TWO INSCRIPTIONS FROM BASSAI
(PLATE 50)

An unpublished limestone stele in the *apotheke* at Bassai is significant as the single, inscribed record of Apollo as deity of the famous temple.\(^1\) The fragmentary stele is cut from a smooth, hard limestone which is beige-gray in color. The stone is of better quality than the dark gray local material quarried for the temple of Apollo and is comparable in appearance to that used for several inscriptions from the nearby city of ancient Phigalia.\(^2\) Evidently, the stele was used as a building block in one of the several modern constructions which ring the northern perimeter of the archaeological zone. Traces of cement speckle the damaged right side. A crowning molding (height 0.15 m.) has been chopped off, leaving a rough surface which projects 0.01 m. beyond the inscribed plane. The bottom portion of the stone is broken away. A maximum of 0.14 m. of inscribed surface is preserved beneath the molding. The right third of the face is chipped so that the text is effaced in this area. The top and left sides are intact and most of the right side is preserved along the back edge. The face is smoothly dressed; top, side and original back are rough picked. A circular dowel hole, 0.042 m. in diameter and 0.017 m. deep, is cut into the top, 0.06 m. back from the frontal plane and 0.10 m. to the left of center (Pl. 50, b). The lettering is badly worn and barely visible but it can be read with the aid of raking light and a squeeze illuminated from behind (Pl. 50, c).

Height 0.37 m. max. preserved, 0.30 m. min. preserved; width 0.390 m.; thickness 0.185 m. to 0.193 m.

Height of letters 0.024 m., of Θ and Ω 0.020 m.; space between lines 1 and 2 0.022 m.; between lines 2 and 3 0.028 m.; left margin 0.046 m. Each line begins with a new word and letters appear to be spaced so as to form an even margin on the right side (here restored).

\[\text{ca. 370-300 B.C.}\]

\[\text{NON-ΣΤΟΙΧ.}\]

\[\text{Θεσπεί[θής]}\]
\[\text{ἀνέθηκ[ε τῶι]}\]
\[\text{Ἀπόλλ[ονι]}\]
\[\text{vacat}\]

\(^1\) Only with trepidation do I hazard the unaccustomed specialty of Greek epigraphy, or more particularly that of Arkadian epigraphy. I have received advice from several scholars whose comments I have tried assiduously to incorporate into the text. In this regard I want to thank Professors Michael Jameson, Ronald Stroud, Eugene Vanderpool, William Wyatt. All blunders are my own. My gratitude also goes to the Archaeological Service of Greece for granting me permission to work at Bassai and more particularly to Mrs. Karagiorga and Miss Parlama, the successive Epimeletriai at Olympia, for their interest in my research.

\(^2\) *I.G.*, V 2, 419; *S.E.G.*, XXIII, 236 and 237.
TWO INSCRIPTIONS FROM BASSAI 225

Line 1. Dot for the theta uncertain because of worn condition of face. Dot of theta in line 2 however is discernible.

Line 3. For the third letter only the upper part of a circular letter is extant and only an apex remains for the fifth letter. Restoration of omicron and lambda, respectively, presents no difficulty.

Pausanias’ (VIII, 41, 7) description of Bassai which clearly establishes Apollo as occupant of the site has gone unquestioned. This is in contrast to his remarks concerning the date and architect of the temple, which have endured emendation or complete rejection.

During the excavations of 1903 a bronze manumission was discovered next to a temple of Artemis at the peak of Mount Kotilion in Arkadia (I.G., V 2, 429). The inscription mentions an Apollo Bas(s)itas along with Artemis and Pan. While this tablet is important and its significance has never been fully realized, the find-spot (and original place of display) is nonetheless 500 meters distant from the temple of Apollo and higher in elevation by 105 meters. It is the otherwise rather modest Theopeithes dedication which verifies the account of Pausanias on at least one major point.

The main purpose of my paper is to discuss dating criteria for two of the major inscriptions from Bassai. The texts are of critical importance to a reconstruction of the history of the site and cult. It is for this reason that I shall delve into a detailed analysis of letter forms. Otherwise the Theopeithes dedication would not deserve the extensive discussion given it here.

COMMENTARY

Line 1. The name, Theopeithes, although common elsewhere, has not been found previously in Arkadia.

Line 2. The rendering of long e by eta attested here (and therefore restored in line 1) is not found in Arkadian inscriptions before the second quarter of the fourth century B.C. The alphabet is not Arkadian, but presumably Ionic. In the fifth century


4 See F. Bechtel, Die Historischer Personennamen des Griechischen, Halle, 1917, p. 204; F. Kirchner, Protopographia Attica, Berlin, 1901, nos. 7000-7007; A. E. Raubitschek, Hesperia, XXXV, 1966, p. 245 (= S.E.G., XXIII, 118); B. Meritt, Hesperia, XXXVI, 1967, pp. 94-95, no. 23 (= S.E.G., XXIV, 187) and references there cited.

5 Late fourth—early third-century B.C. dedications with this form include: I.G., V 2, 61 b, 66, 72, 97; S.E.G., XI, 1070; S.E.G., XXV, 439; I.G., V 2, 406 (= S.E.G., XI, 1120); 103, 109, 110, 112, 145, 283, 297, 416, 450, 453, 454, 510 and 511 (ἀνασκαφής); S.E.G., XXIII, 240. Arkadians at Delphi, Fouilles de Delphes, III, i, 4, 199 (= S.E.G., XIV, 455); I.G., V 2, p. 69, lines 42-44. Arkadians at Olympia, Dittenberger and Purgold, Olympia, V: Die Inschriften, Berlin, 1896
b.c. âveâke (i.e. long e represented by epsilon) is standard for Arkadian inscriptions, including those found at Olympia and Delphi. This form persists into the fourth century but disappears by the third quarter, by which time the Ionic alphabet prevails in Arkadia.  

The article appears before the deity’s name occasionally in Arkadian dedications but practice seems to vary by locality.  Tôu fits the remaining space of line 2 and therefore is restored provisionally.

Line 3. In a fifth-century dedication from Tegea omicron is used for long o in the spelling 'Apollo. In the fourth century b.c. and thereafter Apollôvni becomes regular. The second spelling is the one restored here.

**DATE OF THE THEOPEITHES DEDICATION AND I.G., V 2, 429.**

The manumission from Mount Kotilion (I.G., V 2, 429) is stored in the National Museum, Athens (NM 13096) and in 1968 Mrs. E. Touloupa at my request kindly undertook cleaning and conservation of the bronze (Pl. 50, d). A detailed commentary will be part of my monograph on the temple of Apollo at Bassai (forthcoming). My intention here is to discuss briefly those problems related to the dating of the two inscriptions.

The content of the Theopeithes dedication and that of no. 429 provide no positive clues as to their dates. Letter forms on the inscriptions might point to the fifth century b.c. Indeed, K. Kourouniotes, the excavator of no. 429, believed the letter forms (hereinafter I.v.O.), no. 294. The áveâke on I.G., V 2, 397 (fifth century b.c.) might be the single exception but this dedication is probably Achaian, J. Herbillon, *Les Cultes de Patras*, Baltimore, 1929, p. 117.


I.G., V 2, 399, 401 (Lousoi), 453 (Megalopolis), 555, 556 (Melpai). On the other hand, none of the dedications from Tegea show the name before the god’s (goddess’) name: I.G., V 2, 60, 61, 65, 75, 90, 97.


R, V, Ω and the presence of the *digamma* pointed to a fifth-century B.C. date, although he recognized that *theta* with a central dot and the Ionic alphabet were signs of a later period. But the presence of “Bas(s)itas” to the exclusion of “Epikourios” convinced Kourouniotes of a date prior to the supposed renaming of Apollo in 421 B.C., a date which accorded with the fallacious theory of a plague of this time. The ante-421 B.C. date has been generally accepted. I shall argue that epigraphically a
421 B.C. or earlier date for no. 429 is impossible. Ca. 370 to ca. 300 B.C. for both inscriptions is far more probable.

Unlike their Athenian contemporaries Arkadians never had a penchant for inscribed records and even less seldom did they display artistic engraving. What was acceptable style in one city was not necessarily so in another. As a result, writing in Arkadia did not develop consistently or uniformly throughout the territory. On the other hand, Arkadians spoke a dialect having homogeneous traits regardless of location. To a certain extent, the same may be asserted for Arkadian scripts.

**LETTER FORMS**

_Theopeithes dedication._ Several letters on the limestone stele are distinctively fifth century B.C., but each type persists into the fourth century: *alpha* with a sloping bar, *epsilon* of three equal bars (second letter in Θεοπεί[*θως*]), uneven *lambda*.

Smaller scaled *thetas* and *omicrons* appear to be typical in the fourth and third centuries B.C.

*I.G., V 2, 429.* L. H. Jeffery lists R, V, Γ as being current in the Arkadian

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10 Inscriptiones Graecae, V 2, Arcadiae, ed., Hiller von Gaertringen, Berlin, 1913 publishes 571 inscriptions to which should be added approximately 96 subsequent finds, the most recent published by W. Peek in *Epigrame und andere Inschriften aus Lakonien und Arkadien,* Heidelberg, 1971.


13 A few fifth-century B.C. examples are *I.G.,* V 2, 77 (=*S.E.G.,* XI, 1074), 159 (=*S.E.G.,* XV, 229), 387 (=*S.E.G.,* XI, 1114); early fourth century B.C., *I.G.,* V 2, 117, 551. This style of _alpha_ is standard on Arkadian coinage until the end of the fifth century B.C. when it is displaced by an A whose bar is horizontal. See R. T. Williams, "The Confederate Coinage of the Arkadians in the Fifth Century B.C.," *Amer. Num. Soc. N. Mon.,* CLV, 1966, nos. 299-320. It should be noted however that the developed _alpha_ does appear on a fifth-century B.C. inscribed column from Mantinea, *I.G.,* V 2, 261 (=*S.E.G.,* XI, 1086).


15 _Lambda_ of two symmetrical strokes appears in the late fifth—early fourth century B.C. (_I.G.,_ V 2, 1, 2, 6, 77, 108) and displaces the uneven _lambda_ by the end of the fourth century B.C. The uneven _lambda_ on _I.G.,_ V 2, 390 (assigned IV/III cent.) appears to be one of the last instances.

alphabet by the mid-fifth century B.C.\textsuperscript{17} By 400 B.C. the tailed \textit{rho} and \textit{V} \texttextit{Y} have virtually disappeared but are still written \textit{ca.} 390 B.C. in the text of \textit{I.G.}, V 2, 3 and even later on an ostrakon from Mantinea (\textit{I.G.}, V 2, 323, no. 20, \textit{ca.} 371-340 B.C.).\textsuperscript{18} Tailess \textit{phi} is regular in Arkadian epigraphy through the fifth and into the first half of the fourth century B.C. when it is displaced by the tailed \textit{phi}. The tailless \textit{phi} occurs on the earliest extant Phigalian inscription (\textit{I.G.}, V 2, 425 \texttextit{S.E.G.}, XXIII, 241) which can be assigned only a general date of "fifth century B.C." The tailess \textit{phi} also occurs on an unpublished graffito on a skyphos from Bassai of the mid-fifth century B.C. A tailess \textit{phi} is also inscribed \textit{ca.} 369 B.C., incidentally, on the monument for the Olympic victor Tharykidos of Phigalia.\textsuperscript{19} Transformation from tailess \textit{phi} to tailed \textit{phi} is most clearly seen in the coinage of Pheneos which alters its ethnic in the early fourth century B.C. from \textit{ŒNikon} or \textit{Œ} to \textit{Œ} or \textit{φΕνΕΩΝ}, the two different types of \textit{phi} interchanging during the intermediate period.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Digamma}

\textit{I.G.}, V 2, 429. \textit{Digamma} is written before the initial vowel of Artemis' epithet \\textit{φοβαρία} in line 13 and is restored by all editors in line 8 to read \textit{μειτίας}, a proper name which is attested in a Mantinean decree of the middle fourth century B.C. (\textit{I.G.}, V 2, 271). At the beginning of this period, \textit{ca.} 390 B.C., usage of the \textit{digamma} fluctuates within the same inscription,\textsuperscript{21} but later in the century it is gradually sup-

\textsuperscript{17} L. H. Jeffery, \textit{Scripts}, p. 211.

\textsuperscript{18} For instance, the ethnic on the coins of Arkadia \textit{APK} bears the tailed \textit{rho} until \textit{ca.} 428 B.C. after which time it disappears, R. Williams, \textit{op. cit.} (note 13), nos. 281-296. The tailed \textit{rho} continues in fashion to a somewhat later date on the coinage of Heraia: \textit{Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum-Copenhagen}, 235, \textit{ca.} 418-322 B.C., and on an issue of Parrhasia or Paroreia: \textit{British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins, Peloponnesus}, pl. 35, 22, \textit{ca.} 431-370 B.C.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{I.E.O.}, 161 (\textit{S.E.G.}, XVI, 288).

\textsuperscript{20} The sequence of Pheneos coinage \textit{ca.} 400-370 B.C. seems to run \textit{Œ}: \textit{B.M.C., Pelop.}, pl. 36, 2 and E. Babelon, \textit{Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines}, III, 1914, nos. 886-888 with plate CCXXIV, 24-26; \textit{Φ}: \textit{B.M.C., Pelop.}, pl. 36, 3 and 4 \textit{L. Forrer, The Weber Collection}, London, 1924, no. 4316 \textit{Babelon, Traité}, III, no. 889 with pl. CCXXIV, 27; \textit{Ω}: \textit{B.M.C., Pelop.}, pl. 36, 5 \textit{Hirsch Col.}, no. 1378 \textit{Babelon, Traité}, III, 895 and this style ethnic seems to be struck in a series also bearing \textit{Φ}, Babelon, \textit{Traité}, III, no. 894 with pl. CCXXV, 3 \textit{Weber}, no. 4318. A subsequent issue, \textit{B.M.C., Pelop.}, pl. 36, 8 is approximately dated by coin hoard no. 69, \textit{ca.} 350-325 B.C. in M. Thompson, Mørkholm, and Kraay, \textit{An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards}, New York, 1973. A tailed \textit{phi} on the coinage of Stymphalos may be late fifth—early fourth century B.C. and therefore an exception to this rule of thumb. See below, note 37. J. Roy in "Ethnics of North-eastern Arcadia (Pheneos, Caphyae, and Alea)," \textit{Athenaeum}, L, 1972, pp. 330-336, notes orthographic changes which occurred during this period. However, the author has overlooked several epigraphic examples published by A. Plassart and G. Blum, "Inscriptions d'Orchomène d'Arcadie," \textit{B.C.H.}, XXXVIII, 1914, pp. 459-463, nos. 4 and 6 (Caphyae) and no. 9, pp. 466-467 (Alea).

pressed from the Arkadian alphabet. For instance, κάταρφος, ἐκαστὸς and φοικία in the second half of the fourth and third century B.C. become κάταρφος, ἐκαστὸς and φοικία. The spelling of φαλόντος (⟨ἀλόσκομαι⟩) in the mid-third century B.C. marks the last occurrence of the digamma. It is written on the earliest of a series of decrees which were inscribed on a single stele from Stymphalos.

**Ionic Alphabet**

*Theopeithes dedication* and I.G., V 2, 429. Recently, J. Taillard tand P. Roesch have persuasively demonstrated that the Boiotians adopted the Ionic alphabet *ca.* 395 B.C. or shortly after the Battle of Corinth and their alliance with Athens. During the initial period the newer alphabet intermixed with the older, traditional forms, especially in private dedications. Nearly a generation later a comparable assimilation of the Ionic alphabet occurred in Arkadia. Judging from the evidence provided by datable inscriptions, this transformation coincides with the founding of the Arkadian League in 370 B.C. Little is known of the legislative transactions of the Arkadian League but it may not be unreasonable to assume that the Arkadian Federal Council established orthographic standards for official texts. In any case, the League's imposition of uniformity in script would have been perfectly consistent with the spirit of the times, however short lived, "οἱ Ἀρκάδες συνέθεαν."

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24 *I.G.*, V 2, 261 and 262 (see Buck, *Greek Dialects*, no. 17, p. 198).


26 *I.G.*, V 2, 6, lines 23 and 29; *Syll.*, 306, lines 10 and 16 (=*S.E.G.*, XV, 227 = C. Buck, *Greek Dialects*, no. 22, p. 206); *I.G.*, V 2, 265, line 8; 357, line 57; 421, line 9; 439, line 3; 440, line 11.

27 *I.G.*, V 2, 17, line 3; 394, line 15; *Syll.*, 306, lines 10 and 17.


32 A. Plassart and G. Blum, *B.C.H.*, XXXIX, 1915, pp. 53-115, who date the decree to 369
Generally speaking, local letter styles and the "red" forms for \( \chi = \textit{xsi} \) and \( \nu \) or \( \upsilon = \textit{chi} \) prevailed in Arkadia,\(^{33}\) and the characteristic letters of the Ionic alphabet appear not at all in Arkadian documents prior to ca. 370 B.C. \( I.G. \), \( V \) 2, 3 dated ca. 390 B.C. shows their alphabet in transition. The text employs the Ionic style of \( \chi = \textit{chi} \) and \( \xi = \textit{xsi} \), but retains traditional usage of \( \epsilon = \textit{e}, \, \theta = \textit{h}, \, O = \textit{o} \) and the digamma.\(^{34}\) It is with the foundation of the Arkadian League that the change seems to take place. As far as I can discover, all of the historically datable Arkadian inscriptions after ca. 370 B.C. show \textit{omega} and \textit{eta}.\(^{35}\) The Arkadian base at Delphi (\( F.D. \), III, i, 4) is typical, as well as a number of other examples,\(^{36}\) including the substitution of \textit{eta} for long \( e \), \textit{omega} for long \( o \) in the respective coinages of Heraia, Pheneos and Stymphalos before ca. 362 B.C.\(^{37}\)

CONCLUSIONS

The bronze manumission could be of the 360's B.C. This date might be too high, however, in view of the fact that bronze documents with letters \textit{en pointillé} become fashionable only by the latter part of the fourth century and continue through the third and second centuries B.C. A few \textit{en pointillé} letters on a bronze strip from Lousoi, now lost, seem to be an exception.\(^{38}\) Elsewhere in Greece there are earlier examples

\( B.C. \) (\( = S.E.G. \), XI, 1100 and C. Buck, \textit{Greek Dialects}, p. 204, no. 20). J. Roy does not include this important document in his chronological discussion in \textit{Historia}, XX, 1971, pp. 569-599.


\(^{34}\) See above, note 23.

\(^{35}\) A fragmentary bronze plaque from Olympia, \textit{J.v.O.}, no. 31, granting proxeny \( ca. \) 360 B.C. to a Theban, a Syrakusan, a Sikyonian and an Argive, has been tentatively assigned an Arkadian provenance or possibly Pisatan. This inscription uses \( O \) for \( \overset{\circ}{O} \). Since its origin is questionable this inscription does not affect the general rule of \( \omega \) in Arkadian inscriptions after 370 B.C. Moreover, the Ionic alphabet is used in two marble inscriptions at Olympia which have been assigned to Arkadia by E. Kunze in \textit{Ausgrabungen in Olympia, 1956-1958, Bericht}, VII, Berlin, 1961, pp. 211-217 (\( = S.E.G. \), XXII, 339). For date of \( ca. \) 365/4-363/2 B.C. see J. Roy, \textit{Historia}, XX, 1971, pp. 594-595, notes 127 and 128.

\(^{36}\) For example, \( I.G. \), \( V \) 2, 1 (\( = S.E.G. \), XI, 1050), \( ca. \) 362 B.C. (for dispute of date cf. M. Cary, \textit{J.H.S.}, XLII, 1922, pp. 188-190); Tod, \textit{Gr. Hist. Ins.} \( ^{3} \), II, 1948, no. 132 and J. Roy, \textit{Historia}, XX, 1971, p. 571, note 13; \( I.G. \), \( V \) 2, 2 after 370-360 B.C.; \( I.G. \), \( V \) 2, 343, \( ca. \) 360-350 B.C.

\(^{37}\) \( \text{HPAEQON} \), \( ca. \) 322 B.C. and later; \( \text{O} \text{E} \) or \( \text{ENIKON} \), \( ca. \) 421-362 B.C. and \( \text{P} \text{E} \text{NEQON} \) after \( ca. \) 362 B.C. (see above, note 20); \( \text{ETYM} \text{O} \text{AION} \) \( ca. \) 400-362 B.C. and \( \text{ETYM} \text{HAION} \) after 362 B.C. See, for instance, \( S.N.G.-Cambridge \), 3906-3908 for alteration in orthography within the same issue. Cf. \( S.N.G.-Copenhagen \), 283-287. Babelon, \textit{Traité}, III, pp. 594-595 places the change to \textit{omega} coincident with the founding of the Arkadian League, 370 B.C. or a date confirmed by hoard no. 9, \( ca. \) 420-400 B.C. in M. Thompson, \textit{op. cit.} (note 20), which included \( B.M.C. \), \textit{Pelop.}, pl. 37, 1 bearing \( \text{ETYM} \text{HAION} \). My thanks go to Dr. James Dengate for his numismatic guidance.

\(^{38}\) \( I.G. \), \( V \) 2, 400; L. H. Jeffery, \textit{Scripts}, pp. 209, 214, and no. 4, \( ca. \) 525 B.C.
of letters *en pointillé*, but these tend to be on dedicatory bronze armor ⁴⁹ and vases.⁴⁰ Bronze public inscriptions having letters punched in this style seem more common after the second half of the fourth century B.C. than before.⁴¹ Numerous examples of this type have been found at Lousoi,⁴² Orchomenos,⁴³ Akarnania ⁴⁴ and Dodona.⁴⁵ In fact most of those from Dodona are likewise manumission decrees. 331 B.C. is the date of the earliest of these Dodona manumissions.⁴⁶ I would judge the style of lettering of this latter group of bronzes generally to be later than the Kotilion inscription (*I.G.*, V 2, 429) where the tailless *phi*, the sloping strokes of *nu*, the tailed *rho*, V for Y and the mixed use of τυ and τϊ favor an earlier date.⁴⁷ But as L. H. Jeffery remarks, “On the whole, the general standard of Arkadian writing is not so high that the lack of interest in technique should impress us . . . the number of brief dedications on bronze (often cut hastily on awkward spaces) . . . [means] that to generalize about their standards may well be premature.”⁴⁸ With this word of caution, we may place our manumission sometime between ca. 370 B.C. and ca. 325 B.C.

On the same grounds the Theopeithes dedication should date not earlier than the second quarter of the fourth century B.C. The spelling of ἀνέθηκε[ε] fixes this *post quem*. Older styles of letter forms, especially the sloping-bar *alpha*, elevated stroke of *nu*, uneven *lambda*, the one *epsilon* of three equal bars point to an *ante quem* of 300 or even 325 B.C.

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⁵⁷ I note in passing the third-century B.C. bronze decree from Lousoi which grants proxeny to a Phigalian, *I.G.*, V 2, 395.

As I shall show in a monograph on the temple of Apollo, the two inscriptions represent a significant part of the testimonia from the site. This analysis of letter forms has been necessitated by the paucity of comparable studies of Arkadian epigraphy, especially for the fourth century B.C. For it is in the second or third quarter of the fourth century that the Arkadians regularized their script somewhat and adopted the Ionic alphabet for their koine. More precisely, the change appears to have been coincident with the founding of the Arkadian League in 370 B.C.

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a. Theopeithes dedication from below

b. Theopeithes dedication from top

c. Squeeze illuminated from behind and printed in reverse

d. Bronze manumission from Mt. Kotilion

FREDERICK A. COOPER: TWO INScriptions FROM BASSAI