

Award of the Frontinus-Meaille to Prof. Christer Bruun, PhD – Laudation

Käre Christer,

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, liebe Kollegen und Freunde, dear ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends. We are gathered here today as members of the Frontinus-Gesellschaft. Being focused nowadays on ancient water supply systems, our society organises a great number of events every year. We host meetings and discuss our common interests during conferences and symposia, members and invited guests present their work regularly in public lectures. The Society also organises various activities among which the excursions in Germany, as well as abroad, constitute some of the most beloved and important ones. That being said, there can be little doubt that the highpoint of the Society's activities is the awarding of the Frontinus Medal which began in 1977; since then it has been given to a total of 28 individuals. Recently, and very much in line with the tradition and foundation spirit of the Society, the Frontinus medal has often been given to engineers who have dedicated their life to exploring the workings of the ancient water supply system, providing a better understanding of the technical aspects of water conveyance. Today we diverge from this trend by acknowledging the achievements in another, equally important field, namely the study of the Roman water supply by a classicist and, in particular, an epigraphist.

It is therefore our great honour to present the Frontinus Medal to Professor Christer Bruun at Toronto University. Through this we recognise his foundational work on Roman water systems, in particular his research on hydraulic epigraphy, and acknowledge the vast contribution of his research for larger social questions in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Christer Bruun began his career by studying at Åbo Akademi and Helsinki University in his native Finland. Despite being born in the frozen north, however, Christer's life has always had an international character. Through the years he has studied and worked in Oxford (1988–1989) and Köln as well as spent significant time in Rome, both as a student and as the director of the Finish Institute from 1997 to 2000. Since 1994 he is working at Toronto University in Canada where he is currently a professor at the Department of Classics.

During his career Christer has produced an impressive number of works, with his bibliography listing no less than 6 books, over 130 articles and 70 reviews of scientific works until today – and more than 50 of his articles concern the water supply of the ancient world, ranging from titles such as “Stallianus, a Plumber from Pompeii (and Other Remarks on Pompeian Lead Pipes)” and “Water Use and Productivity in Roman Agriculture: Selling, Sharing, Servitudes” to “Warum verfasste Frontinus sein Werk über die Wasserversorgung Roms?” and “Varro on the Battle against Moisture in the Roman domus (A Note on Men. fr. 531-532)”. Notably his work is characterized not only by his attention to detail and well structured arguments, but also his ability to publish in a large

number of languages, including English, German, Italian, French, Swedish and Finnish. Consequently, Christer has been able to reach an unusually large audience, spreading his results further than most researchers are able to. Furthermore, his work is not limited to studies of the ancient water supply system but he also recently edited the massive 900 pages volume *Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy* and he has written, for example, several articles on the Antonine plague and Roman prosopography.

It is, however, evident from Christer's seemingly never-ending bibliography that the stamps on lead water pipes and the interpretation of these within a larger societal context has been at the heart of his scholarly production. This is also, clearly, what he is most well-known for in the Frontinus Gesellschaft. Already in 1989 he published an article with the title "Water for the Castra Praetoria. What were the Severan *opera min*". In this he boldly started by stating that "The lead pipes for the distribution of water in the city of Rome and its vicinities are interesting in many respects, but have not received the attention they merit." Two years later he published his first book *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome. A study of Roman Imperial Administration* which in almost 500 pages explored the Roman water supply system as well as showcased the power of using lead stamps in a larger context. Following this Christer published, on average, more than one article per three months until today, a pace which very few scholars are anywhere close to matching. It is presumably also safe to say that Roman lead pipes can no longer complain about a lack of attention, largely thanks to Christer's continuous efforts during the last decades.

Through this enormous output Christer has left a lasting mark on our knowledge about the ancient water supply system. It is far from an exaggeration to state that there simply is no way to work with Roman lead pipes or urban Roman water supply systems today without carefully consulting his many books and articles as well as relating new research to his results. And, luckily, Christer's scientific output has by no way slowed down. There is thus good reason to believe that we will see further important studies contributing both to our field, as well as other areas of research.

Käre Christer, congratulations for this well-deserved award. We are all impressed by your contribution to our field and we look forward to seeing further studies in the future.

Patrik Klingborg