



American Society of Greek and Latin Epigraphy
Société américaine d'épigraphie latine et grecque

<http://classics.case.edu/asgle/>

ASGLE Bulletin, 27 March 2014 Volume 18, Number 1

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

ASGLE held its annual business meeting at the AIA/APA meetings in Chicago on January 5, 2014. Weather challenges kept some officers and members from attending; even so, nearly 20 members were in attendance. Outgoing President Nora Dimitrova reported that publication of the proceedings of the first North American Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy, held in 2011 in San Antonio, was going forward, and Vice President Paul Iversen provided an update on the ASGLE panel planned for the 2015 APA meeting. The chief item of business was discussion of a proposal to hold the next North American Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy in January 2016 in Berkeley at the invitation of the Sara B. Aleshire Center for the Study of Greek Epigraphy at the University of California at Berkeley. Professor Carlos Noreña of UC Berkeley's History department offered preliminary information on logistics and funding, and after discussion the proposal was adopted. Stay tuned for more details as planning progresses.

- *James Sickinger, Secretary-Treasurer*

DUES REMINDER

Annual dues for 2014 remain at \$40 for full membership. That fee automatically includes membership in the *Association Internationale pour d'Épigraphie Grecque*

et Latine (AIEGL). Membership at a reduced rate is available for students, retired faculty, and independent scholars at a reduced rate of \$10. Membership in AIEGL is **not** included for those paying the reduced rate.

Dues may be paid through PayPal by visiting the link on the ASGLE website (<http://classics.case.edu/asgle/membership/>). Members may also pay by sending a check to the secretary-treasurer, using the form and address on the last page of the *Bulletin*.

Because ASGLE pays membership fees for AIEGL in one check sent in early summer (so as to reduce transaction costs), members are kindly asked to submit their ASGLE payments **by May 1**. Payments must be in US dollars.

ASGLE Board Members

President, John Bodel, 2-year term ending on 31 December 2015

Vice-President, Paul Iversen, 2-year term ending on 31 December 2015

Past President, Nora Dimitrova, 2-year term ending on 31 December 2015

Secretary-Treasurer, James Sickinger, 2-year term ending on 31 December 2014

Member-At-Large, Christer Bruun, 3-year term ending on 31 December 2014

Member-At-Large, John D. Morgan, 3-year term ending on 31 December 2015

Senior Editor, Laura Gawlinski, 3-year term ending on 31 December 2015

ASGLE AT THE 2015 APA

Please join us next year for a panel on the theme "Inscriptions and Literary Sources," organized by Paul A. Iversen. Polybios (12.10.4-12.11.2), in an extended critique of Timaios of Tauromenion, tells us that the Sicilian historian was famous for consulting inscriptions such as dedications, *stelai* in the back chambers of buildings, and even proxeny decrees on the doorjambs of temples, both to write his history and to criticize his predecessors, or even to correct city records. In keeping with this long tradition of relying upon epigraphical evidence, the Society invites submissions that illuminate the interface between ancient Greek and Latin inscriptions and ancient historical or literary texts. Five scholars will be presenting (speaker list forthcoming).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AIEGL voting. Many ASGLE members are also members of AIEGL (the International Association of Greek and Latin Epigraphy). AIEGL members are to vote about whether to change the statutes to allow for internet voting: the **DEADLINE is MARCH 28**. Get more information and a voting form at their website: <http://www.aiegl.org/newsreader/collegis-amicis-s-p.html>

Workshop on ancient wall-inscriptions
The Herculaneum Graffiti Project is pleased to announce its inaugural field program to take place on-site in Herculaneum June 18-27, 2014. Participants will receive hands-on

training in studying, measuring, photographing and digitizing ancient wall-inscriptions. They will also directly contribute to international projects that are reediting and digitizing ancient inscriptions (Epigraphic Database Roma) and making cultural heritage more accessible (EAGLE Europeana). The workshop takes place under the patronage of the International Association of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (AIEGL) and in collaboration with the Herculaneum Conservation Project. Please see ancientgraffiti.wlu.edu/hgp for more information. **Applications are due April 5.**

Survey on epigraphic tools. Laura Löser (MA Ancient History, St Andrews/Leiden laura.loeser91@gmail.com) sends the following request for assistance from ASGLE members for her project:

If you use inscriptions in your work or study, would you have one minute to take part in this very short survey? It will provide valuable insights into the needs today's users of epigraphic publications: <http://ow.ly/utyDk>

To develop and improve tools for epigraphy, especially digital ones in the growing context of epigraphy-specific TEI (EpiDoc), it is essential to know the needs of users of epigraphic publications. The idea of my project is therefore to explore today's audiences of epigraphic publications. This will contribute to future guidelines for digital tools for epigraphy. My primary interest at the moment is which possible customizations will be most useful in the online (re)presentation of inscriptions, but the results will equally be valuable for the long-term creation of online environments where inscriptions can be collected, displayed and commented on.

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

Will Stenhouse sends notice of his article, "Roman Antiquities and the Emergence of Renaissance Civic Collections," forthcoming in the *Journal of the History of Collections*. This work focuses on early civic collections of inscriptions in Italy and France. An abstract can be viewed at this early access link:

<http://jhc.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/11/27/jhc.fht033.abstract>.

Those without access to the journal are invited to contact the author for a pdf.

Steve Tracy reports that he has just published an article on the first stele of the tribute lists: "The Wrongful Execution of the *Hellenotamiai* (Antiphon 5.69-71) and the *Lapis Primus*," *Classical Philology* 109, 2014, pp. 1-10.

Gerald V. Lalonde has just published, "Two Horos Inscriptions of the Bouleuterion of the Areopagus: Epigraphy and Topography," *Hesperia* 82, 2013, pp. 435-457.

William West presented his paper, "Practical Uses of Writing in Graffiti from Azoria, Crete," at the session of ASGLE at the APA/AIA meeting in Chicago, January 2014.

The Greek Alphabet

The Acropictographic Track and Alphabet History

by

Thierry de Mortain

The following derives from de Mortain's book, L'alphabet grec (or the marriage of the Greek alphabet and the Greek language).

<http://www.thebookedition.com/l-alphabet-grec-thierry-h-de-mortain-p-43912.html>.

Pictographic writing has a long tradition dating back to the 3rd millennium BC. Developed in parallel in Egypt (hieroglyphs) and Mesopotamia (cuneiform), it has subsequently given birth and influenced all writing systems of the Middle East as the proto-Sinaitic, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew and, finally, some of the Phoenician letters that spread to

our Latin alphabet through the Greek alphabet.

But to what extent does the Greek alphabet have a link with the language and the civilization of ancient Greece? Greeks in all likelihood adopted the Phoenician alphabet 2700 years ago and made it undergo considerable changes:

changing the shape of the letters, inventing vowels, and creating new consonants to transcribe sounds specific to Greek language. It is in 403 BC that many Greek alphabets merged into the one known as the Ionian alphabet, adopted in Athens after the Peloponnesian War.

However, the Greek letters seem to lose any pictographic value, whereas the Phoenician letter aleph, for example, represents an ox's head. Imagine the following scenario: in addition to the Phoenician letters, the Phoenicians also pass the method to create and invent new letters according to this principle. For the Greeks to create new letters, just associate with each letter a word that starts with that letter; this letter is the pictogram of this word, like the letter aleph is a pictogram of an ox. This is the acropictographic property. A simple example of the acropictographic property is the word "zigzag": the letter z is both initial and the pictogram of the word.

THE LETTER Π

I'll take a sample letter that undergoes a profound transformation, the letter Π. Originally, this letter is derived from the Phoenician letter *pe*, which means mouth:



Only in Greek, the word mouth was ΣΤΟΜΑ and begins with Σ. To transcribe the sound "p," one must therefore find a new icon. The Phoenician letter then undergoes a serious change to become Π:

once rounded, it becomes straight, two vertical strokes surmounted by a horizontal stroke that goes a bit beyond the vertical. It followed two steps:



One of the reasons commonly given for these transformations is to differentiate the letters Π and Γ. But if you look closer you realize that ultimately it has a design reminiscent of the gate of the Lionesses at Mycenae with two strong pillars surmounted by a horizontal lintel above extending a little on each side. The letter Π would therefore simply become the representation of a sanctuary or city gate, or ΠΥΛΗ with an initial Π. Simple, is it not?



The door of the Lionesses at Mycenae (13th century BC) seems to have inspired the shape of the letter Π

This form of door was the key to ancient Greek architecture. The fact that the horizontal stroke goes beyond each side of the vertical lines is because of material strength: the door is built stronger! The word ΠΥΛΗ is therefore acropictographic.

To conclude, I will try to explain the interest of such a coding of the Greek letters. This acropictographic code developed to establish a relationship between the Greek language and the Phoenician letters: this is a marriage. The acropictographic code is the second easiest after the acrophonic code.

One might also think that this code was used as a lever for decision at the creation of the Greek alphabet in 404 BC when the Ionian alphabet was imposed. In the midst of multiple forms of letters in force at the time, the acropictographic code served as a support to select the ultimate form of the letter. We retained only the letter that was most relevant from a pictographic stand point. It was also the one that established a relationship with the Greek language.

What is the interest of the acropictographic code?

1. To write: if I want to write the sound "p," I say "p" like ΠΥΛΗ and I draw a gate.
2. To read: if I see a Π, I say it's a ΠΥΛΗ and thus I know it's a "p."

To learn the writing of the alphabet you need to know one word per letter. It's so easy. Greek letters respond to an acropictographic code. Why didn't this code come down to us?

- oral transmission of this very simple code that would be lost over time in response to changing language
- a multiplicity of languages/ local dialects making the code unusable in all regions of ancient Greece

But this code definitely banned the writing of lines of letters to teach letters' shapes. This would explain why we never found lines of Π for instance! As an application, today this code can help develop new innovative abecedaries to help children and adults read and write.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

You may pay ASGLE dues online with a credit card via PayPal in many different currencies (<http://classics.case.edu/asgle/membership.html>) or in US Dollars by regular mail with a check. Only those who enroll at the College or University Faculty level will be automatically enrolled in the Association Internationale pour l'Epigraphie Grecque et Latine (AIEGL). *If paying with check, please send only US funds, make all checks payable to ASGLE, and send to James Sickinger at the address given below. Dues will be applied to the year in which they are received unless you request otherwise.* You may wish to make a copy of the completed form for your records. Choose one of the following:

____ College or University Faculty. Annual dues \$40. Membership in the International Association of Greek and Latin Epigraphy is automatic.

____ Student, Retired, Independent. Annual dues \$10. Does NOT include membership in the International Association of Greek and Latin Epigraphy.

____ Student, Retired, Independent. Annual dues \$40. Membership in the International Association of Greek and Latin Epigraphy is included.

Please print or type the following information:

Year(s)/Total enclosed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

James Sickinger
Secretary-Treasurer, ASGLE
Department of Classics, Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32308-1510
jsicking@fsu.edu