

EAGLE - Europeana Network of Ancient and Greek Epigraphy

Making Ancient Inscriptions Accessible

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Abstract

***Colligite fragmenta ne pereant
(Collect the fragments, lest they be lost)***

The cultural identity of the entire western world is rooted in the Greco-Latin tradition; from philosophy to architecture, geometry to law, rhetoric to literature, there remains the presence of the ancients in the way we think, live, and express ourselves. Only a small fraction of all ancient Greco-Roman texts has survived to modern times, leaving sizeable gaps in the historiographic record. An invaluable alternative source of historical evidence can be found in the form of ancient inscriptions. These are invaluable ‘time capsules’ that provide a myriad of useful facts, allowing us to cast light on otherwise undocumented historical events, laws and customs. EAGLE.



Fig1.: Rome, catacomb of Domitilla. Epitaph of Demetrios and Leontia in a mix of Greek and Latin, with an anchor, monogramme of Christ, and bird (ICVR, III 7249). First decades of 4th century.

The Europeana network of Ancient Greek and Latin Epigraphy is a best-practice network co-funded by the European Commission, which will allow for the virtual reconstruction of the inscriptions’ original archaeological and historical context. EAGLE, as a part of the Europeana family, will collect, in a single readily-searchable database, more than 1.5 million items, today scattered across 25 European countries, as well as the east and south Mediterranean. It will make accessible the vast majority of the surviving inscriptions of the Greco-Roman world, complete with the essential information about them and, for all the most important, a translation into English and other modern languages. The technology that will support the EAGLE project is state-of-the-art and tailored to provide the user with the best and most intuitive possible experience. Thanks to the EAGLE’s massive digital undertaking, private enthusiasts and academics alike will be able to make “virtual visits” to the project’s website in which they can access updated information not only regarding the most important inscriptions that are normally on display, but also the materials preserved in storages and places not open to the public.