

C350: An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy Fall Semester 2018

Course Instructor

NAME	Prof. Robert K. Pitt
EMAIL	robertkpitt@gmail.com
HOURS AVAILABLE	After class or by appointment
PHONE	(+30) 6934 207 034

Class Meetings

DAY	HOURS
Monday/Wednesday	11.00 – 12.40
Classroom	AC-5

Course Description

Inscriptions illuminate almost every aspect of the ancient world, from the monumental public laws, decrees and royal pronouncements that formed state policies to the everyday shopping lists and graffiti scratched on potsherds. This course takes a practical approach to the subject in which students will learn the techniques of reading and transcribing inscriptions and how to make a professional edition of a text, as a way of gaining the skill-set needed to find and interpret the epigraphic record and utilize the relevant bibliography. A number of classes will cover a particular theme of the ancient world through a seminar-style reading of a set of inscriptions which students will prepare in advance.

We will look at the origins of written Greek and its development, examine a variety of types of inscribed material (rock-cut, standing stones, everyday objects, potsherds) and read through many categories of texts (including public decrees, private dedications, funerary inscriptions, and curses). Much of the course will be spent on sites and in museums looking at and working with inscriptions, especially at the Epigraphic Museum (the world's largest collection of Greek inscriptions).

Requirements and assessment

As this is a dedicated higher classics/archaeology/ancient history class, students are expected to have a background in ancient languages, although students with only a semester or two of Greek are encouraged to apply as inscriptions are a great way to gain confidence in the language. As the classes all have a seminar element, students should expect to read and prepare inscriptions for the classes for a minimum of 4 hours per week.

The final grade is calculated from the following 4 tasks:

- 1. On-site presentation:** each student will be assigned an inscription from one of the archaeological sites or museums that we visit, and will offer a presentation on that monument for around 10 minutes. Further information will be given when the assignment is handed out. (20%)
- 2. Midterm presentation (October 17th):** over two visits to the museum of the British School at Athens, students will be taught the reading and recording techniques needed to make their

own edition of an inscription assigned to them from the BSA collection. Back at CYA, students will give a talk on their work, presenting an edition of the text with photographs and squeezes (where applicable), and a short commentary on the text. Further information will be given when the assignment is handed out. (20%)

3. Research paper: students will write a 4000-word paper on an epigraphic subject of their choosing (in consultation with the course tutor). Further information will be given when topics are discussed. (40%)

4. Class participation: as this is a seminar-style class, students will be assessed during the semester for their level of participation in discussions on the inscriptions and readings assigned for each meeting. (20%)

Class schedule

Each class has compulsory assigned background reading and/or set texts which should be prepared in advance for the seminar discussion. Most texts are taken from the epigraphic collections Meiggs and Lewis (ML) or Rhodes and Osborne (RO) (see Bibliography); all texts and readings are available from the course Moodle pages. Classes are in AC-5 unless otherwise stated below.

Monday, September 10th

1. Introduction to Greek Epigraphy

The syllabus, assignments, and structure of the course.

Wednesday, September 12th

2. The origins of Greek writing and the earliest inscriptions

The earliest appearances of Greek writing on stone and pottery; Archaic scripts and dialects; the relationship in early writing between text and object.

- Class reading: Woodhead (1981) chapter II 'The Origin and Development of the Greek Alphabet'.

- Set texts: ML 1 Nestor's Cup; ML 7 Greek Mercenaries in Egyptian Service.

Monday, September 17th

3. Early Attic inscriptions I – the alphabet and dialect

This class looks at the earliest inscriptions from Athens, written in the Attic dialect and script, and traces the development of both up to the early Classical period.

- Class reading: M. K. Langdon, 'A New Greek Abecedarium,' *Kadmos* 44 (2005) 175-182.

Monday, September 24th

4. Early Attic inscriptions II – the shepherds' graffiti on Mount Hymettus

Several thousand graffiti of Archaic shepherds and goatherds have been discovered carved into the marble outcrops of Mount Hymettos and its foothills. They offer a unique insight into social history, linguistics, and religion before the coming of democracy.

- set texts: a selection of drawings of graffiti on Moodle (try and make texts out of them).

Wednesday, September 26th

5. Trip to the National Archaeological Museum - Archaic graffiti and statue dedications

The NAM houses a large collection of inscribed Archaic statue bases, mainly of kouroi and korai, as well as having some early Athenian pottery inscriptions on display.

- set texts: Nikandre statue; Dipylon jug; Kroisos base (Moodle).

Meet: National Archaeological Museum steps (44, 28 Oktovriou St.).

Monday, October 1st

6. Trip to the Acropolis Museum - Dedications to the gods in Archaic Athens

The Acropolis has produced a huge collection of inscribed statue bases from the pre-Persian period, giving us information about the processes of dedicating to the gods and about the people who were setting up these expensive gifts.

- Class reading: C. M. Keesling, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis*, Cambridge (2003) 3-35.

- Set texts: ML 18 Memorial of Kallimachos.

Meet: Acropolis Museum, Dionysiou Areopagitou St.

Wednesday, October 3rd

7. Early laws of Crete and the Doric dialect

A surprisingly number of our earliest public inscriptions are laws from Crete. This class will look at a selection of them, after an introduction to the Doric dialect in which they are written.

- Class reading: M. Gagarin, 'Early Greek Law', in M. Gagarin and D. Cohen (edd.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law*, Cambridge (2005) 82-94.

- Set texts: ML 41 Civil Laws of Gortyn.

Monday, October 8th

8. Trip to the British School at Athens Museum – personal inscription project I

Students will be guided through the processes of reading and recording inscriptions, and we will learn how to make and use squeezes (paper casts). You will also be assigned your own inscribed objects from which to write the midterm project.

- Class reading: Woodhead (1981) chapter I 'Signs and Symbols'; McLean (2002) 1.1 'Editorial Sigla'.

Meet: British School at Athens, outside gate at 53 Patera (Alopekis) St., Kolonaki.

Wednesday, October 10th

9. Trip to the Epigraphic Museum - Inscriptions and Imperial control in the Athenian Empire.

The Athenian epigraphic habit explodes under the Empire, giving us inscribed records of revolts and their suppression, decrees imposing cleruchies and new constitutions on allied states, records of tribute payment to the Athenians, as well as imperial pronouncements.

- Class reading: R. S. Stroud, *The Athenian Empire on Stone*, Athens 2006.

- Set texts: ML 45 Athenian Decree enforcing the use of Athenian Coins, Weights, and Measures.

Meet: Epigraphic Museum, Tositsa St.

Monday, October 15th

10. BSA trip II – personal inscription project II

Students will continue to work on their midterm project.

Meet: British School at Athens, outside gate at 53 Patera (Alopekis) St., Kolonaki.

TBA during the week

11. Midterm project help with course tutor

Monday, October 17th

12. Midterm presentations

Monday, October 22nd

13. Language of the street: graffiti and scribbled invective.

Private inscriptions constitute a large and understudied body of ancient texts: economic texts (stamps and marks on pottery), graffiti and games on buildings, Athenian ostracism.

- Class reading: C. Taylor, 'Graffiti and the Epigraphic Habit', in J. Baird and C. Taylor (eds) *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, Routledge (2011).

- Set texts: ML 21 Ostracism at Athens.

Monday, October 29th

14. Democracy on stone

The Athenian democracy created a great many inscribed monuments carrying the decisions of the People: decrees of the Council and the Assembly, laws, accounts of state bodies. We will examine the anatomy of decrees and discuss the role of inscriptions in accountability.

- Class reading: McLean (2002) 2.8 'Decrees'; J. K. Davies, *Accounts and Accountability in Classical Athens*, in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (edd.) *Ritual, Finance, Politics*, Oxford 1994, 201-212.

Wednesday, October 31st

15. Religion, magic, and talking to a god.

Curse tablets and magic spells, often written on lead, were thrown down wells or buried with the dead in order to communicate the writer's wishes to the underworld. Another form of contacting the gods was through an oracle, and many such questions have survived, especially at the sanctuary of Dodona.

- Class reading: E. Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, & Risk among the Ancient Greeks*, Oxford 2007, chapter 7: 'Curses!', pp. 143-159.

Monday, November 5th

16. Cities of Statues: dedications and public benefactors.

The public spaces of Greek cities and sanctuaries became filled with statues of benefactors, particularly in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Their inscribed bases and honorific decrees can tell us a great deal about negotiations of power and prestige among city elites.

- Class reading: McLean (2002) 2.9 'Honorific Decrees, Proxeny Decrees, and Honorific Inscriptions'; J. Ma, *Statues and Cities*, Oxford 2013, chapter 1 'Towards a Grammar of Honours', 15-43.

Wednesday, November 7th

17. Trip to the Epigraphic Museum – the public galleries

This EM visit will look at the galleries housing many of the most famous historic inscriptions in the collection.

- Set texts: Honors for Oiniades; Accounts from the Sanctuary of Nemesis at Rhamnous.

Meet: Epigraphic Museum, Tositsa St.

Monday, November 12th

18. Trip to the Theatre of Dionysus - winners and losers in the public arena

Drama played an important role in Athenian social, political, and religious life. Inscriptions were set up to commemorate victorious playwrights, actors, choruses, and sponsors.

- Class reading: A. Chanotis, 'Theatre Rituals', in P. Wilson (ed.) *The Greek Theatre and Festivals*, Oxford (2007) 48-66.

- Set texts: Decree of the Dionysiac artists (Austin no. 123).

Meet: Theatre of Dionysos, entrance opposite the Acropolis Museum, Dionysiou Areopagitou.

Wednesday, November 14th

19. Greek and other languages: bi- and trilingual inscriptions

This class will look at the interplay between Greek and other languages in the epigraphic record, whether bilingual funerary inscriptions, or public messages to different audiences.

- Set texts: Selection on Moodle.

Monday, November 26th

20. Names in Greek inscriptions: onomastics, prosopography, and history from names

Names can tell us a great deal about the backgrounds of those that bear them; we will look at why certain names were chosen for different types of people or in different areas, what they can say about social or economic standing, and how they can help us trace families through the epigraphic and literary record.

- Class reading: McLean (2002) 1.4 'The Onomastics and Prosopography of Greek Names'.

Wednesday, November 28th

21. Trip to the Kerameikos - The epigraphy of Death

Funerary inscriptions account for the largest proportion of texts on stone to survive. We will look at what they can tell us about the commemoration of the dead, public and private.

- Class reading: McLean (2002) 2.11 'Funerary Inscriptions'; E. A. Meyer, 'Epitaphs and Citizenship in Classical Athens,' *JHS* 113 (1993) 99-121.

Meet: Kerameikos, on Ermou St.

Monday, December 3rd

22. Writing to a King: changing epigraphy in the Hellenistic World.

As Greece fell under the power of Hellenistic monarchs, royal correspondence became an important part of negotiation between local elites and the king.

- Class reading: A. Bencivenni, 'The King's Words: Hellenistic Royal Letters in Inscriptions', in K. Radner (ed.) *State Correspondence in the Ancient World*, Oxford 2014, chapter 6.

- Set texts: RO 86 Alexander the Great and Priene; Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, no. 31 Letter of Antiochus III.

Wednesday, December 5th

23. The Coming of Rome: learning a new language.

As Rome swept through the Eastern Mediterranean, the Greeks kept their own language for most public inscriptions, but the form of those texts changes dramatically to include Roman ways of writing, naming, and commemorating. Greek and Latin bilingual inscriptions in the east and other languages.

- Class reading: Selection of texts on Moodle.

Wednesday, December 12th

24. Historical documents on stone

From the Hellenistic period onwards, we have an illuminating series of documents where cities inscribe records of their own history, events and famous figures, such as the Themistokles decree, the Salmakis inscriptions, the Parian Marble, and the Lindian Chronicle). Set texts: Selection of texts on Moodle.

Bibliography and resources

Introductions to Epigraphy:

- B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.-A.D. 337)*. Ann Arbor 2002. An exhaustive introduction to many aspects of the subject.
- A. G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*. 2nd ed. Cambridge 1981 (although other editions available from various publishers). The course textbook.
- B. D. Meritt, *Epigraphica Attica*. Cambridge, Mass. 1940. Rather out-of-date now but good discussions on understanding the monuments behind inscriptions.
- F. Miller, 'Epigraphy', in M. H. Crawford (ed.) *Sources for Ancient History*, Cambridge 1983, 80-136.
- J. Bodel (ed.) *Epigraphic Evidence. Ancient History from Inscriptions*. London/New York 2012.

Collections of texts and translations:

- R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, eds. *A Selection of Greek historical inscriptions to the end of the fifth century B.C.* Rev. ed., Oxford 1988. A crucial collection of texts of the Archaic period and Fifth Century (no translations) with expert commentaries.
- C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Age*. Yale 1934. A collection of letters between kings and cities.
- R. Osborne & P. J. Rhodes, *Greek Historical Inscriptions 478-404 BC*. Oxford 2017. An updated Meiggs & Lewis, with translations this time, and lengthy commentary.
- P. J. Rhodes & R. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions 404-323 BC*. Oxford 2003. A continuation of Osborne & Rhodes into the Fourth Century.
- P. Harding, *From the end of the Peloponnesian War to the battle of Ipsus (Translated Documents of Greece and Rome, vol 2)*, Cambridge 1985.
- C. W. Fornara, *Archaic times to the end of the Peloponnesian War (Translated Documents of Greece and Rome, vol 1)*, 2nd ed. Cambridge 1983.
- M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation*. Cambridge 1981.
- R. S. Bagnall & P. Derow. *The Hellenistic Period: Historical Sources in Translation*. 2nd ed. Oxford 2004.

Epigraphic journals and bibliographies:

- F. Bérard et al. *Guide de l'épigraphiste: Bibliographie choisie des épigraphies antiques et médiévales*. 4th ed. Paris 2010. An essential guide to the principal epigraphic corpora and bibliography, updated annually online: <http://www.antiquite.ens.fr/ressources/publications-aux-p-e-n-s/guide-de-l-epigraphiste/article/overview>
- *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (SEG)*. Indispensable annual review of all publications associated with Greek epigraphy, which is always around 5 years behind the current date. Brill has an online version, which the ASCSA subscribes to.
- *Bulletin épigraphique* in the periodical *Revue des Études Grecques* is an annual review of select publications of Greek inscriptions the year after they come out; not as exhaustive as

SEG but high quality and often lengthy reviews. It was for decades written by Jeanne and Louis Robert (those publications available also in separate bound volumes at the BSA and ASCSA), and every so often they produce volumes of indices.

- Some recent issues of the journal *Archaeological Reports* carry regional epigraphic updates: R. K. Pitt, 'Recent discoveries & resources in Athenian epigraphy,' *AR* 61 (2014-2015) 49-55; 'Recent epigraphic research in Central Greece: Euboea, Phokis & Lokris', *AR* 61 (2014-2015) 65-74; Recent epigraphic research in Thasos, Aegean Thrace & Smothrace (2005-2015), *AR* 61 (2014-2015) 75-93.

Electronic resources:

- The Packard Humanities Institute Searchable Greek Inscriptions website (PHI): this project aims to make available the texts (no lemma or commentary) of all Greek inscriptions, searchable by bibliographic reference or through the Greek text:

<http://noapplet.epigraphy.packhum.org/allregions>

- Lexicon of Greek Personal Names Online: the LGPN website allows for searches of all Greek names in their database, as well as searches of almost all their published volumes. The Athens volume is the only one, however, that is updated from the original publication, by one of the editors, Sean Byrne, and has much greater search facilities: <http://www.seangb.org/>

- Attic Inscriptions Online (<https://www.atticinscriptions.com/>) is a project of Steven Lambert, aiming to provide good translations of Athenian inscriptions, papers on Attic inscriptions and other resources.

- Claros (<http://www.dge.filol.csic.es/claros/2claros.htm>) offers an online concordance for Greek epigraphy although a little trial and error is needed in getting used to the complex and idiosyncratic abbreviations system.

- The Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents in Oxford has much of its squeeze collection scanned and available online, and provides a long list of other web resources for epigraphy: <http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/>.

- Writing epigraphic Greek now requires a Unicode font, and one of the most popular is Donald Mastronarde's New Athena Unicode, used with the keyboard input of Greek Keys: <https://apagreekkeys.org/NAUdownload.html>.