

EPIGRAPHIC SOURCES FOR EARLY GREEK WRITING

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OVERVIEW

The development of the Greek alphabet is one of the more remarkable and formative episodes in the history of the ancient Mediterranean World. The variety and ingenuity of local alphabets in the Archaic Greek world offer a striking reflection of the creativity of this period of Greek history and of the impact of the introduction of writing on Greek society.

The research collection of the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (CSAD) in Oxford includes the unpublished archive of the late L.H. Jeffery, whose *Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (LSAG) has become the standard treatment of early Greek alphabetic writing.

The *Epigraphic Sources for Early Greek Writing* project aims to catalogue and digitise this archive and create from it a new electronic resource to be made available on-line. A major benefit from this work will be to collate into one source a wealth of data on the texts studied by Jeffery, including large numbers of images of the original texts in their settings. Other elements of the project will enhance LSAG through the provision of features not included in the book.

Epigraphic Sources for Early Greek Writing belongs to a family of projects entitled *Script, Image and the Culture of Writing in the Ancient World* based at the CSAD and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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THE ANNE JEFFERY ARCHIVE & LSAG

L.H. Jeffery (known as "Anne Jeffery") is well known for her work on the development of Greek alphabetic writing. In the course of her research, she accrued an archive of over one hundred foolscap folders of papers and photographs relating to the texts she studied. On Jeffery's death, this was bequeathed to the Faculty of Literae Humaniores at Oxford University.

The core of the "Anne Jeffery Archive" comprises seventy-seven folders pertaining directly to the production of *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* which hold in total some five thousand pages of notes. These notes, often made in pencil, typically assemble not only information from diverse publications but also record Jeffery's own observations, notes on letter forms, transliterations, and drawings of inscriptions. The drawings are of particular interest as they frequently illustrate the three-dimensional relationship between text and inscribed object. This is all the more true when they are combined with the photographs from the archive. Both in this respect, and in terms of the content of the notes, the archive does not merely mirror that of LSAG but adds substantially to the brief entries on individual inscriptions in the catalogue sections of the book.

For example, the page of notes on the inscribed base for a colossus dedicated by the Naxians (Fig. 1) brings together descriptive information from various sources, Jeffery's comments, a drawing of the text, and sketches of the fragments of the colossus with a possible reconstruction. Photographs from the archive give us both a close-up of the text (Fig. 2) and a picture of the whole of the stone on which it is inscribed (Fig. 3). In combination, these notes and images establish a clear impression of both the letter-forms of the text and

its relation to the monument of which it forms a part.

Almost all the photographs in the archive are black and white and were taken with great care and skill by Jeffery herself using a medium format (6cm × 6cm) Rolleiflex camera. The high quality may be illustrated by the images of the Euthykartides base (Fig. 4) and of the Serpent-Column monument in the Hippodrome in Istanbul (Fig. 5).

OTHER MATERIAL IN THE ARCHIVE

Folders in the Anne Jeffery Archive which do not relate to the preparation of *LSAG* do nevertheless mostly concern epigraphic subjects, including five on non-Greek scripts of Asia Minor. In addition, the archive possesses a large number of photographs which were stored separately from the folders and are more diverse in subject matter. A significant group comprises photographs of landscapes and townscapes which have changed markedly since Jeffery captured them with her camera between the late 1940s and early 1960s. For example, a picture of Parga (Fig. 6) offers a markedly different view of the town to that visible today. A related, though smaller group of photographs may be described as ethnographic in subject. A further group of about forty photographs concerns British excavations at Bayrakli (Old Smyrna), where Jeffery supervised the investigation of Bronze Age levels in "Trench B" during the 1949 season. Most of the remaining photographs are biographical in nature, documenting Anne Jeffery's academic career from Cambridge to Oxford via Princeton.

THE PROJECT

The aim of our project, by its completion in late 2004, is to catalogue and digitise the Anne Jeffery Archive and to make it available in electronic form on-line as a new resource for the study of the development of the Greek alphabet.

Our project comes not before time. Jeffery did not envisage that her archive would be preserved, and so was frugal and imaginative in her choice of stationery. Some notes were made on clean sheets of paper of a fairly standard size but others were made on whatever scraps came to hand, whether the backs of draft publications, administrative circulars or odd envelopes. Many of these materials do not age well and the result is that the archive is deteriorating.

BUILDING ON *LSAG*

Digital publication presents us with possibilities which were not available to Jeffery when *LSAG* first rolled off the printing press in 1961. We intend to exploit these by creating a range of new analytical and illustrative tools to complement and enhance the use of the book.

- *LSAG* refers to many more publications than could be included in any printed concordance of manageable size. We are compiling an electronic concordance which will permit searches for inscriptions by numerous criteria, such as author, publication, inscription number, inscription type, date, local script and archaeological context.

- Jeffery's analysis of letter-forms in *LSAG* is detailed, complex and fundamental to her work. We plan to catalogue the letter-forms by individual inscription and link this information to other analytical and illustrative tools in the electronic resource. In so doing we hope to make accessible the very "nuts and bolts" of *LSAG*, thereby helping Jeffery's work to be carried forward.

- *LSAG* includes transliterations of only about half the texts it discusses and almost no translations. We aim where possible to provide both for every inscription. Furthermore, we are creating an XML file for each Greek text following the guidelines being established by the International Epigraphic Project, and entering the texts and translations into a searchable database.

- Geographical themes play a vital role in *LSAG*. These include among others the archaeological contexts of the various texts discussed, the location of the "homelands" of the various scripts and sub-scripts, their distribution, and lines of influence. *LSAG* itself, however, does not contain a single map. We intend to address this lacuna by offering an extensive on-line map gallery (for a prototype see Fig. 7). In the longer term we will make the co-ordinates collected for the compilation of these maps available to users to download for generating their own customised maps.

WEB-SITE

A selection of material from the archive and further information about the project may be viewed on the CSAD website at: <http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/LSAG/>

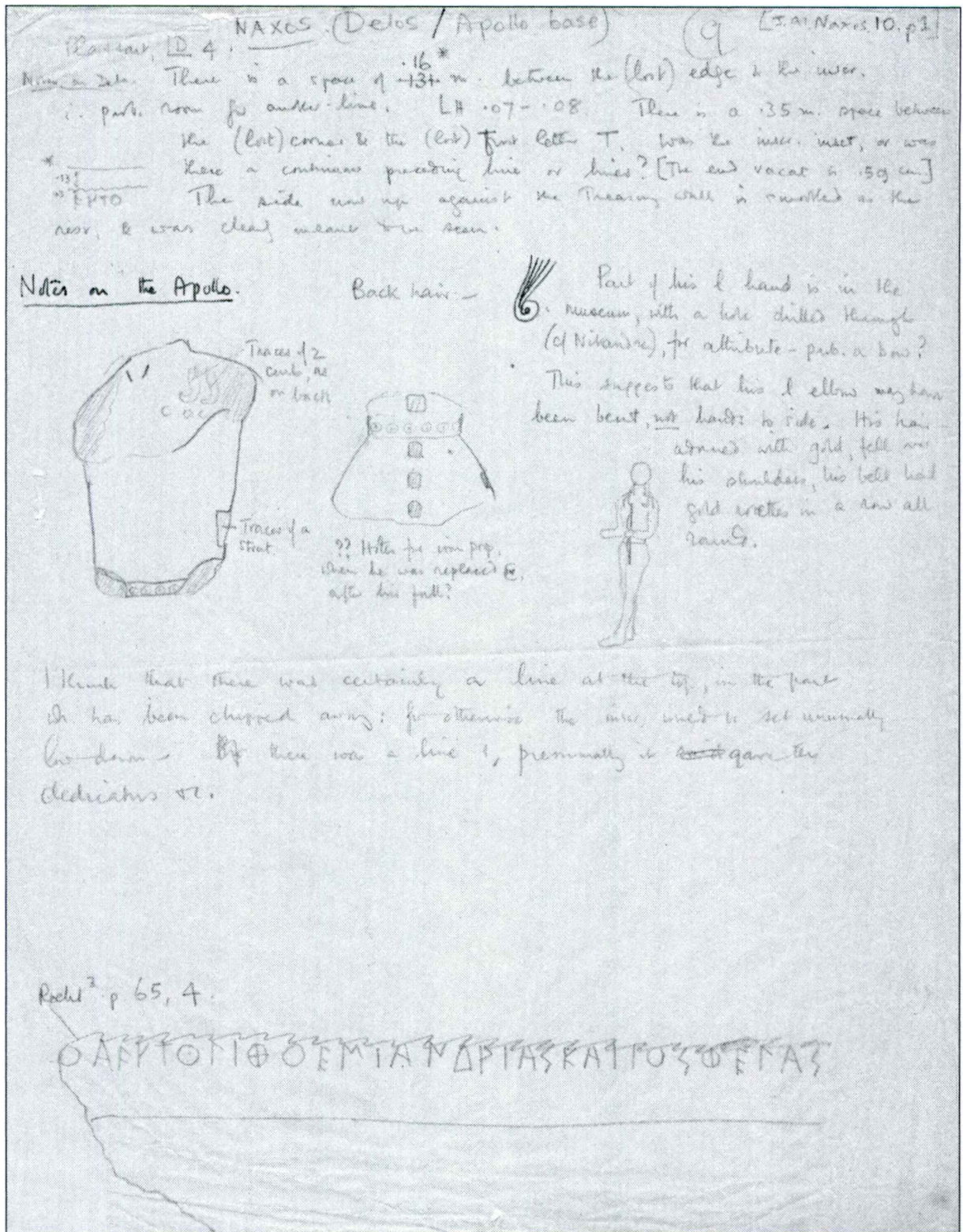


Fig. 1: Page of notes from the Anne Jeffery Archive on the inscribed base of a colossus dedicated by the Naxians on Delos ca. 600-575 (LSAG p. 304 no. 10).



Fig. 2: Photograph from the Anne Jeffery Archive showing a close-up of the text.

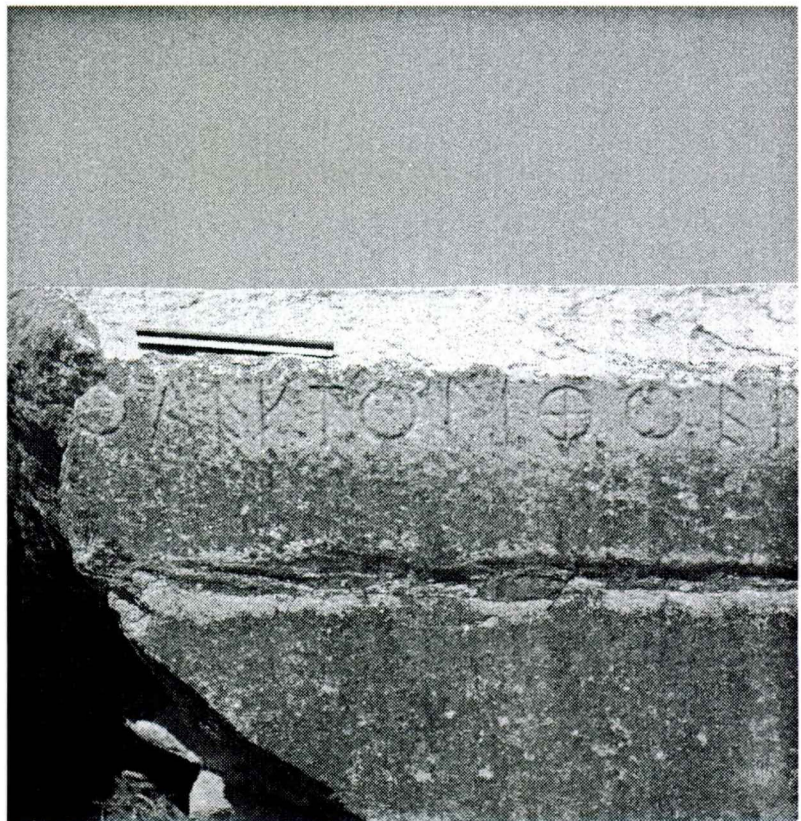


Fig. 3: Photograph from the Anne Jeffery Archive showing the monumental setting of the text.



Fig. 4: Photograph from the Anne Jeffery Archive of the base of a kouros dedicated by Euthykartides on Delos ca. 620-600 (LSAG p. 304 no. 3).

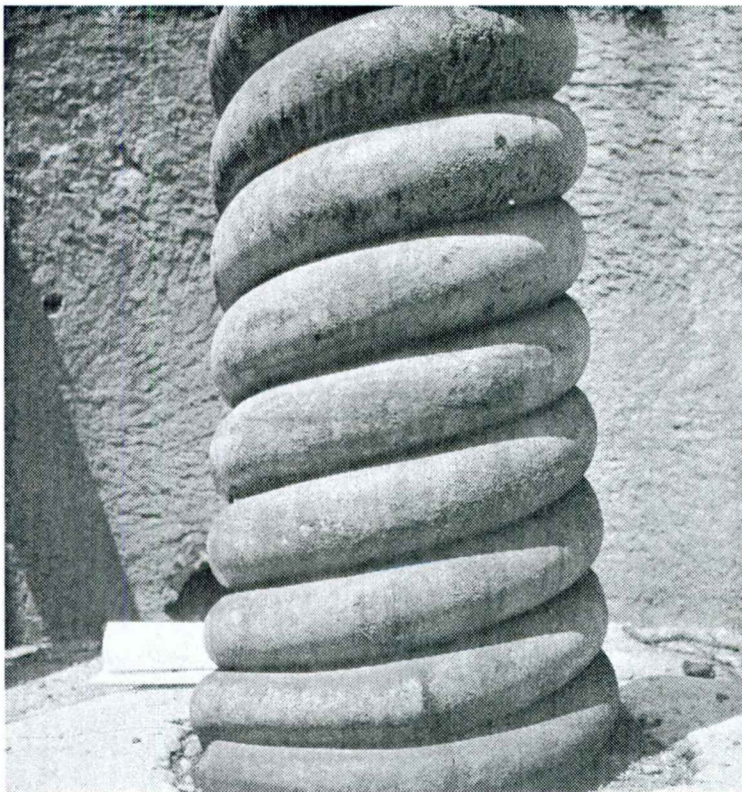


Fig. 5: Photograph from the Anne Jeffery Archive of the Serpent-Column monument dedicated by the Greeks at Delphi ca. 479 and now in the Hippodrome in Istanbul (LSAG p. 104 no. 15).



Fig. 6: Non-epigraphic material from the Anne Jeffery Archive: view of Parga ca. 1950.

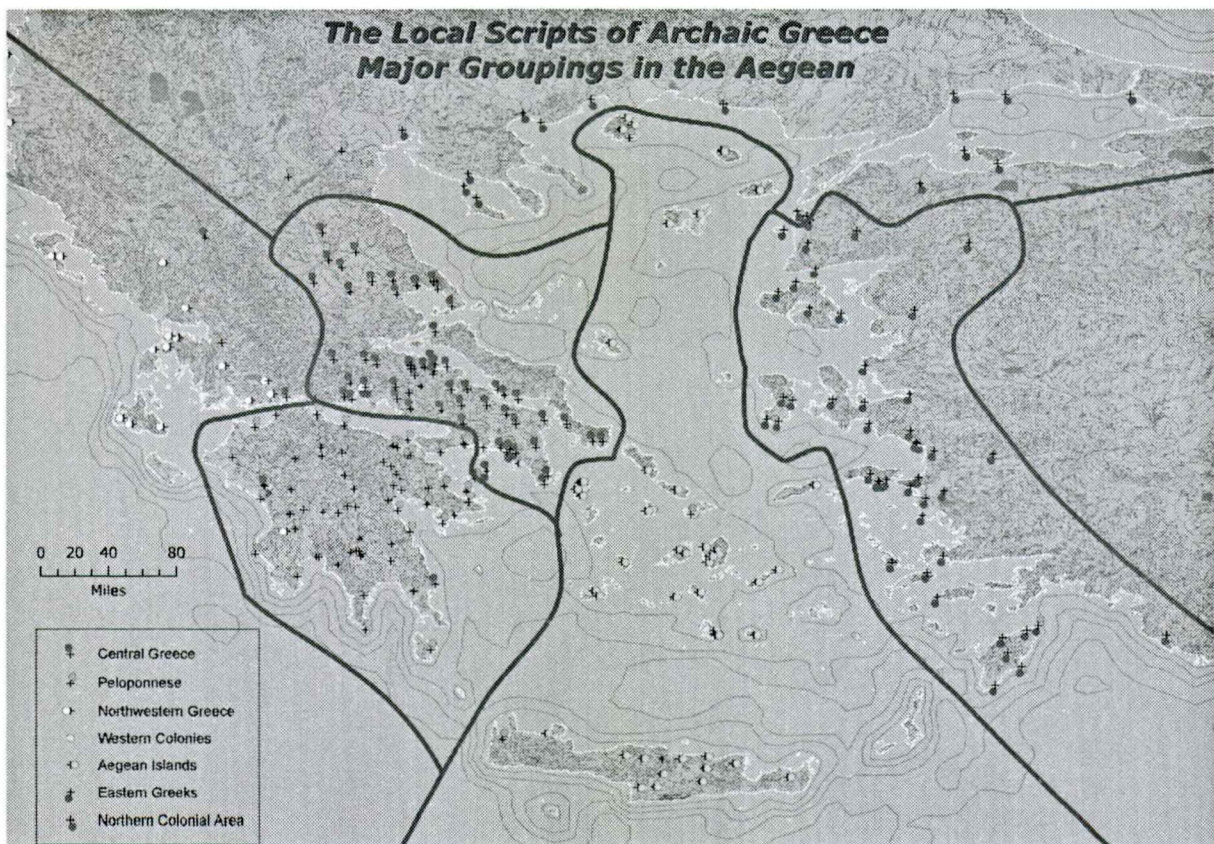


Fig. 7: Prototype map showing the major geographical groupings of scripts proposed by Jeffery in *LSAG* and their archaeological distribution.