

Epigraphy and land ownership in the Roman world: overviews and methodological reflections for the 21st century

Epigraphy has always played a fundamental role in the study of the multiple configurations that land ownership and exploitation could assume in the Roman world. While legal and gromatic texts are an indispensable reference point for the general study of the legal status of land as well as for numerous questions of economic policy, it is only epigraphic sources that allow us to understand the concrete contexts in which rules and traditions were applied. Documents such as the land registry of Orange or the *tabulae alimentariae* remain exceptional discoveries, however, the study of land also benefits from the myriad of burial and honorary inscriptions, pronouncements of Roman authorities and other documents that allow in many cases to locate properties, identify owners and study their economic value.

In recent years, important new inscriptions have enriched our documentation, such as the bronze fragments of the cadastre of Verona, or those of the late antique land registry of Sardis, the regulation of Delphi or even the first copy of the *lex Hadriana de rudibus agris*. Other inscriptions, such as the *Tabula Clesiana*, are currently being re-edited. In recent years, numerous epigraphic studies have shed light on small and medium-sized properties in the provinces. The last decade has also marked a revival of studies on imperial property, thanks to the work of Maiuro, Hirt and the ERC research project PATRIMONIVM.

The study of land ownership lays at the crossroads of several disciplines, in particular epigraphy, law and archaeology. Few, however, are the scholars able to master these different approaches. Epigraphers, particularly in the context of large international projects, need to embrace the perspective of an ever closer cooperation with other specialists of Antiquity. Moreover, the future of the epigraphic study of land ownership cannot be imagined without the digital humanities. A number of international projects will soon make it possible to conduct studies on a large number of inscriptions related to land ownership and to cross-reference the results with archaeological data. These projects are capable of profoundly renewing the study of land ownership thanks to the analysis of a large volume of data, but, even in this case, it is necessary to start a methodological reflection on how to reconcile epigraphy and "big data".

In this framework, the organisers of the section invite colleagues to submit communications of a maximum duration of 20 minutes and centred around the following themes:

- regional overviews
- overviews for particular typologies of inscriptions
- methodological overviews
- presentation of projects or results of research projects

In all cases, proposals that combine a review of the progress made in recent decades with a discussion of future lines of research and methodological challenges will be appreciated.

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