

A palaeographical study of inscriptions from the sixth to the sixteenth century

in Arezzo and Siena

A Ph.D. project in Latin language, University of Jyväskylä

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Research plan

Background

The nineteenth century saw the rapid development of epigraphical studies thanks to the method perfected by Theodor Mommsen and his monumental project of edition of all Latin epigraphy of Antiquity, the *CIL (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum)*.

Based on this work a series of projects developed in several European countries.

These projects cover Ancient inscriptions. The study of mediaeval inscriptions only began in the twentieth century. The most important national editions are the *Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale*, the *Corpus Inscriptionum Hispaniae Mediaevalium* and the *Deutsche Inschriften*.

The situation of Italy was very different because the corresponding work was long fragmented and not well organized in all the regions. Two major projects in this field are a series of studies edited by CISAM (Spoleto) called *IMAI – Inscriptiones Medii Aevi Italiae* - and a study about Tuscany, especially Florentine inscriptions. In this geographical mosaic an important part is left out: the southern area of Tuscany, which comprises the two important cities of Arezzo and Siena.

The proposed project will fill that gap by pursuing and developing the methodological approach of edition and paleographical study of inscriptions from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries in the area of Arezzo and Siena.

The choice to carry out this research at the University of Jyväskylä is based on several reasons:

1. Finland is known for its important epigraphical school, which has always had a relationship of study and collaboration with Italy. Important projects are being carried out in particular at the University of Helsinki and the *Institutum Romanum Finlandiae*. This cultural institution, in addition to dealing with Classical epigraphy, has in recent years also undertaken studies on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

2. The research conducted at the Department of Languages of the University of Jyväskylä approaches texts in their cultural context. In particular, the important book historical projects of the section for Romance and Classical languages, *Books in Transition* (Bit, Academy of Finland 2008-2011), and the on-going *Transmission of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Tralmar, Academy of Finland and University of Jyväskylä, 2013-2017), are characterised by a methodology

taking into consideration all aspects of written evidence (material characteristics, contents, historical and cultural context). For the present project, cooperation with the Tralmar project creates important synergies due to common methodology and subject area (palaeography, codicology and a comprehensive approach to the texts in the historical and cultural context of the Middle Ages and Renaissance).

3. It is a great opportunity to work with Prof. Outi Merisalo as supervisor of this PhD project. Prof. Merisalo is an eminent expert on Medieval and Renaissance written culture. Her recent work also covers Mediaeval and Renaissance epigraphy, using an approach that combines the use of inscriptions, manuscripts, documents and other written sources. Her collaboration with the University of Siena reaches back to the beginning of the millennium; in that context I have had the occasion of cooperating with her in organising seminars, editing scholarly volumes and discussing methodology for over a decade. I am well acquainted with the stimulating scholarly atmosphere of the Department of Languages, in particular Romance and Classical languages, through several teaching stays.

Objectives

The project aims at answering the following questions:

- 1) Are there generic differences in the graphical form of writing between different areas of central Italy such as Tuscany and Umbria during the period between the sixth and the sixteenth centuries? Are there different forms of epigraphical applications of text? If so, what do the differences consist of?
- 2) What are the material characteristics and differences of the inscriptions on stone or marble compared to that of other surfaces like wood or frescoes? Are there textual differences corresponding to different materials?

The research project will also provide a comprehensive descriptive catalogue of inscriptions of this area, covering both published and unpublished ones. A recent study on the subject has already brought to light fifty previously unknown inscriptions.

Research methods and material

The methodology is historical: the project will examine the inscriptions from the combined point of view of the material characteristics and from the texts transmitted. The project will be carried out through an autoptical investigation of every single text (palaeography, material characteristics, textual study). All inscriptions will be photographed. On the basis of an initial study it is possible to estimate the number of inscriptions at fifty for the Arezzo area and at eighty for Siena and its surroundings.

The dissertation will be organized as follows.

- 1) Survey of general bibliography on mediaeval Latin inscriptions in general and that on Tuscan inscriptions.
- 2) Edition
 - a. the inscriptions of Arezzo and surroundings
 - b. the inscriptions of Siena and surroundings
- 3) Commentary on the inscriptions (text, contents)
- 4) Palaeographical study of the inscriptions

Publication plan

A database will be constructed and finally put on line to give access to the collected information. The printed dissertation will contain an edition of and a study on the inscriptions (see above).