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Working Papers
4/2022

From the stone to the *corpus*: The edition of Latin inscriptions

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CARMEN Working Papers 4/2022

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.25358/openscience-8205>

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From the stone to the *corpus*: The edition of Latin inscriptions

Camilla Campedelli

In this paper I will describe how to edit an inscription. Given my own experience, I will mainly refer to Roman and particularly Latin Epigraphy and to the methods used by myself and the other authors of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, knowing that, at least from a methodological point of view, everything that will be said certainly also applies to other forms of critical editions and to Greek epigraphy.

In the memorandum of today's Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities from the year 1847 titled "On the plan and execution of a *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*" (Fig. 1), Theodor Mommsen defined his aims in contrast to those of previous editors and set out his own idea of a complete publication of Latin inscriptions.

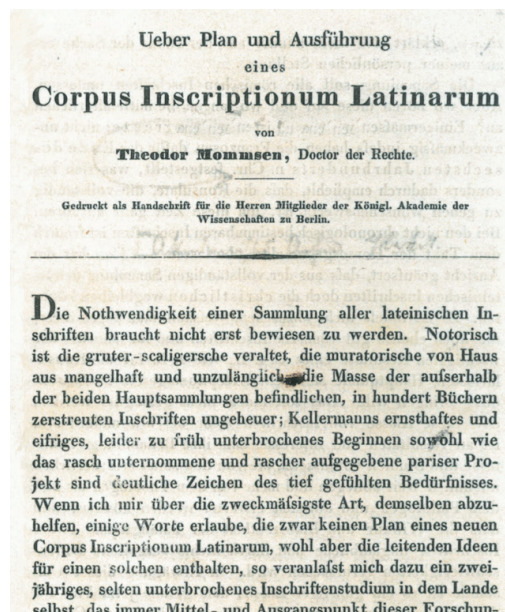


Figure 1

Along with the goal of completeness, Mommsen insisted on the principle “... that the new collection should distinguish itself from the older ones by its critical approach, since but that all criticism which does not go back to the original sources is incomplete.”

A critical edition therefore requires a personal inspection of the original monument – in our jargon “autopsy” –, if this is still possible (Fig. 2).



Figure 2

Drawings, squeezes and photographs are necessary. Moreover, the monument must be measured precisely, and its wider archaeological context, including the local epigraphic environment of the city and province, must be examined. In this way, a thorough documentation of the inscription is brought together, and on this basis first a record and ultimately the text itself can be established.

A squeeze (Fig. 3) will serve as a complete and reliable basis for restoring and editing the text. Sometimes, after returning from an epigraphic field trip, the work at the desk takes an unexpected turn, and the find needs to be reexamined. It can be helpful to draw on the aid of a photograph in this case. Yet it is much more beneficial to have squeezes.

Often a reading is impossible until the squeeze itself is at hand. While a paper cliché can be read under favourable light conditions at any time, with the sun's rays falling at an angle to show the contours of letters in the desired clarity, a photograph, be it taken with a film or a digital camera, only shows the relief at a given moment in time and can occasionally alter the appearance of the actual object. A squeeze can be even more helpful than the original in cases where the original is located in a shady or dark place and cannot be moved because of its weight.

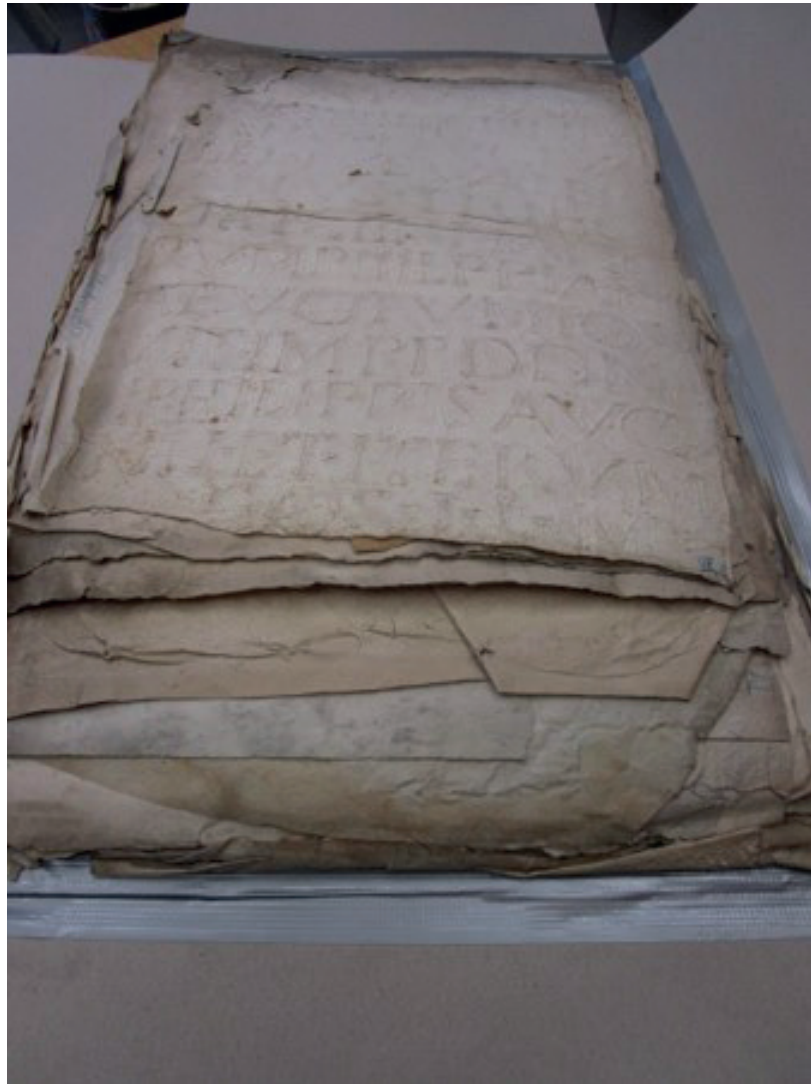


Figure 3

After seeing the monument, it is possible to establish the text. When the inscription is fragmentary, it is necessary to use the *CIL* indexes or databases (especially Clauss - Slaby and EDR) to seek suitable “parallels”. The existence of these databases has sped up these steps of the editing process significantly. The discovery of references allows scholars to associate inscriptions and to verify the existence of a particular phenomenon from any region of the empire in a relatively short time. Before the advent of databases, finding

“parallels” meant to browse the approximately 90 volumes of the *CIL* and/or their indices for the inscriptions published up to the early 1900s. Subsequent discoveries had to be tracked down in the “Année épigraphique” and in relevant journals. This procedure slowed down the research process remarkably.

When the text is established, it must be transcribed using the system of diacritical signs developed from the so-called ‘Leiden System’, which has now become the standard: the Krummrey-Panciera System. The text (or *exemplum* in the *CIL* language) is presented with all gaps restored as far as this is possible; the abbreviations are expanded; peculiarities of the letters are indicated with appropriate signs: ligatures, marks for word-division, apices and special signs, as well as erasures and rewriting, corrections and additions, omissions, etc. (Fig. 4).

Im(peratori) Caes(ari) C(aio) Messio
Q(uinto) Traiano [De]cio
Pio Felici [Inv]ic-
to Aug(usto), Dac(ico)
5 max(imo), pont(ifici)
max(im)o, trib(unicia) pot(estate)
III, p(atri) p(atricae), co(n)s(uli) III, pro-
co(n)s(uli) et Q(uinto) Heren-
nio Etrusco
10 Messio Decio
co(n)s(uli) et C(aio) Val(enti)
Hostil(iano)
[- - - - -].

Fig. α-β: Im. phot. a SCHMIDT sumptae. RIPOLL, ms. circ. 1842/43 f. 213 cum versione Hispanica; ID., *Inscripción romano imperial*, s. notis p. cum versione Hispanica; ID., *La Sociedad* 1, 1842/43, 561–567 (Pi, España 155 adn. 1; SALARICH, *Vich* 83–85 cum versione Hispanica; E. JUNYENT, *Ausa* 2/14, 1955, 148–152); F. FITA, BRAH 19, 1891, 532–535 n. 1–2; HÜBNER, II 4957 cf. p. 998. 1054* = 4958 cf. p. 1054* = 6345 ex ectypo a F. FITA misso (DESSAU, *ILS* 517; MOLAS, *Ausetans* 70 n. 5 cum versione Hispanica; VIVES, *ILER* 1988, 1989; PEACHIN, *Titulature* 68 adn. 263 n. 159. 160 cf. p. 143); G. FABRE – M. MAYER – I. RODÀ, *Ausa* 10/102–104, 1982, 304–307 cum im. phot. et cum versione Catalana; ID., *IRC* I 205 sq. n. 168 et *ibid.* V p. 27 cum im. phot. et cum versione Francogallica (CEPAS, *Crisis y continuidad* 99 n. 155; SOLANA – HERNÁNDEZ GUERRA, *Política viaria siglo III* 171 n. 155); LOSTAL, *Miliarios* 115 sq. n. 112 cum im. phot. et del.; A. CABALLOS, in: COMES – RODÀ, *Scripta manent* 295 n. 132 minus recte cum im. phot. et cum versionibus Catalana et Hispanica. – Cf. ALMAGRO, *Museo de Barcelona* 136; LLONGUERAS, *Museo Barcelona* 171; MAYER – RODÀ, *Romanització* 19 sq. 41 cum im. phot.; RODÀ, *Catàleg Vic* 38; M. MAYER, *Fonaments* 8, 1992, 214; M. MAYER – I. RODÀ, *Monografies del Montseny* 11, 1996, 95 cum im. phot.; E.

VILAS I PUJOL in: *TIR Hoja K/J*–31, 109 s. v. *Molt de les Canes*; J. M^a. NOLLA – I. RODÀ, *Anas* 21/22, 2008/09, 303.

1 *Imperatori Caesari optatissimo legit sine idonea causa* M. GALADIES, sic ut tradidit SALARICH. – 1 ex. *Messio* RIPOLL, ms., qui in universum supplementa minus accurate indicavit, *M[essio]* RIPOLL, *Inscripción*, HÜBNER, II 6345, *M[essio]* FITA, *[M]essio* HÜBNER, II 4957, *M[essio]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *[M]essio* LOSTAL. – 2 in. litt. C pro litt. Q RIPOLL, ms., FITA. – 2 ex. *[De]cio* RIPOLL, HÜBNER, *[Decio]* FITA, LOSTAL. – 3 in. *Pio* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *[P]io* LOSTAL. – 3/4 *Invic[ic]to* RIPOLL, ms., *Inv[ic]ic[ic]to* RIPOLL, *Inscripción*, *Inv[ic]ic[ic]to*, *in[ic]ic[ic]to* FITA, *in[ic]ic[ic]to* HÜBNER, II 4957, *Invic[ic]to* HÜBNER, II 6345, *Inv[ic]ic[ic]to* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *Inv[ic]ic[ic]to* LOSTAL. – 5 ex. post *pont[ifex]* verba *[max(imo) opt(imo)]* adiunxit HÜBNER, II 4957. – 6 in. *max(imo)* *[P(rincipi)]* *O(p[ri]mo)* RIPOLL, *Inscripción*, *max(imo)* FITA, HÜBNER, *max(imo)* *[O]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *max(imo)* *[Q]* LOSTAL. – 6 ex. *pot[estatis]* RIPOLL, *po[t]estatis* FITA, LOSTAL, qui casu ablativo solvit, *pot[estatis]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ. – 6 *max(imo)* *Q. princ[ipi] trib. pot.* HÜBNER, II 4957, *max(imo) trib(unicia) p[ot]estatis* HÜBNER, II 6345. – 7/8 *pr[oc]o(n)s(uli)* FITA, unum verum legit HÜBNER, II 4957: *III p(atri) p(atricae) co(n)s(uli) III, procos. et Q. Heren[nio]* HÜBNER, II 4957, *[pro]co(n)s(uli)* LOSTAL. – 8/9 *Heren[nio]* RIPOLL, *Her[en]nio* FITA, *Her[en]nio*, HÜBNER, II 6345, *He[ren]nio* LOSTAL, *Heren[nio]* *Etrusc[o]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ. – 9 ex. *Etrusco* RIPOLL, *Etrusc[co]* LOSTAL. – 10 *Decio* RIPOLL, ms., *[De]cio* RIPOLL, *Inscripción*, *[De]cio* HÜBNER, II 4957, *Decio* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *Deci[o]* LOSTAL. – 11 in. *[c]o(n)s(uli)* LOSTAL. – 11 ex. hasta obliqua RIPOLL, *Inscripción*, qui autem litt. Q pro litt. C nominis breviate *C(aio)* legit, *V[al(erio)]* FITA, *Val[enti]* HÜBNER, *V[al(erio)]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ, *V[al(erio)]* LOSTAL. 11/12 sine breviationibus minus recte RIPOLL, ms. – 12 *Hostil[iano]* FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ. – Post v. 12 *[Nobiliss(imis) Caes(ari-bus)]?* LOSTAL.

Ex tribunicia potestate IIII posita est inter d. 1 m. Ian. (?) et m. Iun. a. 251, cf. KIENAST, *Kaisertabelle* 205. C. C.

Figure 4

A number of additional important metadata must also be given: discovery location and date, place of conservation, description and measures of the monument, measures of the letters’ punctuation. In a *CIL* entry, all these metadata can be found at the very beginning, in the “Lemma” (Fig. 5).

If the inscription is *edita*, a bibliography must point out the authors who did the autopsy of the inscription and, after them, list other references (Fig. 4).

1, 100 (= II 4957 cf. p. 998. = 4958 cf. p. 1054* = 6345; ILS 517). Rep. m. Feb. a. 1842 inter oppida *Centelles* et *Aiguafreda* (B) loco dicto *Molí de les Canes*, *abriéndose los cimientos para construir una calera*, ad viam a *Barcelona* in *Vic* ducentem RIPOLL, ubi paulo post columnae miliariae n. 1, 101–105 repertae sunt P1. Inde translatum est *Barcelona* in museum archaeologicum (inv. n. 7592), ubi descripsi una cum SCHMIDT a. 2008. Miliarium ex lapide arenario rubro striato infra et a dextra fractum, in parte superiore dextra excavatum, alt. (98), (55) FITA × lat. 35 × cr. 51; litt. 3,5/6. Puncta in crucis formam redacta. Ectypa chartacea a FITA facta servantur *Berlin* in Academia (EC0007034 et EC0007035). Idem FITA exemplum novicium faciendum curavit, quod museo *Vic* dono dedit, ubi vidi a. 2008. Duo miliaria praebet errore HÜBNER.



Fig. α



Fig. β

Figure 5

The existence of more *lectiones* might require a critical apparatus. A critical apparatus is necessary when the readings of scholars who have seen the inscription diverge from the own. In this case (Fig. 4) it was necessary; you can see the large number of *lectiones variae* in this entry.

Line by line, I have noted in the apparatus criticus all the *lectiones* that diverge from my own. For example, in line 1 I pointed out that M. Galadies read “Imperatori Caesari optatissimo” *sine idonea causa*, or that at the end of line 1 Ripoll read the name of the emperor Messio in full, whereas today the letters SSIO have been lost; Hübner, on the other hand, did not see the letter E.

After the apparatus criticus, in the *CIL* volumes you find a commentary on onomastics, on the topography, on religious or administrative aspects and so on.

The last information you need to give is the date. This is mostly simple in the case of the milestones, but it is most difficult in many others cases, as you already know.

A translation should, in my opinion, also be included in the critical edition of an inscription. Although the translation of literary sources is a long-standing practice among philologists, the same certainly cannot be said for epigraphists. Only rarely does a trans-

lation into a modern language accompany the critical edition of an epigraphic text of short or medium length.

Translating ancient inscriptions is not easy. It requires knowledge not only of the source's language but also of the archaeological, historical, religious, social and administrative context. When translating, the editor is forced to take a position on the text's meaning, which consequently lessens the burden on the commentary. Most problems in translating inscriptions arise from: 1. the absence of the original context; 2. the text's elliptical form of expression. Let me show you some examples.

1. The absence of the original context

In literary sources, the word *semita* sometimes indicates narrow streets or footpaths in the city centre or in the countryside and sometimes the sidewalk; the respective meaning must be inferred from the context. In the law of the tabula Heracleensis [*CIL* I² 593 cf. p. 724, 739, 916 = ILS 6085 v. 53–55], *semita* means sidewalk, but in other Italian epigraphic sources, which are by now completely detached from their archaeological milieu, the ambiguity of meaning remains:

CIL X 5055

L(ucius) Arruntius L(uci) f(ilius)
co(n)s(ul), XVvir
sacrieis faciundis,
*viam, **semitas** faciundum,*
 5 *clouacam reficiundam,*
d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) c(uravit).

2. The text's elliptical form of expression

Interpreting inscriptions can be complicated by the fact that the texts often omit basic linguistic elements such as a verb or a direct object. In this regard, I would like to show you two milestones from Pisoraca (Herrera de Pisuerga – Palencia) in the Roman province Hispania citerior Tarraconensis:

CIL XVII/1, 209 = *CIL* II 4883

Ti(berius) Caesar divi Aug(usti) f(ilius)
divi Iuli n(epos) Aug(ustus), pont(ifex)
max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) XXXV,
imp(erator) IIX, co(n)s(ul) V.
A Pisoraca
m(ille passuum).

CIL XVII/1, 210 = *CIL* II 4884

Nero Claudius divi Claudii
Aug(usti) f(ilius) Ger(manici) Caesaris n(epos)
Ti(beri) Caes(aris) Aug(usti) pron(epos) divi
Aug(usti) abn(epos) Caes(ar) Aug(ustus) Ger(manicus),
pont(ifex) max(imus), tr(ibunica) pot(estate) IIII, co(n)s(ul).
A Pisor(aca) m(ille passuum).

As you can see, the verb is missing in both inscriptions. Modern editors have translated both inscriptions very cautiously without giving a verb.

The so-called *antiquiores* (the editors who published inscriptions before the creation of the *CIL*) translated the final part of the inscriptions, after the name and powers of Tiberius and Nero, as follows:

- the Tiberian inscription [*CIL* XVII/1, 209 = *CIL* II 4883]: “... mandó aderezar este camino, y mandó poner en él este mármol á una milla de Pisuerga” (de Morales 1792, 54f.) [commanded the enhancement of this road and commanded that the marble be put in it about a mile from Pisuerga]; or “compuso una milla de este Camino desde Pisoraca” (Flórez 1750, 37) [built a mile of this road from Pisuerga].
- the Neronian inscription [*CIL* XVII/1, 210 = *CIL* II 4884]: “aderezó aquel camino mil pasos del rio Pisuerga” (de Morales 1792, 55) [enhanced this road about a mile from Pisuerga].

Thus, in their translations of both inscriptions, the *antiquiores* supplemented the verbs *munivit* (‘mandó aderezar’ = commanded the enhancement) and *fecit* (‘compuso’ = built) and the expression *miliarium posuit* (‘mandó poner este mármol’ = commanded that the marble be put). In the case of the Tiberian milestone, both translations can be accepted; epigraphic evidence confirms that the road was built under Tiberius, but we cannot rule out that the road had already been established in the Augustan period or before. It is probably also correct that 25 years later (under Nero, according to the second inscription) the same stretch of road was enhanced by a new milestone by Nero to legitimise his power. Appropriately, the *antiquiores* distinguish between the two texts in their translations: it would be wrong to translate both with the verb *fecit*, as the chronological interval of 25 years is insignificant for a robust piece of infrastructure like a Roman road.

I would like to conclude with some remarks on digital editions. The period between the end of the 90s and the beginning of the new millennium represents a “technical turn” for epigraphy. In recent years, interesting projects of digital editions of inscriptions have been undertaken. The very first one is the digital edition of the inscriptions from Aphrodisias, the “Inscriptions of Aphrodisias Project”. More recent are e.g. “ISicily” (Fig. 6), the digital edition of inscriptions from Sicily, or the project “Keltische Götternamen in den Inschriften der römischen Provinz Germania Inferior” (Celtic names of deities in the inscriptions from the Roman province Germania Inferior; Fig. 7).

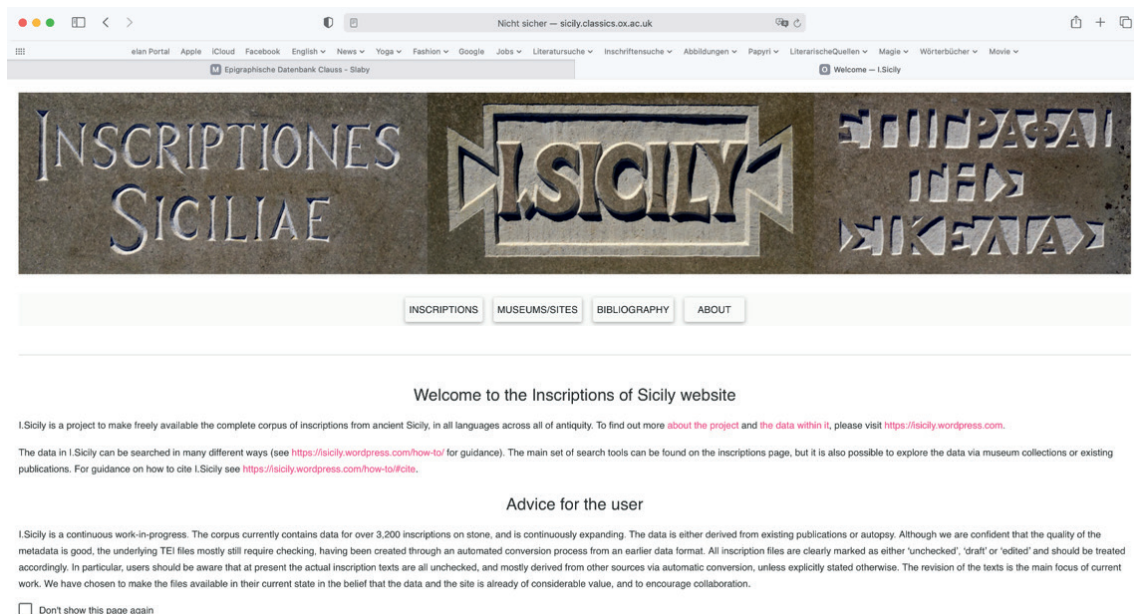


Figure 6

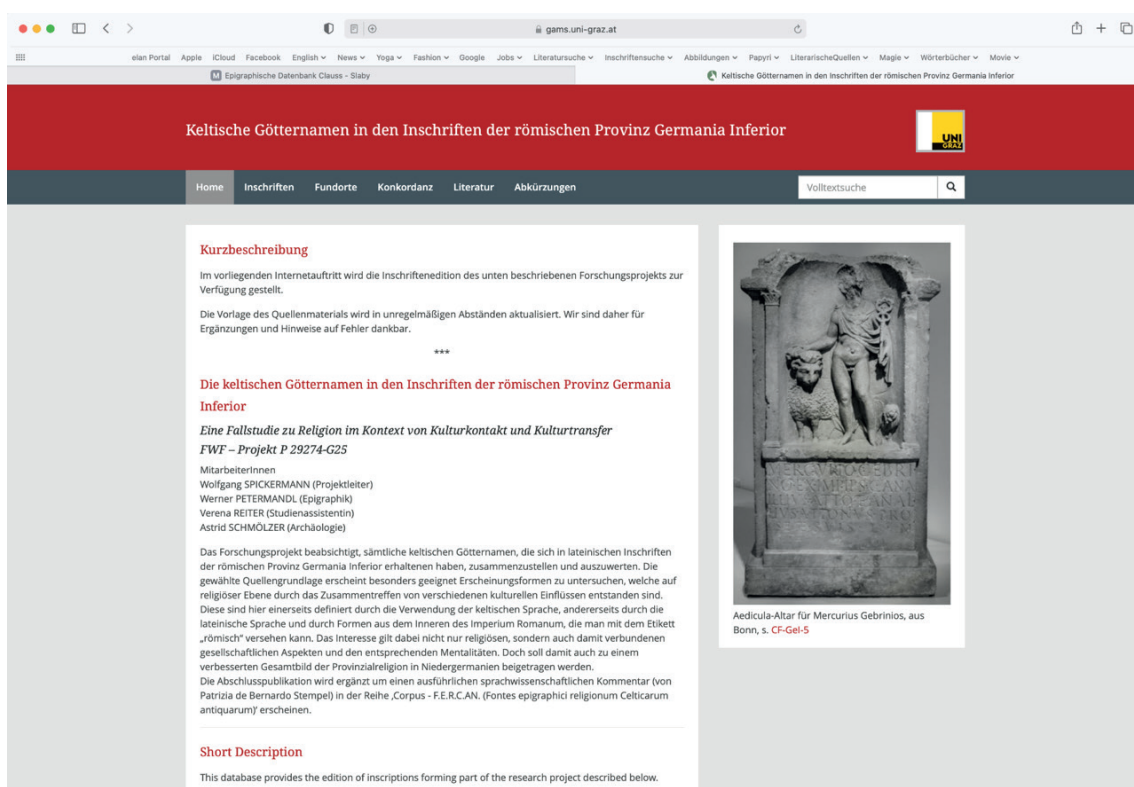


Figure 7

It is clear that there is a substantial difference between the aforementioned databases and electronic editions: while a database contains a vast number of texts, electronic editions cover a limited geographic area or a specific topic and certainly guarantee a higher quality of the readings produced by the author by means of autopsy. The advent of databases has certainly sped up the search for epigraphic parallels and bibliographical information, but, in many cases, it has also reduced the quality of the research and the learning process connected with the inspection e.g. of the volumes of the *CIL* and their indices. The presence of errors in the databases, due to the speedy upload of the texts, can sometimes frustrate the search for “parallels”. I believe that the future of epigraphy lies in the scholars’ commitment to create interlinked electronic editions that respect the standards of quality and completeness established in 1853 by Theodor Mommsen.

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de Morales 1792 = A. de Morales, *Las antigüedades de las ciudades de España* 9. Madrid 1792.