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STATUE BASE EPIGRAMS IN HONOR OF A RESTORER FROM EARLY BYZANTINE ATHENS

ERKKI SIRONEN

The present article is intended to serve as a reminder of the need for caution in restoring Greek stone epigrams without consideration for their date, genre and the kind of object on which the text was cut, and to recognize the danger of the first impression leading often to hasty restorations. Today the means of restoring right away from computer-based text *corpora* is available to an ever increasing number of philologists. But, especially in the field of three-dimensional philology, arguments for proposed restorations should always be tested within the frame of phrases possible in more genres than one before including restorations in the text itself.

Werner Peek, recognized by many scholars as the most ingenious epigraphist in restoring Greek metrical inscriptions, interpreted the inscription under study as funerary epigrams.¹ He failed to notice (maybe because he was working from a squeeze) that the inscription was cut on a statue base, more appropriate for honorary or dedicatory inscriptions. Peek

¹ W. Peek, "Epigramme von der Agora", in ΦΟΡΟΣ. Tribute to Benjamin Dean Meritt, ed. by D.W. Bradeen and M.F. McGregor, Locust Valley (N.Y.) 1974, 127, no. 9 (with a reconstructive drawing in fig. 3 on p. 128), photograph in plate XXIV, 1 (so far ignored by the SEG):

[ἐν τεμένει δὲ θεᾶς στ]ῆσεν ἰο[στεφάνου].
[βουλή ταῦτὸ δ' ἔπραξεν ἢ] Ἀρείοιο [πάγοιο],
[πάντων πειθομένη δό]γμασι Κε[κροπιδῶν].

[ἰητῆρα Κράτιππον ἔχει τάφος, ἐσθλὸν [ἀρωγὸν]
[ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξὶν ἐν] ἄστε[ι] τῶιδε γε[γῶτα].
[ἀλλά μιν Ἑρμείας οἱ] ἀρήγ[ονα χ]εῖρα τιταί[νων]
[ἐξ ἐνέρων ἀνάγοι καὶ ἀπ]ὸ χθονὸς αὐθις ἐγείρο[ι].



Agora I-5661

(Photo courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations)

was not only mistaken in his reading of the extant letters but also provided rather imaginative restorations from his own special field, funerary poetry.

He did not bother to establish any kind of date for the epigrams.²

Agora I-5661, found in the Agora Excavations conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.³ It is a large fragment of an inscribed base of Pentelic marble, with a small portion of the smooth inscribed face (parts or traces of six lines in two different hands), part of the rough-picked top and bottom preserved, found in a modern context at the north foot of the Areopagus⁴ (P 22) on February 24, 1939. Three more joining fragments were found in a modern context in the same area on March 13 and 14, 1939. They constitute parts of the bottom of the monument, preserving the smooth inscribed face (parts or traces of four lines) with *cyma reversa* and flat torus moulding below, the rough-picked bottom, and the right side, around which the mouldings carry. They were glued together in June of 1948.

Most of the inscribed face near the lower right edge is preserved, but

² I agree with Peek's observation that the poems may well be contemporaneous, but his argument, "sonst wäre nach dem ersten Epigramm doch auch wohl größerer Zwischenraum gelassen", is weak. During the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period (i.e., from the later third to the end of the sixth century) earlier texts were usually simply cut away. For conspicuous examples of this procedure in Attica, cf. E. Sironen, "Life and Administration of Late Roman Attica in the Light of Public Inscriptions", in *Post-Herulian Athens. Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens A.D. 267-529* (Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens I), ed. by P. Castrén, Helsinki 1994, 31, no. 15 and 51, no. 32: traces of letters from earlier texts are still visible. Another procedure was to use one of the other sides of the base, cf. *ibid.* 26-27, no. 11 and 46, no. 29. In view of these observations it is likely that the epigrams were contemporaneous.

³ I am indebted to John McK. Camp, Field Director of the Agora Excavations, for inviting me in November 1994 to carry out a systematic search for Late Roman and Early Byzantine inscriptions from the Agora, published or not. I thank Homer Thompson and John McK. Camp for granting permission to publish the identified pieces. Furthermore, I wish to thank Judith Binder, Julia Burman, Paavo Castrén, Jaakko Frösén, Arja Karivieri, Heikki Solin and Homer Thompson for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and Eric Ivison for his help at the 21st Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in New York City, where I read a shortened version of this paper, thus gaining a few useful comments by James Crow and Kenneth Holum, among others.

⁴ As Homer Thompson suggested to me (in a letter of September 1995), the piece may be assumed to have been erected in some very public place, perhaps on the Acropolis: a fair number of fragmentary inscriptions, which undoubtedly stood on the Acropolis, have been found on the north slope of the Acropolis and Areopagus.

on the left more than two thirds of the eight lines is lost. Overall measurements: H. 0.685; preserved W. 0.44 (estimated W. 0.75); preserved T. 0.80. LH. (A.) 0.02-0.025 and (B.) 0.016-0.033; interlinear space (A.) 0.008-0.015 and (B.) 0.006-0.023.

A.

[*vacat*]

[-UU-UU-UU-UU] trace of a letter [UU-x]

[? -UU-UU-?στ]ἦσεν ΙΩ[UU-?]

[-UU-UU-UU ἄν]δρείοιο [U-x]

[?-UU-UU- ?ἔρ]γμασι Κε[κροπίν?]

B.

[-UU-UU-UU-]ΩΣ ἐσθλὸν [U-x] 5

[-UU-UU-UU] ἄστ[ε]ῖ τῶιδε γέρ[ηρεν?]

[-UU-UU-U] ἀρηγ[ό]ν[α χ]εῖρα τιταίν[ων?]

[-UU-UU-U ἀπ]ὸ χθο[ν]ὸς ἀῦθις ἔγειρε[ν?]

vacat

Above line 1: if the top moulding was as high as the preserved one at bottom (0.14), the original height of the inscribed face would have measured around 0.405. Since 0.306 of its lower part is preserved, it would follow that about 0.099 from the topmost inscribed face would be missing. Because the average line height in epigram A. is 0.034, the space available at the top would allow for one, but obviously not more than two more verses to be restored above line 2. The unscribed space of 0.06 m at the bottom may have been balanced with a roughly equal *vacat* at top. My restoration with not more than eight lines is based on presuming balances of unscribed areas at the top and bottom and the number of verses in the epigrams, rather than on being totally positive that epigram A must have been in regular distichs. Because we cannot ascertain the meter of epigram A other than being dactylic, the number of lines to be restored should maybe better be left open. Line 1: nothing more than a trace of a horizontal stroke is preserved at the bottom of the line. Line 2: the last surviving letter is open at top, so it must be omega, not omikron. At the beginning I suspect a finite aorist form. If the line were certainly in hexameter, it would be tempting to see the beginning of a name at the end, and to restore Ἴω[άννου] on the strength of the frequency of the name in this period; if the sentence continued into the next line, the nominative or the accusative case would seem less plausible. Line 3: the stone is broken below the oblique stroke at the beginning of the line. The only other alternative in addition to my proposal [ἄν]δρείοιο, viz. [δεν]δρείοιο, would be as implausible as Peek's conjecture. At the end, I would like to suggest a conjecture with [θ' ὑπάρχου], providing the hypothetical Ἴω[άννου] with a position. Line 4: the first letter could also be tau since everything to the left of the

vertical stroke is lost. I would prefer to restore [ἔρ]γμασι Κε[κροπίην] instead of [δό]γμασι Κε[κροπιδῶν]; for the numerous examples of mythical periphrases in Attic Late Roman/Early Byzantine honorary epigrams, see footnote 8 below. Line 5: at left only the right edge of a lunar stroke is visible, making omikron and omega equally possible; of the last three dotted letters, four traces only from their lowermost parts survive: two oblique strokes slanting towards each other, a lunar stroke, and near it a tip of a vertical stroke. Line 6: the upper parts of the second and third letters have been lost; the trace of an overlong vertical stroke at the right edge represents either iota or, more probably, rho (upsilon is impossible due to small space on the left); after this there is no sure trace of any letter. I restore the ending of γεραίρω, in view of the end of line 8, in the third person singular. Line 7: there is a trace of a top part of a vertical stroke just above the damaged four letters; the last two traces in this line are two lower tips of vertical strokes. I restore the participle, because an accompanying action with a non-finite ending was probably included in this verse. Line 8: no trace of nu exists; of the last surviving letter only the lower left part of a lunar stroke is preserved; it is impossible to know whether a cross, certainly possible at such a late date, decorated the end of the text. Room enough for a final nu or a cross was originally available.

A.: " --- set up the statue (?) of (?) --- of the courageous (?) --- Athens
(?) with (building) works (?) "

B.: " --- the noble --- he (?) gave as a reward to this city --- stretching
(?) out his helping hand --- he (?) raised up, once again, from the ground "

I propose a date from the later fifth century to the sixth century, possibly between the Vandalic raid of A.D. 457/67 and the reign of Justinian.

Sometimes Early Byzantine epigrams were cut in a series of poems on a single object.⁵ In our case, however, the lettering of lines 2-4 is also completely different from that of lines 5-8. The latter script, forming the second epigram, could be as late as the sixth century: note especially *theta* with the overlong cross bar.⁶ The cutter of the first epigram clearly did not

⁵ See the examples given in L. Robert, *Épigrammes du Bas-Empire* (1948), 81-82, and especially the comparison of two different scripts in the epigrams from the Heraeum of Samos, *ibid.* 58. Add to these e.g. *ibid.* 5 (Aegina), 22-23 (= Sironen (1994), 31, no. 15); Sironen (1994), 32, no. 16; and C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity: the Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions including Texts from the Excavations Conducted by Kenan T. Erim*, (JRS Monographs 5, 1989), no. 53.

⁶ See *ibid.* nos. 54, 89, 97, and 100, all basically public texts from late fifth or sixth century Aphrodisias, capital of Caria. SEG XXXVIII 530-533, four separate epigrams in more or less mixed meter honoring Justinian's subordinate Victorinus for building the

cut his letters as deeply as his colleague, and his work emulates the style of earlier centuries, although *alpha* with a lightly dropped bar and *sigma* with four strokes appear in Attica as late as the last years of the fourth century.⁷ Attention may be called to the fluctuation in lines 2 and 3; neither is the *sigma* in line 4 identical with the one two lines above it. The work in the second epigram is much more self-assured, and the cutter seems to be more at home with his script, possibly cut after a model written in literary handwriting.

With support from phrases found in this genre, identified in verses 5-8, the very scanty remains of the first epigram seem to suggest that a statue was possibly erected (line 2) to - rather than by - a man (possibly named John), who could be the obviously courageous one referred to in line 3. If this is right, either the reason⁸ or the authorization for erecting the statue was probably mentioned in the last verse.

The second epigram, with many intact words and no need for conjectural restorations, is certainly in hexameters. In line 5 the man honored is possibly praised with the generally positive epithet ἐσθλόν.⁹ In line 6 the

walls of the Illyrian town of Byllis (in modern Albania) share this feature whenever *theta* is present. For Thessalonica, see D. Feissel, *Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes du IIIe au VIe siècle* (1983), nos. 131, 133, and 135, unfortunately all of them Early Christian epitaphs, but certainly dated to the early sixth century. Lacking other Early Byzantine *corpora* furnished with photographs and in the dearth of any texts from adjacent areas with certain sixth century dates, it is laborious to find comparable letterings. As far as Attica and Corinth are concerned, similar *thetas* appear only in some of the numerous Early Christian epitaphs, i.e. from the fourth to sixth centuries. To my knowledge, the only example of *theta* with an overlong horizontal stroke in an inscription from the province of Achaëa allegedly predating A.D. 400 is IG V, 2, no. 153, restudied by D. Feissel and A. Philippidis-Braat, "Inventaires en vue d'un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance. III. Inscriptions du Péloponnèse", in *T&MByz* 9 (1985), 292-293, no. 32, and illustrated there in plate V, 1. In view of its *alpha*, *beta*, and *mu*, however, I would be inclined to propose a date in the later fifth century for the piece.

⁷ Cf. Sironen (1994), 42, no. 26 and 41, no. 25, respectively.

⁸ In disagreement with Peek I suspect that at the beginning of this concluding verse of the first epigram the work done for Athens was likely to have been mentioned. For ἔργον and its metrical variant ἔργμα in general, see Robert (1948), 12, footnote 1, and *ibid.* 5 (περικάλλεα ἔργα), 61 (τίς τόσον ἔργον ἔτευξε;), 63 (θέσκελα ἔργα), 65 (ὄρας τὸ ἔργον ἠλίκον), 112 (ἔξοχον ἔργον), and 87-89 (κλεινοῖς ἔργμασιν). The restoration Κεκροπίην is paralleled, among others, by Sironen (1994), 17, no. 1, line 9; 31, no. 15, line 2; 33, no. 17, line 3 (the only one not at the end of a pentameter); 48, no. 30, line 2; 51, no. 32, line 4. Cf. also IG II/III², no. 4008, line 3.

⁹ See ἐσθλὸς ὑπαρχο[ς] in CIG, no. 8614, and ἐσθλοὶ ἡγεμόνες in Robert (1948), 17-18, footnote 2; cf. also *ibid.* 24, footnote 3 and 94, footnote 6. Despite the first parallel I

perception of the last word as *γεραίρω* is crucial for the new interpretation. What else than *giving a reward* could be the issue that the honored man did for the city, "stretching out his helping hand"?¹⁰ The last line is essential for the interpretation of the whole: the verb *ἐγείρω* is often used in connection with building works.¹¹ The phraseology in lines 5-8 is commonplace in Early Byzantine honorary epigrams, and makes a case for interpreting the first epigram built around a similar idea.

It remains to speculate on what might have been rebuilt, and then to ponder who could have been the benefactor. The words *αὐθις*¹² *ἀπὸ χθονός*¹³ *ἔγειρεν* evidently refer to a public construction, either destroyed or fallen into ruin. It is not totally out of the question that the whole city or a part of it is being referred to,¹⁴ but I would argue in favor of the circuit wall rather than of other possible reconstructions: between the third and sixth centuries a double set of defensive walls (an inner and an outer) were built or restored repeatedly, and on two occasions we are informed of this in three commemorative dactylic epigrams.¹⁵

would rather refrain from conjecturing [*ὑπάρχον*] also here as being too hypothetical and repetitive, if taken with my conjecture [*θ'ὑπάρχου*] at the end of line 3; cf. the critical apparatus above.

¹⁰ Cf. AP 1.29, 3: *Χριστὸς ... ἀρηγόνα χεῖρα τιταίνοι* and Roueché (1989), no. 40: ... *κάμει καμουσαν ἀμετρήτοις ἐνιαυτοῖς / ἤγειρεν κρατερὴν χεῖρ' ἐπορεξάμενος*.

¹¹ Cf. AP 16.42: *Σμύρναν ἔγειρε καὶ ἤγαγεν εἰς φάος αὐθις / ἔργοις θαυμασίοις ...* among other references in Sironen (1994), 35, note 114. Add to these BÉ 1959, no. 447 *ἄναξ ... ἔγειρε πόλιν*, and Roueché (1989), nos. 39-40. See also Robert (1948), 12, footnote 1 (*ἔργα ἐγείρειν*) and 14-15, footnote 5, for idioms referring to restoration of cities.

¹² For *αὐθις*, see *ibid.* 63 = AP 16.43 (*μετὰ λoίγια πῆματα σεισμοῦ / ἐσσυμένως πονέων αὐθις πόλιν ἐξετέλεσσας*) and 75 (*αὐτίς ... / πάλιν σῶσεν ἀπολλυμένην*), in addition to footnote 11 above.

¹³ As was suggested by Kenneth Holum at the 21st Annual Byzantine Studies Conference in New York, *ἀπὸ χθονός* - perhaps nothing else than a poetic equivalent to *ἐκ θεμελίων* common in prose inscriptions (e.g. Sironen (1994), 42-43, no. 26, with footnote 142) - could refer to anything constructed from the foundations.

¹⁴ In his letter to me Homer Thompson feels inclined to suppose that the present monument commemorates a remarkable amount of reconstruction and new building that occurred in the northern part of the Agora, and possibly in other parts of the city, following a destructive Vandal incursion perhaps in A.D. 457, basing his opinion largely on the evidence adduced by A. Frantz, *Agora 24. Late Antiquity A.D. 267-700* (1988), 78-82. Thompson himself worked closely with Frantz on this problem and was greatly impressed by the scale of activity in the Agora at a seemingly improbable time. See also footnote 16 below.

¹⁵ See Sironen (1994), 21-22, nos. 4 and 5 (the new Post-Herulian inner enceinte) and

What is more crucial in our case, though, is that in A.D. 457/67 the Vandals may possibly have caused damage to Athens, as is suggested by a destruction layer in the western part of the Agora, above the north-south road.¹⁶ Later on, a sixth-century reparation of the walls of Athens is known from Procopius' panegyric of the Emperor Justinian *On Buildings*.¹⁷ Excavations in the Pnyx area have confirmed that the outer city wall had

32-33, no. 16 (probably the ancient Themistoclean outer circuit wall).

¹⁶ A. Frantz (1988), 78-79: this layer included a large number of coins, the latest of which were of Marcian and Leo I, in addition to which the great majority of the lamps found in this layer date from the early fifth to the second half of the fifth century. See A. Frantz, "Some Invaders of Athens in Late Antiquity", in *A Colloquium in Memory of George Carpenter Miles (1904-1975)*, The American Numismatic Society (1976), 13-14. The extent of this understudied ravage of Athens is unknown. J. Koder and F. Hild, *Hellas und Thessalia*, in *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, ed. by H. Hunger, vol. I (1976), 52, with footnote 70 speak for a less thorough destruction in the eastern area of Achaëa, based partly on Procopius' *Vand.* 1,5,23 (ed. by J. Haury, 1962): Ἰλλυριοὺς οὖν ἐληίζετο καὶ τῆς τε Πελοποννήσου τῆς τε ἄλλης Ἑλλάδος τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ ὅσαι αὐτῇ νῆσοι ἐπίκεινται. T.E. Gregory, "Fortification and Urban Design in Early Byzantine Greece", in *City, Town and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Era* (ed. by R.L. Hohlfelder, New York, 1982), 57, footnote 53, surprisingly plays this down. See, however, Damascius, *Isid.* (ed. by C. Zintzen, 1967), fr. 273: ... πλείστων γὰρ αὐτῶ (= Ἀρχιάδα) χρημάτων διηρασμένων, ἐπειδὴ ἦσθετο Θεαγένη ἔτι παιδίον ὄντα λυπούμενον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀπολωλόσι καὶ πεπορθημένοις, ὃ Θεάγενης, ἔφη, θαρρεῖν ἤδη σε χρή καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς ὁμολογεῖν σωτηρίου χάριτας ὑπὲρ τῶν σωμάτων, ὑπὲρ δὲ τῶν χρημάτων οὐκ ἀθυμητέον ... ἀλλὰ τὸν παρόντα ἀγῶνα καὶ Παναθηναίων ἡγεῖσθαι δεῖ καὶ παντὸς ἑτέρου λαμπρότερόν τε καὶ εὐσεβέστερον, which could refer to Vandalic action in Athens.

¹⁷ *Aed.* 4,2,23-24: Καὶ πόλεις δὲ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀπάσας, αἶπερ ἐντὸς εἰσι τῶν ἐν Θερμοπύλαις τειχῶν, ἐν τῷ βεβαίῳ κατεστήσατο εἶναι, τοὺς περιβόλους ἀνανεωσάμενος ἅπαντας. κατερηρίπεσαν γὰρ πολλῶ πρότερον, ἐν Κορίνθῳ μὲν σεισμῶν ἐπιγενομένων ἑξαισίων, Ἀθήνησι δὲ καὶ ἐν Πλαταιῶσι κὰν τοῖς ἐπὶ Βοιωτίας χωρίοις χρόνου μὲν μήκει πεπονηκότες, ἐπιμελησαμένου δὲ αὐτῶν οὐδενὸς τῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπων (ed. by J. Haury, 1964). Procopius' testimony in *Arc.* 26,33, however, seems to contradict his earlier statement: ... ἐν τε τῇ Ἑλλάδι καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα ἐν Ἀθήναις αὐταῖς οὔτε τις ἐν δημοσίῳ οἰκοδομία (ἀνενεώθη) οὔτε ἄλλο ἀγαθὸν (οἶόν τε ἦν) γίνεσθαι. (ed. by J. Haury, 1963; the textual difficulties do not affect our point). One may wish to solve this seeming contradiction by the slandering tone of the *Historia Arcana*, but maybe this passage refers to another period in Justinian's long reign, cf. Frantz (1988), 82. In general, the difficulty in differentiating between the building techniques of the fourth to sixth century renders the identification of Justinianic building activity very problematic. This problem is discussed in A.W. Lawrence, "A Skeletal History of Byzantine Fortification", in *ABSA* 78 (1983), 188, who also notes that even though Procopius mentions more than 600 walls or towers in the Balkans as Justinian's works, earlier emperors are rarely mentioned in *De Aedificiis*.

been repaired under Valerian and Justinian.¹⁸ As far as the building activity around the Acropolis area is concerned, four reservoirs and fortifications have now been dated to the Justinianic period.¹⁹ Towers added to the city wall have a similar date.²⁰

Could the benefactor of our inscription be an emperor, a high-ranking Roman official of the central government, or perhaps a wealthy citizen of Athens?

An emperor, though not totally out of the question, seems implausible: more often than not it was the government official who was honored for building activity in the stone epigrams from the East known to us today.²¹

Was the statue set up in honor of a high-ranking Roman official? For the period after A.D. 435 we know many more names of praetorian prefects of Illyricum than names of proconsuls of Achaëa.²² If my conjectures of the

¹⁸ See H.A. Thompson and R.L. Scranton, "Stoas and City Walls on the Pnyx", in *Hesperia* 12 (1943), 372 and 376; cf. also A.W. Parsons in *Hesperia* 12 (1943), 250, footnote 159. I. Travlos, 'Η πολεοδομική εξέλιξις τῶν Ἀθηνῶν (1993²), 144-148 states that the outer wall was radically repaired and strengthened by Justinian, but the inner enceinte was renewed only as regards its gates.

¹⁹ For the large cistern abutting the east side of the northern wing of the Propylaea, see T. Tanoulas, "Τὰ Προπύλαια τῆς ἀθηναϊκῆς Ἀκρόπολης", in *AD* 42 (1987) B' 1 *Chron* [1992], 14 and in *AD* 43 (1988) B' 1 *Chron* [1993], 21; idem, "The Pre-Mnesiclean Cistern on the Athenian Acropolis", in *AM* 107 (1992) [1993], 130, footnote 5; idem, "The Propylaea and the Western Access of the Acropolis", in *Acropolis Restoration. The CCAM Interventions* (ed. by R. Economakis), London 1994, 56-58.

²⁰ See J. Threpsiades and I. Travlos, "Ἀνασκαφαὶ νοτίως τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου", in *AD* 17 (1961-1962) B' 1 *Chron* [1963], 13, with figure 1; B. Filippake, "Ἀνασκαφαὶ ἐντὸς τῆς περιμετρικῆς ζώνης τῶν Ἀθηνῶν", in *AD* 21 (1966) B' 1 *Chron* [1968], 57 (cf. figure 1, no. 1), figure 2; O. Alexandre, in *AD* 23 (1968) B' 1 *Chron* [1969], 53, no. 22 (cf. figure 1, no. 24), figures 15-16 and p. 67, no. 45 (cf. figure 1, no. 47), figures 26-27 with plate 34ε. See also E. Lyngoure-Tolia, "Ἀνασκαφικὴ ἔρευνα παρὰ τὴν Πειραιϊκὴ πύλη. Νέα στοιχεῖα γιὰ τὴν ἀρχαία ὄχυρῶση τῶν Ἀθηνῶν" in *AAA* 18 (1985) [1988], 137-142 with figures 1-4. I owe all of these references to Judith Binder's unpublished manuscript, *The Topography of Athens. A Sourcebook, Part I, s.v. The Themistoklean City Wall*.

²¹ An example of the few Justinianic stone epigrams: SEG XXXVIII 530-533, a recently studied series of four texts from Byllis (see footnote 6 above), honor Justinian's subordinate Victorinus, evidently assigned to carry out the emperor's building program in the Balkans. In two of these practically intact texts, Justinian is also mentioned: 531 Ἰουστινιανοῦ τοῦ κρατίστου δεσπότη and 533 [Ἰ]ουστινιανοῦ τὸ κράτιστον οὐνομα.

²² J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire II* (1980), 1249-1250, and id., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire III* (1992), 1475, with altogether around 50 names as opposed to only one possible proconsul: see s.v. Victor 1

ends of lines 2 and 3 (suggested only in the critical apparatus) are acceptable, then John, the praetorian prefect of Illyricum in A.D. 479, noted for his just administration and support of the arts, would possibly be a more plausible candidate than any other John known to us. If we stress his action in the revolt of Theoderic, as evidenced by Martindale, he could also have lived up to an adjective like [ἀν]δρειός, comparatively rare in Early Byzantine honorary epigrams, restored in line 3.²³

If we discard John, however, as an unacceptable conjecture, there remain several local wealthy men in Athens that merit being considered,²⁴ despite the wording ἄστει τῶιδε γέρηρεν instead of e.g. πατρίδι τῆιδε γέρηρεν.²⁵ The wealthy senator, archon, and *patricius* Theagenes generously assisted both cities and individuals.²⁶ Together with his father-in-law Archiadas,²⁷ Theagenes would have been ready to spend his money for Athens. Theagenes' son Hegias,²⁸ scholarch of the Neoplatonic School, would be another candidate. It is not impossible that our inscription forms the base for the latest statue from the Agora, the famous *togatus*, possibly depicting a senator from the middle²⁹ or the last quarter³⁰ of the fifth

in the latter work (before A.D. 528). Cf. also E. Groag, *Die Reichsbeamten von Achaia in spätrömischer Zeit* (1946), 76-77, with footnotes 7 and 1-3.

²³ See Martindale (1980), s.v. Ioannes 29, possibly to be identified with (Fl. Ioannes) Thomas 13.

²⁴ In general, see Groag (1946), 76, with footnotes 2-6.

²⁵ The wordings in Robert (1948), 134 (οὗτος ὁ ... κόσμο[ς] / ὃν κάμεν ἢ πατρη θρέπτρα χαριζόμενος / ἀντ' ἀσιαρχίης ὑπατον κλέος ἄστει τεύξας), Roueché (1989), no. 24, line 5 ὃς μεγάλη χαρίεντα πόλι θρεπτήρια τίνων and no. 56 Ἄστ[υ] θεῆς Παφίης καὶ Πυθέου ... go to show that also more neutral designations for one's hometown were in use.

²⁶ For references, see Martindale (1980), s.v. Theagenes, and P. Castrén, "General Aspects of Life in Post-Herulian Athens", in *Post-Herulian Athens* (see footnote 2 above), 13, with footnotes 132-133. Cf. especially Damascius, *Isid.*, fr. 257: ... Ἑλλήνων τε ὅτι μάλιστα χρήμασι λαμπρυνόμενος, οἷς εἰς δέον ἐχρήτο τὰ πολλὰ πόλεων τε ἐνίων τὰ πταίσματα ἐπανορθούμενος ... and Marinus, *Procl.* (ed. by R. Masullo, 1985), 29.

²⁷ See Martindale (1980), s.v. Archiadas 1: Damascius, *Isid.*, fr. 273 and Marinus, *Procl.*, 14. Cf. Castrén (1994), 13, footnotes 134-135.

²⁸ See Martindale (1980), s.v. Hegias; Damascius, *Isid.*, fr. 351: ἐνῆν γὰρ τι τῶ Ἠγία καὶ τῆς Θεαγένους μεγαλόφρονος φύσεως ἐν ταῖς εὐεργεσίαις.

²⁹ Castrén (1994), 14, footnote 139 and Frantz (1988), 65, with footnote 53. H.A. Thompson and R.E. Wycherley, *Agora 14. The Agora of Athens* (1972), 213 says that "the high honor represented by a life-sized statue in this period is most likely to have been in recognition of some substantial benefaction." However, see footnote 4 above for the possibility, that our base was originally set up on the Acropolis.

century (maybe Theagenes) or even from the sixth century.³¹ Yet another candidate would be Diogenes, maybe a native of Achaëa, a benefactor mentioned in a prose inscription for his building works in Megara, possibly during the reign of Zeno.³² The inscriptions of Aphrodisias show that after the mid-fifth century private citizens were honored more often for benefactions in the community than the governor.³³

In conclusion, the stone under study has been identified as a statue base carrying the latest example of epigrams honoring restorers of Athens. The inscription has also been dated, within a range of around 100 years. Because the text is very fragmentary, it has not proved possible to make sure what was restored and by whom. Nevertheless, the inscription now takes its place among the documents concerning Post-Vandalic Athens, revealing a reality beyond the indications of a Vandalic raid on Athens, rare in the ancient Graeco-Roman literature and seldom studied, and opening up avenues of inquiry for both the historian and the archaeologist.

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³⁰ E.B. Harrison, *Agora 1. Portrait Sculpture* (1953), 79-81, no. 64 (inventory number S 657), plates 41-42, with full bibliographical references to earlier literature. For later references, see footnote 29 above.

³¹ See B. Kiilerich, "Sculpture in the Round in Early Byzantine Period: Constantinople and the East", in *Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium* (Papers Read at a Colloquium Held at the Swedish Institute in Istanbul 31 May – 5 June 1992, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul Transactions 4), ed. by L. Rydén and J.O. Rosenqvist, Uppsala 1993, 92-93.

³² Martindale (1980), s.v. Diogenes 5 and 7, Groag (1946), 77-78 and Frantz (1988), 79, with footnotes 150-151.

³³ Roueché (1989), 86 and 123-124. F.E. Wozniak, "The Justinianic Fortification of Interior Illyricum", in *City, Town and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Period* (see footnote 16 above), 200, 202-203 suggests that from the fifth century on fortification works and defense were carried out by the local population and the local aristocratic landowners.