

# Thassos, Known Inscriptions with New Data

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# ASMOSIA XI

## Interdisciplinary Studies of Ancient Stone

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## THASSOS, KNOWN INSCRIPTIONS WITH NEW DATA

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### Abstract

An architectural approach is presented about four known inscriptions on Thassos, taking into account the blocks on which they are engraved, bringing out new proposals, about the content of the inscriptions of the Gate of Silenos (§ 3), new records about the relative chronology of the inscriptions of the Law of Wine (§ 4); and for the other two blocks to find out their purpose and place in *in antis* altars (§ 1 and 2).

### Keywords

Thassos, inscriptions, altars, Gate of the Theoroi, Gate of Silenos, Zeus agoraio, Poseidonion, Law of the wine

### 1. Agora, the inscription of Zeus Agoraio Thasio

The inscription<sup>1</sup> “Δίος Ἀγοραίο Θάσιο“ is engraved on three lines in *stoichedon* form, dated late 5th c. B.C. to early 4th century B.C. However the upper left edge of the block is broken, the three missing letters have been easily restored. Their height is 0.025 m.

This block<sup>2</sup> was published as a post in accord with its measurements<sup>3</sup>, belonging to the *peribole* border of the Temple of Zeus Agoraios in Agora.

A review of this marble block identified some precise measurements and features (Fig. 1.1).

Height: 1.133 m. Front inscribed side [a]: 0.348 m; smooth and polished surface. Left side [d]: 0.345 m; a smooth strip 0.03 m long with a zigzag limit, border on three sides the inner rough surface. Right side [b]: 0,308 m; symmetrical to the left side but with a recut on 0.037 m. Back side [c]: 03.48 m in two levels 0.15 m and 0.189 m, separated by 0.037 m; both smooth surfaces. Upper side [e]: *anathyrose* surround and two cavities, each 0.065 x 0.065 x

0,035 m (deep) with a channel to the side for iron fixations. An *anathyrose* surround is on [f] surface (Fig. 1.1).

In addition, the block is made out of white marble, presumably from the quarry of Mourgena.

According to the shape and the new measures, the block is no more a border post but an architectural piece of an *in antis* altar, precisely, the left pillar of the Altar of Zeus Agoraios.

A fragment of another marble block, reused as construction material in a wall of the Domus 5<sup>4</sup>, shows exactly the same -smooth strip 0.03 m large with a zigzag limit -, bordering the inner rough surface (Fig. 1.2). Recut in its height and length, the block is still 0.51 x 0.345 m. The similarity of the texture suggests the bringing together of this block with the left pillar, and it may be proposed that it is a fragment of the right pillar.

The location of the Zeus Agoraios sanctuary is advanced by the inscription “ Δίος κτισιο πατρωιο “, also in *stoichedon* form, engraved on a stele found in the ancient agora by P. Guillon<sup>5</sup>, near the foundation of a temple, an *euthynteria* and some blocks hollowed (for posts) surrounding all. The dimensions of this *euthynteria* allow us to reconstitute an *in antis* altar.

The *in situ* altar of the Poseidon Sanctuary (Fig. 1.4) is the reference that allows us to propose the restoration of the altar of Zeus Agoraios, on the *euthynteria* located in front of the temple (Fig. 1.3), to take into account the *anta*, - the left pillar with its inscription and the fragment of the right pillar<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 1.5).

1 The discovery belongs to G. Mendel, (MENDEL 1900, 270). The inscription is published in *IG XII*, 8, 361. Archaeological Museum at Thassos: Inv. Number 580.

2 The block was re-used as paving plate in the “kalderim“ from the Genovese Tower to the *Konaki*.

3 The measures given were: 0.33 x 0.25 x 1.10 m (high), MENDEL 1900, 270, n. 10.

4 Domus 5, an Early Christian residence located South-East from the ancient agora: for any references, see: BLONDE *et alii* 2014, p. 615, fig. 1 and p. 167, fig. 3. This block is located at “ESP23/PCE16, MUR22Ouest”, that is at the West side of the wall 22 between the spaces 23 and 16.

5 GUILLON 1937, 195-200. Dim. of the stele: 0.155 m high, 0.165 m wide and 0.085 m deep. The letters are 0.02 m high. Dated 400BC.

A similar inscription (also in *stoichedon* form) was found at Kariani (Pangeio) by M.P. Perdrizet: “Δίος έρκειο πάτρωιο και Δίος κτήσιο”, and is published by J. Pouilloux (POUILLOUX 1954, pl. XVIII, 1).

6 The right pillar could be in one piece, or made of two pieces as at the Poseidonion altar.

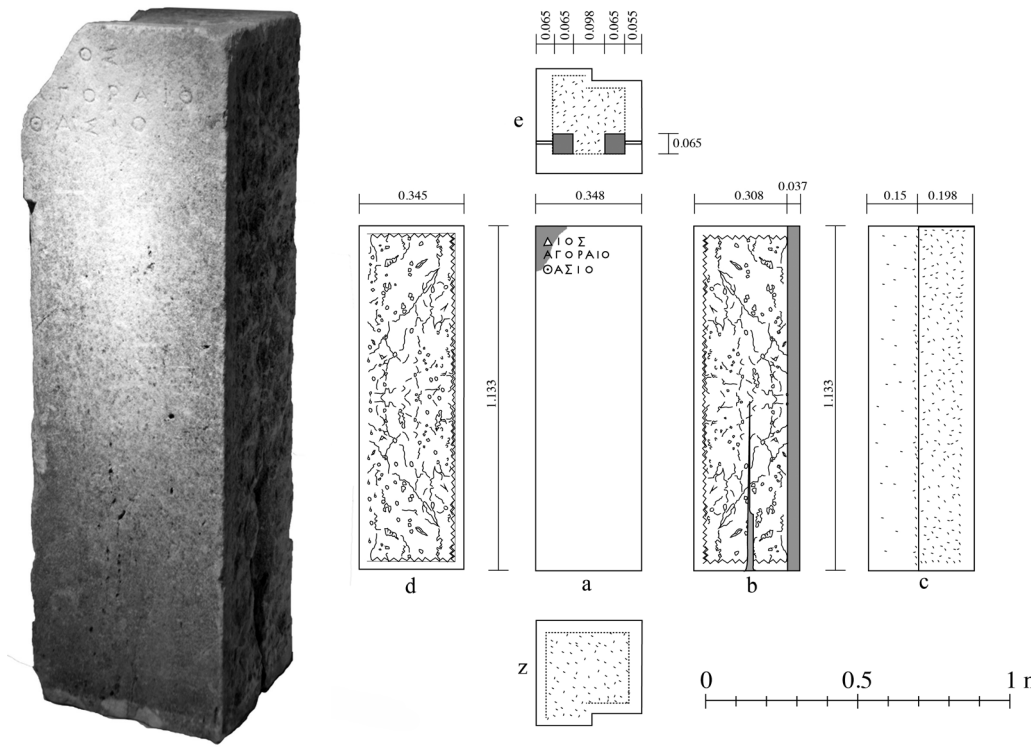


Fig. 1.1.  
Zeus Agoraio  
altar. Photography  
and measures  
of the left pillar  
(photo: T. Kozelj)



Fig. 1.2.  
A decorated  
fragment. Detail  
of the bordering  
(photo: T. Kozelj)

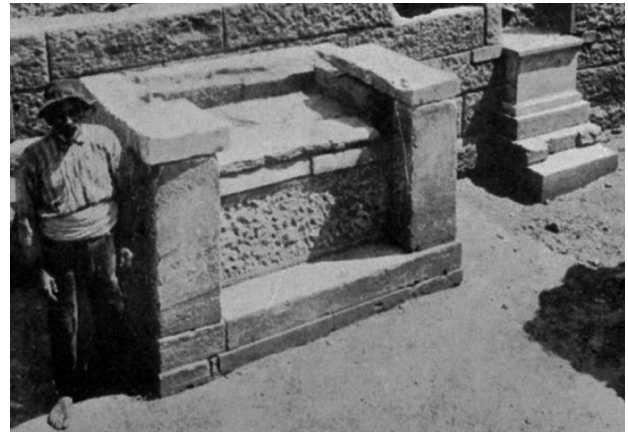


Fig. 1.4. Poseidonion. *Anta* Altar and (behind it) the oldest altar with niche. (cl. EFA, BCH 53, 1929, Pl. XXI)



Fig. 1.3. The *euthynteria* with proposal of the location of the altar of Zeus Agoraios (photo: T. Kozelj)

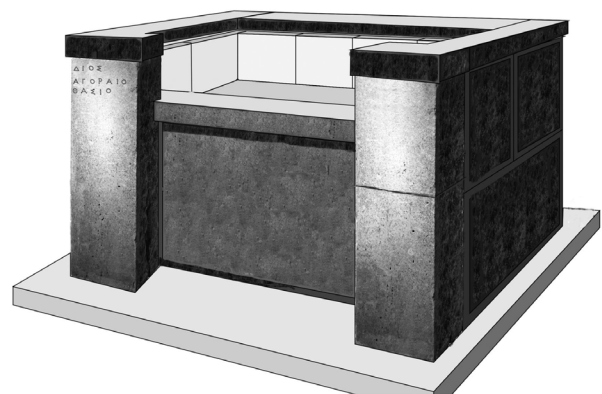
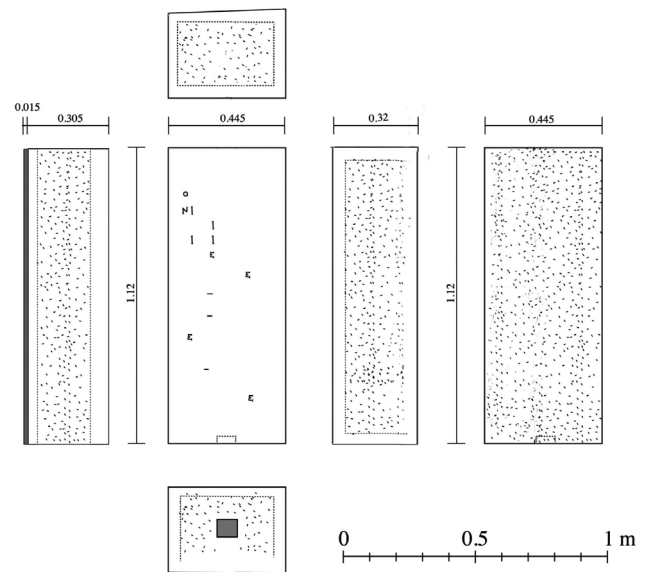


Fig. 1.5. Restitution of the *in antis* altar of Zeus Agoraios (photo: T. Kozelj)





Fig. 2.1. The marble architectural piece, Archeological Museum at Thassos: N. inv. 367 (photo: T. Kozelj)



## 2. The inscription from the Gate of the Theoroi

The inscription “Απόλλωνος λυκείου”<sup>7</sup> is engraved on a marble piece. The measurements and an interpretation of it were given by G. Daux<sup>8</sup>, as a marble base, dated *ca* 100 B.C.

A new consideration, with measurements and drawings of all details, of this piece put forward the idea that it was used twice, as a base with an inscription, but also as a pillar, that time with this inscription (Fig. 2.1 and 2.2).

Height 1.12 m. Front inscribed side: 0.445 m; smooth and inscriptions. Left side: 0.305 m; two smooth strips 0.05 m and 0.03 m large limit the picked surface. Right side: 0.29 m; three smooth strips 0.03 m are surrounding the picked surface; a recut on 0.03 m length. The maximum width is 0.32 m. The backside is on two levels, 0.19 m (the recut part) and 0.255 m. At the bottom, is a cavity, 0.07 x 0.05 x 0.035 m, for an iron tenon (fixation). At the upper face, a socket, 0.06 x 0.04 x 0.035 m, with a channel (which goes to the front side).

— The first use: a piece of an engraved stele (Fig. 2.2, 1).

The front part still shows many letters, which were sufficiently strong and deeply engraved for the re-smoothing of the surface not to erase them. They were engraved in *stocheidon* form. The block has been fixed by a tenon on a plinth.

7 The discovery of this marble piece (about 6 m of the Gate of the *Theoroi*) is due to C. Avezou, in 1913, November: AVEZOU 1913, 15-16.

8 DAUX 1928, 58. Length 0.44 m, height 1.09 m and width 0.29 m.

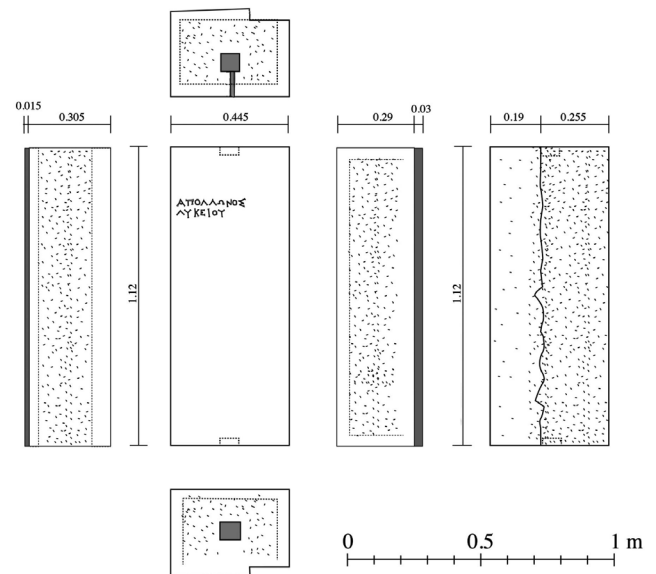


Fig. 2.2. Restitution of the block: first and second use

— The second use: the left pillar of an altar dedicated to Apollon Lykeiou (Fig. 2.2, 2).

The new inscription<sup>9</sup> “Απόλλωνος λυκείου” is engraved on the front surface. The angle of the block has been recut. The socket at the upper part is carved out as well as the channel. Its location as a left pillar of an *in antis* altar has been proposed.

The excavations of the Gate of the *Theoroi*<sup>10</sup> brought out many reshaping of the Gate during Antiquity, with rises in ground level according to the stratigraphy.

9 IG XII, 8, 389 (p. 161).

10 BLONDE *et alii* 1995, 981.



A) Relief of Apollon and the Nymphs



B) Relief of Graces



C) Relief of Hermes

Fig. 2.3.  
The three reliefs found by  
E. Miller, nowadays in the  
Musée du Louvre  
(photo: T. Kozelj)

At the first phase (or at the level + 2.23 m), an *eschara* appeared in front of the wall CD<sup>11</sup> of the Gate, indicating an archaic altar.

The two reliefs, the Graces and Hermes, as well as the relief of Apollo and the Nymphs were discovered by E. Miller<sup>12</sup>, as were the 97 blocks engraved with names of *Theoroi*. He suggested that the two small reliefs belonged to the wall CD, and were older than the large relief that in the wall AB (Fig. 2.3).

The Altar with the niche, which is still *in situ* in the wall of the Poseidonion, and the *eschara* (of which the remains of the foundation were found during the

excavations<sup>13</sup>), are the reference used for the restoration of altars constructed in the same period (Fig. 2.4 and *cf.* Fig. 1.4).

Without doubt an archaic altar was situated in the southern wall, CD, and may be restored from the *eschara*<sup>14</sup>, which is *in situ* and indicates the location of the altar, on its right side; and from the reliefs which framed the niche, the relief of the Graces on the left and the relief of Hermes on the right (Fig. 2.5).

The rise of the ground level has been observed at the Gate of the *Theoroi*<sup>15</sup> as well as at the Poseidonion, the roads and settlements of the Gate of Silenus or at the Gate of Hermes, so that new installations had to be done.

The remains in the wall CD indicate the disposition of an *in antis* altar, constructed into the wall. The traces show still the purposed place of the pillars and the orthostate on the front (Fig. 2.6).

11 GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT 2000, 82-87, fig. 37. Length of the walls: 11 m; length of the passage: 4.60 m. north-west wall: AB and south-east: CD.

12 MILLER 1889, 210. He discovered the blocks in 1864, from June 16<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup> and organised the transport of the three reliefs and 28 blocks (from 97 found) to the Musée du Louvre. Musée du Louvre: N. inv. 696 —A, the Relief of Apollo and the Nymphs; —B, the Relief of Graces; and —C, the Relief of Hermes.

13 BON, SEYRIG 1929, 318-350, Pl. XVI-XXI.

14 SALVIAT 1956, 418-420, fig. 25a, b.

15 At the first phase or at the level + 2.23 m. Level rise at this phase: + 3.13 m.

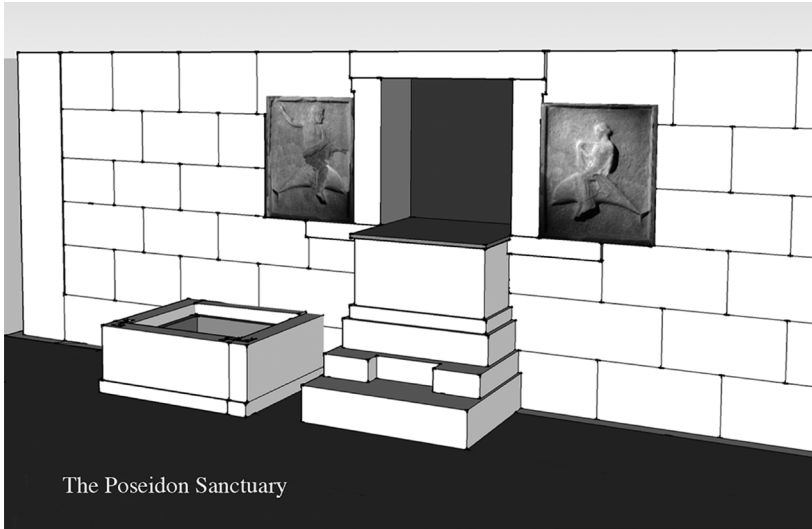


Fig. 2.4.  
The Altar of the Poseidonion,  
as reference (restitution: T. Kozelj)

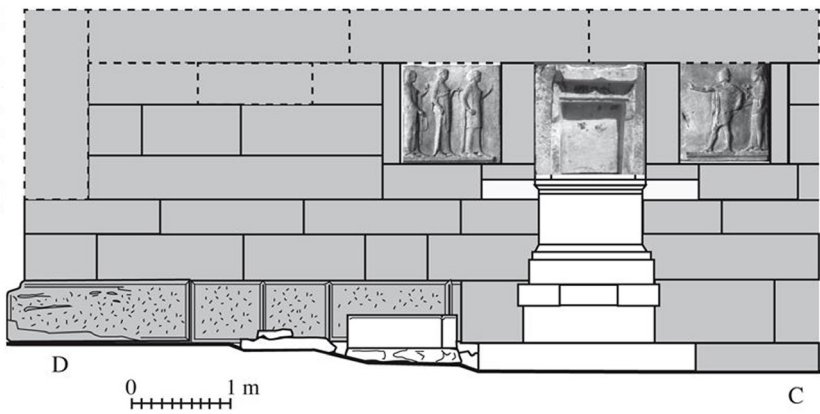


Fig. 2.5. Restitution of the  
Sanctuary of the Graces  
(restitution: T. Kozelj)

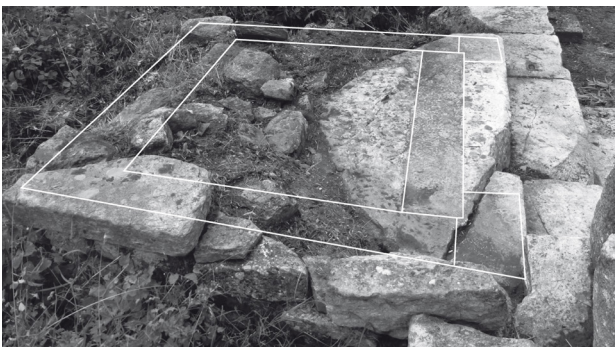


Fig. 2.6. The remains of the *anta* altar, built into the wall CD of the Gate of the Theoroi (photo: T. Kozelj)

The pillar with the inscription “*Ἀπόλλωνος λυκείου*” fits perfectly on the trace.

Again the Poseidonion, where the ground level is raised, with the new installation of an *in antis* altar (the reliefs being kept in place), attested by the remains still *in situ* (cf. Fig. 1.4) is the reference required to propose the restoration of the disposition of the altar at the Gate of the Theoroi.

The *in antis* altar was built into the wall CD, with the previous reliefs (Graces and Hermes<sup>16</sup>) on both sides. Stairs were put in front for an easier access to the *prothysis*, the space between the two pillars in front of the orthostate (Fig. 2.8).

As shown by the excavations<sup>17</sup>, the foundations of another altar and a base had also been set at the edge of the wall CD. On this base is engraved the inscription

16 The relief of the Graces was perhaps not moved from its original place. It may be possible that the enlargement made to build the altar had been done on the right, and it was necessary only to remove the relief of Hermes, which had been set in again.

17 SALVIAT 1956, 418. BLONDE *et alii* 1995, 981.



Fig. 2.7.  
The Gate of the Theoroi. Base with the inscription of Athina Propylaea (photo: T. Kozelj)

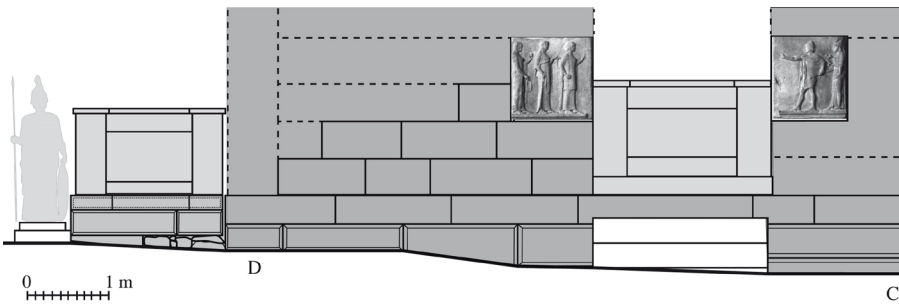


Fig. 2.8.  
The Gate of the Theoroi. Wall DC and location of the altars (restitution: T. Kozelj)

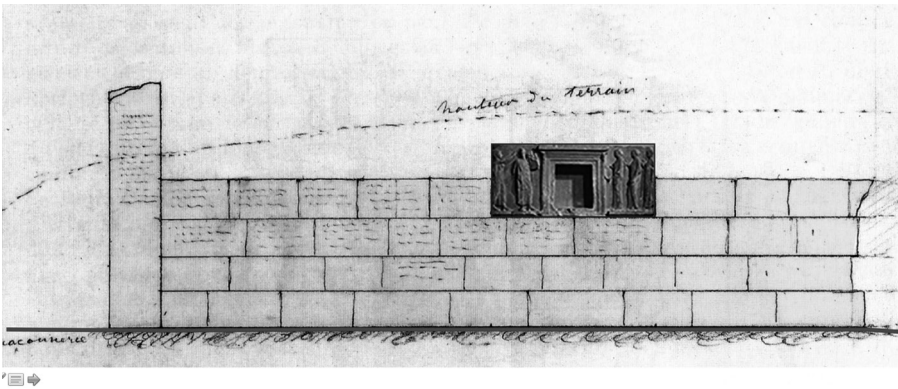


Fig. 2.9.  
The Gate of the Theoroi.  
Wall AB, with the relief of Apollo and the Nymphs

“Αθηνά Προπύλαεα“ (Fig. 2.7), which implies a facing Athena statue (bordered on one side by the *peribole* wall of the Sanctuary of Artemis).

The restoration of both *in antis* altars is represented Fig. 2.8.

On the wall AB, the relief of Apollo and the Nymphs was set into the wall opposite the altar, as a match (Fig. 2.8). The copy of the first list of the Theoroi was probably engraved on this wall,<sup>18</sup> at this time.

Elevation of the north wall AB of the Gate of the Theoroi, drawn by P.D. Guillemet (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), published by B. Holtzmann, 1994, p. 33; with the location of the relief, T. Kozelj (2014).

The modifications of the place connected with the transformations of the Gate, will be presented in another paper<sup>19</sup>: the new entrance to the Sanctuary of Artemis *Hecate*, the transfer of the altar into the area of the sanctuary, the different acts of destruction and different

18 The shape of the wall AB is given by P. Bernard and Fr. Salviat (BERNARD, SALVIAT 1962, 578-611) and also by B. Holtzmann (HOLTZMANN 1994, 33, fig. 5). A review of the blocks at the Musée du Louvre and those (6) at the Archaeological Museum at Thassos, by M. Brunet and her team, put out new evidence, and will certainly achieve a new composition of the wall's layers, and by

consequence, the location of the first part of the list of the Theoroi: BRUNET *et al.* in process. Another proposition of the list of the Theoroi is also in progress by P. Hamon, in process.

19 The paper was presented at the annual conference AE-MTh in 2016, March.



Fig. 3.1.a. The Gate of Silenus. Location of the block (photo: T. Kozelj)

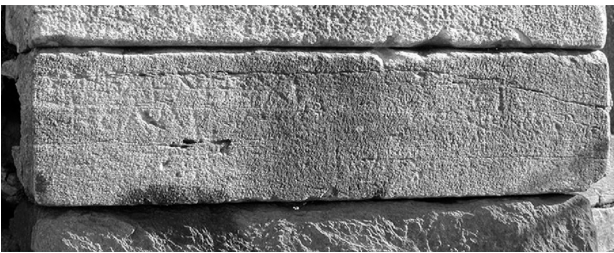


Fig. 3.1.b. The block with both inscriptions



Fig. 3.1.c. The block with both inscriptions (with the recognized letters)

buildings that affect the organization of the place.

In conclusion, the Gate of the Theoroi was always a preferential passage, probably considered at this time, as a monumental propylae, with the main altars of *Apollo Lykeiou* and *Athina Propylaea*, representing them in the city, on the way to the sanctuaries of *Apollo Pythion* and *Athina Poliouchou* located on the top of the hills.

### 3. The inscription at the Gate of Silenos

On the East embrasure splay of the Gate of Silenos, a block (built on the second row from the bottom) was engraved at two different times, as the letters of both inscriptions confirm. Both inscriptions are known<sup>20</sup>.

The first one was understood as “Ἐκατη” by H. Seyrig<sup>21</sup>, according to a dedication to *Hecate*, which is on a fragment of a small votive column found in the excavation of the plots of houses and workshops near the Gate<sup>22</sup>. The letters (0.13 m high) indicate the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.

The second inscription was transcribed as “ωσιων καλος ωσδ” and “ιε” by Ch. Avezou in 1912<sup>23</sup> and completed by Ch. Picard<sup>24</sup> with the name of *Sosiōn*, well known in Thasos (from the 4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. until the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD<sup>25</sup>).

Oblique winter sunlight revealed more details in the form of some letters which change the interpretation of these inscriptions.

— The first inscription appears as “Ἐπίδημος τη πόλει”.

The rise of ground level<sup>26</sup> that was observed everywhere in the city, measures approximatively 1 m.

In the excavation, Y. Grandjean notes that the many transformations had affected the whole environment of

20 GRANDJEAN 2011, 584 and 585.

21 The inscription was read by H. Seyrig: PICARD 1962, 110.

22 PICARD 1921, 158, n. 10. *IG XII Suppl.* N. 401. Fin v<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C.

23 Archives at École Française d’Athènes (French Archaeological School at Athens, Greece): CH. AVEZOU, 2-C Thas 7 and 8, p. 6.

24 PICARD 1921, XX.

References for the inscriptions with “kalos” that have been found on blocks built in the fortification wall (Σκύμνος καλός, Ἀριστοτέλης η καλός, or Μαθηταίος καλός Δημής ...): GRANDJEAN 2011, 582, 586. This interpretation was suggested.

25 DUNANT, POUILLOUX 1957, index.

26 The rise of the ground level might be a consequence of the deforestation in account of the urbanisation process inside the city wall, of the streamings or at other points, the rivers’s alluvions.



Fig. 3.2.  
The block with the new data (drawing: T. Kozelj)

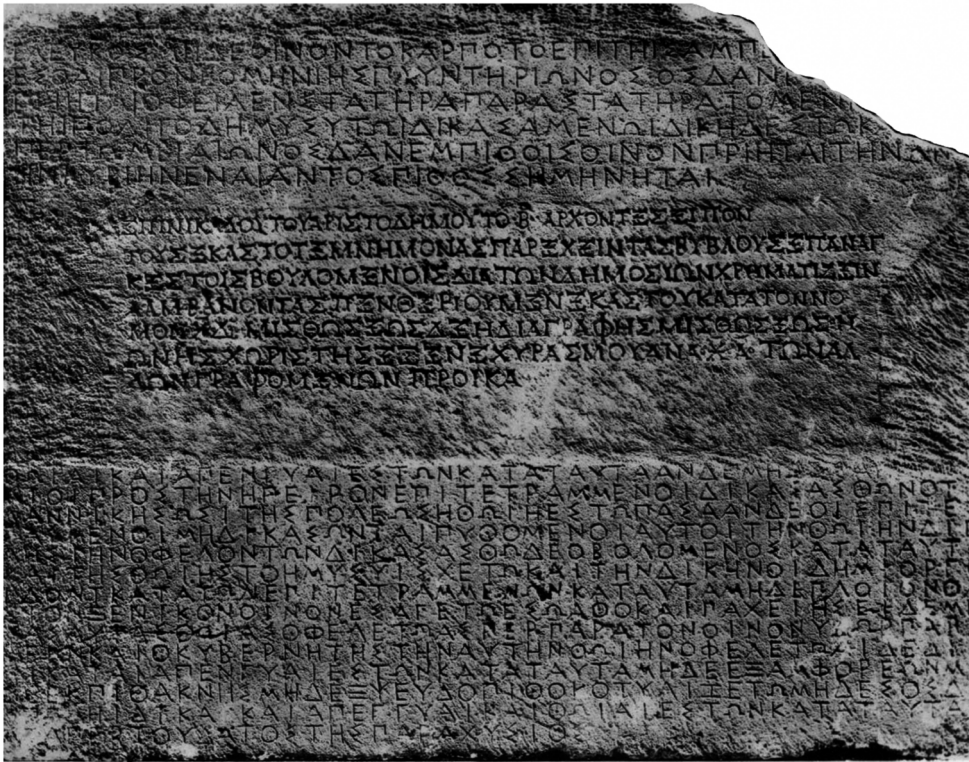


Fig. 4.1.  
The front surface of the engraved block

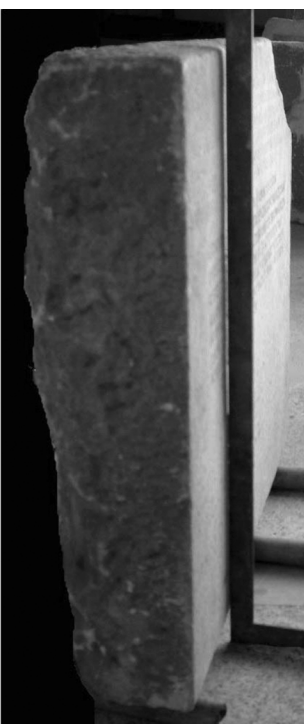


Fig. 4.2.  
The profile of the block showing the 3 mm of recutting (photo: T. Kozelj)

the Gate, not just the city wall, three times<sup>27</sup>, with the raising of the road's level and rebuilding of the Gate.

The proposition to make Epidemos as one of the rebuilders of the city wall is a hypothesis that could fit well with the level of the road II: the block with the inscription would be in a good position to be engraved and to be seen when going through the Gate. That would be dated *ca.* 420.

— The second inscription is engraved in small and irregular letters (0.025 m height), with a retractable ending. The reviewed proposal is “Θάσιων καλός ὄσδῃ” and on the row below “ιεν”. It might signify the perfumed air quality of Thasos<sup>28</sup>, a healthy climate.

27 GRANDJEAN, 2011, 184-189, 182-183, leaflet fig. 212 and 213. See p. 185, b) the second phase: road II was in use from *ca.* 420 to *ca.* 340-330.

28 GORSKI, MAJNARIČ 1976, 198. Translation: Thasos has a good air or climate. ὄσδῃ seems to be ἀρομα (aroma) or οζόν (ozone); so as ιεν : εἶμι (eimi) to be.

#### 4. The Law of Wine

The three inscriptions have been acknowledged<sup>29</sup> and published<sup>30</sup> many times. The interest was in the tenor of the text, the law itself composed by the two inscriptions (Fig. 4.1). But no care was taken of the support on which they were engraved, the surface of the block.

The observation<sup>31</sup> of the block, apart from the measurements: 0.88 m length, 0.678 m height and 0.20 m thickness, brought out the different aspects of the surfaces of the front face (where the inscriptions are) and some unknown details. The consequence of this record is the relative chronology of the inscriptions, and not in the interpretation of the texts themselves.

We distinguish three surfaces (Fig. 4.3):

- The surface at the bottom of the block, 0.265 m high, is flat. The 15 rows of inscription on it are written in stoichedon form (with 45 columns), taking up the whole surface. This part is the oldest (ca 420 BC), because the engraving<sup>32</sup> was done on the primary surface of the block.

29 IG XII, suppl., n. 347.

30 DAUX 1926, 214 and 231 pl. XIII.  
HILLER DE GAERTRINGEN 1939, n. 347. I et II: annis 425-400, III: 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD.  
POUILLOUX 1954, 40-41.  
DUNANT, POUILLOUX 1958, 363.  
MANTZOUFAS 1967, XXX.  
EFA 1967, 179-181 and fig. 111.  
GOFAS 1969, 337-370; especially p. 358-360, note 1.  
SALVIAT 1986, 145-161, esp. p. 147-150.  
VINAGROV 1986, 197-200.  
HOLTZMANN 1989, 186-188, fig. 146.  
BRUNET 1997, 229-242.  
GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT 2000, 183-185, fig. 124.  
GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT 2012, 108-116 (n. 47).

31 Our observations were presented as “A reinterpretation of the block concerning the wine law in Thassos” at the colloquium ASMOSIA VII at Thasos, in 2003 September 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. As the proceedings of the Conference had to be published by the EFA, the Director did not want to consider our paper until Archaeologists of the EFA, specialists in Epigraphy, recognized our observations. All of them saw the recarved surfaces. One of them told us that G. Daux never saw the block by himself and that he worked from an estampage done by a friend of his. A few epigraphists admitted to guessing letters on the erased surface in accord with the *stoichedon* form of the first inscription. They also admitted their interest was in the text of the law itself and not the stone below it.

32 The letters on the “first” line of the right side of the row are missing, cut down by the tooth chisel.

- From the top of the block (but with an obliquity resulting from the chisel work), and more from the third row of the inscription, the surface was recut 3 mm down at 0.61 m height (Fig. 4.2 et 4.3, phase 2), from the primary surface (that remains on the bottom of the block).

The letters of the upper inscription (Fig. 4.3, phase 3) are not written with regularity, and they also are not carved from the left edge of the block (because of the carving<sup>33</sup>).

Over and above what is engraved, several letters can be found, as the ones constituting the first row Θεοι (with letters 0.05 m high), as many letters were placed along the length of the column or on the above parallel restored rows, confirming the *stoichedon* form of the first upper inscription, which was engraved on the whole surface of the block.

This first inscription — the restored upper part and the bottom part on the primary surface — is restored on 32 lines and 45 orthogonal columns, with 1444 letters in total and a part of text could be replaced by the remains of the letters (Fig. 4.3, phase 1).

What is left is to identify words and parts of the sentence engraved in the upper part, which means that a part of the original inscription was re-copied (letter after letter) on the top of the block. Part of the law was still in effect, while the other part (the text which was between both engravings) had to be erased to make space, probably for other rules to be engraved.

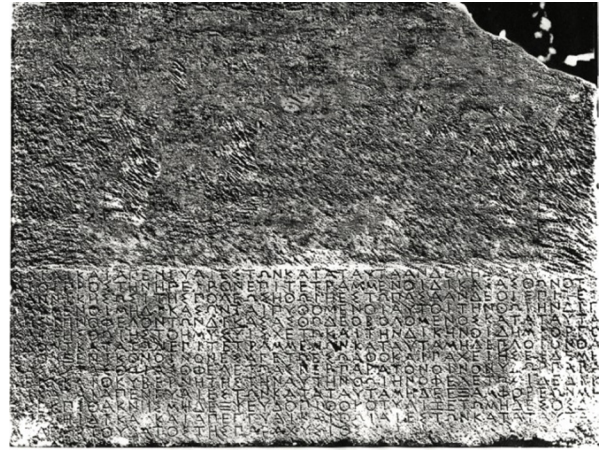
- The third surface, made of a central rectangle 0.71 x 0.165 m, which was again prepared with a tooth chisel, taking 0.5mm to 0.8 mm down, for the engraving of the inscription (Fig. 4.3, phase 4), and on the side of the rectangle, oblique lines could be the remains of a carved *tabula ansata* (Fig. 4.3, phase 5).

The inscription<sup>34</sup> is dated *ca.* 200 AD.

A review, with a fine observation of the details of the letters, could perhaps help us to find out when the copy of the law (the inscription on the top) was engraved. A copy of a law that is current can be done at any time. Until now, the two inscriptions are dated from *ca.* 420-400 BC, but if so, why did the surface remain “empty” until *ca.* 200 AD (Fig. 4.3, phase 3)? There might have been an intention to change a part of the law, but the

33 The block is built in a monument, when the tooth chisel has to recut the surface without damaging the other blocks, the work can't be done up to the edges, and a small obliquity may be observed. The new inscription could not be engraved from one edge to the other edge of the block.

34 DAUX 1926, 227.



4.3. Restitution Phases 1 and 2

1. The original surface of the block, with the first law engraved *ca* 400 BC (restoration: T. Kozelj)
2. The erased upper part to prepare the block for engraving (photo-montage: T. Kozelj)

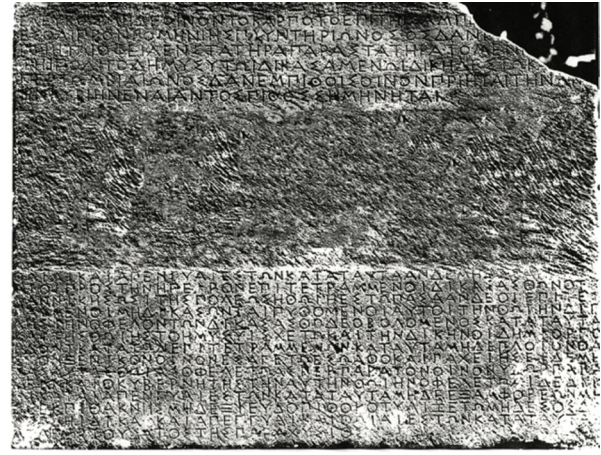
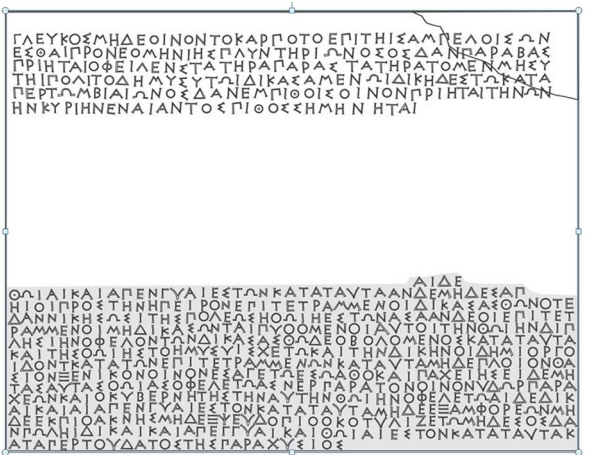


Fig. 4.3. Restitution. Phase 3

- 3a. The engraved copy of the part of the law which stays in effect during this period. *ca* 400 BC (restoration: T. Kozelj)
- 3b. The block, just after the engraving of the second inscription on the top of the block, the middle surface erased (photo-montage: T. Kozelj)

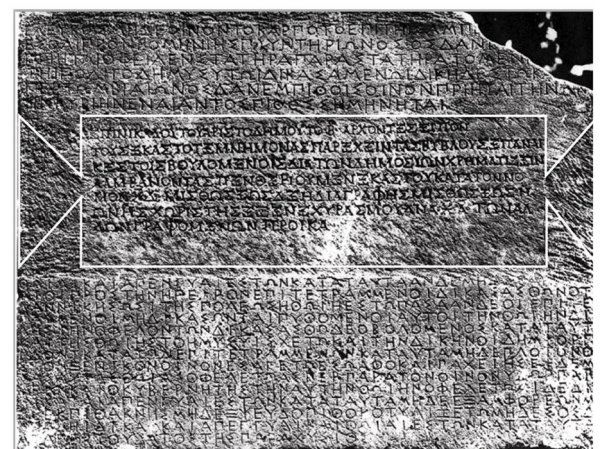
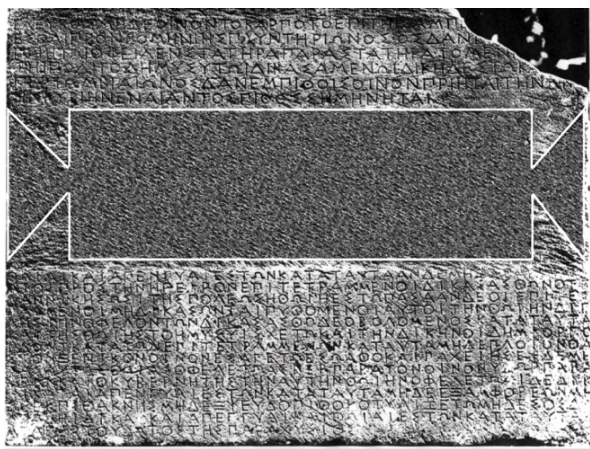


Fig. 4.3. Restitution. Phases 4 and 5

4. Prepared surface, recutting of the rectangular area, for engraving the tabula ansata and the third inscription
5. The third inscription engraved into a tabula ansata, in the middle erased surface, between the copy of the enforced law (top) and the stoichedon inscription (bottom). (photo-montage : T. Kozelj and see original photo: Fig. 4.1)



proposed new clause was not accepted and so was never engraved, leaving the surface free<sup>35</sup>. Or perhaps the copy was done later? Of course, at least before *ca.* 200 AD, before<sup>36</sup> the third inscription was engraved, which has nothing to do with the wine law.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the different phases of work on the surface of this architectural piece.

In conclusion, meticulous observation of the blocks on which the inscriptions are engraved authorized us to propose other restoration of their purpose and place in buildings, as the *in antis* altar of Zeus Agoraios (§ 1), or the one of Apollon Lykeiou (§ 2), as well as to recognize their previous states (Law of wine, § 4) and to reconsider the inscriptions (Gate of Silenos, § 3).

## ABBREVIATIONS

BCH        Bulletin de Correspondances Helléniques  
 Ét.Thas.    Études Thasiennes

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35 Still it would be curious to have this empty area between two parts of the same law, for about five centuries.

36 It could be that the erasing and the copy of the part of law were done purposely to fit into this "cleared" area the *tabula ansata* with the Roman inscription, but that is just a hypothesis.