

ATHENS HONORS THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS

(PLATES 10-12)

IN front of the Stoa of Attalos and about on its axis there stood a tall monument supporting a bronze quadriga, similar to the "Agrippa" Monument at the entrance to the Acropolis (Pl. 10, a). This monument was erected in the middle of the second century B.C., at the same time as the Stoa, and, although no trace of a contemporary inscription belonging to it has been found, there seems little doubt that it was dedicated to Attalos II, the donor of the Stoa. Later on it was re-dedicated to the Emperor Tiberius as we learn from an inscription cut on its face, just as the "Agrippa" monument, originally a Pergamene memorial, was later re-dedicated to Agrippa. The monument itself, a great many of whose blocks still exist, is to be the subject of an architectural study by Mr. C. W. J. Eliot. Here we will concern ourselves only with the Tiberius inscription.¹

The inscription is cut on three contiguous orthostate blocks of Hymettian marble which together make up the full width of the monument (Pl. 10, b). Most of the inscription is on the middle block, but one letter at the beginning of the first line overlaps onto the block at the left, and several letters at the ends of the lines overlap onto the block at the right.

The middle block. Published as *I.G.*, II,² 4209; for earlier publication history, see below. Re-discovered in January 1949 among the marbles lying in the Stoa of Attalos (Q 10).

Height, 0.637 m.; preserved width, 0.99 m.; original width, estimated, 1.18 m.; thickness, 0.33 m. The height of the letters varies from 0.05 m. to 0.08 m., averaging about 0.065 m. Broken at left. Anathyrosis at right. Surface badly weathered.

The right hand block. Agora Inv. No. I 6120 a. Found in January 1949 among the marbles lying in front of the Stoa of Attalos (P 10). Unpublished.

Height, 0.637 m.; width, 1.19 m.; thickness, 0.33 m.

A corner block with finished right side. Anathyrosis at left. Complete except for minor breaks.

The left hand block. Agora Inv. No. I 6120 b. Found in July 1949 among the marbles lying in the area of the Stoa of Attalos (Q 11). Unpublished.

Height, 0.637 m.; width, 1.175 m.; thickness, 0.40 m.

¹ The monument and its inscription have been mentioned in various Agora publications: *Hesperia*, XIX, 1950, pp. 317-318; *The Athenian Agora: A Guide to the Excavations*, 1954, pp. 64-65; *Hesperia*, XXVI, 1957, p. 87; R. E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora*, III, *Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia*, 1957, p. 47.

A corner block with finished left side. Anathyrosis at right. Complete except for minor breaks.

inter annos 14 et 37 p.

Ἡ [βουλ]ῆ ἡ ἐξ Ἀρχοῦ πάγου
 [καὶ ὁ δ]ῆμος καὶ ἡ βουλῆ
 [τῶν ἐ]ξακοσίων Τιβερίωι
 [Καίσαρι] Θεῶι Σεβασ[στ]ῶι
 [εὐεργ]έτη τῆς πόλεως.

The central block which contains most of the inscription (Pl. 10, c) has been known for at least 175 years and has apparently always been visible. It was built face outward into the west side of a tower of the Late Roman Fortification in the middle of the Stoa of Attalos. The superstructure of this tower was built largely of blocks taken from the Donor's monument which had formerly stood on the axis of the Stoa only a few meters to the west. The face of the block is badly weathered and difficult to read, so that those who tried offered varying texts and no acceptable interpretation has hitherto been possible.

The first modern record of the inscription is contained in two unsigned drawings, a sketch and a water color made from it, dated June 1785 and now in the Gennadius Library in Athens (Pl. 11). The artist was no epigraphist, and he copied only a few of the most conspicuous letters of the inscription. He evidently knew some Greek, however, for on the sketch he first copied the letters ΑΦΗΟΥΤΤΑ as they appear on the stone, but later "corrected" and restored them to ΑΡΕΙΟΥΤΤΑΓΟΥ.

The next record is that of Edward Dodwell who visited Athens at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In his *Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece* (1819)² he publishes a drawing showing the tower with the inscription built into it (Pl. 12, a). He identifies the tower as part of the Gymnasium of Ptolemy, this being the usual name for the ruins of the Stoa of Attalos in his day. We might have expected Dodwell to copy the inscription, but he was evidently put off by its inaccessibility and poor condition, and he contents himself with remarking that "one of the blocks which faces the north contains a mutilated inscription, which, however has no reference to the building."³

The first to attempt a copy of the inscription was Fauvel, the French consul in

² Volume I, p. 371.

³ Dodwell's compass directions are not quite exact. He describes the Stoa as running towards the northeast instead of towards the north as it in fact does. This leads him to place the inscription on the north instead of the west. Lueders locates it correctly in the west face of the tower (*apud Dittenberger I.G.*, III¹, 953), and it may be seen still in its position in the tower in a photograph in the files of the German Institute taken shortly before the demolition of the tower (negative no. AB 166).

Athens in the early nineteenth century. In a letter dated September 10, 1810 addressed to J. D. Barbié du Bocage and now in the Gennadius Library in Athens he gives a sketch showing the location of the inscription and his reading and restoration of it, adding the following comments (Pl. 12, b) :

Voici mon ami une inscription qui existe sur un mur de marbre au gymnase de Ptolémée que j'ai marqué A à 15 pieds de hauteur écrite en caractères le 3 pouces. J'étais parvenu à la lire et je crois avoir pu restituer ce qui manque et que j'ai marqué par des points. La place des lettres usées m'a guidé. Par *tiberii adelfi* doit-on entendre Drusus et Tibère.

On April 4, 1811, he forwarded another copy to Barbié du Bocage with the following comments (Pl. 12, c) :

Les lettres restituées sont plus petites et marquées d'une teinte de crayon.

Sur un mur de marbre à 15 pieds de haut en caractères de 3 pouces. En dehors du mur de marbre au Gymnase dit de Ptolémée.

Barbié du Bocage published Fauvel's text with a few minor corrections in the *Magazin encyclopédique* for March 1811, and from this it was taken by August Boeckh and printed in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (1828) as No. 318. Boeckh's comments show that he was most dissatisfied with the text, and he found himself unable to offer a satisfactory interpretation of it.

After the Greek War of Independence Pittakis copied the inscription and published a text in his book *L'ancienne Athènes* (1835), p. 54.

When Dittenberger came to edit the inscription as No. 953 in the third volume of *Inscriptiones Graecae* (1878) he had before him not only Fauvel's and Pittakis' printed texts but also manuscript copies made by Ludwig Ross and O. Lueders. Far from helping the situation, this only made matters worse, and Dittenberger despaired of reconciling the variant readings. He even found it impossible to classify the inscription, for he was unable to decide whether the person honored was a Roman Emperor, a Roman magistrate or a distinguished Greek. He inclined to the last view, however, because of the great number of Greeks who had adopted the names Tiberius Claudius.

Meanwhile, in 1900 the tower into which the stone was built was demolished by the Greek Archaeological Society in the course of its clearance of the Stoa of Attalos, and the inscription was "lost" among the many blocks that filled the area of the Stoa. Kirchner, in preparing the second edition of *Inscriptiones Graecae* (1935) apparently failed to find the stone and simply bases his text on Dittenberger's, noting its unsatisfactory state.⁴

In 1949, in the course of a systematic study of all the blocks in the Stoa area, John Travlos noticed that one of the series of blocks that had come from the tower

⁴ *I.G.*, II², 4209.

of the Late Roman Fortification and belonged to the monument on the axis of the Stoa had at the left edge of its face an inscription consisting of one or two letters in each of several lines, obviously the final letters of an inscription whose main part had been on the adjacent block. A search soon revealed the adjacent block lying near by, and it proved to be *I.G.*, II², 4209. Not long afterwards the block with the initial letter was also discovered. With the re-discovery of the inscription, the addition of the blocks to left and right and the newly acquired knowledge of the monument of which it formed a part, we were at last in a position to make a correct reading and interpretation of it.

With the text as now established, the inscription assumes new interest and importance for we find the Athenians honoring the Emperor Tiberius with a large and conspicuous monument in the Agora and including the epithet *theos* among his titles, i. e., offering him divine honors. We would like to know the occasion on which this was done, but the inscription does not tell us and the other sources are silent. Presumably the date was early in the reign, perhaps at its very beginning. Tiberius was well known and popular at Athens as is shown by a long series of monuments that the Athenians erected to him.⁵ Even before his adoption by Augustus he must have won the favor of the Athenians for he was honored by at least five statues, on the bases of two of which he is given the title of benefactor (*εὐεργέτης*).⁶ After his adoption his statue was erected west of the Parthenon alongside those of other members of the imperial family.⁷ After he had ascended the throne, the Athenians did not confine themselves to erecting statues to him⁸ but even appointed a high priest in charge of his worship.⁹ To all these manifestations may now be added the inscription under consideration here.

A date for our inscription late in Tiberius' reign seems much less likely than an early date, for the Emperor's popularity declined as the years passed. It also seems unlikely that we have to do with the deification of Tiberius after his death. His deification was indeed tentatively proposed by Gaius, but the matter was not pressed and the Senate never ratified it.¹⁰ It is hard to imagine that the Athenians would hasten to deify an unpopular prince especially in view of the Senate's refusal. In fact, all the evidence suggests that the old Emperor was quickly forgotten by everyone in the joy and hope of the new reign, and that Athens shared these feelings.¹¹

⁵ The rest of this paragraph is drawn mainly from P. Graindor, *Athènes de Tibère à Trajan*, pp. 1-2. See also J. H. Oliver, *The Athenian Expounders of the Sacred and Ancestral Law*, p. 91.

⁶ *I.G.*, II², 3243-3247. No. 3243 is published again, but differently restored, as No. 3932.

⁷ *I.G.*, II², 3254.

⁸ *I.G.*, II², 3228, 3261, 3262, 3263, 3265.

⁹ *I.G.*, II², 3530.

¹⁰ A coin struck at Lyon in A.D. 37 shows Tiberius deified, but this appears to be an isolated phenomenon. *J.R.S.*, X, 1920, p. 37.

¹¹ Graindor, *Athènes de Tibère à Trajan*, pp. 7-8. *I.G.*, II², 2292.

If we are right in our dating of the inscription, it appears that the Athenians are according divine honors to Tiberius during his lifetime. This is by no means unprecedented, and can be paralleled by numerous examples from the Greek half of the Empire where the idea of ruler-worship was deeply rooted. Tiberius, to be sure, was reluctant to assume divine honors, being content with more modest and human ones, and when he was consulted beforehand as to whether he would accept them he followed the precedent set by Augustus and declined as politely as possible. We see this most clearly in the case of the city of Gytheion in Lakonia where an inscription preserves the Emperor's reply to such a proposal.¹² His words to the Senate, as quoted by Tacitus,¹³ also bring out the same point. Some cities, however, went ahead and instituted a cult of the Emperor of their own accord, and Athens was evidently among them. Besides the inscription under consideration here, we have a base inscribed *Τιβέριον Θεόν*.¹⁴ On a monument honoring Drusus as the New God Ares, erected shortly after A.D. 20, his father Tiberius is referred to simply as *theos*.¹⁵ At Eleusis there was a high priest of Tiberius Caesar Augustus.¹⁶ From near-by Pagai, a town in the Megarid, comes another inscription honoring Tiberius as *theos*.¹⁷ Other such inscriptions are known from various parts of the Greek world.¹⁸

We may therefore suppose that on the accession of Tiberius, or soon after, the Athenians declared him a God and dedicated to him the handsome monument conspicuously placed at the center of the east side of the Agora, just behind the bema or speakers' platform and close to the Panathenaic Way, in thanks for past favors and in lively anticipation of favors to come.

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¹² *S.E.G.*, XI, 922. V. Ehrenburg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*², 1956, No. 102.

¹³ *Annals*, IV, 38.

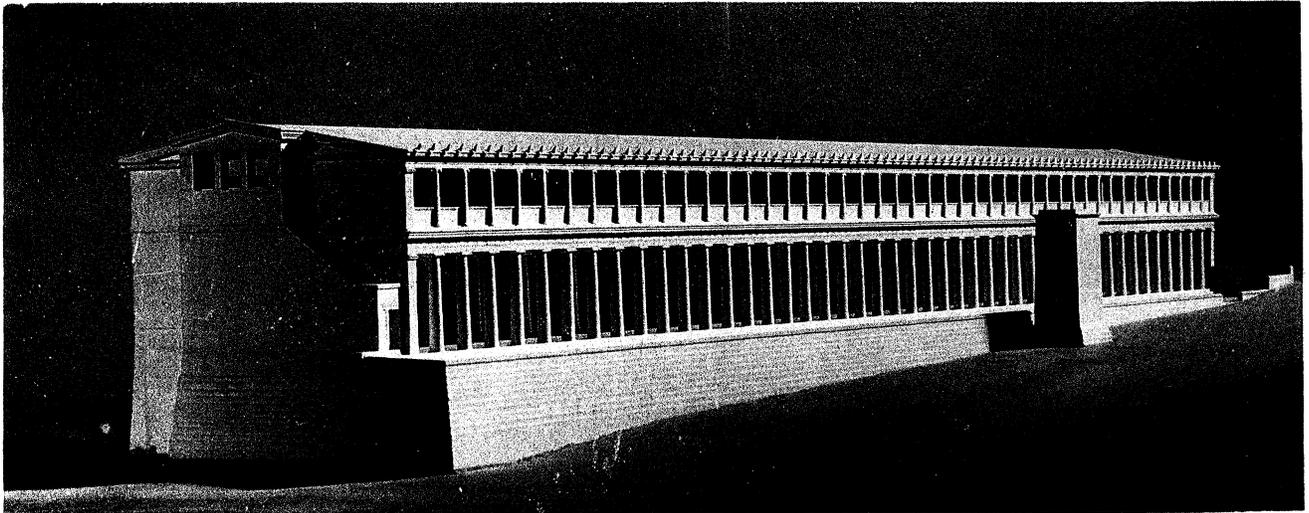
¹⁴ *I.G.*, II², 3265.

¹⁵ *I.G.*, II², 3257.

¹⁶ *I.G.*, II², 3530.

¹⁷ *I.G.*, VII, 195; also published, through an oversight, in the *Attic corpus*, *I.G.*, II², 3264.

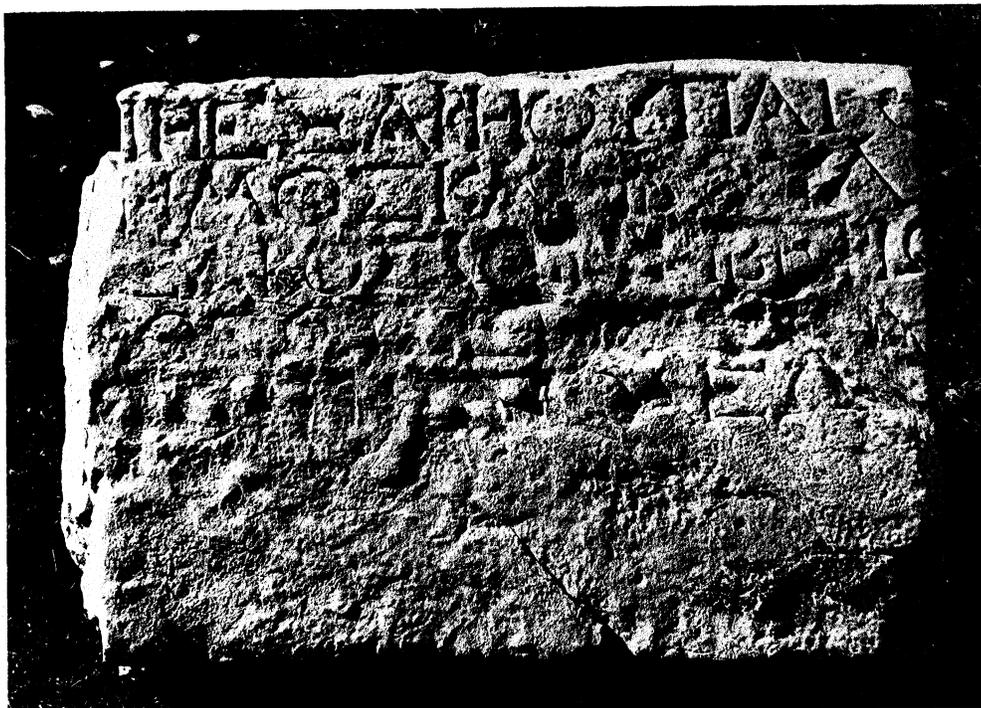
¹⁸ A list is given in J. R. Rietra, *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Vita Tiberi neu kommentiert*, Amsterdam, 1928, pp. 13 ff., which I have not been able to consult. The Gytheion inscription has given rise to a whole series of discussions on the subject of divine honors to living Emperors and to Tiberius' attitude towards them. These may be found through the bibliography in *S.E.G.*, XI, 922. The subject is also well discussed by A. D. Nock in *Cambridge Ancient History*, X, pp. 481-489 and 493-496, and by J. H. Oliver in *The Athenian Expounders of the Sacred and Ancestral Law*, pp. 91-93.



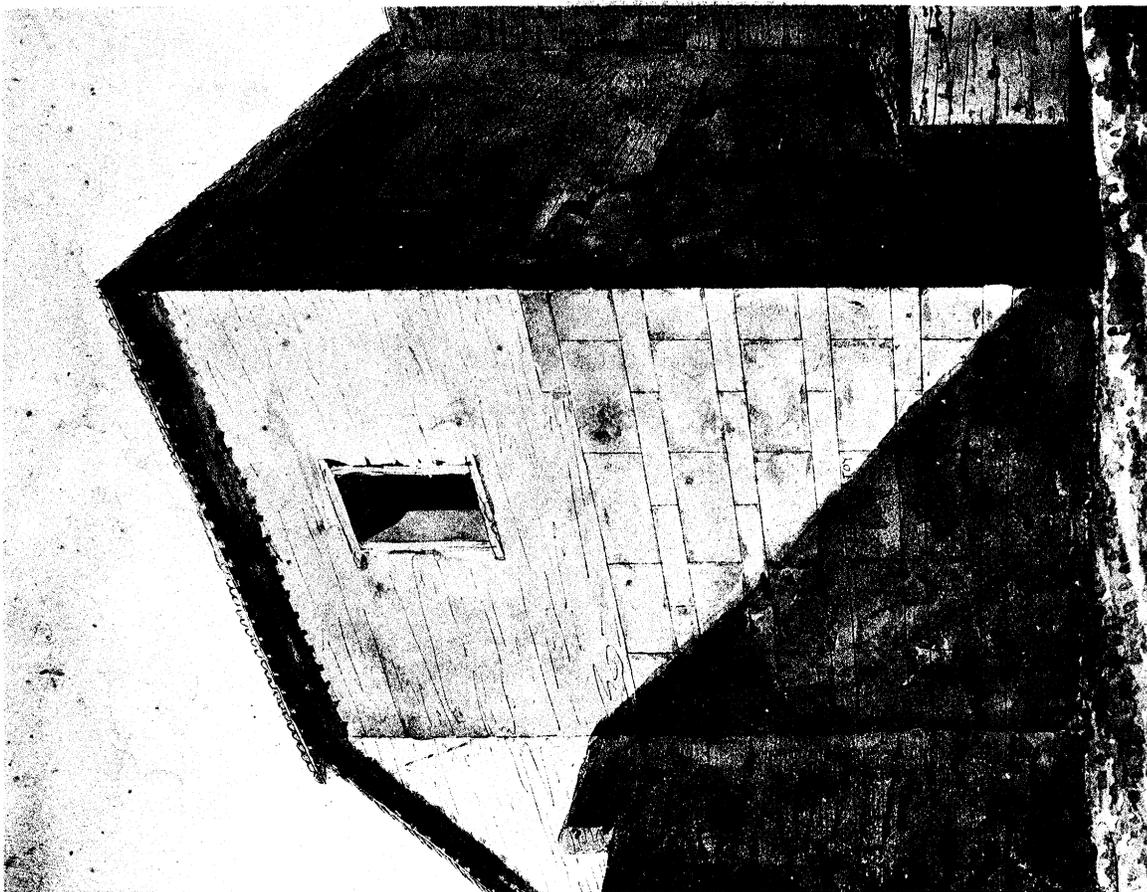
a. Model of Stoa of Attalos with Donor's Monument, seen from Northwest



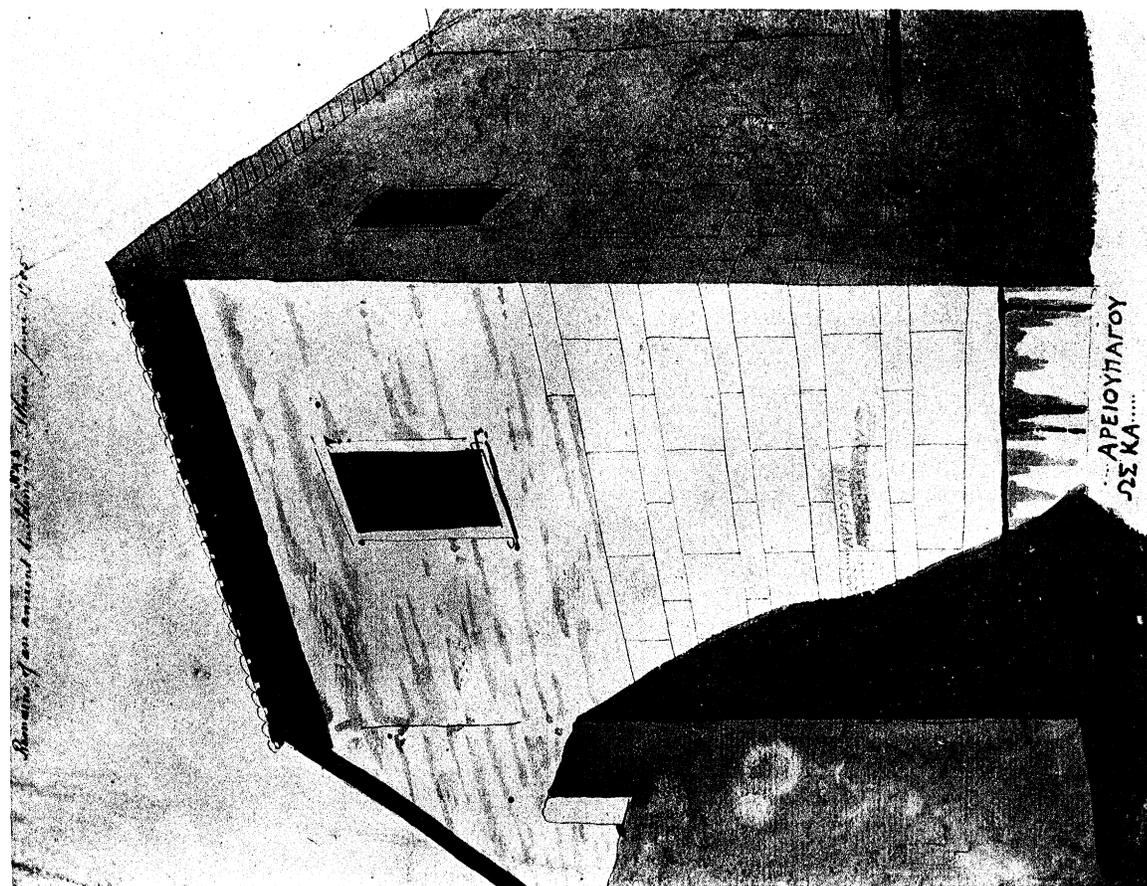
b. The Three Blocks of the Donor's Monument with the Inscription Honoring the Emperor Tiberius.



c. Detail of the Middle Inscribed Block.



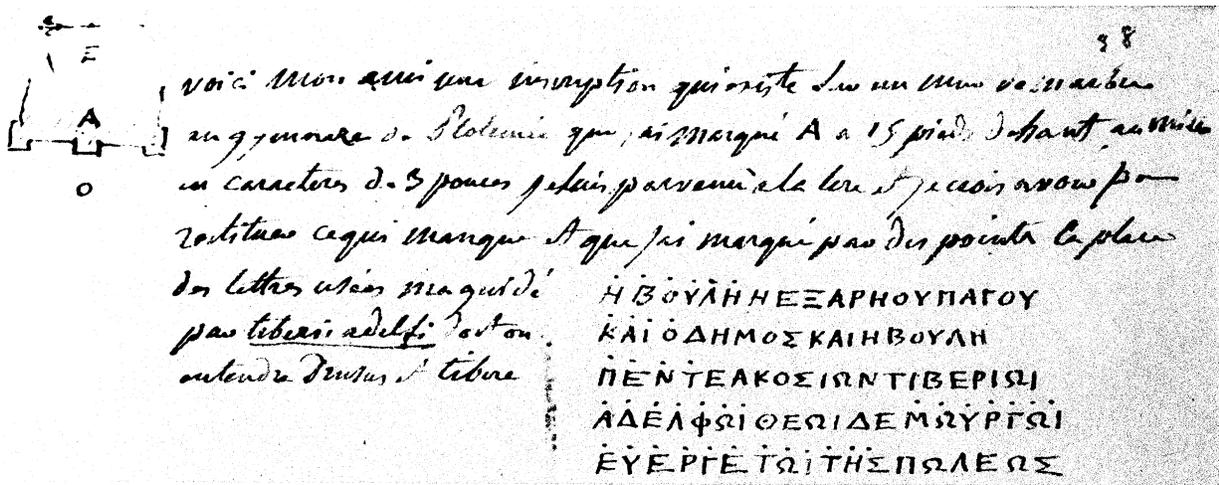
Late Roman Fortification Wall: Middle Tower in Stoa of Attalos. An unsigned sketch (left) and a water color made from it (right), now in the Gennadius Library, Athens. Legend on sketch: "No. 46. Remains of an ancient building in Athens, June 1785." Legend on water color: "No. 33. Areopagus, Athens."



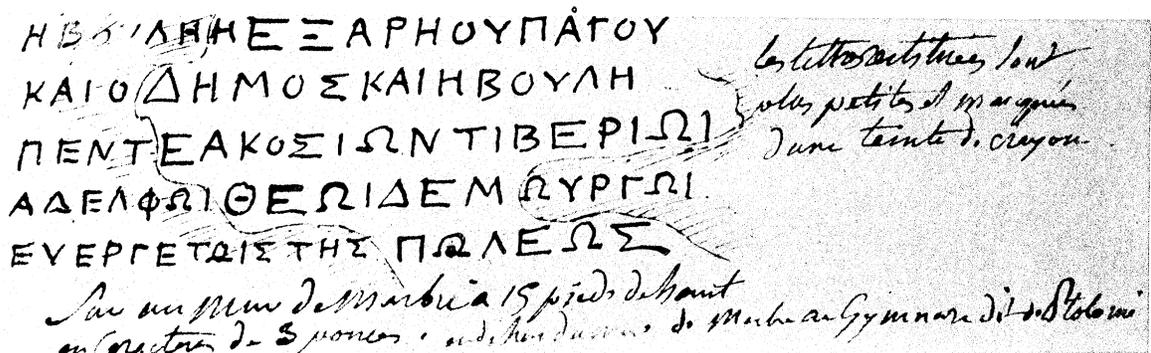
EUGENE VANDERPOOL: ATHENS HONORS THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS



a. Late Roman Fortification Wall: Middle Tower in Stoa of Attalos.
Drawing made for Edward Dodwell.



b. Part of letter from Fauvel to Barbié du Bocage dated Athens, September 10, 1810. (Gennadius Library, Athens, Ms. 134, p. 38, recto, part).



c. From a sheet attached to Fauvel's letter of April 4, 1811 to Barbié du Bocage. (Gennadius Library, Athens, Ms. 134, p. 49, recto, part).