

Formulae Examples

Formulae are formulaic phrases

- ▶ • This is mainly for public documents rather than private but most of the documents you will come across at this stage of your studies are public.
- ▶ That is how epigraphers restore inscriptions. By recognising and filling in the missing formulae.
- ▶ The Athenian democracy had very specific words on how to start decrees:

- The formula is as follows: ἔδοξεν τῇ βολῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ· Κεκροπίς ἐπρυτάνευε, Πόλυμνις Εὐωνυμεὺς ἐγραμμάτευε, Ἀλεξίας ἦρχε, Νικοφῶν Ἀθμονεὺς ἐπεστάτει·
- **SO**, the formula is as follows→ It was decided by the boule and the demos, in the prytany of ..., when ... of the deme of ... was grammateus, when ... was archon, when ... of the deme of ... was epistates...

IG I3 117 (or how even formulae can be taken too far):

- [ἔδοχσεν τει̑ βολει̑ καὶ το̑ι δέμοι· Ἀκα[μα]-
[ντις ἐπρυτάνευε, Φελ]λεὺς [ἐγρ]αμ[μ]άτ[ευ]-
[ε, Ἀντιγένες ἐρχε, Σιβ]ύρτιο[ς ἐ]πεστά[τε],
[**Ἀλκιβιάδης** εἶπε·...]

[It was decided by the boule and th]e
demos, [in the prytany of] Aka[mantis],
[when Fel]leus was [gr]am[m]at[eus, when
Antigenes was archon, when Sib]yrtio[s
was e]pista[tes, **Alkibiades** proposed...]

There are many 10-letter names known from Athens.

Yet, the editor here decided to restore Alkibiades as the proposer of the decree...

There is no reason for us to assume that Alkibiades had anything to do with this decree. Indeed there is evidence that “big” politicians rarely moved decrees, leaving it instead to their friends, supporters or relatives.

Alkibiades



Latin epigraphy and Greek epigraphy share many common elements

- ▶ **BUT** they also have many differences
- ▶ There are a lot more Latin inscriptions than Greek inscriptions
 - ▶ More than 250,000 Latin inscriptions survive
- ▶ Latin epigraphy is to a large extent the story of abbreviations
 - ▶ It has generally been conjectured that the abbreviation system started with names and then sort of expanded into all other word forms.

AMADDV → a(qua)m addu(xit)





G IVLIVS PRIMVS MILES
VETERANVS LEG X
GEMINA[] H S E S T T L
→ G(aius) Iulius Primus /
miles veteranus /
leg(ionis) X gemina[e] /
h(ic) s(itus) e(st) s(it)
t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)

Abbreviations are the reason why if you learn Greek, you can read inscriptions without a problem from a very early stage, while if you learn Latin, the average inscription looks like gibberish

Some abbreviations are standard and everyone knows what they mean.

- Others however are not standard and in many cases we can only guess what they mean.

