Epigraphy.info IX Workshop (Aarhus, 2-5th April 2025)
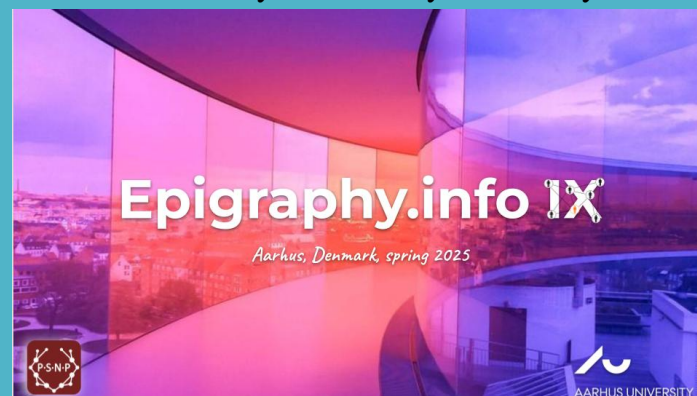
A topography of *aretē*
Mapping out the concept of *aretē*
in Greek inscriptions

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Introduction

This poster is a presentation of an ongoing research project on the topography of *aretē*. It aims to explore the epigraphical attestations of a core concept of the Greek culture, i.e., *aretē (=* virtue, excellence), in Greek inscriptions dating from the Classical to the Roman Imperial periods (5th c. BCE to 3rd c. CE). The primary goal of this project is to create a new digital open-access searchable database of inscribed *aretē.*
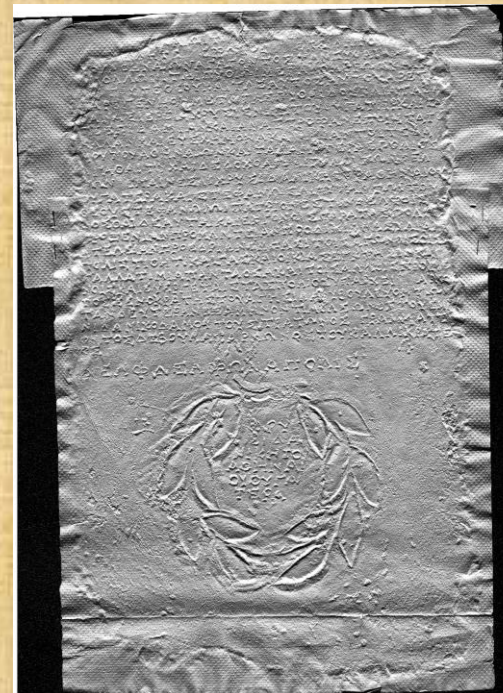
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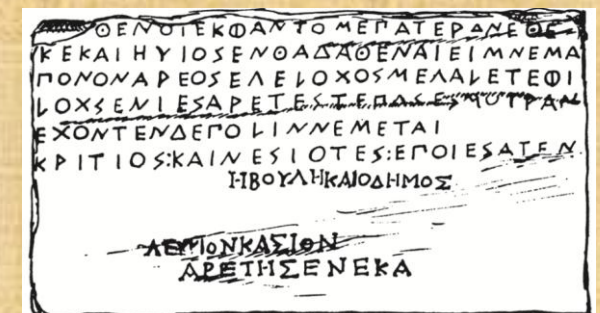
Material & Methods

- Greek inscriptions from the Classical to the Roman Imperial periods (5ᵗʰ c. BCE to 3ʳᵈ c. CE) that attest the term ἀρετὴ.

- Different types of inscriptions: honorific decrees, funerary inscriptions, dedications etc.

Interdisciplinary approach: *Epigraphy, Ancient History, Literature, Linguistics, Digital Classics*

Classification of the material

a) Type of inscription (funerary inscription in prose or verse (epigram), dedication, honorific decree etc.)

b) Geographical (location; other places/geographical indicators)

c) Chronological (date: century; period: Classical, Hellenistic, Imperial)

d) Contextual (function: dedication, commemoration, honorific; names and attributes, e.g., honorands, dedicators, deceased; deities; subjects e.g., family, education, athletics, civic life, religion, war, professional activity etc.; public and private sphere; virtues)

e) Language and vocabulary (formulae of *aretē*)

f) Commentary/Metadata: PHI link; translation; image (photo of the monument or squeeze of the inscription); relief/decoration; bibliographical references; relevant literary evidence; digital map of location

Cross-searching of Epigraphical Corpora,

Digital Databases and other electronic

resources, including the following:

- Packard Humanities Institute (*PHI*)

- Inscriptiones Graecae (*IG*)

- Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (*SEG*)

- *CLAROS*

- *Bulletin épigraphique* (*BE*)

- Epigraphic Database Heidelberg (*EDH*)

- Inscriptions of Aphrodisias

- Attic Inscriptions Online (*AIO*)

- Epigraphic Database of ancient Asia Minor (*EDAK*)

- *KRATEROS*- Squeezes of Greek Inscriptions at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS)

- *EAGLE* Europeana Project

- Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (*CSAD*)

Epigraphic Museum, Athens
© HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE (H.O.C.RE.D).

3523 matches in 3127 texts.   1-100   101-200   201-300   301-400   401-

1000	0.0774%	Attica (IG I-III)
146	0.0583%	Peloponnesos (IG IV-[VI])
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IG I³ 1154   Attica

Πυθαγόρο.
προξενίας ἀρετῆς τε χάριμ προγόνων τε καὶ αὐτῶ /
ἐνθάδ᾽ Ἀθηναῖοι Πυθαγόρην ἔθεσαν /

IG I³ 1299

αρετη   ⊗   All Regions   Search   Concordance   Browse ▲

INSCRIPTIONES GRAECAE

DIGITALE EDITION   SUCHE   KONKORDANZ   PUBLIKATIONEN   ÜBER DIE IG

Digitale Editionen / IG I³. 2 / VI. Tituli sepulcrales / 2. Monumenta privata / B. Monumenta aut Ionicae aut mixtae scripturae
/ b) Monumenta extra urbem vel locis ignotis Atticae reperta / β) Stelae politae, nonnullae etiamnunc pictae / IG I³ 1329

«   ‹   IG I³ 1329   ›   »

Attika   Übersetzung: Klaus Hallof
Demos Peiraieus
Grabepigramm
Kymation-Stele, bemalt
Marmor
um 420-400?

1 Ἀνθεμίδος τόδε σῆμα· κύκλωι στεφα-   1 Dies ist das Grabmal der Anthemis. Ringsum haben
2 νοῦσ‹ι› ἑταῖροι / μνημείων ἀρετῆς   2 es die Gefährten bekränzt wegen der Zeichen der Erinnerung an ihre Tugend
3 οὕνεκα καὶ φιλίας.   und Liebe.
4   Ἀνθεμίς.   4 Anthemis.
5 Ἡρόφιλε.   5 Herophilos.

Key objectives

The research project aims to:

❖ Create an extensive **digital database** featuring information on the concept of *aretē* and the particular contexts in which it was inscribed on stone (or other durable material).

❖ Utilize the latest technological advancements and **digital tools and methods** to enhance understanding the *koine* **of shared civic values, social networks**, and the dissemination of **a language of virtue across the Greek *poleis***.

❖ Launch a digital platform for processing, displaying and providing public access to the epigraphical attestations of *aretē* across **a wide geographical and chronological spectrum** with **historical analysis and contextual information**.

❖ Conduct systematic research on the **various connotations of *aretē* in Greek inscriptions** pertaining to different **types of inscriptions** (honorific, dedicatory, funerary, etc.), different **categories of the persons praised for their *aretē***, and the **epigraphic habit** of the regions and/or the periods examined.

❖ Expand existing scholarly research on **the language of virtue in Greek epigraphy**, starting from the Classical epitaphs to the institution of euergetism and the honorific practices of the Greek *poleis* in the Hellenistic and Imperial periods.

❖ Provide **metadata and commentary** for each inscription of the database; conduct **semantic as well as historical research**; provide **parallel case studies**, and compare with **relevant literary evidence**, e.g. Classical rhetorical speeches, Hellenistic literary epigrams.

❖ Connect the inscriptions to **digital maps**. Provide **chronological timetables** and **bibliographical references**.

❖ Create an **open-access search engine** for simple and advanced searches (building upon previous work by digital epigraphy, such as the *EAGLE* Europeana project etc.).

❖ Develop a **collaborative network of researchers and experts** to foster knowledge exchange.

❖ **Share results** and **disseminate findings** with the scholarly community; organize **seminars for school teachers**, in order to familiarize them with digital epigraphy and provide them with resources and methods that will enable them to **use inscriptions as sources in teaching Classics and Ancient Greek History**.

Why is it important?

- *Aretē* is a core concept of the Greek *paideia* with a tenacity in literature and epigraphy throughout the ancient times.

- The inscription of *aretē* in such different contexts, as in funerary private inscriptions, dedications, and public honorific decrees, shows its manifold connotations as virtue, excellence, and other constituent aspects of civic values.

- The geographical and chronological spread of inscribed *aretē* conveys the acknowledgement and dissemination of a *koine* of shared civic values and of a common shared language of virtue that were employed by various Greek *poleis*.

- The epigraphical attestations of *aretē* also show the social, religious, professional, diplomatic and other exchanges and networks between Greek *poleis.*

- A digital searchable database of the *aretē* inscriptions will allow the performance of multiple searches and the identification of regional, chronological and other variations and patterns across the Greek *poleis* from the Classical to the Imperial periods and through several case studies.

- The insertion of metadata in the database will allow a historical contextualization and an interdisciplinary approach of the epigraphic material (epigraphy, semantics/linguistics, ancient history, archaeology, literature, geography, digital Classics).

Contact

Please, feel free to send your feedback with comments, questions, and suggestions (*especially about the appropriate digital tools which such a project should be better developed with*) to: **antiarg@cantab.net**