

*Epigraphic forgeries and epigraphic collections:
The «lifecycle» of inscriptions*

In the course of the 19th century, the founders of epigraphy as a science decided to merge epigraphic forgeries and displaced inscriptions in a single section of epigraphic *corpora*, titled *falsae vel alienae*, marking them both with an asterisk. In their view, these two kinds of inscribed monuments were not to be considered as historical sources because the information which they provided could not be used for reconstructing ancient history or topography. The rationale for this choice is often misunderstood among the non-specialists and the existence of these two group of inscriptions in the same category often ingenerates confusion.

This thematic section proposes to challenge the prejudicial attitude towards forged and displaced inscriptions and explore new methodological approaches. We welcome proposals on these two topics from colleagues working on different epigraphic situations across multiple historical and geographic contexts.

Potential subjects for discussion may include but are not limited to the *falsae* as products of cultural history and the relationship of the *falsae* both with the classical past and with the time when they were created. Additionally, theoretical approaches to the taxonomy of forged materials will be welcome, as well as in-depth examinations of case studies devoted to intentional forgeries, copies of ancient inscriptions and imitations of classical models. Attention to the physicality will also be a desideratum, since forgeries are composed from a variety of materials, including ancient monuments and more recent artefacts, but they are also most frequently written solely on paper.

In relation to the *alienae*, presentations of epigraphic manuscripts and archival documents, fresh looks at published sources, and any valuable information on the geographic origin of inscribed monuments will be appreciated. The history of epigraphic collections and the analysis of commercial and antiquarian networks should be used to reconstruct the succession of «epigraphic situations» in which inscribed monuments were displayed across time. Only by tracing back the «life-cycle» of inscriptions, from their present location to the time and place in which they were originally produced, can their comprehensive value as historical sources be fully appraised.

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