

*Civic institutions in the Hellenistic period*

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For decades now, Classical scholars have been devoting themselves to studying the history of the post-Classical Greek polis with renewed intensity. The dynamism of this field of research is sustained in no small part by epigraphy and the continuous publication of new texts and historical syntheses. This is especially true of the Hellenistic period, which saw a massive increase in inscription production throughout the Greek world. Extensive, complex documents such as decrees, laws or treaties attest to the vitality of the political institutions of the poleis and shed light on questions that are also at the heart of public discourse today: What should democratic institutions look like and what threatens democratic practice? What role do law and peaceful conflict resolution play in relation to violence and war in 'international' relations? How can local plays for autonomy hope to prevail against supra-regional power blocs, such as the Hellenistic monarchies or the Roman Empire? How does the globalization of the Hellenistic period, the expansion of the geographical horizon of the polis system and the intensification of cultural contacts affect local life in the cities? These are but some of the many questions now being asked regarding the polis institutions of the Hellenistic period. In keeping with the overall theme of the conference, the section invites scholars to draw an (interim) balance of these and other aspects of Hellenistic polis institutions. Potential topics include methodological and hermeneutic considerations on relevant genres of documents, analyses of geographically coherent polis landscapes – also in the context of leagues and similar organisations – or synthetic overviews of individual institutions across multiple poleis. Contributions that point out hitherto overlooked hermeneutic potential in the epigraphic material or highlight open questions are particularly welcome as they promise to sketch out new avenues for engaging with the institutions of the Hellenistic poleis in the 21st century. Lectures are to be no more than 20 minutes long.