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Disappearance, survival, revival

Was Latin epigraphy a killer?

The gold foundation deposit plaque from Koussai, Egypt

# Was Latin epigraphy a killer?

Alex Mullen

The LatinNow team is researching the ways in which local languages and epigraphies in our core provinces Britain, Gaul, the Germanies and the Iberian Peninsula interact with Latin. Unsurprisingly, the picture is far from simple.

Latin epigraphy was successful, perhaps from some perspectives too successful, in large parts of the western provinces. We find it on everything from marble and bronze plaques to pots and spoons. Lapidary epigraphy in particular tends to follow a distinctive pattern: it takes off in the Augustan period and increases steadily until a tail-off from the beginning of the third century AD. In the Germanies and Britain interactions with Rome intensify in a comparatively late period and Roman rule is formalized only in the post-Augustan period, at which point the epigraphic habit has essentially been cornered by Latin: communities choosing to participate in epigraphic practices have one obvious linguistic option. There is no evidence that local communities tried to promote the writing of the major local languages — British Celtic in the case of Britannia and Celtic/Germanic in the Germanies. Of course we see the local languages through Latin writing, for example in the form of personal, deity or place names and occasional loan words, but local epigraphies for non-Latin languages are not created in these areas which, from a Roman perspective, are sometimes viewed as peripheral and 'frontier'.

There are possible exceptions to this general picture from Roman Britain. Two texts found in the collection of second- to fourth-century curse tablets from Aquae Sulis (Bath, Somerset), one in capitals and one in a mixture of capitals and Old Roman Cursive, can be analysed as Celtic. The latter can be translated, cautiously, as 'I, Vindiorix, O divine Deieda/Deveda, shall fix an evil (?fate vel. sim.) on Cuamiina'. The other is more obscure and fragmentary, but what can be understood does seem to be Celtic. The issue with these unusual examples is that they are not necessarily British Celtic. Given the cosmopolitan nature of the sanctuary site at Roman Aquae Sulis, and several dedicators from Gaul in the lapidary epigraphy, it seems perhaps a safer interpretation to assign these to Gaulish, the Celtic language of Gaul, which, as we shall see, is still written on the
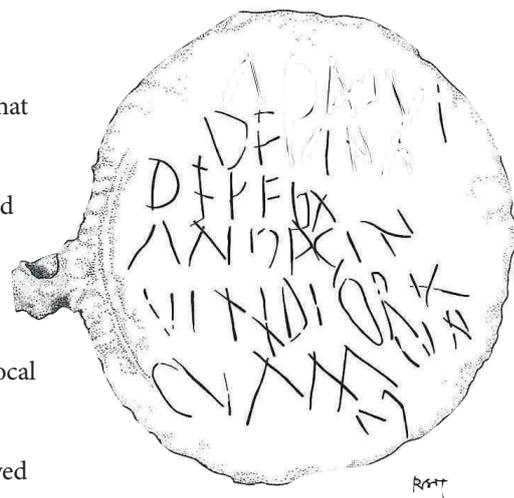
Above: Drawing of Bath curse tablet number 18 (Credit R. S. O. Tomlin).

Continent when these texts were produced in around the third century AD, rather than to assign them to otherwise unattested written British Celtic. British Celtic and Gaulish are closely related in this period and we cannot say what the distinguishing linguistic features may have been. The first Celtic epigraphy from Britannia is Ogam, composed of parallel strokes and attested in the west of Britannia and beyond from the late fourth century AD onwards. In the Germanies, with the exception of a couple of outlier Gaulish inscriptions, no continuous written local language is attested until the post-Roman period. In the areas to which Roman rule came later, by the time the impetus to take up the epigraphic habit had arrived, Latin had effectively killed off any epigraphic competition. However, the lack of local epigraphies does not stop the vernaculars surviving Roman rule.

The story is quite different for the areas which were brought into the Roman ambit earlier. In the Iberian peninsula we are faced with a multilingual and multi-epigraphic picture in the pre-Roman period. Parts of the peninsula interact intensively with mixed Mediterranean
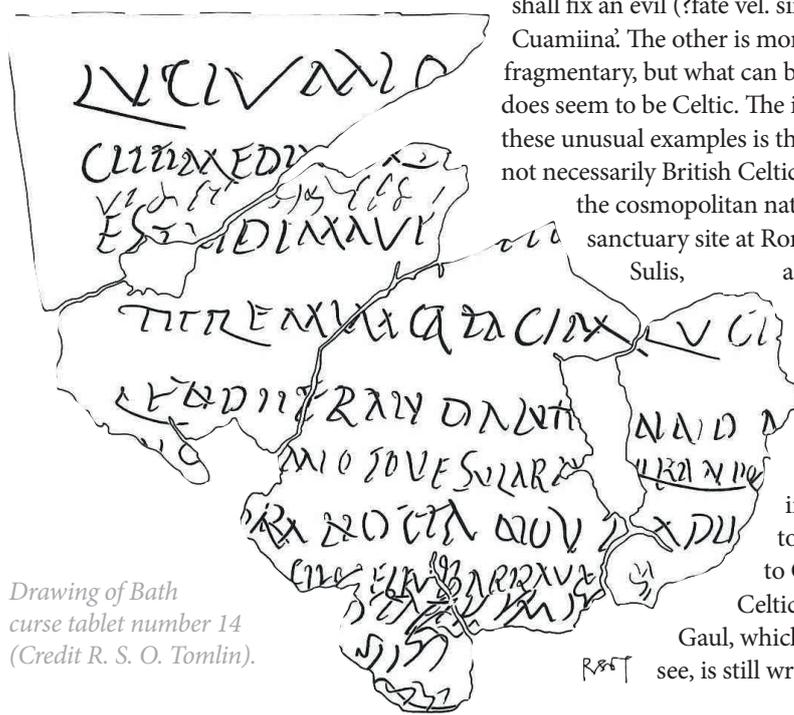
Drawing of Bath curse tablet number 14 (Credit R. S. O. Tomlin).

communities long before the rise of Rome. We find the 'colonial' languages Greek and Phoenician, plus local languages such as Tartessian/South-western language and Iberian, with a particular epigraphic concentration in the south-west from the seventh to the fourth centuries BC.

In the fourth and third centuries the activity moves primarily to the eastern coast, with Iberian, a non-Indo-European language, the main epigraphic powerhouse, written now in two variants of the Palaeohispanic syllabary, an adaptation of the Ionic Greek alphabet and maybe the Latin alphabet. It is, however, in the second and first centuries BC, under the rise of Rome, that the epigraphic complexity of the peninsula reaches its peak: Latin epigraphy joins the 'colonial' languages, Greek and Phoenician; the Iberian language presents its most varied and copious output, and languages, such as Celtiberian (Celtic) and Lusitanian (Indo-European but affiliation unclear), which had not previously been written, make their presence known. Of course this is not only a product of the contact of these communities with Rome — the Iberian-language output still vastly outweighs Latin in the Republican period — but the result of an entangled world with multiple internal and external interactions.

Clearly though Latin epigraphy has a traceable impact, not only in triggering and increasing epigraphic activity, but in the appearance of bilingual indigenous-Latin inscriptions, Roman influence in letter shapes, and the adoption of Roman form and function of epigraphic output, for example the adoption of bronze public epigraphy in Celtiberia and lapidary epigraphy by the Iberian-speaking communities. Far from being a killer, the interaction with Latin epigraphy in the Republican period seems to have stimulated the elaboration and expansion of epigraphies in local languages.

However, from the Augustan period onwards essentially the only language of epigraphy is Latin. Palaeohispanic languages are reduced to appearing as names and some residual features in the Latin linguistic
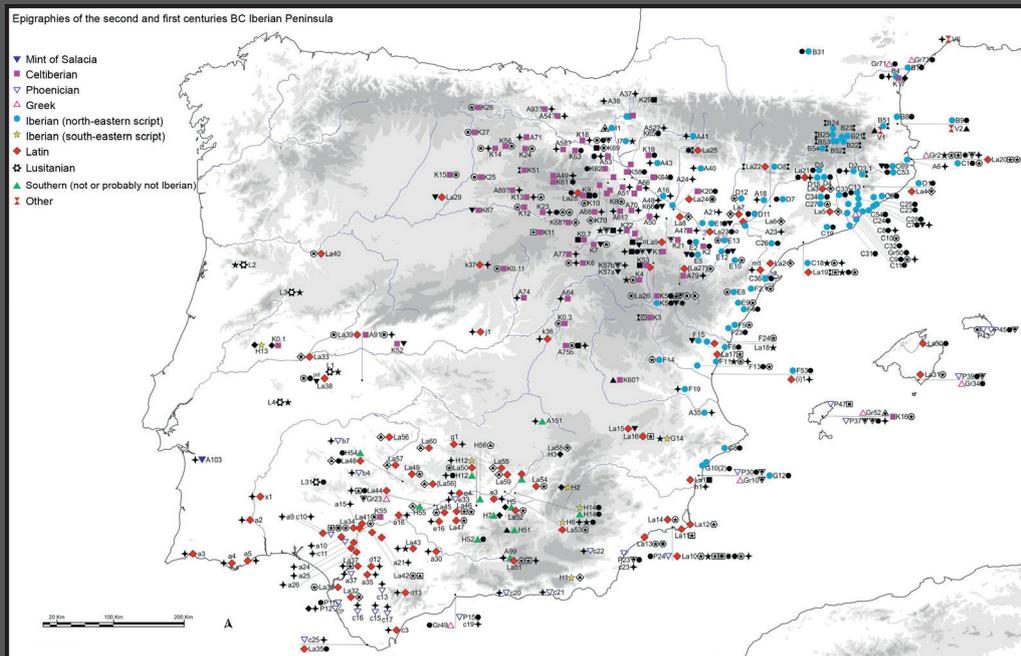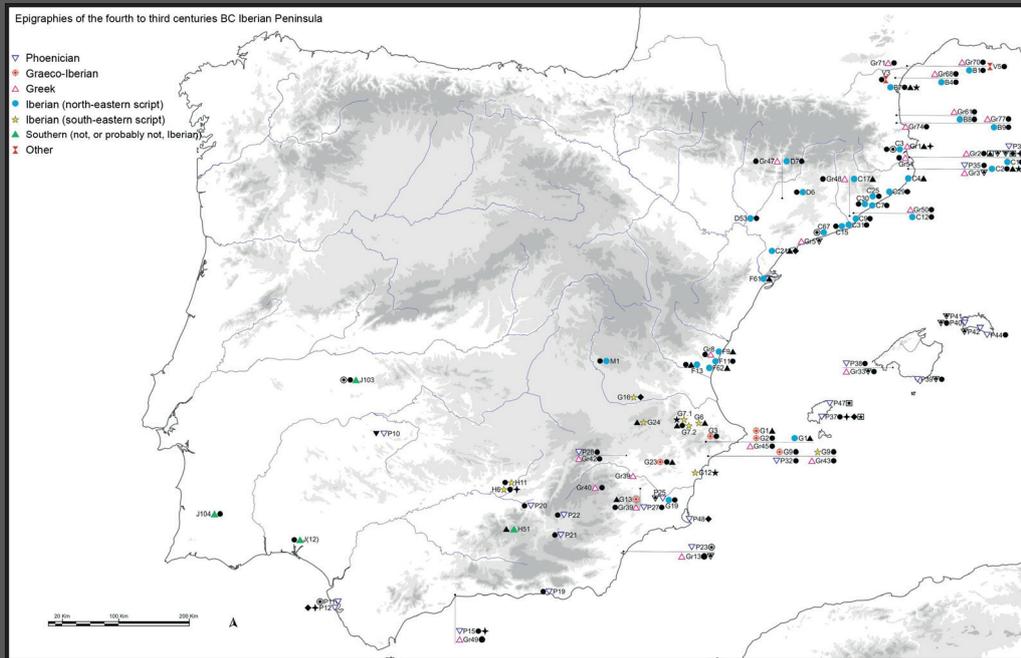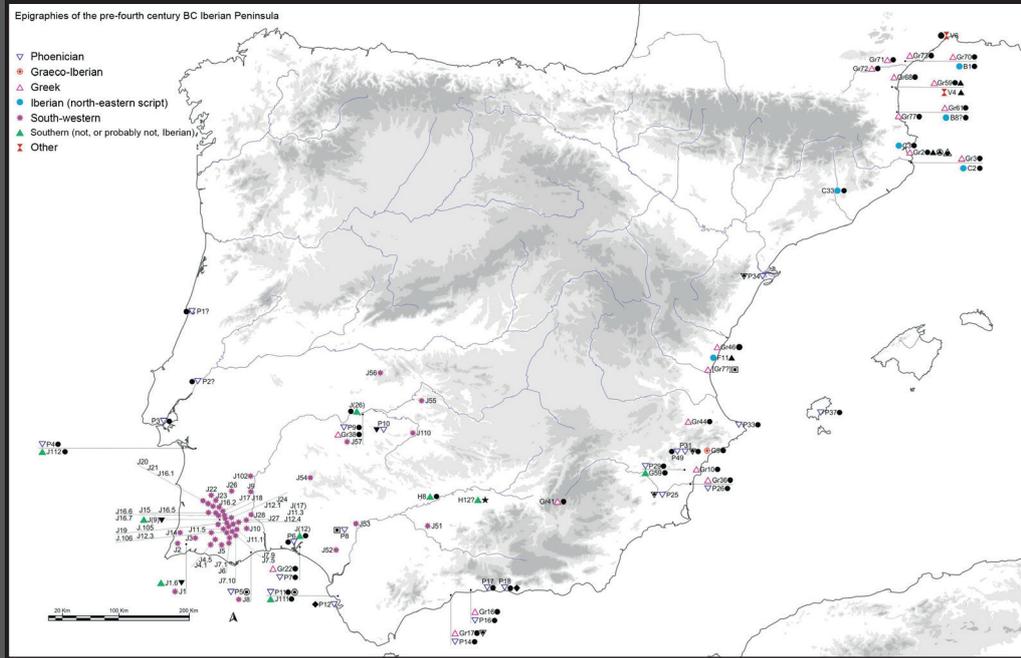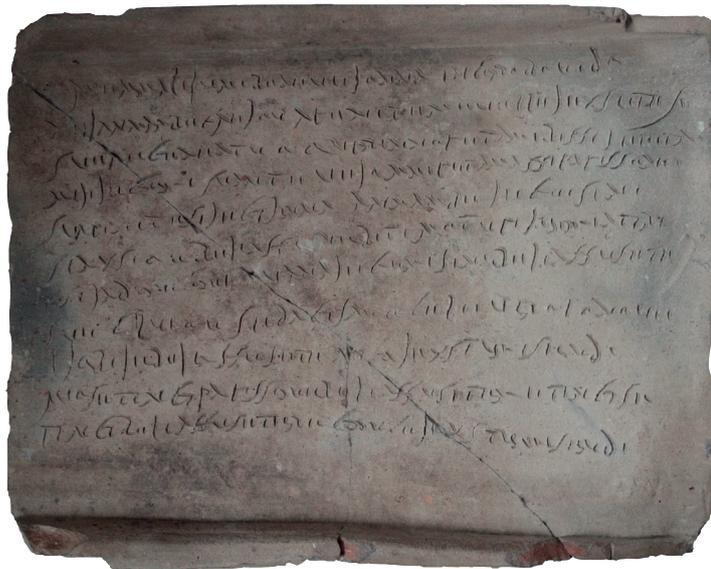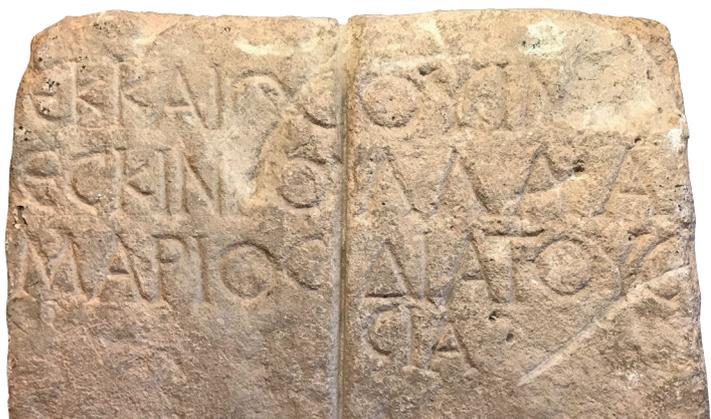
context. Local names can be traced through Latin for longer in some areas than in others, with the north-western and central-western part of the peninsula showing higher levels of indigenous names, but everywhere very few elements of non-onomastic material remain. One interesting exception may be the handful of inscriptions from the western part of the peninsula which seem to retain local language case endings in mixed indigenous-Latin linguistic contexts in the imperial period. For the main part, however, the local epigraphies are killed off with the rapid rise of Latin epigraphy from the Augustan period onwards and, though the languages persisted later in some areas than others, it seems that virtually all the Palaeohispanic languages are eradicated by the end of Roman rule, with the exception of the ancestor of Basque in the far north.

Southern Gaul follows a similar path. In the pre-Roman period, 'colonial' languages take the stage, with Iberian, Greek and Etruscan attested in writing, though the widespread local language, Celtic, and other Mediterranean languages such as Phoenician and Italic languages, would have made up the soundscape of the Midi. In the second and first centuries BC Celtic is written, largely on coins, stone and ceramic, using the Greek script in the lower Rhone basin and in smaller numbers in central eastern France. Traditionally stone inscriptions were taken as an aspect of the 'Hellenization' of the Celtic-speaking 'barbarians'. Increasingly scholars have interpreted inscriptions instead as expressions of local identity which do not necessarily entail any straightforward adoption of Greek culture. Intense contacts with the Mediterranean environment, especially in the context of the rise of Rome, and not just with the Greek colonies, have been shown to have had an impact on the adoption and use of Gallo-Greek, as has increased settlement fixity and the increasing economic power of the indigenous communities. Relatively quickly, though, Gallia Narbonensis loses its local epigraphy and Latin is the exclusive epigraphic medium of the imperial period. Indigenous voices are appreciated only through Latin language. So once again, as in the Iberian peninsula, the local epigraphies are stimulated in the late Republican period with the rise of Rome, but killed off as Latin epigraphy takes a strangle hold.

Gallo-Latin inscription on tile from Châteaubleau (Credit M. Pilon).

In the Tres Galliae the intense interaction with Rome in the first century BC is early enough for local epigraphies to form (unlike in Britain and the Germanies), but late enough that Latin epigraphy does not smother everything. Gallo-Latin, Gaulish written in Latin script, is much more widely spread across the Tres Galliae than Gallo-Greek in Narbonensis and spans virtually the whole of the Imperial period, with the Châteaubleau tablet one of the latest examples known (dating to the third or fourth century AD and containing loss of final consonants indicative of later phases of the language). Gallo-Latin takes on a much larger range of forms and functions than Gallo-Greek and is even attested on roof tiles, spindle whorls and fire-dogs. It has a smaller lapidary output than its Gallo-Greek relation, and many of the stone examples may be assigned to the religious

Gallo-Greek funerary inscription from Ventabren (Credit Alex Mullen).
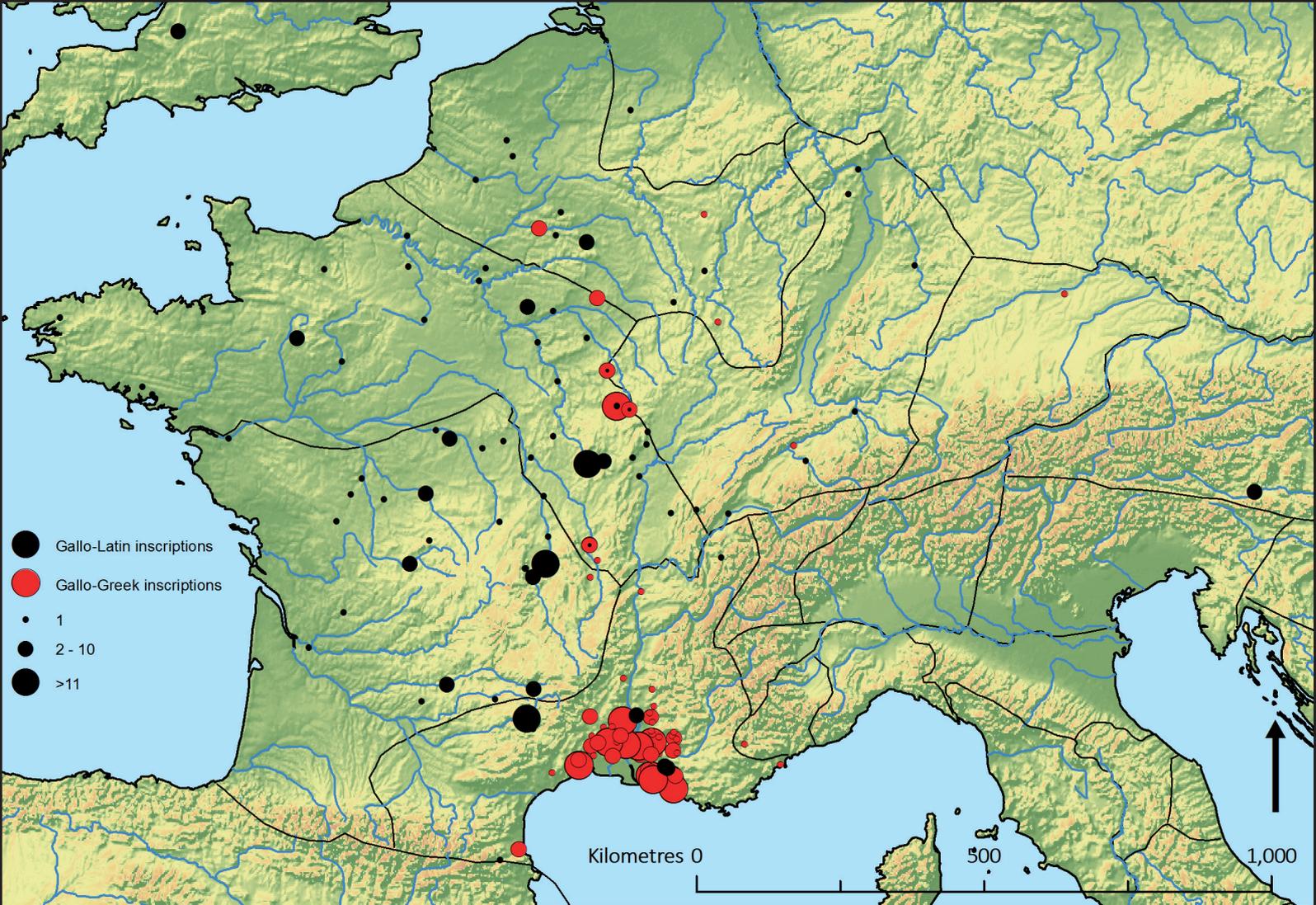
Distribution of Gaulish inscriptions (Credit Michael Loy, LatinNow).

domain in which indigenous languages can be especially tenacious. It seems that Latin has indeed killed off lapidary Gaulish to a great extent, but that the local communities continue to use local epigraphies for a range of ritual and practical functions — not necessarily as an act of resistance to Rome, but perhaps a reflection of multiple identities. How long the Gaulish language survives after the latest epigraphic remains is a subject for debate.

Latin epigraphy functions as a life-giver to local epigraphies in the late Republican period in areas that come under Roman rule earlier, but quickly wipes out the competition in the same areas from the Augustan period onwards. In Britain and the Germanies local epigraphies simply never develop faced with an overwhelmingly monolingual epigraphic habit. Non-Mediterranean Gaul bucks the trend: the local language is attested in an epigraphy (Gallo-Latin) that continues well into the Imperial period. The detail and reasons behind these differential developments are under the research lens of the LatinNow team.

Gallo-Latin firing list from La Graufesenque (Credit T. Estadieu).

To find out more:

On LatinNow: latinnow.eu.

On British Celtic: Mullen in Studia Celtica 2007; https://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/personalnames/.

On the local epigraphies: the AELAW booklets present up-to-date research in accessible format http://aelaw.unizar.es/publications.

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Koussai

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Fig. 1 Gold foundation plaque from the Temple of Aphrodite Ourania, Koussai. Athens, private collection (CPI 324).

For the past five years work has been underway at CSAD to bring a research project inaugurated by Peter Fraser to fruition by creating an illustrated, comprehensive corpus of up-to-date editions of Greek and bilingual epigraphic inscriptions from Ptolemaic Egypt (dating from the conquest of Egypt by Alexander in 332 BC to the death of Cleopatra VII in 30 BC) consisting of some 650 items. In the course of reviewing and updating this material, the Corpus of Ptolemaic Inscriptions team has had the good fortune to rediscover a number of poorly recorded epigraphic documents, previously assumed to be lost. Such is the case of the gold foundation deposit plaque discussed here. It was once part of a group of five or six plaques made from opaque glass, faience, and gold, which bore inscriptions in Greek and Egyptian hieroglyphs, either punched into the surface or written in ink, that were excavated from the temple of Aphrodite in Koussai (Hermopolite Nome, Middle Egypt; Figs. 1–3). This plaque is the only gold item of the group and was published in full for the first time in ZPE 208.

Ptolemaic foundation plaques derive from a well-established Egyptian tradition that was revived during the second half of third century BC when bilingual foundation deposit plaques made either of gold, silver, copper alloy, glass, mud and faience were placed by the Ptolemies III and IV in the
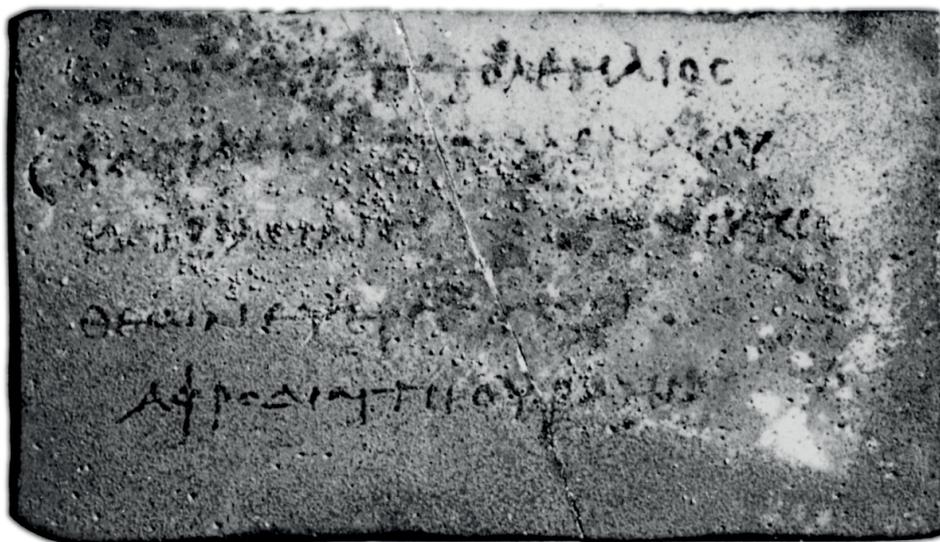

Fig. 3 Opaque glass foundation plaque from the Temple of Aphrodite Ourania, Koussai. Greek text side. London, the British Museum EA 65844 (P. M. Fraser Archive, Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, Oxford).

foundations of sacred sites and temples. Even when they have been removed from these settings, as in the case of the golden plaque discussed here, the inscriptions can still yield vital information.

An epigraphical report, dated to 1931, by Evaristo Breccia, Director of the Graeco-Roman Museum of Alexandria, has hitherto been the only source of information for the existence of this plaque. Breccia transcribed the text without providing an image. He recorded that a gold plaque had

been observed in the antiquities market of Alexandria and Cairo on offer "at a very high price" and that a faience plaque from the same group had been acquired by a French antiquities merchant. The rest of the Koussai foundation plaques appear to have been acquired by private individuals shortly afterwards. One ended up in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and another in the British Museum. The gold plaque, however, became a family heirloom, held in a private collection located in Athens.

The plaque is complete on all sides. It is 10.2 cm wide and 5.3 cm high. The Greek text is arranged in five lines. Letters are punched in cursive form. The text reads:

Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος
βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου
καὶ βασιλίσσης Βερενίκης
4 θεῶν Εὐεργετῶν
Ἀφροδίτηι Οὐρανίαι

Translation: *King Ptolemy, son of King Ptolemy and Queen Berenike, Gods Euergetai, to Aphrodite Ourania (Heavenly)*

The plaque commemorates the foundation of a temple by king Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–205 BCE), dedicated to Aphrodite,

...ery of the gold
...eposit plaque
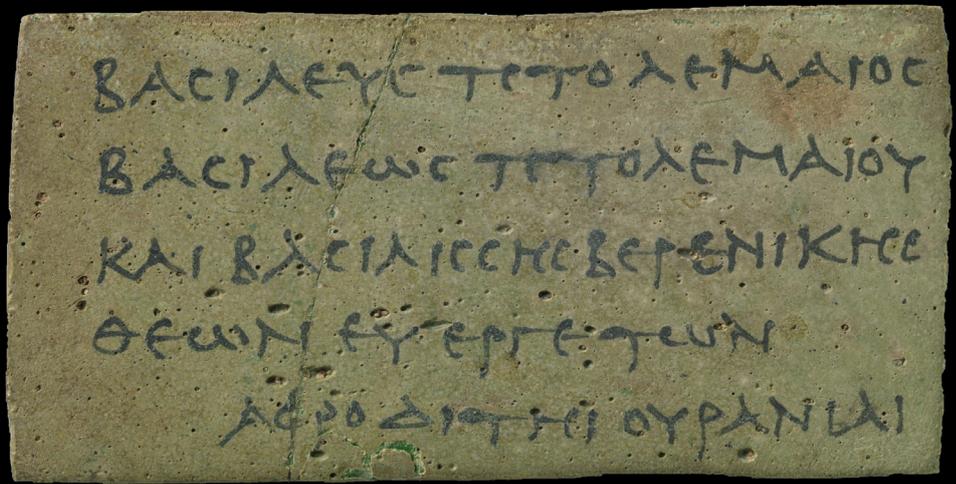## ...e of Aphrodite at
...i, Egypt

...opoulos

Fig. 2 Opaque glass foundation plaque from the Temple of Aphrodite Ourania, Koussai. Greek text side. New York, The Metropolitan Museum 48.45 (public domain).

who appears in Koussai with the epithet Ourania ('heavenly') as the interpretatio Graeca of Hathor, 'who is in heaven'. Indeed, the Aphrodite-Hathor association was widespread across the Egyptian chora. We find a comparable example in the temple of Hathor on Philae Island, where the lintel of the entrance gate to the inner hall bears a royal Greek dedication from Ptolemy VIII, addressed to Aphrodite.

The cult of Aphrodite had taken root in Egypt almost two centuries prior to the inception of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Two temples were dedicated to Aphrodite in Naucratis, the Greek naval station in the Egyptian Delta, as early as the second half of the 7th century BC. This city has yielded a substantial body of material evidence suggesting connections to Cyprus, Aphrodite's birthplace. It seems that dating from this period Aphrodite began to be paired with the Egyptian goddess Hathor.

Aphrodite became incorporated within the Ptolemaic religious pantheon at a very early stage. She played a leading role in the multi-dimensional process of Graeco-Egyptian religious syncretism, being widely identified with both Isis and Hathor. Aphrodite's role in the religious life of the Ptolemaic period was also guaranteed through her association with female members of the Ptolemaic family,

such as Arsinoe II (c. 318–314 to 270–268 BC), daughter of one of the founders of the Macedonian dynasty in Egypt, who became queen of Thrace and Macedonia, and later wife of her younger brother Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Aphrodite's role as the "mistress of the sea" — a cultic form imported from Cyprus — was assimilated with the deified personage of Queen Arsinoe

Fig. 4 Gold foundation plaque of the main Sarapis temple in Alexandria (Great Sarapeion). Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum (CPI 12).

II Philadelphos, who served to provide official protection to the Ptolemaic fleet. It was Arsinoe II who established the festival of Adonia in Alexandria, celebrating the love affair between Adonis and Aphrodite.

The identification of Hathor with Aphrodite is just one instance of a wider process of religious syncretism linking the Greek and Egyptian panthea under the Ptolemaic royal aegis. All major Greek and Egyptian deities would become incorporated in a new religious assemblage, appropriate for the needs of Ptolemaic Egypt's multi-ethnic/cultural society as well as for the promotion of the composite nature of the Ptolemaic

Kingship. The expression of syncretism was germane to the royal initiative to construct sacred buildings not only in Alexandria, but throughout the Ptolemaic kingdom.

At the core of the synthesis between Greek and Egyptian religious practice was the so-called Alexandrian divine triad — Sarapis, Isis and Harpocrates — which became the divine emblem of the Ptolemaic dynasty, especially during the 3rd century BC, during the reigns of Ptolemies II, III and IV. These three kings appear as the founders of several sacred sites, among them, the Great Sarapeion of Alexandria, the 'cathedral' of the capital. The earliest archaeological evidence in the sanctuary dates to the reign of Ptolemy II, yet the main temple structure was built by Ptolemy III. Its foundation plaques were inscribed both in Greek and Egyptian hieroglyphic, and refer to Sarapis and Osiris-Apis as the patron god (Fig. 4). The temple was built in the Greek classical style, incorporating Egyptian elements, while the precinct featured Greek and Egyptian style monuments (Fig. 5). One generation later Ptolemy IV added a shrine to the Alexandrian Sarapeion, dedicated to Harpocrates, son of Sarapis and Isis, and he copied his predecessor by placing bilingual foundation deposit plaques at the corners of the structure (Fig. 6).
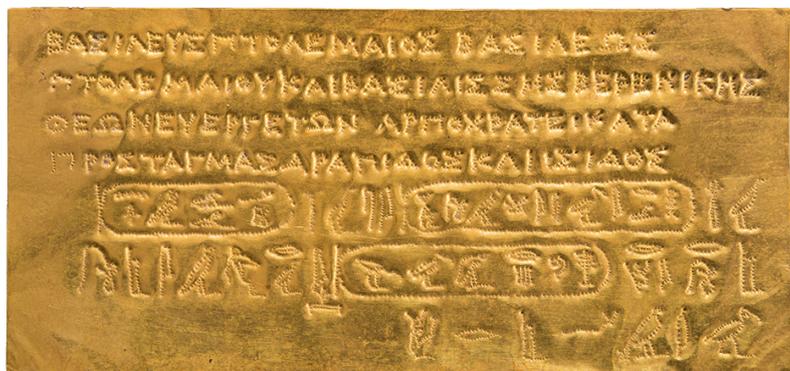
Fig. 6 Gold foundation plaque of the shrine of Harpocrates in the Alexandrian Sarapeion. Alexandria, Graeco-Roman Museum (CPI 18).
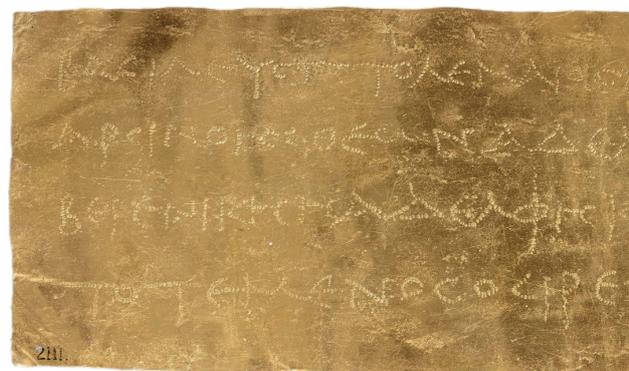

Fig. 7 Gold foundation plaque from a temple of Osiris Ptolemy III. London, British Museum 1895,1030.1 (c

Several other temples dedicated to Sarapis and his family we founded in Alexandria and in the nearby area of Canopus, east of the capital dating from this period. Excavations in Alexandria have revealed the foundation plaques of at least two other temples in the city, dedicated to Sarapis and Isis by Ptolemy IV. In the first case, the King pays his tribute to the great goddess Isis for her benevolence to him, while in the second case, Sarapis and Isis are hailed as 'saviour gods', most probably in relation to major recent events, including Ptolemy IV's victory at the battle of Raphia (217 BC).

In the Canopic region, it is Ptolemy III who appears in the inscriptions of dedicatory plaques as the founder of other cultic sites for Sarapis (or Osiris) and Isis (fig. 7). Another foundation deposit plaque from a temple dedicated to Sarapis founded by Ptolemy III, held today in the collection of Martin Bodmer Foundation in Cologny-Geneva, surfaced recently in a bibliographic reference (fig. 8). It has been suggested that the plaque may have come from the area of Canopus, however, this identification is tentative, due to the lack of certainty about the circumstances of its discovery, and to major differences in the way the text is formulated

in comparison to any other surviving example from the region. Whether it comes from another, so far unknown, temple of Sarapis, remains an open question.

Finally, we should note the recent discovery of another Ptolemaic temple in Alexandria, founded during the reign of Ptolemy III by his wife, Queen Berenike II. The foundation plaques discovered at the site suggest that the temple was dedicated to the famous Egyptian cat-goddess Bastet (also known as Boubastis), protector of childbirth, who became paired with the Greek goddess Artemis during the Ptolemaic period.

Fig. 5 General view of the site of the Sarapeion today.
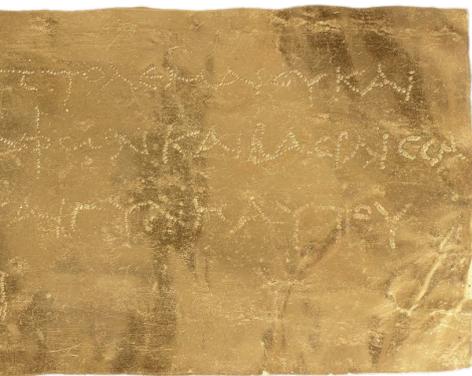
Fig. 8 Silver foundation deposit plaque of an unidentifiable temple of Sarapis. Cologny-Geneva, Fondation Martin Bodmer, inv. Bodmer 22 (courtesy of Fondation Martin Bodmer).

The discovery of this temple is widely regarded as being the greatest revelation of Alexandrian archaeology this century. Hitherto, Boubastis had been regarded an inferior deity, who enjoyed popularity in the private sphere. No one expected that a temple in the capital would have been founded by royal initiative on her behalf. Its discovery shows that there is more to be revealed about the fascinating world of the Ptolemies. Foundation deposit plaques offer us captions for the religious phenomena under investigation, and they help to unveil key features, which we would otherwise be unable to trace.

The placing of foundation deposits beneath temples goes back a very long way in ancient Egypt. They came in different forms, often featuring model tools or miniature offering vessels. The practice of placing inscribed dedicatory plaques on a bed of sand, beneath the corner stones of temple buildings and associated structures, began in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2050-1652 BC), and it became widespread during the New Kingdom (c. 1550-712 BC). After a long period of decline, this tradition was revived and adapted during the reigns of Ptolemies III and IV, in the second half of the third century BC, when the rites for dedicating new temple buildings became increasingly drawn-out, and bilingual plaques came into use. As Dorothy J. Thompson notes in a forthcoming volume from the CPI conference, this practice was abandoned after the reign of Ptolemy IV. Bilingual plaques appear to have been a uniquely 3rd century phenomenon: although temple building continued, no other plaques have been found.

Linked epigraphy
Charles Crowther

Linked Open Data (LOD) is, in the words of the Europeana consortium, 'a way of publishing structured data that allows metadata to be connected and enriched, so that different representations of the same content can be found, and links made between related resources'. Behind the acronym and its associated abstracted terminology of ontologies and RDF triples is a quiet revolution that is steadily transforming the digital world of ancient studies. In the field of Numismatics CSAD's Director Andrew Meadows has played a leading role in the the establishment of a community-based project (nomisma.org) which has created a LOD framework to link together more than 30 disparate research projects and collections across North America, Europe and Africa.

On 8-9 November a workshop was held at New College under the auspices of CSAD and led by Professor Meadows to explore the application of LOD to epigraphic data. The meeting brought together epigraphists and Digital Humanities scholars from Britain (Gabriel Bodard, ICS-London; Charlotte Tupman, Exeter; Valeria Vitale, ICS-London), Europe (James Cowey, Heidelberg; Mark Depauw, Leuven; Pietro Liuzzo, Hamburg; Silvia Orlandi, La Sapienza-Rome), and North America (Hugh Cayless, Duke; Tom Elliott, ISAW), together with local participants from CSAD, LGPN and I.Sicily (Jean-Sebastien Balzat, Charles Crowther, Andrew Meadows, Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, Robert Parker, Jonathan Prag).

What might an epigraphic Linked Open World look like? For CSAD this question has a particular relevance to its continuing work on the epigraphy of Ptolemaic Egypt. There are interesting research questions for the Ptolemaic empire that could be addressed through visualizations of the movements of coins, people, institutional structures and so on if one category of evidence (coins) could be overlayed over another (inscriptions). Is it possible to move to a world in which that is possible?

The November meeting offered a promising beginning. There was general agreement on the desirability of a LOD approach to amalgamation of digital resources and a start was made on identifying the data that might easily be drawn from existing representations of epigraphic texts and exchanged using available vocabularies and ontologies. The meeting considered how epigraphic information could be expressed in RDF (Resource Description Framework) triples (statements linking one object to another via a predicate, with each element having an associated URI), and what vocabularies would be appropriate to define epigraphic classes and properties. A simplified protype ontology was mapped out and as a proof of concept a sample epigraphic edition, taken from the xml underlying an I.Sicily document, was encoded in RDF. This resulted in a neat and well-documented example of linked open data describing the salient features of one inscription, drawing on existing ontologies and using standardised vocabularies.

This is only a beginning, but points to a future in which inscriptions can talk freely to coins and papyri and join a conversation with encoded pots and places and people.

Visitors

Hanging around: the strange tenacity of the tau gallicum

Dr Corinna Salomon, University of Vienna

When the Latin alphabet swept across the Northern Mediterranean during the expansion of the Roman empire in the 1st century BC, the epichoric alphabets of the local populations — sometimes writing systems of considerable age, derived from older literary cultures, far predating Rome's — succumbed to the normalising force of Latin literacy within a few centuries. In the northern Padan plain and the Alps beyond, the writing cultures of the Venetians, the Raetians, the Camunians and the Cisalpine Celts, which boasted epigraphic traditions reaching back into the 6th or even the 7th century BC, were gradually infiltrated by Latin letter forms, orthography and linguistic elements until they petered out around the beginning of the 1st century AD, while in Transalpine Gaul the Greek alphabet had begun to be replaced by the Latin alphabet even as early the reign of Augustus.

Here and there, isolated elements of the old alphabets survived longer than the writing systems from which they were derived, since they served to write sounds in vernacular words and names for which the Latin alphabet had no letters.

One such element was the "tau gallicum", as it was known in Transalpine Gaulish. Named, somewhat tenuously, after a phrase in a satirical poem disputably ascribed to Vergil, the underlying sound, presumably a dental, seems to have been absent from either the Greek or the Latin phoneme systems — being different enough from any sounds that were associated with the letters in either of the classical alphabets to require distinct ways of spelling that allowed it to stand out. However, Gaulish writing was never completely standardised,

and the tau gallicum sound emerges in writing in several guises. In Gallo-Greek epigraphy, the superfluous letter theta (sometimes doubled) could be employed to write the sound, though spellings with simple dental letters or doubled sigma have also been recorded. The Latin alphabet provided no such letter, so the Greek theta was preserved to mark the sound. In the context of Latin lettering, theta was reshaped into a more Latin-looking "barred D" Đ, and appears in numerous Imperial Latin inscriptions throughout the Continental Celtic area, where the relevant sound crops up in local names and a few Gaulish lexemes. Sometimes, double sigma crossed by a horizontal stroke SS is found. Beside these special characters, the tau gallicum sound was written with a wide variety of Greek and Latin letters for dentals (tau, delta, sigma), often doubled, as well as di- and trigraphs, such as DS, in an effort to reflect the Celtic sound.
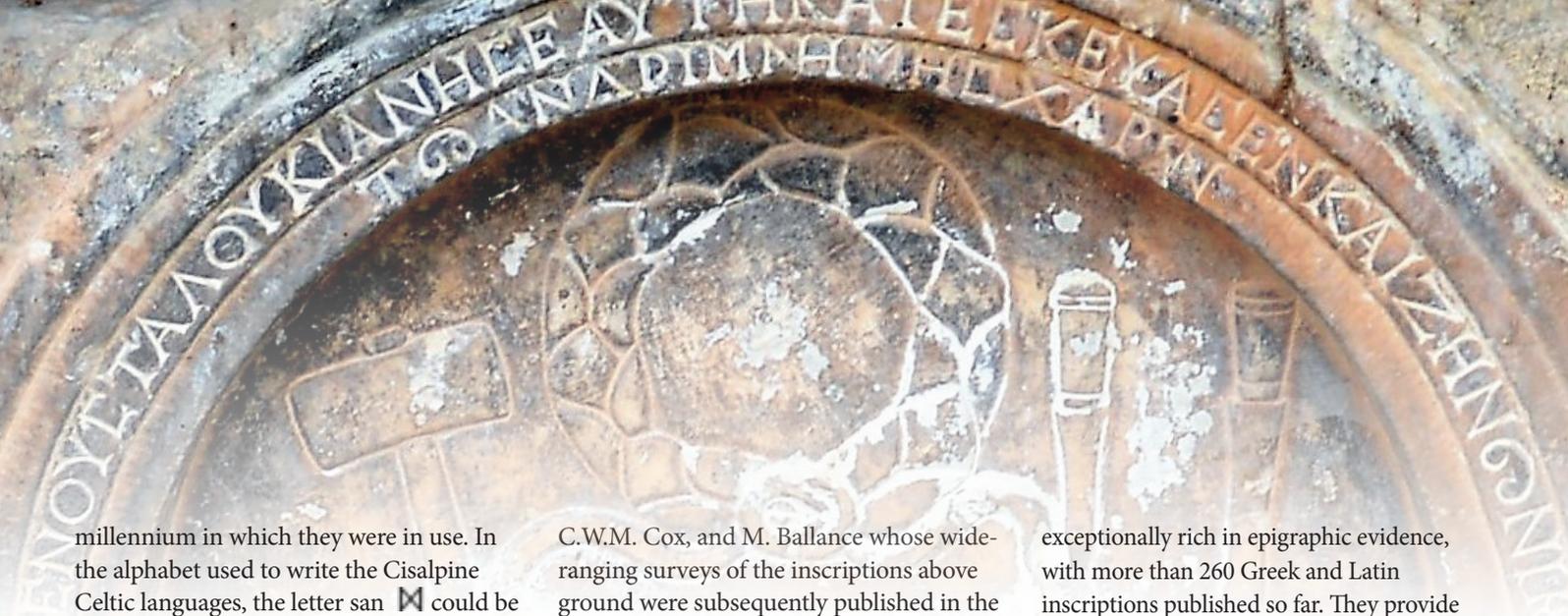
The phonetics of the tau gallicum sound has been extensively discussed by scholars. Is it a dental affricate, or a fricative? What were its etymological origins and phonemic status? How did it relate to Insular Celtic sounds? Do the graphic variants reflect diachronic or dialectal variation?

While debates on these strictly linguistic issues have been extensively published, the details of the graphic side of the matter have been somewhat neglected. Collections of the attestations of the tau gallicum in various sub-corpora — Gallo-Greek, Gallo-Latin, Latin in Gaul, and Cisalpine Celtic — have either been anecdotal, focussing on the clearest or most interesting examples, or imprecise, listing potentially relevant onomastic elements without comprehensive discussion of all variants and their relation to each other.

During my three-month stay at CSAD with LatinNow (latinnow.eu), supported

by the COST-action AELAW — *Ancient European Languages and Writings* (aelaw.unizar.es), I have laid the groundwork for a complete collection of all attestations of the tau gallicum, which should serve to provide a basis for a detailed study of spelling variants in chronological and a geographical perspective. While it is reasonable to assume that certain variations reflect phonetic developments of the underlying sound, most are more likely to be conditioned by other factors. The letters or letter combinations which are used in different times, at different places and in different alphabetic contexts to denote the tau gallicum may yield insights into contacts between languages and writing traditions and the writers themselves. Since I am particularly interested in graphic aspects, I want to see whether the documentary record enables one to the identify separate orthographic fila, i.e. writing traditions passed on through scribal schools or writer communities (trades, cults, etc.) which favour particular spellings of the tau gallicum, and whether such conventions can tell us anything about these traditions' relations with each other and with the scripts from which they originated. The identification of spontaneous compromise spellings may even tell us something about the writers' level of education.

The research on the graphical variations of the tau gallicum builds on my PhD thesis and my previous work, which focused on the epigraphic corpus of Raetic and on the North Italic alphabets. Since the tau gallicum sound is also present in the Celtic languages and dialects south of the Alps, the issue of the tau gallicum is of immediate relevance to a number of problems concerning the spelling of dentals in the alphabets of Northern Italy, which were similar and influenced each other's orthographies throughout the half-

millennium in which they were in use. In the alphabet used to write the Cisalpine Celtic languages, the letter san ⋈ could be employed to denote the tau gallicum sound. The rules which underlie its use at different times and in different traditions may have a bearing on the interpretation of certain problematic letters in the Camunic and Raetic alphabets, namely Camunic san ⸙ and the Raetic character ⸏. We might even reconsider a connection of some of the special characters which were used to denote the tau gallicum with the Runic script's enigmatic letter thorn ⸏. In any case, the tau gallicum problem serves to illustrate that the Europe's early writing traditions were by no means isolated systems proper to their respective "peoples", but were highly mobile and adaptable sets of letters and orthographic rules which could be borrowed, exchanged and reworked to serve the needs of ever-shifting populations.

City of Tolerance. Building a corpus of inscriptions for Akmoneia

Dr Hüseyin Uzunoğlu

For the past decade, I have been assisting Prof. Eda Akyürek Şahin (Akdeniz University) with the task of recording newly acquired inscriptions for the Eskişehir Museum, whose holdings include a substantial collection of inscriptions from the main civic centres of Phrygia such as Dorylaion, Nakoleia, and Midas. At the same time, I have been involved in an ongoing survey of Uşak and its environs, led by Dr Münteha Dinç and Emre Taştemür from Uşak University, which aims to locate, record and interpret the archaeological and epigraphic remains of several ancient settlements, including Akmoneia, Sebaste and Temenothyrai.

Between the 1890s and the 1960s, Phrygia was visited by pioneering scholars and travellers such as W. Ramsay, W. Calder,

C.W.M. Cox, and M. Ballance whose wide-ranging surveys of the inscriptions above ground were subsequently published in the volumes of MAMA. In the past decade, Peter Thonemann digitised the Calder-Ballance (1954–57) survey of the Phrygian region (MAMA XI), but for the most part the epigraphic evidence for studying the history of Phrygia in antiquity remains

Dr Hüseyin Uzunoğlu

scattered in different (and often outdated) publications. Now, more detailed studies are starting to emerge: the inscriptions of Laodikeia (Thomas Corsten, University of Vienna) and Amorium (Christopher Lightfoot, the MET) have been compiled to create a corpus of inscriptions for each city. I should also mention the Swiss epigrapher, Peter Frei, who spent many years working on a corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions of the city Dorylaion, but following his death in 2010 the future of this project is unfortunately uncertain.

My aim is to work on a corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions for Akmoneia, one of the most prominent cities of ancient Phrygia. A number of new finds have been made during recent years, with more expected in the near future. Akmoneia is proving to be

exceptionally rich in epigraphic evidence, with more than 260 Greek and Latin inscriptions published so far. They provide a picture of a city of increasing religious diversity where polytheistic and monotheistic beliefs seem to have coexisted peacefully during the Roman Imperial era. Working on this research at CSAD, I have been able to exchange my ideas with the other scholars whilst making use of the Cox and Ramsay archives and the squeeze collection.

There is scope to do more. Turkish archaeological excavations and field surveys are no longer confined to the coastal regions flanking the Mediterranean and Aegean, but are being extended inland, to parts of Asia Minor such as Phrygia and Lycaonia, as well as many other parts of Turkey. The Turkish government has recently announced that in 2019 continuous excavation will be carried out at twenty sites for the twelve months, including the Phrygian city of Laodikeia on the banks of the Lykos.

The drive to protect regional cultural heritage has been gaining ground in Turkey for many years. But in the present climate, even the members of small local communities have begun to express an interest in tracing the ancient history of their settlements, and they are happy to finance excavations and organize scientific symposia to this end. It is good to see that these projects are being supported and funded by local municipalities and are winning sponsorship from local firms and companies as well. Research on Phrygia is benefiting from these developments. And yet the treasure hunters remain active and illicit digs continue. It is sad to realise how much material has been lost. It makes compiling epigraphic material a matter of some urgency: it is imperative that we record as many monuments as we can, to preserve them for the future.

Oxford Epigraphy Workshop
Trinity Term 2019

Monday 29 April:

Peter Thonemann (Wadham), "Amymon and Megathymos go to Rome (Syll.3 656)"

Monday 6 May:
no meeting

Monday 13 May:
Eugenio Luján (Madrid), "Indigenous influences on Latin epigraphy of the Iberian peninsula"

Monday 20 May:
Leah Lazar (New), "Athenian influence, Rhodian distinctiveness: explaining the late fifth-century Rhodian proxeny decrees"

Monday 27 May:
Nino Luraghi (New), "Land disputes and arbitrations in the Peloponnese before the Third Macedonian War"

Monday 3 June:
no meeting

Monday 10 June:
Martin Hallmannsecker (New), "The Koinon of the 13 Cities in the light of new inscriptions from Sardis"

Monday 17 June:
John Wilkes (Oxford), "How they fixed the pot-holes in the Via Egnatia: IG X.2.2. no. 52 and I.Thrak.Aig E434 and E447"

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, Prof. Andrew Meadows. 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 Administrator and Research Support Officer, Dr Chloe Colchester (**chloe.colchester@classics.ox.ac.uk**).

Circulation and Contributions

This is the twenty-third 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, papyrology and numismatics 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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Cover image: Honorary inscription of Lucius Egnatius Quartus, Akmoneia, 2nd century AD.
Photo: Dr Hüseyin Uzunoğlu.

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