Society for Libyan Studies

Small Grant (2018): Report

I applied in February 2018 for a small grant of £2863.08, which was awarded to me in March 2018

The purpose of the grant was to help me in preparing an online edition of some 2,500 Greek and Latin inscriptions from Roman Cyrenaica (IRCyr). These materials were collected, over several decades, by Joyce Reynolds, and about half of them have never been previously published. For most of them there are one or more photographs. The volume of the material makes paper publication unrealistic, and we therefore decided to publish the corpus online, following the pattern used for the *Inscriptions of Aphrodisias* published in 2004 and 2007 (<http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/>) and the *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* published in 2009 (<http://inslib.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/>). Those corpora were published in EpiDoc XML (<https://sourceforge.net/p/epidoc/wiki/Home/>) and each project contributed to the development of those protocols, which are now being widely used. Those undertakings did, however, depend on a good deal of technical support to make the materials easily readable. In 2018 Dr Gabriel Bodard of the Institute of Classical Studies received a grant from the Mellon Foundation, which he used to develop EpiDoc Front End Services (EFES); this software enables the editor to transform texts prepared in EpiDoc into a publishable format, and provides indices and other filters.

The aim is that, in due course, scholars will be able to install and run this software quite independently; but it is still rather demanding. I therefore requested funding for one month’s work by Simona Stoyanova, a PhD candidate at King’s College who has been working on the development of EFES, to install an instance of EFES and apply it to the IRCyr materials which I am editing in XML.

Simona worked from 1st-30th June 2018. She installed the EFES software, and then started to rationalise and organise the IRCyr materials. This was not simple: the texts, while being transcribed, had gone out of order (so, for example, some material from Apollonia was listed under Cyrene). Simona renumbered the entire corpus, flushing out and removing duplicates and other errors. She then worked to ensure that the various capacities of EFES were working, as we applied them to this first fully EFES corpus. We created new indices as our edition of the material required.

There were challenges, as there always are. Some of these were created by errors in my XML, which were usefully revealed; others were created by glitches in EFES, which we worked to remedy. But we now have a working version of a web publication of the corpus. I had thought that this would have to go into GitHub, but in fact it has been possible to place it on the King’s Digital Lab development server; I have therefore been able to make it accessible to my colleagues in Bologna, Heidelberg, Leicester and Paris, so that we can now develop our collaboration further.

I am very grateful indeed to the Society for this funding, which has transformed the way in which I work: I can now see the publishable version of my work instantly, whenever I make a change. I hope that this is going to make it possible for me to publish the corpus before the end of 2019 – and Joyce Reynolds’ 101st birthday!

Below: Before (text in XML) and after!







