A View on Digital Classics Collaboration
from a cacophony of epigraphic databases to
a citizens’ web of inscriptions

Gabriel Bodard
King’s College London
• Background
• Digital Corpora
• User Reactions
• A Lesson from Papyrology
• Cyberscience and Epigraphy
BACKGROUND
Background: Print corpora

• CIG: Augustus Boeckh 1825 (IG: Adolf Kirchhof 1860)
  – 50,000 inscriptions
• CIL: Theodor Mommsen 1853
  – 180,000 texts
• Geographically organized
• Texts re-edited, if possible autopsied
Background: Print summaries

- AE: René Cagnat 1888
- SEG: J.J. Hondius 1923
- Annual summaries of new publications in given year
- Comprehensive within those constraints
DIGITAL CORPORA
Digital Corpora 1: PHI

• Kevin Clinton, Cornell 1985
• Funded and designed, David Packard (Packard Humanities Institute)
• 1987-1996: CD ROM
• 2007- : website (epigraphy.packhum.org)
• Texts plus minimal bibliography
• Documentation absent:
  – № of inscriptions? (208,000)
  – Collection/editing criteria? (sporadic)
Christian honorary inscription for Rhodopiaios, on columnar statue-base; 6, found at Aphrodisias: Reinach, BEG 19, 1906, 142-143, no. 75; Hellenica 4, 127-128; BE 1949-178; Rousché, CRBS 20, 1979, 182; "Rousché, Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity, no. 86 (77).

Rousché, Aphrodisias 86

1 [τὸν ἀ]θήνασιν εὐ-
2 εὔχητην τὸν λού-
3 θοῖς καὶ στηρωθίς
4 λοίμων καὶ λιμον ἀπε-
5 λάσαντα Ρεθοπαίον
6 [τὸ]ν φυλοτετράρχην ποθοῦ-
7 [ο]σια πόλης δευτέρη
8 [ὁ]ς εἰκόνι μαμώσαι
9 κοσμήσασαι αξίμας
10 [η]μιτῷ τιμῶς.
“Our goal is to make available computerized texts of as many Greek inscriptions as possible, from all areas and periods. This data bank of inscriptions is not intended to replace or reproduce printed editions: we do not attempt to reproduce the precise layout of printed texts, broken letters, critical apparatus, or commentary. The primary purpose of the data bank is to allow the texts to be searched as quickly and efficiently as possible by a variety of computers with appropriate programs.”

John Mansfield
Digital corpora 2: EDH

- Géza Alföldy, Heidelberg 1986
- Website since 1997
- 65,000 texts
- Text + diplomatic + very detailed supporting and analytic data and categories
- Re-examined and re-edited by compilers
- Bibliography, photographs
- EAGLE Federation (Rome, Bari, Alcalá)
## EDH - Epigraphic text database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HD no.:</th>
<th>HD006785</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work status:</td>
<td>provisional work status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last update:</td>
<td>28 June 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsible individual:</td>
<td>Graf</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Find spot / present location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>province / Italic region:</th>
<th>Aegyptus</th>
<th>modern country:</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ancient find spot:</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>modern find spot:</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### type of inscription / language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>language:</th>
<th>Latin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### type of monument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE 1980, 0894</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Text of inscription

**Transcription:**
D(iis) M(anibus) s(acrum) / M(arcus) Valerius Omuncio eq(u)e(s) Valerii filii(us) / fecit monimentum(!) Valerii fili / qui vixit menses VII

**majuscule:**
```
D M S
M VALERIVS OMVNCIO EQE VALERINI FILI
FECIT MONIMENTVM VALERINI FILI
QVI VIXIT MENSES VII
```
Digital corpora 2: EDH

“The texts and metadata of the inscriptions are thus presented on the basis of up to date scholarly research. One of the basic principles of the working method of *EDH* is that readings are not simply accepted from the editions and secondary literature. As much as possible these readings are verified at least on the basis of drawings or photographs ... or ideally through autopsy.”

EDH website, ‘Concept’
Digital Corpora 3: Clauss-Slaby

- [www.manfredclauss.de](http://www.manfredclauss.de)
- 445,000 texts (“almost all Latin inscriptions”)
- Very little documentation/agenda
  - founding date? (Late ‘90s?)
  - collection/editing criteria?
- Raw text search only
  - minimal metadata
- Draws heavily on CIL/EDH and other databases
Conditions of search:

Publication: "ILBulg"
Province: 
Place: 
Search text 1: 
Choice: "and"
Search text 2: 
Sorting: "Publication"

Inscriptions found:

There were found 461 inscriptions.

Publication: CIL 03, 00749 (p. 992, 1338) = IGLNovae 00073 = ILBulg 00357 = ILBulg 00386
Province: Moesia inferior Place: Svishtov / Svistov / Novae
Ex mactroritrato imperatoris Caesaris / divi Traiani Parthae / filio(i) divi Nervae / nepotis Traiani Hadriani Avgusti / p(atris) p(atiae) post(tribu) maximo(l) / trib(uniciae) potestatis XX co(n)s(ulis) II[I] / Antius Rufius in terris Moesos et Thraciae fines possuit

Publication: CIL 03, 00750 (p. 992, 1338) = IGLNovae 00030 = ILBulg 00292
Province: Moesia inferior Place: Svishtow / Svistov / Novae
Libero Patricio C(aius) Iul(ius) Carniunus p(ro) f(ilius) l(eg(ionis) I Ital(iae) ex eq(uite) Romano

Publication: CIL 03, 00751 (p. 992) = CIL 03, 12345a = D 01855 = ILBulg 00441 = AE 1902, 00122
Province: Moesia inferior Place: Svishtow / Svistov / Novae
Numini Augusti (am) et Genio p(ublico) p(atrii) Hermes / hulorum Iauari Carinotis / Epaodroidit / conduceram / p(ublici) p(atrii) illic i(ustit) et / riae Thraciae / serv(itus) illic(ius) posuit
USER REACTIONS
Cambridge workshop 2007

• lack of coherence in collection strategy and coverage (unlike therefore SEG or AE, which can claim to be complete for a given year)
• "a work in progress is no use to me“
• PHI (maybe less so EDH) is full of mistakes—inconsistent checking because of so many different editors/data entry folk
• you can't cite it, so you always have to go to the publication as well
• you can't trust the search, so you always have to go to SEG/AE indices as well
General impressions

• “I’ll use Clauss-Slaby because EDH doesn’t have everything”
• “I don’t need detailed metadata and carefully edited texts, I just need all the inscriptions”
• “But EDH only has Eastern Europe!”
geographic distribution of the entered inscriptions
Challenges

• Scale is obviously important
• Quality and detail are important too
  – How can you trust large-scale search if quality of text is sacrificed?
  – Users don’t trust any databases, so quality is not recognized as a factor?
• Data for faceting search/discovery
• Linked Data to connect with external projects
  – Geographical
  – Prosopographical
  – Archaeological
Challenges

• Scale is obviously important
• Quality and detail are important too
  – How can you trust large-scale search if quality of text is sacrificed?
  – Users don’t trust any databases, so quality is not recognized as a factor?
• Data for faceting search/discovery
• Linked Data to connect with external projects
  – Geographical
  – Prosopographical
  – Archaeological
A LESSON FROM PAPYROLOGY
Integrating Digital Papyrology

- Josh Sosin, director, DDbDP
- James Cowey, Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis
- 2007-2011, Mellon-funded project
- 55,000 texts in DDb (+HGV database)
  - 30,000 APIS records
  - HGV, APIS, and other translations
  - Trismegistos identifiers
Integrating Digital Papyrology

- Data migration to EpiDoc (TEI) XML
  - King’s College London
- Papyri.info search and browse/LD interface
  - Columbia/NYU
- SoSOL community editing platform
  - University of Kentucky
- Training programme for papyrologists
- Documentation and dissemination
Papyri.info is dedicated to the study of ancient papyrological documents. It offers links to papyrological resources, a customized search engine (called the Papyrological Navigator) capable of retrieving information from multiple related collections, and an editing application, the Papyrological Editor, which contributors can use to suggest emendations to PN texts.

The Papyrological Navigator aggregates and displays information from the Advanced Papyrological Information System (APIS), the Duke Databank of Documentary Papyri (DDBDP), the Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens (HGV), and Bibliographie Papyrologique (BP), as well as links to Trismegistos.
IDP: Papyrological Editor

• Management interface
  – Editorial board vet all contributions/emendations
  – Reject/accept/accept to apparatus

• Tags-free editing (Leiden+)
  – 600 registered users
  – 000s of new texts / corrigenda
  – Professors marshalling student helpers
  – Retired civil servants keeping active
Papyri.info: a model for epigraphy?

• IDP was possible because of *amicitia papyrologorum*
  – DDb (+HGV) main database, no rivalry
  – Young discipline, 1880s onward
  – Greek encoding and display issues slowed down proliferation of databases

• Epigraphy fragmented, cacophonic
  – Many databases (esp. Latin)
  – No *amicitia epigraphicorum*
  – Ancient conflicting traditions
    • Italian and German giants
Papyri.info: a model for epigraphy?

• Texts already in EpiDoc:
  – Aphrodisias, Vindolanda, US Epigraphy, Tripolitania, Curse tablets, Roman Cyrenaica, Northern Black Sea, Israel-Palestine, Macedonia/Thraces, MAMA XI, Archaic Latin, Bruttium, Roman Britain...
  – In progress: Beischriften, A nastro, Dionysiak, Hydrical administration, Croatia, Latium Vetus, Minoan, Apparatus inscriptions, Greek Cyrenaica

• Compatible databases:
  – Heidelberg, Bari, Hispania Epigraphica, Jüdischen Grabsteinepigraphik

http://wiki.digitalclassicist.org/Category:EpiDoc
Papyri.info: a model for epigraphy?

• Heidelberg and Rome already massively collaborative
  – Scholars and teams of students
  – Overseas collaborators
• EAGLE partners in contact with EpiDoc community
• Linked Data projects such as Pleiades, Pelagios
  – Value of interoperability and interchange
  – Necessity of collaboration
  – Futility of negative criticism/complaining
  – Academic engagement
A community-built gazetteer and graph of ancient places

Tricore? - An ancient place, cited: BAtlas 15 E3 Tricore?

Search the 34,344 Places
About PELAGIOS

PELAGIOS stands for 'Pelagios: Enable Linked Ancient Geodata In Open Systems' - its aim is to help introduce Linked Open Data goodness into online resources that refer to places in the Ancient World. Why do we want to do that? Well, we think it will make all sorts of other things possible, including new modes of discovery and visualization for scholars and the general public. Pelagios also means 'of the sea', the superhighway of the ancient world - a metaphor we consider appropriate for a digital resource that will connect references to ancient places.

Who are Pelagios?

Pelagios are a collective of projects connected by a shared vision of a world - most eloquently described in Tom Elliott's article 'Digital Geography and Classics'.
Citizens’ Web of Inscriptions

• We are academics, but no more ivory tower
• Serve public interest:
  – Not only to educate academics
  – To engage, educate, entertain public
• Publications serve more than ourselves
  – Popular history
  – Edit Wikipedia
  – Educate ourselves on digital scholarship
    • and digital culture
Citizens’ Web of Inscriptions

• Linked Data approach to existing cacophony
  – Assign URIs to digital records

• Community annotation and enhancement
  – owl:sameAs
  – oac:related
  – gawd:attestsTo

• Massive database without single silo
  – Decentralize
  – Open license
  – LOCKSS
Citizens’ Web of Inscriptions

• SoSOL approach to community editing
  – Papyrological Editor, Perseus, Homer Multitext, CTS, Charta
  – Gated crowdsourcing / Scholarly cyberscience

• Everyone likes to shoot down what’s there more than to build something new!
  – Revision
  – Enhancement
  – Full credit
    • Resumé/tenure package
Citizens’ Web of Inscriptions

• Decentralized data/texts
  – Core editing interface
  – Multiple editorial boards
  – Two-way data migration (keep FMP platform)
    • Until realize they like XML more anyway!
    • Enhancements from LD

• Relationships with other data
  – Papyrology
  – Geography
  – Prosopography
Thank you!

gabriel.bodard@kcl.ac.uk

http://wiki.digitalclassicist.org/User:GabrielBodard