

**Présentation de section parallèle
pour le XVI^e congrès international d'épigraphie grecque et latine (version en anglais)**

Quantitative epigraphy

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This section intends to present an overview of quantitative approaches to epigraphic documentation. Such approaches rely on a systematic and wide-ranging count in order to quantify precisely either a historical phenomenon known through inscriptions, or the epigraphic phenomenon itself – the « epigraphic habit », according to the famous formula of R. MacMullen – in its chronological, geographical and/or typological dimensions.

When it comes to counting inscriptions (or the occurrences of words in inscriptions) and translating the numerical results into lists, tables or graphs, it is essential to consider the documentary biases which may affect the results and the methodological choices which lay behind the counting. These may have varied considerably, even on the same research subject, from the 1970's to the present day. The development of digital tools and the publication of corpora online have undoubtedly favoured the development of quantitative analyses of epigraphic documentation, but the link between quantification and digital technology is not systematic and is never obvious. Recent studies, which may rely on online search engines, are nevertheless based on the principle of a systematic analysis, framed by a series of criteria, more or less explicit and always open to question.

The discussion may focus on the various criteria used to survey the documentation, to constitute the corpus and to process the data, on the methodological problems that arise and the choices adopted to solve or circumvent them. Some topics are of particular interest in this perspective, because they have been addressed in seminal work and continue to inspire current research:

- the chronological distribution of inscriptions. In particular, it would be interesting to compare the methods adopted to deal with a documentation which is often dated by wide chronological ranges.
- the spread of the *civitas* in the Greek world. This topic has been the subject of renewed interest in recent years, and it would be useful to pool the methodological problems raised by the quantitative treatment of the diffusion of Roman names.
- lexical analysis, in particular that of the honorific epithets attributed, on the one hand, to the emperor and, on the other hand, to local notables. Here too, methodological choices may affect historical interpretation.

The three topics suggested here are by no means limitative, and many other subjects can be addressed through the quantitative treatment of inscriptions. The proposals for papers should highlight methodological aspects more than the results themselves.