**Polysemic Concepts Differentiated as Ontological Classes**

An example from epigraphy

For epigraphists the term “inscription” comprises a **compression of multiple concepts.** As an example of their vision, consider the polysemic understanding used in *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL) for recording an inscription, which is, from time to time, described as:

1. A **physical** **object** on which an inscription occurs, and all the aspects concerning its material composition, finding spot, status at finding time, status at record creation time, etc.

1. A **text** intended as an exact reproduction of the arrangement of letters (and symbols)  on the physical support.

1. The **linguistic** **meaning** of the text as deduced by its accurate investigation and study.

A valid methodology to deal with this issue iscould be to try and decompress the various intrinsic meanings of “inscription” to identify the **chain of distinct senses** that it comprises, and in particular**:**

a) the **material aspect** of the physical feature and **individual appearance** of the physical feature

b) the optical appearance of the surface, as it can be approximated by imaging methods

c) the **arrangement of symbols** and their **status**: readabilityle, partially readable/unreadable and the actual **sequence of symbols** as it has been recognized

d) the **expansion into a meaningful text**

e) Interpretations of the propositions and their literary style in this text

To render all these aspects, it is possible for instance to instantiate classes of CIDOC CRM and CRMtex to capture all the possible meanings of the “inscription” compound, and then relate all these instances between each other to reassemble all the possible facets of this polysemic concept by means of CIDOC CRM propositions. For instance, it is possible to use:

* Instances of the TX1 Written Text or TX7 Written Text Segment class to render a)
* Instances of the class *E36 Visual Item* and *P138 represents:* TX1 Written Textto render b)
* Instances of the *TX1 Written Text* or *TX7 Written Text Segment* class to render a) and b)
* Instances of the class TX10 Style and*TXP12i is style of:* TX1 Written Text, and the class TX12 Grapheme Sequence and *P128 is carried by:* TX1 Written Text to render c)
* Instances of *E34 Inscription* and *P128 is carried by:* TX1 Written Text*, P106 is composed of:* TX12 Grapheme Sequence to render d)
* Instances of E73 Information Object and *P129 is about*: E34 Inscription to render e)

Finally, it is possible to relate the Written Text (feature) by the property *P56 is found on* to the wider object as a whole.