# Roman Epigraphy

## Prof. Emanuele Bonis

***Text under revision. Not yet approved by academic staff.***

COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Acquisition of adequate knowledge and skills for the correct reading and interpretation of epigraphic documents, especially in view of their correct use in the context of historical reconstruction.

Knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course, students will know the main collections of Latin inscriptions, epigraphic catalogues and the most important information and updating tools for recently discovered epigraphic material; they will become familiar with the use of inscription filing techniques, from discovery to classification; they will be able to understand the message and historical value of an epigraphic text, in both its unique structuring and its material and expressive forms.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding

At the end of the course, students will be able to read and correctly interpret a Latin inscription, classify it, decode its main abbreviations, as well as formulate pertinent historical-archaeological observations regarding the context of its discovery and the political-ideological message it conveyed.

Students will also acquire the methodological skills necessary to transpose epigraphic practice from Roman antiquity to the current context, highlighting the substantial operational continuity of the epigrapher's *modus operandi* also for the study of modern and contemporary history.

COURSE CONTENT

Learning the scientific method of cataloguing and studying the various types of epigraphic material.

Students will be offered, appropriately translated and commented on, the most significant Roman inscriptions of the Republican and Imperial ages in terms of construction methods and content, as they are autonomous, complementary and sometimes alternative sources, compared to the historiographical tradition. The transmission, preservation and reuse of inscriptions, the main criteria for dating epigraphic documents, the so-called ‘false inscriptions’ and the varied category of epigraphic objects in common use (*instrumentum inscriptum*) will also be analysed.

Finally, an epigraphic case-study taken from the contemporary age will be presented, namely, the *"Savigliano di pietra"* project; this centred on the conception and creation of a substantial catalogue of the epigraphic heritage of a single Municipality, Savigliano (CN), alongside a website expressly conceived to enhance, also for tourism purposes, the considerable number of inscriptions, organised by content macro-type and including also sundials accompanied by mottos of various kinds.

READING LIST

A. Buonopane, *Manuale di epigrafia latina*. Nuova edizione, Carocci, Rome 20202.

S. Giorcelli, *Epigrafia e storia di Roma*. Nuova edizione, Carocci, Rome 20152 (optional supplementary reading).

TEACHING METHOD

Lectures. Guided practical tutorials involving the reading, translating and interpreting of inscriptions relating to Roman Republican and Imperial history, projected with *slides* and collected in a dossier that will be distributed in class.

There will also be a guided tour of the University Library's Consultation Room, which will allow students to acquire a good working familiarity with the main *corpora*, repertoires and other updating tools, essential for any epigraphic research.

ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA

Oral interview aimed at ascertaining, first and foremost, the student's solid acquisition of a correct epigraphic method through the understanding and *full* study of the manual proposed in the reading list, accompanied by the lecture notes. The following will also be assessed:

1. knowledge of the historical lines of development of the epigraphic discipline, as well as mastery of the most important repertoires, the bibliography of the sector and the main methodological issues addressed in class;

2. the ability to correctly read and interpret one or more inscriptions from different historical periods (Republican and Imperial ages), selected from those analysed and commented on in class;

3. clarity of presentation and argumentative capacity, command of the discipline's specific language and accuracy of the historical references connected to the epigraphic documents in question.

NOTES AND PREREQUISITES

Course attendance, although not mandatory, is strongly recommended. Students who are not in a position to attend classes are requested to promptly contact the lecturer. Given the specific nature of the practical tutorials for reading and interpreting epigraphs carried out in class, there is no alternative exam programme for non-attending students.

Prerequisites

Knowledge of the development of Roman history from its origins to the fall of the Western Empire.

At least a basic knowledge of Latin; while this will not constitute a binding requirement, it will facilitate the understanding of the topics covered in class.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=Eng or on the Faculty notice board.