

Epigraphy project

Epigraphic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean
and the Middle East in antiquity: status, display,
democracy, identity

prof. dr hab. Krzysztof Dariusz Nawotka

University of Wrocław

Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences

1. The research aims of the project (a problem to be solved, research questions and hypotheses)

This project is concerned primarily with the culture of display of inscriptions, principally inscribed in stone and set up in places accessible to the general public. Most of them meet the criteria of Eck's (2009, 17) *Memorialinschriften*. Other inscriptions, in metal, clay but also graffiti written on walls, will be taken into consideration too if they were meant for display. There is a general if tacit assumption that ancient epigraphy is a predominantly urban phenomenon and this makes even more important case studies concerned with territories with a thin layer of Greek-type urbanization. The analysis of the emergence and development of epigraphic culture prior to the organized Greek presence and in its early stages should allow us to better understand the link between a Greek city, or lack thereof, and inscribing for display. The starting point in this project is the recognition of a very uneven chronological distribution of ancient inscriptions in the period from the inception of alphabetic writing (9th c. BCE) until the mid-7th c. CE, the generally accepted date of the end of antiquity (Mango 2002, 2-5).

The principal aim of this project is to identify the prevailing trends in chronological distribution of ancient inscriptions. The previous study of the epigraphic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean (Nawotka 2020) came up with a number of conclusions. Because of the nature of that study, consisting of a limited number of case studies spread over the large area between Crimea and Egypt, its conclusions will be regarded in this project as working hypotheses only, to be verified on a much bigger material and through applying more refined methodology. The first working hypothesis is that there was not one universal epigraphic habit in the Eastern Mediterranean, opposite to what has been claimed for the Roman Empire, or at least for its Latin-writing part, by MacMullen (1982) and his school, nor there was a plethora of unrelated epigraphic habits (Bodel 2001). In well over 40% of all identifiable cases an epigraphic maximum falls in the 2nd c. CE and the secondary peak falls in the 2nd c. BCE. The issue whether a more clear pattern of epigraphic maxima and minima can be established is of prime importance in this project. A working hypothesis holds that, in keeping with Hedrick's (1999) study of the Athenian epigraphic habit, the epigraphic maxima in continental Greece are earlier than those in Asia Minor, Black Sea and the Levant. This pattern of chronological distribution of inscriptions will be verified in this project, as will be the hypothesis of (some) major temples (Olympia, Didyma but not Delphi) as places with very early (archaic age) absolute or local epigraphic maxima. In order to do so, the investigation will be conducted of epigraphic culture in cities and temple states associated with major shrines, e.g.: Epidauros, Nemea, Korinth, island sanctuaries (Delos, Kos), Olba-Diocaesarea. Temples will be a focal point in this project, in hope that the epigraphic culture associated with them can be better understood in the light of ample academic publications on ancient temples, their economy and relationship with political powers (e.g. Perlman 2000; Dignas 2002; Dignas and Trampedach 2008; Melfi and Galli 2013).

An issue of near universal importance in shaping epigraphic curves of Mediterranean cities is the putative influence of territorial powers, great empires with their established ways of advertising royal might and its universal nature in the first place. In many case studies questions about the influence the Iranian empires (Achaemenid, Parthian, Sasanian), the Roman republic and empire, Hellenistic kingdoms might have on quantity of inscribing and composition of epigraphic output in cities and temple-states within their borders. Striking difference in the composition of the epigraphic output throughout the western and northern coast of the Black Sea between areas which were under direct Roman rule and those which stayed outside of any *provincia* noticed in the earlier epigraphic study (Nawotka 2020) necessitates further investigation. Another objective is to explore the significance role of inscriptions in legitimizing the imperial authority and unifying its territory in different eras, perhaps best noticeable in Iran. A related issue is the range of non-Greek inscriptions, in the first place Latin

and bilingual Greek/Latin inscriptions and the influence of the Roman epigraphic habit on the epigraphic output in the Eastern Mediterranean. The working hypothesis connects this phenomenon with the long-term presence of Roman soldiers, businessmen and officials in select cities of the East. The influence of the imperial epigraphic habit on local epigraphic cultures will be among the principal issues of research in case studies of the Levant and Middle East. Another working hypothesis is this that the so-called crisis of the third century was far from universal in affecting the epigraphic production. This project will try to investigate what factors, apart from wars, led to the decline in inscribing in the last three quarters of the 3rd c. CE.

A major issue to be investigated in this project is that of temporal coincidence and possible causal links between the status of a city and its constitution and inscribing in stone. It will verify the hypotheses of the causal link between democracy and inscribing in general (Hedrick 1999 for Athens) or democracy and inscribing public documents (Nawotka 2003 for western Asia Minor). The previous project (Nawotka 2020) indicates that a link between inscribing and democracy may have existed in the Hellenistic age and that the constitution of a polis was not the only mitigating factor. This project will pay much attention to a possible link between the pedigree and status of a city and its epigraphic curves. It will try to establish whether old Greek poleis of pre-Hellenistic pedigree were more likely to inscribe in greater quantity in the Hellenistic and Roman age and whether the same categories of inscriptions were as likely to be produced by them as by other categories of cities, like Seleukid and other Hellenistic foundations, cities ruled by oligarchs and tyrants, cities directly controlled by territorial powers. This necessitates a selection for study both of pre-Hellenistic Greek cities in Greek mainland, islands and in Asia Minor on the one hand, and Seleukid, Ptolemaic, other colonies of the Hellenistic age, as well as Hellenized or at least Greek-writing cities in Asia Minor, and the Middle East on the other. The working hypothesis holds it that such link appears in some cases at least, like Alexandria and Pergamon, less in the terms of overall epigraphic production and more in terms of categories of inscriptions inscribed in royal cities versus those inscribed in free poleis (Nawotka 2020).

Another important issue to be investigated in this project is a possible connection between ethnicity and inscribing. It recognizes that ethnicity is an intellectual construct which needs to be approached beyond the bounds of the language of evidence (e.g. Hall 1997; Malkin 2001; Hall 2002). In other words, not everybody who commissioned an inscription in Greek perceived himself Greek. This issue has been profusely researched mostly with regard to Greco-Roman Egypt (e.g. Coussement 2016), here an attempt will be made to study often hidden ethnic background in shaping epigraphic cultures. The preliminary research (Nawotka 2020) indicates that the areas, endowed with rich pre-Greek epigraphic tradition, like Phoenicia or parts of Egypt studied in that project, in the Hellenistic and Roman age continued to produce inscriptions on a large scale but smaller than comparable cities in Asia Minor. More important than overall quantity of epigraphic production is a conspicuous reluctance of cities in Phoenicia and Egypt to adopt some of the most important categories of Greek inscriptions, primarily within the field of public documents, decrees in the first place. This project acknowledges the existence of councils or perhaps of assemblies (*puhrum*) in Mesopotamian and Levantine cities and their influence on government and judiciary (Momrak 2015, with reference). It acknowledges also spreading of the knowledge of Greek in Mesopotamia throughout the Seleukid and early-Parthian rule, especially after poleis were established in Babylon and probably also Uruk and other cities under Antiochos III (Monerie 2015), and the usage of Greek in inscription in Iran (Huysse 2014). It will ask whether and to what extent local elites and councils were involved in commissioning inscription. It will further investigate what changed in the Hellenistic age: was there a connection between changing prestige of various languages (Egyptian vs. Greek; Greek vs. Syriac; Iranian vs. Greek; Greek vs.

Latin) and the epigraphic culture, or was there a discernible influence of the Greek epigraphic culture on local display habits, or perhaps the influence of the Macedonian epigraphic culture. It will try to reverse the question too: how the Western (Greek and Macedonian) epigraphic habit brought with soldiers, officials, settlers to the East changed when juxtaposed with the local pre-Hellenistic epigraphic habit. This project will also attempt to gauge the importance of pre-Greek cultural background in shaping the epigraphic curve in Egypt, eastern Anatolia, Mesopotamia and the East. It will try as well to investigate to what degree pre-Greek epigraphic culture was adopted by Greek-speaking people who commissioning inscriptions in Greek. In other words epigraphy in the East will be approached in this project not only as a tool to measure "Hellenization" of local elites but also a tool to establish what were the limits of Hellenization and how the culture and pre-Greek epigraphic habit affected the epigraphic curve in the Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman age. This project suggests as well a new approach in using inscriptions and their frequency for studying identities, self imagination and collective memory in the cultural-political milieu of the ancient world.

This project continues in the footsteps of the epigraphic culture study conducted by the team led by K. Nawotka (Nawotka 2020). Neither that team could nor the one to be created now will be able to cover all of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The only viable way to achieve meaningful results is to sample this vast area selecting case studies applying the methodology principles laid down in the section 4. This time sampling will be much more dense and will cover areas not studied in the previous project. The results of this project, combined with earlier studies of the epigraphic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean (MacMullen 1986; Meyer 1990; Hedrick 1999; Nawotka 2020), is meant to provide definitive answers as to the shape of the epigraphic curve. Of course, it does not pretend to be able to provide all definitive answers explaining the shapes of the curves, however much effort will be devoted to that. Four groups of case studies will be conducted: 1) Greece and Macedonia, possibly stretching to North Balkans, 2) islands, 3) Asia Minor, 4) Egypt, Levant and the East.

1) In the previous project only three areas in the Peloponnese (Olympia) and central Greece (Delphi, Boiotia) were investigated, sometimes bringing more questions and hypotheses than firm answers. They will be verified in this project by moving south and north from central Greece. The case studies will include Korinthias, Argolis, Messenia, Lakonia and Thessaly. The epigraphic evidence from these areas is plentiful. One should expect meaningful results and epigraphic curves from these areas will be helpful in verifying a number of working hypotheses, concerning early epigraphic maxima in cities hosting major temples, links between democracy and inscribing, decline of inscribing throughout the Hellenistic and Roman age, manumission inscriptions as a local phenomenon of central Greece. Korinthias is potentially an interesting case since Korinthos belongs to the number of cities allegedly utterly destroyed at one point of their history. It should be investigated whether the epigraphic production was impacted by the calamity of 146 BCE similar way as in Miletos destroyed by the Persians (cessation of inscribing for a few decades) or in Thebes destroyed by Alexander (short-term diminished inscribing) or if it displayed different characteristics. An attempt will be made as well to cover Macedonia or at least to sample it so that Meyer's (1990) reading of the epigraphic curves of epitaphs from Thessaloniki may be verified. Athens will not be included for two reasons: three major studies of epigraphic culture already exist (Meyer 1990, 1993; Hedrick 1999) and, although they were based on the PHI Greek Inscriptions and the methodology I propose here would produce more reliable results, the amount of work needed to do so would have seriously undercut other objectives of the project. Time allowing Thrace will be included as its inscriptions were published in exemplary volumes by G. Mihailov (*IGB* I-V). Thrace seems a perfect case study for verifying hypothesis concerned with non-Greek ethnic background impacting the epigraphic culture of mostly Greek-language inscriptions, interactions between cities, royalty, empires and native tribes influencing the

shape of the epigraphic curve and its composition in the period between the Hellenistic age and late Antiquity.

2) Perhaps the most important group of case studies are islands, as they were not covered in Nawotka 2020 and barely touched in any epigraphic culture project so far, the exception being Chaniotis 2004 on central Crete in the Hellenistic and Roman age. The criteria for selection of an island as a case study is the size of its epigraphic output, its comparative historical importance, its position within ancient networks, presence of major temples, complexity of ethnic and social fabric. An obvious question to be asked is whether insularity resulted in meaningful similarity in the epigraphic habit in major islands (Brock and Hodkinson 2000; Constantakopoulou 2005 and 2007; Velaza 2017; Kouremenos 2018). At least five case studies will be conducted:

Rhodes and the Rhodian Peraia. Inscriptions from this area are plentiful (e.g. Bresson 1991) and the importance of Rhodes paramount. It seems that some new dates could be offered thanks to the new *Lexicon of Eponym Dies on Rhodian Amphora Stamps* since some officials attested in amphora stamps appear also in stone inscriptions. Various aspects of ancient history of Rhodes have been extensively covered in modern academic literature, to mention only: the groundbreaking book of Gabrielsen (1997) on elite of Hellenistic Rhodes, a book on foreigners on Rhodes (Boyxen 2018), a recent important book on associations in Rhodes, a phenomenon of the Hellenistic and Roman age (Thomsen 2020), and probably the most important for this project study of chronology of inscription from Rhodes and neighboring islands (Badoud 2015). This state of things should on the one hand offer new dates to some inscriptions and to allow placing the Rhodian epigraphic curves in the proper context, on the other.

Kos: the epigraphic output is both diverse and substantial (ca. 4000 inscriptions), while new corpora (*IG XII*, 4.1-4) will assure better dating of inscriptions. Kos belonged to the Ptolemaic network (e.g. Bagnall 1976; McKechnie and Guillaume 2008; Huss 2011; Buraselis, Stefanou and Thompson 2013) and was housing a major panhellenic temple of Asklepios (e.g. Interdonato 2013). Its epigraphic habit should be investigated in the context of these circumstances.

Delos, is the smallest island proposed as a case study, yet the one with enormous epigraphic output, with some 3,400 inscriptions in that some 1800 in *ID* alone. Its epigraphy is complex, dominated by dedications, proxeny decrees and inventories, with a large and early component of mosaics (Bruneau 1974). Many aspects of history of Delos have been in recent decade, to mention only its demography and economy (Reger 1987), business community (Chankowski 2019), ties to Athens (Chankowski 2008), Delos in Mediterranean networks (Constantakopoulou 2017); associations (Steinhauer 2019). This should help with dating inscription from Delos and make the interpretative part of the case study convincing. Delos looks like a perfect counterpart to other great sanctuaries studied in Nawotka 2020: Delphi and Didyma.

Crete, with a particular attention paid to Gortyna, Knossos, Lyttos, Hierapytna, Eleutherna, Lissos whose combined epigraphic output is ca. 2000 inscriptions (Pałuchowski 2003; Bile 2016). Bearing in mind the prevailing view of the unique and homogeneous social and political model of Cretan cities, an issue worthy of investigation is whether the same can be said about the epigraphic culture in Crete (Brock and Hodkinson 2000). The epigraphic culture of Gortyna, whose epigraphic output is 1/4 of the whole island's output, is of particular importance. The case study of Crete will be juxtaposed with case studies of Cyprus because of well-attested ties between these islands (Cadogan et al. 2012), of Thessaly and southern Peloponnese because of parallels in social structures of these lands (Ducat

1994; Brock and Hodkinson 2000; Perlman 2014), with Cyrenaica united with Crete as one Roman province (Francis and Kouremenos 2016).

Cyprus is among the most culturally diverse regions of the Mediterranean, as reflected in the written evidence: Cypro-Minoan, Eteocypriot, Phoenician, Greek, both syllabic (ca. 650) and alphabetic, and Latin, of which the last three will be studied in this project. Recently published corpora (e.g. *IG XV 1,1* (syllabic Greek inscriptions from Amathous, Kourion and Marion); *IG XV 2,1* (alphabetic Greek inscriptions from Kition, Pyla, Golgoi, Tremithos, Idalion, Tamassos)) and works concerned with literacy, writing culture and epigraphy make the task of studying Cypriot epigraphic culture feasible (e.g. Yon 2004; Egetmeyer 2010; Steele 2013; Steele 2019) as never before. A serious attempt will be made to gauge the chronological distribution of various categories of Cypriot inscriptions, often language specific, thus tracing the development of the epigraphic cultures in the multilingual context.

3) A number of case studies covering parts of Asia Minor will be studied in this project. Among them are a few in the western Asia Minor, necessary to verify the hypothesis of the causal link between democracy and inscribing noticed while investigating epigraphic culture of major Greek cities of western Asia Minor: Miletos, Ephesos, Pergamon (Nawotka 2020). Hence two democratic, old Greek cities will be selected:

Priene promises good reliable results because of a new *IK Priene* volume (2014) with some 432 inscriptions. Priene has attracted substantial attention of scholarship in recent decades, on account of its relationships with neighboring Greek cities, Magnesia, Miletos and Samos in the first place, with Alexander the Great and Hellenistic kings (Sherwin-White 1985; Mileta 2008; Thonemann 2012). Extensive archaeological excavations and resulting publications (e.g. Koenigs 2015; Raeck, Filges and Mert 2020) is a point of reference to epigraphic research.

Iasos promises reliable results, as its inscriptions are well-published, with modern studies concerned with honorific decrees (Fabiani 2015), epigraphy and archeology in general (e.g. Baldoni, Berti and Giunan 2013). A factor in selection of Iasos is that it is the only city, outside of Athens, in which the assembly pay (*ekklesiastikon*), a hallmark of democracy is attested (Gauthier 1990; Konuk 2010). This and the well documented history of transition from oligarchy to democracy in the 4th c. BCE makes Iasos a good case study, especially from the point of view of 'inscriptions and democracy'.

Possibly another case study will be added in western Asia Minor, preferably Sardis with its rich epigraphic output and pre-Greek tradition which might influence the composition of the epigraphic output in the Hellenistic age.

The northern coast of Asia Minor will be covered in case studies too, most likely Herakleia, Synope, Amastris, Amaseia, Nikomedia, Nikaia. The cities proposed as case studies differ in pedigree, status and size, ranging from old Greek coastal *apoikiai* to inland foundation of Hellenistic kings from Iranian and native dynasties. Since these were colonial cities founded in lands densely populated by local tribes (Mariandynoi, Bithynians etc.), the influence of the majority people on the epigraphic curve composed of Greek inscriptions (glocalization of Greek epigraphy) will be investigated too. The epigraphic output from these cities is well-published in modern volumes, e.g. *IK Heraclea*, *IK Sinope*, Marek 1993. The principal issue in this area is the coexistence of old Greek cities and new Hellenistic foundations with monarchies: great empires of Achaemenid Persia and Rome (e.g. Marek 2003), and native kingdoms, often ruled by Iranian dynasties (e.g. Erciyas 2003; Højte 2009).

Finally three large areas in eastern Anatolia will be sampled: Kilikia, Kommagene and Kappadokia. The number of surviving inscriptions is far smaller than in central and western Asia Minor yet they

will be included because of their profoundly multicultural nature as Persian satrapies, later kingdoms ruled by Iranian dynasties, Roman vassal kingdoms and borderland provinces (e.g. Facela and Kaizer 2010). Of particular interest is the epigraphic culture in Seleukid colonies Apameia-on-the-Euphrates and Zeugma and that in the temple state of Olba-Diokaisareia.

4) Levant and the Middle East: this project will work closely with P. Głogowski's project "The Development of the Epigraphic Culture of the Near-Eastern Peoples in the Greco-Roman Period: The Case-Study of the Southern Levant (Phoenicia, Judaea-Palestine and Transjordan)," (NCN Preludium 19), in order to cover most of Levant, a part of which (Phoenicia) has already been researched (Nawotka 2020). In this project an attempt will be made to tabulate all inscriptions to the east of the Euphrates, to study diversity of local epigraphic culture and to measure the veneer of Hellenism on the epigraphic tradition preceding the conquest of Alexander by more than 2000 years. Special cases will be Osrhoene and its capital city Edessa, a special case of an important multicultural centre in northern Mesopotamia, one of the very few places in the East where the local language became a language of prestige, from the late-second c. CE contesting the position of Greek, a traditional language of power, and the land with complex history with regard to Rome and culture with interacted with broader imperial themes (Wood 2012). Bearing in mind the unique position of Edessa as the centre of Christian writing and culture, one wonders how its history and religious life is reflected in epigraphic curves, what it borrowed from the Greeks and Romans and whether the western influence prevailed in its epigraphic culture. An attempt will be made as well to draw epigraphic curves for Palmyra, if only a scholar with enough competence in Palmyrene can be recruited to this project.

Finally this project will continue tabulating inscriptions from Egypt and adjacent Cyrenaica, beyond Alexandria and the Fayum (Nawotka 2020). This time Lower Egypt and a few select major sites in Upper Egypt will be included, certainly Thebes, Phyle, Hermopolis Magna with its nome. At this stage it is not possible to give precise numbers of inscriptions in stone, but it seems that in Lower Egypt one can expect meaningful results with some 5000 inscriptions listed by the Trismegistos database. The obvious issue to be covered is the coexistence of millennia-old Egyptian epigraphic tradition and a very strong native culture with the Greek epigraphic habit.

2. Importance of the project (state of the art, rational for selecting this project, arguments for the innovative nature of this project, its importance for the academic discipline within which it operates)

The idea of linking the chronological distribution of inscriptions with political events and constitutional transformation in antiquity was first raised by R. Austin (1938, 25) and B. Meritt (1940, 91). The first to count inscriptions in order to draw an epigraphic curve was S. Mrozek (1973) whose curve, based on counting honorific inscriptions referred to in major history books, showed a maximum under the Severi. From this moment the bulk of research on the chronological distribution of ancient inscriptions has been concerned with Latin epigraphy of the age of Empire. The real interest of scholarship in understanding the temporal distribution of ancient inscription has been generated by the classical paper of R. MacMullen (1982), which circulated the term 'epigraphic habit', now gradually superseded by the term 'epigraphic culture' as more reflective of the social context in which inscriptions were commissioned (Wolf 1996; Beltrán Lloris 2015). His paper is still the principal point of reference for any study of the chronological distribution of ancient inscriptions with a lasting contribution of drawing attention to the very uneven chronological distribution of inscriptions as well as promoting the idea of inscriptions as cultural phenomena and not exclusively as sources of text. The

basic premises of MacMullen's paper were: exclusive concentration on epitaphs from just seven cities in Roman Africa, model-based dating used to tabulate inscription onto 20-year brackets, belief in the existence of a single principle explaining the shape of the epigraphic curve, and his willingness to extrapolate the result of his study into all of the Roman Empire. MacMullen and the epigraphers following in his footsteps argue that their epigraphic curves coincide with and reflect changes within Roman society, in particular reflecting the coveted Roman inheritance law that was spreading throughout the provinces, resulting in a growing number of Roman citizens (Meyer 1990).

There seems to be a broad agreement that there was a pattern among the chronological distribution of (Latin) inscriptions from the early Empire. MacMullen, in promoting this idea, relied on the pattern of the chronological distribution of epitaphs, established by J.-M. Lassère (1973) for seven cities in Roman Africa. To a degree this was confirmed by Meyer's (1990) epigraphic curve for Thessaloniki, but not by other curves, not even within other Latin-writing provinces. The graph representing epitaphs from Lugdunum (Meyer 1990) shows a peak much earlier than in Africa, with a steep decline almost a century after decline was identified in Africa. Also, the curve created by MacMullen (1986) on the basis of dated inscriptions from Lydia is very different than the model-based curve for Africa. Also the curve for epitaphs from Athens, drawn from an unusually large amount of evidence (8135 with 7480 dated) from between the fifth c. BCE and the fourth c. CE (Meyer 1990), does not match any other epigraphic curve, even if it shows a local maximum in the end of the second c. CE. The curves for Sicily, drawn by Prag (2002), show a nuanced picture. The first, combining all datable inscriptions, i.e. Punic, Greek, Latin and others, has two peaks: in the archaic age and in the fourth c. CE, when, according to some studies, epigraphy almost disappeared. The graph which splits the total output into three curves, each reflecting one language, shows the strength of Punic inscriptions only in the archaic age, a bell-shaped Latin curve with a peak in the second c. CE, and a Greek curve with three peaks, in the sixth c. BCE, a in the second c. BCE and one in the fourth c. CE. The analysis of the curves resulting from the past epigraphic studies does not allow therefore for identifying one pattern of chronological distribution of inscription in the Early Empire, let alone in antiquity *sensu largo*. Another theory explaining the epigraphic maximum in the second half of the second c. CE, of G. Woolf (1996) to whom inscriptions were cut in order to 'fix an individual's place within history, society and the cosmos', was criticized (Pleket 1999) for misapplying psychology to epigraphy and for failing to explain the dropping epigraphic curve in the age of anxiety in the first half of the third c.

MacMullen and his school rely heavily on statistical model in dating inscriptions in order to move around the very low number of securely dated Latin inscriptions. His method would be valid on condition of a more or less equal distribution of inscriptions per year in each of MacMullen's categories. It is impossible to say whether this assumption is correct since the sample of precisely datable epitaphs in Roman Africa is much too small (two inscriptions only datable to a year) to produce any sound statistical analysis (Cherry 1995). The surviving epigraphic output from the East seems to paint a strikingly different picture than that resulting from MacMullen's model (Nawotka 2020).

For a long time the epigraphic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean attracted much more modest attention of scholarship. Apart from MacMullen's (1986) short paper on Roman inscriptions in Lydia, one has to mention Hedrick's (1999) study of the epigraphic curve in Athens and Nawotka 2003 on public documents in western Asia Minor. All these papers are not model-based but rather rely on counting dated inscriptions, hence their results are very much unlike those on the epigraphic habit in the West of the Roman empire. The same principle was applied in the recent and by far the biggest study of the epigraphic culture in the East (Nawotka 2020), based on counting over 32,000

inscriptions. This project proposes to count inscriptions in the broadest area so far aiming at definite answers as to the epigraphic culture in the East.

By adopting the Mediterranean perspective this project wants to overcome particular approaches often typical for scholars whose research concentrates on one area or language, like Crete or inscriptions in Phoenician. Some tend to overstate local peculiarities not realizing fully that the phenomena they describe appear in a broader context. E.g., however much this project appreciates books of P. Steele (2013, 2019) and her attempt to tabulate the chronological distribution of what she calls inscriptions from Cyprus, it has to point to lack of precision in the field of Cypriot studies in defining inscription. To her and many scholars dealing with Semitic sources, inscription is any piece of writing on durable material with no recognition of differences between inscriptions in stone displayed in public, clay *bullae*, pottery stamps and ostraca. Focusing on a single epigraphic landscape does not allow scholars to tell the differences between features that are peculiar and specific for a certain region and those that are common and shared all throughout the ancient Mediterranean. Furthermore, in some fields the existing research infrastructure does not allow to easily examine the epigraphic landscape in a comprehensive manner this project postulates, e.g. the *IGLS* volumes include only the Greek and Latin evidence from Syria, while for the contemporary Semitic evidence originating from the same areas one need to look for other corpora (there are some exceptions, e.g. Aramaic texts in bilingual and trilingual inscriptions from Palmyra published in *IGLS XVII/1*). Within this project it is necessary then to take up an additional effort to overcome this research particularism: facing and conquering these difficulties creates an opportunity to address broader questions and opens new horizons for the entire research field and Ancient studies in general.

3. the guiding idea and work plan (general work plan, detailed research questions, results of introductory research, risk analysis)

This project will tabulate inscriptions over a vast area in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East in order to draw epigraphic curves, study the epigraphic culture in antiquity and pursue a number of tasks on historical interpretation of data. In some places at least inscriptions will be counted and classified separately for earlier and later antiquity. This approach stems from the fact some categories of inscription completely (decrees) or almost completely (*tituli honorarii*, pagan dedications) expired after the third c. CE, while new, mostly Christian, categories of inscriptions came into existence, like Christian votive inscriptions, acclamations. An effort will be made to measure how Christian charity is reflected in late-antique epigraphy and how it compares to euergetism prominent in epigraphic production of the Hellenistic and early Imperial age (Horden 2012).

The general research plan consists of 6 items:

- 1) identifying all pertinent epigraphic material in every case study area. This will be done on the bases of epigraphic corpora, specialized journals (*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, *Année Epigraphique*, *Bulletin Epigraphique*) data bases (PHI Greek Inscriptions, Trismegistos, EDH, EDCS), other journals specific to each area in question;

- 2) establishing dates of inscriptions. In majority of cases the dates this project will accept the dates taken from epigraphic corpora and data bases, trying, nevertheless to verify them and occasionally to propose plausible dates of inscriptions not dated by editors;
- 3) tabulating inscriptions by various categories, some case-study-specific, in 25- and 100- year brackets;
- 4) based on tabulated inscriptions, drawing epigraphic curves: for each case study, for regions, for all Eastern Mediterranean and for the Middle East, for inscriptions in various languages, for some categories of inscriptions throughout all areas studied;
- 5) writing interpretative part: explaining the shapes of epigraphic curves and searching for answers concerning the epigraphic culture or cultures in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East;
- 6) using epigraphic curves in study of select historical issues.

Introductory research of the epigraphic culture in the Eastern Mediterranean was conducted within my previous project; it was published as Nawotka 2020. The results of that projects are presented in section one as working hypotheses in this project.

Two principal risks may be identified at this stage. The first is concerned with the nature of evidence, the second with the way how any research team in NCN grants has to be build. The number of surviving, let alone datable, inscriptions from the eastern Anatolia and the lands to the East of the Euphrates is quite low, in fact it may be too low to allow drawing proper epigraphic curves by quarter centuries. If this is the case, inscriptions from these areas will be counted in 100-year brackets which will produce curves of lesser value which will, nevertheless, provide some information on the epigraphic culture in the Middle East. The second risk is related to building a research team which ideally has to be composed of trained epigraphers, fluent in ancient Greek and Latin, some of them familiar with major languages of the East (Aramaic, Syriac, Phoenician, Egyptian in its Late Period varieties, Old and Middle Persian, perhaps Palmyrene), preferably with some experience in quantitative epigraphic study. On top of that there are some additional restrictions imposed by the grant-giving agency on who can and who cannot be hired. Bearing in mind that the number of people who meet these requirements is very limited, I anticipate shortage of fully qualified candidates. There are two ways to handle this risk. One is to advertise positions vigorously and I intend to do so. The second one is to hire young people who do not meet all criteria and to offer them training on the job - in this case a preference will be given to candidates with a working knowledge of languages of the Ancient Near East who will be trained to do epigraphic research. Although section 1 of the project description lists all desirable case-studies, the final decision as to which of them will be covered will be made once the research team is recruited. Some modification to the list of case-studies is possible based on expertise of the members of the research team, but only to such a degree which will not affect adversely the aims of the project.

4. methodology (how research will be conducted? methods, techniques and study tools, methods of analysing and presenting results, equipment used in this project)

The project will identify inscriptions throughout select regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, establish their dates and tabulate them in 25- and 100- year brackets. It will then draw a number of graphs representing epigraphic curves. Inscriptions will be tabulated separately for the period between the beginning of inscribing until ca. 300 CE and for late antiquity (from ca. 300 until

ca. 650 CE) because sampling of the Eastern Mediterranean epigraphic output (Nawotka 2020) clearly shows that different categories of inscriptions were typical for earlier and for later antiquity. Inscriptions will be tabulated within a few categories, in both broad periods including epitaphs, *tituli honorarii* (including *tituli agonistici*), dedications and votive inscriptions, royal and imperial letters. For the earlier antiquity decrees and other local legislative acts will be tabulated, for the later antiquity other specific categories of Christian inscriptions (Schreibleiter-Gail 2014; Sironen 2018). In addition each case study may have its own category of inscriptions, specific to the region. Surely the majority of inscriptions in the territory to be investigated are in Greek, yet this project will take into account linguistic diversity of this broad area in antiquity, tabulating inscriptions in Latin, Egyptian, Aramaic, Syriac, Iranian languages, among others. It will show in graphs the linguistic composition of the epigraphic output of the areas covered in the case studies.

This project will attempt to count all ancient inscriptions from a given area, attributing an inscription to the city in which it originated, even if it was commissioned by a foreigner or foreign entity. Inscriptions found areas other than an actual city but in a place controlled by the polis will be counted together with those found within the city walls. In keeping with the epigraphic convention *instrumentum domesticum* and graffiti painted on or cut into walls, stone or rock will be included. *Diplomata militaria* will be excluded as they represent the epigraphic culture of Rome, not of places where they were found. The largest category of inscriptions excluded from this project are pottery inscriptions. The place where pottery (or fragments of pottery) is eventually found often differs from its place of origin, thus inscribed pottery says nothing about the epigraphic habit of the place where it was unearthed. Then, inscriptions on tiles and amphorae were never meant for public display. Furthermore, the sheer quantity of pottery inscriptions (some 200,000 from Rhodes alone) and stamps on tiles would, in some places, distort the overall picture of the local epigraphic habit. Presenting material in 25-year brackets is akin to earlier studies (e.g. Le Bohec 1989). This division of material stems from the desire to interpret minima and maxima of the epigraphic curve with reference to historical events evolving within a generation, or within the reign of a king or emperor who might have affected epigraphic production in a particular city. In the case of the Middle East this project intends to break the established habit of publishing inscriptions by the principle of language and not of geographical provenance, as if people who commissioned inscriptions in Greek and Syriac/Aramaic etc. belonged to different communities, not connected to each other. This project professes an opposite assumption that people in many parts of the ancient world lived in multiethnic communities and their choices of language selected for inscribing were complex, transgressing the ethnic barriers and changing in time. The epigraphic curves representing inscriptions in various languages used in one area should contribute to our understanding of the processes of ethnic change and *longue durée* of pre-Greek cultures.

Similar as earlier projects of this nature, it will count only published inscriptions, with no attempt to inspect stones. Although in principle desirable, inspecting stones would be a monumental task which would have taken many years, in practical terms rendering this project undoable. Taking this attitude means also that in most cases the project will accept the dates established by the editors or epigraphers who re-studied the published inscriptions. The dates will be verified on internal (text-related) criteria only, using various prosopographies, and dictionaries, like the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*. In some cases archaeological evidence will be used to narrow down the dates of inscriptions. An effort will be made to estimate the chronological distribution of inscriptions which cannot be dated, applying the weighting method developed by Van Beek and Depauw (2013) for Egyptian evidence, i.e. mostly for papyri. This project realizes that this method estimates numbers, not providing exact figures, hence the same credence will not be given to the results obtained from Van Beert's and Depauw's model as to

the outcome of counting datable inscriptions. The results will be juxtaposed nevertheless to shed more light on historical processes which stood behind the particular shapes of epigraphic curves.

The most important methodological principle in this project is counting inscriptions by hand. This does not exclude accessing popular databases, like PHI Greek Inscriptions, Trismegistos, EDH, EDCS. Yet the project will not resort to mechanical counting inscriptions using these bases because they contain unknown number of doublets and triplets which can be sifted out only by a trained epigrapher who actually reads inscriptions making sure that each and every one is counted only once. This of course makes the whole process of tabulating inscriptions longer but assures much more reliable results than it would have been possible if the project relied on electronic databases only. Every effort will be made to peruse corpora, epigraphic and other journals.

5. list of academic literature pertaining to this project (a list of all positions listed in the project description)

R.P. Austin, *The Stoichedon Style in Greek Inscriptions*, London 1938.

N. Badoud, *Le Temps de Rhodes. Une chronologie des inscriptions de la cité fondée sur l'études des ses institutions*, München 2015.

R.S. Bagnall, *The Administration of Ptolemaic Possesions outside Egypt*, Leiden 1976.

D. Baldoni, F. Berti and M. Giuman (eds.), *Iasos e il suo territorio. Atti del convegno internazionale per i cinquanta anni della Missione archeologica italiana Istanbul, 26-28 febbraio 2011*, Rome 2013.

F. Beltrán Lloris, "The 'Epigraphic Habit' in the Roman World", in: C. Bruun and J. Edmondson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*, Oxford 2015, 131–148.

M. Bile, *La Crète*, Nancy and Paris 2016.

J. Bodel, "Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian", in: J. Bodel (ed.), *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions*, London and New York 2001, 1-56.

B. Boyxen, *Fremde in der hellenistischen Polis Rhodos. Zwischen Nähe und Distanz*, Berlin 2018.

A. Bresson, *Recueil des inscriptions de la Perée rhodienne (Perée intégrée)*, Besançon 1991.

R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens: Varieties of Political Organization and Community in Ancient Greece*, Oxford 2000.

P. Bruneau, *Mosaics on Delos*, Paris 1974.

K. Buraselis, M. Stefanou and D.J. Thompson (eds.), *The Ptolemies, the Sea and the Nile: Studies in Waterborne Power*, Cambridge 2013.

G. Cadogan et al. (eds.), *Parallel Lives: Ancient Island Societies in Crete and Cyprus, Papers Arising from the Conference in Nicosia organised by the British School at Athens, the University of Crete and the University of Cyprus, in November–December 2006*, London 2012.

- A. Chaniotis, "From Communal Spirit to Individuality: The Epigraphic Habit in Hellenistic and Roman Crete", in: M. Livadiotti and I. Simiakaki (eds.), *Creta romana e protobizantina: atti del congresso internazionale (Iraklion, 23-30 settembre 2000)*, Padova 2004, 75-87.
- V. Chankowski, *Athènes et Délos à l'époque classique. Recherches sur l'administration du sanctuaire d'Apollon délien*, BEFAR 2008.
- V. Chankowski, *Parasites du dieu. Comptables, financiers et commerçants dans la Délos hellénistique*, BEFAR 2019.
- D. Cherry, "Re-Figuring the Roman Epigraphic Habit", *AHB* 3/4 (1995): 143–156.
- C. Constantakopoulou, "Proud to Be an Islander: Island Identity in Multi-Polis Islands in the Classical and Hellenistic Aegean", *MHR* XX (2005): 1–34.
- C. Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of the Islands: Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire, and the Aegean World*, Oxford 2007.
- C. Constantakopoulou, *Aegean Interactions: Delos and its Networks in the Third Century*, Oxford 2017.
- S. Coussement, *'Because I am Greek': Polyonymy as an Expression of Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt*, Leuven 2016.
- B. Dignas, *Economy of the Sacred in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford 2002.
- B. Dignas and K. Trampedach, *Practitioners of the Divine: Greek Priests and Religious Officials from Homer to Heliodoros*, Washington 2008.
- J. Ducat, *Les pénestes de Thessalie*, Paris 1994.
- W. Eck, "The Presence, Role and Significance of Latin in the Epigraphy and Culture of the Roman Near East", in: H. M. Cotton, J. J. Price and D. J. Wasserstein (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: Cultural and Linguistic Change in the Roman Near East*, Cambridge 2009, 15-42.
- M. Egetmeyer, *Le dialecte grec ancien de Chypre*, Berlin 2010.
- D.B. Erciyas, *Wealth, Aristocracy and Royal Propaganda Under the Hellenistic Kingdom of the Mithradatids in the Central Black Sea Region of Turkey*, Leiden 2006.
- R. Fabiani, *I decreti onorari di Iasos. Cronologia e storia*, Munich 2015.
- M. Facella and T. Kaizer (eds.), *Kingdoms and Principalities in the Roman Near East*, Stuttgart 2010.
- J. Francis and A. Kouremenos (eds.), *Roman Crete: New Perspectives*. Oxford 2016.
- V. Gabrielsen, *The naval Aristocracy of Hellenistic Rhodes*, Aarhus 1997.
- P. Gauthier, "L'inscription d'Iasos relative à l'ekklesiastikon (*I.Iasos* 20)", *BCH* 1990: 417-443.
- J.M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, Cambridge 1997.
- J.M. Hall, *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*, Chicago 2002.

- C.W. Hedrick, "Democracy and the Athenian Epigraphical Habit", *Hesperia* 68 (1999): 387-439.
- J.M. Højte (ed.), *Mithridates VI Eupator and the Pontic Kingdom*, Aarhus 2009.
- W. Huss, *Die Verwaltung des Ptolemaischen Reichs*, München 2011.
- P. Huysse, "The Use of Greek Language and Script in Bilingual and Trilingual Inscriptions from the Iranian World", in: W. Eck et al. (eds.), *Öffentlichkeit - Monument - Text. XIV Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae 27. - 31. Augusti MMXII. Akten*, Berlin 2014, 161-182.
- E. Interdonato, *L'Asklepieion di Kos: archeologia del culto*, Rome 2013.
- W. Koenigs, *Der Athenatempel von Priene*, Wiesbaden 2015.
- K. Konuk, "The payment of the *ekklesiastikon* at Iasos in light of new evidence", in: R. van Bremen and J.-M. Carbon, *Hellenistic Karia*, Bordeaux 2010, 59-67.
- A. Kouremenos (ed.), *Insularity and Identity in the Roman Mediterranean*, Oxford and Philadelphia 2018.
- J.-M. Lassère, "Recherches sur la chronologie des épitaphes païennes de l'Africa", *AntAfr* 7 (1973): 7-152.
- Y. Le Bohec, *La troisième légion Auguste*, Paris 1989.
- P. McKechnie and P. Guillaume (eds.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his World*, Leiden 2008.
- I. Malkin (ed.), *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*, Cambridge Mass. 2001.
- B.D. Meritt, *Epigraphica Attica*. Cambridge, MA 1940.
- R. MacMullen, "Frequency of Inscriptions in Roman Lydia", *ZPE* 65 (1986): 237-238.
- R. MacMullen, "The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire" *AJPh* 103 (1982): 233-246.
- C.A. Mango (ed.), *The Oxford History of Byzantium*, Oxford 2002.
- C. Marek, *Stadt, Ära und Territorium in Pontus-Bithynia und Nord-Galatia*, Tübingen 1993.
- Ch. Marek, *Pontus et Bithynia: Die römischen Provinzen im Norden Kleinasiens*, Mainz 2003.
- M. Melfi and M. Galli (eds), *Roman Power and Greek Sanctuaries: Forms of Interaction and Communication*, Athens 2013.
- E.A. Meyer, "Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: the Evidence of Epitaphs", *JRS* 80 (1990): 74-96.
- E.A. Meyer, "Epitaphs and Citizenship in Classical Athens", *JHS* 83 (1993): 99-121.
- C. Mileta, *Der König und sein Land*, Berlin 2008.
- K. Momrak, "Identifying Popular Power: Who were the People of Ancient Near Eastern City-States?", in: R. Rollinger and E. van Dongen, *Mesopotamia in the Ancient World: Impact, Continuities*,

Parallels. Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium of the Melammu Project Held in Obergurgl, Austria, November 4-8, 2013, Münster 2015, 417-432.

J. Monerie, "Writing Greek with Weapons Singularly Ill-designed for the Purpose: The Transcription of Greek in Cuneiform", in: R. Rollinger and E. van Dongen, *Mesopotamia in the Ancient World: Impact, Continuities, Parallels. Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium of the Melammu Project Held in Obergurgl, Austria, November 4-8, 2013*, Münster 2015, 349-364.

S. Mrozek, "À propos de la répartition chronologique des inscriptions Latines dans le Haut-Empire", *Epigraphica* 35 (1973): 113–118.

K. Nawotka, "Freedom of Greek Cities in Asia Minor in the Age of Alexander the Great", *Klio* 85 (2003): 15–41.

K. Nawotka (ed.), *Epigraphic Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity*, Abingdon and New York 2020.

A. Pałuchowski, *Les élites urbaines en Crète sous le Haut Empire*, Diss. Tours–Wrocław (ANRT Lille 2005), 2003.

P. Perlman, *City and Sanctuary in Ancient Greece: The Theorodokia in the Peloponnese*, 2000.

P. Perlman, "Reading and Writing Archaic Cretan Society", in: O. Pilz and G. Seelentag (eds.), *Cultural Practices and Material Culture in Archaic and Classical Crete: Proceedings of the International Conference, Mainz, May 20–21, 2011*, Berlin and Boston 2014, 177–206.

H.W. Pleket, "Greek Inscriptions in the Roman Empire: Their Strength, Deficiencies and Inaccessibility", in: *XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina, Roma, 18-24 settembre 1997: atti*, Rome 1999, 77–91.

J. R.W. Prag, "Epigraphy by Numbers: Latin and the Epigraphic Culture in Sicily", in: A.E. Cooley et al. (eds.), *Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and Epigraphy in the Roman West*, Portsmouth RI 2002, 15–31.

W. Ræck, A. Filges and I.H. Mert, *Priene von der Spätklassik bis zum Mittelalter. Ergebnisse und Perspektiven der Forschungen seit 1998*, Bonn 2020.

G.L. Reger, *Studies in the Demography and Economy of Delos in the Third Century B.C.*, Madison 1987.

V. Scheibelreiter-Gail, "Inschriften und christliche Kulträume", in: W. Eck et al. (eds.), *Öffentlichkeit - Monument - Text. XIV Congressus Internationalis Epigraphiae Graecae et Latinae 27. - 31. Augusti MMXII. Akten*, Berlin 2014, 635-637.

S. Sherwin-White, "Ancient archives: the edict of Alexander to Priene, a reappraisal", *JHS* 105 (1985): 69-89.

E. Sironen, "Early Christian Inscriptions from the Corinthia and the Peloponnese", in: C. Breytenbach and J.M. Ogereau (eds.), *Authority and Identity in Emerging Christianities in Asia Minor and Greece*, Leiden 2018, 201-216.

P.M. Steele, *A linguistic history of ancient Cyprus: The non-Greek languages and their relations with Greek, c.1600-300 BC*, Cambridge 2013.

P.M. Steele, *Writing and Society in Ancient Cyprus*, Cambridge 2019.

J. Steinhauer, "Across gender, status, origin: Religious associations and networks in the sanctuaries of late Hellenistic Delos", in: M. Dana and I. Savalli-Lestrade (eds.) *La cité interconnectée dans la monde gréco-romain*, Bordeaux 2019, 223-237.

C.A. Thomsen, *The Politics of Association in Hellenistic Rhodes*, Edinburgh 2020.

P. Thonemann, "Alexander, Priene and Naulochon", in: N. Papazarkadas and P. Martzavou (eds.), *Epigraphical Approaches to the Post-classical Polis: Fourth Century BC to Second Century AD*, Oxford 2012, 23-36.

B. Van Beek and M. Depauw, "Quantifying imprecisely dates sources: a new inclusive method for charting diachronic change in Graeco-Roman Egypt", *AncSoc* 43 (2013): 101-114.

J. Velaza (ed.), *Insularity, Identity and Epigraphy in the Roman World*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2017.

P. Wood, "Syriac and the 'Syrians'", in: S.F. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, Oxford 2012, 170-195.

G. Woolf, "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire", *JRS* 86 (1996): 22–39.

M. Yon, *Kition-Bamboula V. Kition dans les textes. Testimonia littéraires et épigraphiques et Corpus des inscriptions*, Paris 2004.