

Association for Written Language and Literacy
Ассоциация письменного языка и письменности
Ενωση για τη γραπτη γλωσσα και τη βασικη εκπαιδευση
书面语言和识字协会
Association for Written Language and Literacy

AWLL Newsletter: Number 6: 15 May 2019

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On distribution of sixth AWLL newsletter [Terry Joyce (newsletter editor)]

In maintaining the cycle of distributing a new AWLL newsletter every six months, fortuitously, the timing of this sixth newsletter falls at a suitably convenient interval after the recent AWLL12 workshop to be able to include, as its main feature, a brief report from the local organizers, Robert Crellin and Anna Judson. It is also particularly apposite for this newsletter to include a short announcement about the revision to the AWLL membership arrangements that was confirmed during the AWLL12 business meeting. In the interests of brevity, the announcement here seeks to summarize the gist of the minutes for the AWLL12 business meeting, combined with some aspects of the revised *Community* page of the AWLL website. Readers are invited to consult both the minutes, as well as the new *Community* page, for fuller explanations.

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/wsMaterials/AWLL12-2019-BMMinutes.pdf>

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/community.html>

The regular section of *Introducing writing systems* continues with the fourth installment of the series on the Japanese writing system, with a second piece on the principles of kanji formation. The other regular section of *Thought-provoking quotations and observations* again adopts the format of a mini matching quiz; this time related to some of the terms associated with the anatomy of lettershapes.

It is very much hoped that this sixth AWLL newsletter will be of interest to you. Comments, ideas, and, especially, items for future newsletters are always most welcome and may be emailed at any time to terry@tama.ac.jp.

[Past newsletters are available at <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/newsletters.html>]

Brief report about AWLL 12 [Robert Crellin & Anna Judson]



The 12th meeting of the Association for Written Language and Literacy, entitled *Diversity in Writing Systems: Embracing Multiple Perspectives*, took place in the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge, U.K., on March 26th-28th 2019; the local organisers were Robert Crellin and Anna Judson. With 38 oral and poster presentations and 57 attendees in total, this was the largest AWLL workshop to date.

The theme of *Diversity in Writing Systems* was intended to reflect the diversity in the participants' approaches and disciplinary backgrounds, as well as in the geographical and chronological spread of the writing systems they study. Consistently, the writing systems discussed at AWLL12 covered a time-span of several thousand years and were/are used in Europe, the Middle East, Egypt, Ethiopia, West Africa, India, South-East Asia, Japan, Korea, China, and Central and North America. Accordingly, the presentation topics ranged from ancient Mesopotamian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphic to present-day Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, and Yoruba via early modern English shorthand, Mayan hieroglyphic, and much more. The two fantastic keynote speakers also encompassed almost the whole of this whole range between them – Kathryn Piquette spoke on *Developing Integrated Perspectives on Writing Systems* based on her work as an Egyptologist and a specialist in applying digital imaging techniques to ancient inscriptions, while Sonali Nag drew on her research into literacy and educational techniques in contemporary South-East Asian writing systems and spoke on *Emergent and early literacy: how children learn to use a writing system*. AWLL12's themed 'symposium' session focused on research into ancient writing systems in the Faculties of Classics and Asian and Middle Eastern Studies: Pippa Steele and Robert Crellin spoke about their work on the *Contexts of and Relations Between Writing Systems* (CREWS) Project; Ester Salgarella and Anna Judson spoke about their work on Linear A and Linear B as part of the Mycenaean Epigraphy Group; and Imre Galambos spoke about the use of the early Chinese writing system by other cultures.

We would like to thank the AWLL committee for giving us the opportunity to organise this conference and bring AWLL12 to Cambridge. Thanks are also due to the Faculty of Classics for their generous funding and hosting; to the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies for the use

of their common room for refreshment breaks; to all the Classicists who helped out during the conference; and of course, to all our participants, for making AWLL12 the enjoyable and educational experience that it was!

A selection of papers will appear as a special issue of *Written Language and Literacy*, which is planned for publication in 2021 – conference participants will receive information about this publication shortly.

Robert Crellin (rsdc2@cam.ac.uk)

Anna Judson (apj31@cam.ac.uk)

The AWLL12 programme with abstracts of all of the presentations is available at:

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/wsMaterials/AWLL12-2019-ProgrammeAbstracts.pdf>

PDF versions of the powerpoints and posters for many of the presentations are available at:

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/wsMaterials/AWLL12-2019-PDFs/AWLL12-2019-PDFs.html>

The minutes of the AWLL12 business meeting, held during the workshop, are available at:

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/wsMaterials/AWLL12-2019-BMMinutes.pdf>

Photographs of the presentations, panel session and the final group photo are available at:

<http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/wsMaterials/AWLL12-2019-Photos/AWLL12-2019-Album.html>

The *Contexts of and Relations Between Writing Systems* (CREWS) Project's website can be found at:

<https://crewsproject.wordpress.com/>

The website of the Mycenaean Epigraphy Group can be found at:

<https://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/mycep>

Announcement concerning AWLL 'membership' [Terry Joyce (president)]

At some point in the distant past, with well-meaning intentions, AWLL membership came to be based on a discounted subscription fee for the closely connected *Written Language & Literacy* (WLL) journal. However, as actively discussed at the business meetings of recent workshops, it has become increasingly obvious that the discounted WLL subscription setup has not functioned as an effective membership system for AWLL. In addition to providing no financial support for AWLL workshops and activities, the WLL subscription system has evidently served as a disincentive against applying to become an AWLL member for even many regular workshop participants.

Accordingly, the AWLL board tabled a revision proposal to the AWLL12 business meeting, which was confirmed after discussion. In essence, while inclusion on the AWLL's mailing list will continue to be open to anyone interested, membership to AWLL's core community is now to be based primarily on attending AWLL workshops. Only core community members will be entitled to have a brief member profile included at the AWLL website. It should be noted, however, that the posting of member profiles is entirely on a voluntary basis. As such, all eligible workshop participants are requested to confirm their wish to be regarded as a community member by providing the profile information to me. Moreover, acknowledging that members may not be

able to attend every AWLL workshop, the board has also decided to recognize, in principle, a basic membership period equating to the interval between three workshops (such that a participant attending to AWLL12 for the first time would be considered an AWLL core community member until AWLL15, when, if not attending to AWLL13-15, they would be contacted about the situation). Moreover, as the issue of revising AWLL membership arrangements has been under consideration since AWLL10, it also seems most appropriate to retrospectively extend the same criterion to all AWLL10 and AWLL11 participants.

Although WLL subscription is no longer a prerequisite to becoming an AWLL member, the journal's publishers, John Benjamins, have graciously agreed to continue offering a special subscription fee to AWLL members. In order to benefit from that offer, an AWLL member just needs to initiate their WLL subscription using a special AWLL version of the journal's subscription form (available from me). Individuals who continue to renew their special-offer WLL subscription will still be regarded as an AWLL member even if not attending any recent AWLL workshops. Finally, members of the WLL's editorial board are also entitled to be an AWLL community member and, upon confirmation, have a member profile posted at the AWLL website.

Member profiles include four sections: Under the member's name [surname, given name order]; (1) 'participation' row indicates the individual's membership basis (i.e., primarily AWLL workshops attended, as well as noting AWLL and WLL roles); (2) the optional 'Affiliation' row notes the member's institutional affiliations (i.e., departmental and university names), if applicable; (3) the 'Email | Link(s)' row includes, in addition to an email address (mailer link), up to two links to the member's individual websites (including self-maintained site, institutional page, or an academic social networking site, such as ResearchGate or Academia); (4) the 'Interests' row includes a maximum of five keywords, which reflect the member's research interests.

Introducing writing systems: Japanese [4] [Terry Joyce & Keisuke Honda]

As explained in our third instalment, the traditional classification of kanji, from the early second-century, is known as 六書 /RIKUSHO/ 'Six scripts'. However, in briefly introducing its six principles, we also pointed out that only four are actually principles of formation with the remaining two being principles of usage. In this second piece on these important principles for understanding kanji, we focus on the first two principles behind the formation of structurally-simple kanji, namely 象形 /SHŌKEI/ 'pictographic' and 指事 /SHIJI/ 'ideographic'. As both terms are not without some inherent problems, we would stress that they are only being used in their narrower, technical senses here to denote these two historical principles of kanji formation. We will conclude with a few further remarks about these terminological issues.

As the term pictographic implies, this principle initially entails some degree of pictorial or iconic representation of the physical object that a particular kanji denotes, but, given that contemporary kanji have become highly conventionalized in their forms, the underlying iconicity of a particular pictographic kanji is often extremely tenuous in nature. As the examples below

illustrate, pictographic kanji vary considerably in terms of the numbers of their strokes, such as three strokes for 川 and 12 strokes for 象 (its original referent might be more discernable if rotated by 90 degrees). Moreover, consistent with the intrinsic limitations on the potential of pictography to become as a full writing system, only 264 (12.36%) of the 2,136 jōyō kanji are pictographic kanji (based on Shirakawa's (2012) 常用字解 'Etymology dictionary of jōyō kanji').

木	/BOKU, MOKU, ki, ko/ 'tree'	vertical stroke for trunk with other strokes for branches
川	/SEN, kawa/ 'river'	3 strokes, originally wavy, to indicate river course and flow
象	/SHŌ, zō/ 'elephant; image'	combining elements representing trunk, head, and body

It is most appropriate to interpret the ideographic principle as referring to schematic denotations of simple concepts. As the prototypical examples below demonstrate, these include tally marks for a very small set of numbers and a few pictographic kanji where an additional stroke is added to highlight some aspect as a way of signifying an abstract concept. Shirakawa (2012) classifies just 11 (0.47%) of the jōyō kanji under this principle, which is strong testimony to the fact that it is also completely untenable to realize a full writing system based simply on the ideographic principle.

一	/ICHI, ITSU, hito(tsu)/ 'one'	prototypical example of tally mark to represent one thing
末	/MATSU, BATSU, sue/ 'end; tip'	stroke added to the tree kanji 木 to indicate its tip
上	/JŌ, ue, kami, .../ 'top, up'	relative to the horizontal base line, strokes to indicate top

Undoubtedly, the terms of pictographic and ideographic have engendered much muddled confusion, which has been the focus of considerable debate within writing systems research. While it would be beyond the scope of this serialization to delve too far into the terminology issues, we would tender a couple of observations in concluding this instalment. Firstly, it warrants mention that, although the term of pictography generally equates with the nuances of 象形, as a combination of 'image' + 'shape; form', given that 指事 is a combination of 'point; indicate' + 'thing', there is a good case for favouring the frequently-attested alternative term of 'simple indicative principle', in order to avoid some of the misunderstandings that the term of ideography can potentially evoke. Secondly, and more importantly, regardless of whatever term is used in referring to these two principles (which, as noted, underlie relatively few contemporary jōyō kanji), it is imperative to keep in mind that kanji are primarily morphographic in nature (Joyce 2011). That is, rather than being vaguely associated with things or ideas, kanji are, by convention, associated with specific linguistic entities, the morphemes of the Japanese language, even if the situation is, admittedly, rather complicated by the fact that a particular kanji might be associated with multiple Sino-Japanese and native-Japanese pronunciations (as explained in the first instalment).

Next time, we will turn to look at the two principles that underlie the formation of structurally-complex kanji!

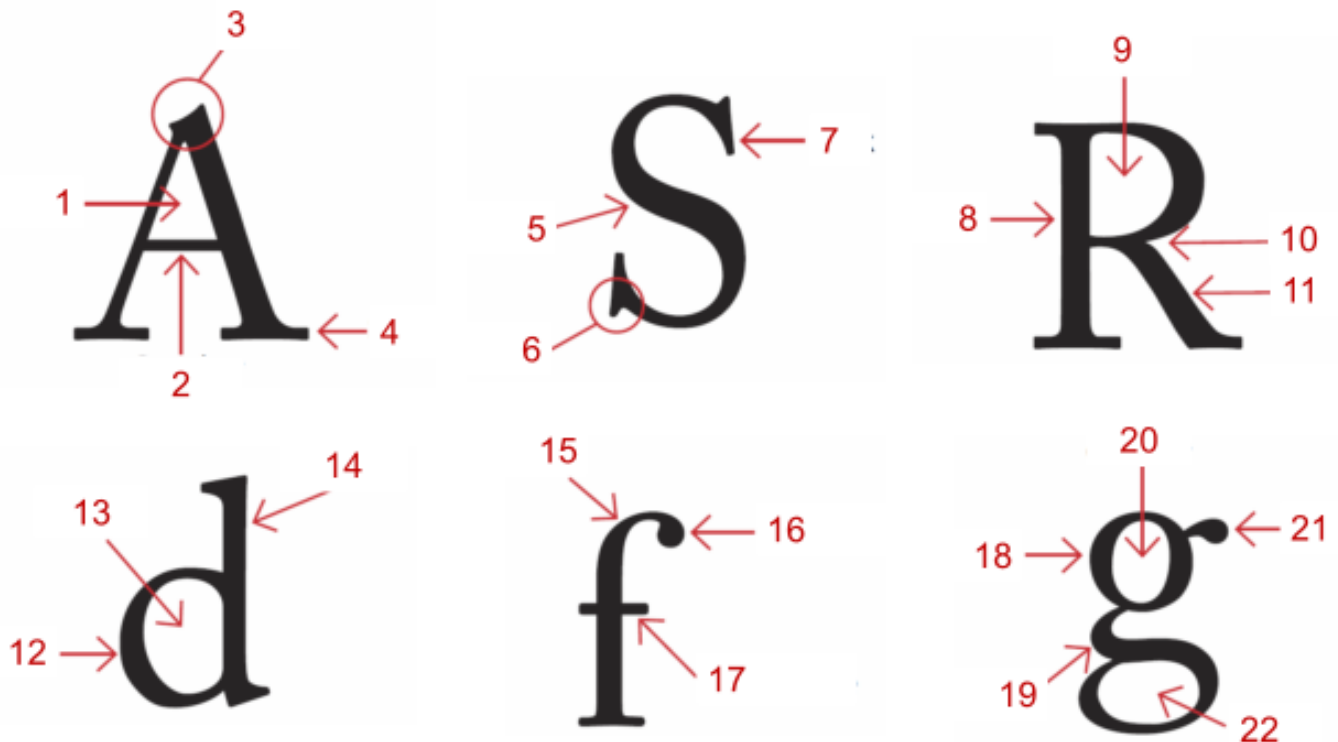
Thought-provoking quotations and observations [6]

While acknowledging that the scenario is hardly likely to be a terribly common one (even for anyone who might be reading this AWLL newsletter), but have you ever found yourself rather stumbling in a conversation because you didn't know how to refer to a particular part of a letter shape? As Krysinski (2018: 44) remarks, the terms that one might use when discussing the shapes of letters have been adapted over time from both calligraphy and typography.

As a way of introducing just a few of the more important names, this feature again adopts the format of a mini matching quiz. How many of the parts indicated by the numbers within the image below can you correctly match with the appropriate name from the list (a-r) below?

Please note that there are fewer names, as some apply to more than one numbered element.

You are welcome to either match the numbers to the name list or the names to the numbers within the image, but to facilitate the checking of your answers, the correct names are given next to the numbers 1-22 when providing the correct answers at the end of this newsletter.



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|---------|---------|------------|
| a. apex | b. ascender | c. ball finial | d. beak | e. bowl | f. counter |
| g. cross stroke | h. crossbar | i. ear | j. hook | k. leg | l. link |
| m. loop | n. serif | o. spine | p. spur | q. stem | r. waist |

This quiz is based on a larger image from Krysinski's (2018: 44) book entitled *The art of type and typography: Explorations in use and practice*. More specifically, the image appears under the *Anatomy of Letterforms* section of chapter 2, *Letters and Their Characteristics*, which features 24 example letterforms and their elements and also directs its readers to the glossary at the back of

the book for definitions of the terms mentioned. The second chapter starts by providing a succinct definition of typography and three of its key terms (p. 42).

Typography is the mechanical arrangement of words in a way that communicates meaning and content. It is concerned with both the creation of typefaces and their arrangement in a composition. ...

Type	The physical object, a piece of metal with a raised face on one side containing the reversed image of a character. The digital form—individual glyphs or characters.
Font	A set of characters of a given typeface, all of one size and style.
Typeface	A set of fonts of related design or style—roman, italic, bold, bold italic, etc.

In total, the book consists of ten chapters, which also include *A brief history of the alphabet and type*, *The mechanics of type*, *Setting display type* and *Other typographic elements*.

Krysinski, Mary Jo. (2018). *The art of type and typography: Explorations in use and practice*. New York & London: Routledge.

Miscellaneous matters

Calls for various related conferences, events, special issues

5th Workshop of the Linguistic Colloquium on Language, Region, Identity:

Writing and Written Language in Everyday Life

Merano, Italy: 6-7th June 2019

<http://www.lri.eurac.edu/>

8th International Conference on Writing Analytics: Academic Writing in Digital Contexts:

Analytics, Tools, Mediality

Winterthur, Switzerland: 5-6th September 2019

Contact person: Christian Rapp

<https://writinganalytics.zhaw.ch>

Internationalization & Unicode Conference (ICU43)

Santa Clara, CA, USA: 16-18 October 2019

Contact person: Christian Rapp

<https://www.unicodeconference.org/>

2nd conference on Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing Asia (AMLAP Asia)

Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong: 24-26 April 2020

<http://ling.cuhk.edu.hk/amlap.asia/>

Answers to the matching quiz (figure number + name):

1-counter	5-spine	9-counter	13-counter	17-cross stroke	21-ear
2-crossbar	6-spur	10-waist	14-ascender	18-bowl	22-loop
3-apex	7-beak	11-leg	15-hook	19-link	
4-serif	8-stem	12-bowl	16-ball finial	20-counter	

AWLL board

President: Terry Joyce; vice-presidents: Lynne Cahill & Dorit Ravid

AWLL website: <http://faculty-sgs.tama.ac.jp/terry/awll/index.html>;

On Facebook and Twitter [@awll]

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