

# GREEK INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE ATHENIAN AGORA

(PLATE 85)

THIS ARTICLE consists of the first editions of two miscellaneous fragments of inscriptions unearthed in the excavations conducted in the Athenian Agora by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.<sup>1</sup>

1 (Pl. 85). Fragment of a stele of gray limestone, found on 2 June 1973 in an early Byzantine wall southeast of the Stoa of Attalos (T 13). Parts of the original inscribed face, top, back, and sides are preserved, but the bottom is broken away at an angle from the lower left to the upper right. The front left and right edges are beveled. The inscribed face has been roughly dressed with a toothed chisel, whereas the remaining worked surfaces are crudely picked. A piece of the front face in the upper right corner is broken away, and in a few places the inscribed surface is gouged. The letters, which are sharply cut in shallow and narrow lines, are very irregular in their size, spacing, and horizontal alignment.

## NOTICE OF CONTRACT OR LEASE

P.H. 0.22, W. 0.30, Th. 0.14 m.

L.H. 0.009 (e.g., theta, omicron)–0.018 (chi) m.; the horizontal spacing of letters averages 0.014 m.; the vertical spacing varies from 0.01 to 0.02 m.

Agora Excavation Inv. No. I 7458

*med. saec. IV–II a.*

NON-ΣΤΟΙΧ.

μέρος δέλτα τοῦτο με-  
τρῆται π[λ]έθρα πέντε  
πόδες ΧΧΧΧΗΗΗΗ[<sup>1-2</sup>]  
καὶ ἐμισθώθη τοῖ[<sup>4-5</sup>]  
5 μι(σθωτῆς) ἈντικΑΓ[<sup>ca. 7</sup>]  
ἐχ(γυητῆς)? [ <sup>ca. 15</sup> ]  
[-----]

The irregularities of letter size, letter spacing, and margins in this fragment allow only approximation of the numbers of letters missing in broken lines.

*Line 1:* The first stroke of mu at the left edge is worn away, as is the upper half of the vertical of the first tau. Only the outer ends of the three strokes of upsilon are preserved. The broken surface after the last epsilon covers one letter space, yet the text as preserved is continuous from line 1 to line 2. The apparent gap is probably the result of an irregular margin.

*Line 2:* Of dotted tau the vertical hasta and what may be a trace of the right side of the horizontal are visible. Of dotted pi there are a left vertical and possibly a trace of a lower right vertical. Since the center space

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank T. Leslie Shear, Jr., Director of the Agora Excavations, for assigning these inscriptions to me for study and publication. I am indebted to Lawrence J. Bliquez, Merle K. Langdon, Michael B. Walbank, the editors and anonymous referees of *Hesperia*, and the members of the Publications Committee of the American School of Classical Studies, whose critical readings significantly improved these texts and notes. A debt of thanks is due to Grinnell College for its support of this and other work in Athens.

of this letter is chipped away, eta is also possible. Most of the letter space here bracketed is chipped away, but a mark at the lower right may be the terminus of a diagonal stroke. Of the following letter there is preserved a full left vertical with an upper horizontal branching off it to the right. Slight horizontal marks off the mid- and lower parts of this vertical, if they are letter traces rather than incidental scarring, would indicate epsilon rather than gamma or pi. I take the small dot at the center of the following circle to be intentional and so read theta rather than omicron.

*Line 3:* The initial pi has lost the left vertical hasta except for a trace at the top. Of the etas in the number, the first lacks the upper half of the right vertical, and the second lacks the upper halves of both verticals. At the broken right edge of the stone, the horizontal stroke and most of the left vertical of pi are extant. Enough of the central part of the letter is preserved to rule out  $\rho$ .

*Line 4:* The first theta has a slight dot at the center. In the second theta, which is demanded by the context, the dot has been left out or effaced. At the broken right edge is the lower right quadrant of omicron followed by the upper horizontal of another letter with a slight trace of a vertical stroke joining it near the left end; pi or gamma is likely, but as this letter cutter was generally careless about the junctures of perpendicular strokes, tau or xi is also possible.

*Line 5:* The letter following ANTIK- shows most of the two legs of an isosceles letter, and connecting the lower parts of these near the broken edge is a nearly horizontal line that has the distinctive thin sharp character of the letter strokes of this inscription. The letter is certainly alpha. Following this appears the upper part of a left vertical with part of a connecting loop to the right as of rho or beta. To the right of this at the fracture line is a slight vertical nick which appears to be the upper trace of a stroke.

*Line 6:* Closely following epsilon above the break is most of a vertical hasta joined at the top by a horizontal. A bit of the latter stroke is to the left of the vertical, but for the most part it extends to the right. There is no trace of a right vertical. An indistinct horizontal mark appears at the midpoint of the vertical, but it has none of the sharpness of the letter strokes and is probably one of the dressing marks of a toothed chisel, which are horizontal throughout the area. Thus the letter was probably gamma.

Nothing in the wording of 1 helps to date it. The developed Ionic lettering and orthography put its anterior limit in the early 4th century B.C., and it may fall short of the late 2nd century B.C. when many letter cutters affected serifs and broken-bar alphas. But even in the later period and beyond, such embellishments might have been too formal for the amateur cutting of this inscription, which has its closest parallels in some of the funerary and security horoi of the 4th to 2nd centuries. If comparisons are at all useful here, one might note the stylistic similarity of this lettering to that of Kirchner's no. 71, which is a security horos dated to the end of the 4th century B.C.<sup>2</sup>

Keys to the general identification of this fragment are  $\epsilon\mu\sigma\theta\acute{\omega}\theta\eta$  and  $\mu\iota(\sigma\theta\omega\tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma)$ <sup>3</sup> in lines 4 and 5 respectively, terms which appear in numerous decrees and accounts of public works, contracts, and leases. The verb usually indicates that some job was "let on contract" or that some property was "let", and the noun signifies either a contractor or a lessee of property. 1 apparently shares with the early 4th-century accounts of the *teichopoioi*<sup>4</sup> the naming of a  $\mu\iota\sigma\theta\omega\tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma$  and the noting of dimensions. In addition to these elements, the inscription has in

<sup>2</sup> *Imagines*. The evidence for the dating of this inscription is the name  $\Phi\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\pi\pi\omicron\upsilon \text{ } \acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\rho\gamma\upsilon\rho(\alpha\sigma\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon)$  in line 4, which occurs also in a dedicatory inscription of *lampadephoroi* (IG II<sup>2</sup>, 3105, which Kirchner as editor has dated variously as "post med. s. IV a." [*loc. cit.*] and "inter a. 350–300" [IG II<sup>2</sup>, 2662, note]).

<sup>3</sup> M. B. Walbank first suggested (*per ep.*) that  $\mu\iota$  here is the abbreviation of  $\mu\iota\sigma\theta\omega\tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ ; more common are  $\mu\iota\sigma\theta\omega\tau$ ,  $\mu\iota\sigma\theta\omega$ , and  $\mu\iota\sigma$ , but see SEG XXXIV, 124, line 21:  $|\mu\iota : \acute{\alpha}\gamma|$ .

<sup>4</sup> See IG II<sup>2</sup>, 1656–1664; SEG XIX, 136–145 (395/4–392/1 B.C.); XXXII, 165 (392/1 B.C.).

common with accounts of public contracts<sup>5</sup> the verb ἐμισθώθη and probably the recording of an ἐγγυητής (guarantor).<sup>6</sup> We must consider also that all these terms, as well as the noting of a measured section of property, as in lines 2–3, could be the elements of a lease.<sup>7</sup> But these general correspondences are not sufficient evidence to assign 1 to a specific series of contracts or leases, and in fact this inscription has characteristics which differentiate it to some extent from formal public documents. Although the beginning of the text is preserved, it does not have the preamble which was standard in decrees or official records of public contracts, nor does it mention the ἐπιστάται τῶν δημοσίων ἔργων, who allocated public contracts in one of the dikasteries and oversaw the finished work.<sup>8</sup> It also lacks the prefatory Θεοί and the archon's name, which are common in official publications of records of public leases and contracts,<sup>9</sup> and it does not have the owner's name, which usually appears at the beginning of a notice of public lease.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the shallow, crooked, and variously sized letters of 1, as well as the rough preparation of its inscribed face, resemble little the neat renderings of the previously mentioned records of contracts and leases. These comparisons demonstrate the likelihood that we have here the unusual instance of a simple unofficial notice of contract or lease. The unofficial character of the inscription would not preclude the Athenian state from being a party to the business noted therein.

The notice apparently calls attention to a section (μέρος) of ground which was, or was to be, measured out (μετρήται),<sup>11</sup> and the area of which is noted. The designation of this tract as δέλτα probably means that it was one of several which were differentiated with letter-labels in alphabetical order. A plausible alternative interpretation is that δέλτα referred to the shape of the μέρος.<sup>12</sup> In any case, the letter-label may have been spelled out rather than conveyed by the symbol Δ to avoid confusion with the acrophonic numbers employed in the text. Although less common than μέρος as a term in Attic epigraphy for a portion of real property or contracted work, μέρος has sufficient parallels.<sup>13</sup> In this case the

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the record of contracts for the building of the stoa at the south wall of the precinct of Eleusis (289/8 B.C.): *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1682 *a* and *b*, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> See line 6 where, at the suggestion of Walbank (*per ep.*), I read tentatively ἐγγυητής. For the use of this term, in various abbreviations and the full spelling, see the records of public leases and sales of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. (*IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1590–1593, *passim*).

<sup>7</sup> Compare the public leases of sacred property, which illustrate all these terms: *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1590–1591 (343/2 B.C.); *SEG XXXIII*, 167, 168–171 (*ca.* 338–326 B.C.); *XXXIV*, 124 (*ca.* 300 B.C.).

<sup>8</sup> See Aischines 3.14; *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1669, lines 8, 18, 21, and 38 (mid-4th-century record of contracts for the construction of the temple of Zeus Soter in Peiraieus); see also *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1675, line 27 (contract for fasteners to be used in the building of the stoa at Eleusis, *ca.* 337/6 B.C.); cf. Lipsius 1905, p. 120.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1662 *a*, line 1; 1590, lines 1–2.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 1590, line 3.

<sup>11</sup> Since the dimensions of the section follow immediately, μετρήται is possibly not a jussive subjunctive but an indicative with eta as an alternate spelling or misspelling; on the confusion of η and ει [e\* or i\*], see Threatte 1980, pp. 170–171. The indicative would also make μετρήται congruent in mood, if not in tense, with μισθώθη.

<sup>12</sup> L. J. Bliquez, *per ep.*

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, *IG II*<sup>2</sup>, 463, lines 7 and 26 (decree of 307/6 B.C. regarding the rebuilding of the walls of Athens); 505, line 35 (honorific decree of 302/1 B.C.); 1046, lines 17 and 21 (on the restoration of the Asklepieion, 52/1 B.C.).

demonstrative *τοῦτο*, as it modifies *μέρος* without the article, should be taken in the local and adverbial sense of “here”,<sup>14</sup> from which we may infer that the inscribed stone was erected for viewing at *μέρος δέλτα*. This inference is bolstered by the fact that the inscription is limited to a discussion of *μέρος δέλτα* and is not an account of various *μέρη*. Presumably there were other letter-labeled sections with similar notices posted at them. The rest of lines 2 and 3 of our text gives the measured area of *μέρος δέλτα*. *Πλέθρα* is the likely restoration of the traces in the middle of line 2,<sup>15</sup> and *πέντε*, fully spelled as in the modern convention for writing small numerals, indicates the number of plethra involved. In the following line, *πόδες XXXXHHHΠ[-* gives the number of feet (4,305 plus). *Πλέθρα* and *πόδες*, in a departure from the common genitive of measurement with numerals, must be nominatives correlative with *μέρος*. Since 4,305-plus linear feet would be reducible to 43-plus linear plethra (one linear plethron = 100 linear feet), the figures *πέντε* and *XXXXHHHΠ[-* must refer to square plethra (one square plethron = 10,000 square feet)<sup>16</sup> and square feet respectively. Thus *μέρος δέλτα* was an area of 54,305-plus square feet, equivalent to a square of about 233 feet per side.

The loss of text in line 4 and following obscures the precise meaning of *ἐμισθώθη*. If 1 was a notice of lease, the verb probably referred to some specific property,<sup>17</sup> either sharing with *μετρῆται* the subject *μέρος δέλτα τοῦτο* or, what is more likely, having its own subject expressed in the balance of the line. Possibilities compatible with the surviving context are a noun beginning *τοΠ* (e.g., *τόπος*;<sup>18</sup> yet this by itself would be a little short of filling up the line) or a short neuter noun preceded by its article. Similarly, in the case of a contract, the subject of the verb is likely to have been either a pronoun or noun indicating the job or area to be worked by the contractor or some material, such as stone, which was to be applied to the job or area designated as *μέρος δέλτα*.<sup>19</sup> In some accounts *ἐμισθώθη* is the verb form used in recording the value of a contract, but in the case of 1 the remainder of line 4 does not prompt restoration of the monetary term that follows such a use of the verb.<sup>20</sup> The missing parts of the inscription may have contained information about the nature of *μέρος δέλτα* and its owners and, if the notice was a contract, what was to be done with this land beyond

<sup>14</sup> See LSJ, *s.v.* *οὗτος*, B, I, 3, and C, I, 5; Kühner and Gerth 1898, no. 467.2, pp. 641–643.

<sup>15</sup> It first occurred to me, partly because of the provenance of the stone, to discount the faint dot of theta and the possible middle and lower horizontal traces of epsilon and to restore *ῆ [ἀ]γορά*. This now seems the less plausible restoration for reasons in addition to the extant letter traces. There is no difficulty in reading *πεντέποδες* as a single word (see the Attic use of this unit of measurement in building accounts and decrees of contract: e.g., *IG* I<sup>3</sup>, 474, lines 128, 184, 232, and 233; II<sup>2</sup>, 1668, line 44; 1672, lines 130–131; see also Plato, *Theaetetus* 147D for *πεντέπους* as a square measure; cf. Stephanus, *Lex. Ling. Gr.*, *s.v.* *πεντέπους*), but with *ῆ ἀγορά* as the subject of *μετρῆται*, *μέρος* would have to be construed as an accusative of respect, which seems strained for a simple notice of this sort. It is also difficult to conceive of a contract by which the Athenian Agora, or another agora, might have been measured out in the manner and dimensions suggested by this text.

<sup>16</sup> For the use of *πλέθρον* as a square measure, see *IG* I<sup>3</sup>, 418, line 4; 420, line 7; Herodotos 7.199; Plato, *Theaetetus* 174E; *Alcibiades* I 123C; Demosthenes 20.115.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the *passim* restoration of *ἐμισθώσατο* in *SEG* XXXIV, 124. The verb is also used to introduce a catalog of leased properties: see, for example, the sequence *τάδε . . . ἐμισθώθη* as restored in *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1590, line 3 and *SEG* XXXIII, 169 B, line 1.

<sup>18</sup> M. K. Langdon, *per ep.*

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1669, lines 8, 17, and 21.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1675, lines 26, 27, and 31.

measuring it. If δέλτα was a letter-label, one is prompted to think of a linear series of μέρη, such as sections of road to be graded or paved by contract.<sup>21</sup> If, as it seems, we have the broken name of the contractor or lessee in line 5, this name certainly begins Ἀντικά- followed by a letter that is possibly beta but more likely rho and probably continues with a letter with a vertical stroke in the left or medial position. Greek and Attic prosopography offers no name that exactly matches these remains.<sup>22</sup> I have considered the possibility that the letters αντι are the preposition, but there is no parallel for its following μισθωτής, and, if line 6 really begins ἐγ(γυητής), there is little room in the intervening lacuna for the development of a prepositional phrase.

2 (Pl. 85). Fragment of a shaft of white crystalline marble, found on 5 June 1971 in a modern wall southeast of the Stoa of Attalos (S 13). The neat trimming of the left side, the rough bevel of the right side, and the high quality of the marble relative to the crude artistry of the inscription suggest that the stone had an earlier architectural use. The lower part of the shaft is lost.

#### EARLY CHRISTIAN EPITAPH

P.H. 0.275, W. 0.17, Th. 0.068 m.

L.H. 0.020–0.055 m.

Agora Excavation Inv. No. I 7332

*aet. Christ.*

NON-ΣΤΟΙΧ.

Ἀφρο  
δισί  
as  
⦿

In line 4 the centered rho that survives in its loop and part of its vertical stroke at the broken edge of the stone indicates that the Aphrodisia commemorated in this epitaph was, in spite of her name, a Christian.<sup>23</sup> As there are no traces of the upper extensions of a chi above the break, the symbol would not have been the familiar chi/rho monogram but rather, as restored here, the plain monogrammatic cross and rho with horizontal bar, which, as Platon notes,<sup>24</sup> was more common than chi/rho in the east Mediterranean. Platon asserts that this

<sup>21</sup> When I once brought this text to the Agora tea table for discussion, Mabel Lang offered the tentative suggestion that it might refer to work on a road or street.

<sup>22</sup> If the vertical mark in the upper point of the space at the break should not be a letter trace, there would be the possibility of Ἀντικάρτης, a metathesis of the common Ἀντικράτης, which appears in its patronymic form in 4th-century military lists of Kyrenai (*SEG* IX, 46, line 41; 49, line 33). This spelling of the name is unattested in Attic prosopography, but as Walbank reminds me (*per ep.*), metics commonly appear as contractors in inscribed Athenian accounts. The consideration of Attic names such as Antikleides has been suggested, but J. McK. Camp and E. Sironen (*per ep.*) verify the letter traces as I have noted them.

<sup>23</sup> For the most recent thorough treatment of Athenian early Christian funerary texts, see Creaghan and Raubitschek 1947; see also *Agora* XVII, nos. 1060–1099, pp. 188–194.

<sup>24</sup> Platon 1937, p. 666; for the dating and examples from Attica, see also *IG* III, 3447, 3482, 3525, and 3531; Creaghan and Raubitschek 1947, p. 16 and notes 85–88; no. XXII, p. 36; no. 29, p. 48; no. 34, p. 50; *Agora* XVII, no. 1093.

symbol is only found in epitaphs from the mid-4th to the early 5th centuries of the Christian era. In the case of **2** this symbol and other letter forms are indicative of the early Christian period, but I am persuaded to follow the example of Creaghan and Raubitschek, who, although they believe on the basis of letter forms that their inscriptions belong approximately to the 5th century after Christ, refrain from giving them any definite date.<sup>25</sup> Pagan Greek epitaphs with the name alone are usually in the nominative case, but their occasional Christian counterparts, as in this case, are practically always in the genitive with the unexpressed nominative understood to be a term for the tomb. *Κοιμητήριον* is by far the most popular term in early Christian epitaphs in Attica and is exclusively a Christian designation for the individual grave.<sup>26</sup>

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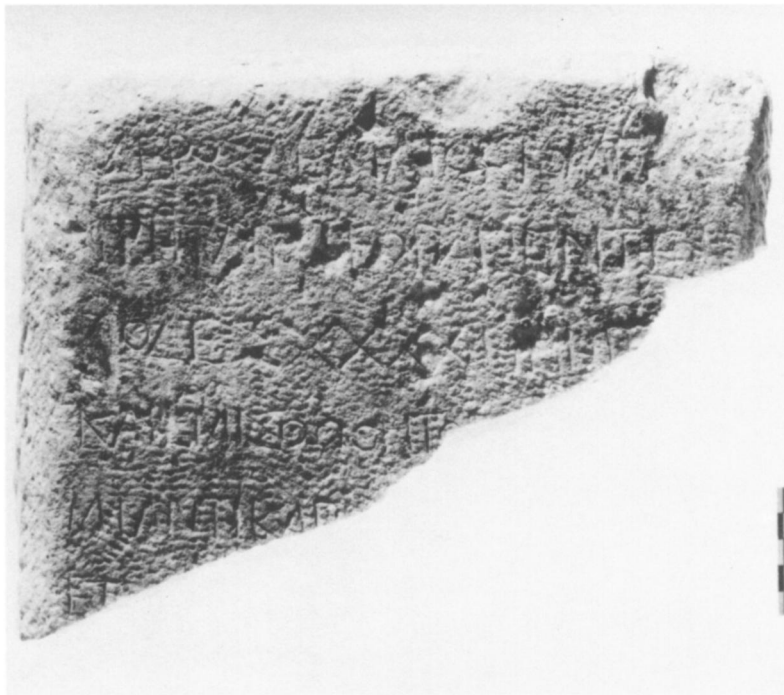
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<sup>25</sup> **2** shares the lunate sigma and the extended right diagonals of alpha and delta with Creaghan and Raubitschek 1947, nos. XII, XIII, 17, 24, and 31, and as in all their catalogue entries, the lettering of **2** can be dated prior to the marked change in the 7th century to a script that is "taller, narrower, and more 'Gothic'" (see pp. 12–13 for this observation and the approximate dating of their inscriptions to the 5th century after Christ; their rejection of close dating is noted on p. 38); see also their reference (p. 13) to *Imagines*, no. 151, one of the few dated inscriptions of the 5th and early 6th centuries, which is very like **2** in its lettering.

<sup>26</sup> See Creaghan and Raubitschek 1947 for a discussion of the term *κοιμητήριον* (pp. 5–6) and the exceptional use of just the genitive of the name (p. 7 and note 37); their catalogue illustrates the dominance of the term *κοιμητήριον* and has a case (no. VIII) of the simple genitive of the name with the *crux monogrammaticus* and rho; compare the similar pattern in *Agora* XVII, nos. 1060–1099, with a case of the genitive alone with a cross in no. 1063.



1 Agora I 7458



2 Agora I 7332