Report on the second *Epigraphy.info* workshop
held in Zadar, December 14-16, 2018
(Department of History, University of Zadar)

The **first *Epigraphy.info* workshop** held in Heidelberg (March 21-23, 2018) ended in a consensus that there is a need for an epigraphic **collaborative digital environment** for ancient inscriptions. Its main features were **editing** of all sections of the environment, and offering robust **searching and browsing** facilities for transcriptions and metadata. A series of goals and tasks were identified and grouped according to the levels of their procedural priority, and a set of the most critical issues were chosen as topics for the following *Epigraphy.info* workshop that was to be held in Zadar in September 2018.[1] Due to unforeseen circumstances, this second ***Epigraphy.info* workshop** had to be postponed and was held in December 14-16, 2018.

The main outcome of the Zadar workshop has been the definition of a Mission Statement for the *Epigraphy.info* group

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Mission Statement

Epigraphy.info is an international open community pursuing a collaborative environment for digital epigraphy, which facilitates scholarly communication and interaction. We apply FAIR principles to epigraphic information in order to efficiently create, use and share it among researchers, students and enthusiasts around the globe. The *Epigraphy.info* community works to gather and enhance the many existing epigraphic efforts, and serves as a landing point for digital tools, practices and methodologies for managing collections of inscriptions. Key concerns include:

- Identification, creation, and dissemination of agreed-upon guidelines, standards, and best practices;
- Preservation, reuse, and update of existing and emerging datasets providing the most up-to-date versions of inscriptions;
- Providing a toolset for searching, analyzing and editing inscriptions and their metadata by both human and machine;
- Services for citation, revision and exchange.

Epigraphy.info will not replace existing digital resources; it intends to be a hub for a fruitful exchange of epigraphic data.

Participants[2]

24 renowned scholars in epigraphy and/or digital humanities attended in person the *Epigraphy.info* II workshop in Zadar, and 5 others participated via Skype, while 42 more were not able to come but had expressed their willingness to be involved in *Epigraphy.info* activities, which makes a total of more than 70 supporting scholars and researchers in the field of (digital) epigraphy.

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[1] 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).

[2] See below p. 6-7 Appendix.

Programme[3] / Course of the meeting / Results

After brief opening greetings the **programme** started with the **demonstration of newly developed editors** which could serve for *Epigraphy.info* (**I.**). That took the entire afternoon of the <u>first day</u> and beginning of the second day and included **allied project reports** (**II. 1.**) on approximately a dozen projects, editors, publishers and/or applications.[4] In addition to providing the insight into the most recent developments, these reports had shown that there are still some differences of opinion regarding the relationship of the *Epigraphy.info* initiative and the idea of the collaborative epigraphic platform / environment agreed upon in Heidelberg. Thus, one of the tasks that should be addressed in the third workshop will be to define the basic operational model of the collaborative platform / environment.[5]

The reports raised many questions, such as, for example, about the relation of existing editors to *Epigraphy.info*, the modalities of how to transfer texts and metadata from one project to another, language use, defining the minimal set of metadata required, identifiers for dates, and similar.

On the <u>second day</u> the discussion from the previous day naturally continued as the next section on the programme focussed on the question of **"State of data & discipline"**: what's already done and who is doing it?" (**II. 2.**) summarising the principles upon which the collaborative platform / environment should operate established in the first workshop in Heidelberg and the tasks that were to be achieved either in the time span between the first and second workshop or during the second workshop.[6]

During the afternoon of the second day two breakout sessions were formed to discussed two topics, which had arisen from the previous discussions: **(1) functionality of *Epigraphy.info*** and **(2)** formulating a **Mission Statement**.[7]

This led, among other things, to a discussion of possible technical solutions for bibliographical questions and unique identifier for inscriptions (IV. 1).[8] Controlled

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3   <http://epigraphy.info/program2.html>.
4   Petrae / Patrimonium (V. Razanajao). – Perseids / Syriaca (video presentation Z. Fletcher). – Brill editor (E. Suyver). – Networked epigraphic applications (video presentation P. Liuzzo). – READ editor (L. Calvelli / S. White). – TEI-publisher / CETEIcean / CapiTainS (video presentation P. Liuzzo). – Reports on: Oxford "Linked Epigraphy" meeting & DHARMA ERC project https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1fg6vWBwcALq64GhWhewKndLV5u9EygTUlxOrEkZcY/edit?usp=sharing (T. Elliott). – Report on Oxford meeting forthcoming (will be widely distributed). – Report on DHARMA ERC project forthcoming (will appear in *Current Epigraphy*). – GODOT <https://godot.date/home> (F. Grieshaber). – Trismegistos corpusdata + New Trismegistos API <https://www.trismegistos.org/tmcorpusdata/index / https://www.trismegistos.org/dataservices> (T. Gheldof). – LatinNow <https://prezi.com/view/eVJ3GyAy9VNsDSHjxOLu/; https://latinnow.eu> S. Vanderbildt. – EPNet <http://www.roman-ep.net/wb/research/epigraph/>; http://www.semanticweb.org/ontologies/2015/1/EPNet-ONTOP_Ontology (J. M. Bermúdez). – Comparative Digital Epigraphy and EDAK <https://www.written-artefacts.uni-hamburg.de/en/research-fields.html>; <http://w3id.org/dts> (P. Liuzzo). – CRMtext: a model for epigraphy and ancient texts <http://cidoc-crm.org/crmtex>; <http://cidoc-crm.org/crmtex/fm_releases> (F. Murano / A. Felicetti; Achille Felicetti, Francesca Murano. "Scripta manent: a CIDOC CRM semiotic reading of ancient texts." Int J Digit Libr (2017) 18:263–270 <DOI 10.1007/s00799-016-0189-z>.
5   More detailed below B. 18. and passim.
6   In total, all concrete tasks have been tackled, but most of them are still in progress, such as: *a)* elaborate a technical environment (editor-emo version), *b)* definition of the duties of the editorial board; *c)* workflow of submission and finalization; *d)* descriptive vocabularies; *e)* technical solution for bibliographica questions and unique identifiers for inscriptions; *f)* dealing with unpublished inscriptions. – Largely included below, B. 14. ff.
7   Meanwhile online (since March 1st, 2019; after expiry of the deadline of December 22th, 2018 in the version of December 15th [last change]) <epigraphy.info/index.html>; see also above p. 1.
8   Key concerns were identified. There was agreement upon the necessity of using existing bibliographic resources (such as *Trismegistos*, *iDAI.bibliography / ZENON*, etc.). The need to define the identifiers for

vocabularies for metadata was also touched upon (IV. 2) and will also be prepared for the next workshop by a working group.[9]

The <u>third day</u> was dedicated to a general discussion and conclusions (VI. 1 and 2), to the choosing of the venue[10] and specific date of the next workshop, and of the members of the new committee (VI.3) as well as to the defining of the tasks to perform until the next workshop (VI. 4).

Throughout the entire programme, a shared *googledoc*[11] served as a common communication platform where results of discussions were recorded and were links to presentations and/or editors were subsequently added.

Results

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

1. The **third *Epigraphy.info* workshop** will be held in Vienna (Austria) – University   of Wien, in springtime 2019.[12]

2. The two existing committees (‚technical' and ‚steering') will join into **one single committee**, which will consist of six members (a mixture of people of various aptitudes and experiences was deemed reasonable) plus a seventh member coming from the host institution of the upcoming venue.[13]

The **members of the new committee** are (in charge until the next workshop meeting):
 Chiara Cenati (AT - Vienna),
 Tom Elliot (USA - New York),
 Francisca Feraudi-Gruénais (DE – Heidelberg),
 Tom Gheldof (BE – Leuven),
 Anamarija Kurilić (HR – Zadar),
 Pietro Liuzzo (DE – Hamburg),
 Julia Lougovaya-Ast (DE – Heidelberg)

3. There will be **a Google Group**.

4. We need to have **tangible results in the near future**, taking small steps, one at the time, and the search engine was proposed as the first step in achieving that goal. For the

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bibliographic references, what needs to be handled in order to add new bibliographic entries to a "united catalog", a need for a software to pass a string reference and retrieve a URI / URN for the bibliographic data, looking for other collections with existing identifiers (i.e., *L'année Philologique, AÉ*), creating new IDs for new citations. – See also below „Results B. Tasks until and for the next workshop(s)".

[9] See below B. 17.

[10] Candidates for the next venue were London (proposed by G. Bodard), Vienna (proposed by C. Cenati in the name of Fritz Mitthof) and Washington D.C. (for January 2020, proposed by R. Benefiel).

[11] <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IVrzkASteBc-H1Ocy_cdcEM67FO9RcPM-j25-925yc8/edit>.

[12] A google vote carried out in the meantime led to the date of 30th May – 1st June 2019 (preceded by a technical training from 27th to 30th May). – For first information and registration see <epigraphy.info/workshop_3.html>.

[13] The committee's task is to interact with the rest of the community, interface with other bodies, continue to organize the community as such and to provide input. It is a sort of mediator for the members. It will also prepare a report and distribute it to all the participants of the workshop and then share it publicly. – It was proposed that the Committee should have a meeting twice a year and that the first meeting of 2019 will be in Vienna during the third workshop. A list of nominees for the new Committee should be prepared in advance, preferably shortly before the next meeting (app. 3 weeks in advance).

beginning, we should start with a simple search: text and identifiers and perhaps location. – *As possible answer to this see below, "Tasks" 17. Epigraphy.info **operational model**.*

5. A **pilot of DTS** will be created. *Brill, EDH, Lupa, Petrae* can have DTS in a reasonable amount of time (3 months from Zadar) which will concern about 100.000 Latin and 2.000 Greek texts).

6. The workshops should start with a **training** for people not versed in **technical terms and subjects, not only limited to EpiDoc**.[14]

7. Each inscription will have a **unique identifier**, ideally from Trismegistos (TM).[15]

8. For **unpublished inscriptions, where TM has already started to operate** it was proposed *a)* to follow the practice adopted by the existing corpora (i. e., not to add unpublished texts to the corpus before they are published in some way);[16] *b)* to make an investigation about whether there is an institution which has already dealt with this issue / there are professional articles published on this argument.

9. The inclusion of **Greek inscriptions** in *Epigraphy.info* is implicit in the participation of the SEG, but there are still many issues to discuss, and we will deal with this in the next meeting(s).

10. **Relations to institutions** (i. e., ways of how to achieve institutional independence of *Epigraphy.info* and its financial sustainability / issue of the collaboration with other institutions): should be postponed until we have a clearer idea of the *Epigraphy.info* mission.

11. **Financing** (i. e., obtaining finances, monitoring the funds, reporting on how the funds were spent, etc.): perhaps one of the ways of providing financing would be if everyone applying to a grant will include in the proposal a contribution to the community.

12. **Represented epigraphies**: Although we all agree that we need from the beginning to take into consideration the issues of epigraphy of other parts of the world than the classical Greek and Roman, it is important that we start with focussing on a practicable common aim, which means at present Greek and Latin epigraphy.[17]

13. The *Epigraphy.info* **Mission statement** was defined.[18] Furthermore in a distributed model of interaction it has been proposed that:
    a) Membership and participation to *Epigraphy.info* should be voluntary, global and include everyone (scholars, students, and enthusiasts);

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[14] See also above note 12 (technical training). – It will also be a sort of tutorial to explain some of the technical aspects of the project. Whoever is responsible for this will have to consult with the various subcommittees in order to prepare appropriately. On the other hand, perhaps a sort of tutorial on epigraphy could be useful? We should set up a doodle poll to ask participants if they would be interested in attending either of these tutorials.

[15] <https://www.trismegistos.org/>. – On TM numbers and what constitutes an inscription or a document see <https://www.trismegistos.org/about_identifiers.php)>.

[16] It should be noted that TM often has already assigned a TM number to unpublished material (based on some online existence (description, image. …).

[17] Instead of proposing many different solutions. Because expanding the scope of *Epigraphy.info* as positive as it is on the other hand poses many great challenges in the execution for priorities of other epigraphies may greatly differ from those of Classical Epigraphy.

[18] See above and note 7.

b) *Epigraphy.info* should be the hub in which we can share knowledge and should help to inform other projects about what they might do by providing advice, procedures, guidelines;

c) *Epigraphy.info* should also have a front facing website which uses the same standards to share information as any other partner project and enable search/browse access across as many epigraphic texts with the ability to research on any slice of that body of inscriptions;

d) The front end website of *Epigraphy.info* should enable editing and thus store locally copies of the data;

e) Each partner should be free to choose the extent of interaction (read / write / allow access to selected [sub-]corpora). Individuals should be able to choose when and where to submit and publish their contributions. Projects should be able to choose what to share and if and how to use external contributions from the network. This is indeed part of the concept of open and shared API and standard specification;[19]

f) *Epigraphy.info* should be able to maintain dead projects which adhere to standards (conserve and reuse);

g) *Epigraphy.info* should act as a facilitator to make contacts with museums, by involving them in the network, providing linkable and reusable data and facilitating the integration of museum data with epigraphic archives;

h) The *Epigraphy.info* initiative should be presented to various professional associations and meetings (next opportunities e. g. at the ASGLE Conference in Washington (1/2020), and the next IDEA meeting (1/2019).

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

14. **Mandate of the Committee and its functions:** It was concluded that we should avoid going back to issues of what are the tasks of the committee, how long it stays in order, how do we choose the members, etc.[20]

15. Editorial board – definition of its duties and composition:
 – Present concerns are:

a) Do members of the Editorial board have to be persons fluent in coding or not? Members of the Editorial board should ideally be capable of dealing with EpiDoc (even if not certain of everything).[21]

b) What is its relation to the Committee? – Remains to be discussed.

c) What will the work-flow look like? – A possible answer is: Work flow will be submission of suggestion / new entry which is then considered from a scholarly point of view as well as from an EpiDoc point of view before being processed so that the new and improved version is then visible.

d) will members of the Editorial board do revisions? - Submissions will always be respected, but can of course be overturned. Good scholarly grounds for overturning must be made transparent.
– Services have been presented, such as Perseids, which could provide editorial board facilities to each project or where a centralized board of editors could be assigned edits to revise coming from different sources.

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[19] See on this the presentation <u>Networking Epigraphy</u> by Pietro Liuzzo

[20] J. Osnabrügge will take care of the preparatory work on this issue for the next meeting.

[21] If, however, the editorial board works on the basis of examining a submission and making a decision on its contents, then members could do the job of making scholarly judgements, expressing them clearly and leaving them as guidance for processing.

16. Definition of what different users might want when engaging with the environment (**user scenarios**).22

17. Providing a **roadmap** of the steps to take for *Epigraphy.info.*[23]

18. *Epigraphy.info* **operational model**:
– A **distributed model**, as discussed in Heidelberg, and demonstrated in its functioning in Zadar has been envisaged which will be made of several platforms and websites with different levels of collaboration according to their needs and decisions, adhering to the DTS[24] and IIIF[25] API specifications. This ongoing discussion lacks a practical implementation yet.
– Open access to the shared content in the environment will be necessary to guarantee fluid and transparent exchange of data.[26]

19. Defining of **unique identifiers** for inscriptions.[27]

20. **Dead projects**: transferring data into a more stable and secure environment, reliable citation and clear licensing.

21. **Complementary key concerns**:
– requirements;
– verified / validated changes;
– verification and validation of new inscriptions (based on photo or facsimile?);
– canonical / curated versions (human intervention necessary);[28]
– allow editing / enrichment of others' collections;
– discovery and identity management / disambiguation;
– versions and editions;
– suggestions and conjectures which aren't a complete new edition.

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Appendix*:*
Personally present at the workshop:
J. Egger (**AT**, Vienna, **Lupa**); O. Harl (AT, Vienna, Lupa); T. Gheldof (**BE**, KU Leuven); J. Cowey (**DE**, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, **EDH**); F. Feraudi-Gruenais (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH); F. Grieshaber (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH); J. Osnabrügge (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH); S. Evangelisti (**IT**, University of Foggia, **EDR)**; C. Cenati (**AT**, University of

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22   Two smaller working groups will work on *a)* the definition of an EpiDoc pivot format (using EPIDOC guidelines, and structure <http://www.stoa.org/epidoc/gl/latest/supp-structure.html>, *b)* normalized encoding standards (including vocabularies in use) from EAGLE and Oxford Meeting / recommend "starting set" of metadata fields to use in search. – See also E*pigraphy.info* Workshop I, WG 1, "User stories" <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1I5MnOOMT--AjEae2R-j6445gyYwdurTMOUzw7k_TCSk/edit>.

23   In connection with above B. Tasks, 15.

24   <https://w3id.org/dts>.

25   <https://iiif.io/api/presentation/2.1/#table-of-contents>.

26   Further discussion is needed: if there is just aggregation of info with links to other projects the question arises of changes we want to implement in those texts; other question is if these databases will allow it; question of creating an "epigraphy room").

27   Especially with respect to the presence of more than one text on a single support; or if one text turns out to actually be two texts.

28   Reg. the reading of texts and the possibility of adding new readings of texts the best point seems to have a curated version of the text first and in the link different, older versions.

Vienna); T. Hobel (AT, University of Vienna, graduate student); P. Liuzzo (DE, University of Hamburg); V. Razanajao (**FR**, University of Bordeaux, Patrimonium); A. Kurilić (**HR**, University of Zadar); J. Parat (HR, University of Zagreb, PhD candidate); Z. Serventi (HR, University of Zadar); L. Calvelli (**IT**, University Ca' Foscari of Venice); S. Pesce (IT, University of Torino, PhD candidate); A. Pistellato (IT, University Ca' Foscari Venezia); G. Sarullo (IT, University of Enna); S. White (IT, University Ca' Foscari of Venice); E. Suyver (**NL**, SEG-Brill); A. Ragolič (**SLO**, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts); T. Elliott (**USA**, New York University); E. Mylonas (USA, Brown University).

Not personally present at the workshop but participated in its work via Skype:
J. M. Bermúdez (**ES**, University of Barcelona, EpNet); S. Vanderbilt (**GB**, University of Nottingham, RIB online); A. Felicetti (**IT**, University of Florence); F. Murano (IT, University of Florence); Z. Fletcher (**USA**, Tufts University, Perseids).

Not personally present at the workshop but expressed their wish to be involved:
F. Beutler (**AT**, University of Vienna); T. Corsten (AT, University of Vienna, SEG); F. Mitthof (AT, University of Vienna); W. Spickermann (AT, University of Graz); M. De Pauw (**BE**, KU Leuven, **Trismegistos**); N. Sharankov (**BG**, University of Sofia); O. Gengler (**DE**, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Malalas); B. Gräf (DE, Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, EDH); K. Harter-Uibopuu (DE, University of Hamburg); A. Hartmann (DE, University of Augsburg); T. Hölscher (DE, University of Heidelberg, EDH); M. Horster (DE, University of Mainz); M. Khayutina (DE, University of Munich); J. Lougovaya-Ast (DE, University of Heidelberg); K. Matijević (DE, University of Flensburg); F. Weise (DE, University of Hamburg); J. Gomez Pantoja (**ES**, University of Alcala de Henares, **HepOnl**); A. Alonso Deniz (**FR**, HiSoMA Research Center Lyon, e-SEC); A. Campos (FR, CNRS/ANHIMA Paris); N. Laubry (FR, Ecole francaise de Rome); E. Morlock (FR, HiSoMA Research Center Lyon); N. Prevot (FR, University of Bordeaux, PETRAE); D. Rousset (FR, EPHE Paris); N. Tran (FR, University of Poitiers); G. Bodard (**GB**, University of London); A. Mullen (GB, University of Nottingham); J. Prag (GB, University of Oxford); M. Tomić (**HR**, University of Zadar); G. Amato (**IT**, CNR-ISTI); S. Antolini (IT, University of Macerata); A. Bencivenni (IT, University of Bologna); A. Felle (IT, University of Bari, **EDB**); C. Lasagni (IT, University of Turin); S. Orlandi (IT, University La Sapienza Rome, **AIEGL**); C. Papi (IT, Pontifical University Antonianum); F. Zoppi (IT, CNR-ISTI); O. Pelcer Vujačić (**MNG**, University of Montenegro); R. Varga (**RO**, University of Cluj-Napoca); R. Benefiel (**USA**, Washington and Lee University); J. Bodel (**USA**, Brown University).

Interested people subsequently added:
Aaron Hershkowitz (**USA**, Rutgers University, Krateros Project), M. Michael Satlow (USA, Brown University).

Hamburg – Heidelberg – Leuven – Zadar, April 11ᵗʰ 2019
James Cowey / Francisca Feraudi-Gruénais / Tom Gheldof / Frank Grieshaber / Anamarija Kurilić / Pietro Liuzzo