STONE-MASTERS

DIGITAL ATLAS OF WORKSHOPS IN EPIGRAPHY (DAWE)

PAWEŁ NOWAKOWSKI, MARINA BASTERO ACHA, LORENA PÉREZ YARZA, ANDRÉS REA, JULIA BORCZYŃSKA, MACIEJ KRAWCZYK

THE ERC STONE-MASTERS PROJECT

The **STONE-MASTERS** project aims to investigate one of the major issues of collective memory and commemorative practices, the transformation of Roman imperial epigraphic traditions at the end of the 3rd century CE, and the subsequent rise of new epigraphic cultures through production systems and workshops. Although carving of texts as a commemorative practice was known before, it was not until the expansion of the Roman Empire that inscriptions gained a new status. They became an essential element, central and inherent to the Roman 'cultural package' of the second and third centuries. However, the practice of engraving inscriptions declined during the 3rd century —or even earlier in different parts of the Roman Empire— to the extent that some regions began to produce only a fraction of their previous output. Where the practice survived, the epigraphic habit took on a completely new aspect that spread during the 4th century across the Mediterranean: the **epigraphic cultures of Late Antiquity**. Rather than focusing on evaluations such as quantitative, visibility or 'spectator culture' studies, our project examines these cultures by recording the production techniques and individual characteristics that allow to distinguish the styles and workshops responsible for introducing new trends and transforming old ones.

WHAT IS THE DIGITAL ATLAS OF WORKSHOPS IN EPIGRAPHY?

To study this phenomenon systematically, STONE-MASTERS has designed the **online database DAWE**, which establishes a highly regionalised **network of styles and workshops**. This network will identify the ateliers of origin for most of the inscriptions from the 3rd to the 5th centuries to trace the changes in style and epigraphic production offered over the centuries. Instead of the great imperial monuments we focus on the strategies for adapting old styles to new needs as well as the prefabricated inscriptions and techniques developed by Late Antique workshops, which hold an important significance as vehicles of cultural memory in both public and private commemoration.
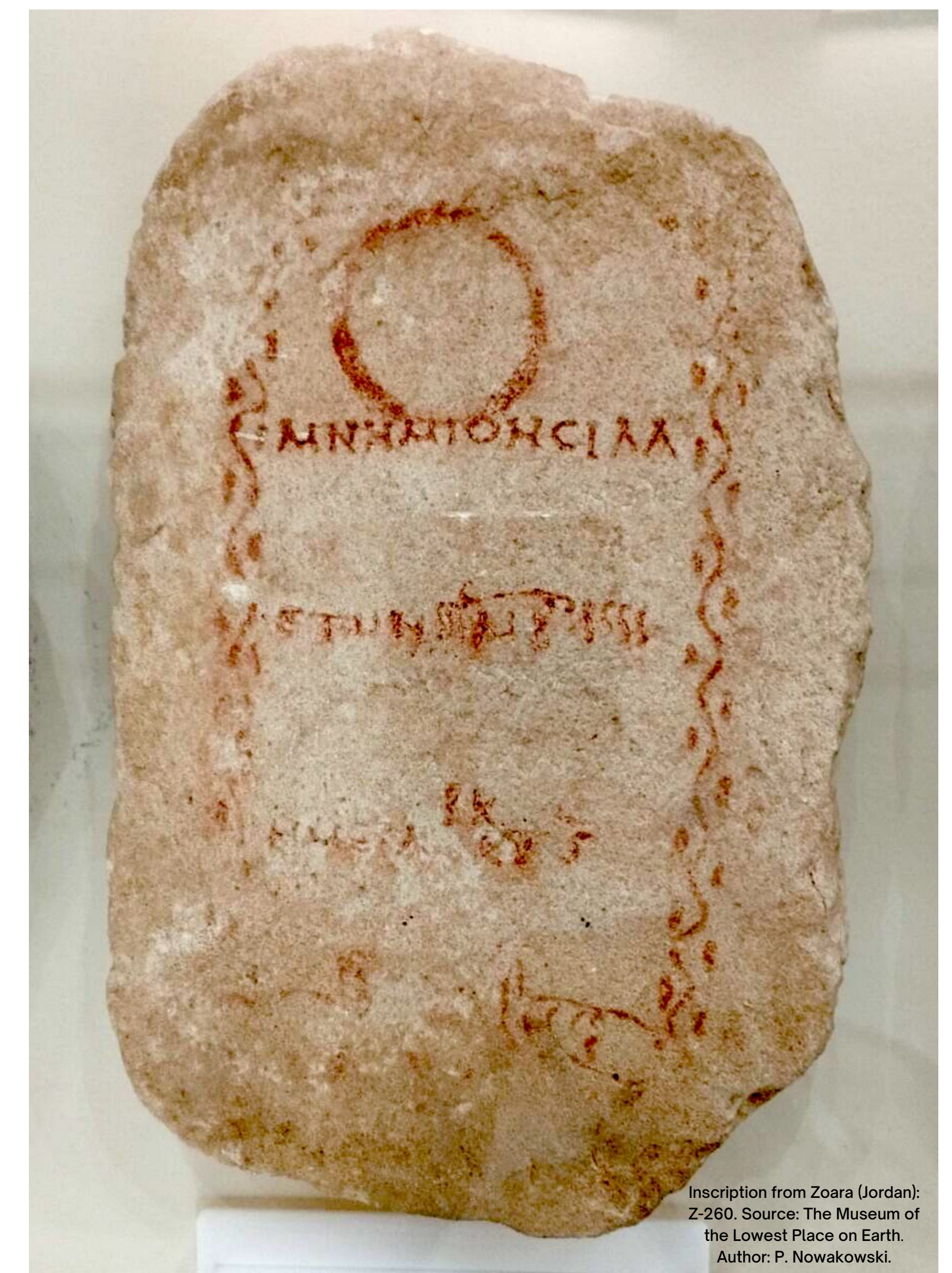
WHAT DOES DAWE DO?

DAWE database **employs workshop survey techniques** developed for other trades and periods, particularly for early Greek vase-painters and scribes/scriptoria, and adapts them to the needs of Greco-Roman epigraphy, considering **morphology, iconography, paleography** and **formulae**. By focusing on the styles of Late Antique stonemasons and craftsmen, which are key to facilitating cultural exchange, we can better understand the systems of innovation and transmission, as well as the existence of heterogeneous production centres specialising in more than one genre that develop common techniques.

AFFILIATION

University of Warsaw.
ERC Stone Masters: the stonecutters' workshops and the rise of the late antique epigraphical cultures. ERC StG 101040152.

Inscription from Zoara (Jordan): Z-260. Source: The Museum of the Lowest Place on Earth. Author: P. Nowakowski.

STONE-MASTERS | Wydział Historii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego | People | Attestations | Loci | Stones | Stonework Markings | Styles | Workshops

Workshops

Person Types
Quality

Workshops

COLUMNS | FILTERS | DENSITY | EXPORT

ID	Na...	Description
22	Sun disk w...	This workshop is characterised by...

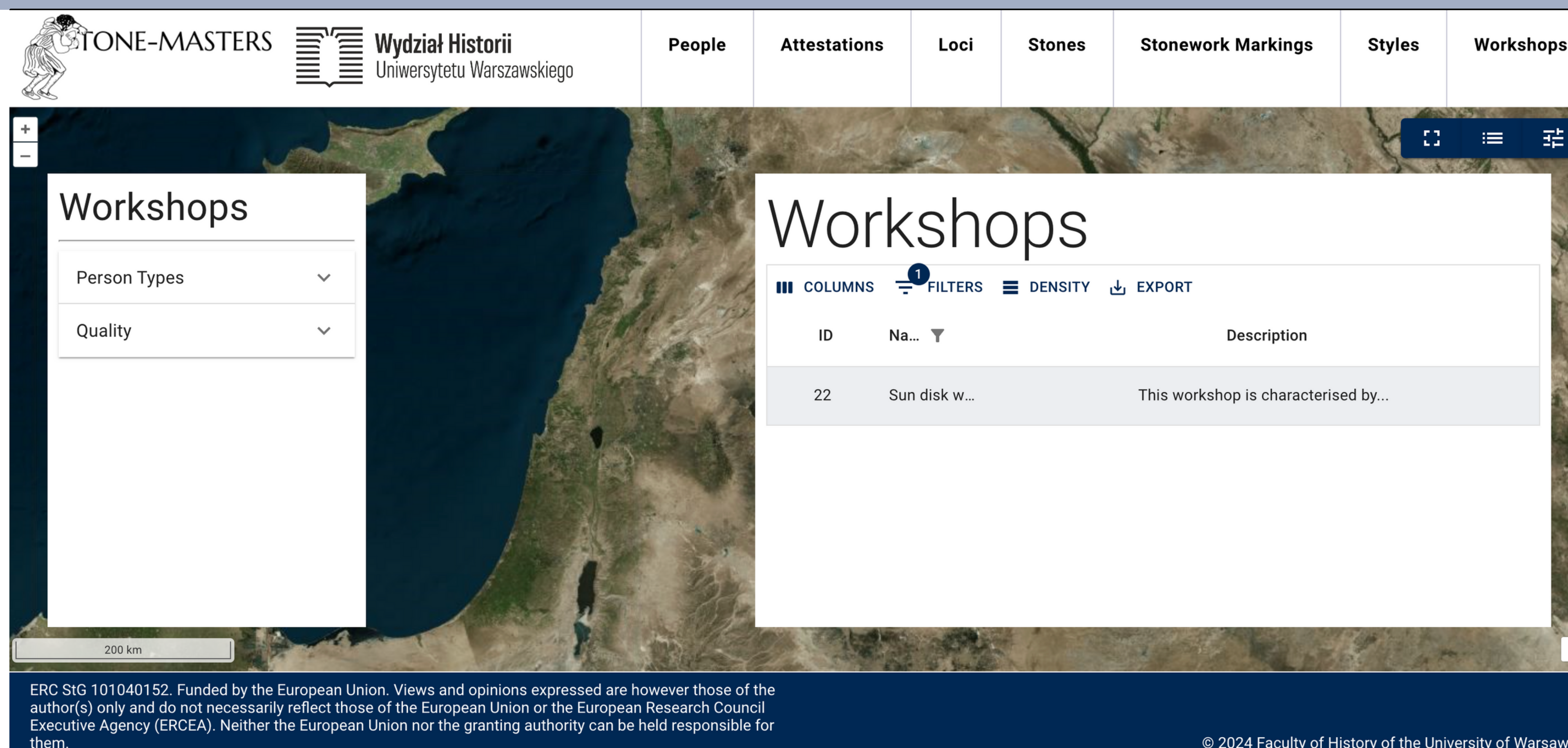© 2024 Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw

WORK METHODOLOGY

Select a corpus of inscriptions from the same archaeological site or location dated between the 3rd and 5th century CE.

↓

1. Create chronologically affiliate datasets.
2. **Morphological** analysis.
3. **Iconographical** analysis.
4. **Paleographical** analysis (controlled vocabulary).
5. **Textual** analysis.

↓

Identification of style - workshop - stonemason

↓

Data dump into **DAWE**

CASE STUDY: ZOARA (JORDAN)

The site is known to epigraphists as a find-spot of hundreds of Greek and Aramaic inscriptions dating from Late Antiquity (fourth–seventh century), including spectacular finds of colourfully painted epitaphs, while formulae are grouped in several distinctive models. By applying the above methodology to a total of 250 inscriptions, we have been able to recognise some stonemasons, whose inscriptions are sequenced like in this example:

Inscr. 96 | Inscr. 107 | Inscr. 110 | Inscr. 111 | Inscr. 112 | Inscr. 113

| 409 | 415 | 416 | 417 |
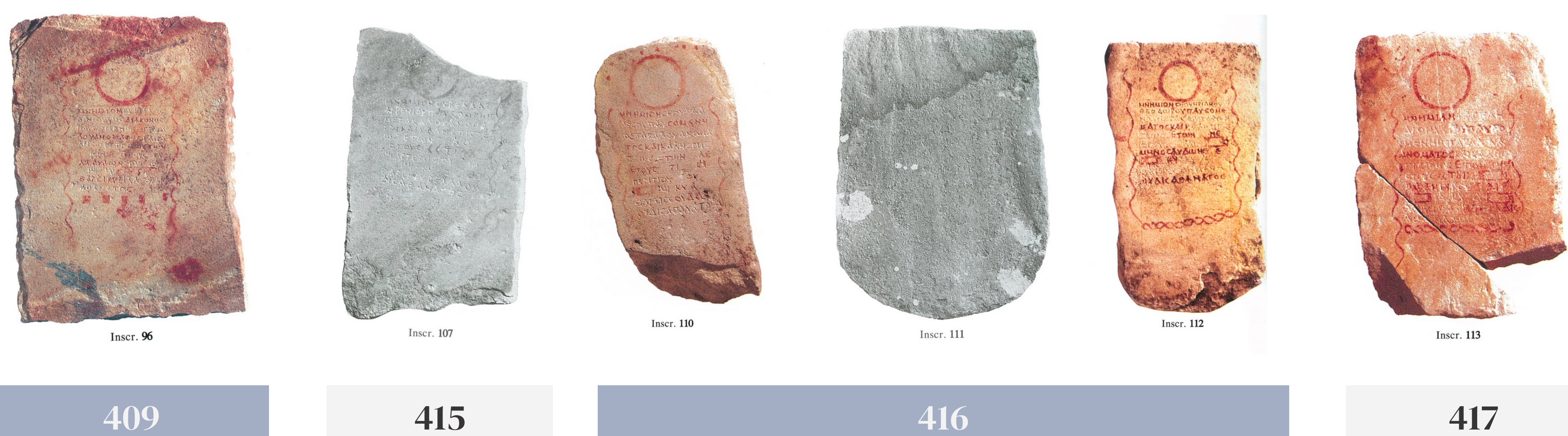
FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

1. Was there more than one workshop active at the same time in such a town?
2. Did one workshop offer inscriptions in more than one style?
3. How were the styles transmitted across the centuries and workshops?

Faculty of History University of Warsaw