

AN ATHENIAN DEDICATION TO HERAKLES AT PANOPEUS

(PLATE 65)

THE TOWN OF PANOPEUS in Phokis did not impress Pausanias; he begins his description as follows:

It is twenty stades from Chaironeia to Panopeus, a city of the Phokians, if one can indeed give the name of “city” even to people who have no government offices, no gymnasium, no theater, no agora, no water conducted to a fountain, but who live in hollow huts, just like mountain shelters, at the side of a gully. Nevertheless, there are boundaries between their land and their neighbors’, and they also send delegates to the Phokian assembly (10.4.1).¹

He goes on to describe the ancient circuit wall, which he reckons at seven stades in length. Today these walls are the most impressive remains of the city, standing eight to ten courses high, with well-preserved gates and towers, probably dating to the second half of the 4th century B.C.² These fortifications crown a high rocky crag with extensive views eastward toward Boiotian Chaironeia and the Kephisos River valley and westward to Daulis and the massif of Parnassos.

A handful of inscriptions are known from Panopeus, and some burials were excavated at the turn of the century, but generally the physical remains of the ancient city are neither abundant nor much studied.³ In February 1990, while descending from the northern side of the fortified acropolis, we passed a vertical, northwestward-facing scarp into which three niches had been cut (Fig. 1, Pl. 65:a, b).⁴ Closer examination showed that all three were labeled with inscriptions. Dodwell saw these inscriptions when he visited the site in

¹ References are to the Teubner text of Pausanias (ed. Maria Helena Rocha-Pereira, 1990); translations are our own. We would like to thank *Hesperia*'s two anonymous reviewers for their very valuable corrections and suggestions.

² For the fullest description of the circuit walls, with a useful plan (reprinted here as Figure 1), see *RE* XVIII, iii, 1949, cols. 637–649, *s.v.* Panopeus (E. Kirsten). Winter (1971, p. 146) follows Scranton (1941, pp. 89–90) in dating the walls to the period immediately after the Battle of Chaironeia on the grounds of historical probability. See, most recently, Müller 1987, pp. 530–534.

³ The most recent treatments, with bibliography, are to be found in Fossey 1986, pp. 63–67, and Rousset and Katzouros 1992. Panopeus had other rupestral inscriptions in addition to those reported here. The regulations of the Labyadai inscribed at Delphi (*SEG* XXXVI 520) are copied from a text inscribed at Panopeus ἐν ταῖς πέτραις (lines 30–31); cf. Sokolowski 1969, 77D, lines 29–31 and *CID* 9D, lines 29–31. The Panopean original of this text was found by John Camp and members of the American School of Classical Studies in September 1993 and will be published elsewhere.

⁴ The niches are cut into the face of the bedrock a short distance to the east of Kirsten's gate C on the north side (Fig. 1).

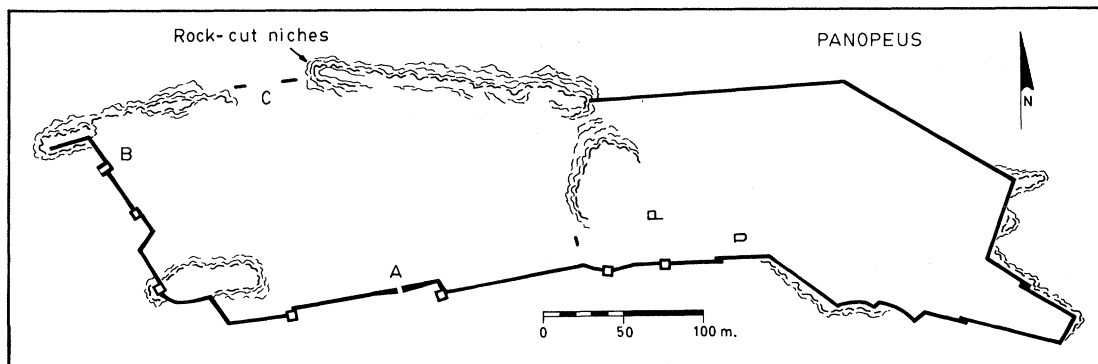


FIG. 1. Plan of citadel of Panopeus (after *RE XVIII*, iii, col. 644), showing location of niches

1805, but he found them to be illegible.⁵ In 1860, Bursian published the first attempt at a transcription of the two inscriptions situated below the easternmost and central niches.⁶ In 1925, Friedrich Schober did an extensive survey of the site and worked on the inscriptions, but the results of his research were never published.⁷ Bursian's text therefore remains the only published version. We are fortunate to have been able to read additional letters and to correct Bursian's readings, as well as to locate a third inscription above the westernmost niche. Our new reading of the principal inscription allows us to identify the niches as constituting a small sanctuary of Herakles.

NICHE 1

The easternmost niche is the largest and the most carefully cut, measuring 0.82 m high by 0.63 m wide, with an arched top and flat back (Pl. 65:a, b). The depth from front to back is 0.40 m. Sunk into the floor of the niche is a double rectangular cutting, presumably to secure a votive relief or a statuette.

The face of the cliff immediately below the niche has been dressed smooth over an area 0.18 m high and 0.53 m wide. Within this dressed panel are two lines of text (Fig. 2, Pl. 65:c) in letters 0.02 m high (omicron 0.01 m):

⁵ Dodwell 1819, p. 209: "Near this spring is a votive rock, in which there are niches for offerings, with some illegible inscriptions." We could not find any trace of the spring mentioned by Dodwell, but we were at the site in a period of extended drought. It is possible that the water-supply arrangements for the modern town of Agios Blasios have affected former springs on the hill.

⁶ Bursian 1860, p. 210. F. G. Welcker (1865, p. 59) noticed the niches but not the inscriptions.

⁷ Klaffenbach (1935, p. 703) mentions the inscriptions "deren Lesung dann schon Schober gefördert hatte" and declares that Schober himself will report on them. Kirsten (*RE XVIII*, iii, 1949, cols. 646–647, s.v. Panopeus) states that Schober and Klaffenbach had deciphered but not yet published the inscriptions; nor was a text available to Kirsten at that time (*op. cit.*, col. 639). Since Kirsten refers to and cites an unpublished manuscript of Schober in connection with the fortifications (*op. cit.*, cols. 640 and 643), it seems that this manuscript did not deal with the inscriptions. With the kind help of Professor Hermann Kienast and Dr. Antje Krug of the Deutsche Archäologische Institut, and of Professor William M. Calder III, we tried to trace Schober and his notes but were unable to do so. Schober appears to have ceased publication about 1940; it seems most likely that he died or vanished during World War II.

Π Α Ρ Η Λ Ι Ο Σ Ε Ι Ο Σ
Α Σ Τ Η Ν Ι Ο Σ Α Ν Ε Θ Η Κ Ε

FIG. 2. Drawing of inscription of Niche 1

Α Σ Τ Α Ν Σ Η

FIG. 3. Drawing of inscription of Niche 2

[‘H]ρακλεῖ Δέξιος
Ἀθηναῖος ἀνέθηκε

Dexios the Athenian dedicated this to Herakles

The letters are carefully cut. They show incipient serifs of a type known in Attic inscriptions from the middle of the 4th century B.C.⁸

These letter forms and the spacing, however, may also suggest a date in the early 2nd century.⁹ The dressed panel is large enough to have accommodated two additional lines of text, but we saw no letters in the lower half and think this extra space was never inscribed. At the beginning of line 1 the stone is damaged, and no certain traces of the initial eta are visible. The delta in line 1 is badly damaged. Part of the bottom horizontal remains; there may also be traces of the bottom of the left diagonal stroke. The traces of the next letter are consistent with xi and epsilon only.¹⁰

The name Dexios occurs with some frequency in Athens.¹¹ Four examples fall within the range of dates indicated above. A Dexios served as epimelete of the sanctuary of Bendis in 329/8, and the name appears also on a mid-4th-century tombstone, in a military muster roll of the second half of the 3rd century, and in the accounts of Asklepios from the time of the Chremonidean War.¹²

NICHE 2

About 0.10 m to the right (west) of Niche 1 is a second niche, triangular in shape, measuring 0.45 m high, 0.34 m wide at its base, and 0.14 m deep (Pl. 65:a, b). Its unusual triangular form was probably dictated by its proximity to a diagonal flaw in the cliff face. It is set with its floor some 0.40 m higher than either of the other two niches; there are no cuttings in the floor. A dressed panel immediately below measures 0.15 m high by 0.34 m wide and is occupied by an inscription that reads (Fig. 3):

⁸ They appear, for example, on a statue base from the Athenian Agora signed by the sculptor Bryaxis, on boundary stones of the Kerameikos, and on a base signed by Praxiteles. Bryaxis base: *IG II² 3130* (photo: Travlos 1971, fig. 25; the sigma and kappa here are quite similar to those of the Dexios inscription). Kerameikos boundary stones: *IG II² 2617* (photo: Travlos 1971, fig. 415) and B. von Freytag in U. Knigge *et al.* 1991, p. 387, with fig. 26:a, b. Praxiteles base: Agora Inv. I 4165 (see *Agora XIV*, p. 154 and pl. 78:c).

⁹ We are grateful to Professor Stephen V. Tracy for examining the squeezes and offering his comments on dating. He notes that the incipient serifs on some of the letters (most notably the kappa of ἀνέθηκε) are more common in the 2nd century B.C., although possible earlier, and that the slanting (rather than horizontal) top and bottom strokes of the sigmas suggest that the inscription was probably made prior to 150 B.C. Tracy considers it likely that the inscription was carved by a professional stonecutter, perhaps a traveling mason.

¹⁰ Bursian (1860, p. 210) transcribed this inscription as follows:

. P . . Δ . I E I O Σ
. . . N . Φ O Σ A N E Θ H K E

Our reading differs in both letters and letter spaces. In line 1, he reads delta where we read lambda and epsilon where we read xi. In line 2 we read iota for his phi. Since Bursian read fewer letters, his estimation of the letter spacing in line 1 is untrustworthy. He may have obtained the extra space by misreading epsilon for xi (where his epsilon would represent only the right half of the xi) or by conflating them. There is not, in fact, room for four letters between the iota of Ἡρακλεῖ and the xi of Δέξιος.

¹¹ Osborne and Byrne (*LGPN II*, p. 102) list ten examples.

¹² Bendis epimelete: *LGPN II*, Δέξιος 6 (= *PA 3233*); tombstone: *LGPN II*, Δέξιος 5 (= *PA 3233b*); military muster: *LGPN II*, Δέξιος 2 (= *PA 3234*); Asklepieion account: *LGPN II*, Δέξιος 7 (= *IG II² 1534B*).

Δ Ω Τ Α Ν Ω Ν

Although the rock surface is badly weathered, the letters are distinct, and it seems that no others were ever carved on either side of them. Bursian read this inscription as Λ Τ Α Ν Ω Ν.¹³ Although the dressed panel is large enough to have accommodated another inscribed line, we could see no letters below. The meaning of the letters is unclear; they may be the name of a group in the genitive plural. It is also possible that they represent a name in the nominative singular.¹⁴

NICHE 3

The westernmost niche is intermediate in size, measuring 0.50 m high and 0.45 m wide (Pl. 65:a, b). It is arched like the first, but the back wall of the interior has a deep concave curve, reaching a depth of 0.24 m. There is a single rectangular cutting in the floor. As the curved back wall seems both unnecessary and inappropriate for a relief plaque, it is probable that the niche was designed to hold a statuette.

This niche differs from the other two in the placement of its inscription. The area below the niche has not been dressed smooth, perhaps because the stone was too flawed at this point. Instead, a roughly rectangular panel has been cut above the niche, a little to the right. A flaw in the cliff face to the left made it impossible for it to be centered directly above the niche. The panel contains at least one line of text, sloping slightly upward from left to right:

Τ Ι [²·³] Α Ε Ν

The tau is located at the left edge of the panel and seems to be the first letter of the inscription. The weathering of the rock makes it impossible to estimate how many letters, if any, followed the final nu. There may be traces of a second line of lettering below. We can offer no meaningful restoration of this text.

The rock face into which these niches have been cut is uneven and flawed in many places. The Dexios niche is larger than the other two and unmarred by flaws in the bedrock. For these reasons we believe it was the first of the three.

COMMENTARY

Religious activity by an Athenian at Panopeus need not surprise us.¹⁵ The city was an important stop on the Sacred Way from Athens to Delphi.¹⁶ Every second year Athenian women known as *thyiades* stopped to dance at Panopeus while on their way to worship Dionysos on Parnassos.¹⁷ Athenian traffic through Panopeus must have been particularly heavy at the time of the Pythais. Inscriptions from the Treasury of the Athenians show that

¹³ Bursian 1860, p. 210.

¹⁴ Dornseiff and Hansen (1957, p. 116) list twelve personal names ending in -ωνων.

¹⁵ There is at least one other epigraphically attested instance of Athenian involvement in Phokian cult: in the 1st century B.C. the Athenian Menemachos, son of Menemachos, restored a temple of Dionysos at Hyampolis (Michaud 1969, no. 4, p. 75).

¹⁶ According to Ephoros, cited by Strabo (9.3.11–12 C422), Apollo visited Panopeus while on his way from Athens to Delphi. When Apollo reached Panopeus he overthrew Tityos, a violent and lawless man, who had control of that spot.

¹⁷ Pausanias 10.4.3.

hundreds of Athenians participated in the *pompe*.¹⁸ Often all nine archons were present, as well as *pythaistai* representing separate groups such as the Eupatridai, the Kerykes, and the Tetrapolis. In addition there were *theoroi*, *kanephoroi*, and even *pythaistai paides*, all escorted by units of cavalry and ephebes. Some of those who took part in the procession went to Delphi to compete in the Games, and it is conceivable that Dexios was an athlete making a dedication to Herakles.¹⁹

The Athenians took a special proprietary pride in the road to Delphi. Aischylos alludes to this in the *Eumenides* (lines 12–14), where the “road-building sons of Hephaistos” are said to escort Apollo on his way to Delphi. The scholiast explains that this is a reference to the Athenians, “for Theseus cleared the road of robbers, and whenever [the Athenians] send a *theoria* to Delphi, men go in advance carrying axes in order to cut back the overgrowth.”²⁰ According to Aelius Aristides, the road to Delphi was an *ergon* of the city, a remark that the scholiast explains by referring to the same tradition that Theseus had rid it of robbers.²¹

Panopeus is, in fact, one of the few places north of Attica that played a part in the epic cycle of Athens’ greatest hero. The journey north on which Theseus cleared the road of bandits included a sojourn at Panopeus, where he conceived a passion for Aigle, the daughter of Panopeus.²² More general mythological ties connected the Athenians and the rest of Phokis, for example, the dynastic marriages of Tereus and Prokne and of Kephalos and Prokris.²³ At least one Phokian town even claimed to be descended from Athenians.²⁴

The worship of Herakles is poorly attested in Phokis. Apart from the niches at Panopeus, the only attested sanctuary in Phokis is the *ἱερόν* of Herakles Misogynos mentioned by Plutarch, although its site is unknown.²⁵ The fact that the donor at Panopeus was an Athenian may help to explain the choice of divinity. Herakles was extraordinarily popular among the Athenians. His worship is attested in no fewer than twenty-four sanctuaries in Attica, and some sources state that the Athenians were the first

¹⁸ *FdD* III, ii, pp. 2–67.

¹⁹ Theokritos (*Idyll* 24.115) gives Panopeus as the hometown of Herakles’ wrestling teacher, Harpalykos.

²⁰ Schol. Aischylos, *Eumen.* 13. With regard to the practice of clearing the road with axes Curtius (1894, p. 33) notes: “In der Nachfolge der Heroen vollenden die Menschen das gottesdienstliche Werk der Wegebahnung.”

²¹ Aelius Aristides, *Panathen.* 363, and schol. *ad loc.*

²² Plutarch, *Thes.* 20; Athenaios 13.4 (557a).

²³ For the ill-fated marriage of Tereus and Prokne see Pausanias 10.4.8; Thucydides 2.29. On the marriage of Kephalos and Prokris see Apollodoros, *Bibl.* 1.9.4. Prokris was the daughter of Erechtheus, and Kephalos was the son of the Phokian king Deion. Kephalos also appeared in some genealogies as an Athenian hero and was remembered as an ally of Panopeus and Amphitryon (Apollodoros, *Bibl.* 2.4.7). The ambiguity over Kephalos may reflect the closeness of the two regions.

²⁴ Pausanias 10.35.8–9. Pausanias was told that the founder of the Phokian town Stiris was an Athenian, Peteus, son of Orneus, and that the majority of his followers came from the Attic deme of Stiria. The Hellenistic geographer Polemon wrote on the foundations of the cities of Phokis and their kinship with the Athenians: *Κτίσεις τῶν ἐν Φωκίδι πόλεων καὶ περὶ τῆς πρὸς Ἀθηναίους συγγενείας αὐτῶν*, in Müller 1883, p. 123. The tradition of a tie between Athens and Stiris seems to be borne out by the discovery of an Athenian decree at Hosios Loukas, not far from ancient Stiris; see Vanderpool 1971.

For further discussion of the various connections between Athens and Phokis, with particular reference to their significance for Athenian politics in the 6th century B.C., see Camp 1994.

²⁵ Plutarch, *Mor.* 403F.

to worship him as a god.²⁶ Since Dexios' votive niche seems to have been the first on the rock face, an Athenian may have been the first to worship Herakles at Panopeus as well.

The rock face into which the three niches are carved stands high on the hill, above steeply sloping ground. Its position is reminiscent of several other open-air sanctuaries; one thinks immediately of three such shrines on the north slope of the Akropolis at Athens: those of Apollo Hypomakrais, of Pan, and of Eros and Aphrodite.²⁷ At neighboring Chaironeia the names of Apollo Daphnaphorios and Artemis Soodina were inscribed into the rock face above the theater.²⁸ A modest open-air shrine is not inappropriate for Herakles; he is rarely accorded a proper temple.

The location of the niche sanctuary may be associated with other features in its immediate vicinity. These include the walls of the acropolis, their extension into the plain, a gate, and possibly a spring (Fig. 1). All such features have now virtually vanished from this spot, but they are well attested by the early travelers, and a few wall blocks can still be seen in the undergrowth. Both Leake and Frazer describe stretches of wall that extended from the acropolis and ran north into the plain.²⁹ These extensions created a fortified space below the acropolis. In this respect the fortifications at Panopeus are reminiscent of those of Lilaia, Drymaia, and other Phokian settlements.³⁰ Dodwell, Leake, and Schober saw traces of a gate in a dip between outcrops of bedrock a short distance to the west of the rock face that carries the inscriptions.³¹ It is possible that a path from the gate to the lower section of the site ran immediately along the western side of the cliff face into which the niches are cut. Gate shrines were not uncommon, and Herakles stood guard both at one of the city gates of Thasos and just inside the main gate of the fortification wall at Kastri east of Alyzia in Akarnania.³² There was also a "Herakleian Gate" at Argyrion

²⁶ Isokrates 5.33; Diodoros 4.39.1; Pausanias 1.15.3 (specifying Marathonian Athenians). For the cult of Herakles in Attica see Woodford 1971; for a recent epigraphical addition to this body of evidence see Matthaïou 1989 and 1992.

²⁷ For the shrine of Apollo Hypoakrais/Hypomakrais see Travlos 1971, pp. 91–95; of Pan, Travlos 1971, pp. 417–421; of Eros and Aphrodite, Travlos 1971, pp. 228–232.

²⁸ *IG VII* 3407; Bursian 1860, p. 210.

²⁹ Leake 1835, pp. 110–111; Frazer 1913, V, p. 218. Wilhelm Vischer (1857, p. 599) also noted that the walls ran down as far as the valley, and Welcker (1865, pp. 57–58) remarked that, from the road to Parnassos, Panopeus could be seen to have three lines of walls. This description agrees with that of Leake: "their general form is a triangle . . . two [walls] inclose the northern face . . . they included a small portion of the plain at the western end of the site."

³⁰ Kirsten 1956, p. 44.

³¹ On the gate: Dodwell 1819, p. 208; Leake 1835, p. 111; Schober, cited by Kirsten in *RE XVIII*, iii, 1949, col. 643, *s.v.* Panopeus (for Schober's unpublished manuscript see note 7 above). Leake speaks of the gate as "leading to the lower town". Of course, we cannot be sure whether the lower extension of the fortifications existed at the time of the dedication of the niches, but even if it postdates them, there would almost certainly have been a gate here as soon as the western part of the acropolis was fortified.

³² Thasos gate reliefs: *Études Thasiennes I*, pp. 160 and 188. For the relief at Kastri see Kovacsovics 1982, pp. 204–206 with pl. 43:1 (cf. pl. 42:1 for relation of relief to gateway) and Boyd 1985, pp. 325–328 with pl. 65. In addition to the Herakles relief at the southwest gateway, reliefs of four other divinities were carved on a rock face just within the southeastern fortification wall (Boyd 1985, fig. 1; Kovacsovics 1982, pls. 43:2, 44:1, 2). Boyd (1985, p. 331) considers this group "a simple garrison shrine, probably carved by a mason employed in the construction of the walls of Kastri." For divine gate guardians see Maier 1961.

in Sicily.³³ Herakles' function as averter of evil (ἀλεξίκακος) would make him a suitable guardian of the citadel.³⁴ If the spring mentioned by Dodwell did exist here in classical times, it is possible that Herakles was honored here as god of the spring. In either of these cases, however, we would expect a Panopean rather than an Athenian to have made the dedication. Dexios' dedication to Herakles may therefore relate to the god's role as wayfarer and builder, a suitable guardian deity for an Athenian on the road.³⁵

An Athenian could have been present in Panopeus or even resident there at almost any time from the 4th to the mid 2nd century B.C. The Athenians helped to restore the Phokian cities after the Third Sacred War; Dexios may have been an Athenian mason working on the refortification of Panopeus.³⁶ If so, he could well have been not only the dedicator but also carver and inscriber of the niche. The possibility that Dexios was a mercenary in the Third Sacred War or the later Macedonian Wars cannot be ruled out. Other times and occasions are also possible, including the Athenian *pompe* to Delphi, mentioned above.

The difficulty of assigning secure dates to these inscribed niches does not detract from their interest. Whether the Dexios of Niche 1 was a 4th-century mason or a member of a Hellenistic religious delegation, the inauguration of a Herakleion at Panopeus by an Athenian sheds light on the continuing cultural relations between Athens and Phokis and provides a possible example of cult diffusion in ancient Greece.

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³³ Diodoros 4.24.6.

³⁴ Of particular interest in this connection is the well-attested lintel inscription for private houses: ὁ καλλίνικος Ἡρακλῆς ἐνθάδε κατοικεῖ· μηδὲν εἰσιτω κακόν [Herakles, glorious in victory, dwells here. Let no evil enter]; Slater 1984, p. 260, note 106 and Faraone 1992, pp. 57–59.

³⁵ On Herakles as traveler and builder of earthworks see Curtius 1894, pp. 9–10.

³⁶ Panopeus destroyed by Philip II: Pausanias 10.3.1; Phokian cities restored by Athenians and Thebans: Pausanias 10.3.3. The construction of fortifications frequently involved the use of craftsmen from allied cities: in 417 B.C. Athenian carpenters and stonemasons assisted in the construction of long walls at Argos (Thucydides 5.82.6); in 394/3 Thebes sent 500 skilled workers and masons to help rebuild the walls of Athens and Peiraieus (Diodoros 14.85.3; cf. Xenophon, *Hell.* 4.8.10 and *IG II²* 1657). In 391 B.C. the Athenians, accompanied by masons and carpenters, rebuilt the western long wall at Corinth in a few days' time (Xenophon, *Hell.* 4.4.18).

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a. The three niches in the rock face



b. Niches 1 to 3, left to right



c. Inscription under Niche 1