

28 May 2021: 'Why were inscriptions reused or reinscribed?'

Date: **28 May 2021, 16.00-18.00** (UK summer time)

Hosts: Drs Muriel Moser-Gerber (Frankfurt) and Aaron Schmitt (Freiburg)

This session gathered four scholars currently working on important examples of epigraphic reuse of edition. Together, the four presentations allowed covering the topic from the second millennium BC up to the late antique period, thereby highlighting the scope and the persistence of the phenomenon.

Conversation partners & topics:

Dr Aaron Schmitt Freiburg	'A contextual and praxeological approach to the study of reused and reinscribed monuments in ancient Mesopotamia'
Prof. Polly Low Durham	'Pragmatic' vs 'symbolic' erasures in the inscriptions of Classical Athens'
Dr Muriel Moser-Gerber Frankfurt	'The reuse of old statue monuments, and their inscriptions, in Roman Athens'
Dr Anna Sitz Heidelberg	'Politics and religion: erasing the pagan past on select inscriptions in Late Antiquity'

Each presentation situated the reused or reinscribed material it discussed in its historical context, while also addressing three overarching questions. These were: How were the inscriptions edited and who was responsible for this manipulation? What was the aim of the editing? And finally, who was the intended public? Like the title of the meeting, these are deceptively simple questions. Amongst others, they tackled the problem of 'erasures' and of the deliberate preservation of earlier inscriptions. They also discussed the visual and material aspects of (reused) inscriptions as well as the mnemonic role of reused inscriptions. Topics discussed also included the problem of 'erasures' and of the deliberate preservation of earlier inscriptions, as well as the visual and material aspects of (reused) inscriptions and the mnemonic role of reused inscriptions.

Together, the papers highlighted the continued awareness and active engagement with older epigraphy throughout antiquity, as well as the sophistication, deliberation and care that characterized many of these manipulations. They also gave an impression of the scope of the phenomenon, and the potential of this material for improving our understanding of the nature and cultural ramifications of ancient epigraphic culture(s) at large.

Finally, we hope that this meeting facilitated scholarly discussion about reused and recarved inscriptions. The high number of participants –this Epigraphic Conversation had 71 registered participants from Germany, the UK, France, Belgium, Italy, Finland, Austria, the US, Netherlands, Japan, Australia, Suisse, Israel and Greece – suggested that there is great interest in these questions, and that there may be other such lively conversations in the future.