

The Epigraphic Self-Representation of Transylvanian Towns in the Middle Ages

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Abstract: *The study approaches how inscriptions constituted a vehicle of urban self-representation, i.e. the town as such, its institutions, its elites and community members, as well as the corporative representation, thus the way in which the town and its people epigraphically represented themselves.*

Being placed in public places like churches, public and private buildings, inscriptions had a major impact upon the construct of urban communities.

The propensity of urban elites, in a broad sense, to emphasize the formal and public honorable insignia, mainly belong to commemoration and memorials in a written and visual form, thus through text and image. These memorial records become a means of documentation of the way the elites had influenced the public opinion, had presented the individual, the family or urban institutions. The medieval inscriptions were intentionally designed to preserve the individual and collective memory, being associated to a monument and linked to the right of patronage (ius patronatus) and its direct consequence, the right to lay inscriptions (ius inscriptionis).

The analysis deals with the epigraphic self-representation of medieval Cluj, compared with other Transylvanian towns until the end of the 16th century.

Keywords: *inscriptions, epigraphic self-representation, medieval Cluj / Kolozsvár / Klausenburg, urban elites, Gregorius Schleunig, Johannes de Olczna.*

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