

AN HONORARY EPIGRAM FOR EMPRESS EUDOCIA IN THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATE 69)

A FRAGMENT OF A COLUMNAR MONUMENT in the Athenian Agora catalogued by the excavators as a grave monument carries a text that was initially edited by Werner Peek as a grave inscription.¹ This article offers a new edition and interpretation of that fragment, I 3558 a, together with the first edition of the remaining fragments, joined under the inventory number I 3558 b.²

Agora Inv. No. I 3558

a: ΣA 113 (Pl. 69)³. A surface find, brought in from the area of the Stoa of Attalos, February 1936. Fragment of a columnar monument, probably a statue base. White Pentelic marble. Bottom preserved.

H. 0.475; W. 0.305; T. 0.16 m. (diameter *ca.* 0.62 m.). L.H. 0.011–0.019; space between lines 0.008–0.015 m.

Four lines of text inside a *tabula ansata* 0.11 m. high. The beginning of lines 1–3 and the upper horizontal groove of the *tabula* worn, as well as the end of lines 3 and 4. The space between the horizontal groove and the text is 0.005 m. on the top and 0.004–0.007 m. below. The lines start within 0.077 to 0.087 m. from the left edge of the *tabula*.

b (Pl. 69). Mended from four pieces: P 195, P 210, P 227, and P 302, of which P 227 is preserved only in a photograph. All the fragments were found in Late Roman/Byzantine context north of the Odeion (M 8), March through May 1936. Inscribed convex face only preserved. White Pentelic marble.

¹ W. Peek, *Attische Grabschriften (Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Klasse für Sprachen, Literatur, und Kunst 3)*, Berlin 1956 (1957), II, no. 197, pp. 56 (with drawing) and 63 (corrections):

[ε]ῖσε κασ[ιγνητος] or [ε]ῖσε κασ[ιγνητος]

[ε]ὶ σὺ δόσι[ν ---]

πιστοτατ[

’Οξύλος Ἰπ[πο-]

² I am grateful to Professor Homer A. Thompson for permission to study and republish Agora I 3558 a and to publish I 3558 b for the first time. I am indebted to my wife, M. A. Julia Burman, for her advice, especially on Empress Eudocia and Athens. A preliminary version of this paper was presented in a graduate seminar led by Professor Maarit Kaimio at the Institute of Classical Philology of the University of Helsinki in October 1988. I am grateful for the comments given in the seminar by Professors P. Castrén, Maarit Kaimio, H. Solin, H. Thesleff, and H. Zilliacus. For several useful suggestions I am indebted to Dr. Julie Bentz, Dr. Judith Binder, Professor J. Camp, and Dr. C. K. Williams, II, who were kind enough to read through my draft in vacillating English. Furthermore, I wish to thank Professor D. Feissel and Dr. Alison Frantz for their suggestions on the second draft. Any errors which remain are, of course, my own.

³ The numbers prefixed ΣA and P are from the field notebooks for those excavation sections. All the following measurements are mine; they differ slightly from Peek's and those on the catalogue cards of the Museum of the Athenian Agora.



P 210, P 195, and P 302 join, and P 227 belongs below P 210 and to the left of P 195 (see Pl. 69). Only P 302 preserves parts of all four lines of text. Measurements as joined:

H. 0.285; W. 0.192; T. 0.165 m. L.H. 0.011–0.021; space between lines 0.002–0.016 m.

Space between the horizontal grooves of the *tabula* 0.11 m., as in fragment *a*; same degree of convexity. The space between the horizontal groove and the text is 0.002–0.004 m. at the top and 0.004–0.007 m. below.

In view of the similarities between the two fragments in the height of the *tabula*, the height of letters and spaces between lines, the degree of convexity, the quality of the marble, and the identical lettering, I regard them as belonging together. The letter height for the entire inscription is thus 0.011–0.021 m. and the space between lines 0.002–0.016 m.

<i>a</i>	E[ίνε]κα φ [ca. 7] βασιληίδος Εύδ[οκίας --] Θευδόσι[ος βασιλε]ὺς στῆσεν ἄγαλ[μα τόδε] πιστοτα[τ ca. 9] ΕΘΩ[?]Ν θεραποντ[----] Θευδοσιο[ca. 9] ΟΛΑ [--]EXONTΙ[----]	<i>b</i>
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Line 1: Traces of the first letter are visible; it is epsilon, theta, omikron, or sigma. Damage to the area of the next three letters is deeper than the grooves of the letters. The fifth letter, kappa, is sure despite the partial damage. I follow the suggestion of Denis Feissel and Alison Frantz in reading ε[ίνε]κα here. The last letter on fragment *a* is possibly phi, but omega or omikron is not out of the question. On fragment *b* the first letter must be beta, of which there are no other occurrences. The restoration Εύδ[οκίας] is based on the twice-mentioned Θευδόσιος and on the partly restored noun βασιλεύς in line 2.

Line 2: The first letter is theta rather than omikron, which would have to be smaller (cf. line 4). The first two letters on fragment *b* could be chi or upsilon and epsilon or sigma. If Θευδόσι[ος βασιλε]ὺς στῆσεν ἄγαλ[μα τόδε] is restored, the line would be elegiac. A restoration in hexameters is possible but would be elaborate. Several letters in στῆσεν have been damaged, but only the second sigma could be read as another letter (epsilon). Furthermore, the meter and the presence of the word ἄγαλμα make a good argument for στῆσεν. The last visible letter is more probably lambda than chi.

Line 3: The left leg and the horizontal stroke of pi have been damaged. The long vertical stroke of the second letter is very likely that of an iota. The third letter could be sigma or epsilon. The shortness of the horizontal stroke in the fourth letter makes tau more probable than gamma. There is no trace of a letter after alpha. For fragment *b* it is necessary to rely on the small photograph of P 227 in the Agora catalogue, which shows either εθω or εθω. There is no other occurrence of omega, but if its form was ω, no place is left between it and the unsure nu in P 195. If omikron is to be restored, I would read εθω[ι]ψ, which is improbable owing to its dual ending. The horizontal stroke at the end of the line belongs to tau. A restoration such as [ἐν] εθει is unfortunately ruled out by the impossibility of reading epsilon.

Line 4: Peek's reading Οξύλος must be attributed to an inadequate squeeze because on the stone itself a horizontal stroke crossing the normally sized circle of theta is partly visible. The second letter is epsilon; sigma is out of the question because a part of the horizontal stroke is still visible. The fourth letter, delta, preserves part of its lower horizontal stroke, so that it cannot be lambda. The last letter on fragment *a* is probably omikron, but omega and phi are also palaeographically possible. For fragment *b* the photograph of P 227 reads ολα; it is difficult to calculate the number of letters missing before εχοντι[----]. Because of its height I would read the last extant letter as iota.

All letters of the alphabet are attested except for ζ, μ, ξ, φ, ψ, and ω. There are no diacritical marks such as the *spiritus*. The lettering is reminiscent of *IG II², 3818*, an honorary inscription from the early 5th century after Christ, and gravestones *IG II², 11952* (middle of the 5th century), 12473, and 13166 (both dated 3rd or 4th century after Christ), but it is more carefully cut.

The erection of a statue by a person designated in the singular, most probably Theodosius (the Emperor?), is mentioned. In the first line an empress Eud(ocia?) is named in the genitive, possibly a reference to the person depicted in the statue. In the last two lines are parts of three words, “the most loyal”, “servant”, and “Theodosius”, of which the case endings are not known.

Be[cause ?] of [----] Empress Eud[ocia--]
 Theodosi[us the Emper]or put up [this] statue.
 The most loyal [----] servant [----]
 Theodosi[us ----] having (?) [----].

Line 1: *βασιλής* in the meaning “queen” or “empress” is attested in the writings of the 4th-century astrologer Manetho and the poet Balbilla, ca. A.D. 130.⁴ For *Εὐδόκιας* the epic form *Εὐδόκης* could naturally be restored, as in the *Greek Anthology* 1.10, line 1 and 15.15, line 1.

Line 2: The contracted form *Θευδόσιος* is very common, especially in poetic texts. It is not restricted to references to emperors of this name.⁵

Line 3: *πιστότατος* and *θεράπων* may belong together, as in the *Greek Anthology* 15.15, line 4: *καὶ πιστὸν θεράποντα σκηπτούχοιο Λέοντος*.

Line 4: EXONTI[does not necessarily imply a form of *ἐχω*; there is no reason to try to restore it with the numerous compounds.

It is probable that the monument in question is a statue base for one figure because the diameter is only *ca.* 0.62 m. It was obviously a statue of Empress Eudocia, because it would be implausible for Emperor Theodosius II to be identified through his wife.⁶ This interpretation, of course, takes for granted that the Theodosius in line 2 is the Emperor Theodosius II. It could be someone else with the same name, but the restored [*βασιλε]*ψ*ς* and the likelihood that it is his wife who is mentioned in the first line make a strong case for Theodosius II. It is possible, but by no means sure, that the Theodosius in the last line is the same person.⁷

The Agora inscription is remarkable in two ways. First, this kind of inscribed imperial

⁴ Manetho 1.283: . . . *βασιλῆδος ἐστὶ γενέθλη*. Balbilla’s epigram on the colossus of Memnon: *τέρπει γάρ σ’ ἑράτα μόρφα βασιλήδος ἄμμας* (A. and É. Bernand, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon*, Paris 1960, pp. 93–96, no. 30, line 3).

⁵ E.g., *IG II²*, 4223, line 8: . . . *νεύματι Θευδόσιον*; *Greek Anthology* 9.690, line 1: *Θευδόσιος τόδε τεῖχος . . .*; 9.682, line 2: . . . *Θευδόσιος βασιλέν*; *Palatine Anthology* 16.65, line 2: *Θευδόσιε, θνητοῖσι. . .* I agree with the date proposed for *IG II²*, 4223 in the reign of the first Theodosius (A. H. M. Jones *et al.*, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I*, Cambridge 1971, *s.v.* Theodorus 16 and D. Feissel, “Notes d’épigraphie chrétienne VII,” *BCH* 108, 1984 [pp. 545–579], p. 550 with note 30); Agora I 3558 cannot be linked with it.

⁶ Note, however, the rare example in the *Greek Anthology*, 1.2, line 1, in which Justin II is named as the spouse of Sophia: *Θέους Ἰουστίνος, Σοφίης πόσις. . .*

⁷ The double occurrence of the name of an emperor seems to be rare, but there is one example in the *Palatine Anthology* (16.69) of Emperor Zenon and his wife Ariadne. This two-line epigram, however, tends to favor parallel constructions in its choice of words.

columnar statue base has not previously been attested in Late Roman Attica.⁸ Second, there has been no concrete proof until now of Eudocia's contacts with Athens.

Although Eudocia is traditionally considered to be a benefactress of Athens, even her Athenian origin has been doubted.⁹ Now it is certain that Eudocia had a connection with Athens. There is still no information, however, about the reasons for the erection of this statue.¹⁰ Could it have commemorated Eudocia's marriage to Theodosius II on June 7, A.D. 421 in Constantinople? Or could Eudocia have built something in Athens? As there was a vigorous building campaign in Athens in the early 5th century, it would be tempting to associate this fragmentary inscription with some of the most notable official buildings of this period. A good candidate would be the complex previously called "Gymnasium of the Giants" but now to be regarded as the "Palace of the Giants":¹¹ the smaller fragments of the inscription were found squarely in front of the façade of the Palace of the Giants.

It seems likely that the inscription dates from the time soon after the imperial marriage in A.D. 421, although the apparent absence of the title Αὐγονστά or Σεβαστή in the epigram does not exclude the period after Eudocia was granted this title.¹² From the 430's on, she was more or less involved in religious disputes and monasticism in Jerusalem, so that it would seem almost impossible to date this honorary inscription in the later period.

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⁸ My re-editions of Late Roman inscriptions from Attica will appear in the publications of The Finnish Institute at Athens as a part of its first project, "Last Pagan Revival at Athens in A.D. 267–529".

⁹ K. Holm (*Theodosian Empresses. Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, Berkeley 1982, pp. 117–118) thinks that Eudocia was from Antioch.

¹⁰ Euagrios' *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.20 mentions Eudocia in Antioch and an honorary statue for her, but there are no clues relating to the statue in Athens.

¹¹ H. A. Thompson, "The Palace of the Giants," in A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora*, XXIV, *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700*, Princeton 1988, pp. 95–116. Thompson suggests (p. 110) that the building "may be supposed to have evoked some association with the emperor," and furthermore (pp. 111–112) that perhaps its most probable use was as an official residence. It would have been maintained by the Imperial government and intended for the occasional accommodation either of the emperor himself or of high-ranking Imperial officials when on tours of duty. Thompson (p. 113), asking who paid for the construction, suggests that some wealthy individual is a more probable answer than a government department. Finally (p. 114), Thompson says that the Athenian establishment could not possibly have accommodated an imperial household. While I am in general agreement with Professor Thompson, I would like to draw attention to the information given, e.g., by Johannes Malalas (*Chronographia*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca* 97, Paris 1865, col. 529), that Eudocia's brother Ges(s)ius was given the prefecture of Illyricum. It might not be too far fetched to suppose that Eudocia or her brother could have demonstrated an increase in status by such a building. It seems to be more than a mere coincidence that it is a possibly Imperial building dated between A.D. 410 and 425 in front of which fragments of a statue base for Empress Eudocia, herself probably an Athenian, were found. For further evidence on Gessius, see J. R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* II, Cambridge 1980, s.v. Gessius 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, s.v. Aelia Eudocia (Athenais) 2.



I 3558 a (ΣΑ 113)



I 3558 b



P 227 (now lost)

P 195 P 302

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