable of capturing 128 images of each tablet illuminated from different light positions. The images are then mathematically combined using open-source software to create a single, interactive image. This allows epigraphers and other scholars to illuminate the tablets from virtually any direction on a computer display, and to enhance the contrast of tiny, barely visible, features by changing simulating changes to the reflective properties of the surface. The CSAD plans to capture RTIs of all 405 of the Bloomberg tablets, beginning in February 2018.

The CSAD is also exploring new methods of combining 3D imaging and machine learning with RTI to improve the detection and recovery of messages from the tablets. We hope to take advantage of advances in computer vision and medical imaging that increasingly rely on 3D models to isolate and highlight features of interest, using a process known as segmentation. Previous attempts to combine 3D models with RTI require separate capture methods, processing workflows, and rendering tools. Instead, we aim for a more integrated approach to acquiring, efficiently processing, and rendering highly detailed 3D models and texture maps for further study. We use segmentation algorithms so that once the raw images are acquired, they can be reprocessed and reused as more advanced algorithms are developed.
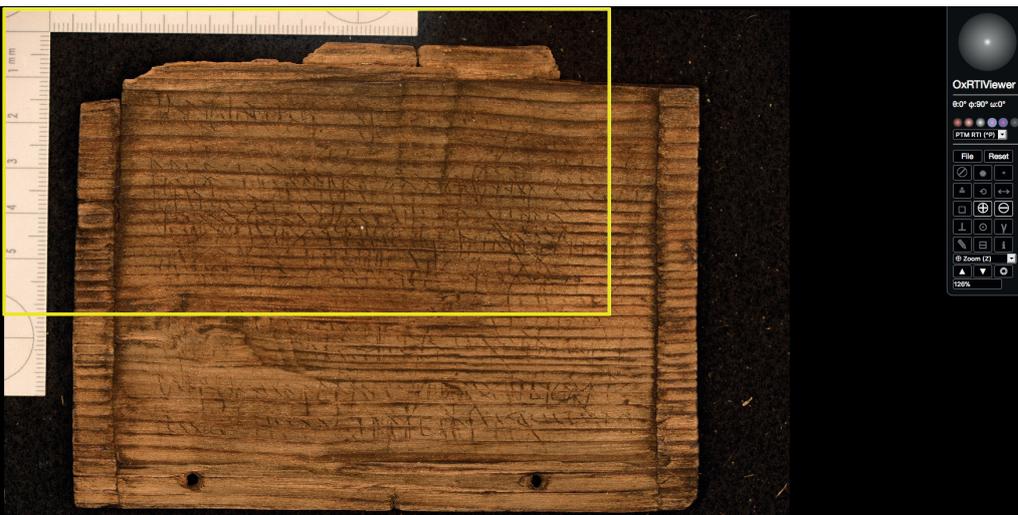

Fig. 1: RTI of one of the Bloomberg tablets rendered in the new web RTI viewer. The light position and viewer settings are displayed in the control panel on the right.

Fig. 2: Area of detail rendered with raking light and specular enhancement.

Alongside these technical considerations, one of the major goals of the project is to increase public awareness and engagement with the tablets, and to foster collaboration with the wider community of scholars interested in the early history of Roman settlements in England. A web-based viewer for sharing and annotating RTIs and 3D models is vital to achieving this. In collaboration with the departments of Archaeological Science and Computer Science, a new web-based viewer is currently being developed which will make the stages of digitally-enhanced epigraphy publicly accessible for the first time.

A prototype of the new viewer, which has just been written by Dr. Christopher Ramsey from the department of Archaeological Science, is currently being tested. It allows users to record the settings of the viewer – including its rendering mode, annotations, and metadata such as the angle of illumination – so that researchers can easily view and share data and collaborate in their research and analysis across the internet (**fig. 1-3**). The aim is to make a viewing app that will be compatible with a range of computers (desktop, laptop, tablet, or smartphone), popular operating systems (Windows, MacOS, Linux), and web browsers. Another feature will enable researchers or members of the public to draw directly on a touch screen – or alternatively, using a separate drawing device, such as an electronic stylus tablet – to trace the scratches that have been rendered visible in the RTI format (**fig. 4**). These various facilities will encourage crowd-sourced interpretation of the writing on the tablets.

One of the great advantages of RTI is that it is interactive: It is possible to change the illumination angle or manipulate the surface reflective properties of an object by using a trackball in the upper portion of the control panel or by pointing and dragging a finger across a touch-sensitive screen. This offers an extraordinary opportunity to document and share the phases of analysing, drawing and deciphering text, giving the public a chance to engage in the kind of visual analysis, linguistic and detective work that goes into epigraphy. By recording the interpretations of the inscriptions
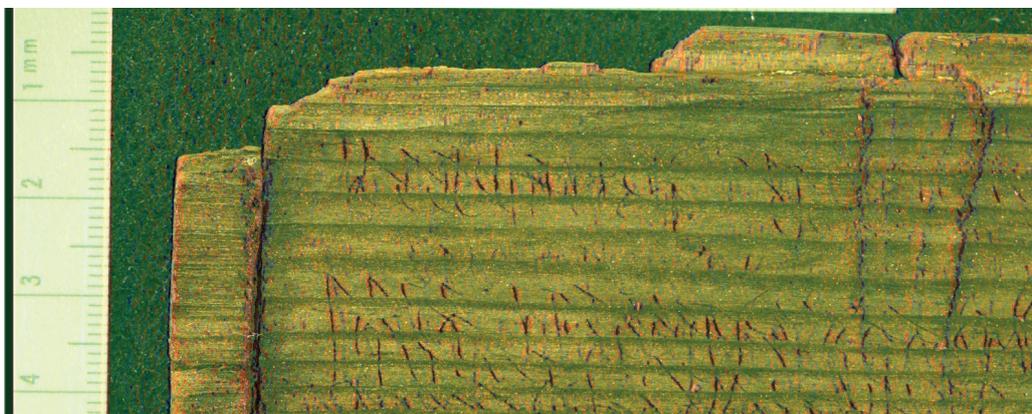

Fig. 3: Area of detail seen with the "Surface" filter, which can extract high-frequency 3D shape information as a colour-coded depth map, making the inscriptions more visible.
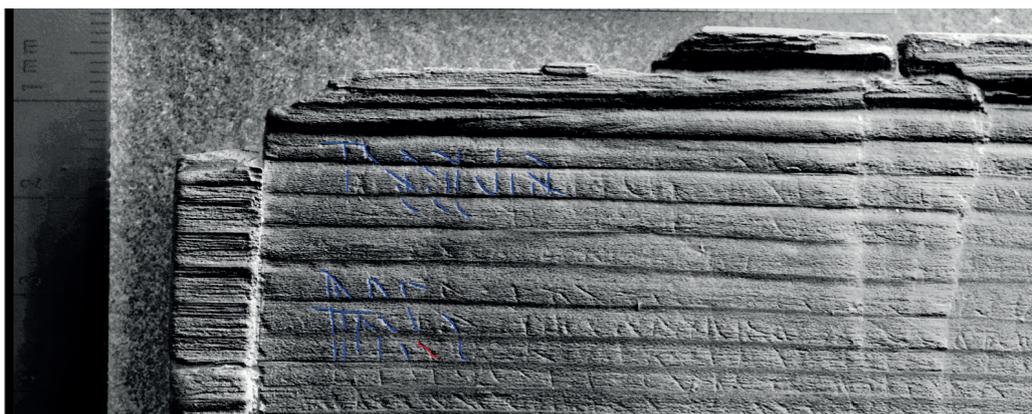

Fig. 4: Area of detail rendered with specular enhancement and drawing layer. The blue and red coloured strokes in the upper left corner of the tablet are a tentative interpretation.

by researchers and the public, we hope to get a sense of the range of permutations involved. Some interpretations could potentially be used as training data to apply 'deep learning' computational methods to assist with the recognition of characters in the inscriptions.

The prototype viewer is currently being written using Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), because this allows us to test and modify the viewer's features before going through the time-consuming task of writing webGL code later on. But our overall ambition is to create a platform which will use crowd-sourcing to open up epigraphy and to give the wider public a way of becoming involved with these extraordinary documents, which serve as a timely reminder of the importance of the Continent in the City's past.

Research team

Dr. Charles Crowther, Associate Professor in Ancient History, Assistant Director of CSAD

Dr. Roger Tomlin, Chief Researcher, Roman Inscriptions of Britain, Faculty of Classics

Mr. Julian Hill, Senior Project Manager, Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA)

Dr. Lindsay MacDonald, Honorary Professor, Faculty of Engineering Sciences, University College London

Dr. Christopher Ramsey, Professor of Archaeological Science and Director of Research Laboratory for Archaeology

Taylor Bennett, DPhil candidate in Archaeological Science

LatinNow! The Latinization of the north-western Roman provinces: sociolinguistics, archaeology and epigraphy

Alex Mullen

LatinNow is an interdisciplinary project linking sociolinguistics, archaeology and ancient cultural history. Every Classicist knows that dramatic changes occurred linguistically in the north-western Roman Empire: a patchwork of local languages which existed in the Iron Age had been all but replaced by Latin as the dominant language by the end of the imperial period. However, the precise nature of this process, and how it relates to other social phenomena, remains an underexplored topic which is central to our understanding of the Roman world. We offer an analysis which cuts across provincial boundaries, those between the Iron Age, Roman and early medieval periods, and reaching beyond Classics to Germanic, Celtic and Palaeo-hispanic studies and modern sociolinguistics.

LatinNow focuses on Britain, Gaul, the Iberian Peninsula, the Germanies, Noricum and Raetia and is attempting to illuminate our understanding of Latinization by employing an approach which exploits both epigraphic and archaeological material (writing *and* writing equipment) and situates the phenomena of Latinization, literacy, bi- and multilingualism within broader social developments. Drawing together the strands of sociolinguistics, bilingualism studies, digital epigraphy, and small finds archaeological investigation into an integrated methodology brings a fresh perspective, founded on empirical data and supported by evolving technologies (Geographical Information Systems (GIS), EpiDoc, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI)). LatinNow aggregates data from several publicly funded databases, including EAGLE, HESPERIA, OxRep, EngLaId and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and is using the resultant GIS database as a research tool to aid the analytical work on our core research questions:

- How quickly, when, for whom, where and why does Latinization occur, and can we reconstruct sociolinguistic attitudes towards it?

- What is the nature of, and attitudes towards, bi- and multilingualism, language death and survival in the provinces and why do some provinces behave quite differently, especially in the post-Roman period?

- Can writing equipment help us rethink literacy levels, and attitudes towards them, in the provinces and how do these compare with W. V. Harris's 'pessimistic' view of ancient literacy? In particular can female literacy be better understood through sensitivity to archaeological remains?

- How do Latinization, bi- and multilingualism, and the uptake of literacy link to other social phenomena?

- What were the mechanisms for learning Latin and how to write it?

- How successful was the 'epigraphic habit' and how does it map onto distributions of non-monumental texts and *instrumenta scriptoria*? How might we account for the differences we identify?

The LatinNow team at CSAD and beyond

LatinNow is a 5-year ERC-funded project hosted by the University of Nottingham (2017-2022). The CSAD welcomed the research team in September 2017.

The main research interests of Principal Investigator, Alex Mullen (University of Nottingham; All Souls), lie in the application of contemporary sociolinguistics to the ancient world and the integration of sociolinguistics, epigraphy and archaeology to write socio-cultural history. Her primary focus for LatinNow is the cultural and linguistic histories of Iron Age and Roman Britain and Gaul: she has completed a short book on Gaulish and is writing a book *Entangled Worlds: Britain and Gaul in the Iron Age and Roman periods*, which will explore the complexities of multiple languages, identity and culture in this highly interactive zone. She has especially enjoyed working on the racy bilingual spindle whorls from Autun, France, and a new metrical graffito on pottery from Kent. She is working with project mentor, Alan Bowman, to compose a cursive Latin manual which will incorporate the latest digital techniques in epigraphy pioneered by the CSAD.

Screenshot of the RTI scan of the East Farleigh, Kent, pot base with metrical inscription, showing default settings (Alex Mullen).

Spindle whorl from Autun found in Sens, France, with Gaulish inscription (RIG II.2 L-120) (Cl. MdC. Musées de Sens).

Research Fellow Francesca Cotugno is leading the project's research into the Germanies, Noricum and Raetia. Her detailed doctoral study of the sociolinguistics of Latin at Vindolanda allows her to make links to the linguistic remains of the northern parts of the Continent, from where the soldiers of the writing tablets largely came. Exploring the epigraphy of the Germanies, she has found the *matres* inscriptions particularly intriguing for what they reveal about bilingualism between Latin and local languages.

Research Fellow, Noemí Moncunill Martí, is leading the analysis of the extensive remains from the Iberian Peninsula. She has published a short book on Iberian and is preparing an edited volume on the culture of writing. Her current research traces local peoples through onomastics and involves the publication of new epigraphic finds, for example the graffiti from Elne, south-western France.

LatinNow is supported by researchers across Europe, including María José Estarán Tolosa (working on the earliest phases of Latinization of Hispania Ulterior), a team at the CNRS in Lyon (who will work on graffiti from Lyon and inscribed small finds) and a dozen European Special Advisors. LatinNow also supports Scott Vanderbilt's work to add all the lapidary inscriptions of Britain, with EpiDoc, to *Roman Inscriptions of Britain online* (https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/) and to advance the quest to make all of Roman Britain's published epigraphic material digitally available and searchable.

LatinNow needs you!

LatinNow relies on the support of the academic community for access to materials and advice on how best to use data sets. In particular the team is keen to hear from anyone about epigraphic remains, *instrumenta scriptoria* and data which illuminate social phenomena (e.g. military

movements, production centres, urbanization, road networks) relevant for understanding Latinization in the north-western provinces. In addition, we need researchers for our work on Raetia and Noricum, the later Roman Iberian peninsula, and *instrumenta scriptoria* across the provinces. We are also interested in identifying doctoral students to work on themes related to LatinNow (funding may be available). Please contact Alex Mullen (alex.mullen@nottingham.ac.uk) for any of the above, apart from the Touring Exhibition, for which please contact the Tour Manager, Jane Masséglia (jeam2@leicester.ac.uk).

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European Research Council
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Research work carried out at the museum and archaeological warehouses of Elne.

Greek characters on a lead tablet found in Elne. The language of the inscription is uncertain (maybe Gaulish?).

An epigraphic mission to Illiberis (Elne), crossroad of cultures at the foot of the Pyrenees

Noemí Moncunill Martí

In December 2017 I had the chance to travel to the beautiful town of Elne, in southern France, in order to study its interesting corpus of inscriptions together with Jérôme Bénézet, archaeologist in the "Service Archéologique du Département des Pyrénées-Orientales".

Located on the Roussillon plain between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, Elne has been a land of passage and a meeting point for different cultures since ancient times. Its epigraphic record is diverse, including not simply inscriptions in Greek and Latin, but also in Iberian and possibly Gaulish as well.

As a matter of fact, the local identity of the ancient inhabitants of this area has long been discussed and it is still the subject of controversy among specialists: some scholars think that Iberian was the vernacular language of the Iberian people of this region, whilst others believe this language was merely used as a *lingua franca* to facilitate commercial interactions with the Iberian Peninsula. Be this as it may, the study of the sources written by the inhabitants of Elne from the 4th century BC to the Roman period remains essential in order to understand the cultural and linguistic substrate of the region along with its evolution until the final Latinization.

This epigraphic mission is one of the main working packages of the LatinNow project, called "Documenting the Provinces", which aims to gather data and materials that are relevant for the study of Latinization in the north-western provinces. We have carried out the revision of the whole corpus of inscriptions from the site and are currently working on the interpretation of these texts, with a special focus on the cultural environment in which they were produced. To this end, the linguist analysis will be combined with the archaeological study of find contexts and writing materials, which will help us to date the inscriptions whilst also elucidating the circumstances of writing practices in ancient Elne.

Greek graffito on a red figured Attic pottery sherd (4th century BC) found in Elne.

Latin graffito on a jug (c. 80-120 AD) in the "Musée du Cloître" in Elne.

Pictures showing two different graffiti from Elne, both of them written in Iberian script. Whereas the one on the left bears an Iberian name, Elerbas, the one on the right, which reads]nuetiri, might be the Iberian adaptation of the Gaulish anthroponym Conuectirix.

Visiting Scholars

Dr Sevgi Sarıkaya

I am Assistant Professor in the Department of Ancient History at Sakarya University in Adapazar/Sakarya. I joined the CSAD as a Visiting Research Fellow after completing my doctoral thesis at Akdeniz University in Antalya on the Persian satrapy of Dascylium in the Classical period. I used the six months I spent at the CSAD (May-November 2017) to turn my thesis into a book, which is in the process of being published in Turkish, working in association with Peter Thonemann. This book is now ready for publication and is being edited by Prof. Dr. Murat Arslan. Dascylium (Hisartepe Höyük) on the edge of Lake Manyas (Dascylitis) was an essential provincial centre, serving the Persian/Achaemenid Empire almost continuously from c. 539 BC until 334 BC and it was here that the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia had his residence. My research has involved assessing new evidence, which has recently emerged through a comparative analysis of epigraphic, archaeological and literary sources, as well as continuing my research into Anatolian history by studying inscriptions from Dascylium and western Asia Minor. Whilst working at the CSAD, I also produced a Turkish translation and commentary on Plutarch's 'Life of Artaxerxes', and translated texts by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Diodorus, Plutarch, Lysias and Demosthenes. All in all, the months at the CSAD were very productive. ∎

Elodie Vandermeiren

As an Academic Visitor I had the opportunity to spend Michaelmas term 2017 in Oxford. I am a PhD student (Université de Fribourg (CH) and Université Catholique de Louvain (BE)), working on topics relating to the economy of the Province of Asia in Hellenistic and Roman times. My research focuses on Ephesus and seeks to identify the institutions and people that played a role in managing the resources, expenses and transactions of the local community, from the daily market to the various regular games and the foundations that funded festivals. Although based mainly on epigraphic material, my research to a certain extent also considers coinage.

During my stay in Oxford, I studied many inscriptions from Ephesus at the British and Ashmolean Museums. In order to prepare for this research, I made use of the CSAD's collection of squeezes, which are a prime source of evidence for paleographic and textual questions.

At the CSAD, I also discovered the laboratory, where new avenues of research are being explored and where the research projects foster scientific and cultural diversity. This inspiring atmosphere was really valuable to me and I also appreciated the social environment of the centre and its members, eager to discuss research topics and ready to give advice and institutional support in case of need. ∎

Nan Zhang

For nearly 18 years, I have been studying and working at the Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations (IHAC) at the Northeast Normal University (NENU) in Changchun, China. The IHAC is the country's first professional institute for the study of ancient civilizations and until now the only institute in the People's Republic of China which makes the study of ancient languages (such as ancient Greek and Latin) obligatory for all students.

In my current project *The Selected Latin Historical Inscriptions* (supported by the National Social Science Fund of China), I translate selected Latin inscriptions into Chinese, with detailed commentaries to provide a general survey of the history of Rome and the Latin languages. The project has been largely completed, but there were still some relevant sources I could not access in China. As this made it difficult to take my project further, I got help from Dr. Yuantao Yin and I had the honor of being invited by Dr. Charles Crowther to the CSAD as academic visitor.

Since I arrived in August 2017, I gained access to many original epigraphic texts through the archives of the CSAD, especially for the Roman inscriptions of Britain. In addition, I had the opportunity for discussions with staff and visiting scholars at the CSAD, which gave me a deeper understanding of the backgrounds of the relevant inscriptions. The visit at CSAD will undoubtedly contribute to my research and my project will be completed before I leave. ∎

Oxford Epigraphy Workshop
Hilary Term 2018

Monday 15 January:
Thea Sommerschield, "A Sicilian cursing phenomenon? A geo-chronological and textual study of Greek defixiones from Sicily"

Monday 22 January:
Peter Thonemann, "New inscriptions from the Middle Hermos"

Monday 29 January:
Robin Osborne, "The appearance of numbers in Athenian inscriptions"

Monday 5 February:
Georgy Kantor, "A proconsular letter to the city of Ephesus referring to Ulpian (*I.Eph.* II 217)"

Monday 12 February:
Barbara Roberts, "The paraphulax as a village benefactor: a fragmentary inscription from northeast Lydia"

Monday 19 February:
no meeting

Monday 26 February:
Elizabeth Foley, "Studies in the Athena Promachos accounts"

Monday 5 March:
Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, "A new Greek curse tablet from Roman Tyre"

Charles Crowther, Jonathan Prag, Peter Thonemann

Visitors to CSAD

The Centre is able to provide a base for a limited number of visiting scholars working in fields related to its activities. Enquiries concerning admission as Visiting Research Fellow (established scholars) or as Visiting Research Associate should be addressed to the Centre's Director, Professor A.K. Bowman. Association with the Centre carries with it membership of the University's Stelios Ioannou School for Research in Classical and Byzantine Studies. Further information concerning application procedures and other formalities can be obtained from the Centre's Research Support Officer and Administrator, Dr. Chloe Colchester (**chloe.colchester@classics.ox.ac.uk**).

Circulation and Contributions

This is the twenty-first issue of the Centre's Newsletter. The Newsletter is also available online in HTML and pdf formats (**www.csad.ox.ac.uk/CSAD/Newsletters**).

We invite contributions to the Newsletter of news, reports and discussion items from and of interest to scholars working in the fields of the Centre's activities – epigraphy and papyrology understood in the widest sense.

Contributions, together with other enquiries and requests to be placed on the Centre's mailing list, should be addressed to the Centre's Administrator, Dr. Chloe Colchester, at the address below.

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