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# The Epigraphy and History of Boeotia

*New Finds, New Prospects*

*Edited by*

Nikolaos Papazarkadas



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# Two New Epigrams from Thebes

*Nikolaos Papazarkadas*

Recent rescue excavations conducted in and around Thebes have brought to light some extraordinary archaeological material, including numerous inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> Without a doubt the epigraphic highlight of this recent crop was the inscribed *kioniskos* published by Dr. Aravantinos in *BSA* in 2006.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Dr. Aravantinos and I published another important historical document, the earliest extant treaty from ancient Thebes.<sup>3</sup> In this essay I provide the editio princeps of two more new inscriptions. Both texts are poetic, and they are further connected by means of an unusual epigraphic experiment, as the reader will soon discover. They represent however two different genres, and although qualitative judgment should be resisted, text no. II is potentially one of the most important Greek inscriptions to have been discovered in recent years, for reasons that will become apparent by the end of the essay.

## I. Inscribed Funerary Stele

In the early third millennium, the 9th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities undertook excavations ahead of the construction of a submerged motorway for the Greek Railways Organization. This work led to the discovery of an extensive assemblage of graves, the so-called Northeastern Cemetery. A

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1 I have presented the texts at Berkeley, Princeton, Tallahassee, Manchester, Durham, and Athens, and I would like to thank the audiences of all these venues for their comments and useful suggestions. I am grateful to Y. Kalliontzis who has helped me repeatedly with the strenuous work of reading two extremely difficult texts, and to A.P. Matthaïou for sharing with me his unparalleled expertise in Greek epigraphy by discussing in extenso several aspects of these documents. My gratitude also goes to P. Thonemann, for reasons explained below in the commentary to text II, and to M. Griffith for discussing the meter of both epigrams with me. For the drawing of the second monument and good archeological advice I am indebted to E. Sioumbara. Most of all, I am grateful to V. Aravantinos who with his characteristic generosity gave up his publishing rights by assigning me the privilege of publishing these intriguing texts.

2 Aravantinos 2006, pp. 367–377 (= *SEG* LVI 521).

3 Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012. The treaty, arguably set up in the shrine of Herakles, casts fascinating light on early Theban aspirations toward establishing and expanding their hegemony.

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FIGURE 1 *Funerary stele inv. no. 33459; photo O. Kourakis*



FIGURE 2 Funerary stele inv. no. 33459: detail of the inscription

important examples, including an unpublished funerary stele with an epigram for a dancer;<sup>8</sup> and an older find (Museum of Thebes, inv. no. 1499), an epigram for a certain Pythokles who died in some unidentified battle.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned above, the surface of the stone is very worn, and although with artificial light one is able to discern scattered worn letters here and there, these are of little help. A total of eight inscribed lines can be read. A cursory glance at the stele, however, shows something extraordinary: what we have here is the same four-line epigram,<sup>10</sup> carved twice (Fig. 2). Closer inspection shows that the same epigram was written in two different scripts. The upper register is in

8 The inscription, probably of the 5th century BC, will be published by Angelos P. Matthaiou in a volume in memory of S.N. Koumanoudes.

9 I had the opportunity to present this epitaph in 2010 at the 6th International Congress of Boeotian Studies, the proceedings of which will include the *editio princeps*.

10 The language is patently poetic and belongs to the military and, more broadly, agonistic lexicon of elegiac poetry, as will be shown below.



the Boeotian script (text A),<sup>11</sup> whereas the script used for the text of the lower register is some form of the Ionic (text B). I will return to this phenomenon below, but first I provide a commentary on what can be deciphered.

Line 1: This line has presented me with major difficulties. In line 1 of text B, the dotted letter is either an H or Ͳ. The latter is thought to represent E, EI, or H (especially in Thebes).<sup>12</sup> In a Hestiaian epigram, *CEG* 785, ll. 1–2, we read:<sup>13</sup> λισσ[ό]μενος δὲ θεοὶ νίκης ἡβρὸν ἕρετο κύδος | ἀϞ[-<sup>4</sup>-<sup>5</sup> -]στε[φ]άνοι καλλικίθονι[ . . . ] ᾄοι. This is a dedicatory epigram by a certain Kephalos who had ‘got from the goddess the delicate glory of victory’ (νίκης ἡβρὸν ἕρετο κύδος). ἕρετο is the crucial verb, second aorist of ἄρνημαι, ‘to win’, ‘to gain’.<sup>14</sup> In view of the agonistic connotations of l. 4 of the new epigram (see below ad loc.), the reading ἤρετον would appear to be very tempting. This could well be a dual aorist form; if so, the deceased were two, either friends or brothers, a phenomenon not totally unknown in funerary poetry. As in the famous Simonidian epigram *CEG* 4 (χαίρετε ἀριστῆες, πολέμου μέγα κύδος ἔχοντες | κῆροι Ἀθηναῖον, ἔχσοχοι ἠπποσύναι | οἱ ποτε καλλιχόρο περι πατρίδος ὀλέσατε ἕβεν | πλείστοις ἑλλάνον ἀντία βαρνάμενοι), what Gjert Vestreheim recently called “a nameless and featureless voice” addresses the deceased;<sup>15</sup> in this case we could translate: “and the two of you gained there (ἤρετον αὐτοῦ) glory” vel sim. Incidentally, the scenario whereby two brothers died at the same battle is not improbable: we know from Pindar’s 4th *Isthmian* for Melissos that four members of the victor’s family had died on the same day, most likely at the Battle of Plataea.<sup>16</sup> However, given the poor state of preservation of the stone and the uncertainty of the proposed readings, and in view of other objections described below, I merely propose this interpretation as one possibility.

Line 2: Comparison of the two variations of the second verse of the epigram provides new, albeit inconclusive, evidence of a linguistic phenomenon that has long perplexed dialectologists. In line 2 of text A, we unproblematically read πολέμυ (with an upsilon). In line 2 of text B, this has been transcribed as πολέμοι. The interchangeability of upsilon with the diphthong omikron-iota in the dative endings of second declension nouns has been known for a long time:

11 The Boeotian script is a version of the so-called orthodox Chalkidian script.

12 See Mendez Dosuna 1995.

13 Ed. pr. by Cairns 1983.

14 The aspiration of the verb in the Hestiaian epigram is irregular, and most probably does not appear in our text, if this is the enigmatic verb of ll. A1 and B1.

15 Vestreheim 2010, esp. pp. 67–71.

16 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.16–17: ἀλλ’ ἀμέραι γὰρ ἐν μιᾷ | τραχεῖα νιφὰς πολέμοιο τεσσάρων | ἀνδρῶν ἐρήμωσεν μάκαιραν ἐστῖαν, with Willcock 1995, p. 76.

in text A we probably have the earliest known example of the upsilon-variant.<sup>17</sup> In any case, we should probably restore [ἐν π]ολέμυ ([ἐν π]ολέμοι in text B line 2), which is metrically sound, producing the second half of a pentameter.

Also of interest is the aorist infinitive *θανέμεν*, “to die”, in its first occurrence in lapidary poetry. Athematic infinitives are quite at home in Boeotia, and although Homeric poetry makes use of them,<sup>18</sup> much more relevant is their appearance in the work of that Theban literary giant, Pindar himself. In fact, the only other known attestation of *θανέμεν* is found in Pindaric poetry.<sup>19</sup> Dying in war is of course a common theme of funerary epitaphs,<sup>20</sup> and the new epigram simply adds to the relevant material. The topic anticipates the patriotic content of line 3.

Line 3: *Θέβας* of text A has been rendered as *Θεῖβας* in text B. This phenomenon, observable in Boeotian—and even in Thessalian—dialects, is something to be expected: as has long been observed, the sound of H in these dialects became so close that when the Ionic alphabet was introduced, it was represented by EI, as here.<sup>21</sup> Note also the use of the singular *Θήβα*, instead of plural *Θήβαι*, a poetic form already extant in the *Iliad*.<sup>22</sup>

Line 4: This verse is metrically rough.<sup>23</sup> We should probably understand that a spondee is replacing the second dactyl, which is permissible in the first hemiepes. Moreover, we observe *brevis in longo* in the case of the omikron, combined with hiatus between the first and second hemiepes, something that is canonically avoided, although exceptions in Theognidean poetry have long been observed.<sup>24</sup> The second hemiepes, *ἄθλα κράτιστ' ἀρετᾶς* is readily

17 The classic analysis is that of Vottéro 1995, who at p. 93 collects the relevant evidence, and shows that the earliest dative form in upsilon dates to the 4th century BC. The inscription under consideration appears to push this date back by at least a century, as we will see below.

18 Hom. *Od.* 11.264–265: ... ἐπεὶ οὐ μὲν ἀπύργωτόν γ' ἐδύναντο | ναίεμεν εὐρύχορον Θήβην, etc.

19 Pind. *Pyth.* 4.72–73: θέσφατον ἦν Περίαν | ἐξ ἀγαυῶν Αἰολιδᾶν *θανέμεν* χεῖ|ρῆσσι νῆ βουλαῖς ἀκνάμπτοις (“It was fated that Pelias would perish because of the proud Aiolidai, at their hands or through their inflexible counsels”; tr. Race 1997a).

20 A famous Attic example, with similar phraseology, is the epigram for Tetichos, *CEG* 13: [εἴτε ἀστό]ς τις ἀνὴρ εἴτε χσένος | ἄλοθεν ἐλθόν : Τέτιχον οἰκτῖρα]ς ἀνδρ' ἀγαθὸν παρίτο, : ἐν πολέμοι | φθίμενον, νεαρὰν ἠέβεν ὀλέσαντα.

21 Buck 1955, p. 25.

22 For instance, Hom. *Il.* 4.406: ἡμεῖς καὶ Θήβης ἔδος εἶλομεν ἑπταπύλοιο; cf. Ebeling 1885, s.vv. *Θήβαι* and *Θήβη*.

23 I can do nothing with the two letters NA in the beginning of B, L.4.

24 West 1982, pp. 45–46 with n. 43 (where the author notes hiatus and *brevis in longo* in the metrical inscription *CEG* 407 from Rhamnous); Gentili and Lomiento 2007, pp. 266–267.

reminiscent of a passage from the end of Thucydides' famous *Funeral Oration*: Εἴρηται καὶ ἐμοὶ λόγῳ κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὅσα εἶχον πρόσφορα, καὶ ἔργῳ οἱ θαπτόμενοι τὰ μὲν ἤδη κεκόσμηνται, τὰ δὲ αὐτῶν τοὺς παιδᾶς τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε δημοσίᾳ ἢ πόλις μέχρις ἡβῆς θρέψει, ὠφέλιμον στέφανον τοῖσδέ τε καὶ τοῦς λειπομένοις τῶν τοιῶνδε ἀγῶνων προτιθεῖσα· ἄθλα γὰρ οἷς κείται ἀρετῆς μέγιστα, τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἄνδρες ἄριστοι πολιτεύουσιν.<sup>25</sup> In his *Commentary on Thucydides*, Simon Hornblower aptly noted: "Thucydides' use of these words raises the question of a very curious omission in the whole section: a very well-attested part of the public funeral was an *epitaphios agon* or contest, for which see Vanderpool, *Archaeologikon Deltion* 24A (1969) ... Thucydides' omission of the whole topic is deliberate and (in view of the choice of words in the present passage) defiant".<sup>26</sup> I think that the language of the new epigram also refers to contests of this sort.

I start with the Karabournaki bronze vessel, first properly published by Eugene Vanderpool in the article cited by Hornblower.<sup>27</sup> This is one of three bronze vessels that have been identified as prizes for the funeral contests held in Attica in memory of Athenian casualties.<sup>28</sup> The unproblematic identification is based on the inscription: Ἀθηναῖοι ἄθλα(α) (ἐ)πὶ τοῖς ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ: "The Athenians (offer these) prizes for those who died in war." Now, the form of the vessel is readily reminiscent of a hydria on display in the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence: it does not take much archaeological training to see that the two vessels are similar in shape. The provenance of the Providence hydria, which is dated to ca. 480–470 BC, is unknown, but the inscription on the rim is Boeotian and its content has never left any doubts about where the vessel was manufactured: τὸν Θέβαις ἀΐθλον.<sup>29</sup> But which games?

25 Thuc. 2.46. S. Lattimore translates: "In words, as much as I in my turn could say suitably in accordance with the custom has been said, and in deed, these have been honored in burial now, and from this time the city will rear their sons at public expense until they are of age, conferring on both the dead and their survivors a beneficial crown for such contests as these. For it is among those who establish the greatest prizes for courage that men are the best citizens".

26 Hornblower 1991, p. 315. A good synopsis of the Athenian ἀγῶν ἐπιτάφιος can be found in Pritchett 1985, pp. 106–124.

27 Vanderpool 1969, pp. 3–5, no. 3; now *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 525.

28 The three inscriptions are published in the corpus as *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 523, 524, and 525.

29 The inscription can be found in Jeffery 1990, p. 95, no. 16; pl. 9. For the hydria itself see Jacobsthal 1933, pp. 21–22 with figs. 10–11, who, however, failed to describe the vessel as a prize for funeral games. Robinson 1942, pp. 180–182 with figs. 12–13, gives a detailed description of the vessel and the accompanying inscription but makes no attempt at identifying the games in question. For detailed linguistic discussion of this and other similar texts, see Loeschhorn 2007, pp. 326–335.

Here again Pindar may be of some help. Pindar's 4th *Isthmian* gives an account of a festival held in honor of Herakles: καὶ δεύτερον ἄμαρ ἐτείων τέρμ' ἀέθλων γίνεταί, ἰσχύος ἔργον.<sup>30</sup> Of particular interest for our discussion is the reference to the ἀέθλα. The games were held not only to honor Herakles but also his descendants; indeed, the scholiast to Pindar explicitly mentions the ἐπιτάφιοι ἀγῶνες.<sup>31</sup> The games held at Marathon to honor the dead of the homonymous battle are likely to have been organized in the framework of a Herakleian festival as well.<sup>32</sup> One wonders whether the Pindaric games are precisely the contests at which the Providence hydria was given as a prize.

Strangely, the word ἀθλα does not feature prominently in early epigrams. One notable exception is the occurrence of the term, in the same dialectal form αἰθλα, in a Boeotian dedicatory inscription from Delphi that commemorates non-public *funeral games*.<sup>33</sup> Thus, even though my hypothesis falls short of a full proof, an array of features—the inscribed Theban hydria, its striking resemblance to the Athenian hydria from Karabournaki, and the Boeotian dedication from Delphi—seem to strengthen the theory that funeral contests were held in Thebes. The allusions in line 4 of the new funerary epigram would further appear to corroborate the whole hypothesis. In any case, a restoration such as θέντο ἀθλα κράτιστ' ἀρετάς, “they set the best prizes of virtue”,<sup>34</sup> though somewhat metrically inelegant, probably renders the general tenor.<sup>35</sup>

As for the peculiarity of the double inscribing of the epitaph, there are two explanations worth probing: either the two versions were written at approximately the same time; or one of the two texts, presumably the one in the Ionic script, was written later. I withhold a definite answer for the time being, although I note that *a priori* the second explanation seems more plausible.

Regarding the crux of the approximate date, given that the stele was not found *in situ*, we must rely primarily on the lettering, which is admittedly not

30 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.68–69: “And on the second day is the conclusion of the annual games, the labor of strength” (tr. Race 1997b).

31 Schol. Pind., *Isthm.* 4.104b: μετὰ ταῦτα Ἡρακλῆς ἀνεῖλε τοὺς ἐκ Μεγάρων παῖδας κατὰ ταύτας τὰς πύλας, ἐφ' αἷς κατ' ἔτος Θηβαῖοι ἐναγίζουσι τε τοῖς παισὶ καὶ ἀγῶνας ἐπιταφίους ἀγούσιν (“Afterwards, Herakles killed the sons of Megara at these gates, at which every year the Thebans offer sacrifices to her sons and hold funeral contests”).

32 Koumanoudes 1978, pp. 237–238; Matthaiou 2003, pp. 190–202.

33 *CEG* 444 (550 BC?) Λαφόσφορς μ' ἐπὶ παιδὶ ἐφοῖ αἰθλα ἔδοκε Εὐθ[ύ]μοι.

34 The theory that ἔντο is the third person plural of the present imperative of εἶμί, i.e. ὄντων (cf. C.D. Buck 1955, pp. 128 and 152) should be rejected because it violates Attic syntax.

35 I would like to emphasize that I consider this line to be an allusion to, not an actual representation of, the funeral games held in Thebes.

the safest guide. I offer here the following observations on individual letters in text A:

- Alpha is unusually curved.
- Beta has two semi-circular loops, of which the upper one is slightly larger.
- The ‘Latin type’ delta is almost an isosceles triangle.
- Epsilon is an important letter: it is tailed: its vertical stretches beyond the lower horizontal. Furthermore, its three parallel strokes all lean downwards.
- The tail of rho is tiny, almost infinitesimal.
- Sigma is of the three-bar type.
- Upsilon is another interesting letter-form, consisting as it does of a vertical stroke and an upwards slanting stroke to the right of the vertical. As Jeffery observed in her *Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, this early form persists into the second quarter of the 5th century but it disappears afterwards.<sup>36</sup> This would give us ca. 450 BC as the *terminus ante quem* for the first epigram.

All in all, the lettering looks very similar to that of a recently published small, inscribed column, which on historical grounds can be securely dated to 506 BC.<sup>37</sup> The lettering of the funerary stele is, if not contemporary, then only slightly later. One would probably not err in dating it to the late 6th or the early 5th century BC. This date tallies well with the pattern emerging from the recent quantitative analysis of sepulchral and dedicatory epigrams by Ewen Bowie, who has demonstrated that poems consisting of two elegiac distichs peaked for the first time in the first quarter of the 5th century BC.<sup>38</sup>

The second text is equally if not more difficult to date. Its lettering is neat, without any superfluous decorative elements. The rho lacks a tail; sigmas are of the four-bar type. We have seen that EI has been used to render eta in line 3. On the other hand, the dative in line 3 has an omikron instead of an omega. Similar forms appear in the Boeotian (i.e. Theban) decree in honor of a Carthaginian, *IG VII 2407*, which dates to the 360s.<sup>39</sup> The question of the introduction of the

36 Jeffery 1990, pp. 90–91.

37 Aravantinos 2006 (= *SEG LVI 521*); cf. Berti 2010. Krentz 2007, pp. 73–79, would associate *SEG LVI 521* with the conflict between the Athenians and the Aiginetans in 490 BC, whereas Figueira 2010, pp. 200–201, with the events of 480–79 BC. I prefer Aravantinos’ interpretation.

38 See E. Bowie 2010, pp. 313–384, esp. the table “Lengths of verse inscriptions 750–400 BC” at 378–379, with the following results: 575–550 BC, one funerary elegiac poem of two distichs; 550–525 BC, none; 525–500 BC, one example; 500–475: seven examples.

39 Rhodes and Osborne 2003, no. 43.

Ionic alphabet to Boeotia has long troubled scholars. Good recent work by Guy Vottéro has shown that the 370s—after the liberation of Thebes and before the battle of Leuktra—seems to be the crucial period. A date around that time for the re-inscribed epigram also looks epigraphically tenable.<sup>40</sup>

If the proposed chronological framework is right, we need to find an appropriate historical event for the death of the men commemorated in the epigram. The military events of 506 BC present one possibility; these must have taken their toll on the Theban army. Another possibility, and one that I consider more likely, is the Persian Wars.<sup>41</sup> One could even think of the Thebans who fell at the battle of Plataea or in the ensuing siege of their city, soldiers who almost certainly fought for the very existence of their own fatherland, *πατριδος πέρι Θέβας*.<sup>42</sup> If so, the new epigram permits us a unique, albeit indirect, glimpse into a critical moment of the Graeco-Persian Wars from the perspective of medizing Greeks. But of course some other context, such as the battle of Thermopylae, in which Thebans also fought in very peculiar circumstances,<sup>43</sup> cannot be excluded. Conversely, given that the spelling variant *πολέμυ* (text A, line 2) could drag the date even lower, I would not categorically exclude a later occasion, such as the battle of Tanagra (458 or 457), which famously left a rich epigraphic legacy.<sup>44</sup>

On the assumption that the monument is private, the re-inscribing could similarly have been a private affair, a case of a descendant visiting his ancestral tombs more than a century or so after their construction and embellishing the old monument. In doing so, the unknown descendant might have imitated the

40 Vottéro 1996; cf. Iversen 2010, pp. 262–263, who does not accept Vottéro's theory that a Theban decree sanctioned the alphabetic reform; Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012, pp. 243–244, 248–249, whose text shows that as late as 377–6 BC, the epichoric script was in use in public documents in Thebes.

41 Aravantinos 2001–2004 [2011], p. 142, has briefly suggested a military encounter between Thebans and Athenians in the period between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War.

42 The Thebans lost 300 men at Plataea, as we know from Hdt. 9.67, with the useful note of Flower and Marincola 2002, p. 224, who rightly observe that this passage suggests there was also a non-medizing party in Thebes (see note 16 above on Pindar's equally dramatic description of Theban losses in the same battle). The victorious Greek troops went on to lay a long siege to Thebes: the Theban resistance is narrated by Herodotus (9.86–88), on which Demand 1982, p. 25, bluntly observes: "The Thebans ... were in effect fighting on their own territory and for their own survival".

43 See R.J. Buck 1979, pp. 130–133; Demand 1982, pp. 21–22.

44 See Papazarkadas and Sourlas 2012, esp. pp. 586–587 and 603–604.

alphabetic reform already introduced by the state.<sup>45</sup> Or perhaps the battle that had cost the lives of the two unknown men had become once more topical. A re-inscription would then have aimed at repackaging the old patriotic message for a new audience.

Assuming however that it was part of a public memorial, we are entitled to see a state initiative behind the re-inscribing. Again topicality could provide the appropriate interpretative framework. In a recent article Nino Luraghi has strongly, and probably rightly, argued that local variants of scripts were deliberate efforts on behalf of political entities to create and/or reinforce ethnic and political identities.<sup>46</sup> In fact, this hypothesis makes it more likely that the decision to re-inscribe the epigram was a state initiative. This in turn would reinforce an interpretation of the stele as a public monument. The poor state of preservation does not permit us to be more affirmative. Morphologically, the four-line epigram on a free-standing stele is reminiscent of a recently published epigram commemorating the Athenian casualties at Marathon.<sup>47</sup> On this interpretation, it would appear that public funerals and monuments of war casualties were not an Athenian peculiarity but that similar developments were taking place in Thebes at around the same time.

## II. Inscribed Dedication

Fragment of a tapering, unfluted column drum made of micaceous poros, found in March 2005 at a rescue excavation at the building plot of E. Bovalis, on 17 Amphionos Street, in the southeastern part of modern Thebes.<sup>48</sup> It is now stored in the epigraphic collection of the Museum of Thebes (Bakas courtyard), inv. no. 40993. Dimensions: height: 0.41 m.; diameter 0.31 m.; letter height: 0.018–0.02 m. (side A), and 0.025 m. (side B), but O=0.02 m. (Fig. 3, 4, and 5)

45 See note 40, and Papazarkadas *forthcoming*.

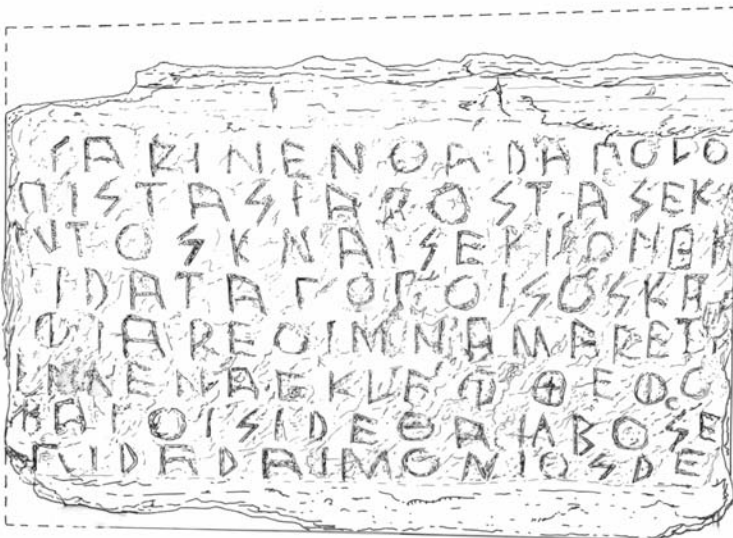
46 N. Luraghi 2010.

47 *Editio princeps* by Steinhauer 2004–2009 (*SEG* LIV 430). Keesling 2012, p. 145, has claimed that the Marathon epigram, “inscribed in smaller letters and squeezed between the tribal heading and the list, appears to be an afterthought, though possibly inscribed by the same hand as the list”. I am not so sure about this, though the Marathon stele and the Boeotian stele under consideration are different in that the latter includes no list of names.

48 Aravantinos 2001–2004 [2011], pp. 137–138, notes that the dig was begun by the 9th Ephorate and concluded by the 1st Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities. The column drum was found built into the Byzantine wall, no. 13.



FIGURE 3 *Inscribed column inv. no. 40993, side A; photo O. Kourakis*



31/7/2012

Ασπανάς Γεωργιάδης

FIGURE 4 *Inscribed column inv. no. 40993, side A; drawing by G. Aslanis based on E. Sioumpara's drawing of fig. 7*





FIGURE 5 *Inscribed column inv. no. 40993, side B; photo O. Kourakis*

The column drum is broken on its upper part, but for textual reasons (see below) there cannot be more than a centimeter or two missing. It is there, on the broken upper part, that we encounter the first enigmatic feature of the monument, for on that section of the column there is a virtually unparalleled cruciform orifice (Fig. 6 and 7).<sup>49</sup>

Each one of its antennae is of equal depth and almost equal length, 0.01 and 0.02 m. respectively. Nevertheless, the center of the cross, where the antennae intersect, is not as deep as the antennae themselves. To the best of my knowledge, there is no known clamp orifice of this form. A couple of experienced archaeologists tentatively suggested that this might be a lewis-hole for lifting the stone; if so, there is no real parallel. Another hypothesis, the most likely in my view, is that the orifice was used for the insertion of some object—probably, the capital. The other end of the column drum is hewn. It is hard to tell whether this work is original or secondary. As already mentioned, the column drum was found built into a Byzantine wall.

However, it is the inscription, or rather the inscriptions, that immediately catch one's eye. On the one side—for the sake of convenience, I will call it side A—one can see eight lines of text, written in Boeotian script, running along the long axis of the column. The state of preservation of the text on the other side—side B—shows greater deterioration than that on side A. What is more, it has been inscribed perpendicular to the vertical axis of the stone. Strikingly, on this side the script is Ionic.<sup>50</sup>

I begin with a description of the lettering of side A. Certain letters have a distinctive squarish appearance. This is especially true of alpha but also of delta. Sigma is of the three-bar type. Phi consists of an encircled vertical. Theta is in the form of an encircled cross. At the end of line 3 there is the symbol for the aspirate, basically a rectangle with a horizontal crossbar. Although there are rather few comparanda, the lettering of the new *kioniskos* appears to be quite similar to that of an inscribed dedicatory column from the Boeotian shrine of Apollo at Ptoion, which is traditionally dated to the late 6th century BC.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the two monuments have much in common—the same form,<sup>52</sup> same

49 I am grateful to Dr. Sioumpara for the drawing.

50 According to Aravantinos 2001–2004 [2011], p. 138, the lettering on this side suggests a date in the 4th or the 3rd century BC. The former date has to be preferred, as I will argue below.

51 *CEG* 336: Δάσον και Φα[νι]ας Σιζιός τ' Ε[ὐ]γειτίχο ηυ[ιοί], Πτόι' Ἀπολοῖν ἄν[α]χς, σο[ι] μ' ἀνέθεκε χ[[α]]ρίν. See Ducat 1971, pp. 392–393, no. 242, with pl. 133–134; cf. Vottéro 2002, p. 80, no. 15.

52 According to Ducat *op. cit.* *ibid.*, the column from Ptoion (“colonne lisse”) has an identical diameter of 0.31 m. at the top, and is made of “pôros jaune grisâtre, à grain fin”.



FIGURE 6 *The orifice of the column*

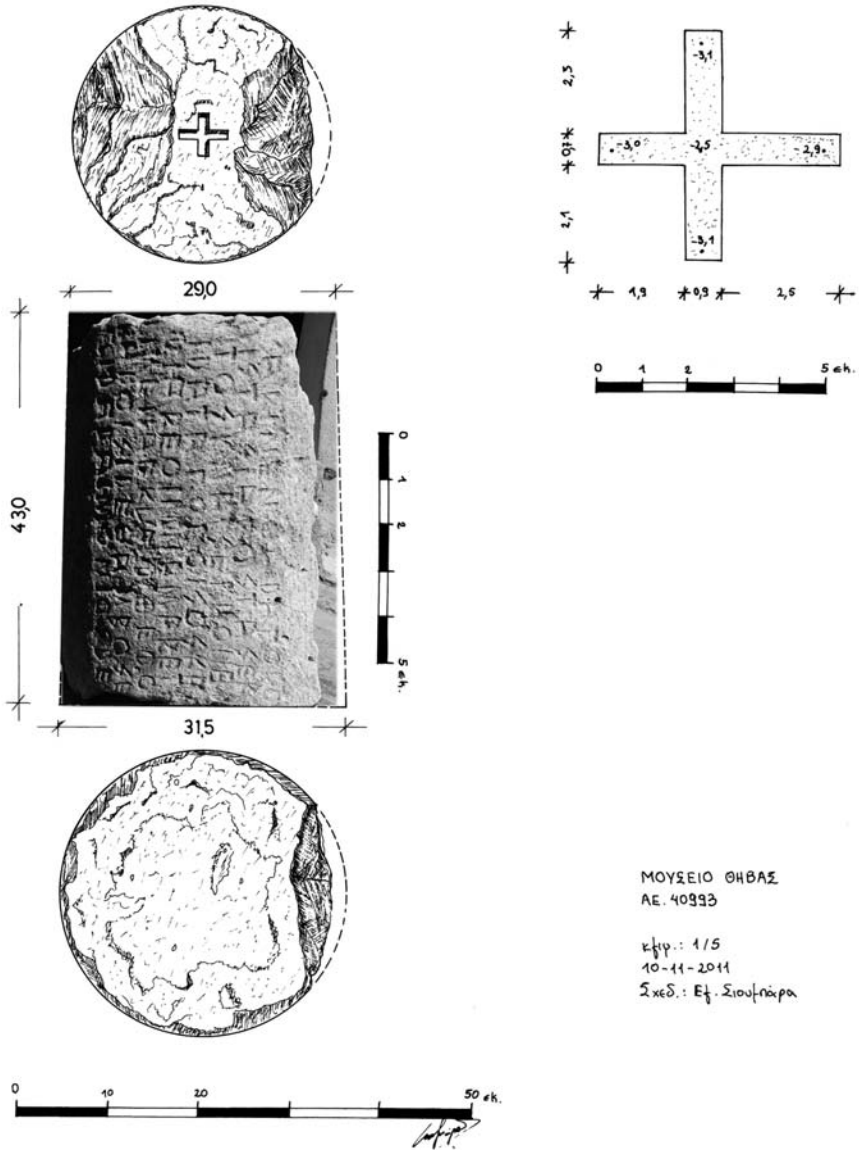


FIGURE 7 The orifice; drawing by Dr. E. Sioumpara

phraseology, and even similar spelling conventions. If so, our *kioniskos* could equally well date to the late 6th–early 5th century BC.

Once we turn the column around, however, the new text in the Ionic script is revealed. The surface of the stone is badly eroded and the text hardly legible. I invested dozens of hours of autopsy at the archaeological Museum of

Thebes, in the good company of Y. Kalliontzis, yet for a long period of time the defective text defied interpretation and at times the situation seemed hopeless. Comparative study of the two texts turned out to be more fruitful. In order to demonstrate the difficulties I experienced while examining and trying to understand this double text, I provide majuscule transcripts of the two texts next to one other.

Text A (Boeotian)	Text B (Ionic)
ἌRINEN⊕ADAPOLO	MA
PICTAICTARROCTAICEK	CTAICEKAT
NTOCYNNAICEYRONB	MENOEMANTOC
4 IDATAIQ.OICOCKA	4 CEYRONNYPIOTA
ΦIAREOIMNAMARET	OIOΦAENNAN
MENAKLEΦ⊕EΦO	ΔATANGPOI
BAIOCIDE⊕AMBOCE	QNAΓAAM
8 PIDADAIMONIOCDE	8 APEQI

Comparison of the two reveals considerable overlap in places. Thus we read CTICEK in text A, l. 2, and CTAICEK in text B, l. 2; NTOC in text A, l. 3 and NTOC in text B, l. 3; CEYRONB in text A, l. 3, and CEYRON in text B, l. 4;<sup>53</sup> possibly REOI in text A l. 5, and PEQI in text B, l. 8; and finally the purportedly enigmatic DATAIQ.OI in the Boeotian text, l. 4 and ΔATANGPOI in the Ionic text, l. 6. In this case the texts are not identical but suspiciously similar. Overall, the similarities between the two texts are so extensive that, quite simply, they cannot be dismissed as mere coincidence. Just as in the case of the funerary epigram discussed earlier in this chapter, it seems that an early text in the epichoric alphabet was re-inscribed at some point in a different script (and in a different orientation). And in this case as well there can be no doubt that the new script is Ionic, probably of the early or mid fourth century BC.

But back to the text proper. The diction is that of a dedication.<sup>54</sup> The form of the monument similarly suggests a dedication. One is readily reminded of the inscribed poros columns from the shrine of Apollo at Ptoion, mentioned above. The poem is elegiac, consisting of four couplets of dactylic hexameters

53 Here omikron is replaced by omega, whereas the aspirate of the Boeotian text nicely corresponds to the underlying aspirate of the upsilon of the Ionic text.

54 Aravantinos 2001–2004 [2011], pp. 137–138 thought of a funerary epigram by virtue of the few words read at the time, especially  $\mu\nu\alpha\mu\alpha$  in line 5.

and pentameters. Each line of the Boeotian text corresponds to a verse line. Clearly the lost part of the poem continued on a second column drum. The original monument would have been much larger, at least a meter high, if not higher.

I offer the following provisional minuscule transcription, basically a composite primarily based on the better preserved Boeotian script version. I have underlined the overlapping sections.

- [σοί] χάριν ἐνθάδ', Ἄπολλο[ν, υ | - υ | - υ | - υ]  
 [κέ]πιστάς ἰαροῦ στᾶσε κατ[ευχσά]μενος  
 [μα]ντοσύναις εὐρόν ἠυπὸ ΤΑ[...] ΟΙΟ φανερὰν  
 4 [ἀσπ]ἰδα τὰγ Ὀροῖσος κα[λφ]ὸν ἄγαλ[μα θέτο?]  
 [Ἄμ.]φιαρέοι μνάμ' ἄρετ[ᾶς τε πάθας τε υ | - υ]  
 [. .]μεν ἄ ἐκλέφθε ΦΟ[υ | - υ | υ]  
 [Θε]βαίοισι δὲ θάμβος Ε[ - υ | - υ | - υ]  
 8 [. .]πιδα δαιμονίος || ΔΕ[υ | - υ | υ]

Lines 1–2: For this invocation of Apollo, cf. *CEG* 336 (note 51 above). Given the context, this must be Apollo Ismenios, whose shrine, the Ismenion, was excavated by Keramopoulos in the early 20th century and has been under investigation by Bucknell University since 2011.<sup>55</sup> It is no doubt the same shrine that is mentioned in line 2 as having been supervised by someone, presumably the dedicant. His name, possibly along with some other title, would have appeared at the end of the first verse.<sup>56</sup> For the unusual syntax of ἐπίστημι + genitive (instead of dative), cf. Hdt. 7.117: ἐν Ἀκάνθῳ δὲ ἐόντος Ξέρξεω συνήνικε ὑπὸ νούσου ἀποθανεῖν τὸν ἐπεστεῶτα τῆς διώρυχος Ἄρταχαίην,<sup>57</sup> and Eur. *Andr.* 1098, ὅσοι θεοῦ χρημάτων ἐφέστασαν. The syntax is probably influenced by that of the cognate ἐπιστατέω, which normally takes the genitive; cf. Hdt. 7.22, Βουβάρης δὲ ὁ Μεγαβάζου καὶ Ἄρταχαίης ὁ Ἄρταίου ἄνδρες Πέρσαι ἐπεστάτεον τοῦ ἔργου. For the crasis in [κέ]πιστάς cf. *SEG* LVI 521, l. 2, ἠελόντες κέλευσῖνα.

Combining the two versions, I provisionally put forward the restoration κατ[ευχσά]μενος (having vowed) for the end of the first pentameter.<sup>58</sup> The par-

55 On the site see Keramopoulos 1917, pp. 33–98; Symeonoglou 1985, pp. 132–133, 236–239; Faraklas 1996, pp. 52–57.

56 Surely the place where the two letters MA of the Ionic version belong, though it is impossible to be more precise.

57 See Powell 1938, s.v. ἐπίστημι 2 (intrans.): “be in charge”.

58 See examples cited by Powell 1938, s.v. κατεύχομαι.

ticiples brings us back to the *χάρις* (favor) of line 1, for which a nice comparandum is offered, yet again, by *CEG* 336, Πτόι' Ἄπολο|ν ἄν[α]χς, σο[ι μ'] ἀνέθεκε χ[[α]]ρίν. The theme of *charis* has recently been superbly analyzed by Joseph Day, who, commenting on the specific case of *CEG* 336, observed that “[w]hen *charis* is given to the god, it is (a token of) gratitude or a counter-favor for the god’s earlier help.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the participle κατ[ευχσά]μενος places the *charis* of line 1 in a reciprocal context, whose parameters are only revealed in the following verse.

Line 3: The term *μαντοσύνας* firmly places the dedication within the context of the Ismenion: we should not forget that Apollo’s Theban shrine was oracular.<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, in its only attestation in the Pindaric corpus, the term *μαντοσύνα* refers to Apollo.<sup>61</sup> Both the Boeotian and the Ionic texts contain the aorist participle *εὐρών*: someone, presumably the dedicant, had been able to find something that was *φαιάν*, shining, radiant.<sup>62</sup> This poetic form of *φαινώς* is a favorite of Pindar: with 11 attestations,<sup>63</sup> the Pindaric corpus provides by far the greatest density of the term’s use in Greek literature, yet another good reminder that the lapidary poetry I deal with in this chapter was never far away from the high poetry composed by the local masters of the time. For the disappearance and rediscovery of Croesus’ dedication, see my notes below on line 6. I do not know how exactly to interpret the letters before *φαιάν*, but they may well belong to an epic genitive, as in *CEG* 110 from Boeotian Haliartos: Καλλία | Αἰγίθιοιο | τὸ δ’ εὖ πρᾶσ’, [ὄ] | παροδῶτα. If so, the genitive may be that of place name, standing as the object of the preposition *ὑπό*.<sup>64</sup>

Lines 4–5. Initially a *crux*, these are the most exciting lines of the epigram, and they should be analyzed in conjunction with information transmitted to us by Herodotus.

I start with the *nomen sacrum* Ἀμφιαρέοι in line 5. Note that from a metrical point of view Ἀμφιαρέοι should stand here for Ἀμφιαρήω, a spelling variant

59 Day 2010, p. 239.

60 Evidence and treatment in Schachter 1981, pp. 77–85, esp. 81–82.

61 Pind. *Ol.* 6.63–66: ἴκοντο δ’ ὑψηλοῖο πέ|τραι ἀλίβιατον Κρονίου ἔνθα οἱ ὤπασε θησαυρὸν δίδυμον μαντοσύνας.

62 I assume simplification of the geminate consonant, as in Ἄπολο[ν] of line 1.

63 See Slater 1969, s.v. *φαινώς*.

64 This, admittedly, would be a rather rare, albeit not unprecedented, use of *ὑπό* with genitive (instead of dative) to express static position *under*: see S. Luraghi 2003, pp. 225, 230–231. In fact, the examples collected by Cooper 2002, p. 2830 show that Pindar—yet again—had a penchant for this construction.

known from Herodotus 1.46, and, most importantly, from Pindar.<sup>65</sup> Coming after the invocation of Apollo in line 1, this is an extraordinary reference to another god, Amphiaraos, yet it should come as no surprise to the student of Herodotus, for it is from Herodotus that classical philologists and historians have long known of the connection between Amphiaraos and Apollo Ismenios in Thebes. The context is the famous testing of the credibility of the major Greek oracles by the Lydian King Croesus, who was satisfied not only with the answer he had received from the Delphian Apollo but also with that from Amphiaraos.<sup>66</sup> “And to Amphiaraus”, Herodotus relates, “of whose courage and fate Croesus had heard, he dedicated a shield made entirely of gold and a spear all of solid gold, point and shaft alike. Both of these were until my time at Thebes, in the Theban temple of Ismenian Apollo.” (τῷ δὲ Ἀμφιάρεω, πυθόμενος αὐτοῦ τὴν τε ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν πάθην, ἀνέθηκε σάκος τε χρύσειον πᾶν ὁμοίως καὶ αἰχμὴν στερεὴν πᾶσαν χρυσεῆν, τὸ ξυστὸν τῆσι λόγχῃσι ἐὼν ὁμοίως χρύσειον· τὰ ἔτι καὶ ἀμφοτέρω ἐς ἐμὲ ἦν κείμενα ἐν Θήβῃσι, καὶ Θηβέων ἐν τῷ νηῷ τοῦ Ἰσμηνίου Ἀπόλλωνος.)<sup>67</sup>

Leaving aside the question of where Amphiaraos’ oracular shrine was located (Oropos or some place near Thebes),<sup>68</sup> the credibility of Herodotus has often been questioned.<sup>69</sup> The new epigram appears to vindicate the Halicarnassian historian, proving that there was indeed a connection between Apollo Ismenios and Amphiaraos at Thebes.

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- 65 See Slater 1969, s.v. Ἀμφιάροος. In the last line of the Ionic text, the stone-cutter appears to have inscribed ΑΡΕΩΙ, which most likely means that he was thinking of [Ἀμφι]ἄρεωι. This is presumably due to the fact that the Attic-declension form Ἀμφιάρεωσ had already prevailed by the time of the re-inscribing of the text. A cursory search on the TLG will immediately confirm the popularity of the Attic form even in non-Attic writers.
- 66 See also Hdt. 1.46: μετὰ ὧν τὴν διάνοιαν ταύτην αὐτίκα ἀπεπειράτο τῶν μαντηῶν τῶν τε ἐν Ἑλλήσιν ... οἱ δὲ τινες ἐπέμποντο παρά τε Ἀμφιάροον καὶ παρά Τροφώνιον ...; idem 1.49: τὰ μὲν δὴ ἐκ Δελφῶν οὕτω τῷ Κροίσῳ ἐχρήσθη, κατὰ δὲ τὴν Ἀμφιάρεω τοῦ μαντηίου ἀπόκρισιν οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν, ὅ τι τοῖσι Λυδοῖσι ἔχρησε ποιήσασι περὶ τὸ ἱρόν τὰ νομιζόμενα (οὐ γὰρ ὧν οὐδὲ τοῦτο λέγεται) ἄλλο γε ἢ ὅτι καὶ τοῦτον ἐνόμισε μαντήιον ἀψευδὲς κεκτῆσθαι.
- 67 Hdt. 1.52 (tr. A.D. Godley). The most detailed analysis of the passage known to me, at least as concerns the dedications *per se*, is that by Buxton 2002, pp. 121–128.
- 68 See Schachter 1981, pp. 21–23, for a convenient collection of theories down to 1981. Schachter himself is currently the leading exponent of the idea of a single Amphiareion located at Oropos: see also Schachter 1989, pp. 76–77. Asheri, in Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, p. 110, thought that there were two separate shrines.
- 69 One of the finest connoisseurs of Boeotian religion, Schachter 1981, p. 21, note 4, wondered whether “... the story of Kroisos’ dedication to Amphiaraos was invented by Herodotos’ Theban hosts”, which is of course not the same as doubting the historian’s integrity.



I return to line 4, where I have already observed that the overlap between the Boeotian and the Ionic text is striking. Yet at this point the Boeotian text, better preserved though it is, did not seem to make sense, or, rather, it defied decipherment for a long time. It all came together, however, after a close reading of Herodotus 1.52, where the historian unequivocally states that the dedication by Croesus to Amphiaraios—a golden spear and a golden shield (σάκος)—were made in recognition of Amphiaraios' (military) valor and suffering, ἀρετή and πάθη.<sup>70</sup> In line 5 of the epigram we learn that something was given to Amphiaraios μνάμ' ἀρετᾶς, a rather infrequent albeit not unique collocation for dedicatory poetry,<sup>71</sup> and what is more, one strongly reminiscent of the Herodotean passage. The temptation was hard to resist, and once it became clear that what at first sight appeared to be an omikron was in fact a koppa, I was able to find the solution that makes sense in terms of meter and content:<sup>72</sup> the σάκος χρύσειον of Herodotus' account must be the φαινάν [ἀσπ]ίδα of the new epigram.<sup>73</sup> Although an ἀσπίς and a σάκος might have been initially typologically different, poets did not adhere to such technical distinctions,<sup>74</sup> and the composer of the Theban epigram may not have bothered with such subtleties either.

One is further tempted to restore the whole Herodotean collocation τὴν τε ἀρετὴν καὶ τὴν πάθη; metrical considerations have prompted me to restore the slightly peculiar ἀρετ[ᾶς τε πάθας τε] in line 5.<sup>75</sup> It is noteworthy that the

70 For a brief analysis of this passage, see Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, p. 113.

71 For another Boeotian dedicatory inscription containing the term μνάμα, see *CEG* 332 (ca. 450–400 BC): εὐχὰν ἐκκτελέσαντι Διονύσοι Νεομέδεις | ἔργον ἀντ' ἀγαθὸν μνάμ' ἀνέθεκε τόδε. Day 2010, pp. 183–187, has recently reaffirmed that “[e]pigrams show that display and piety were not in opposition, that *mnema* function was compatible with *agalma* function”. Needless to say, the new Theban epigram proves this point beyond any reasonable doubt.

72 The possibility that the inscription under consideration may be related to information transmitted by Herodotus first arose during a long SKYPE discussion I had with my colleague and friend Peter Thonemann. At the time of the Berkeley conference, while I recognized that the name of Croesus ought to be read in this line, I had to resort to some linguistic acrobatics. Reading a koppa was Prof. Knoefler's ingenious suggestion at the Berkeley symposium. Subsequent autopsy of the stone showed the tiny tail of a koppa, thus confirming the proposed reading.

73 For the collocation cf. Hom. *Il.* 22.96–97: ὦς Ἐκτωρ ἄσβεστον ἔχων μένος οὐχ ὑπεχώρει, | πύργῳ ἔπι προὔχοντι φαινήν ἀσπίδ' ἐρείσας.

74 See Buxton 2002, esp. p. 124 with note 356, on Aeschylus' indistinct use of ἀσπίς and σάκος in *The Seven Against Thebes* to denote a round shield.

75 For the double conjunction, cf. *CEG* 11, l. 1, προξενίας ἀρετῆς τε χάριμ προ(γ)όνων τε καὶ αὐτῶ, and *ibid.* 394, ll. 3–4, νικάσας Φισόμακός τε πάχος τε.

feminine form *πάθη* occurs 5 times in the Herodotean oeuvre (including Hdt. 1.52), as opposed to 28 occurrences of the neuter *πάθος*.<sup>76</sup>

Returning once more to line 4: since some form of the word *ἄγαλμα* arguably appears in line 6 of the Ionic text and since the sequence KA is visible at the end of line 4 of the Boeotian text, I provisionally provide the reading *κα[λϜ]ὸν ἄγαλ[μα]*, here for metrical reasons with a *digamma*, for which one can compare the dedication *CEG* 334, ll. 1–2 from Ptoion (ca. 550–525 BCE) *καλϜὸν ἄγαλμα φάνακτι Ϝ[εκαβόλοι Ἀ|πόλωνι:] | [ . .c. 3.]ορίδας ποίφσεέ μ' Ἐχέστρο|ος αὐτὰρ ἔπεμψαν*, etc. Of course, *ἄγαλμα* is the standard way of referring to the dedicated object in the majority of the Greek epigrams.

At the end of the same line, I restore the unaugmented middle *θέτο* for metrical reasons, for which cf. *CEG* 808 (ca. 400 BC?): *τόνδ' ἱατορίας Ἀσκλαπιῶδι Αἰγινάτας | ηυιός με χαγίλλο μνάμ' ἔθετο Ἀνδρόκριτος*.<sup>77</sup>

Line 6: We have here an almost indubitable reference to a certain thing or things (*ἃ* could be the feminine singular of the relative pronoun or the neuter plural in Attic syntax) that had been stolen. This unusual passive aorist form of *κλέπτω*, instead of the canonical second aorist *ἐκλάπην*, is known from Herodotus 5.84: *κλεφθέντων δὲ τῶνδε τῶν ἀγαλμάτων οἱ Ἐπιδαύριοι τοῖσι Ἀθηναίοισι τὰ συνέθεντο οὐκέτι ἐπετέλεον*.

If *μέν* is the particle and *ἃ* is the neuter form of the pronoun then we have a rather unpleasant hiatus.<sup>78</sup> It would therefore be tempting to restore *[αἰχ]μέν ἃ ἐκλέφθε* etc., which would satisfy metrical demands better and bring the new epigram even closer to the Herodotean narrative. The Ionic form *[αἰχ]μέν* instead of the expected Boeotian *[αἰχ]μάν* is slightly disconcerting but not incurable: genre requirements often affect the diction of epigrams, and in fact epigrammatic poetry often displays mixed dialectal forms.<sup>79</sup> More difficulties, however, are raised by the grammar of the restoration *[αἰχ]μέν*, since it would leave us with no connective particle, unless we assume that the grammatical clause started at the end of line 5.

At any rate, it is clear that the unknown “supervisor” of Apollo’s shrine had miraculously discovered the stolen shield of Croesus. This should not come as

76 Powell 1938, s.vv. *πάθη* and *πάθος*.

77 I owe this reference to Dr. Andrej Petrovic (Durham).

78 But see M.L. West 1966, p. 316, noting on Hes. *Theog.* 532: “the hiatus is not in itself suspicious (cf. *h. Ap.* 391 *ταῦτ' ἄρα ὀρμαίνων*)” etc.

79 See, for instance, the surprising (?) appearance of Doric forms in the Attic monument *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 503/4, lapis C: *οὔθαρ δ' ἀπείρο πορτιτρόφο ἄκρον ἔχοντες' / τοῖσιμ πανθαλῆς ὄλβος ἐπιστρέ[[φεται]*, with Petrovic 2007, p. 175.

a surprise since we know from the Dodona tablets that stolen property was one of the concerns for which oracular assistance was requested.<sup>80</sup>

Line 7: Within the well-known μέν-δέ scheme of antithesis, if this is what we have (but see my note on LL. 5–6 above), we should probably discern divine action, the oracular revelation of the stolen object having caused fear or something similar to enemies but astonishment to the Thebans. For metrical reasons, the two letters ΦΟ must belong to a long syllable; accordingly, φόβος should be ruled out, but given the Apolline context some form of Φοῖβος is not impossible. The only alternative, the regional ethnic Φωκεύς, though intriguing, would raise historical implications that cannot possibly be controlled on such frail evidence.

Line 8: ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΣ in the last line can be deciphered in various ways, e.g. it could be nominative singular, accusative plural,<sup>81</sup> or, what I consider to be more likely, an adverb, i.e. δαίμονιος.<sup>82</sup> Before that, [ἄσ]πίδα or [ἐλ]πίδα are the obvious restorations. The two last surviving letters mark the beginning of the second hemiepes of the pentameter and therefore ought to belong to a long syllable, e.g. δε[χσαμένοις]. Perhaps “[the Thebans] having received the shield by divine intervention”? It is possible that others may come up with better ideas.

### Croesus' Dedication: Further Analysis

Scholars have long been perplexed by the presence of Croesus's dedication to Amphiaraios in the shrine of Apollo at Thebes.<sup>83</sup> We can now catch a glimpse of what had happened. At some unspecified point the shield was stolen. It was subsequently recovered, with the oracular help of Apollo Ismenios, by

80 See Lhôte 2006, pp. 247–252; Eidinow 2007, pp. 116–118, who also reports information transmitted to her by the late Professor Christidis that unpublished material mentions stolen sacred property. It goes without saying that Croesus' dedication would have fallen within this last category.

81 I do not believe that we have two separate words here, e.g. δαίμονι ὄς vel sim.

82 CEG 5: τλέμονες, ἡοῖον ἀγῶνα μάχης τελέσαντες ἀέλπ[το] | φσυχᾶς δαίμονιος δλέσατ' ἐμ πολέμοι, etc., where δαίμονιος is taken to be an adverb, translated as “marvelously” by E. Bowie 2010, pp. 369–370.

83 For instance, Vannicelli 2003, p. 341, takes for granted that Hdt. 1.52 refers to a Theban shrine of Amphiaraios. Much earlier, Keramopoulos 1917, p. 266, had been more prudent, suggesting that Croesus' dedications were kept in the Ismenion for security reasons after the demise of the Theban Amphiareion.

the supervisor (i.e., priest?) of Apollo's shrine. Now, we should remember that peculiar story related by Herodotus: the Thebans, we are told, had been asked to choose between having Amphiaraos as an ally and using him as a diviner. They opted for the former, and as a result no Theban was allowed to consult the oracle of Amphiaraos by performing incubation.<sup>84</sup> This would nicely explain why the Thebans made use of Apollo's rather than Amphiaraos' divinatory powers in order to recover a dedication to Amphiaraos himself, which would otherwise appear to have been impossible.

As for the context, some of the foremost experts on Boeotian religion, and most notably Albert Schachter, have long argued that there was only one sanctuary of Amphiaraos, the famous one of Oropos, and that the Thebans simply lost control of it.<sup>85</sup> Once more a theft can easily be construed within the context of the Archaic rivalry between the Thebans and the Athenians for the administration of the Oropian shrine of Amphiaraos. The late 6th/early 5th century lettering of the early text is appropriate to this period. But the rivalry went on well into the 4th century,<sup>86</sup> and this may well explain the re-inscribing of the Boeotian text.<sup>87</sup> An emphatic translation and fresh reading of the late Archaic dedication in the political circumstances of the fourth century could have well served Theban claims on Oropos, the land primarily associated with Amphiaraos. Of course, this interpretation could well stand even if we were to accept that the Theban Amphiareion was different from the famous Oropian shrine.

But the crucial question remains: is the new epigram the one allegedly seen by Herodotus and reported in section 52 of his first book?<sup>88</sup> This was my initial reaction; several factors, however, mitigated that first impression. At some point I even felt inclined to accept that it may be a different text,

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84 Hdt. 8.134, with A.M. Bowie 2007, p. 222.

85 See note 68 above.

86 Knoepfler 1986, pp. 90–93; Hansen 2004, p. 449.

87 After I had finished writing this chapter, Prof. Schachter communicated to me the following thoughts (*per epistulam*): “[As for] why and when the Attic-Ionic transcription was made, I can see two possible occasions (there are probably more): either during the hegemony, when the Thebans seem to have rebuilt at least parts of the sanctuary, or (and I think I like this a little better) after the reconstruction of Thebes, when there was a certain amount of re-erecting of monuments (eg. *CEG* 2.630 and 786)”. I am grateful to him for his second suggestion, which I had not pondered and which, I gladly admit, may well be right.

88 In a classic article, S. West 1985 does not include Hdt. 1.52 in her list of Herodotean inscriptions (at pp. 279–280), no doubt because she did not consider the possibility that an epigraphic document had informed Herodotus' account.

albeit one closely related and actually generated by the dedication mentioned in Herodotus' narrative. In this scenario, the new monument would have stood very close to Croesus' actual dedication, which had been transferred into the shrine of Apollo at Thebes after it had been recovered following its disappearance. One element that dissuaded me from accepting the alternative (and more exciting) interpretation, namely that the new column preserves the very text seen by Herodotus and paraphrased by him, is the use of the term ἀσπίς instead of σάκος: I found this deviation slightly disconcerting though it may not be too damaging. Much depends on whether we can restore αἰχμὲν in the beginning of line 6. In any case, with its long and variegated narrative, the new epigram stands out from the throng of formulaic epigrams that have come to us from the Archaic period.

In her 1985 investigation of the inscribed tripods Herodotus claimed to have seen with his own eyes in the Ismeneion, Stephanie West made the following bold claim: "Autopsy is so much a matter of faith in Herodotean scholarship that it may be thought frivolous or irresponsible to advance the hypothesis that Herodotus has here been misled by hearsay evidence and that we should not believe that he had himself inspected these inscriptions. But there are other passages in his work where it is very hard to accept that he could have seen what he says he saw".<sup>89</sup> The new inscription proves, I think, that Herodotus had indeed visited the Theban Ismeneion. He had possibly seen dedicatory inscriptions in hexameters; he had certainly inspected another inscription, which was in elegiac couplets, and this gave him every right to affirm that Croesus' dedication to Amphiaraos was to be seen in Thebes.

### Epilogue

The two epigrams published here raise an array of intriguing questions, most of which I have attempted to address in my analysis. Both epigrams were initially carved in the epichoric script of Boeotia. Much later they were re-inscribed in the Ionic script, which by the 4th century had become the standard alphabetic system throughout the Greek world. I have already put forward some possible interpretations behind the re-inscribing of each text. My suggestions were text-specific—the two epigrams represent after all different genres—, but one can hardly overlook the epigrams' common provenance from Thebes. Are we then entitled to see a certain cultural mind-set at work in Thebes that would

89 S. West 1985, p. 293.

account for this peculiar epigraphic habit? There are some indications, including unpublished epigraphic material from Thebes, pointing in this direction.

Inevitably, however, readers will warmly embrace the fact that both texts can be classified as “historical inscriptions”. Greek historians are familiar with this term from the standard *Greek Historical Inscriptions* collections that were inaugurated by Hicks in the 19th century,<sup>90</sup> continued by Tod,<sup>91</sup> elevated to archetypal status by Meiggs and Lewis,<sup>92</sup> and are still upheld under the erudite supervision of Rhodes and Osborne.<sup>93</sup> The latter have rightfully pointed out that “[t]here is, of course, a sense in which all inscriptions are historical documents” but justified their choice to continue the venerated epigraphic tradition on the understanding that some texts are intrinsically more important than others. This, I contend, holds true for both inscriptions presented in this article. Epigram no. I should be associated with a battle either of the Persian Wars or of the early *pentekontaetia*. Epigram no. II invites us to read Herodotus yet again, appreciate what he wrote, ponder what he did not, and simply marvel at his account. In other words it casts illuminating sidelight on Greek history.<sup>94</sup>

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90 See Hicks and Hill 1901, an updated edition of the first edition produced by Hicks alone in 1882.

91 Tod 1946–1948.

92 Meiggs and Lewis 1988 (first edition in 1969).

93 Rhodes and Osborne 2003: the two authors are now preparing a new edition of Meiggs and Lewis 1988.

94 A deliberate allusion to M.N. Tod’s famous lectures *Sidelights on Greek History ...* (Tod 1932).

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