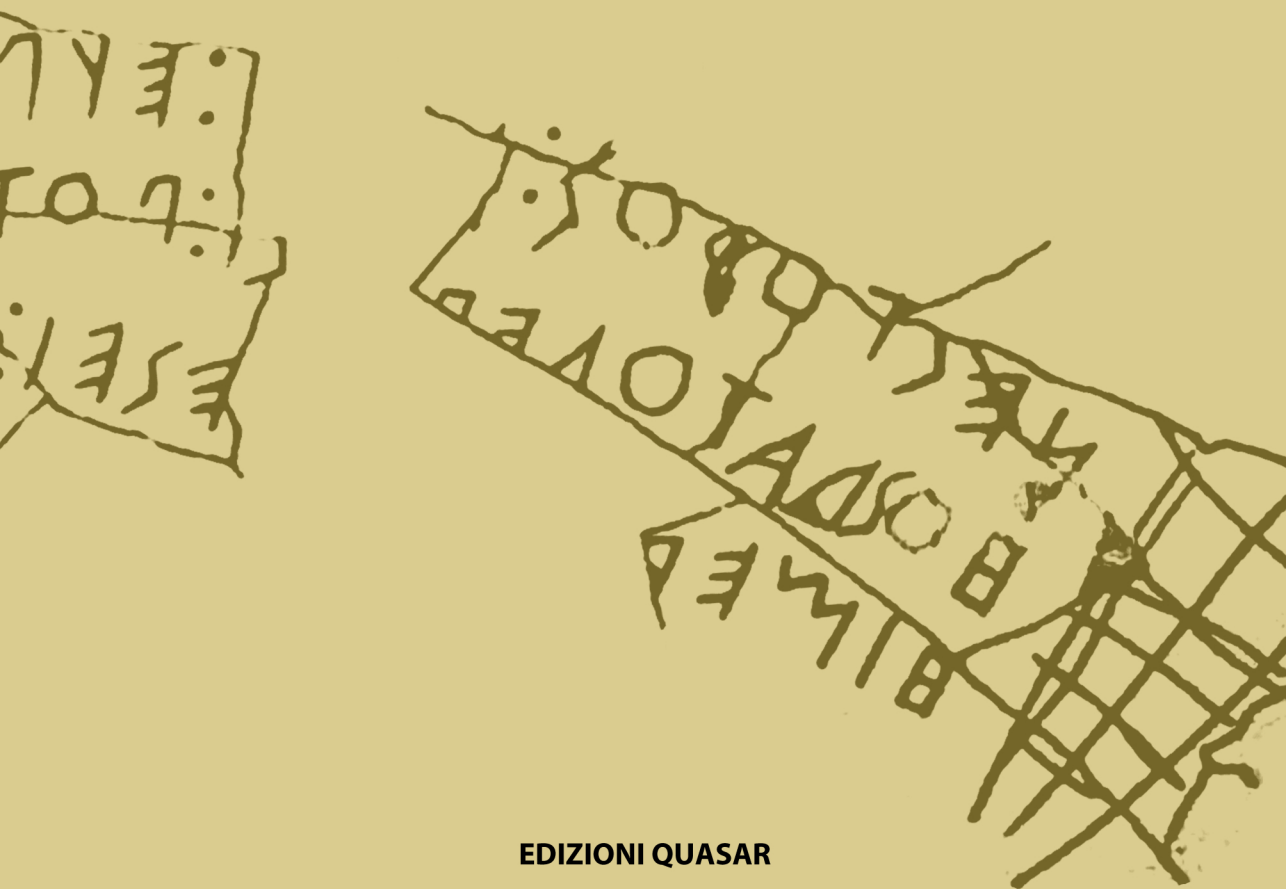


# SAEG Papers

1

Seminari Avanzati di Epigrafia Greca

2025



EDIZIONI QUASAR

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# Wikibase and Wikidata for Greek and Latin Epigraphy: Modelling, Analysing, and Making Reusable Linked Open Data

Anna Clara Maniero Azzolini

Pietro Ortimini

Camillo Carlo Pellizzari di San Girolamo

**T**his paper aims to demonstrate the potential offered by the Wikidata knowledge base and the Wikibase Cloud platform for structuring, analysing and making Linked Open Data (LOD) related to epigraphy reusable.<sup>1</sup> Wikidata and other Wikibase instances, along with other platforms connected to the Wikimedia projects,<sup>2</sup> offer free and easily accessible tools whose applications in the field of Greek and Latin epigraphy are currently being explored.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, it will provide technical details concerning the use of these resources. Secondly, it will highlight their potential impact on epigraphic research.

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\* The article is the result of a collaboration. Although all parts were conceived and discussed collectively, sections 2, 2.11a, 2.13, 3 were written by Anna Clara Maniero Azzolini (<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0425-2339>), sections 1.2, 1.3, 2.1-2.10, 2.11b, 2.12 were written by Pietro Ortimini (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0479-8553>), and sections 0, 1, 1.1 were written by Camillo Carlo Pellizzari di San Girolamo (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2699-1693>). The conception and construction of the two main digital products presented here – namely the Wikibase instance *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* and the Wikidata project *Altinum* – should also be framed within this collaborative context, even though the former specifically relates to the research of Pietro Ortimini (see Ortimini 2025a; 2025b) and the latter to the research of Anna Clara Maniero Azzolini (see Maniero Azzolini 2024b). All links were accessed on 01/02/2026.

<sup>1</sup> Tupman 2021, Orlandi 2021.

<sup>2</sup> An up-to-date list of Wikimedia projects, including also the few closed ones: [https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Complete\\_list\\_of\\_Wikimedia\\_projects](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Complete_list_of_Wikimedia_projects).

<sup>3</sup> The largest coordinated effort to describe inscriptions in Wikidata to date has been undertaken by WikiProject IDEA ([https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_IDEA](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_IDEA)), regarding inscriptions from Dura Europos; notably, the WikiProject has developed a comprehensive set of data models ([https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_IDEA/Look\\_Under\\_the\\_Hood](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_IDEA/Look_Under_the_Hood)) and has been described in multiple publications (see Thornton 2024a, Thornton 2024b, <https://doi.org/10.5334/johd.445>). The WikiProject Epigraphy aims to establish a shared data model for inscriptions in Wikidata and to coordinate related discussions ([https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_Epigraphy](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_Epigraphy)).

With regard to the first objective, an explanation will be offered of how Wikidata and a Wikibase Cloud instance operate from the perspective of data modelling (1.1), data entry (1.2), and data analysis and reuse (1.3).<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, a data model for the analysis and dissemination of epigraphic Linked Open Data within Wikidata and Wikibase Cloud instances will be proposed (2).

With regard to the second objective, the article will demonstrate how the use of traditional digital resources can be limiting from various perspectives. These limitations can be overcome by Wikibase and Wikidata, particularly regarding interdisciplinarity, multilingualism and the flexibility of queries (2). In addition, it will address the FAIR principles<sup>5</sup> and will argue that alignment with the FAIR Epigraphy project<sup>6</sup> constitutes a turning point in the creation of a sustainable epigraphic environment.

Specifically, given the authors' scientific interests, this paper will address aspects primarily related to Greek metrical epigraphy (Ortimini)<sup>7</sup> and the use of epigraphic data for prosopographical investigations (Maniero Azzolini).

## 1. Wikibase and Wikidata

Within the Wikimedia ecosystem, several complementary projects support the creation and dissemination of open knowledge. Wikipedia, a freely accessible and editable online encyclopedia, was created in 2001; since 2002, Wikipedia has been using the open-source software MediaWiki, which is continuously developed by volunteers and employees of the Wikimedia Foundation (WMF).<sup>8</sup> To make it possible to store data in a structured format, a new

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<sup>4</sup> Zhao (2023) reviews Digital Humanities (DH) projects using Wikidata until 2022. A white paper about the use of Wikibase for research in the DH will be published in mid 2026; the extended version of its chapters is available at <https://dhwiki.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Documentation>. Many examples of research using Wikidata have been presented in 2025 at the Wikidata and research conference in Florence ([https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikidata\\_and\\_research](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikidata_and_research)), whose proceedings are scheduled to be published in 2026, and are described in the special collection of the *Journal of Open Humanities Data* titled 'Wikidata Across the Humanities: Datasets, Methodologies, Reuse' ([https://openhumanitiesdata.metajnl.com/collections/wikidata\\_across\\_the\\_humanities](https://openhumanitiesdata.metajnl.com/collections/wikidata_across_the_humanities)) published in 2025-2026.

<sup>5</sup> Namely, that data should be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable; see <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://inscriptions.org/>, see Heřmánková, Horster, Prag 2022.; on controlled vocabularies and ontology, see 2.

<sup>7</sup> In principle, the approach outlined here can also be applied to Linked Open Data related to Latin metrical epigraphy.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mediawiki.org/>.

MediaWiki extension, Wikibase,<sup>9</sup> was developed in 2012 by Wikimedia Deutschland (WMDE); this extension is used by one of the sister projects of Wikipedia, Wikidata,<sup>10</sup> which was also launched in 2012 by WMDE on behalf of WMF, with the aim of becoming the database for collecting and making queryable the data present in Wikimedia projects, mainly Wikipedia.<sup>11</sup> Wikibase is constantly maintained and improved by a vast community of volunteers and by WMDE.<sup>12</sup>

Wikidata and the other Wikibase instances<sup>13</sup> function similarly but with some differences. In Wikidata, all data must be modelled in a way that is consistent with the overall structure of the knowledge base, shaped over the past thirteen years: everyone can edit, in most cases also without having registered an account, and all the structured data are released into the public domain (CC0);<sup>14</sup> the items must be fall into the Notability policy,<sup>15</sup> and the data they contain should be modelled according to the guidelines set by the thematic WikiProjects. Creating your own Wikibase instance, on the other hand, allows you to build an independent project. Therefore, it grants greater flexibility, as you can decide who can edit the data,<sup>16</sup> which items are notable, how to structure the data, and the license under which to share them. However, the advantages of Wikidata in comparison with other Wikibase instances include greater visibility, the ability to benefit from the voluntary contribution of other users and to directly integrate and compare one's own data with data already present in Wikidata. In all Wikibase instances, including Wikidata, textual pages allow users to store documentation (in multiple languages if needed),

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.wikidata.org/>. Several literature reviews on Wikidata are available: Wikidata in general (Mora-Cantalops, Sánchez-Alonso, García-Barriocanal 2019), Wikidata's quality (Piscopo, Simperl 2019), Wikidata in libraries (Tharani 2021), Wikidata in GLAM institutions (Candela *et alii* 2024), and Wikidata in the DH (Zhao 2023).

<sup>11</sup> The original technical proposal for the creation of Wikidata is available at [https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikidata/Technical\\_proposal](https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikidata/Technical_proposal). About Wikidata and Wikibase and their history until 2023, cfr. Vrandečić, Pintscher, Krötzsch 2023.

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Linked\\_Open\\_Data\\_development\\_plan](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Linked_Open_Data_development_plan).

<sup>13</sup> *I.e.*, other databases built using Wikibase.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Copyright>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Notability> (the community is presently discussing how to restrict it at [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Requests\\_for\\_comment/Notability\\_policy\\_reform](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Requests_for_comment/Notability_policy_reform)).

<sup>16</sup> Only registered accounts can edit, and the creator of the instance can create new accounts directly or by approving account requests.

providing a detailed description of the characteristics of the reference dataset, the aims of the data collection and the methods used to collect the data.<sup>17</sup>

A new Wikibase instance can be created in two different ways. The first option is Wikibase Suite,<sup>18</sup> which involves downloading Wikibase—as of now, a technically demanding setup process—and independently creating a database with it. The database must be deployed on a server in order to be accessible online. The advantage of Wikibase Suite is the wide range of possible customisations that can be implemented. The second option is Wikibase Cloud, which provides a Wikibase instance hosted on the wikibase.cloud platform,<sup>19</sup> made available by WMDE since 2022. When using Wikibase Cloud, installation and software update procedures are handled by WMDE, eliminating the need for direct user involvement in system maintenance; however, the possible customisations within the instance are limited.

The workflow on Wikidata and on Wikibase Cloud instance can be structured into three consecutive phases: modelling data (1.1), entering data (1.2), analysing data and making them reusable as Linked Open Data (1.3).<sup>20</sup>

### 1.1 Data model

In a Wikibase instance data are modelled by associating properties and values.<sup>21</sup> The type of values a property can accept is defined by the property's data type. Data types presently available<sup>22</sup> include item,<sup>23</sup> property,<sup>24</sup> string,<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> E.g. [www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_Manuscripts](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_Manuscripts) (and subpages), [https://hypotheses.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Modello\\_dei\\_dati](https://hypotheses.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Modello_dei_dati), [datalib.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Modello\\_dei\\_dati](https://datalib.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Modello_dei_dati), [https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Data\\_model\\_-\\_description\\_of\\_data](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Data_model_-_description_of_data).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/Docker>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.wikibase.cloud/>; examples of Wikibase Cloud instances regarding Classics include *Hypotheses* (<https://hypotheses.wikibase.cloud/>) and *DataLib* (<https://datalib.wikibase.cloud/>), besides *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* (see *infra*).

<sup>20</sup> In the field of classics, see Maniero Azzolini 2026; Ortimini 2025a; 2025b; Pellizzari di San Girolamo 2026; Thornton, Seals Nutt, Chen 2024a; 2024b.

<sup>21</sup> See fig. 1.

<sup>22</sup> The special page ListProperties (e.g. <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Special:ListProperties>, <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:ListProperties>) provides an automatic list of all the properties, filterable by data type; a detailed explanation of datatypes is available at [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Data\\_type](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Data_type).

<sup>23</sup> I.e., the value of the statement is an item (e.g. 'place of birth' [wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P19](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P19)).

<sup>24</sup> I.e., the value of the statement is a property (e.g. 'subproperty of' [wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P1647](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P1647)).

<sup>25</sup> I.e., the value of the statement is a string of text (e.g. 'postal code' [wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P281](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P281)).

monolingual text,<sup>26</sup> external identifier,<sup>27</sup> URL,<sup>28</sup> quantity,<sup>29</sup> geographical coordinates,<sup>30</sup> point in time,<sup>31</sup> EDTF (Extended Date/Time Format),<sup>32</sup> file stored on Wikimedia Commons,<sup>33</sup> and EntitySchema.<sup>34</sup>

Items and properties can have a label (i.e., a primary name), a description, and aliases (i.e., alternative forms of the name) in multiple languages,<sup>35</sup> as well as statements, which describe the item/property by associating properties and values. In the statements, properties can be also used as qualifiers to provide further details and as references to indicate the sources of the information.<sup>36</sup> If a property has multiple values, it is possible to indicate a hierarchy among them through ranks.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the order in which the statements are visualised can be customised using the page MediaWiki:Wikibase-SortedProperties.<sup>38</sup> Properties and items are automatically assigned an alphanumeric ID when they are created: P+n for properties and Q+n for items. If an item is merged with

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<sup>26</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a string of text associated with a language code (e.g. 'title' [wiki-data.org/wiki/Property:P1476](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P1476)).

<sup>27</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a string which can (usually) be combined with a formatter URL forming a valid link to a page of another website (e.g. 'Epigraphic Database Heidelberg ID' [wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P11273](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P11273)).

<sup>28</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a (syntactically valid) URL (e.g. 'official website' <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P856>).

<sup>29</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a number with (optionally) an associated unit of measurement represented by an item (e.g. 'height' <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P2048>).

<sup>30</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a single point indicated by a latitude and a longitude (e.g. 'coordinate location' <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P625>).

<sup>31</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a date expressed in the XSD format (e.g. 'publication date' <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P577>).

<sup>32</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a date or interval of time expressed in the EDTF format (e.g. 'dating (EDTF)' <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Property:P22>); dates are expressed according to the EDTF syntax (<https://www.loc.gov/standards/datetime/>) and converted into XSD (XML Schema Definition) in the queries; this data type is presently available in Wikibase Cloud instances but not in Wikidata, where the Wikibase EDTF extension ([https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Extension:Wikibase\\_EDTF](https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Extension:Wikibase_EDTF)) has not been installed (see <https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/T207705>).

<sup>33</sup> *I.e.*, the value of the statement is a page in the File namespace of Wikimedia Commons (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>); the upload of new files requires having logged in with a Wikimedia account (e.g. 'image' <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Property:P18>).

<sup>34</sup> See *infra*.

<sup>35</sup> The language codes presently available in Wikibase are 632: [wikidata.org/w/api.php?action=query&meta=wbcontentlanguages&wbclcontext=term&format=json&formatversion=2](https://www.wikidata.org/w/api.php?action=query&meta=wbcontentlanguages&wbclcontext=term&format=json&formatversion=2).

<sup>36</sup> See fig. 1.

<sup>37</sup> See <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Ranking>.

<sup>38</sup> *E.g.* <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/MediaWiki:Wikibase-SortedProperties>, <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/MediaWiki:Wikibase-SortedProperties>.

another item via `Special:MergeItems`,<sup>39</sup> the ID of the merged item redirects to the ID of the surviving item. Therefore, these IDs can be considered permanent identifiers (PIDs).

Language	Label	Description	Also known as
British English	IGUR III 1336	No description defined	
English	IGUR III 1336	No description defined	IGV XIV 2012 Peek, GVI 1924 CIL VI 33076
default for all languages	No label defined	–	

Statement	Value	References
instance of	inscription	0 references
edition	IGUR III reference inside the publication nr. 1336 reference edition	0 references
	Peek, GVI reference inside the publication nr. 1924	0 references
	IG XIV reference inside the publication nr. 2012	0 references
edition URL	<a href="https://inscriptions.packnum.org/text/1886857&amp;bookid=250&amp;locaton=1696">https://inscriptions.packnum.org/text/1886857&amp;bookid=250&amp;locaton=1696</a>	0 references
Triemgestos ID	274046	0 references
image - publication	IGUR III reference inside the publication p. 190 (nr. 1336)	0 references
type of inscription	funerary inscription	0 references
provenance - macro-region	Italy (Regiones I-XI)	0 references

1 – Data Model of an Inscription in the instance of Wikibase *Greek Metrical Inscriptions*; see <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q1194> (IGUR III 1336).

Data structure and modelling can be validated using EntitySchemas written in Shape Expressions (ShEx).<sup>40</sup> The use of EntitySchemas allows users to check

<sup>39</sup> See <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Merge>.

<sup>40</sup> <https://shex.io/webapps/shex.js/doc/shex-simple.html>; <https://shex.io/shex-next/>. See e.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/EntitySchema:E2>. In Wikidata, see <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/EntitySchema:E467> (Maxime Guenette).

data conformity against a specific data model, standardise the data structure to facilitate integration between different projects, and helps users enter data correctly and completely. Property constraints can also be used to automatically flag cases in which a property is probably being misused.<sup>41</sup>

In the field of epigraphy, a predefined data model has yet to be established for use in both Wikidata and Wikibase instances. However, significant progress has been made through the International (Digital) Dura-Europos Archive (IDEA)<sup>42</sup> project and the WikiProject Epigraphy<sup>43</sup>. The goal is to develop a common, effective data model grounded in (FAIR) shared ontologies and (FAIR) controlled vocabularies<sup>44</sup> that can be implemented across Wikibase instances and Wikidata inscription projects to maximise the interoperability of epigraphic Linked Open Data.

In Wikidata, data modelling is adapted to the needs of the community. While the FAIR framework provides a robust foundation for epigraphic data in general, it still requires adaptation across different levels of granularity. The FAIR-oriented layer represents the general and foundational level. Other levels, which vary according to individual projects, are not addressed within this framework. Wikidata, by contrast, extends beyond this general layer and seeks to accommodate multiple levels of granularity, a goal made feasible by its large and diverse community of contributors.

In a Wikibase instance, research data can be modelled to meet the specific requirements of individual users. However, the data model must be based on an ontology and controlled vocabulary shared with the scientific community. Furthermore, in order to implement interoperability, it would be desirable for individual Wikibase instances and Wikidata projects to be interconnected, at least within the same discipline (such as epigraphy).

The data models presented in this work for the *GMI* and *Altinum* projects are intended to stimulate discussion and ultimately create a common, effective and shared epigraphic Wikibase data model.

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<sup>41</sup> [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Property\\_constraints\\_portal](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Property_constraints_portal).

<sup>42</sup> [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_IDEA](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_IDEA)

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject\\_Epigraphy](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_Epigraphy)

<sup>44</sup> See 2.

## 1.2 Data entry

Data entry follows the structure defined by the data model; the main available ways are the following:

- I. Using the special pages [Special:NewItem](#)<sup>45</sup> and [Special:NewProperty](#),<sup>46</sup> which allow users to manually create items and properties.
- II. Data can be imported on a large scale in CSV format using the tool [QuickStatements](#).<sup>47</sup> In this case, data must be transformed using a specific syntax that enables the Wikibase instance to recognise the properties and values defined in the data model. For example, if the data item 'stele' corresponds to item Q13, the data must be expressed as 'Q13' in the CSV file for [QuickStatements](#).<sup>48</sup>
- III. The tool [Cradle](#) provides user-friendly forms for entering data according to the structure defined by its templates.<sup>49</sup> These templates are encoded as [EntitySchemas](#) or, on Wikidata only, in the [Wikidata:Cradle](#) page: they specify which properties and expected values should appear for a given type of item. Users fill out these forms, and [Cradle](#) helps map the entered data to the standardised properties and fields of the Wikibase instance. It also provides a simple interface to review and confirm each mapped item. Once confirmed, [Cradle](#) creates a new item with the entered data.<sup>50</sup>
- IV. The software [OpenRefine](#) provides advanced features for data wrangling,<sup>51</sup> allowing users to transform, reorganise, and standardise raw data, reconcile them with items of a Wikibase instance and to import them. Since [OpenRefine](#) is pre-configured for Wikidata, other Wikibase instances require the setup of a dedicated reconciliation endpoint to enable the connection.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> [wikidata.org/wiki/Special:NewItem](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Special:NewItem), [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:NewItem](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:NewItem).

<sup>46</sup> [wikidata.org/wiki/Special:NewProperty](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Special:NewProperty), [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:NewProperty](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:NewProperty). In a Wikibase Cloud instance all registered users can create properties (cfr. [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:ListGroupRights](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:ListGroupRights)), whilst in Wikidata this right is restricted to property creators and administrators (cfr. [wikidata.org/wiki/Special:ListGroupRights](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Special:ListGroupRights)) and properties have to be proposed ([wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Property\\_proposal](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Property_proposal)) and approved by the community before being created (cfr. [wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Property\\_creation](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Property_creation)).

<sup>47</sup> See fig. 2a.

<sup>48</sup> [quickstatements.toolforge.org/](https://quickstatements.toolforge.org/), [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/tools/quickstatements/](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/tools/quickstatements/); the documentation is the same for Wikidata and other Wikibase instances ([wikidata.org/wiki/Help:QuickStatements](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Help:QuickStatements)).

<sup>49</sup> See fig. 2b.

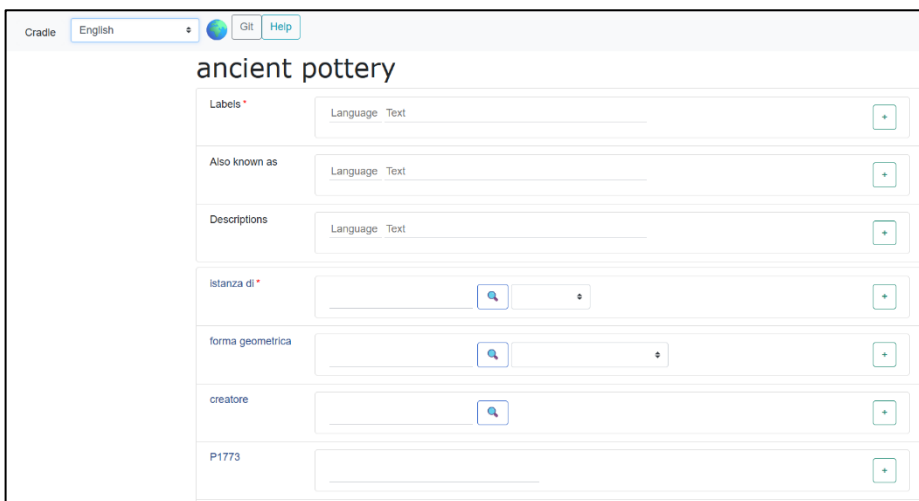
<sup>50</sup> <https://cradle.toolforge.org/>, <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/tools/cradle/>; the documentation is the same for Wikidata and other Wikibase instances (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Cradle>).

<sup>51</sup> *i.e.*, the process of cleaning and structuring raw data into a format suitable for analysis or publication.

<sup>52</sup> The software can be downloaded at <https://openrefine.org/>; cfr. Wikidata documentation (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Tools/OpenRefine>) and [OpenRefine](#) documentation about how to connect to another Wikibase instance (<https://openrefine.org/docs/manual/wikibase/configuration>).



2a– The use of QuickStatements; see <https://quickstatements.toolforge.org/#/>.



2b– The use of Cradle; see [https://cradle.toolforge.org/#/subject/ancient\\_pottery](https://cradle.toolforge.org/#/subject/ancient_pottery); a CRADLE form for inscriptions does not yet exist; it is currently under development (Maxime Guénette), see <https://cradle.toolforge.org/?#/shex/E467>.

For large-scale data entry, bots can also be programmed using the Pywikibot library in Python, which provides a framework to interact with the Wikibase API. A bot can read structured data—possibly prepared with OpenRefine—and perform bulk data import into the Wikibase instance.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. <https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Manual:Pywikibot/Wikidata>, [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wiki-data:Creating\\_a\\_bot](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wiki-data:Creating_a_bot).

### 1.3 Data analysis

The data contained within a Wikibase instance can be analysed and reused mainly through SPARQL queries.<sup>54</sup> Federated queries allow multiple databases with SPARQL endpoints to be queried at the same time.

The acronym SPARQL stands for ‘SPARQL Protocol and RDF Query Language’.<sup>55</sup> It is the standardised query language used to interact with data stored in the Resource Description Framework (RDF) format, which is the underlying data model for the Semantic Web. Data in RDF (Resource Descriptive Framework) is stored as a series of Subject–Predicate–Object statements (triples).<sup>56</sup> For example, one might state that ‘a particular inscription (subject–item) comes from (predicate–property) Rome (object–value)’, and the components of this statement will be structured in such a way that they can be machine–readable (RDF). As already mentioned, each of these components is assigned an alphanumeric identifier (items with Q–identifier and properties with P–identifier).<sup>57</sup> The most common form of SPARQL query, the SELECT query, searches for combinations of these triples in the dataset.

A SPARQL query<sup>58</sup> defines the data to be queried through the SELECT clause and the WHERE clause. The ORDER BY clause, at the end of the query, allows the user to specify the order in which the data appears in the results. Prefixes can be used to shorten the URIs most used in the queries. In Wikidata, prefixes related to Wikidata entities are automatically incorporated into the Query Service and are implied in the text of the query.<sup>59</sup> For other Wikibase instances, prefixes must be explicitly defined at the top of the query, ideally modelled on those used in Wikidata, and included manually in queries executed via the instance’s Query Service.<sup>60</sup> Once the query is executed, the results are

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<sup>54</sup> For a complete overview of the methods to access Wikidata’s data, cfr. [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Data\\_access](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:Data_access); a part of these methods is available also for the other Wikibase instances.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.w3.org/TR/sparql11-query/>; regarding Wikidata, cfr. [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL\\_query\\_service](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL_query_service).

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.w3.org/TR/rdf11-concepts/>; regarding the Wikibase RDF dump format, valid for all Wikibase instances, cfr. [https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/Indexing/RDF\\_Dump\\_Format](https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/Indexing/RDF_Dump_Format).

<sup>57</sup> See <https://tinyurl.com/298crlou>.

<sup>58</sup> See figg. 3-6.

<sup>59</sup> See [https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/Indexing/RDF\\_Dump\\_Format#Full\\_list\\_of\\_prefixes](https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Wikibase/Indexing/RDF_Dump_Format#Full_list_of_prefixes).

<sup>60</sup> E.g. [https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query\\_-\\_access\\_to\\_data#Introduction](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query_-_access_to_data#Introduction).

obtained; they can be exported in CSV, TSV, and JSON formats for reuse, and visualised as tables, charts, maps, etc.

The screenshot shows the Wikidata Query Service interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Examples', 'Help', 'More tools', and 'Query Builder', along with a language selector set to 'English'. The main area contains a SPARQL query:

```

1 #Inscriptions from Altinum in a complete state of preservation
2 SELECT ?item ?itemLabel WHERE {
3 ?item wdt:P31 wd:Q12161474; #instance of: funerary inscription
4 wdt:P1071 wd:Q441542; #location of creation: Altinum
5 wdt:P12020 wd:Q122238694. #state of transmission: full
6 SERVICE wikibase:label { bd:serviceParam wikibase:language "[AUTO_LANGUAGE],mul,en". }
7 }
8 ORDER BY ?itemLabel
    
```

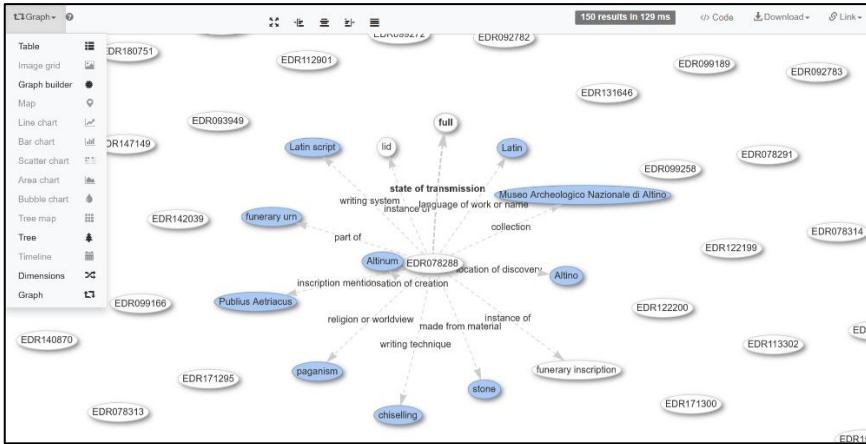
3a– Text of the SPARQL query: Inscriptions from *Altinum* in a complete state of preservation; see <https://w.wiki/HgMi>.

The screenshot shows a more complex SPARQL query in the Wikidata Query Service interface. The query includes various prefixes, property paths, and filters:

```

1 #title: all inscriptions from rome
2 PREFIX gdt: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/>
3 PREFIX gqs: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/qualifier/>
4 PREFIX gqp: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/qualifier/value-normalized/>
5 PREFIX gqv: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/qualifier/value/>
6 PREFIX gpr: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/reference/>
7 PREFIX gprv: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/reference/value/>
8 PREFIX gpsv: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/reference/value/>
9 PREFIX gps: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/statement/>
10 PREFIX gss: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/statement/value-normalized/>
12 PREFIX gdt: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/direct-normalized/>
13 PREFIX gdm: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/normal/>
14 PREFIX gdrf: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/reference/>
15 PREFIX gds: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/entity/statement/>
16 PREFIX gdt: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/direct/>
17 PREFIX gdt: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/direct-normalized/>
18 PREFIX gdt: <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/prop/direct/>
19 SELECT ?inscriptions ?inscriptionslabel ?deditionURL ?typeofinscriptionlabel ?provenanceregionlabel ?provenancecitylabel ?supportlabel ?authorshiplabel ?date
20 (GROUP_CONCAT(DISTINCT ?meterlabel; separator=",") AS ?meter)
21 (GROUP_CONCAT(DISTINCT ?layoutlabel; separator=",") AS ?layout)
22 (GROUP_CONCAT(DISTINCT ?recipientlabel; separator=",") AS ?recipient)
23 WHERE {
24 ?inscriptions gdt:P4 gdt:Q698 ;
25 gdt:P7 ?deditionURL ;
26 gdt:P8 ?typeofinscription ;
27 gdt:P16 ?provenanceregion ;
28 gdt:P4 ?provenancecity ;
29 gdt:P18 ?support ;
30 gdt:P9 ?meter ;
31 gdt:P25 ?layout ;
32 gdt:P35 ?authorship ;
33 gdt:P22 ?date ;
34 gdt:P37 ?client ;
35 gdt:P38 ?recipient . FILTER(DATATYPE(?date) = xsd:dateTime) .
36 ?inscriptions rdfs:label ?inscriptionslabel FILTER(LANG(?inscriptionslabel) = 'en')
37 ?typeofinscription rdfs:label ?typeofinscriptionlabel FILTER(LANG(?typeofinscriptionlabel) = 'en')
38 ?provenanceregion rdfs:label ?provenanceregionlabel FILTER(LANG(?provenanceregionlabel) = 'en')
39 ?provenancecity rdfs:label ?provenancecitylabel FILTER(LANG(?provenancecitylabel) = 'en')
40 ?meter rdfs:label ?meterlabel FILTER(LANG(?meterlabel) = 'en')
41 ?support rdfs:label ?supportlabel FILTER(LANG(?supportlabel) = 'en')
42 ?layout rdfs:label ?layoutlabel FILTER(LANG(?layoutlabel) = 'en')
43 ?authorship rdfs:label ?authorshiplabel FILTER(LANG(?authorshiplabel) = 'en')
44 ?client rdfs:label ?clientlabel FILTER(LANG(?clientlabel) = 'en')
45 ?recipient rdfs:label ?recipientlabel FILTER(LANG(?recipientlabel) = 'en')
46 }
47 }
48 GROUP BY ?inscriptions ?inscriptionslabel ?deditionURL ?typeofinscriptionlabel ?provenanceregionlabel ?provenancecitylabel ?supportlabel ?authorshiplabel ?date
49 ORDER BY ?inscriptionslabel
    
```

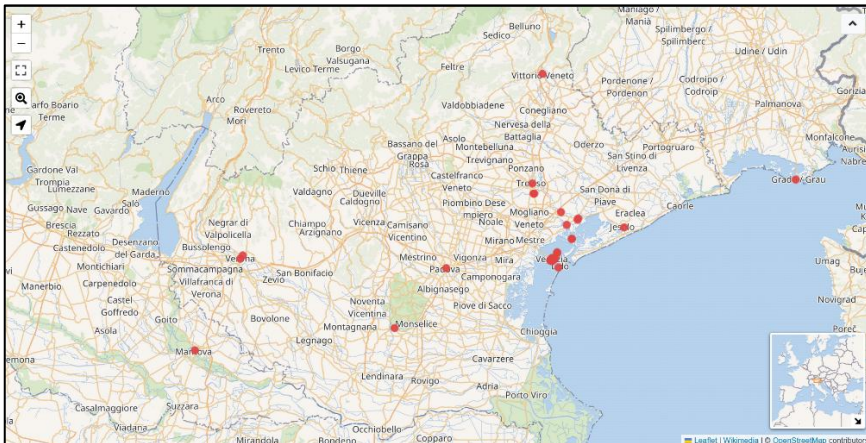
3b– Text of the SPARQL query: Greek metrical inscription from Rome; see <https://tinyurl.com/2d6pcnvl>.



4 – Text of the SPARQL query: Greek metrical inscription from Rome; see <https://tinyurl.com/2d6pcnvl>

inscriptions	inscriptionlabel	editionURL	typeofinscriptionlabel	provenanceregionlabel	provenancecitylabel	supportlabel	authorshiplabel	date	meter	layout	recipient	client
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q246&gt;</a>	IGUR III 143	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1167/762/?m=434.415&gt;</a>	dedicatory	Latium	Rome	stone base	signed	101200	hexameter	A.2a	Pius	Publius
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q271&gt;</a>	IGUR III 155	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1167/747/Abok&amp;P=2&amp;location=1096&gt;</a>	funerary inscription	Latium	Rome	stone	signed	161	hexameter	A.2a	Appia Avia Regilla	Herodes Atticus
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q272&gt;</a>	IGUR III 190	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1168/979/m=27.26&gt;</a>	funerary inscription	Latium	Rome	stone	anonymous	101200	hexameter	A.2a	Dikaioklos	unknown
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q246&gt;</a>	IGUR III 1214	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1168/507/Abok&amp;P=2&amp;location=1096&gt;</a>	funerary inscription	Latium	Rome	panel	anonymous	1771923	epigram/couplet	A.2c.5, cae.	Euthydikos	Commodus
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q246&gt;</a>	IGUR III 1218	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1168/571/book&amp;P=2&amp;location=1096&gt;</a>	funerary inscription	Latium	Rome	panel	anonymous	201296	hexameter	A.2c.2, cae.	Isakonos	anonymous
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q246&gt;</a>	IGUR IV 1532	<a href="#">https://db.mpg.de/igrls/inscriptions/loc/1613&gt;</a>	honorific inscription	Latium	Rome	basin	signed	1712997	hexameter	A.2a, dithyramb of pentameter	Homer	Aelianus
<a href="#">Q</a> <a href="#">https://igrls.net/igrls-inscriptions/wikibase/cloud/entry/Q246&gt;</a>	IGUR IV 1537	<a href="#">https://inscriptions.packhum.org/loc/1169/17/m=43.26&gt;</a>	honorific inscription	Latium	Rome	basin	signed	1712997	hexameter	A.2a, dithyramb of pentameter	Homer	Aelianus

5 – Results of the SPARQL query: Greek metrical inscription from Rome; see <https://tinyurl.com/2d6pcnvl>



6 – Results of the SPARQL query: Map of conservation sites of Altinum inscriptions; see <https://wiki/HgPr>

Wikidata offers a ‘Query Helper’ to assist users in writing their queries.<sup>61</sup> This feature is not currently available in Wikibase Cloud instances. In both Wikidata and other instances of Wikibase, textual pages can be created to store lists of queries that can be used by those unfamiliar with the SPARQL language.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, through the special page *Special:EntityData*, individual items can be exported in JSON, PHP, N3, TTL, NT, RDF, JSON-LD, and HTML formats.<sup>63</sup> They can also be exported in JSON, PHP, and XML formats via the *MediaWiki Action API*.<sup>64</sup>

## 2. Wiki-Linked Open Data and Epigraphy

Having outlined the structure of Wikibase and Wikidata, this article now examines their applications within the field of Epigraphy, suggesting that developments in the field may also inform other areas of the Digital Humanities.<sup>65</sup> Linked Open Data enables this circulation and reuse of digital practices by fostering interoperability among projects, facilitating the sharing of information, and supporting the development of open knowledge networks.<sup>66</sup>

In the epigraphic context, existing resources often focus on limited sets of inscriptions or on specific disciplinary aspects. Moreover, many of these resources are neither multilingual nor flexible, limiting their accessibility and usability. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a comprehensive, widely accessible, and highly queryable database. It is essential to model epigraphic data in a way that not only captures but also thoroughly represents each key aspect (such as object, material, place of production, place of discovery, dating, type of inscription, text, palaeography, mentioned individuals, references, etc.) while

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<sup>61</sup> [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL\\_query\\_service/Query\\_Helper](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL_query_service/Query_Helper).

<sup>62</sup> E.g. [https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL\\_query\\_service/queries](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:SPARQL_query_service/queries), [https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query\\_-\\_access\\_to\\_data](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query_-_access_to_data) (all the queries available in the instance of Wikibase *Greek Metrical Inscriptions*), <https://hypotheis.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query> (all the queries in the instance of Wikibase *Hypotheis*), <https://datalib.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Query> (all the queries in the instance of Wikibase *Datalib*).

<sup>63</sup> [wikidata.org/wiki/Special:EntityData](https://wikidata.org/wiki/Special:EntityData), [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:EntityData](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Special:EntityData)

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.wikidata.org/w/api.php>, <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/w/api.php>.

<sup>65</sup> Concerning the use of Semantic Web in Digital Humanities see Hyvönen 2020; on Wikidata and DH Zhao 2023.

<sup>66</sup> On Linked Open Data and Epigraphy, see Orlandi 2021, 6-7; Tupman 2021; Middle 2024.

linking to recognised authorities and vocabularies, including standardised epigraphic source identifiers, and recording as many additional details as possible, even beyond strictly epigraphic information.

Within this framework, the wiki ecosystem assumes a particularly significant role, as it encourages continuous interaction between disciplines and among communities of collaborators with diverse expertise, often extending beyond the field of the Digital Humanities. This characteristic contributes to the creation of a dynamic and collaborative environment, in which Epigraphy can engage in dialogue with other fields of knowledge, benefiting from approaches, methodologies, and tools developed elsewhere. Epigraphy occupies a research landscape that is profoundly interdisciplinary, drawing upon competencies and methodologies from areas such as palaeography, archaeology, history, prosopography, geography, and geology, alongside more recently emerging domains, such as digital imaging documentation and so forth. While this plurality of approaches constitutes an invaluable resource for the interpretation of epigraphic materials, it simultaneously poses significant challenges in the management, integration, and representation of data.

Efforts undertaken in recent years to harmonise and render epigraphic data interoperable within Wikidata, however, offer encouraging prospects for the future. The current objective is to continue and consolidate the standardisation process initiated in 2022 by the parallel projects *IDEA*, *Altinum*,<sup>67</sup> and *Greek Metrical Inscriptions (GMI)*,<sup>68</sup> through the coordinated adoption of Wikidata and Wikibase as reference infrastructures for data modelling, sharing, and reuse. These Wiki-epigraphy projects aim to contribute to the creation of a common data model for Greek and Latin epigraphy, providing a framework to model, analyse, and make epigraphic Linked Open Data reusable. Establishing this common data model is the only way to achieve true interoperability among digital Wiki-tools used to generate Linked Open Data related to epigraphy.

In this regard, the starting point involves referring to shared controlled vocabularies. The projects described hereafter follow the FAIR Epigraphic Vocabularies;<sup>69</sup> for fields not covered by these, the EAGLE vocabularies<sup>70</sup> are

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<sup>67</sup> [wikidata.org/wiki/User:Anna\\_Clara\\_Maniero\\_Azzolini/Altinum](https://wikidata.org/wiki/User:Anna_Clara_Maniero_Azzolini/Altinum).

<sup>68</sup> [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/).

<sup>69</sup> <https://ontology.inscriptiones.org/index.html>; see Asif, Heřmánková, Horster, Prag 2024.

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies/>; see Evangelisti, Liuzzo 2021; Liuzzo 2015.

employed, alongside the Poésie Épigraphique thesaurus, which focuses on metrical and layout aspects.<sup>71</sup>

Below, the data modelling employed thus far is illustrated, particularly as developed within the *Altinum* and *GMI* projects, which have served as an initial proving ground for the authors in establishing effective standards for the representation of epigraphic information.

The following sections explore potential data modelling and analysing approaches for inscription-related datasets within Wikibase Cloud instances and Wikidata. In the case of Wikidata, we will refer to the dataset modelled within the WikiProject *Altinum*, while for Wikibase Cloud, reference will be made to the Wikibase instance *GMI*.

### 2.1 Bibliographic information and images

In *GMI*, each inscription<sup>72</sup> features the acronym and numbering of the reference edition as its English label; other editions are listed as aliases and as items linked to the ‘editions’ property, which uses a qualifier (P20) to specify the inscription number and/or the edition’s page numbers. The URL of the digital edition and the bibliographic reference for existing translations are provided (P7; P68).

Each edition<sup>73</sup> is an item with structured data including bibliographic references (P34), the publication’s URL or DOI (P33), standard abbreviations (P76), the author (P44, also represented as an item),<sup>74</sup> and the reference geographical area for geographical *corpora*.<sup>75</sup> Through queries, it is possible to obtain concordances<sup>76</sup> or, for example, isolate specific types of inscriptions published in a certain edition,<sup>77</sup> or editions containing metrical inscriptions related to a specific geographical area.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> <https://ark.mom.fr/ark:/76609/poe-j01pqj275rgkdbmwqhvw>; see Ortimini 2025b, 52-53; Santin 2025, 18.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q14> (*l.Egypte métriques* 26).

<sup>73</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q33> (*l.Egypte métriques*).

<sup>74</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q589> (Étienne Bernand).

<sup>75</sup> See 2.4.

<sup>76</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/22c5pdm>.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/25e5oxbh> (all the inscriptions in iambic trimeters published in Peek, *GV*).

<sup>78</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/27sgft94> (metrical inscriptions from Egypt).

Regarding images, the URL of images available online is reported (P7) alongside the bibliographic reference to the edition where the photo is published (P12). Reference is also made to any copies (P17), for which the author of the copy is mentioned as an item via a qualifier (P21). Queries allow for the visualization of different types of images for each individual inscription or, for instance, the identification of which inscriptions in a specific *corpus* have an available photo, copy, or online image.<sup>79</sup>

## 2.2 Type of inscription

In *GMI*, the type of inscription is indicated by P6. Each type of inscription constitutes an item.<sup>80</sup> For every language used, the primary name is indicated in the label, while other names referring to the same type are included as aliases. The statements provide the definition of that type of inscription (P40) based on the classification proposed in the FAIR Epigraphic Vocabularies,<sup>81</sup> with the link provided as a reference.

Numerous queries can be performed; for example, one can collect inscriptions belonging to a certain type within a specific territory,<sup>82</sup> in relation to the type of clients/recipient,<sup>83</sup> meter,<sup>84</sup> or layout.<sup>85</sup>

## 2.3 Object

In *GMI*, data regarding the object is structured using P10 referring to an item identifying the type of object,<sup>86</sup> whose naming in various languages follows the EAGLE vocabularies.<sup>87</sup> Material<sup>88</sup> and state of preservation<sup>89</sup> are expressed as items through qualifiers (P30; P32), while object measurements are expressed as quantities (cm/m). Distinct properties indicate the writing technique (P81) and the object's place of preservation (P69), citing the source of the

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<sup>79</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/28bqwbwk> (metrical inscriptions from Bithynia with references to the images and copies available).

<sup>80</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q10> (funerary inscription).

<sup>81</sup> [https://ontology.inscriptiones.org/type\\_of\\_inscription](https://ontology.inscriptiones.org/type_of_inscription).

<sup>82</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/27228h26> (*proskynemata* from Egypt).

<sup>83</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2d63oba9> (agonistic inscriptions).

<sup>84</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2cj5489j> (funerary inscriptions in iambic meters).

<sup>85</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2bmssttd8> (funerary inscriptions with signs/vacat to mark the end of the verse).

<sup>86</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q304> (altar).

<sup>87</sup> <https://www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies/>.

<sup>88</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q104> (marble).

<sup>89</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q113> (intact).

latter as a reference. Each place of preservation is itself an item,<sup>90</sup> reporting the link to the institution's website, its location, and the corresponding Wikidata item (P45).

Queries can be performed concerning the type of object and material, inscription type and/or geographical origin, place of preservation, and writing technique.<sup>91</sup>

In Wikidata (*Altinum*), both the inscription type and the object type are currently entered as values for the 'instance of' property (P31). Since Wikidata properties have constraints, it is necessary to use 'instance of' to indicate that the item represents both a text and an object; indeed, some properties, such as 'language of work or name' (P407), must be used for text-related items, while others, like 'material used' (P186), are for object-related items. An alternative solution would be creating distinct items for inscriptions as texts and for the objects that preserve them.<sup>92</sup>

#### 2.4 Geographical provenance

In *GMI*, regarding geographical origin, the modelling is based on seven properties: macro-area (P5), macro-region (P27), region (P16), sub-region (P28), city (P4), and place (P14). Each geographical location is an item,<sup>93</sup> having labels and aliases in multiple languages. The type of place is specified (e.g. region or city), alongside its Wikidata item (P45), the Trismegistos Places ID (P47), the Pleiades ID (P42), the ToposText ID (P48), and the editions (P24) associated to that geographical location.

Through queries, one can identify places in a certain region where metrical inscriptions are attested,<sup>94</sup> find editions containing metrical inscriptions from a specific area,<sup>95</sup> or gather a *corpus* of metrical inscriptions from a specific city, region, or macro-area, narrowing the search by inscription type, specific commissioners, or meter.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, thanks to the geographical coordinates of

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<sup>90</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q829> (Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung).

<sup>91</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2beezbbt> (metrical inscriptions on marble stele).

<sup>92</sup> See Bodard *et alii* 2021.

<sup>93</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q15> (Antinoopolis).

<sup>94</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/256tf2zh> (cities in Egypt).

<sup>95</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2d3jjn3c> (editions – Italy).

<sup>96</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/23jmwk66> (funerary inscriptions dedicated to women from Cyrenaica).

the findspot and the place of production, it is possible to track the movement of inscriptions. The query service can visualise these data in the form of a map.<sup>97</sup>

### 2.5 Dating

In *GMI*, dating is expressed through an EDTF (Extended Date/Time Format) property (P22),<sup>98</sup> which allows for detailed and flexible representation of dates and time intervals. Dating indications in editions are translated into numerical values following guidelines from projects like EAGLE and EDR; additionally, EDTF allows for expressing uncertainty by adding a question mark after the numerical value. A qualifier for the EDTF value (P23) cites the edition's text regarding the dating, making various dating proposals across different editions searchable.

Encoding chronological data in Wikidata presents some challenges.<sup>99</sup> In the *Altinum* project, dating was handled using the qualifiers P1319 (earliest date) and P1326 (latest date), consistent with the EDR database method. This approach has limitations. Specifically, to represent an interval in Wikidata, an intermediate date must also be specified as a value of the 'inception' property (P571)<sup>100</sup> (a system that conforms more to computational logic than epigraphic logic). This can generate ambiguity, especially for intervals spanning several centuries. This choice also proved limiting for queries, making the system less accessible to scholars who are not experts in data modelling. For example, to search for inscriptions from the 3rd century AD, one must use '+200-01-01T00:00:00Z/9' as the earliest date and '+300-01-01T00:00:00Z/9' as the latest. In this syntax, 'T00:00:00Z' indicates a conventional time (UTC midnight) and '/9' represents the precision level (7 for century, 9 for year). This system, while technically functional, moves away from an intuitive and historically faithful data presentation.

### 2.6 Length of the text

In *GMI*, the length of the text is expressed by a property (P19) linked to a quantity value, using lines, verses, lines in prose, rhythmic lines as units of

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<sup>97</sup> See 1.3.

<sup>98</sup> [EDTF example property - Wikibase EDTF - Demo Wiki](#)

<sup>99</sup> Cfr. <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Help:Dates>; as previously said (see 1.1), using the EDTF format for dates is not presently possible in Wikidata.

<sup>100</sup> [https://w.wiki/J\\$aW](https://w.wiki/J$aW).

measurement. A qualifier (P31) is used to indicate whether the text is complete or incomplete. This enables queries regarding text length—for example, to identify so-called *epigrammata longa* (those exceeding the indicative threshold of 15 verses, see Agosti 2008; Garulli 2008)—also in relation to other data, such as the type of meter.<sup>101</sup>

### 2.7 Number of inscriptions on the object

In *GMI*, data regarding the presence of multiple inscriptions on the same object is expressed through P52. The term ‘multiple inscriptions’ was chosen to distinguish cases where an object bears two or more metrical inscriptions from those where metrical inscriptions are accompanied by prose.<sup>102</sup> Queries can be performed to identify multiple inscriptions belonging to a specific typology, or those featuring different languages or meters.<sup>103</sup>

### 2.8 Language

The language of the inscription is indicated by P53, associated with items representing the different languages.<sup>104</sup> These data allow for queries on bilingual inscriptions, which can also be combined with other data points such as inscription type, meter, and geographical origin.<sup>105</sup>

### 2.9 Meter

In *GMI*, the meter is expressed by a property (P8) associated with the various types of meters, which are represented as items.<sup>106</sup> The types of meter are divided into two groups. The first group includes those meters definable as ‘verses’. The second group comprises rhythmic sequences that cannot be defined as verses but rather as rhythmic units: *metra* and *cola*.<sup>107</sup> For each type of meter, the terminology has labels and aliases in multiple languages; the

<sup>101</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/26ggzb72> (*epigrammata longa* in iambic trimeter).

<sup>102</sup> The items associated with P52 are: Q639 (single inscriptions: single metrical inscription on the object); Q640 (multiple inscriptions - meter: two or more metrical inscriptions on the same object); Q642 (multiple inscriptions - meter (1)/prose (1+): one metrical inscription and one or more inscriptions in prose on the same object); Q832 (multiple inscription - meter (1+)/prose (1+): one or more metrical inscriptions and one or more inscriptions in prose on the same object).

<sup>103</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/24ba8urz> (multiple funerary inscriptions in verse and prose).

<sup>104</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q644> (Greek).

<sup>105</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/29p8exaa> (multiple bilingual inscriptions).

<sup>106</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q24> (hexameter).

<sup>107</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q1065> (adonic *colon*).

definition (P40), the metrical scheme (P78), and the corresponding Wikidata item (P45) are provided.

Queries can be performed to study the use of a single type of meter or a specific combination of meters within the inscriptions, including filters for geographical area and/or type of inscriptions.<sup>108</sup>

### 2.10 Layout

In *GMI*, data regarding layout typology is structured and classified according to the metrical structure of the text, referring to specific types identified by alphanumeric codes:<sup>109</sup> A.1, the layout does not follow the metrical structure; A.2, the layout follows the metrical structure. Specifically, A.2a, 1 line = 1 verse; A.2b, featuring a *vacat* and/or a sign to mark the end of the verse; A.2c, verses arranged over two or three lines, without *eisthesis* of the second part of the verse (A.2c.1), or with *eisthesis* of the second part (A.2c.2). The abbreviation *cae.* (*caesura*) is used when verses are divided based on *caesurae*.<sup>110</sup> Each typology<sup>111</sup> is represented as an item connected to the ‘layout’ property (P15).

Queries can be performed to identify the attestation of various layout types within a specific geographical area, in relation to other characteristics such as the type of meter, type of inscription, clients and recipients.<sup>112</sup>

#### 2.11a Clients and recipients

In *GMI*, clients and recipients are represented as items linked via properties P37 and P38 in the items of the inscriptions. These items use the individual’s proper name as label,<sup>113</sup> or the term ‘anonymous’ if the identity is unknown.<sup>114</sup> Detailed descriptions of these individuals use properties such as P50 (gender), P57 (age descriptions, e.g. ‘old’), and P58 (age in years). Furthermore, their

<sup>108</sup> E.g. [tinyurl.com/26g2a7bf](https://tinyurl.com/26g2a7bf) (inscriptions in iambic trimeters from Egypt); [tinyurl.com/2y5bc5q7](https://tinyurl.com/2y5bc5q7) (inscriptions in iambic trimeters and hexameters).

<sup>109</sup> See [greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Data\\_model\\_-\\_description\\_of\\_data#Layout\\_\(P15\)](https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Data_model_-_description_of_data#Layout_(P15)).

<sup>110</sup> See Agosti 2010, 76-89.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q32> (A.2a, 1 line = 1 verse).

<sup>112</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2yhtjpc5> (metrical inscriptions in elegiac couplets with verses divided according to *caesurae*); <https://tinyurl.com/23rc5xvu> (*proskynemata* with layout type A.2a, 1 line = 1 verse); <https://tinyurl.com/2fkufjot> (inscriptions from Cyrenaica with a *vacat*/sign to mark the end of the verse, A.2b); <https://tinyurl.com/29r564g9> (*eisthesis* of pentameters).

<sup>113</sup> E.g. <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q721> (the slave Epitynchanon).

<sup>114</sup> <https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q331>.

profiles include family status (e.g. P65 ‘wife’), social role (P51), and religious affiliation (P55). Distinct classifications are also provided for deities (Q310), mythological figures (Q261), and animals (Q839) through property P3, with the specific animal species defined by P73.

The data regarding clients/recipients can be analysed through queries in combination with other data—for instance, the type of inscription and the client/recipient’s gender, age, and social role.<sup>115</sup>

The structuring of data regarding clients and recipients can be instrumental for conducting comprehensive prosopographical research, as will be demonstrated in the following section.

### 2.11b *Methods and practice for prosopographical analysis*

In this section, attention is focused primarily on the *Altinum* project, which developed the main case studies under discussion. Nevertheless, the following analysis is of paradigmatic significance: it demonstrates that technological advances achieved in the field of Epigraphy can have enduring effects and be applied to other domains within the (Digital) Humanities, providing tools and methodologies of broad utility for scholarly inquiry.

Within the framework of cataloguing the epigraphic documentation of the *municipium* of Altinum, and with the aim of systematically capturing the full extent of information contained in the inscriptions, the *Altinum* project also encompassed the recording of data pertaining to the individuals mentioned therein. Corresponding to each item of an inscription, separate items were created for each cited person, thereby creating a direct link between the individual and the inscription in question. This connection constitutes a pivotal node for prosopographical analysis, allowing for a precise tracing of individual trajectories within the Altinate community. The ‘show derived statements’ button,<sup>116</sup> accessible in Wikidata both from the page of the inscription item and from that of the individual, makes this link immediately visible; to render it operational, it was sufficient to insert the relevant properties for the inscription or the individual, such as ‘inscription mentions’ (P6568) and ‘described by source’ (P1343),

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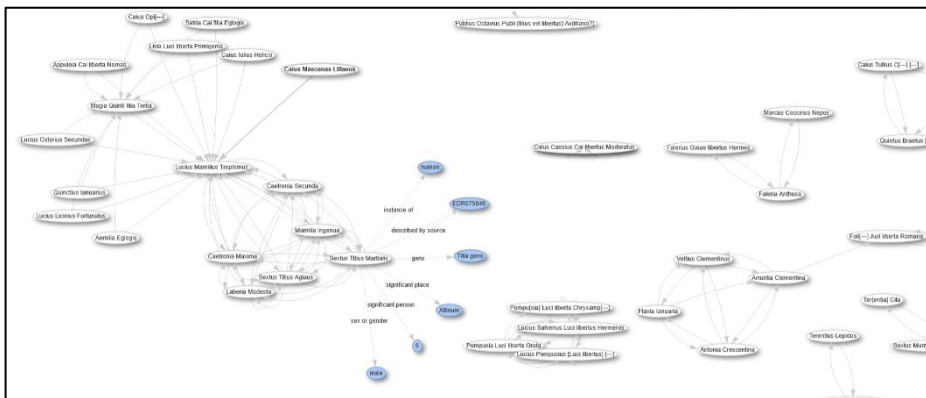
<sup>115</sup> E.g. [tinyurl.com/28hwxqcd](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/tinyurl.com/28hwxqcd) (funerary inscriptions for female children); [tinyurl.com/2ceqbabo](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/tinyurl.com/2ceqbabo) (funerary inscriptions for physicians); [tinyurl.com/26874cbs](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/tinyurl.com/26874cbs) (funerary inscriptions for slaves); [tinyurl.com/249mqya4](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/tinyurl.com/249mqya4) (dedicatory inscriptions to Zeus).

<sup>116</sup> Enabled by the gadget *relateditems* (<https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/MediaWiki:Gadget-relateditems.js>).

and to assign as value the identifier of the individual or the inscription, as illustrated in the example below.



7 – Example of the Property inscription mentions (P6568) as for EDR099175 (Q126687906); see <https://w.wiki/HgNq>.



8 – Results of the SPARQL query: relationships between *Altinum gentes*; see <https://w.wiki/HgUC>.

Out of a total of 644 catalogued inscriptions, 627 individuals were recorded,<sup>117</sup> most of whom were drawn from Pivetta 1997–1998, with the remainder derived from a direct reading of the inscriptions. The data collected encompass primarily onomastic information, but also details relating to possible movements, relational and professional data, indicators of social status, and other particular circumstances, where further information was available. Thus, an

<sup>117</sup> See <https://w.wiki/HgSw>, which retrieves a list of people connected to inscriptions, including their local identifiers from the Prosopografia Altinate Zenodo source (Maniero Azzolini 2024a). For each person, the query returns the individual, their label, the local ID, and any associated inscriptions with their labels.

optimal basis for further investigation into social dynamics, territorial mobility, structures of familial and professional networks is provided. And it was above all to this latter category that special attention was devoted, so as to allow the reconstruction of genealogical trees (via the EntiTree service, which draws its data from Wikidata),<sup>118</sup> thereby enabling the interweaving of individual information within a broader historical and social perspective (fig. 8).

Many of the fundamental properties—such as place of birth, place of death, source description, *gens*, and items such as human, friend, and the like—were already present in the Wikidata vocabulary; by contrast, other more specific items, particularly those relating to professions, had to be created *ex novo*. The decision to establish new items for historically well-known gentes was justified by the need to distinguish clearly the Altinate *gentes* from those attested elsewhere in Wikidata, largely pertaining to Rome (for example, the *gens Iulia* or the *gens Aemilia*), thereby avoiding any confusion whereby queries might conflate members of the Altinate *gentes* with those of their namesakes in Rome. In this way, the project’s methodological approach preserved the specificity of local data without altering attestations already present in other contexts.

The data collected demonstrate the richness of research that can be conducted through Wikidata and Wikibase: the more detailed and comprehensive the dataset, the more precise and fruitful the queries and the results that can be obtained, regardless of the scholarly domain under investigation. Moreover, they testify to how the systematic integration of historical data into an interdisciplinary ecosystem can open up multiple avenues of inquiry and possibilities for analysis and correlations that would otherwise be difficult to access: when asked, ‘*how many Altinate women mentioned in inscriptions we have found lived in the first century CE?*’,<sup>119</sup> Wikidata answers in a matter of seconds.

### 2.12 Authors

In *GMI*, a specific property (P35) is used to indicate whether the inscription is signed or not. If the text is anonymous, the value ‘anonymous’ is used; if the text is signed, the value ‘signed’ is applied, specified by a qualifier that provides the actual text of the signature (P36); another qualifier (P85) specifies if the signature is in verse or in prose. A different property is used to mention the names

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<sup>118</sup> [entitree.com/](http://entitree.com/).

<sup>119</sup> See <https://w.wiki/Hbkg>.

of the author(s), who are represented as items with data structured in the same way as the clients/recipients.<sup>120</sup>

Through queries, it is possible to distinguish signed inscriptions from anonymous ones, narrowing the research by geographical area, author characteristics, or inscription typology.<sup>121</sup>

### 2.13 Text

The inclusion of inscriptional texts within Wikibase instances is at present subject to specific technical limitations. In particular, textual values are limited to a maximum of 1,500 characters per individual statement and, as of now, do not allow for the adoption of specialised encoding systems such as EpiDoc (the XML markup can be used, but is interpreted as plain text, and the text cannot contain line breaks).<sup>122</sup>

Textual data are entered by means of a property with data type ‘monolingual text’. In the *GMI* project it was therefore considered appropriate to provide solely a link to the digital edition of the text. By contrast, the *Altinum* project, with the support of Silvia Evangelisti and Silvia Orlandi, proceeded to import into Wikidata the texts of the Altinate inscriptions published in EDR, adopting minimal editorial intervention in order to preserve consistency with the reference editions: the lines were separated by means of a conventional divider, to avoid line breaks; moreover, the import via QuickStatements in CSV format entails particular precautions if the texts contain commas, because they could be incorrectly read as CSV format dividers rather than as human-readable punctuation (these difficulties can be effectively addressed through data normalisation tools such as OpenRefine). Diacritical marks conforming to the Unicode standard, on the other hand, do not present problems of representation. The text is fully searchable through textual queries in the Wikidata Query Service and can be combined with a wide range of other epigraphic and prosopographical data (a fully flexible query framework); it thus becomes possible, for example, to identify the recurrence of a given term within dedicatory inscriptions attributable to a specific chronological range, and to analyse its

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<sup>120</sup> E.g. *I. Colosse Memnon 28* (<https://greek-metrical-inscriptions.wikibase.cloud/wiki/Item:Q657>).

<sup>121</sup> E.g. <https://tinyurl.com/2y8kaa83> (inscriptions signed by women).

<sup>122</sup> Cfr. <https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/T323705>, <https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/T372326>.

distribution in relation to the gender of the dedicators or other structured information available.<sup>123</sup>

### 3. Conclusions

The analysis has sought to illustrate the ways in which Wikidata and other Wikibase instances can be employed for the modelling, analysis, and reuse of epigraphic Linked Open Data. The paper has shown that these platforms provide a flexible environment, within which epigraphic information can be structured according to shared principles, queried in combination with heterogeneous datasets, and disseminated in forms that promote both accessibility and interoperability.

Although the use of Wikidata and other Wikibase instances does not stand in opposition to long-established databases upon which the discipline continues to rely,<sup>124</sup> Wikidata and other Wikibase instances have shown the capacity to meet certain ‘new’ requirements.

Their collaborative model enables continuous enrichment and real-time updating of data, making edits immediately visible (while acknowledging the necessity of balancing openness with mechanisms designed to prevent and mitigate possible vandalism) and easily traceable through page histories. Moreover, their multilingual structure makes it easier to represent epigraphic data in a range of languages. The IDEA project has developed this feature to represent cultural contexts where Greek inscriptions are preserved in predominantly Arabic-speaking regions, which have been underrepresented in traditional databases.

A crucial element for the success of a project within Wikidata and other Wikibase instances is the modelling of data. The effectiveness of these platforms depends less upon the technological infrastructure of the ecosystem itself than upon the adoption of coherent and explicitly defined models, capable of representing the complexity of epigraphic documentation while remaining compatible with broader semantic frameworks that sometimes extend beyond the boundaries of Epigraphy alone. In this perspective, the alignment of the

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<sup>123</sup> See e.g. <https://w.wiki/HgSa> which retrieves inscriptions produced in Altinum that mention *sibi et* in their text.

<sup>124</sup> On epigraphic databases see Lorito 2018.

proposed models with the principles articulated within the FAIR Epigraphy initiative constitutes a necessary step towards the construction of a common vocabulary and shared standards.

Moreover, a comparison between Wikidata and autonomous Wikibase Cloud instances reveals different needs and development trajectories. Owing to its scale, visibility, and well-established community practices, Wikidata provides an unparalleled environment for integrating epigraphic data into a broader knowledge graph. By contrast, independent Wikibase instances allow individual projects to experiment with data modelling choices, editorial policies, and access control mechanisms, which may in turn inform or refine practices adopted on a wider scale. Despite such differences, these approaches are better understood as complementary components of a single ecosystem rather than as mutually exclusive alternatives.

With regard to the flexibility of queries, examples drawn from *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* and from the *Altinum* projects demonstrate that, once epigraphic data are encoded in a structured and interoperable manner, it becomes possible to formulate complex research questions capable of transcending the traditional boundaries between the textual, material, chronological, and social dimensions of the evidence. Such queries are often not feasible within larger Greek and Latin epigraphy databases.

In addition, Wikibase instances and Wikidata have proven to be highly effective educational tools.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, they allow for the implementation of learning activities designed to develop both epigraphic and digital skills. Through data modelling, students gain an understanding of the complexity of inscription data and the primary tools required to interpret and analyse it. Furthermore, these platforms can be used to teach the concept of Linked Open Data (LOD) and the FAIR Principles as applied to epigraphy. Finally, they demonstrate the potential of Wikidata and Wikibase Cloud instances for creating custom databases. Within these environments, users can structure, analyse, and produce reusable FAIR Linked Open Data to support scientific research across various fields of Ancient Studies.

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<sup>125</sup> The *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* Wikibase instance served as an educational tool for digital epigraphy internships within the *Mondes Anciens* Master's program at Université Lyon 2 (*Laboratoire HiSoMa*; Prof. Eleonora Santin).

The scientific character of the data structured in a Wikibase instance is ensured by the very structure of the data, whereby each statement may be accompanied by one or more references. This can be reinforced by the use of property constraints and EntitySchemas, which allow users to easily find statements which are probably wrong or improperly modelled.

In conclusion, the experience gained through the projects *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* and *Altinum* suggests that the long-term value of Wikibase-based epigraphic initiatives resides in their capacity to foster data reuse. Just as Wikipedia operates under the principle of free information, so too does Wikidata follow the principle of open access and reuse. Such projects fully embody the FAIR principles by making information openly accessible, multilingual, richly structured and technically interoperable. They contribute to the progressive construction of a shared research infrastructure within which epigraphy can continue to interact with neighbouring disciplines in the digital humanities and beyond.

It is through such discussions that we have sought to demonstrate the full scholarly potential of Wikidata and other Wikibase instances for the study of a discipline as versatile as Epigraphy, with the understanding that the conditions described here are applicable in many other fields of scientific inquiry in the fields of Classics.

<i>I.Colosse Memnon</i>	É. Bernard, <i>Les inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon</i> , Le Caire 1960.
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> , Berlin 1877-.
<i>IGUR</i>	L. Moretti, <i>Inscriptiones graecae urbis Romae</i> , Romae 1968-1990.

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the potential of Wikidata and Wikibase Cloud for structuring, analysing, and enabling the reuse of Linked Open Data (LOD) related to Greek and Latin epigraphy. It provides technical details on data modelling, entry, and analysis while highlighting the impact of these tools on research, specifically regarding interdisciplinarity, multilingualism, and query flexibility. Through case studies such as the *Greek Metrical Inscriptions* and *Alti-num* projects, the authors demonstrate how these platforms address the limitations of traditional digital resources. Furthermore, the article emphasises alignment with FAIR principles to foster a sustainable and interoperable research environment. Finally, it discusses the effectiveness of these platforms as educational tools for developing digital and epigraphic skills.