Report on the third Epigraphy.info workshop
held in Vienna, May 30 - June 1, 2019
(Institut für Alte Geschichte und Altertumskunde, Papyrologie und Epigraphik, Universität Wien)

Epigraphy.info has become an **international open community** pursuing a **collaborative environment for digital epigraphy**, which facilitates scholarly communication and interaction. It intends not to replace existing digital resources, but rather to serve as "a landing point for digital tools, practices and methodologies for managing collections of inscriptions".[1]

During the first workshop (March 21 - 23, 2018)[2], an international group of scholars gathered in Heidelberg to discuss the concept of *Epigraphy.info*. Participants focused on four major topic areas: participating people/institutions, structure, finances, and tasks. A steering committee and organizing committee were formed to coordinate next steps. A second workshop followed in Zadar (December 14th - 16th, 2018)[3] where the main outcome was the draft of a mission statement, and (based on the results of the breakout sessions) a **series of goals and tasks** to be discussed during the next workshop.

The third workshop, which is the subject of this report, took place in Vienna (May 30 - June 1, 2019). Its main outcome has been the approval of the **mission statement** and the **forming of working groups** with responsible persons identified to coordinate the tasks outlined after the breakout sessions and formalized during the final plenary session.

Participants[4]

Thirty-seven scholars from thirteen countries personally attended the 3rd *Epigraphy.info* workshop in Vienna, while eighteen more indicated that they were not able to come, but

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[1] Mission statement on the homepage of the website: http://epigraphy.info

[2] F. Feraudi-Gruénais / F. Grieshaber / J. Cowey / J. Lougaovaya-Ast, Report on the first Epigraphy.info workshop in Heidelberg, March 21st-23rd, 2018, DOI: <10.11588/heidok.000243> (20.04.2018).

[3] A. Kurilić / F. Feraudi-Gruénais / J. Cowey / F. Grieshaber / P. Liuzzo / T. Gheldof, Report on the second Epigraphy.info workshop held in Zadar, December 14-16, 2018 (Department of History, University of Zadar), DOI: <10.11588/heidok.00026330> (11.04.2019).

[4] See appendix with list of participants.

nonetheless expressed their interest in being involved in *Epigraphy.info* activities. More scholars have joined the community in the immediate following months after the Vienna workshop. The Epigraphy.info Google Group (see Results, 3) counts today more than 100 members. Twenty-five scholars also attended the training course on *EpiDoc* (and *XML*, *DTS* and other digital epigraphy tools) during the 3 ½ days that preceded the workshop.

Programme[5] / Course of the meeting / Results

The third workshop in Vienna kicked off with a welcome session in which the participants were greeted by the organizers and briefly introduced to *Epigraphy.info* and to the results of the previous two meetings. The first plenary session focussed on **ontologies**[6] and data sets containing information about people, followed by a general discussion on **prosopographies**. In the second session of that day, several new and ongoing projects useful for *Epigraphy.info* were presented. These projects were highlighted particularly for the collaborations they represented and their relevance to the development of **distributed system architectures** and **linked data**. The day ended with the demonstration of the *Patrimonium Editor* from the *Patrimonium* project, an **editor for epigraphic texts** that facilitates encoding in *TEI-EpiDoc*. A discussion of the **editorial board** was postponed to the next day where a definition of its **duties and composition** was drafted.[7]

The second day started with a plenary session where **User scenarios**[8] (building upon the User stories[9] and User profiles) were discussed. During the breakout session, a list of different users (such as 'Wendy the epigraphist') and their desiderata was compiled. This list will become the basis to meet the requirements of one key group of *Epigraphy.info* users. **Normalized encoding standards** and **RDF structures for metadata**[10] will have to be explained and put in guidelines/best practices to make epigraphic texts from different sources useable and interoperable in *Epigraphy.info* software. Getting at all the XML data of all projects online in open access will be key here. **Ontologies**, including **vocabularies**, should also be either already used in other related projects (e.g. GeoJSON in *Pleiades*, *EAGLE* controlled vocabularies) or created in simple fashion to cover the basic metadata information from most

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[5] http://epigraphy.info/program3.html

[6] With ontology we mean here a formal declaration of the possible classes of information and properties connecting those classes, using standard vocabularies https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_Ontology_Language. An ontology says for example that there is a class of information which is "Measure" and that it can be linked to an entity in a class "Object" by a property "hasMeasure".

[7] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MKocSv8IF3KqmnlnAJ7yJzumYq1KpVcjP2F1ye-S3IE

[8] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IX020le5yIMZTtSNTrtFJRMC6O88wPlvjOz05kKssmQ

[9] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I5MnOOMT--AjEae2R-j6445gyYwdurTMOUzw7k_TCSk/edit

[10] Normalized encoding standards are encoding standards for metadata (such as Unicode for character encoding), in this case for encoding descriptive metadata from an inscription (e.g. provenance, dating criteria, ...). RDF (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resource_Description_Framework) is a standard model that uses existing web standards (such as XML and URIs) to describe links between (meta)data, expressed as "triples" (subject <-> predicate <-> object; e.g.: inscription <URI1> <-> lawd:foundAt <-> place <URI2)>), making these resources meaningfully interlinked (in the so-called Semantic web). This facilitates multiple data resources to be interlinked, queried and modified without changing the data or their respective source models.

projects and allow expanding (e.g. *EpiDoc* or *CIDOC CRM*). During the breakout session several projects and best practices were discussed and a task force was formed to tackle these technical issues. Finally, a **list of tasks** was drafted and **working groups** were formed, each with a responsible and deadlines.[11]

The final day was dedicated to some more formal topics. In the first plenary session **recommendations for the correct handling and best practices of unpublished texts** were discussed. A *Statement of Intent on the Handling of Unpublished Inscriptions*[12] was presented, which stimulated comments and further discussion. This led to the formation of a working group for the revision of the statement. The session continued with the decision on the *Proposal for the organisation and selection of the steering committee*, which will be applied for future elections. After this discussion the **steering committee** was formally elected.[13] The plenary session ended with the decision on the venue and date of the next workshop[14] and the summarizing of the **Final actions** to be undertaken before or during that next workshop. Throughout the entire workshop, a shared Google Doc[15] was used as a working document where the results of the presentations, discussions and breakout sessions were collaboratively annotated with text and links to other projects/documents.

Results

A. Organisational matters / fundamental framework conditions / agreement on:

1. The **fourth Epigraphy.info workshop** will be held in Hamburg (Germany) – University of Hamburg, in spring 2020.[16]

2. The newly elected **steering committee** consists of six members, plus an extra member from the local organizing team of the next workshop:

The **members** of the new committee are (in charge until the next workshop meeting):

     1) Andrea Mannocci, CNR Pisa / EAGLE
     2) Chiara Cenati, Austrian Academy of Sciences

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[11] https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Y1bem5uU9a8F1_XlItUcuOPpXL8G_gmRKLuZQkOxO84

[12] The here linked document already corresponds to the REVISED version from August 2019, visible on GoogleDocs since September 2019 and distributed via email (Google Group) on February, 2nd 2020 in preparation of the formal decision in Hamburg: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tA_RtosRWgrfaMsJvSXZaMiKCQh8n1eKeUdpoY9bDhc

[13] The proposal for the organisation and selection of the steering committee got approved: http://epigraphy.info/steering%20committee.pdf

[14] Candidates for the next venue were Hamburg (proposed by P. Liuzzo) and Leuven (proposed by T. Gheldof, as a possible candidate for the fifth Epigraphy.info workshop)

[15] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LwapkTiAyGbMW5U79uQ2dmxDPM3K51eTxDV7qo6BrP8

[16] A Doodle carried out in the meantime led to the date of February 19-21, 2020 (preceded by a technical training from February 17-19, 2020). – For first information and registration see: http://epigraphy.info/program4.html

3) M. Cristina de la Escosura Balbás, University of Zaragoza
4) Tom Elliott, NYU
5) Tom Gheldof, KU Leuven / Trismegistos
6) Vincent Razanajao, Université Bordeaux Montaigne / Patrimonium
7) Franziska Weise, University of Hamburg

3. A **mailing list** will be created (based on *Google Groups*) where an invitation link from the organization/steering committee will be sent to participants of *Epigraphy.info* meetings as opt-in.

4. An **outreach strategy** has been decided upon:
   a) a **social media** working group (F. Weise, C. Cenati, D. Espinosa) is formed and will work on setting up an official *Epigraphy.info* email address (info@epigraphy.info) and social media guidelines[17]
   b) an **Epigraphy Party** at the joint annual meetings of the *SCS* and *AIA* (Washington DC January 2020) and **poster** at the contemporaneous *North American Conference of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (NACGLE)*
   c) a short and complete **report** will be disseminated via *AIEGL*, the *Epigraphy.info* mailing list and several additional communication channels

5. A **tool** for the **organization** and **tracking of tasks** and how to give **reports** should be looked for.

6. The *Epigraphy.info* **mission statement** has been finalized and will be published on the *Epigraphy.info* website's home page.[18]

7. A *Proposal for the organisation and selection of the steering committee*[19] was approved that includes the **composition** of the **steering committee** (6+1), their **responsibilities** (representing and organizing; at least 3 with experience in computational matters, at least 3 with experience in epigraphic matters, and 1 for the organizational side) and the **selection process** (one year or until the next meeting, maximum 2 consecutive terms, nominated with consent and elected by members via majority vote)

8. A *definition of the Editorial Boards' duties and composition*[20] was suggested for the **Editorial Board** and will be discussed during the next workshop. Key **concerns** are:
   a) Do members of the Editorial board have to be persons fluent in coding or not?
   b) Will members of the Editorial board do revisions?
   c) What will the workflow look like?
   d) What is its relation to the Steering Committee?

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[17] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sd5SNc9uDIUGb5F3yt-3m8r-FMXE-wLx

[18] http://epigraphy.info

[19] http://epigraphy.info/steering%20committee.pdf

[20] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MKocSv8IF3KqmnlnAJ7yJzumYq1KpVcjP2F1ye-S3IE

9. A *Statement of Intent on the Handling of Unpublished Inscriptions*[21] has been drafted and includes **principles** on the **handling** of the following categories of **unpublished inscriptions**:
   a) *new finds*
   b) *unpublished old finds* in public and private collections
   c) *stolen objects* and objects on the *black market*

The revision of this statement will be presented by the next workshop.

B. Tasks until and for the next workshop(s):

10. Establish an **electronic voting mechanism** for future **steering committee elections** (V. Razanajao, A. Kurilić)

11. **Cleanup of vocabularies** (e.g. EAGLE controlled vocabularies[22]) and looking at **guidelines** and **specifications** for **RDF** and **linked data** for epigraphy (J. Cowey, T. Gheldof, F. Grieshaber, V. Razanajao)

12. **Collating lists of desiderata** into a **single set of user scenarios** (G. Sarullo)

13. **User interface** and **search experience evaluation and design** (V. Razanajao, C.de la Escosura, N. Sharankov)

14. Move actively towards assuring that **all texts and metadata are available open-access in EpiDoc with stable URIs** (J. Cowey, S. Evangelisti, V. Razanajao, T. Costea)

Previously foreseen tasks remain to be addressed:

15. Find a technical solution for **bibliographical questions** and **unique identifiers** (T. Gheldof)

16. Creation of a **pilot of DTS** (E. Suyver, J. Egger, V. Razanajao)

17. Look into possibilities for **financing** and **institutional anchoring** (T. Gheldof, F. Weise, C. Cenati)

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[21] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tA_RtosRWgrfaMsJvSXZaMiKCQh8n1eKeUdpoY9bDhc (revised version).
[22] https://www.eagle-network.eu/resources/vocabularies/

Appendix

Personally present at the workshop:

C. Cenati (**AT**, Austrian Archaeological Institute), F. Mitthof (AT, University of Vienna), A. Gangoly (AT, University of Vienna), T. Hobel (AT, University of Vienna), N. Riegler (AT, University of Vienna), J. Schneider (AT, University of Vienna), K. Stenzel (AT, University of Vienna), E. Theodorou (AT, University of Vienna), T. Gheldof (**BE**, University of Leuven, TM), N. Sharankov (**BG**, University of Sofia), T. Costea (**DE**, *Berlin* Academy of Sciences), J. Cowey (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH), B. Gräf (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH), M. Horster (DE, University of Mainz, CIL), G. Imberciadori (DE, Ludwig Maximilians Universität München), A. Opfermann (DE, Ludwig Maximilians Universität München), F. Weise (DE, University of Hamburg), *J. M. Bermudez Lorenzo (**ES**, University of Barcelona) via Skype*, C. de la Escosura Balbas (ES, Universidad de Zaragoza), D. Espinosa (ES, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela), A. Campos (**FR**, ANHIMA, Paris), V. Razanajao (FR, University of Bordeaux, Patrimonium), N. Tran (FR, University of Poitiers), A. Kurilić (**HR**, University of Zadar), N. Cannata (**IT**, University Sapienza Rome), S. Evangelisti (IT, University of Foggia, EDR), A. Felicetti (IT, University of Florence), F. Murano (IT, University of Florence), S. Orlandi (IT, University Sapienza Rome, AIEGL), L. Rigobianco (IT, University of Venice), G. Sarullo (IT, IDEA), R. Varga (**RO**, University of Cluj Napoca, Romans 1by1), A. Ragolič (**SLO**, ZRC SAZU, Institute of Archaology), I. Kosanović (**SRB**, Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade), P. Kruschwitz (**UK**, University of Reading), T. Elliott (**USA**, New York University), A. Hershkowitz (USA, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton NJ)

Not personally present at the workshop but expressed their wish to be involved:

F. Toska (**AL**, University of Tirana), C. Volk (**AT**, University of Vienna), K. Knäpper (**AT**, University of Vienna), W. Spickermann (**AT**, University of Graz); F. Feraudi (**DE**, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH), O. Gengler (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Malalas), J. Osnabrügge (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH), J. Gomez-Pantoja (**ES**, University of Alcala de Henares, HepOnl), N. Prevot (**FR**, University of Bordeaux, PETRAE); B. Adamik (**HU**, Eötvös Loránd University), A. Bencivenni (**IT**, University of Bologna), L. Calvelli (IT, University of Venice Ca' Foscari, EDF), A. Felle (IT, University of Bari, EDB); C. Papi (IT, Pontifical University Antonianum), O. Pelcer Vujačić (**MNG**, University of Montenegro); M. Hallmansecker (**UK**, University of Oxford), J. Bodel (**USA**, Brown University), G. Tsolakis (USA, New York University)

Bordeaux – Leuven – New York – Zadar – Pisa – Vienna – Zaragoza, January 19th 2020

Chiara CENATI / Tom ELLIOT / Cristina DE LA ESCOSURA BALBAS / Tom GHELDOF / Anamarija KURILIĆ / Andrea MANNOCCI / Vincent RAZANAJAO