

## INSCRIPTA – A RESEARCH NETWORK FOR LATIN EPIGRAPHY

The interdisciplinary research network INSCRIPTA was initiated in 2010 and funded until 2012 by the Tercentenary Fund of the Swedish National Bank (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond). The aim of the network was to introduce a truly long-term perspective into the study of Latin epigraphy. Thus, participants from a wide range of disciplines – such as Latin, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History, Medieval Archaeology, Nordic Archaeology, and History – were brought together, specializing in pre-Roman inscriptions, classical inscriptions, late antique, early Christian and medieval inscriptions. The participants came from Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. During 2010-2011, we held four workshops at the Swedish Institute in Rome, where we studied Latin epigraphy thematically and diachronically.

One of our first thematic studies was the relationship between *Epigraphy and truth*. We discussed the juridical validity of inscriptions as legal documents; the notion that inscriptions sometimes are regarded as more trustworthy than other sources; and inscriptions that make false claims. Study examples were among others the *fibula Praenestina*, the inscription on the Pantheon, and some medieval inscriptions in the portico of St. Peters.

Another workshop had the theme *Self-representation in epigraphy*. One of the most interesting functions of inscriptions is the fact that they can speak autonomously, by lending the voice of the passer-by who reads the inscription aloud, and by using the first person singular. Also in this case, it turned out to be very fruitful to study epigraphic material from a diachronic perspective. Once again, the *fibula Praenestina* is an early example of a speaking inscription (“Manius made me for Numerius”), as is the inscription on the late antique obelisk of Theodosius in Istanbul. Also in the Middle Ages, speaking inscriptions are very common, and some examples from Sweden were discussed.

In connection with the university course in Latin epigraphy, developed by the author of this article and given for the first time at the Swedish Institute in spring 2011, the INSCRIPTA network held a workshop, included into the course, with the theme *Epigraphy and teaching*. The epigraphy course has since then been given for a second time, in 2014, then also in collaboration with the epigraphy course given by Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome.

In spring 2012, we held a conference at the University of Gothenburg, entitled *Rome outside Rome. The Roman Epigraphical Tradition Transmitted and Transformed*. It included a field excursion to the medieval churches on Kinnekulle in Västergötland, where some of the oldest extant Latin inscriptions in Sweden are preserved. Since then, the INSCRIPTA network has participated in a conference held at the German Historical Institute in Rome, *Der päp-*

A. Blennow

*stliche Hof und sein Umfeld in epigraphischen Zeugnissen (700-1700)*, and has co-arranged a conference at the Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz, *Rome outside Rome II*, which will also result in an online publication hosted by the Academy, to be published during 2015.

ANNA BLENNOW

University of Gothenburg  
Swedish Institute in Rome  
anna.blennow@sprak.gu.se