Navigating Early Medieval Europe

The Rural Riches Database Manual

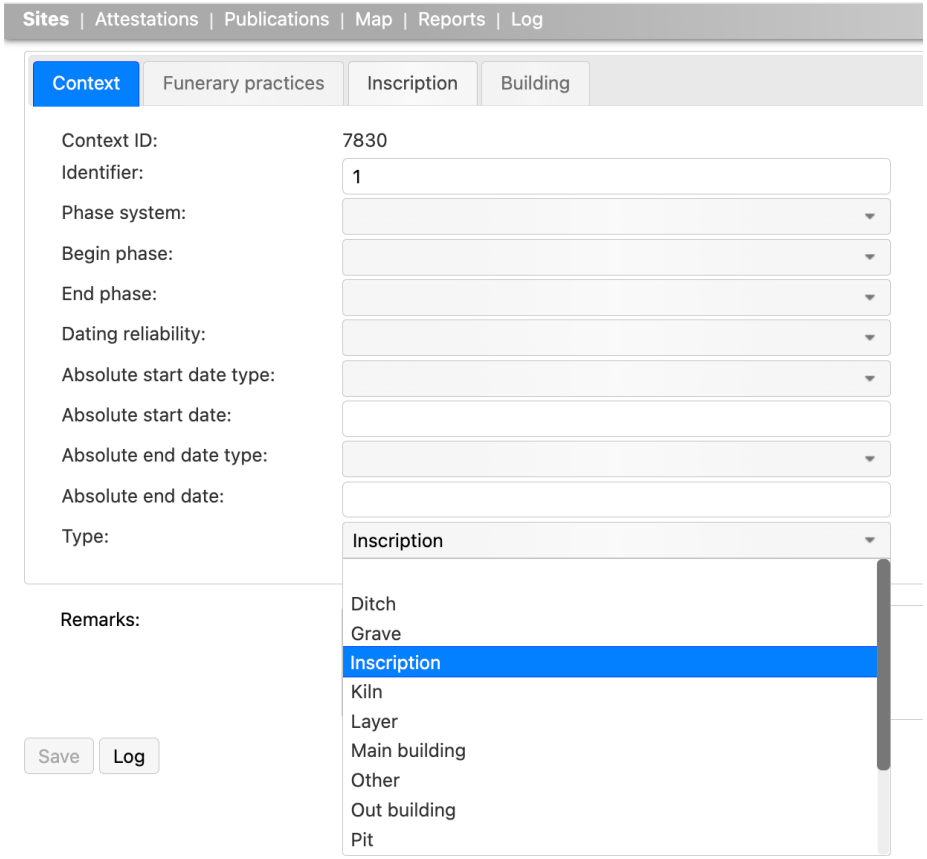
Manual 6: Recording Inscriptions

RURAL RICHES

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

Recording Inscriptions

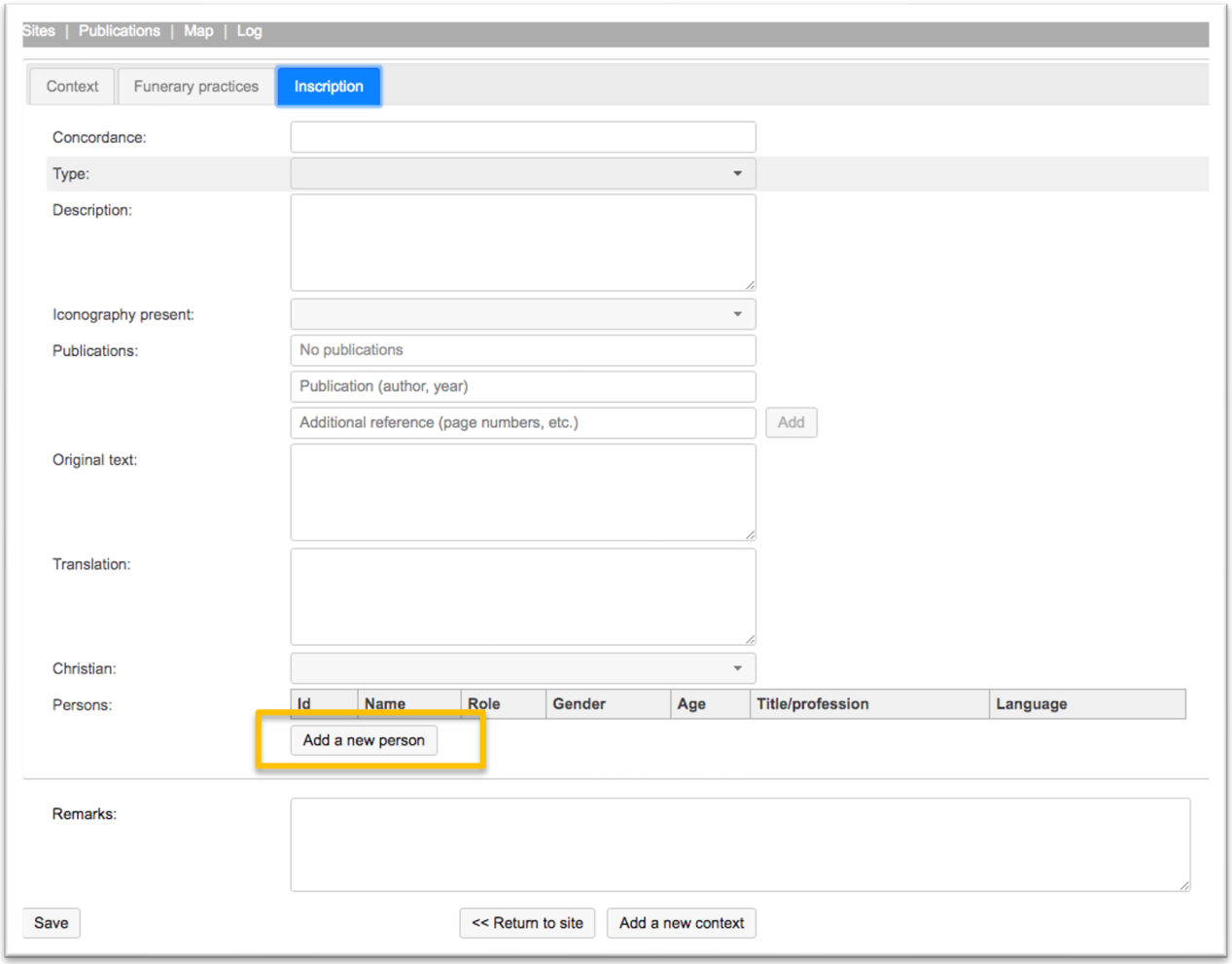
In the RR database inscriptions can be recorded.



At first sight it seems superfluous to record inscriptions for there are already interesting sites with databases of inscriptions. They are mentioned at the end of this manual. Most of them have a focus, of course, on epigraphy and language. The Rural Riches database differs to some extent from those. It allows for making spatial analyses of their distribution and of specific elements of inscriptions, where other sites often only mention a place of origin in a general sense or provide a list of inscriptions from one ancient site. No maps are provided. Moreover, the Rural Riches database allows for combining the presence and distribution of inscriptions with other aspects of (late Roman and) early medieval society. An example is a comparison of Christian cult sites of all kinds and inscriptions. For those reasons we thought it opportune to create a form to record inscriptions.

Inscriptions are considered to be a context on a site. Go to the context form of a site (see NEME 3 Manual Contexts). When you add a new context to a site choose 'Inscription' under 'type'. See illustration to the right.

When you have chosen ‘Inscription’ you can go directly to ‘Inscription’ in the bar with tabs at the top of the form. Click on ‘Inscription’ and you get the form illustrated below. Inscription is highlighted. We chose to record basic information. Moreover, this database is geared to (very) late Roman times and the early Middle Ages in the western part of the former Roman Empire, so the number of types of inscriptions is limited.

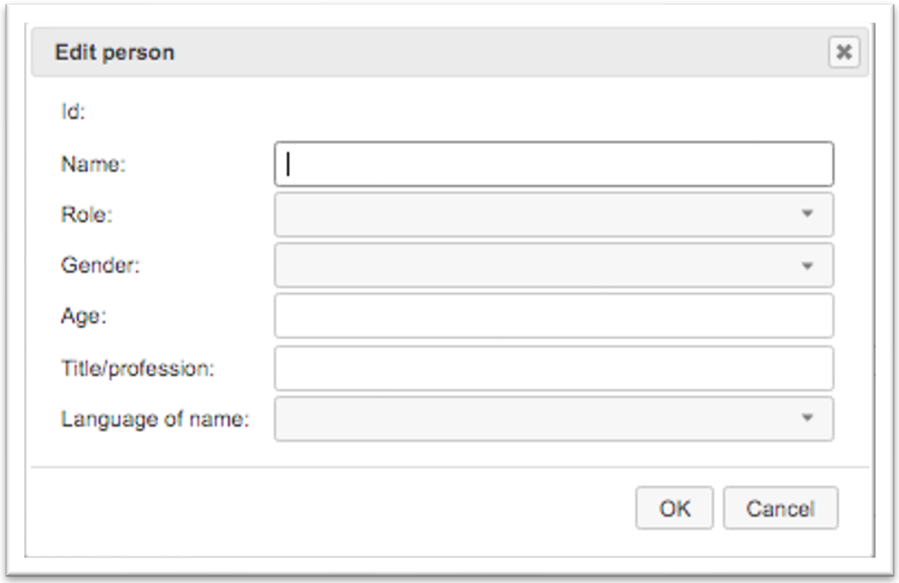


The information to be recorded is explained in the table below.

Concordance	Record the identification of the inscription in the main published corpus of inscriptions. See for the form of the entry below. The main goal of this entry is not to make a whole concordance of the inscription, but to make it possible to find the inscription in the major corpora. For northern Gaul this is usually CIL 13 (= *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum volume 13: Inscriptiones trium Galliarum et Germaniarum Latinae*); newer inscriptions can be found in regional corpora, but also for example AE= l'Annee Épigraphique, ILS= Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae. No Roman numerals, everything Arabic, e.g. CIL 13: 1311; AE 1989: 13; ILS: 5. It is possible to record more than one concordance.
Type	Record the type of inscription from a reference list. The following possibilities are offered: <open>, Funerary, Object (when it is on an object), Dedicatory (for instance a building inscription), Unknown, Other.
Description	Record a **brief** description of the material aspects of the inscription, such as find place/conditions, material (for instance: limestone, 56 cm high, 58 cm), condition (e.g. left and right upper corner missing), what iconographic elements are added (e.g. chi rho, alpha and omega), quality of the text (sloppy writing, clear writing, as described by the publication or own judgement).
Iconography present	<open>, Yes, No, Uncertain. If Yes or uncertain, describe in description field. Iconography can be such things as a chi rho, a dove, a leaf, or a geometric pattern, plants, human beings, etc.
Publications	Record the relevant publications. For explanation see NEME 2. Manual Literature.
Original text	Record the original text of the inscription. Follow the usual conventions for recording inscriptions (abbreviations, reconstructions, completions, punctuation etc.). The original Latin text from the publication used, the miniscule (lower casing) NOT the majuscule unless for names etc. Note the publication from which the text is copied. It should be clear what text is original and what text is [reconstructed] or abr(eviated), /precedes a new line, abr(eviation), reconstructed w[ord], missing letter [.], Uncertain letter A(?), missing line [---]. NB. Different publications may have different systems for recording this, but this should be standardized in the database as mentioned.

Translation	Provide the translation (when it exists) given by the author of the catalogue (English, German, French, Italian allowed). If no translation is given you may give it a try but note in the remarks field that it is your translation.
Christian	Record whether it is a Christian inscription from a reference list. You can choose: <open>, Certain, Uncertain, Unknown. Is the inscription Christian? Interpretation is sometimes given by the publication, but can also be evident from use of Christian symbolism or phrases. INTERNAL EVIDENCE ONLY should be used. (e.g. a chi rho = yes, a partial chi-ro = maybe). Unknown should be used for inscriptions which have no clear indication for being Christian (since inscriptions never explicitly show a non-Christian identity there is no category "No"). NB. Refers to the epigram, not religious identity of the deceased.
Remarks	You can add any remarks you deem necessary.

Now you can also add information on the persons mentioned in the inscription. You can add information on more than one person. Click on 'Add new person' (see orange box in the image above) and you get the form in the image below.



The information to be recorded is explained in the table below.

Id	Automatically generated Id. Don't bother.
Name	Record the name of the person as it is mentioned in the text. No modern forms, conjugations may be corrected to nominative (Martino > Martinus).
Role	Record the role of the person in relation to the inscription from a reference list. You can choose from: <open>, Deceased, Dedicant, Other. A person can only have one role, but multiple people can share the same role. (the deceased is the dedicee, the one to whom to the epitaph is raised, the dedicant is the person or persons setting up the inscription, other can be any other kind of persons involved with the inscription).
Gender	Record the gender of the person. You can choose from a reference list. You can choose from: <open>, Female, Indeterminate, Male, Unknown. The gender should often be clear from the name (e.g. Desiderius = male, Mustela = female), the translation or the discussion. If it is not clear, or actually unknown, use unknown.
Age	Record the age of the person in calendar years. If not known leave open. Age is usually mentioned VIXIT ANNIS (years) / MENSES (months) / DIES (days). Nb. Misspellings are common, e.g. bixit for vixit, mesis for menses. Round down to number of years lived. E.g. Someone who has lived 15 annis, 11 menses and 30 dies = 15 years (if unknown, field should be left empty)
Title /Profession	Record any social role of the person. You can add kinship terms (father, husband, brother etc.) but also other social roles (senator, warrior, curialis, military function, etc.). If the inscription names a title or profession, e.g. *presbyter*, *centenarius*, *episcopus, comes*, copied from the Latin original
Language of the name	Record the language of the name of the person from a reference list. You can choose from: <open>, Eastern (mostly Greek), Latin, Other, Unknown. Can be: Latin - any form of vulgar Latin/classical Latin/proto-Romance, or derived from Greek. Since Greek names are common in Late Latin they are recorded under Latin since they presume a similar socio-cultural strata. Other options are: Germanic, Eastern (Syriac, Hebrew), other (e.g. mix of the above, Gaulish), unknown, or unknown?) If other, specify in remark field.

When you have recorded the information on a person click OK. Then you can add information on another person by clicking 'Add a new person' again.

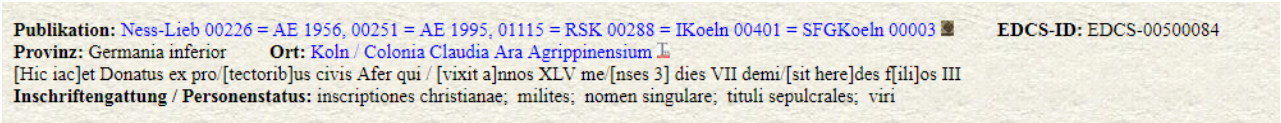
NB. Resources

The CIL has an online database: http://cil.bbaw.de/cil_en/dateien/datenbank_eng.php. All paper editions are in the Leiden University UB library room 1.2.

General database for Latin inscriptions = Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi.php?s_sprache=en

Clauss/Slaby can be used to copy concordance, find photos, and to compare Latin text

A screenshot from Clauss/Slaby



Other links to epigraphic databases can be found on: http://cil.bbaw.de/cil_en/dateien/links.html

Abbreviations

AE	l'Année Epigraphique
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
ILCV	Dielh, E., 1925-1967: *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, Berlin.
IKoeln	Galsterer,B. and H., 2010: *Die römischen Steininschriften aus Köln,* Mainz.
Inscr.Aq.	Vergone, G., 2007: *Le epigrafi lapidarie del museo paleocristiano di monastero (Aquileia),* Triest (Antichita Altoadriatiche 3).