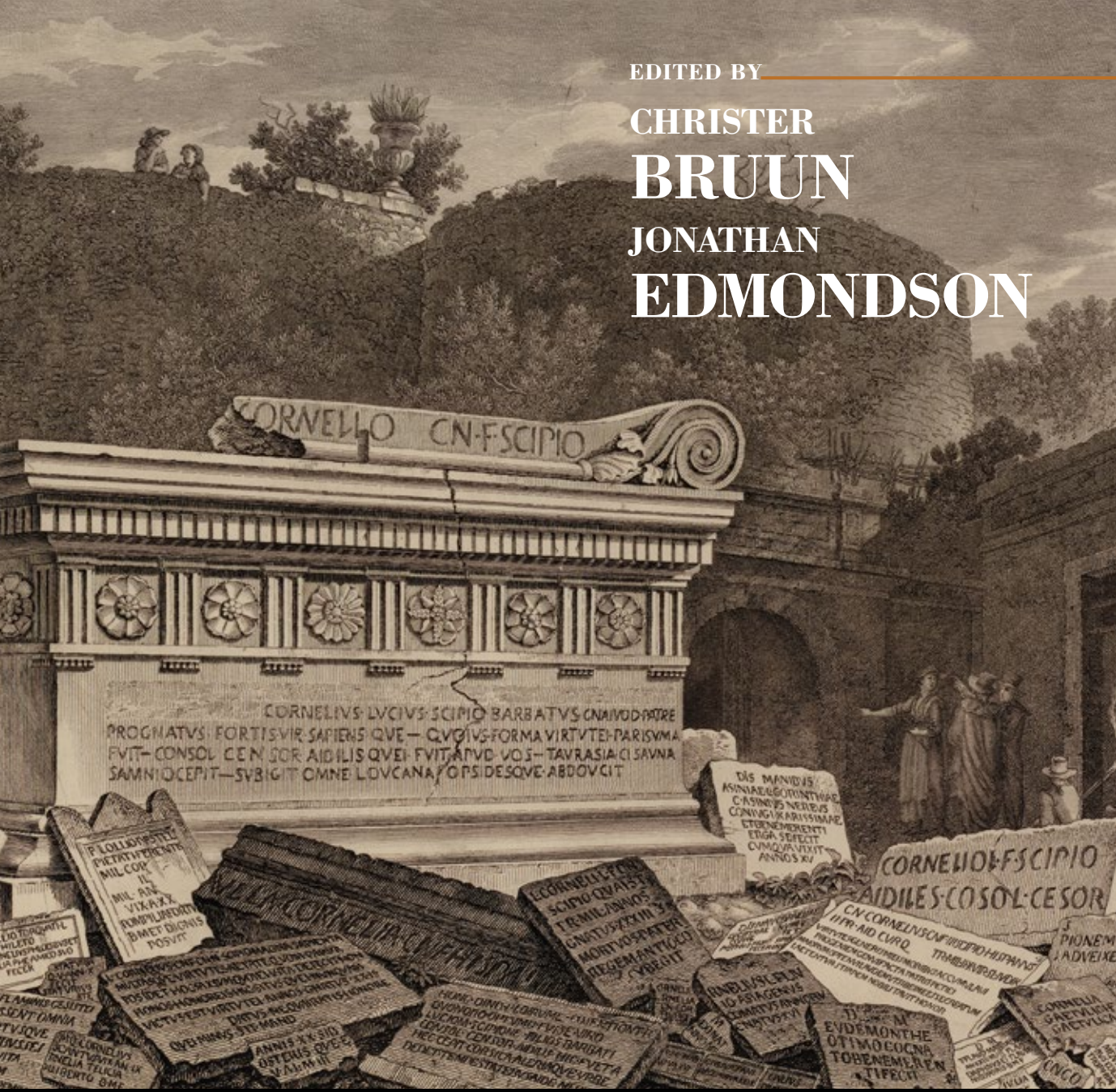


EDITED BY

CHRISTER  
BRUUN

JONATHAN

EDMONDSON



The Oxford Handbook of  
**ROMAN**  
**EPIGRAPHY**

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF  
**ROMAN**  
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ROMAN  
EPIGRAPHY

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*Edited by*

CHRISTER BRUUN

*and*

JONATHAN EDMONDSON

OXFORD  
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## CHAPTER 18

## LATE ANTIQUITY

BENET SALWAY

LATE Antiquity may be understood to comprise that post-classical but pre-medieval period which started with Diocletian and closed with Phocas, honorand of the last public monument in the Roman Forum (*CIL* VI 1200 = *ILS* 837, 1 August 608), when cultural identity remained predominantly Roman but also became increasingly Christian.<sup>1</sup> The epigraphy of this period differs in several respects from that of the High Empire, reflecting the changed political, economic, and cultural circumstances. Attention will focus here on the epigraphic habit of that fluctuating portion of the late-antique world that remained Roman. Despite the emergence of additional languages in the inscribed repertoire in certain regions (Syriac and Coptic),<sup>2</sup> Latin and Greek retained their hegemony as the two languages of the Roman cultural mainstream, though the balance between them fluctuated. Their basic epigraphic footprint continued to respect the long established linguistic frontier dividing the Empire's Greek East from its Latin West in North Africa and the Balkans. Nevertheless, the establishment of an imperial court, with attendant bureaucratic and military retinue, in major centres of the Greek East from the last decades of the third century coincided with a new flowering of Latin inscriptions in the region. From Diocletian to the Valentinianic dynasty official pronouncements were inscribed in Latin prose, often in multiple copies.<sup>3</sup> After the definitive separation of the imperial government in 395, a new vogue set in amongst members of the increasingly Hellenophone governmental elite of the Empire's eastern portion for showing off their facility in the language of law and authority by the composition and display of Latin epigrams.<sup>4</sup>

Although the vast majority of inscriptions cannot be dated precisely, the absolute number of Greek and Latin texts inscribed in durable media declined drastically

<sup>1</sup> Chronology covered by A.H.M. Jones 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Syriac: Briquel Chatonnet, Debié, and Desreumaux 2004. Coptic: Krause 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Feissel 1999; Corcoran 2000, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Feissel 2006.

in the third century, especially from the 240s to the 270s, the most acute period of the “third-century crisis.”<sup>5</sup> A partial recovery followed in the late third and early fourth century, before numbers tail off again in the fifth and sixth centuries, when the epigraphic culture of the Latin West suffers in the wake of imperial contraction, while that of the Greek East displays somewhat more vitality and resilience. Not all categories of text were affected equally. Most are diminished in number, some entirely eliminated, while others continue but in a radically altered fashion, and other new categories emerge for the first time. Epitaphs (always the largest category) remain the most resilient throughout, while public dedications, especially at the municipal level, suffer the most acute decline and do not see a recovery equivalent to that for epitaphs in the fourth century. Accordingly, funerary inscriptions account for an even greater proportion of Roman epigraphy than had been the case before, while their content and style were profoundly altered by the progressive Christianization of society between the third and fifth centuries, though considerable cultural continuities may still be observed. Moreover, this phenomenon does not account for all the developments in other categories. Nor is the chronology and pace of developments synchronized across the range of inscriptional types.

The ability to examine late antique Latin inscriptions as an integrated whole is hindered by patterns of publication. The tradition inherited from Renaissance humanists to treat “Christian” texts separately from “pagan” or secular epigraphy has influenced the structure of epigraphic corpora, both Greek and Latin. Following in the footsteps of Smetius and Gruterus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the extensive selection of Latin inscriptions by Giuseppe Gaspare Orelli, published between 1828 and 1856, excluded Christian texts. This same attitude was adopted by the original editors of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, which aims to provide a comprehensive record of Latin inscriptions to about 600 CE. Thus, even where the data had been assembled together, as for instance by Emil Hübner for the Iberian peninsula and Britain, they appeared separately: *CIL* II in 1869 and VII in 1873 separate from his respective corpora of Christian inscriptions, *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Christianae* and *Inscriptiones Britanniae Christianae*, published in 1871 and 1876. (However, for the new edition of *CIL* II, the editors decided to include Christian inscriptions up to the Arab conquest in 711.) For Rome (*CIL* VI), Wilhelm Henzen respected the limits of Christian epigraphy as defined by Giovanni Battista de Rossi for the *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (*ICUR*). The exclusion of Christian texts from most volumes of *CIL* means that the collection is asymmetric in its late antique sections, undermining its utility. Moreover, the distortion gives an exaggerated impression of the real decline in the Latin epigraphic habit.

The awkward divide between *CIL* and *ICUR* is mirrored by the selections of Hermann Dessau (*ILS*) and Ernst Diehl (*ILCV*), and successive introductions and handbooks to Latin or Roman epigraphy have tended to perpetuate the lopsided treatment of Late Antiquity. Most explicitly or effectively end with the third century or the reign of Constantine.<sup>6</sup> Those that continue their coverage on to Theodosius, or even Phocas,

<sup>5</sup> Roueché 1997: 353–354; cf. Ch. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Third century: Sandys 1927; Schmidt 2004. Constantine: Bloch 1969; Meyer 1973; Susini 1982.

generally restrict themselves to narrowly secular examples.<sup>7</sup> Selections and manuals of Greek inscriptions that cover the Roman period exhibit the same tendencies, terminating with Diocletian or Constantine,<sup>8</sup> or focusing only on secular texts thereafter.<sup>9</sup> A few honorable exceptions treat late antique secular and Christian texts together and more than cursorily.<sup>10</sup> Students of the late antique Latin inscriptions of the city of Rome now benefit from the fact that the inscriptions of emperors, senators, and equestrian officials from the third century onwards have been re-edited with copious commentary and illustration by Géza Alföldy in *CIL* VI.8.2 (1996) and *CIL* VI.8.3 (2000). Outside Rome, specifically late antique corpora exist for some regions, notably in the Greek East.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, an initiative to link the late antique texts of the Latin West that are dispersed across the electronic corpora may alleviate the obstacles posed by the printed collections.<sup>12</sup>

Considering the texts of the traditionally distinct sub-fields of late Roman and early Christian epigraphy as an integrated whole highlights the distinctiveness of the epigraphic landscape of Late Antiquity. Within the repertoire of Latin inscriptions in particular the changes are such that the epigraphic record no longer contributes to our historical understanding of this period in the same way as it does for the High Empire. A comparison of the basis for the entries in the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* (*PLRE*), covering the period 260 to 641, reveals the progressive decline of traditional categories of honorific inscriptions as a principal source for public office holders.<sup>13</sup> Still, while the most famous inscribed text from Roman antiquity must be Augustus' *Res Gestae* (Ch. 10; Figs. 10.2–3), the longest is certainly Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices of 301, a historical source arguably of equal significance, though in quite a different way.<sup>14</sup> The changing profile of the epigraphic record itself provides an indispensable barometer of socio-political developments and the evidence of inscriptions remains vital for the study of those periods, regions, echelons of society, and aspects of life that are poorly documented by the literary record.

## GENERAL FEATURES

Although the majority of late antique public inscriptions are on stone, bronze was still used throughout the Latin West for the display of documents of the Roman state and local municipalities. A significant number of inscribed bronze plaques survive from

<sup>7</sup> Cagnat 1914; Calabi Limentani 1991.

<sup>8</sup> *IGRR*; Guarducci 1987; McLean 2002.

<sup>9</sup> *OGIS*; *SIG*<sup>3</sup>; cf. Guarducci 1967–1977: 4.299–556, appending Christian texts to 600 CE to secular material that ends with Diocletian.

<sup>10</sup> Diehl 1912; Gordon and Gordon 1965; Lassère 2007; Cooley 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Beševliev 1964; Sironen 1997; *IG* II/III<sup>2</sup>.5 (2008); *ala2004* (Aphrodisias).

<sup>12</sup> Witschel 2010.

<sup>13</sup> In general, Barnes 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Lauffer 1971; Giacchero 1974; Corcoran 2000: 205–233; Crawford 2002; Salway 2010.

Italy, Gaul, and Africa from the fourth century (*CIL* VI 1684, 1689; *ILS* 6111–17; *AE* 1990, 211; 1992, 301; cf. *CIL* VIII 17896 = *FIRA* I 64, a contemporary copy of a bronze original), while in early sixth-century Rome the Ostrogothic king Theoderic is said to have ordered the publication of a pronouncement on bronze (Anon. Val., pars posterior, 69, p. 552). If the king's order was ever carried out, it is doubtful whether the text would have been engraved on a freshly cast sheet of bronze. From the start of the fourth century it is increasingly common to find texts of all sorts inscribed on bronzes and stones previously inscribed with texts now deemed redundant or expendable. This no doubt indicates a reduction of the resources that commissioners of inscriptions were willing or able to invest in this form of display. This re-use might take various forms. The cheapest option was to refashion the text by erasing and recarving a small portion. Thus the dedicatory inscription to a statue base at Aphrodisias (Fig. 18.1), which had honoured the emperor Julian, was crudely reworked to honour Theodosius I or II, as is clear in lines 2–5 of the text (*ala2004* 20, lines 2–5):

Φλ(άουιον) Κλ(αύδιον) <<Θεοδόσιον>>  
 (vac) τὸν αἰώνιον  
 καὶ εὐσεβέστατον  
 (vac) Αὔγουστον

To Flavius Claudius <<Theodosius>> the everlasting and most pious Augustus.

Most drastic was the complete erasure of an original text, smoothing of the surface, and carving over it of a fresh text. The original dedication date on its right-hand side reveals that this is what the *praefectus vigilum* Rupilius Pisonianus did when he set up a statue of the emperor Constans (337–350) in Rome on a base that had originally supported a statue of the goddess Venus Genetrix unveiled on 26 September 269 (*CIL* VI 1157 = 40840). Most commonly, however, texts reused in Late Antiquity are epigraphic, i.e., reused by being inscribed on what was originally their reverse side. At Larinum in Samnium the bronze plaque that bore a copy of a *senatus consultum* of 19 CE governing attendance at spectacles (*AE* 1978, 145; cf. Chs. 15, 25) was turned over, cut down, and inscribed with a *tabula patronatus* dated 1 April 344 (*AE* 1992, 301). The proliferation of antique monuments in the public spaces of Constantinople is well documented.<sup>15</sup> Similarly in Rome and Italy in the later fourth and fifth centuries certain ancient statues were rescued from dilapidated surroundings and re-erected in new contexts.<sup>16</sup> Restoration and renewal is also a strong theme running through late antique building inscriptions, though the genuine extent of the work claimed may sometimes be doubted in the light of the archaeology (cf. Ch. 24).<sup>17</sup>

Greek and Latin epigraphy of Late Antiquity exhibits the same basic conventions in the presentation of the written word as had prevailed since the Hellenistic period. As in contemporary literary manuscripts and papyrus documents, absence of word-spacing

<sup>15</sup> Bauer 1996: 413–421.

<sup>16</sup> Curran 1994: 47–49; Bauer 1996: 401–412.

<sup>17</sup> Alföldy 2001; Behrwald 2009: 49–56.



FIG. 18.1 Base of a statue of the emperor Julian, re-carved to honour Theodosius I or II. Aphrodisias, Caria. Aphrodisias Museum, Geyre, Turkey.

remains the norm, with occasional interpuncts being the only regular aid to legibility. However, there is much variation in style of script, competence of layout, and quality of execution. Greater varieties of letter-forms were employed simultaneously than in earlier times. Rather than the development of completely new scripts, there was an increase in the range and type of letter-forms considered appropriate.<sup>18</sup> Stylistically, neither the uniformity within nor consistency between inscriptions—characteristics of early imperial epigraphy—seem to have been a priority. While changes in aesthetics

<sup>18</sup> Greek: Roueché 1997; *alazoo4* (Narrative: letter-forms); Sironen 1997: 380–383. Latin: Cardin 2008: 47–60; cf. Diehl 1912: pls 32–37; Gordon and Gordon 1965: nos. 301–365.



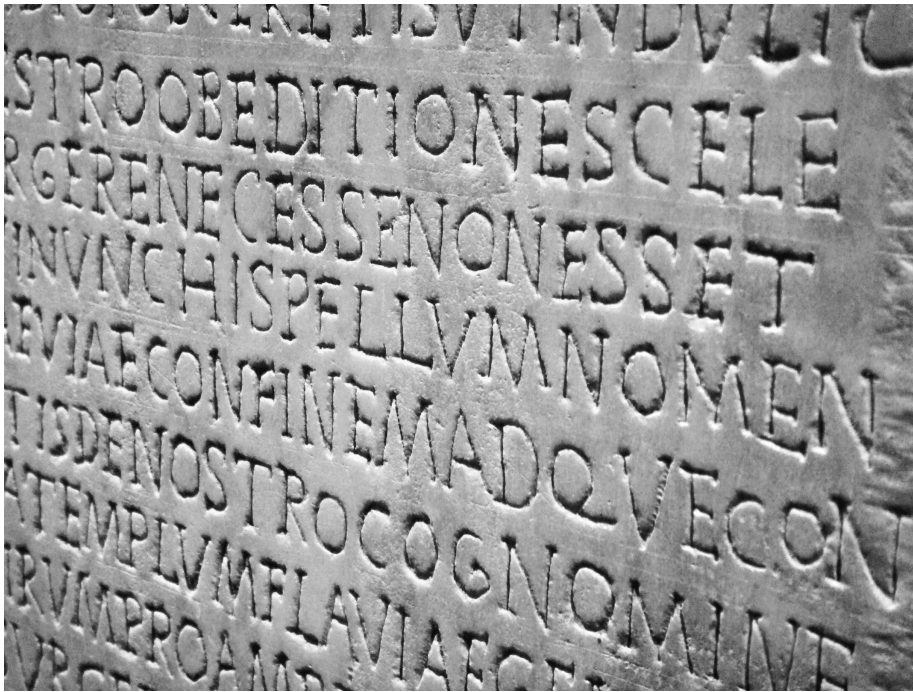


FIG. 18.2 Detail of the rescript of Constantine and sons to the Umbrians, Hispellum. Palazzo Comunale, Spello.

may be a factor, the greater variability in quality suggests that inscriptions were no longer carved predominantly by professional letter-carvers, but now commonly by ordinary masons. Observe, for example, the contrast between the careful scoring of the still visible guidelines and the rather haphazard carving of the lettering on the rescript of Constantine and his sons to the Umbrians from Hispellum (*CIL* XI 5265 = *ILS* 705; Fig. 18.2). Nevertheless, although the widespread transmission of professional letter-carving skills may have fallen victim to the general decrease in epigraphic production during the third-century crisis, high quality work is still apparent in some prestige projects.

In Latin, traditional squared monumental capitals continued to be employed for inset bronze letters, as on the Arch of Constantine in Rome (*CIL* VI 1139 = *ILS* 694, 315 CE), as well as for lettering on stone, as in the inscription commemorating the lavish floor and wall mosaics provided by the urban prefect Longinianus and his wife Anastasia for St. Peter's in 401/2 (*CIL* VI 41331a = *ICUR* II 4097). Also continuing a style current since the first and second centuries is the more elongated capital script used, for instance, on the statue base of the anonymous *patronus* of Saena (Siena) at Rome, dated to 1 August 394 (*CIL* VI 1793). Specific to the city of Rome is the flamboyantly serified script of the mid-fourth-century calligrapher Furius Dionysius Philocalus, employed by bishop Damasus for his cycle of epigrams celebrating the

martyrs,<sup>19</sup> and still being imitated in prominent epitaphs and public inscriptions of the early fifth century (*CIL* VI 40798, statue base of Arcadius, 399/400; *CIL* VI 41377, verse epitaph of Eventius, 407).

First attested by two inscriptions from third-century North Africa (*CIL* VIII 11824 = *CLE* 1238 = *ILS* 7457, the famous “Mactar harvester” inscription;<sup>20</sup> cf. *CIL* VIII 17910, Thamugadi) is the use on stone of the rounded capitals, properly a manuscript bookhand, known to palaeographers as uncial. In these examples, which both have a literary flavour, the choice of script may be a conscious affectation, but this is unlikely in the case of the version of the preamble to Diocletian’s Prices Edict from Athens,<sup>21</sup> and even less so with the two copies of a letter of the emperor Julian from Lesbos (*CIL* III 14198) and Amorgos (*CIL* III 459 = *AE* 2000, 1370; Fig. 18.3). The challenge to comprehensibility is obvious even from the opening clause of the latter, which reads *ouopipi solent nonnul[le] contpouepsie que* for the correct *oboriri solent nonnullae controversiae quae* (“Some disputes are accustomed to arise that . . .”). The extraordinary appearance of these inscriptions may be attributed to the local hellenophone carvers, who, unfamiliar with the conventions of inscribed Latin, struggled to copy the half-uncial text as it appeared on the papyrus or parchment before them.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly in the Greek East during the sixth-century the so-called “heavenly letters” (*litterae caelestes*) of the special Latin cursive script used by the imperial chancery are found faithfully reproduced on stone (cf. *AE* 2004, 1410 = *SEG* 54, 1178, 1–2 April 533, Didyma).<sup>23</sup> The intention was presumably to emphasize the fidelity of the publicly inscribed document to the authentic original retained in the archive of the municipality or provincial governor. In a constitution of the emperor Maurice from Ephesus, dated 11 February 585, the cursive Latin of the dating clause forms a striking contrast with the clear capital script of the body of the text in Greek (*I.Ephesos* 40; Fig. 18.4):

*dat(um) III Idus Februar(ias) Co-*  
*nstantinupo(li) imp(er)a(toris)*  
*d(omini) n(ostr)i [[Maurici Ti]]-*  
*beri pe(r)pe(tui) Aug(usti) ann(o) III*  
5 *et post cons(ulatum) eius(dem)*  
*ann(o) I(crux)*

Given on the third day before the Ides of February in Constantinople in the third year of the emperor our lord Mauricius Tiberius, perpetual Augustus, and in the first year after his consulate.

As for Greek letter-forms, from the third century onwards an increased influence of cursive forms upon some letters of the standard epigraphic capital script is observable. Lunate forms of epsilon (€) are commonly found alongside the traditional squared

<sup>19</sup> Ferrua 1942; cf. Ch. 21.

<sup>20</sup> Shaw 2013 (with photos).

<sup>21</sup> Photo: Gordon 1983; pl. 53.

<sup>22</sup> Marichal 1952; Feissel 2000.

<sup>23</sup> cf. Feissel 2004.



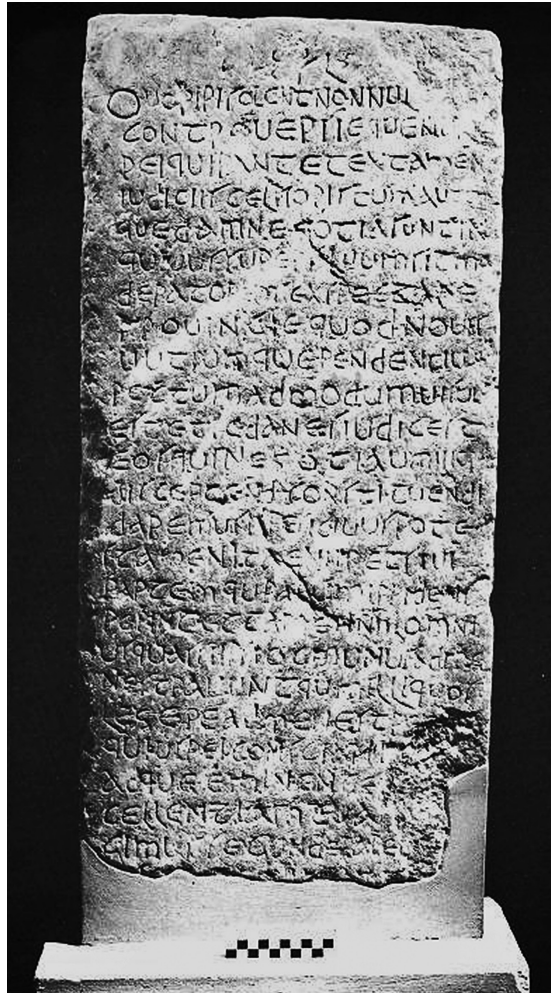


FIG. 18.3 Letter of the emperor Julian to the praetorian prefect Secundus from the island of Amorgos in the Cyclades. Epigraphic Museum, Athens (EM 10401).

form (E), while from the mid-fourth century onwards, as seen in the Aphrodisian dedication to Julian/Theodosius (Fig. 18.1), trilateral squared or lunate (C) forms of sigma and double-horseshoe ( $\omega$ ) forms of omega almost completely displace their respective forms standard in the Hellenistic and early imperial periods ( $\Sigma$ ,  $\Omega$ ). There is also an increased tendency towards vertical elongation, perhaps reflecting the influence of Latin, and an increased abbreviation of predictable elements, which certainly represents Roman custom.

Trends in orthography can be revealing about developments in pronunciation. The one variation from classical norms that can reasonably be considered a specifically late feature is the progressive distinction of consonantal *-v-* from vocalic *-u-* in Latin. In Latin inscriptions this gives rise to an increased confusion or interchangeability of B

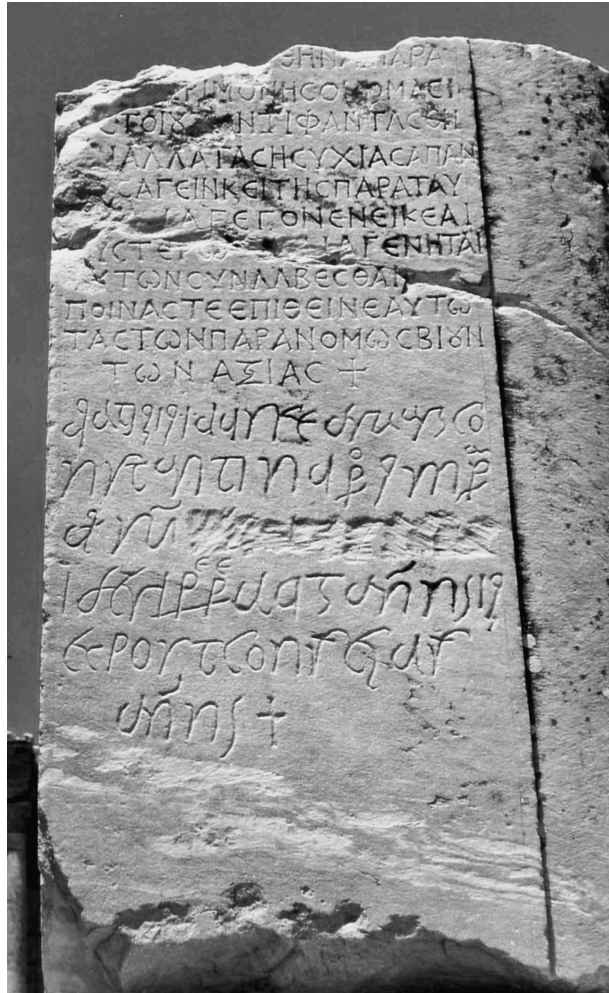


FIG. 18.4 Constitution of the emperor Maurice, 585 CE, from Ephesus, with the last six lines containing a Latin dating-formula. In situ.

and V, while in Greek it is exemplified by a switch in the standard transliteration of the Latin sound from *ov* to  $\beta$ , the voicing of which was itself in the process of softening from *-b-* to *-v-*. Other specifically late features that are common to texts in both languages are the use of:

- a symbol resembling a “scroll” or undulating tilde (~) as an abbreviation mark, often in a vertical position at the point of suspension so looking like a shallow S
- supralinear letters in abbreviations
- the deployment of the cross as an ornamental punctuation mark, especially to open and close texts, where previously it was normal to find a leaf (*hedera*).

The subscript of the emperor Maurice (Fig. 18.4) illustrates these phenomena.

A late antique novelty increasingly common in the fifth and sixth centuries is the use of the years of the fifteen-year fiscal cycle, the indiction, in dating formulae, especially in epitaphs. Unlike the annual consulship, as a chronological system the indiction had the advantage of having a naturally progressive sequence. However, it was the practice to indicate the number of the year within the cycle but not the number of the cycle in the series, which took its notional starting point under Constantine on 1 September 312. The system, therefore, is of limited utility in identifying a particular year in the longer term.<sup>24</sup> Without any additional chronological indicator, between Constantine and the death of Heraclius in 641, for example, an indictional dating may signify any one of twenty-two different twelve-month periods, no doubt more of a disadvantage to us than it was to contemporaries. Similarly, the lack of synchronization with the consular year (beginning on 1 January) is more awkward for us than it would have been for Roman taxpayers, for whom its annual rhythm was more relevant than the traditional civic year. Also newly emerging in the same period are a new expression in Latin for indicating the day—*sub die*—and the symbol  $\varsigma$  to represent the Roman numeral VI. The epitaph of a young girl from Ammaedara, in the province of Byzacena, illustrates these various features in combination (*AE* 1975, 901):

*Ponti-*  
*ca fidel(i)s*  
*in Xp(ist)o requi-*  
*ebit (!) in pace*  
 5       *s(ub) d(ie)  $\varsigma$  id(us) Maias*  
           *ind(ictione) XIII vixit*  
           *annis V*

Pontica, believer in Christ, went to rest in pace on the day 6 before the Ides of March in the 13th indiction. She lived for 5 years.

The danger of imprecision arising from dating by indiction alone was perceived by the emperor Justinian's advisers. A law of 31 August 537, the day before the beginning of the next first indiction, laid down a new system whereby henceforth, for a document to have any legal force, it had to be dated by consulship, indiction, and the emperor's regnal year (*Just. Nov.* 47.1). This was the first open acknowledgement in the imperial chancery, in the over five hundred years since the "Augustan settlement," that the regime was indeed a monarchy. The new style, well documented in papyri, is also reflected in the subsequent epigraphic record.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> cf. Lassère 2007: 911 (tabulation of cycle from 312 to 641).

<sup>25</sup> Feissel 1993.

## LATE ANTIQUE SOCIETY

Epitaphs, because they represent a wider social spectrum than does the literary record, are central to the analysis of the chronological, demographic, and geographical distribution of a range of social and cultural phenomena: for example, family life and the progress of the Christianization of the general population.<sup>26</sup> Specifically Christian aspects of Latin funerary epigraphy are dealt with by Danilo Mazzoleni in Ch. 21; for Greek, Erkki Sironen provides a useful introduction.<sup>27</sup> Among the epitaphs of the Jewish diaspora a renaissance in the use of Hebrew is notable (cf. *JWE* I 42–116, Venusia, S. Italy). Verse remained popular for epitaphs and perhaps even increased proportionally (cf. Ch. 35).<sup>28</sup> Despite the occasional self-consciously Christian touch, the sentiments eulogizing domestic virtues generally continue earlier traditions (cf. Chs. 26, 27), as in this hexameter example from the catacombs of Hadrumetum (Sousse) in Byzacena (*ILTun* 193):<sup>29</sup>

5 *haec fuit Eusebia, fratres, rara castissima coniunx,  
quae meruit mecum vitam coniugii, ut tempora monstrant,  
annis decem sexs (!) mensibus octo et viginti diebus,  
huius, ut confiteor, vitam Deus ipse probavit,  
innocua vere coniunx exempli rarissimi sexus.  
oro Successus ego tabularius huiusque maritus  
eius semper meminisse, fratres, vestris precibusque.*

This, brothers, was Eusebia, a rare and most chaste partner,  
who has deserved to live with me in marriage, as the dates demonstrate,  
for sixteen years, eight months, and twenty days,  
whose life, as I bear witness, God himself approved;  
a truly irreproachable partner, most rare example of her sex.  
I, Successus, *tabularius* and her husband, beg you,  
brothers, to remember her always in your prayers too.

A number of funerary epigrams are known for high-profile members of the senatorial aristocracy, though some only survive through the copies of medieval pilgrims and Renaissance scholars, such as those from the mausoleum of Petronius Probus (*PLRE* 1, Probus 5) at St. Peter's (*CIL* VI 1756 = *ILCV* 63).<sup>30</sup> By contrast, it is only modern excavation that has reunited the strikingly traditional verse epitaph for the urban prefect of 359, Junius Bassus (*PLRE* 1, Bassus 15), with his famous sarcophagus, which enjoyed a prime position behind the high altar of the original Constantinian basilica on the

<sup>26</sup> Shaw 1984; Liebeschuetz 1977.

<sup>27</sup> Sironen 1997: 384–400.

<sup>28</sup> Bernt 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Pikhhaus 1994: no. B10.

<sup>30</sup> Trout 2001; Matthews 2009: 135–137.

Vatican (*CIL* VI 41341a; cf. VI 32004 = *ILS* 1286 = *ILCV* 90 = *ICUR* II 4164).<sup>31</sup> Similarly, discovery of a fragment of the inscribed funerary epigram for the Gallic aristocrat and bishop of Clermont-Ferrand in the late fifth century, Sidonius Apollinaris (*PLRE* 2, Apollinaris 6), has restored faith in its authenticity (*CLE* 1516 = *ILCV* 1067 = *RICG* VIII 21).<sup>32</sup> Pagan cultural references remained acceptable in verse, even within an ecclesiastical milieu. Sidonius' epitaph describes his literary works as "gifts of the Graces" (*dona Gratiarum*) and a fifth/sixth-century inscription from the Lateran quotes Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.274–278, with its description of Romulus' building of the city's *Mavortia moenia* (*AE* 1989, 75). Vergil was accorded the status of an honorary Christian, but here it may be more significant that these lines preface Jupiter's famous prediction for Rome of *imperium sine fine*, a message not unwelcome to the city's bishops.

In the Greek East a fashion for adorning statue bases with honorific verses for living subjects arose in the second century and continued to flourish in Late Antiquity, but never caught on in a big way in the Latin West (cf. *CIL* VI 1693 = *ILS* 1241, c. 352 CE; *CIL* VI 1710 = *ILS* 2949 = *IGUR* I 63, c. 402 CE, two verses in Greek).<sup>33</sup> These Greek epigrammatists, whether employing Christian or traditional mythological imagery, generally favoured the so-called "modern style," typified by Nonnus and his school.<sup>34</sup> This form was popular because its simple rhythmic structure (with stress accents signalling the main caesura and line-ends) allowed the poet to combine a high literary register with a direct style, readily comprehensible to less educated audiences.

Changes in personal naming practices are observable in late antique epigraphy and are a key indicator of social and cultural developments (Appendix III). For many Romans the *nomen gentile* shifted from indicating a family relationship to marking social status as a long-term consequence of the *constitutio Antoniniana* of 212. Transformations in the standard canon of personal names (*cognomina*) are partially attributable to the progressive Christianization of society in the fourth century.<sup>35</sup> By the fifth century Roman names were effectively reduced to single personal names for most, but epigraphic evidence still occasionally reveals the polyonymy of members of the Roman or Constantinopolitan elite, otherwise known only by single personal names.<sup>36</sup> Thus it is only from recent epigraphic finds that the consuls of 463 (Vivianus), 511 (Felix), and 521 (Valerius) are shown to glory in the names Flavius Antoninus Messala Vivianus (*AE* 2008, 1764), Arcadius Placidus Magnus Felix (*EAOR* VI 17.67a–f), and Iobius Philippus Ymelco Valerius (*EAOR* VI 17.72a–g) respectively, and Justinian's notorious praetorian prefect, John the Cappadocian (*PLRE* 3, Ioannes 11), to have styled himself in full as Fl(avius) Marianus Michaelius Gabriellus Archangelus Ioannes (*AE* 2004, 1410 = *SEG* 54, 1178, lines 42–44).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Matthews 2009: 133–134; cf. Malbon 1990: 115 (translation).

<sup>32</sup> Montzimir 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Robert 1948.

<sup>34</sup> Agosti 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Salway 1994: 136–143; Kajanto 1997; Solin 2005; Salomies 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Rome: Cameron 1985. Constantinople: Laniado 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Feissel 2004: 333–335.



A striking development in Latin epigraphic practice is the prefacing of honorific texts with a form of nickname known as the *signum*.<sup>38</sup> Attested from the start of the third century, they are most noticeable epigraphically as a common affectation in dedications to members of the Roman senatorial aristocracy of the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>39</sup> Morphologically these names are formed with the adjectival suffix *-ius*, their meanings often expressing some personal quality, and are frequently Greek by etymology; one early example is even inscribed in the Greek alphabet on an early third-century statue base from Utica in Africa Proconsularis (AE 1964, 179; cf. 1973, 575): *Εὐκόμῃ // C(aiae) Sulpiciae [?Di]/dymianae c(larissimae) [f(eminae)] / coniugi Q(uinti) Vin(ii) / Victorini c(larissimi) v(iri) fil(iae) / C(ai) Sulpici(i) Iusti c(larissimi) v(iri) / Calpurnius Gabini[us] / patronae* (“Well-haired one! Calpurnius Gabinius (set this up) to his patron Gaia Sulpicia Didymiana, *clarissima femina*, wife of Q. Vinius Victorinus, *vir clarissimus*, daughter of C. Sulpicius Iustus, *vir clarissimus*”).<sup>40</sup> Originally these *signa* were employed in the vocative to form an imprecation, suggesting an address to the statue with which each was associated. They were normally carved detached from the main body of the text, often on the cornice of the statue base, as for Sulpicia Didymiana (PIR<sup>2</sup> S 1029) and on that for L. Aradius Valerius Proculus *signo* Populonium, dating to c. 340 (CIL VI 1690 = ILS 1240), or even on the plinth of the statue itself, as in the case of the statue labelled *Dogmatii*, found near the base for Caelius Saturninus of 324/337 (CIL VI 1704 = ILS 1214).<sup>41</sup> By the later fourth century, *gentilicia*, which mostly shared the *-ius* termination with the genuine *signa*, can be found standing in as a detached *signum* in order to conform to the fashion, as on the cornice of the posthumous base dedicated to Vettius Agorius Praetextatus: *Agorii* (CIL VI 1778, 1 February 387).<sup>42</sup> The consistent use of terminations in *-i* in these fourth-century examples looks superficially similar to the earlier *signa* in the vocative, but grammatically they are in the genitive, suggesting that the understanding of the function of these headings has shifted. They now function as labels of the images to which they relate, i.e., “(statue) of X.” By the fifth century, not just a single name but the honorand’s full names might be repeated in detached form at the head of the dedication, as in that from Trajan’s Forum to the panegyrist and poet Claudian from c. 402 CE: *[Cl(audi)] Claudiani v(iri) c(larissimi) / [Cla]udio Claudiano v(iro) clarissimo tri/[bu]no et notario...* (CIL VI 1710 = IGUR I 63 = ILS 2949; cf. VI 1725 = ILS 1284 = Fig. 18.5).

Another shorthand method of identification that emerges in the epigraphic record in late antiquity is the monogram. This usually takes the form of a design comprising the letters of a name within a circle or connected by a square.<sup>43</sup> From the fourth century they are common on seal rings and in the fifth and sixth can be found as graffiti,

<sup>38</sup> Kajanto 1966: 42–90.

<sup>39</sup> Chastagnol 1988a: 38–41.

<sup>40</sup> Photo: Lassère 2007: 86, fig. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Photo: Lassère 2007: 719, fig. 118.

<sup>42</sup> Photo: Gordon and Gordon 1965: no. 339.

<sup>43</sup> Roueché 2007a: 231–234.

coin designs, and monumental decoration, as on the pillars from the church of St. Polyeuktos, built in Constantinople in the early sixth century by the wealthy aristocrat Anicia Iuliana. Since they were designed to be recognizable rather than decipherable, these monograms cannot always be fully understood. In this case a plausible resolution might be ἁγίου Πολυεύκτου (“of St. Polyeuktos”).<sup>44</sup>

Vertical links between patron and client continue to be a common reason for epigraphic commemoration. As well as individuals, cities, and even provinces, in the fourth century the *collegia* of the city of Rome are notable for erecting dedications to the urban prefects: for example, the *corpus coriariorum* (CIL VI 1682 = ILS 1220) or the *mensores et codicarii* (VI 1759 = ILS 1272). The *corpus suariorum et confecturariorum* (“guild of pork butchers and sausage makers”) was responsible for two dedications—in prose and verse—to the prefect, Valerius Proculus (CIL VI 1690, 1693 = ILS 1240, 1241). That relations between the prefects and tradesmen were not always so cosy is demonstrated by three fragmentary copies of the same edict of Tarracius Bassus (PLRE 1, Bassus 21), the prefect of 375–376, naming and shaming a list of shopkeepers (*tabernarii*) who, in contravention of expected behaviour (*disciplina Romana*), had become accustomed to claim handouts, seats at games, and bread “in dereliction of prefectorial edicts” (*derel[ictis edictis praeff(ectorum)]*) or “having quit Rome” (*derel[icta urbe Roma]*) (CIL VI 41328–30).<sup>45</sup>

The allocation of seating, in the Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome at least, was a serious enough business to warrant the carving of permanent place markers for senatorial spectators, as the series of inscribed seats stretching from the fourth to sixth century demonstrates (Ch. 25).<sup>46</sup> Extending through the social orders, the “circus factions” (the hippodrome teams and their supporters) leave a considerable trail of inscriptions in the Greek East, from formal honours to simple graffiti.<sup>47</sup> As well as in the hippodrome, their presence was felt in the theatre, and they seem to have been used as a basis for the organization of public ceremonial. One of the activities in which they become engaged is the shouting of acclamations. These are chants that express approval or support, a genre which enters the epigraphic record in the later third century and continues into the early seventh.<sup>48</sup> Acclamations also appear in the portico of the south agora at late antique Aphrodisias, such as a text hailing a local magnate and benefactor, Albinus (*ala2004* 83.xv):<sup>49</sup>

αὔξει Ἀλβῖνος  
ὁ κτίστης καὶ τοῦτου  
τοῦ ἔργου.

Up with Albinus! The builder of this work too!

<sup>44</sup> Harrison 1986: 130, 5.a.iii. For 415 designs, mostly of names and offices, PLRE 3.1556–73.

<sup>45</sup> Purcell 1999: 144–145.

<sup>46</sup> EAOR VI (ed. S. Orlandi), superseding Chastagnol 1966.

<sup>47</sup> Cameron 1973; Roueché 1993, 2007a.

<sup>48</sup> Roueché 1984, 2007b: 183–186; Wiemer 2004.

<sup>49</sup> cf. Roueché 1984: 190–194.

In the economic sphere, Diocletian's Maximum Prices Edict, with its listing of a ceiling price for nearly fourteen hundred separate goods or services, under seventy chapter headings, is an invaluable resource for the modern scholar, although the recovery of its full text is only now nearing completion (cf. n. 14). As in earlier periods, inscribed artefacts (*instrumentum domesticum*) are most informative about commerce and manufacture. In contrast to the environs of Rome, where brick-stamps show that the workshops (*figlinae*) come under the control of the urban prefects from Diocletian onwards, brick production seems to have remained in private hands in fifth- and sixth-century Constantinople.<sup>50</sup> A unique insight into the agrarian society and economy of late antique North Africa is provided by a cache of forty-five writing tablets relating to a certain *fundus Tuletianus* in the mid-490s (the so-called "tablettes Albertini"). These show that over fifty years into the Vandal period tenant-landlord relations were still being governed by the *lex Manciana* of the first century CE and the use of Roman forms for transactions, including a slave-sale, with school-teachers and a priest, rather than professional notaries, acting as scribes.<sup>51</sup>

## THE IMPERIAL STATE

Despite the decline in the epigraphic habit, inscriptions still provide some essential information for political and military events, especially for periods in the third and fourth century for which no extensive historical narrative survives.<sup>52</sup> Inscriptions, especially epitaphs in the Latin west, are essential for establishing the consular *fasti*, sometimes the only clue to shifting political alliances.<sup>53</sup> For example, it is only epigraphy that has preserved the identity of Arcadius son of Theodosius II (*PLRE* 2, Arcadius 1), a short-lived member of the Theodosian dynasty, too junior to feature in the numismatic record (*CIL* XI 276 = *ILS* 818 = *ILCV* 20, a mosaic from the church of St. John the Evangelist, Ravenna),<sup>54</sup> and recorded the posthumous rehabilitation of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus (*PLRE* 1, Flavianus 15), a pagan senator and supporter of the usurper Eugenius (*CIL* VI 1783 = *ILS* 2948, Trajan's Forum, Rome).<sup>55</sup> The decline in many categories of public text at the provincial and municipal level gives a new prominence to inscribed copies of acts of central government.<sup>56</sup> As already noted, there is an efflorescence in the fourth century in the inscribing of imperial pronouncements in their original elaborate Latin form in multiple copies over the provinces of the Greek

<sup>50</sup> Rome: Steinby 1986; Constantinople: Bardill 2004; cf. Ch. 31.

<sup>51</sup> Courtois et al. 1952; for a slave sale: *ibid.* no. 2; cf. Wessel 2003.

<sup>52</sup> Barnes 1982, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Bagnall et al. 1987: 58–66; Salway 2008: 300–309.

<sup>54</sup> Barnes 2007.

<sup>55</sup> Hedrick 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Feissel 1995, 2009.



East.<sup>57</sup> The most extreme example is Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices, attested in as many as forty-five separate copies.<sup>58</sup>

In the Early Empire much information can be derived from the formal imperial titulature found in the headings of official acts (Ch. 10). A development that allows a crude differentiation of texts of Christian emperors from those of pagan ones, but only in the Greek East, is Constantine's replacement of Σεβαστός, the traditional equivalent of the Latin *Augustus*, by the simple transliteration Αὔγουστος.<sup>59</sup> The inclusion of multiple titles commemorating military victory reaches the height of its complexity in the Tetrarchy and thereafter, as in the heading of Diocletian's Prices Edict (*ILS* 642).<sup>60</sup> Such prolixity may have encouraged some inscribers to omit the heading entirely in favour of the bald descriptor *e(xemplum) s(acrarum) l(itterarum)*, as was done in the copy of the Prices Edict from Stratonicea in Caria (*AE* 2008, 1396). As well as the titles themselves, the order of seniority and composition of the imperial college are valuable indicators of the niceties of imperial politics. For instance, the two-man college of Galerius and Maximian that issued the letter confirming city status to the town of Heraclea Sintica in Macedonia in 307/8 (*AE* 2002, 1293 = 2004, 1331) reveals a low-point in diplomatic relations between Diocletian's successors.<sup>61</sup>

It may appear that there was a decline in the use of full imperial titulature, but this may simply result from the fact that official documents were less often inscribed on durable materials. The opening of a letter of 337 from Constantine and his Caesars to the Senate at Rome, acknowledging the virtues of Valerius Proculus (*PLRE* 1, Proculus 11) and probably granting the Senate's request for the erection of a public statue in his honour, shows not only the full panoply of imperial epithets, powers, and victory titles in use but also the traditional formal epistolary greeting ("if you and your children are faring well, it is good; we and our army are faring well") addressed to the Senate and magistrates: *consulibus, praetoribus, tribunis plebis, senatui suo salutem dicunt: si vos liberique vestri valetis, bene est; nos exercitusque nostri valemus* (*CIL* VI 40776). The sporadic survival of inscriptions makes arguments *e silentio* fragile. For example, the argument that Theodosius deliberately dropped the title *pontifex maximus*, based only on epigraphic material, may be mistaken. The title is last attested by an inscription dedicating the *pons Gratianus* in Rome by Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian in 369 (*CIL* VI 1175 = *ILS* 771; *CIL* VI 31250); but, when manuscript evidence is taken into consideration, it seems to have lived on at least into the sixth century, with slight restyling as *pontifex inclitus* (cf. *Collectio Avellana* 113, letter of Anastasius of 516).<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the disappearance under Theodosius I of the formula *devotus/dicatus numini maiestatique eius/eorum* ("devoted to his/their divine aura and majesty"), first attested

<sup>57</sup> Corcoran 2007: 224–226.

<sup>58</sup> Feissel 1995: 43–45; Crawford 2002: 147 n. 6, 156 n. 27.

<sup>59</sup> Rösch 1978; Salway 2007.

<sup>60</sup> Lauffer 1971: praef., sections 1–5; Roueché 1989: no. 231, panel i, lines 1–7.

<sup>61</sup> Mitrev 2003.

<sup>62</sup> Cameron 2007.

for the Severans, may reflect new religious sensibilities (cf. *CIL* VIII 22671 = *IRT* 476, Lepcis Magna; VIII 10489 = *ILS* 779, Gigthis, 378 CE).

A specifically late imperial category of inscribed material is that of silver plate distributed as largesse, presumably to high-ranking civil and military officials. About twenty examples survive, from the *decennalia* of Licinius (317/318) to the consulship of Fl(avius) Ardabur Aspar (434), and all but this last celebrating imperial anniversaries.<sup>63</sup> The (often optimistic) slogans on these objects generally follow simple formulae paralleled in other media: for example, the *sic X / sic XX // Licini Augusti semper vincas* (“Thus 10, so 20. Licinius Augustus, may you be victorious forever!”) inscribed on the bowls celebrating Licinius’ *decennalia* from Naissus (Niš);<sup>64</sup> but an example from Kaiseraugst sports two lines of hexameter verse: *Augustus Constans dat laeta decennia victor / spondens omn[i]bus ter tricennalia faustus* (*ILS* 1299: “Constans victorious Augustus gives (this) for a joyous ten years, (and), having been blessed, promising (it) to all three times over for the thirty-year anniversary”).<sup>65</sup> In return it is the probable beneficiaries of this largesse who were overwhelmingly responsible for dedications of statues or other monuments to the emperors with their ever more elaborately flattering introductory formulae, as when Licinius is described as *devictor omnium gentium barbarorum et super omnes retro principes providentissimus* (“defeater of all tribes of barbarians and most provident above all past emperors”) at Tarraco (*CIL* II 4105 = *II*<sup>2</sup>/14, 939).<sup>66</sup>

Although the emperors continued to sponsor public building in Rome, their general absence from the city gave more prominence to their local representatives, the *praefecti urbis*, as their agents.<sup>67</sup> Inscriptions of the urban prefects attest significant rebuilding activity after the Gothic sack of 410, and again after that by the Vandals in 455 (*CIL* VI 40803 = 31419 [410/423]; 31890 = 37106 = 41403, 1788 = 31891 = 41404, 41405 [456]).<sup>68</sup> Official regulation of the interface between the people and subordinate officials of prefects and provincial governors is attested by inscribed edicts of the fourth and fifth centuries, which fix the fees and gifts that administrators might lawfully accept (*CIL* VIII 17896 = *FIRA* I 64, Thamugadi, 362/363; *AE* 2003, 1808, Caesarea Maritima, 465/473; cf. *Bull. ép.* 2004, 394).<sup>69</sup> The activity of central and provincial officials can be traced through the seal-impressions on lead *bullae*, which proliferate in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>70</sup> A cache of Latin *ostraka* from Carthage document the state’s requisitioning of olive oil in the late fourth century.<sup>71</sup> Beyond the major urban centres, various central government activities have left their trace. For example, tetrarchic land-surveyors left

<sup>63</sup> Leader-Newby 2004: 11–59.

<sup>64</sup> Chastagnol 1988b; Leader-Newby 2004: 18.

<sup>65</sup> Leader-Newby 2004: 25.

<sup>66</sup> Chastagnol 1988a: 19–26; for such titles, cf. Ch. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Chastagnol 1960; Curran 2000: 1–115; Behrwald 2009: 46–59; Chenault 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Behrwald 2009: 132–146.

<sup>69</sup> cf. Chastagnol 1978: 75–88; Stauner 2007.

<sup>70</sup> For example, the *commercarii*: *PLRE* 3, 1485; Zacos and Vegler 1971; Oikonomides 1995.

<sup>71</sup> Peña 1998.

*cippi* across the Syrian provinces, Palaestina, and Arabia; Volcei in Lucania benefited from an *alimenta* scheme under Constantine and Licinius (*CIL* X 407 = *Inscr.It.* III.1, 17, 323 CE); and detailed tax-registers were engraved across the province of Asia in the Valentinianic period.<sup>72</sup>

The largest arm of the imperial state remained the military and, outside papyri from Egypt, inscriptions remain the main source for knowledge of all grades below the most eminent generals.<sup>73</sup> With the suppression of the praetorian cohorts in 312, the last individual bronze diplomas disappear but the conferral of tax privileges by Licinius on his troops collectively in 311 is now attested by two bronze plaques (*AE* 1937, 232 = *FIRA* I 93, Brigetio, Pannonia; *AE* 2007, 1224, ?Durostorum, Moesia). The renewed (and sometimes extreme) geographical mobility of soldiers of all ranks, provoked by the development of the *comitatus*, is documented by epitaphs (cf. *AE* 1981, 777; *CIL* III 14406 = *ILS* 8454).<sup>74</sup> Inscribed regulations of Anastasius on soldiers' allowances from Pamphylia, Arabia, and Libya detail the internal hierarchy of the legions c. 500.<sup>75</sup> With Christianization, the dedication by military units of altars on behalf of the emperors' well-being gives way to acclamations to the Christian God and for the emperors' long reign, such as that found on Constantinople's Porta Aurea (*CIL* III 7405 = *ILS* 9216).

Following the separation of military and civilian career paths, the generals (*magistri militum*) lagged behind in the receipt of honours, but in the early 400s Stilicho was honoured by two statues in the Forum Romanum (*CIL* VI 1730–31 = *ILS* 1277–78) and the loyalty and courage (*fides virtusque*) of his soldiers were the subject of a third monument (*CIL* VI 31987 = *ILS* 799). By the mid-fifth century generals are attested as donors to churches (*ILS* 1293, Lateran, Rome; 1294, St. Agatha, Rome; *CIL* V 3100 = *ILS* 1297, St. Justina, Padua) and in the seventh century as church builders (*AE* 1973, 245, Torcello, 638/639; *CIL* VIII 2389 = *ILS* 839, Thamugadi, 641/646). It is a feature typical of Late Antiquity that sixth-century generals celebrated the restoration of vital infrastructure with inscribed verses: for example, the *pons Salarius* in Rome (*CIL* VI 1199 = *ILS* 832, 565 CE; cf. *CIL* II 3420 = *ILS* 835 = *ILCV* 792, lines 8–9, Carthago Nova, 589).

## THE IMPERIAL ELITE

Even if in much reduced numbers, the continued tradition of honouring members of the equestrian and senatorial elite with statue bases permits career-patterns to be traced through the dark days of the third into the later fourth century.<sup>76</sup> At Rome, despite their physical absence, the emperors maintained control over the erection of honours in public

<sup>72</sup> Millar 1993: 535–544; Harper 2008.

<sup>73</sup> Officers from *duces* and *comites* down are listed in *PLRE* 1. 1116–27; 2. 1295–1306; 3. 1511–37. Lower ranks: Elton 1996: 274–277.

<sup>74</sup> Wilkinson 2012; cf. Ch. 30.

<sup>75</sup> Feissel 2009: 124, 126–127.

<sup>76</sup> Christol 1986; Kuhoff 1983.

**Table 18.1 Senatorial and equestrian grades from the late second century onwards**

	late 2nd–mid-4th century	mid-4th–mid-5th century	mid-5th century onwards
senatorial grades	<i>v(ir) c(larissimus)</i>	<i>v(ir) inl(ill(uster/tris))</i> <i>v(ir) sp(ectabilis)</i> <i>v(ir) c(larissimus)</i>	<i>v(ir) exc(ellentissimus)</i> <i>v(ir) gl(oriosus/issimus)</i> <i>v(ir) magn(ificus/centissimus)</i> <i>v(ir) inl(ill(uster/tris))</i> <i>v(ir) sp(ectabilis)</i> <i>v(ir) c(larissimus)</i>
equestrian grades	<i>v(ir) em(inentissimus)</i> <i>v(ir) p(erfectissimus)</i> <i>v(ir) e(gregius)</i>	<i>v(ir) p(erfectissimus)</i>	<i>v(ir) d(evotus/issimus)</i> <i>v(ir) l(audabilis)</i> <i>v(ir) st(renuus)</i> <i>v(ir) h(onestus/issimus)</i>

spaces, so many of the statue bases put up by clients to their patrons originate from the private space of aristocratic mansions, sometimes explicitly so (*CIL* VI 31940 = 41331 [374/380 CE], 1793 [392], 41382 [416/421]).<sup>77</sup> Although the aristocracy of Rome were slow to adopt the practice, the increasing ubiquity of the senatorial epithet *vir clarissimus*, thanks to the widespread award of honorary senatorial status and the upgrading of formerly equestrian posts, led to the development of a range of epithets that distinguished those who had held genuinely high office from the mass of *virī clarissimi*. The promotion to senatorial status of the offices of the traditional equestrian service in turn provoked the emergence of new grades of sub-senatorial status (see Table 18.1).

At Rome honorific statues continued to be dedicated to senators until the practice largely halted with the Vandal sack.<sup>78</sup> However, from the later fourth century onwards the dedicatory texts change in format and content. Minor senatorial magistracies are no longer enumerated and a much more allusive and verbose style, reminiscent of the municipal honorific decrees of an earlier age, comes into vogue.<sup>79</sup> The statue base for Fl(avius) Olbīus Auxentius Draucus (*PLRE* 2, Draucus) from the 440s illustrates this (*CIL* VI 1725 = *ILS* 1284; Fig. 18.5). His early career, comprising the urban magistracies (*quaestor, praetor, consul suffectus*), now of purely local significance, is paraphrased by *senatus munia* (line 3), after which come a series of ranks and offices in imperial service, either at court (then in Ravenna) or at Rome, culminating in the urban prefecture, which earned him the title *vir inlustris*. The complexity of the text's grammar has proved a challenge to translators:<sup>80</sup>

*Fl(avi) Olbi Auxenti Drauc[i v(iri) c(larissimi)]*  
*Fl(avio) Olbio Auxentio Drauco v(iro) c(larissimo) et inl(ustri) patriciae familiae*  
*viro, senatus mun<i>is prompta devotione perfuncto,*

<sup>77</sup> Niquet 2000.

<sup>78</sup> Machado 2010: 255–257.

<sup>79</sup> Roda 1977: 93–108; Delmaire 2004.

<sup>80</sup> cf. Gordon 1983: 182–183, no. 97; Lassère 2007: 740–742.

5 comiti ordinis primi et vicario urbis Romae, comiti  
 sacri consistorii, praefecto urbis Romae, ob egregia  
 eius administrationum merita, quae integritate  
 censura et moderatione ita vigerunt ut sublimissi-  
 mae potestatis reverentiam honorifica eius auct-  
 10 ritas custodiret et humanitatem amabilis censura  
 servaret, petitu senatus amplissimi, qui est iustus  
 arbiter dignitatum, excellentibus et magnificis  
 viris legatione mandata ut inpetratorum digni-  
 15 tas cresceret, quae paribus studiis amore iustitiae  
 et providentiae desiderabantur, dd(omini) nn(ostris) Fll(avii)  
 Theodosius et Placidus Valentinianus invicti  
 ac triumphatores principes semper Augusti



FIG. 18.5 Base of a statue honouring the Roman senator Flavius Olbius Auxentius Draucus, from Rome.



*ad remunerationem titulosque virtutum, quib(us)  
circa rem publicam eximia semper probitas  
invitatur, statuam auro fulgentem erigi  
conlocarique iusserunt.*

20

Of Flavius Olbius Auxentius Draucus *vir clarissimus*. To Flavius Olbius Auxentius Draucus *vir clarissimus* and *illustrer*, a man of patrician family, having fulfilled all the senate's obligations with unhesitating devotion, *comes* of the first rank, *vicarius* of the city of Rome, *comes* of the imperial consistory, prefect of the city of Rome, on account of the outstanding merits of his periods of office, which were so strong in integrity, judgement, and moderation that his honorific authority maintained respect for the most sublime power and (his) amiable judgement preserved human kindness, by request of the most ample senate, which is the proper arbiter of honours, the delegation having been mandated to excellent and magnificent men so that the dignity of the rewards be increased—(rewards) that were desired with equal zeal by a love of justice and foresight—our lords the Flavii Theodosius and Placidus Valentinianus, unconquered and triumphant leaders forever Augusti, have ordered, for the remuneration and record of the virtues by which outstanding probity with regard to the republic is always encouraged, that a statue shining with gold be erected and put in place.

The emergence of this more florid style more or less coincides with another new phenomenon: the production of luxury two-leaf writing tablets (diptychs) in ivory. A significant number are souvenirs commemorating public games given by members of the fifth- and sixth-century civilian and military elite of both Rome and Constantinople during their tenure of the praetorship (at Rome) or the consulship (*ILS* 1298, 1300–1312).<sup>81</sup>

## PROVINCES AND MUNICIPALITIES

At the municipal level in many regions Late Antiquity is an epigraphic desert, excluding epitaphs. In the Latin West, the North African cities manifest the most resilient epigraphic culture.<sup>82</sup> At Mustis a fourth-century cycle of epigrams attests to local pride in the urban landscape.<sup>83</sup> Here as elsewhere, however, the effect of increasing burdens on the curial class and the diversion of municipal revenues to imperial coffers severely curtailed private and civic benefaction. Nevertheless, imperial rescripts inscribed by successful petitioners demonstrate the continued desire of communities from the third into the sixth century for a civic charter, especially when autonomy might be a way to be free of other burdens (*CIL* III 6866 = *ILS* 6090, Tymandus, Pisidia, ?tetrarchic; *AE* 2004, 1331, Heraclea Sintica, Macedonia, 308; *MAMA* VII 305, Orcistus, Phrygia, 324/326; cf. Ch. 17; *AE* 2004, 1410 = *SEG* 54, 1178, Didyma/Iustinianopolis, Caria, 533). The continued existence in the fifth century of patron-client relationships between the aristocracy and cities in the Latin

<sup>81</sup> Delbrück 1929; Cameron 2013.

<sup>82</sup> Lepelley 1981a.

<sup>83</sup> Schmidt 2008.

West is well attested, often by the bronze commemorative plaques that adorned the mansions of the *patroni* (for example, *ILS* 6111–17).<sup>84</sup> Although there is evidence into the later fourth century of euergetism by local worthies, funding entertainments (*IRT* 567, Lepcis Magna; *CIL* X 6565 = *ILS* 5632, Velitrae, 364/367) and public buildings (*AE* 1903, 97; cf. *CIL* VIII 4878 = *ILS* 2943, Thubursicu Numidarum, 326/333 CE; *AE* 1972, 202, Asola, N. Italy, 336), inscriptions reveal that the imperial treasury, through the agency of provincial governors, had become the primary funder of public building.<sup>85</sup> Communities fortunate enough to become the chief cities of newly created provinces, such as Antioch in Pisidia, saw considerable investment by the authorities in new public buildings and monuments (*AE* 1999, 1611–1620).<sup>86</sup> Even Ephesus, long established as the premier city of Asia, underwent significant remodelling to accommodate statues and other inscribed monuments commemorating the activities of emperors and proconsuls.<sup>87</sup> Generally provincial governors became the most frequent recipients of municipal honours,<sup>88</sup> though these were habitually offered not by the council and people but by senior officers of the civic administration. The epigraphic record documents the subordination of the wider *curia* and annual magistrates to narrower groups of liturgists, known as *decemprimi* (δεκάπρωτοι), and senior officials, known as *principales* (πρωτεύωντες), respectively, and the regular institution of a *curator rei publicae* (λογιστής) appointed from amongst the latter as a *de facto* mayor.<sup>89</sup> From the mid-fifth century, another occasional official, the *pater civitatis*, is attested in inscriptions in the eastern part of the Empire, as, for example, Fl(avius) Athenaeus on a statue base from Aphrodisias (*ala2004* 62). In the Latin West, the municipal *pontifices* or *flamines perpetui* of the imperial cult continued to perform a role long after the neutralization of their religious functions (cf. *CIL* VIII 10516 + 11528 = *ILCV* 388, Ammaedara, 526); and tenure of the office of high priest (*coronatus* or *sacerdos*) at the annual regional or provincial council remained an important occasion for the staging of spectacles (cf. *CIL* XI 5265 = *ILS* 705 = *EAOR* II 20, the Hispellum rescript; Fig. 18.2).<sup>90</sup> The new hierarchy of honours is documented by the rare survival of an inscribed register of the council of Thamugadi in Numidia, c. 362/3 (*CIL* VIII 2403 [= *ILS* 6122], 17903 + *AE* 1948, 118).<sup>91</sup> The example of Aurelius Antoninus (c. 337) offers a good illustration of a late antique municipal career (*CIL* XI 5283 = *ILS* 6623, Hispellum):

*C(aio) Matrinio Aurelio*  
*C(ai) f(ilio) Lem(onia tribu) Antonino v(iro) p(erfectissimo)*  
*coronato Tusc(iae) et Umb(riae)*  
*pont(ifici) gentis Flaviae*

<sup>84</sup> Chausson 2004.

<sup>85</sup> Cecconi 1994: 117–121.

<sup>86</sup> Christol and Drew-Bear 1999.

<sup>87</sup> Bauer 1996: 422–426.

<sup>88</sup> Horster 1998; Slootjes 2006: 129–153.

<sup>89</sup> Lepelley 1981a, 1981b; Laniado 2002: 201–211.

<sup>90</sup> Chastagnol and Duval 1974; Lepelley 1997: 339. Barnes 2011: 20–23 for the dating of the rescript.

<sup>91</sup> Chastagnol 1978; Horstkotte 1988.

- 5            *abundantissimi muneris sed et  
praecipuae laetitiae theatralis edi[t]o[r]i  
aedili quaestori duumviro  
iterum q(uin)q(uennali) i(ure) d(icundo) huius splendidissimae  
coloniae curatori r(ei) p(ublicae) eiusdem*
- 10          *colon(iae) et primo principali ob meritum  
benevolentiae eius erga se  
[ple]bs omnis urbana Flaviae  
Constantis patrono  
dignissimo*

To C. Matrinius Aurelius Antoninus, son of Gaius, of the Lemonia tribe, *vir perfectissimus*, high priest of Tuscia and Umbria, *pontifex* of the Flavian *gens*, producer of a most abundant arena-show as well as of an outstandingly enjoyable theatrical performance, aedile, quaestor, twice quinquennial *duumvir* with judicial power of this most splendid *colonia*, *curator rei publicae* of the same *colonia* and first *principalis*, on account of the merit of his benevolence towards them, as a most worthy *patronus*, the whole urban populace of Flavia Constans (set this up).

On the domestic front, Late Antiquity sees an upsurge in the commissioning by the elite of mosaics incorporating labels and commemorative texts to decorate their homes across the Empire from Britain to Syria.<sup>92</sup> Labelling of the luxury tableware in their dining rooms seems to have been equally popular, offering another opportunity for an inscribed epigram: for example, the names on the Hoxne hoard from Britain and the elegiac couplet on a silver plate from the Sevso treasure.<sup>93</sup> The Chi-Rho symbol regularly accompanies ownership inscriptions on gold and silver plate from the fourth century onwards, whereas, except for the use of crosses as punctuation, public inscriptions remain relatively free of Christian vocabulary and symbolism until the reign of Justinian. Divine favour is explicitly invoked in the formulae of the inscriptions recording the refortification of African cities by the central Byzantine government after the reconquest from the Vandals (*AE* 1911, 118, Thamugadi, 539/544 CE).<sup>94</sup> Similarly, sometime in the later sixth century the dedication of the NE gate of Aphrodisias was over-carved with a prominent Christian emblem and the naming of the city was adjusted to obscure the memory of Aphrodite (*ala2004* 22).<sup>95</sup>

## EPILOGUE

The unusual spectacle of a marble plaque bearing a copy of a papal letter-forms an appropriate end to this chapter (*ICUR* II 423; Fig. 18.6). The letter, dated 22 January

<sup>92</sup> Leader-Newby 2007.

<sup>93</sup> Tomlin 2010; Mango 1994: 77–83.

<sup>94</sup> Durliat 1981: no. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Roueché 2007b: 186–189.



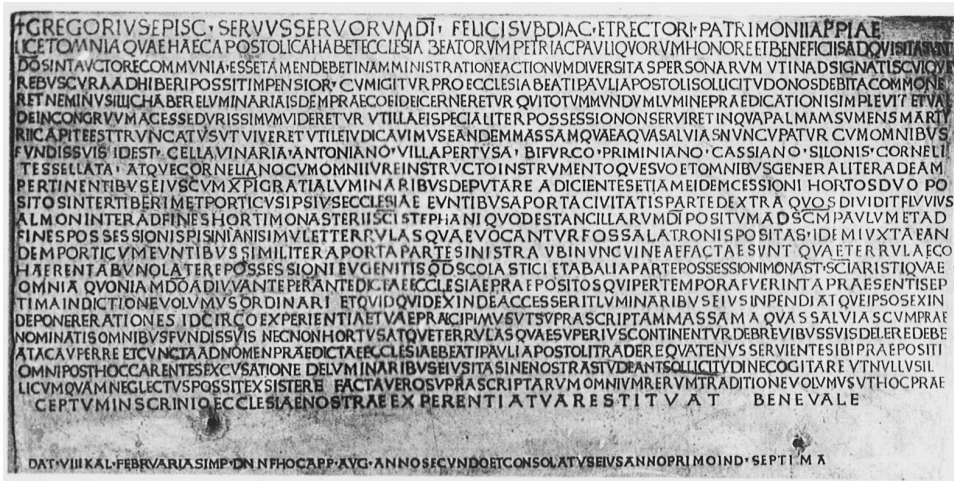


FIG. 18.6 Inscribed copy of a letter of Gregory the Great to the subdeacon Felix. Church of S. Paolo fuori le mura, Rome.

604, is an ordinance addressed to the subdeacon managing the church’s estates along the Via Appia, allotting the revenues of certain properties to provide lighting for the basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls (S. Paolo fuori le mura). The care of its layout and carving confounds prejudices about the appearance of late antique inscriptions. Its opening and closing preserve elements of the diplomatics of the document that are either abbreviated or omitted in the version transmitted in the manuscript collection of Gregory the Great’s letters (*Ep.* 14.14). It shows the pope’s self-styling as *episcopus servus servorum Dei* (“bishop and servant of the servants of God”), reproduces what would have been his personal subscription, *bene vale* (“farewell”), and shows the papal chancery utilising the fullest form of dating as required for legal validity by Justinian’s legislation (whereas the letter collection simply files it by indiction):

*dat(a) VIII kal(endas) Februarias imp(eratoris) d(omini) n(ostri) Phoca p(er)p(etui) Aug(usti) anno secundo et consulatus eius anno primo ind(ictione) septima*

Given on the eighth day before the kalends of February in the second year of the emperor our lord Phocas perpetual Augustus and the first year of his consulship, in the seventh indiction.

Here we find the *rector patrimonii Appiae* (the controller of the property along the Via Appia) adopting the long-standing practice of enhancing the utility and authority of the letter as a document of reference by ensuring its record in permanent inscribed form for public display.

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