

EMILIO ROSAMILIA

Broken *stelae*, fallen stones.  
Neglect, deterioration, and disruption  
of the epigraphic landscape

*1. Introduction*

Every year, the few visitors that go through the Epigraphic Museum in Athens are met by room after room of inscribed stones in orderly rows. Each stele is perfectly vertical and stands out against the brightly painted wall behind it. This arrangement aims at maximizing both visibility and readability and, in this respect, does not differ much from epigraphic landscapes from Classical Antiquity. However, this clean-room musealization deftly conceals the constant efforts needed to keep the inscriptions in their pristine state. The stones are kept indoors, safe from rain and snow, and even the slightest trace of mould is implacably removed by the zealous staff. This leads to an obvious question: was the same true in Classical Greece?

Ancient Greeks were hardly unaware that the passing of time could easily compromise their records, even the copies on more durable materials such as marble or bronze. Nevertheless, as far as we know, upkeep and regular cleaning of the average inscription were hardly their priority. No ancient account mentions any further expense after an inscription was carved and set up. Even statues – which were both more expensive and more visible – seem to have been generally ignored. As a matter of fact, we know of only two instances when funds were earmarked for statue cleaning<sup>1</sup> and the bad shape of many statues on the Acropolis

Unless otherwise stated, all dates are to be understood as BCE.

<sup>1</sup> A Delian account dating from 250 mentions the small payment of 1,5 drachmas to a craftsman that cleansed a small statue near the Charites (*JG XI*, 2 287, face A, l. 49: τῶι τὸ ἀνδριάντιον

around 330 is no testament to either the frequency or even the existence of upkeep and maintenance efforts<sup>2</sup>. Inscriptions generally had to fend for themselves. This means that a few inscriptions fared quite well and were still in tiptop conditions many centuries after having been inscribed, but other ones were far less lucky.

One of the mildest consequences of passing time was the reduced readability of older texts. A few ancient authors describe earlier inscriptions whose letters were worn-out and almost unreadable because of their age. For instance, Thucydides tells us that the old altar of Apollo Pythios had been dedicated by Peisistratos the younger. About a century later, this altar still stood but the letters of the dedicatory inscription were now ἀμυδρά, that is “worn out” or more likely “washed out”<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, in the speech *Against Neaira* from the Demosthenic corpus Apollodoros son of Pasion quotes an old law about the archon *basileus*’ wife that could still be read in the sanctuary of Dionysos in Limnai on an old stele inscribed «in washed-out Attic letters»<sup>4</sup>. Unreadable inscriptions are attested outside Athens as well. For example, Pausanias’ local guides told him that the base of a statue of the athlete Arrachion on the agora of Phigaleia had originally been inscribed. However, by Pausanias’ time, the inscription was no longer readable<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, from a Lindian decree dating from 22 CE we learn that at the time some

καθαρόν ποιήσαντι τὸ πρὸς ταῖς Χάρισιν). More interestingly, a decree from a third-century dossier from Erythrai about the statue of the local tyrannicide Philitas prescribes that the *agoranomoi* should keep the statue clean from verdigris: ὅπως δὲ καθαρὸς ἰοῦ ἔσται ὁ ἀνδριάς (...) ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τοὺς ἀγορανόμους (*I. Erythrai* 503, ll. 14-17; cf. Biard 2017, 237). Although we are dealing here with an old statue that had a high symbolic value for the local community, the *agoranomos* in charge immediately pointed out that no funds had been earmarked for the upkeep and the monthly crowning of the statue (*ibid.*, ll. 22-23: ὁ δὲ ἀγορανόμος ἰφῆσιν εἰς ταῦτα πόρου δεῖσθαι). This in turn attests to the exceptional nature of the provisions.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra* section 2 and *addendum*.

<sup>3</sup> Thuc. VI 54, 6-7. On ἀμυδρός meaning “discoloured” cf. Wilhelm, *Beiträge*, 112; Guarducci, *Epigrafia Greca* I, 27; Meiggs, Lewis, *GHI* 11, comm.; Kaczko, *Attic Dedicatory Epigrams*, 460 on no. 123.

<sup>4</sup> [Dem.] LIX 76: τοῦτον τὸν νόμον γράψαντες ἐν στήλῃ λιθίνῃ ἔστησαν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Διονύσου παρὰ τὸν βωμὸν ἐν Λίμναις (καὶ αὕτη ἡ στήλη ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἔστηκεν, ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασιν Ἀττικοῖς δηλοῦσα τὰ γεγραμμένα). On this passage cf. Kapparis 1999, esp. 335-337. Although Apollodoros overemphasizes the antiquity of this law, Kapparis 1999, 337, points out that, according to it, the *basilinna* had to be an Athenian citizen. This law would then be slightly later than Pericles’ law on citizenship (451/0), which made the status of female citizens relevant. On the other hand, the text is quite similar to Attic decrees on sacred norms from the first half of the fifth century, e.g. *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 2-8 and especially *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 7 (now Osborne - Rhodes, *GHI* 108; decree on the Praxiergidai, likely ca. 450). Since the trial against Neaira took place between 343 and 340 (Trevett 1992, 17; Kapparis 1999, 28), the inscription would have been about a century old at the time.

<sup>5</sup> Paus. VIII 40, 1: λέγουσι δὲ καὶ ἐπίγραμμα ἐπ’ αὐτὴν γραφῆναι· καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἠφάνιστο ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου.

statues on the way up and on the acropolis of Lindos were ἀνεπίγραφοι καὶ ἄσφαμοι<sup>6</sup>. While it is possible that some of those monuments were never inscribed in the first place, the Lindians likely employed these two adjectives to describe either the loss of the relevant inscription (e.g. a statue got separated from its base) or its unreadability<sup>7</sup>.

If sometimes the passing of time just wore texts out, at the other end of the spectrum we find the complete destruction of the inscribed document. While scholars generally focus on the many instances of inscribed documents that were purposefully destroyed or refashioned<sup>8</sup>, inscriptions were easily destroyed by a number of other factors as well. This is clearly exemplified by the so-called *Lindian Chronicle*: in 99, Hagesitimos son of Timachidas persuaded the inhabitants of Lindos to publish a list of votives that had been dedicated to Athana Lindia and – in Hagesitimos’ words – «had been destroyed together with their inscriptions on account of time»<sup>9</sup>. In a recent contribution, Carmine Ampolo convincingly argued that this expression is likely a «synthetical and euphemistic reference to a plurality of causes, either subaudible or just omitted»<sup>10</sup>. Whether inscriptions were lost to inclement weather, fires, earthquakes, wars, mobs, thieves, or simply neglect, the result was still the same: the inscription was totally destroyed.

However, what happens when an inscription is no longer in good repair, but it is neither simply unreadable nor completely destroyed yet? Two fragmentary official documents from different areas of the Greek world – one from Athens, one from Larisa – offer us descriptions of very disrupted epigraphic landscapes. In both texts we find stelae lying on the ground amid other ones that are still standing. For this reason, in the next pages we will try to shed some light on the possible causes of these localised disruptions as well as on the historical context which prompted the inscription of these two documents.

<sup>6</sup> Badoud, *Temps de Rhodes*, no. 25, ll. 30-44 esp. 30-32. The Lindians had these statues reinscribed with the names of the highest bidders in order to create a money fund for cultic expenditures. Although the addition of a new dedicatory inscription to old statues was already frowned upon by Cicero (Cic. *Att.* VI 1, 26: *odi falsas inscriptiones statuarum alienarum*), Dio of Prusa attests that the Rhodians were rather keen on the practice (Dio Chrys. *Or.* XXXI 8-9; cf. Biard 2017, 242).

<sup>7</sup> Badoud, *Temps de Rhodes*, 386, translates these adjectives as: «(des statues) dont l’inscription a disparu ou n’est plus intelligible». The interpretation of ἄσημος as “unreadable” is substantiated by the clause on publication recurring to γράμματα εὔσημα in this same inscription (Badoud, *Temps de Rhodes*, no. 25, ll. 133-135; cf. Rosamilia 2020, 136-144 esp. 138).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. e.g. Culasso 2003; Savalli-Lestrade 2009. On reuse of statues and their bases cf. also Biard 2017, 237-249.

<sup>9</sup> Badoud, *Temps de Rhodes*, no. 24, l. 4: συμβαίνει δὲ τῶν ἀνα[θεμάτων τούτων πολλὰ μετὰ τῶν ἐπιγραφῶν διὰ τὸν χρόνον ἐφθάρθαι. For the translation cf. Higbie 2003, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Ampolo 2014, 295-310 esp. 309-310.

2. Chaos on the Acropolis (ca. 336-320 BCE)

In 1992, Diane Harris published together five fragments of Hymettian marble that originally belonged to a single stele from the Athenian Acropolis<sup>11</sup>. In the surviving text, she recognized the remnants of an inventory that consisted of two columns inscribed *stoichedon* on each side of the stele. Unlike other inventories dating from the fourth century, this document deals mainly with statues in disrepair. Even so, the upper part of the first column on side A – which likely coincides with the opening section of the whole inventory – lists quite a few official inscriptions that had been inscribed by various boards of Athenian treasurers (cf. Fig. 1)<sup>12</sup>:

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 [- - -<sup>11</sup>- - - ταμιῶν τ]ῆς θεοῦ [- - -<sup>16</sup>- - -] stoich. 40  
 [- - -<sup>17</sup>- - -] χαμα[ι? .]. [- - -<sup>15</sup>- - -]  
 [- - -<sup>12</sup>- - - στήλ]η ταμιῶν τῶν [- - -<sup>14</sup>- - -]  
 4 [- - -<sup>11</sup>- - - στήλ]η ταμιῶν τῶν ἄλλ[λων - - -<sup>10</sup>- - -]  
 [- - -<sup>10</sup>- - - στήλ]η ταμιῶν [τ]ῶν τῆ[ς θεοῦ - - -<sup>9</sup>- - -]  
 [- - -<sup>8</sup>- - - ἐπ' Ἄν]τιγένους· στήλη πλ[αγία χαμαὶ . . .<sup>4</sup>]-  
 [- - -<sup>11</sup>- - -] τῶν τε{P}πάρων ἀρχῶ[ν - - -<sup>12</sup>- - -]-  
 8 [. . .<sup>4</sup>· στή]λη ταμιῶν τῶν ἄλλων [ἐ]πὶ Δ[ιοκλέους ἄρχον]-  
 [τος χα]μαὶ πλαγία· στήλη ταμιῶν τῶν [ἄλλων τῶν ἐπὶ Γλ]-  
 [αυκίπ]που ἄρχοντος χαμαὶ πλαγία· σ[τήλη ταμιῶν τῆ]-  
 [ς θεοῦ] ἐπὶ Διοκλέους· στήλιδιαι I. [- - -<sup>13</sup>- - -]-  
 12 [. . τῶ]ν ταμιῶν τῆς θ[ε]οῦ ἔχομεν, ὄντα [- - -<sup>8</sup>- - - δύο, τ]-  
 [ρί]τον ταμιῶν τῆς [θε]οῦ, [τέ]ταρτον [ταμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, π]-  
 [έμ]πτον ταμιῶν τῆς θε[οῦ, ἐ]κτον τα[μιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, ἔβδο]-  
 [μον] ταμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, ὄγ[δ]οον ταμ[ιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, ἑ]νατο]-  
 16 [ν ταμ]ιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, δέκατον ταμ[ιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, ἑ]νδέκα]-  
 [τον τ]αμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, δωδέκατ[ον ταμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, τρ]-  
 [ίτον] καὶ δέκατον ταμιῶν τῆς [θεοῦ, τέταρτον καὶ δέ]-

<sup>11</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1498-1501A; Harris 1992, esp. 646-652 (*SEG* XLII 128; M. Sève, *Bull.Ép.* 1993, no. 89; A. Chaniotis, *EBGR* 1992 [1996], 374 no. 90); Kosmetatou 2003. Cf. also Ferguson 1932, 3-7; Thompson 1944, 205; Thompson 1970, 61; Tracy, *ALC* I, 85; Mattusch 1996, 101-102; Mikalson 1998, 26 n. 32; Harris 2000; Monaco 2011, 221; Lambert 2018, 122 n. 26. *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1501B does not belong to this document (Harris 1992, 640 n. 12). On the other hand, according to A.M. Woodward (Harris 1992, 639 n. 9), the unpublished opisthographic fragment EM 4619 belongs to this same account. The original collocation of the stele is not known, but the only fragment for which some data survive – *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1498, frg. *b* – was found on the Acropolis.

<sup>12</sup> Main editions: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1498A, ll. 1-22; Harris 1992, esp. 646-647; Kosmetatou 2003, esp. 34-35. I had no chance to examine the stone autoptically. The present revision is based on the Meritt Collection squeeze of the stone now at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies (cf. Fig. 1).

[κατον] ταμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ διαλε[ιπτ?--<sup>15</sup>--].  
 20 [στήλη] ταμιῶν τῆς θεοῦ ἐπὶ Λ[-<sup>10</sup>-- στήλη ταμ]-  
 [ιῶν τῆ]ς θεο[ῦ κ]αὶ τῶν ἄλλων [-<sup>11</sup>--].[...<sup>7</sup>...]  
 [...<sup>5</sup>...σ]τήλη[τ]αμιῶν τῶν ἄλλων [...<sup>6</sup>...].[...<sup>7</sup>...].

The number of letters in the *stoichedon* grid (i.e. 40) can be deduced from the restoration of ll. 12-19. || 1. [- - -] ΗΣ.Θ[- - -] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Harris 1992, Kosmetatou 2003. || 2. χαμα[ι .] ΣΙ[- - -] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Harris 1992, Kosmetatou 2003. Letters are very worn out. I do not rule out a reading ταμ[ιῶν] τῆ[ς θεοῦ]. || 3-5. [τῶ]ν ταμιῶν Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Harris 1992, Kosmetatou 2003. In these three lines, the first letter is rather an *eta*. || 6-7. [παρα]διδομένη ὑπὸ Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Kosmetatou 2003; the supplement is rejected by Harris 1992 and should be considered hypothetical. || 7-8. [τῶν ἐπὶ Γλαυκίππου] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*). || 9-10. Δ[ιοκλέους] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*); the supplement is rejected by Harris 1992. || 11-12. ΙΑ[- - -] Harris 1992; ταμ[ιῶν τῶν ἄλλων κ]αὶ Kosmetatou 2003; [ῆ]λε[φαντωμένα ΔΙΙΙ] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*). || 12. [δύο - - -] Kosmetatou 2003; [δύο μὲν ἄγραφα] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), with an extra letter; [- - -] Harris 1992. || 14-15. ταμ[ιῶν τῆς θεοῦ, ἔβ]δομον ταμιῶν with an extra letter in l. 14 Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Kosmetatou 2003; rejected by Harris 1992. Because of the structure of these lines, one should likely postulate some clerical error on the cutter's part (cf. l. 7), possibly the syncope of the first *omicron* of ἔβδομον (cf. Threatte, *Grammar I*, 395-398). || 19. διάλιθ[ον] Harris 1992, διάλι[θον] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Kosmetatou 2003. The term – literally “studded with precious stones” – would be quite surprising in this context. The vertical stroke that previous editors interpreted as *iota* is in fact on the left side of the *stoichedon* grid. For this reason, I read instead ΔΙΑΛΕ[- - -], possibly διαλε[ίπτοντα], i.e. “standing at an interval” (*DGE*, s.v. διαλείπω § A.II.3; cf. e.g. Xen. *An.* IV 7, 6: πίπτες διαλείπουσαι μεγάλα). For a possible supplement, cf. also *infra* n. 32. || 19-20. [στηλίδιον χαλκοῦν τῶν] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), not supplied by Harris 1992, Kosmetatou 2003. The lacuna at the beginning of line 20 is compatible with the word στήλη. || 20. ἐπὶ Λ[- - -] Harris 1992; ἐπὶ [- - -] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), Kosmetatou 2003. || 21-22. [θεῶν ἐπὶ Πυθοδώρου ἄρχ]οντος Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*). Traces of a vertical stroke allow us to narrow down the alternatives to a single supplement. || 22. [τῶν ἐπὶ Κλ]ε[οκρίτου] Kirchner (*IG II<sup>2</sup>*), [- - -] Ε[- - -] Kosmetatou 2003; according to Harris 1992, the *epsilon* does not survive. Traces of a few letters are visible, but no convincing supplement can be proposed.

«[- - -] of the treasurers of the Goddess [- - -] on the ground(?) [- - -]. A stele of the treasurers [- - -]. A stele of the treasurers of the other [Gods - - -]. A stele of the treasurers of the Goddess [- - - during the archonship] of Antigenes. A stele, sideways, [on the ground - - - of] the four boards of magistrates [- - -]. A stele of the treasurers of the Other (Gods) during [the archonship of] D[iokles], on the ground, sideways. A stele of the treasurers of the [Other (Gods) during the archonship of Glaukip]pos, on the ground, sideways. A s[tele of the treasurers of the Goddes]s during the archonship of Diokles.

We have a few small stelae [- - -] of the treasurers of the Goddess: [two] are [- - -], the third] (is) of the treasurers of the Goddess, the fourth [of the treasurers of the Goddess], the fifth of the treasurers of the Goddess, the sixth of the trea[surers of the Goddess, the seventh] of the treasurers of the Goddess, the eighth of the trea[surers of the Goddess, the ninth of the trea]surers of the Goddess, the tenth of the trea[surers of the Goddess, the eleventh] of the treasurers of the Goddess, the twelfth [of the treasurers of the Goddess, the thir]teenth of the treasurers of the [God]dess, the fourteenth] of the treasurers of the Goddess, [all standing at an interval(?) - - -].

[A stele of the] treasurers of the Goddess during the archonship of [- - -]. A stele of the of the treasurers of the Goddess and the Other [(Gods) - - -]. A stele of the treasurers of the O[ther (Gods) - - -]. (...))»

Stephen V. Tracy determined that this document was inscribed by the cutter of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 334*, one of the most active Athenian stonecutters during the 330s and 320s<sup>13</sup>. As a result, all scholars agree that this inscription dates from the Lykourgos period and is likely connected with Lykourgos' reorganization of the Acropolis<sup>14</sup>. Unfortunately, the consensus ends here.

A central point in the discussion is the interpretation of the words *χαμαί πλαγία* that recur multiple times in connection with stelae. Harris interpreted this

<sup>13</sup> Tracy, *ALCI*, 82-95. The eponymous document for this stonecutter – *IG II<sup>2</sup> 334*, now *IG II<sup>3</sup> 447* – deals with the reforms of the Lesser Panathenaia in the late 330s. The same cutter is also responsible for the inscription of the law *περὶ τῆς ἐξέτασσεως* proposed by Lykourgos himself (cf. *infra* n. 22).

<sup>14</sup> On Lykourgos and his politics cf. Mitchel 1970; Humphreys 1985; Faraguna 1992; Mikalson 1998, 11-45; Habicht 2006, 27-28 and 41-48; Azoulay - Ismard 2011, *passim*. About Lykourgos' interventions on the Acropolis cf. esp. Faraguna 1992, 365-379; Lambert 2011, esp. 188-190; Monaco 2011, 220-226. Lastly, on the dating of Lykourgos' twelve-year tenure as *ἐπι τῆς διοικήσεως* cf. Faraguna 1992, 199-200; Lewis 1997, 221-227.

expression as «lying on the ground»<sup>15</sup>, while Kosmetatou prefers translating πλάγια as “sideways” or “slanting”. In particular, the latter proposed that the stelae were «perhaps removed from their original base and lined up against a wall sideways»<sup>16</sup>. In my opinion, the presence of χαμαί allows us to exclude that these stelae were either just slanting or leaning on nearby walls. A stele described as χαμαὶ πλάγια would have to be resting horizontally on the ground on one of its faces. At the same time, if the magistrates were just dealing with fallen stelae, they could have simply described them as χαμαί instead<sup>17</sup>. Since πλάγιος can easily be employed to denote something put transversally or sideways<sup>18</sup>, the expression might rather be compatible with stelae lying on the ground on one of their narrow sides.

This is hardly a natural position for a stele and certainly not one that makes reading any easier. The most likely explanation is that we are dealing here with stones that had been moved from the spot where they were originally set up. Whether someone removed some toppled stelae or just displaced a few old inscriptions to make room for new votives and documents, it seems a fair conclusion that these items were no longer considered relevant, and their readability was not a priority anymore.

Had the stelae on the ground already been set aside for removal? In order to determine this, we must first identify the type of official document we are dealing with. In fifth- and fourth-century Athens, boards of magistrates usually produced *paradoseis*, that is annual lists of items they were handling down to their successors.<sup>19</sup> Since no such list takes into account stelae and statues, our inventory is likely a one-of-a-kind document whose realization was prompted by exceptional circumstances. Documents of this kind are generally either *exetasmoi* – exceptional inventories that become necessary when discrepancies arise – or *kathaireseis*, that is lists of items that the magistrates are about to melt down or

<sup>15</sup> Harris 1992, 639. According to her, the expression describes a scrap heap of bronze items, including inscribed tablets. This same view is espoused by Monaco 2011, 221.

<sup>16</sup> Kosmetatou 2003, 36.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. e.g. the use of χαμαί in the accounts of the Erechtheion (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 474*, ll. 93-94 and 103: [λ]ίθινα παντελῶς ἐχσεργ[α]σμέ[να] | ἡὰ χαμαί and [ἡεμίεργ]α χαμαί) or the wooden log κειμέν[ωι] | χαμαί in the 329/8 accounts of the Eleusinian *epistatai* (*I.Eleusis* 177, ll. 433-434).

<sup>18</sup> The adjective πλάγιος is generally used as an antonym of ὀρθός in order to describe items that are perpendicular to others being ὀρθά. Cf. e.g. the lateral walls, πλάγιοι τοῖχοι, in Philon's arsenal (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 1668*, ll. 66 and 90; *syngraphai* of 347/6) and the description of planting cuttings in Xen. *Oec.* 19, 9: πότερα δὲ ὄλον τὸ κλῆμα ὀρθὸν τιθεῖς πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν βλέπον ἡγή μᾶλλον ἀν' ριζοῦσθαι αὐτὸ ἢ καὶ πλάγιόν τι ὑπὸ τῇ ὑποβεβλημένῃ γῆ θείης ἄν, ὥστε κείσθαι ὡσπερ γάμμα ὑπτίον;

<sup>19</sup> On the complex relations between archival registrations, *euthynai*, and inscribed inventories cf. lastly Faraguna in Boffo - Faraguna 2021, 237-264.

otherwise dispose of<sup>20</sup>. In our case, Diane Harris argued in favour of the *kathairesis* alternative<sup>21</sup>, while Elizabeth Kosmetatou suggested a stronger connection between this document and the law *περὶ τῆς ἐξετάσεως* proposed by Lykourgos himself and approved around 335<sup>22</sup>. As a result, she rather identifies this document as an *exetasmos*<sup>23</sup>.

A major clue about the nature of this document is provided by its composite structure. The fact that statues and inscriptions are mentioned in the same document proves that these items have something in common. While a *kathairesis* would possibly include very different items that were simply going to be removed from the acropolis on the same occasion, an inventory should be more coherent. However, in this case no easily identifiable common denominator comes to mind. Harris argued that the common ground was provided by the materials these items were made of and supposed that the inscriptions mentioned in the inventory were bronze ones destined to be melted down alongside the statues in disrepair<sup>24</sup>. On the other hand, Kosmetatou disproved this theory by pointing out that these bronze stelae would belong to a new class of documents that left no other trace in the surviving texts<sup>25</sup>.

If the stelae mentioned in this inventory were stone ones and belonged to the same groups as the ones published in *IG I<sup>3</sup>* and *IG II<sup>2</sup>*, then – in order for us to be dealing with an *exetasmos* – these inscriptions and statues had to have something else in common. It might be tempting to assume that these items were housed in a common location<sup>26</sup>, but this does not seem to have been the case. On the Acropolis, votives and inscriptions were likely set up in different areas<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, even though only a fraction of the original text survives, the stelae described here do not represent the variety of the epigraphic landscape on the Athenian Acropolis. For instance, neither the many decrees published ἐμὶ πόλει nor the huge

<sup>20</sup> For the distinction cf. Aleshire, *Ath. Asklepion*, 103-110; Harris 1992, 637-638. On *exetasmoi* cf. also Tréheux 1956, 467-474.

<sup>21</sup> Harris 1992, 638-639.

<sup>22</sup> *IG II<sup>3</sup>*, 1 445; cf. Faraguna 1992, 368-378. A fragment of this text (EM 2459) is still unpublished.

<sup>23</sup> Kosmetatou 2003, 44-45.

<sup>24</sup> Harris 1992, 639; cf. also Monaco 2011, 221. On bronze stelae from Athens cf. Stroud 1963, 138 n. 1; Kosmetatou 2003, 36-37; Lambert 2018, 49-50 and n. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Kosmetatou 2003, 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Kosmetatou 2003, 42.

<sup>27</sup> The 307/6 decree proposed by Stratokles of Diomeia and granting Lykourgos the *megistai timai* prescribes to set up the resulting stelae ἐν ἀκροπόλει πλησίον τῶν ἀναθημάτων ([Plut.] *Vit. X Or.* 852 E; on the epigraphic fragments pertaining to this document cf. also Lambert 2015), which seems to be some exceptional concession. Whether most offerings were kept apart from decrees or from official inscriptions in general can only be speculated.

Athenian tribute lists are mentioned. This in turn excludes that we are simply dealing with an inventory of monuments and documents set up on the Acropolis.

Possibly, the common denominator was provided by the disrepair of stones and statues alike. As a matter of fact, the bronze statues mentioned here were hardly in good shape. This is made apparent by the verbs ἀποστατέω and ἐνδέω, as well as by the recurring expression: «as for the rest, (the statue is) in good repair»<sup>28</sup>. The disrepair of much of the statuary mentioned here is further echoed in the title of the statues' section, which is partially preserved<sup>29</sup>: [- - -<sup>11</sup>- - -] καὶ κειμ[ήλια τῶν ταμι]ῶν τῆς [θεοῦ]. Although there is no consensus on the missing words at the beginning of the line<sup>30</sup>, all editors agree on the presence of κειμ[ήλια]. This word is a poetic one, rarely attested in prose before the second century<sup>31</sup>, and it conveys the idea of ancient heirlooms left undisturbed for generations but not necessarily in good shape. However, not all inscriptions listed in the text are described as χαμαὶ πλαγίᾳ<sup>32</sup> and this detail cannot provide us with the common ground that we are seeking for.

The presence of a few items in good repair among many dilapidated ones constitutes the best clue in favour of a *kathairesis*. This means that the stelae mentioned in our text were ultimately removed from the Acropolis, and reminds us that the city of Athens – in Christophe Pébarthe's words – was «free to destroy a stele as well as erasing part of its contents, [which constitutes] a sign of the city's total control over the epigraphic landscape»<sup>33</sup>.

On the other hand, the coexistence of stelae on the ground alongside standing ones before their removal proves that these inscriptions had likely become χαμαὶ πλαγίᾳ prior to this document's publication. In other words, a partially disrupted epigraphic landscape was created and maintained over a period of time on the Athenian Acropolis, until Lykourgos and his collaborators had the

<sup>28</sup> [τὰ δε] ἄλλα ὑγίης *scil.* ἀνδριάς (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1498B, ll. 49 and 51; 1500B, l. 38; cf. Harris 1992, 649 and 651).

<sup>29</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1498A, l. 23.

<sup>30</sup> Kirchner (*IG* II<sup>2</sup>) printed [τάδ' ἀναθήματα] καὶ κειμ[ήλια], which becomes problematic if we accept that the lacuna did not include letters from the previous line. Harris (1992, 641) favoured a reading [τάδε ἀγάλματα] καὶ κειμ[ήλια], which is compatible with the width of the lacuna in the form [τάδ' ἀγάλματα] καὶ κειμ[ήλια]. Lastly, Kosmetatou (2003, 38) proposed a much less convincing [τάδε χρήματα] καὶ κειμ[ήλια].

<sup>31</sup> Hdt. III 41 (the treasures of Polykrates) and VI 62 (the treasures of Ariston, king of Sparta); Plat. *Leg.* XI 913a (a hidden treasure left for someone's heirs); Hippocr. *Med. Lex* 4b-4c (experience as a θησαυρὸς καὶ κειμήλιον).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the stelae C and F from the list *infra* in the *addendum*. As for the *stelidia* mentioned in ll. 11-19, we cannot exclude that in the missing part of l. 19 magistrates described them as διαλε[ίποντα χαμαὶ πλαγίᾳ], i.e. «on the ground, sideways, at regular intervals».

<sup>33</sup> Pébarthe 2006, 261.

dilapidated statues and outdated inscriptions removed and disposed of<sup>34</sup>.

We will deal again with the inscriptions mentioned in this document in the *addendum*.

### 3. Small sanctuaries around Larisa (200-180 BCE)

Although the Athenian inscription quoted above is a unicum, a black marble stele from Larisa might provide a parallel of extreme interest for the disrupted epigraphic landscape on the Athenian Acropolis. This document dates from the Hellenistic period and deals with a few small shrines in disrepair around the city<sup>35</sup>. Because of the use of Thessalian dialect and the presence of some extremely rare words, Bruno Helly on the one side and François Salviat and Claude Vatin on the other presented two very different editions of the whole document. Taking their conclusions and hypotheses into account, I propose here a revised text of the relevant section (ll. 19-32)<sup>36</sup>:

19 (...) ἱερὸν Ἀθάνας Πατ[ρ]ίας ἔξο[υ πόλιος]  
20 κατὰ Πύθειον εἰόντων ἐν Κραννοῦνα ἀριστερᾶς [χερρὸς]  
πλατίον τοῦ βοιοῦνι τοῦ καλειμένου Ἴππο<κ>ρ[ά]τεος·  
ἐνθι κίονες πλείονες χαμαὶ συνχρυλέαι καὶ χού[ροι]  
πέλεθρα Π· πελεθραῖαι ΠΙΙ· καπβολαῖαι Π· καὶ μικ[ροῦ ἴκ?]-  
24 τὰρ Ἀθάνας Θερσῖος κίουν χαμαὶ συνχρυλέα ΚΑ[. . .<sup>5-6</sup>. . .]  
καὶ χούροι πέλεθρον Ι. – Ἔϊροι Ἴονίου τοῦ Ἐπαφᾶ [ . . .<sup>2-3</sup>. κα]-  
λειμένου πλατίον τοῦ Ἴππαρχίου περροικοδ[ο]μειμέ-  
νον καὶ ἔξ ἀστερᾶς χερρὸς ἐδήμεμιν κίονα[ς . . .<sup>5-6</sup>. . .]  
28 τοῦ πῶτ Ὀλύμποι καὶ Ἐννοδίας Μυκαβῖας [ . . .<sup>6-7</sup>. . . ],  
μεθ' ἃ εὔραμεν καὶ ἐν τοῦ αὐτοῦ τόπου κίονα[ς, ἃ μὲν]  
Διὸς συνχρυλέα, ἃ μὰ Ἐῖρας μένει· καὶ ἐπιγραφὰ [ . . .<sup>6-7</sup>. . . ]

<sup>34</sup> According to Humphreys (1985, 210), the Acropolis played only a minor role in Lykourgos' programs. However, this perspective resents from excessive focus on major building projects. This does not mean that the Acropolis played no role in Lykourgan politics (cf. Lambert 2011, esp. 188-190) nor that it was not buzzing with activity (cf. Monaco 2011, 220-226). For instance, the Acropolis benefited from the melting down of the *phialai exeleutherikai* that were turned into new processional vessels (cf. Meyer 2010) as well as from the reorganisation of Athenian sacred finances.

<sup>35</sup> Salviat - Vatin 1971, 9-34; Helly 1970 (J. and L. Robert, *Bull.Ép.* 1971, no. 375). Cf. also Theocharis 1960, 185 and pl. 158 (J. and L. Robert, *Bull.Ép.* 1964, no. 225); Chrysostomou 1998, 55 no. 2 and 107-108; Caputo - Helly 2000, 575; Mili 2014, esp. 44 and 141-142. Minor revisions of other parts of Helly's text have been proposed over the years (cf. *SEG* XXXIX 499; *SEG* LX 589).

<sup>36</sup> This revised edition is based on the photographs published by Salviat - Vatin 1971, 10 and 12, and Helly 1970, 250. No autoptic re-examination of the stone was conducted so far.

[γ]ραμμάτεσσι· “Σκείβεις καὶ Ἴππαρχος ἱερομ[ναμονέν]-  
32 [τ]ῆς ἐστάσαιεν”· (..)

21. βοιοῦνι τοῦ Helly 1970; Βοιουνίτου Salviat - Vatin 1971. || Ἴππορ[χίου]-  
Salviat - Vatin 1971; Ἴπποκ[ράτεος, οὐς] Helly 1970. The *rho* is fully read-  
able, but cf. ll. 26 (Ἴππαρχίῳ) and 31 (Ἴππαρχος). Helly (1970, 269) argues  
that the syntax calls for a relative pronoun. This is not compatible with either  
the synthetic nature of the document or width of the lacuna. || 22. καὶ χού[ροι]  
Salviat - Vatin 1971; καχού[μεναι] Helly 1970. The *iota* is clearly visible on  
the photograph and cf. l. 25. || 23-24. μικ[ροῦ ἕκ?]ταρ Helly 1970; not sup-  
plied by Salviat - Vatin 1971. The presence of an obscure [- - -].ΕΤΤΑΡ in l.  
4 makes Helly’s supplement not completely convincing. || 24. κα[χούμεναι]  
Helly 1970, for which cf. l. 22; not supplied by Salviat - Vatin 1971. Maybe  
κα[ἰ ἄλλα] *scil.* κίουν? || 25-26. Ἐπαφᾶι τ[οῦ] Helly 1970; Ἐπαφαί[ου]  
Salviat - Vatin 1971 (cf. addendum: «le ‘T’ nous semble très incertain»). Pos-  
sibly either [καὶ κα]λλειμένου or [ἐπ(ι)κα]λλειμένου. || 27. ἐδήμεμιν Helly  
1970; ἔδη ἔμμεν Salviat - Vatin 1971. || Possible supplements include κίονα[ς  
δύο Διῖ?] and κίονα[ς Εἴρουι?]. || 28. Μυκαρίας Helly 1970, 274; Μυκαϊκᾶς  
Salviat - Vatin 1971. Traces of a *beta* after ΜΥΚΑ seem to be clear. Ennodia’s  
cultic epithet might be connected Hsch. μ 1841: μυκαρίς· νυκτερίς. If μυκαρίς  
is a misspelling for μυκαβίς, then we would have here an Ennodia «of the bats»  
(cf. Rosamilia, forthcoming). || 28-29. [- - -], | μεθ’ ᾗ Helly 1970; [- - -]|μεθα  
Salviat - Vatin 1971. || 29. ᾗ μὲν supplied by Helly 1970. || 30. ᾗ μὰ Εἴρας  
μένει· καὶ Helly 1970, Salviat - Vatin 1971, addendum; ᾗμα Εἴρας· μένει καὶ  
Salviat - Vatin 1971. || Likely [ἀμυδροῖς] or some synonym, although  
[ἀρχαίοις] is a valid alternative. || 31-32. ἱερομ[νάμοι]ν[ες] ἐστάσαιεν Salviat  
- Vatin 1971; ἱερομ[νάμονες] ἐστάσαιεν Helly 1970. While the latter  
alternative is more compatible with the width of the lacuna, at the beginning of  
l. 34 I would rather read an *epsilon* than a *sigma*. As a result, I propose to read  
here the participle ἱερομ[ναμονέν]τες, which is more in line with local dedi-  
cations. For the athematic participle in Larisean dialect cf. e.g. Tziafalias -  
Helly 2007, 428. || 32. After ἐστάσαιεν, Ἄπλουνος Τεχέτα ἔξου π[όλιος  
κίουν] Salviat - Vatin 1971, as the next item in the list; Ἄπλουνος πέχεται  
ἔξου π[όλιος] Helly 1970, as part of the inscribed dedication quoted here. The  
first *tau* of Τεχέτα is easily readable and the space between the *epsilon* and the  
second *tau* is compatible with an *iota*. I propose to read Τεχίτα.

«(..) Shrine of Athana Patria, outside the city, next to the Pythion, on  
the left side of people that go towards Krannon, near the stable that is  
called “of Hippo<k>r[ates(?)].” There are pillars, fallen to the ground

for the most part, and 2 *plethra*, 7 *plethriai*, 5 *katabolaiai* of land. In addition, close nearby, a pillar of Athana Thersys, fallen to the ground KA[- - -] and 1 *plethron* of land.

To the hero Ionios, the one (we) call [also?] Epaphas, near the Hipparchion, a walled enclosure, and on the left side we located [- ?- -] pillar[s] (dedicated) to [- - -], the one on the side (of Larisa) towards Mount Olympos, and of Ennodia Mykabia [- - -]. Afterwards, we found pillars in the same place, [the one?] of Zeus fallen, while the one of Hera still stands. (There was) also an inscription in [- - -] letters: «Skeibeis and Hipparchos set up (this monument) when they were *hierom[namon]es*». (...)»

Since the upper part of this stele is lost, we do not know the circumstances behind the document's compilation. The use of 1<sup>st</sup>-person plurals (e.g. lines 27 and 29) points out that the text was written by a board of magistrates, but this does not tell us much about the nature of the text, although a few educated guesses are possible.

The recurring expression ἐτ τάνε/τόνε ἐπιβάσκει followed by a proper name is particularly relevant<sup>37</sup>. Outside this document, the rare verb ἐπιβάσκω – an alternative formation that shares the same root as βιάινω – occurs only once in Thersites' speech from the *Iliad*<sup>38</sup> and in ancient grammatical texts and *lexica* dealing with that passage. Unfortunately, this word's meaning in the *Iliad* is totally incompatible with our document, which leaves us with almost no clue as to the verb's meaning in this context. According to Helly, the form ἐπιβάσκω would be a local synonym of the term ἐμβιάινω, “rent”, that recurs frequently in Boiotian land lease contracts<sup>39</sup>. As such, the people mentioned in the text would be the lessees of the sacred lands described in the inscription.

More convincingly, Salviat and Vatin proposed that the verb ἐπιβάσκω is used here to describe irregular occupation of sacred plots<sup>40</sup>. As they pointed out, the verb ἐπιβιάινω is found in one of the fourth-century tables from Herakleia in

<sup>37</sup> Helly 1970, II. 8-9: ἐτ τάνε ἐπιβάσκει [...]λύκος Πετρίχειος; II. 15-16: ἐτ τόνε ἐπιβάσκει Ἄγα[...] | Φιλοκράτειος. Cf. also II. 36-37: [του]ννέουν ἐπιβάσκει ἐτ τὸ ψιλὸν Φίλισκος [- - -]ος.

<sup>38</sup> Hom. *Il.* II 233-234: οὐ μὲν ἔοικεν / ἀρχὸν ἔόντα κακῶν ἐπιβασκέμεν υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν.

<sup>39</sup> The term ἐμβιάινω is used extensively for «taking possession» (and thus being the lessee) in some public land leases from third-century Thespiiai in Boiotia (cf. Pemin, *Baux Rurales* 21, fig. 1; 22, fig. 1; 26). The noun ἐμβίασις is attested with a similar meaning in Mylasa and Olymos as well.

<sup>40</sup> Salviat - Vatin 1971, 15: «On pourrait traduire le terme par ‘empiéter’ ou ‘usurper’», and 34. Cf. also Montanari, *GE*, s.v. ἐπιβάσκω: «perhaps ‘to violate’», with reference to this inscription.

Lucania with a similar sense<sup>41</sup>. A second parallel for this meaning comes from an Amphictyonic decree quoted in some manuscripts of Demosthenes' *On the Crown*<sup>42</sup>. Although the decree itself is definitely a later forgery<sup>43</sup>, Mirko Canevaro recently argued that this document and similar ones were written during the Hellenistic period in the context of some rhetoric schools<sup>44</sup>. The forgers aimed at manufacturing a credible text in order to fill in the documentary gaps of fourth-century Attic speeches. For this reason, the forged decree – though not a reliable source on fourth-century Delphic practices – provides invaluable confirmation about the use of ἐπιβαίνω in Hellenistic times to describe the illegal occupation of sacred land. Our document would then be a relation by a board of local magistrates on the status of some small shrines and sacred properties within and without the city, including some plots that had been unlawfully occupied<sup>45</sup>.

Interestingly, a fair number of these small shrines held inscriptions. With the exception of the ἐπιγραφά mentioned in ll. 30-31, all inscribed stones are described here as κίονες, literally “pillars”. This shall come as no surprise, as in Thessaly the term κίουν (Att. κίων) is frequently used as a local synonym of the more widespread στήλη<sup>46</sup>. However, this might also reflect local dedication

<sup>41</sup> Pernin, *Baux Rurales* 259, doc. I, ll. 128-130: αἱ δὲ τίς καὶ ἐπιβῆι ἢ νέμει ἢ φέρει τι τῶν ἐν ταῖς ἱερῶν | γὰρ ἢ τῶν δεινῶν τι κόπτηι ἢ θραύει ἢ περιῶι ἢ ἄλλο τι σιγήται, ὁ μὲν ἱερῶν ἐγδικαζήται ὡς πολίστων (Herakleia in Lucania; fourth century). Although the sentence shows that ἐπιβαίνειν is an offence *per se*, it should be somewhat different from misappropriation of sacred land, which the same document describes as «making it private» (doc. I, ll. 49-50: τοῖς τὰν ἱερῶν γὰρ μιδίαν ποῖόντασιν; cf. also doc. II, ll. 25-26: ταύταν πᾶσαν μιδίαν ἐπεποιήντο | τινας). Since mere trespassing would hardly be punishable, the verb ἐπιβαίνω denotes either illegal occupation or a hostile intent (i.e. trespass to damage). However, the latter eventuality is discussed at length in the following line (doc. I, l. 129).

<sup>42</sup> Dem. XVIII 154: ἐπειδὴ Ἀμφισσεῖς ἐπιβαίνουσιν ἐπὶ τὴν ἱερὰν χώραν καὶ σπεύρουσι καὶ βοσκήμασι καταπέμνουσι, ἐπελθεῖν τοὺς πυλαγόρους καὶ τοὺς συνέδρους καὶ στήλαις διαλαβεῖν τοὺς ὄρους, καὶ ἀπειπεῖν τοῖς Ἀμφισσεῦσι τοῦ λοιποῦ μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν. The most recent edition of this text is provided by Canevaro 2013, 300. Since the document refers to the Fourth Sacred War, there can be little doubt that the inhabitants of Amphissa did not just attack the sacred lands but rather occupied and exploited them.

<sup>43</sup> Canevaro 2013, 295-304.

<sup>44</sup> Canevaro 2013, 329-342.

<sup>45</sup> All documents about the reorganization of lands around Larisa date from this same period. Cf. the dossier about the sale of ἱππότεια plots dating from 219 (Helly - Tziafalias 2013; *SEG* LXIV 501) as well as the fragments of at least two separate stelae about the registration or alienation of landed property dating from ca. 200-190 (Habicht 1976; *SEG* XXVI 762-766). Notably, the verb ἐπιβάσκω is not present in either of these dossiers.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. e.g. the publication clause of the Larisean decree granting citizenship to the rhetor Bombos son of Alpheios, from Alexandria Troas, dating from the early second century (Béquignon 1935, no. 2, ll. 30-31): τὸς ταμίαις ἐσδόμεν ὀνγράψει<ν> αὐτὸ (i.e. τὸ μὰ ψάφισμα τότε) ἐν κίονα

practices. The stelae described here were apparently inscribed only with the name of a god/goddess and their cultic epithet, either in the genitive or in the dative<sup>47</sup>. Inscriptions of this kind are quite common in Thessaly<sup>48</sup> and can function as a dedication and a boundary marker for a small *temenos* at the same time<sup>49</sup>.

From our point of view, the most striking parallel between our text and the Athenian inventory is provided by the attention reserved to the epigraphic landscape and its perturbation. To describe some of the *kiones* mentioned here, the document's writers recur to an otherwise unattested local word: the adjective \*συγχρυλέος. In the absence of other attestations, the meaning of this term can be deduced from its frequent juxtaposition to the adverb χαμαί and its use as an antonym of μένει in line 30. There can be little doubt that the document's compilers employed this adjective in order to describe stones that were no longer standing<sup>50</sup>. On the other hand, according to the most plausible etymology of \*συγχρυλέος<sup>51</sup>, the expression χαμαί συγχρυλέα likely means "fallen to the ground". Therefore, unlike their Athenian counterparts, the magistrates who wrote this list were probably dealing with alterations of the epigraphic landscape whose causes and aims were not so evident.

Little we do know of the inscriptions mentioned in this document, of their date and form. No traces of many of these cults survive outside this text and in some cases the lack of cultic epithets makes possible connections flimsy. For instance, the two pillars dedicated to Zeus and Hera mentioned in lines 29-30 could come either from the same sanctuary where Parmonis daughter of Kallikles dedicated an inscribed stele to Zeus and Hera during the late second century<sup>52</sup> or from any other Zeus sanctuary around Larisa. However, there is an exception. Lines 12-16 of our document describe a sanctuary of Apollo Promantas, where a stele

λιθίαν καὶ κατα[θέ]μιεν ἐν τῷ ἱερῶν τοῦ Ἄπλουτος τοῦ Κερδοίου. In Larisa, the local form στάλλα recurs only in the publication clauses of the dossier about the concessions of citizenship prompted by Philip V and his intervention (*IG IX, 2 517*, ll. 20-22 and 43-45; documents dating from 217 and 214 respectively). However, in this case we cannot rule out the influence of *koine*.

<sup>47</sup> Lazzarini, *Dediche*, 59 nos. 6 and 8, 75-77.

<sup>48</sup> Heinz 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. e.g. the small sanctuary of Pasikrata discussed by Stamatopoulou 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Salviat - Vatin 1971, 15, who translated this term as «renversé», «gisant».

<sup>51</sup> According to Helly 1970, 269-270, the radical -χρυ- would be derived from the Indo-European root \**g<sup>h</sup>reh<sub>2</sub>u-*. This same root is connected with aorist epic forms ἔχρα(φ)ε, χρα(φ)εῖν, the rare verb χράω, and the epic adjective ζαχρη(φ)ής, as well as Latin verbs *congruo* and *ingruo*. While many of these forms basically mean "attack", "wound", or "assault", they can easily be interpreted as akin to "fall upon one's enemy".

<sup>52</sup> Giannopoulos 1931, 177 no. 13; Heinz 1998, 170 no. 3 and fig. 170: Διὶ καὶ Ἥρᾳ Παρμονίς Καλικλέου[ς]. Cf. also Moustaka 1983, 142; Rakatsanis - Tziafalias 1997, 50 and n. 306; Mili 2015, 323 no. 451.

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for the same god stood alongside one of Apollo Delphaios<sup>53</sup>. The latter epithet is extremely rare, but a fourth-century stele mentioning Apollon Delphaios was found near Larisa in the early 1970s<sup>54</sup>. While we cannot be sure that this is the same stele mentioned in our document, it cannot be excluded either. The stele would have been about two centuries old by the time the magistrates found it still standing and in good shape.

Quite interestingly, the magistrates do not mention any intervention to restore the fallen stelae. However, this may be due to the nature of the document as an official investigation about the state of the shrines around the city. As we have seen, a few individuals are mentioned in the text because they had usurped some sacred land. However, they were hardly allowed to go on with their unlawful exploitation once it was discovered and brought to the city's attention. Similarly, the magistrates – after having recorded the state of disrepair of some shrines and informed the city about it – likely planned some interventions, secured the city's approval, and took action in due course.

The description of this disrupted epigraphic landscape in the Larisean countryside is quite detailed. However, one is left to consider what could have caused this state of disrepair across the land. From this point of view, Caputo and Helly provided an interesting hypothesis: that these stelae fell during some otherwise-unattested earthquake<sup>55</sup>. While this cannot be excluded, our document aims at much more than just a restoration plan for damaged buildings and premises throughout the city. The unlawful occupation of sacred land points at a situation of neglect over a period of years – if not decades – before the enquiry whose results are preserved on our stone was even conducted<sup>56</sup>.

The document's dating might provide an interesting clue on alternative causes for the disrepair. Helly convincingly dated this inscription to the beginning of the second century on palaeographical and dialectal grounds<sup>57</sup>. This means that the document was likely inscribed after the Second Macedonic War (200-196). This conflict involved fighting throughout Pelasgiotis, including Flamininus' long and unsuccessful siege of Atrax in fall 198<sup>58</sup> and the battle of Kynoskephalai

<sup>53</sup> Helly 1970, ll. 12-13: ἱερὸν Ἀπλουνοῦ [Προ]μάντα κίουν καὶ Δελφᾶίοι κίουν.

<sup>54</sup> Gallis 1971, 303 and pl. 268γ; Heinz 1998, 221 no. 91 and fig. 27: Ἀπλουσι Δελφᾶίου. Cf. also McDevitt 1970, no. 365; Moustaka 1983, 147; Rakatsanis - Tziafalias 1997, 23 and pl. 5; Mili 2015, 305 no. 46. Unfortunately, the text was found in the possession of a private citizen and nothing is known about its original findspot.

<sup>55</sup> Caputo - Helly 2000, esp. 575.

<sup>56</sup> Of course, this does not rule out that it was the earthquake that finally convinced the Lariseans to take matters into their own hands.

<sup>57</sup> Helly 1970, 255-256.

<sup>58</sup> Liv. XXXII 15, 8; 17, 4-17; 18, 1-3. As Livy states, Atrax is just 10 miles from Larisa itself.

the following year<sup>59</sup>. However, despite its closeness to the front, Larisa itself was not directly involved in the fights<sup>60</sup>. A slightly later date for our document is not to be excluded. Admittedly, Antiochus III laid siege to Larisa during his campaign in Greece in the fall of 192. However, he was deterred from a real assault by the arrival of Appius Claudius with Roman reinforcements<sup>61</sup>.

Both these conflicts left almost no trace in contemporary Larisean epigraphic production<sup>62</sup>. For instance, no mention of either war can be found in this document and – if we ignore fallen inscriptions – traces of devastation are non-existent. As a result, no direct connection between these conflicts and the alteration of the local epigraphic landscape can be proposed. On the other hand, the many years of political tensions and warfare throughout Thessaly might have led to reduced maintenance in extra-mural sacred areas as well as to unlawful occupation of sacred spaces by private citizens. It is likely the result of these phenomena that we are contemplating when reading this inscription.

#### 4. Conclusions

These two documents offer us two case studies of extreme interest. They both describe a perturbed epigraphic landscape where inscriptions were in bad shape and at least some of them were on the ground. At the same time, the landscapes they describe differ greatly.

The Lykourgan document from the Athenian Acropolis listing statues and stelae is most likely a *kathairesis* and commemorates monuments that had just been removed from the Acropolis or were about to. However, the fact that some of these stelae were listed as already on the ground points out to the fact that they were in this state prior to their removal. In addition, these stelae were positioned sideways. This partial defunctionalisation points to some human intervention that

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Will 1982, 159-160.

<sup>60</sup> Philip and his troops moved from Larisa towards Pherai before meeting Flamininus' army in the Kynoskephalai hills (Polyb. XVIII 19, 3; Liv. XXXIII 6, 3). In the aftermath of the battle, Philip fled towards Macedonia, so Flamininus reached Larisa but found no resistance (Polyb. XVIII 33, 8; Liv. XXXIII 11, 1-2).

<sup>61</sup> Liv. XXXVI 10, 3-14. Interestingly, Livy does not describe any actual attack on the city but rather insists on Antiochus' doubts about the right course of action.

<sup>62</sup> A Larisean decrees honours the Roman [Titus?] Quinctius son of Titus for his actions during a long war – Arvanitopoulos 1910, no. 3 (*SEG* XXXIII 461); Bouchon 2007 – and mentions that local fields had hardly been tilled during the conflict (ll. 2-3: [τῶν ἀγρῶ]ν ἀρουμένων ἢ[κιστῶ]). Although this document has generally been dated to ca. 186 (this date is still accepted in Zelnick-Abramovitz 2013, 125), in a recent paper Richard Bouchon (2007, 260-261) argued convincingly that the decree dates from the years immediately after the First Mithridatic War.

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set these inscriptions aside even before the city decided to remove them from the Acropolis. In other words, the perturbed epigraphic landscape on the Athenian Acropolis was at least partially the result of deliberate choices on some magistrates' part rather than just the side effect of insufficient maintenance efforts.

On the other hand, the inscription from Larisa registers the state of some sacred areas within and without the city around 200 and describes the perturbed epigraphic landscape of a few peri-urban shrines. While some external calamity – e.g. an earthquake – cannot be ruled out, in this case the disrepair seems to be due mainly to neglect. Possibly, the worries caused by the wars against the Macedonians and Antiochus III – which were mainly fought in Thessaly – played a major role in the Lariseans' reduced attention to the state of their small shrines around the city. At the same time, the document likely attests to the city's effort to regain full control on these sacred plots and shrines and possibly precludes to a full restoration of the epigraphic landscape.

Despite the different situations they portray, these two documents constitute the best reminder that epigraphic landscapes in ancient Greece were neither self-maintaining nor always orderly. Even more interestingly, in both cases the description of irregular situations is just a preliminary step to the reorganization of the epigraphic landscape by city officials, which proves that efforts to keep inscriptions in good repair may have been rare and exceptional but were not completely inexistent.

emilio.rosamilia@unipg.it

Addendum. *The inscriptions mentioned in IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498A*

The identification of IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498+ as a *kathairesis* allows us to analyse the stelae mentioned in this document in more detail. Since many official Attic inscriptions from the fifth and fourth centuries survive, we should first ask ourselves whether any of the stelae listed in IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498A are still extant.

In order to answer to this question, we must first take into account that the magistrates that wrote this list were no epigraphers. True, they might have had access to official documents and archon lists that allowed them to connect a single board of treasurers to the year they were in charge. However, consulting these records would have been beyond the scope of our document, that is identifying each stele, describing its current state, and preserving its memory in view of removal and reuse.

The magistrates probably relied on what was readable in each stele's very first lines. For instance, when we find a mention of a stele τῶν τεττάρων ἀρχῶν (ll. 6-7; Stele B *infra*), we are very likely dealing with one of the many inventories of the Treasurers of Athena inscribed between 434/3 and the last years of the Peloponnesian War<sup>63</sup>. During this period, inventories followed a four-year cycle with an official audit during the Greater Panathenaia, a situation attested by the heading of each stele. For instance, the earliest inventory of the Hekatompedon begins thus<sup>64</sup>:

[τάδε παρέδοσαν] ἡαι τέτταρες ἀρχαί, ἡαὶ [ἐδί]δοσαν τὸν λόγον ἐκ  
Π[α]ναθηναίον ἐ[ς Πανα]-  
[θέναια, τοῖς τα]μίαςιν, ἡοῖς Κράτες Λαμπτ[ρε]ῦς ἐγραμμάτευε·  
κ.τ.λ.

«The four boards (of treasurers) that submitted their account from Panathenaic festival to Panathenaic festival (for auditing purposes) handed over the following items to the treasurers whose secretary was Krates of the deme of Lamptrai. (...)»

Even though no convincing restoration of lines 6-7 of our text can be proposed, very likely the magistrates did not read up to the point where the relevant storeroom is mentioned<sup>65</sup>. This is even more evident when they describe a document simply as the stele of a specific board of treasurers.

<sup>63</sup> IG I<sup>3</sup> 292-340 and 343-358.

<sup>64</sup> IG I<sup>3</sup> 317, ll. 1-2. On the Hekatompedon, the main room of the Parthenon, cf. van Rookhuijzen 2020, 6-9.

<sup>65</sup> In the case quoted above, IG I<sup>3</sup> 317, l. 4.

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To complicate matters, the number and characteristics of boards of sacred treasurers in Athens varied over time<sup>66</sup>. Up to 434/3, the only board of Athenian treasurers mentioned in our sources were the Treasurers of Athena. In that year, the first Kallias decree instituted a second centralized board of Treasurers who were in charge of the revenues and resources of the Other Gods<sup>67</sup>. The two boards were merged sometime during the last phases of the Peloponnesian War<sup>68</sup> and remained together until 386/5<sup>69</sup>. They then co-existed as independent boards for a few decades but were likely merged again in the 340s, when they became known simply as the Treasurers of Athena<sup>70</sup>. The situation is further complicated by the fact that each year the treasurers of Athena published many inscriptions, that can be divided into two different types:

- *Traditiones*, or inventories, that is lists of items that were handed over to the board in charge for the following year<sup>71</sup>.
- *Rationes*, or accounts, that generally take the form of a list of annual disbursements to other boards of magistrates<sup>72</sup>. Unlike the inventories, these documents are only attested up to the last years of the Peloponnesian War.

As for the treasurers of the Other Gods, when they were a separate board they published their own inventories and accounts. However, only a few of these documents survive. The main exception is a long inventory of 429/8<sup>73</sup> plus some fragmentary inventories dating from between 386/5 and ca. 350<sup>74</sup>.

Taking this complex situation into account, we can now try and determine

<sup>66</sup> Rhodes 2013, 213-216; Migeotte 2014, 427-428.

<sup>67</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 52 (cf. now Osborne - Rhodes, *GHI* 144). On this board of treasurers cf. Linders 1975.

<sup>68</sup> The earliest datable account by a joint board of Treasurers dates from the archonship of Eukleides in 403/2 (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1370+1371+1384; cf. Harris 1995, 254 no. 26), although fragments two earlier accounts might survive as well (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1502 and Stroud 1972, 424-426 no. 56; cf. Harris 1995, 254 nos. 24-25). According to Ferguson 1932, 104-106 (followed by Blamire 2001, 116 and 121), the unification took place in 406/5, at the end of a Panathenaic cycle, although this hypothesis has been partially revoked into doubt by Thompson 1970, 61-63. This unification is among the innovations of the proposed oligarchic constitution of 411/0 quoted by [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 30, 2 (cf. Rhodes 1981, 391).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1407, an inventory dating from 385/4.

<sup>70</sup> [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47, 1, attests to the existence of a single board of treasurers in the late fourth century (cf. Rhodes 1981, 549-551). On the date of the amalgamation cf. Papazarkadas 2011, 30 and n. 67. Whether the Treasurers of the Other Gods were reinstated during the third-second century is still debated (cf. the still unpublished law from Brauron, *SEG XXXVII* 89, that – according to Rhodes 2013, 205 and n. 85 – might be the Hellenistic copy of a text dating from the 340s).

<sup>71</sup> For these documents cf. Harris 1995; Hamilton 2000, esp. 247-276.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 375, l. 1: Ἀθηναῖοι ἀνέλοσαν ἐπὶ Γλαυκίππο ἄρχοντος.

<sup>73</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 383.

<sup>74</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1445-1454.

which kind of documents are described in our text. Only in lines 1-11 and 19-22 some stelae are described at length. In the case of seven stelae, we possess sufficient data for a closer examination:

- *Stele A* (ll. 5-6), of the Treasurers of the Goddess(?), archonship of [An]tigenes (407/6).
- *Stele B* (ll. 6-7), of the Four Boards, dating from the second half of the fifth century (discussed *supra*).
- *Stele C* (ll. 8-9), of the Treasurers of the Other Gods, archonship of D[iokles] (409/8)<sup>75</sup>.
- *Stele D* (ll. 9-10), of the Treasurers of the Other Gods, archonship of [Glaukip]pos (410/9).
- *Stele E* (ll. 10-11), of the Treasurers of the Goddess, archonship of Diokles (409/8).
- *Stele F* (l. 20), of the Treasurers of the Goddess. The name of the archon is lost, except for the first letter, a triangular one. Possible supplements are too many for a sound hypothesis. However, no fifth-century archon is compatible after Apollodoros (430/29), so we are likely dealing with a *post*-386/5 inventory.
- *Stele G* (ll. 20-22), of the Treasurers of the Goddess and the Other Gods, very likely an inventory. Since the lacuna containing the missing pieces of information about the stele is 24 letters wide and traces of a vertical stroke are visible, a few supplements are equally plausible. In particular, we could read either [τῶν ἐπὶ Ξεναι]ν[έτου ἄρχλοντος] (401/0) or [ἐπὶ - - -<sup>7</sup>- - - Ο]Υ[Σ χαμαι πλαγία]. In the latter case, the archons Euthykles (398/7), Philokles (392/1), and Nikoteles (391/0) are all equally likely<sup>76</sup>.

If we set aside Stelae B, F and G, the remaining documents all date from the last years of the Peloponnesian War and more precisely from between 410/9 and 407/6. These four years correspond to a particular phase in the administration of Athenian sacred finances, because they stand between the oligarchic rule of the Four Hundred in 411 and the merging of the two boards of treasurers in 406/5. Since treasurers of Athena normally inscribed groups of four inventories on the same stone and omitted the archon's name at least until 407/6<sup>77</sup>, it stands to reason

<sup>75</sup> Under Astyphilos (420/1) the accounts of the Treasurers of Athena were published on stelae covering four-year intervals. However, we cannot be completely sure that the same was true for the accounts of the Treasurers of the Other Gods (cf. *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 383).

<sup>76</sup> For surviving inventories dating from this period, cf. Harris 1995, 254-255.

<sup>77</sup> The earliest surviving inventory on a single stele is *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 341 (Hekatompedon inventory; either 407/6 or 406/5). The Pronaos inventory of 410/9 is missing and was likely inscribed on a

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that the inscriptions mentioned here are mainly expenditure accounts (*rationes*). Unlike inventories, starting from 410/9 these documents were generally inscribed on a single stele, although in a few occurrences the back of a stele was reused for a later inventory. Considering the chronological span, it is useful to compare what accounts we know from these years with the stelae described in *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498A*.

Stele D has a particularly striking parallel in a well-known document now at the Louvre Museum: the Choiseul Marble (Fig. 2)<sup>78</sup>. This stele preserves the account of the Treasurers of Athena dating from the archonship of Glaukippos (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 375*; 410/9), the same year of Stele D. Since this account is not mentioned in the surviving part of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498A*, we might legitimately wonder whether and to what extent the survival of the Choiseul Marble was due to the fact that it was not included in this *kathairesis*.

In addition to *IG I<sup>3</sup> 375*, two other accounts potentially date from these years: *IG I<sup>3</sup> 376* and *377*. *IG I<sup>3</sup> 377* is an extremely problematic document in its own right. This account is inscribed on the back of the Choiseul Marble and likely includes entries dating from five different prytanies during the last three months of 408/7 and the first three months of 407/6<sup>79</sup>. In addition, this account lacks an opening section and deals with small amounts of money. As a result, while the importance of *IG I<sup>3</sup> 377* as a source for the year 407 cannot be called into question, we might legitimately wonder whether we are dealing here with the same type of document as *IG I<sup>3</sup> 375-376*.

The case of *IG I<sup>3</sup> 376* is even more problematic. Almost all scholars agree that this document could plausibly date from 409/8<sup>80</sup>. This, in turn, would lead to an identification between *IG I<sup>3</sup> 376* and our Stele E and prove that not all inscriptions mentioned in our text disappeared from the Acropolis altogether. However, one cannot completely ignore the objection of Gaetano De Sanctis, namely the absence of the *diobelia* in the preserved sections of this account<sup>81</sup> and alternative

separate stone (cf. Thompson 1970, 55 n. 12), but the Pronaos inventories of the following three years are all inscribed on a single stele (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 314-316*).

<sup>78</sup> Meiggs - Lewis, *GHI* 84; *IG I<sup>3</sup> 375*; Osborne - Rhodes, *GHI* 180. On this stone cf. now Lambert 2014.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. the accurate analysis by Lambert 2014. According to Pritchett 1977, 12, the text of *IG I<sup>3</sup> 377* would be inscribed over an earlier one.

<sup>80</sup> Ferguson 1932, 18-27. David Lewis (in *IG I<sup>3</sup>*) and Samons 2000, 275-276 n. 105, tentatively accepted Ferguson's conclusions, while others (e.g. Blamire 2001, 118-119) take the date for sure. The first expenditures from the sacred reserves on the Acropolis in 412 (Thuc. VIII 15, 1) provide a *terminus ante quem non* for *IG I<sup>3</sup> 376*. At the same time, this account can hardly be later than the loss of Pylos (cf. *IG I<sup>3</sup> 376*, l. 4: funds for an expedition [ἐξ Πέλο]πόννησον), which took place in 409/8 (Diod. XIII 64, 5-9).

<sup>81</sup> De Sanctis 1935, 211-213. Cf. also the alternative demotic form Ἀλοπτεκε(ι)εῖς for Ἀλοπτεκῆθεν (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 376*, ll. 12 and 31) that is otherwise unattested after 415/4.

dates – such as 413/2 and the months of 411/0 after the fall of the Four Hundred – should not be dismissed lightly<sup>82</sup>.

	Glaukippos (410/9)	Diokles (409/8)	Euktemon (408/7)	Antigenes (407/6)
Treasurers of the Goddess	IG I <sup>3</sup> 375	E (IG I <sup>3</sup> 376?)		A
Treasurers of the Other Gods	D	C		
Non-Annual Accounts			IG I <sup>3</sup> 377	

Tab. 1. Accounts of Athenian Treasurers, 410/9-407/6. From the archonship of Kallias of Angele (406/5), the two boards were probably merged into one.

Unfortunately, little can be said on the other inscriptions mentioned in our document. For instance, we know next to nothing about the set of 14 *stelidia*<sup>83</sup> – all pertaining to the treasurers of the Goddess – that are described in lines 11-19. From the fact that they are considered together, we might infer that these inscriptions shared some common characteristics and possibly belonged to a single dossier or at least to a single set of documents previously earmarked for removal. Our best clue is the use of the diminutive *στηλίδιον*: these inscriptions looked smaller than other official ones. One possibility in particular comes to mind, that is the annual inventories of the Treasurers of the Goddess dating from after 386/5, definitely smaller than their fifth-century counterparts.

Some other inscriptions are mentioned in the next section of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498+* as well. The magistrates that wrote down this list of statuary at times referred to monuments as the offering of some private individual, likely quoting the dedicator's name inscribed on the statue base. The names of 15 dedicators are at least partially preserved but identifications with Athenians known from other sources are hypothetical at best. Karkinios of the deme of Thorikos is likely the main exception<sup>84</sup>. Two members of an important family from Thorikos were named

<sup>82</sup> The very fragmentary *IG I<sup>3</sup> 372* can possibly date from 413/2 as well.

<sup>83</sup> The word *στηλίδιον* is extremely rare. Hsch. s.v. *στηλίδια* (σ 1815) explains the plural form as οἱ τεθειμένοι ὄροι, while in Thphr. *Char.* XXI 9 the man of petty ambition sets up a tomb with an inscribed *stelidion* for his puppy. As shown by these examples, the term has more to do with the size of the support than with the nature of the inscribed text. The word recurs in the *Patria* of Constantinople as well (Cameron - Herrin 1984, §38; cf. also Suid. s.v. *Μίλιον*, μ 1065), but with the new meaning of “small statue”.

<sup>84</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498B*, ll. 68-69: [--- ἄ]προστατεῖ ὅ τι εἶ[χεν ἐν - -] ἄ]νάθημα Καρκίνου Θ[ορικίου].

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Karkinios between the fifth and fourth centuries: Karkinios the elder, *strategos* in 432/1<sup>85</sup>, and his grandson<sup>86</sup>. Quite interestingly, the inscribed base of a statue dedicated by Karkinios the elder on the Acropolis around 450 has survived<sup>87</sup>. However, whether this is the base of the statue mentioned in our inscription is debatable.

From this analysis, it emerges that all these inscriptions were less than a century old at the time they were described and likely removed from the Acropolis. The reasons behind this intervention remain unclear. On the one hand, the limited space available on the Acropolis and the constant addition of new monuments and documents required complex decisions. The city had to strive to maintain a careful balance between setting up new monuments and removing older ones. The stelae mentioned in our document were outdated ones and had likely outlived their usefulness as both official registrations and reminders of the past. Their removal was thus a necessary step to allow for new, more relevant texts to be displayed instead.

At the same time, we cannot ignore that at least some of these documents dealt with the struggles of administering sacred resources throughout the most difficult years of the Peloponnesian War and the early years of the fourth century. This situation, in turn, made the removal of the long-outdated documents even easier and preferable, since the history these stelae told – one of dwindling resources, empty coffers, and later efforts to partially recover from the lost war – was partially at odds with Lykourgan-era attention for the glorious days of fifth-century Athenian empire<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Traill, *PAA* 564125.

<sup>86</sup> Traill, *PAA* 564130 and likely 564135.

<sup>87</sup> Raubitschek, *Dedications* 127; *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 874: [τὰ]θεναῖαι Κα]ρκί[ος | Χσ]ενο[ί]μο  
Θο]ρίκ[ιος | τρ]ιερ[αρχῶν ἀνέ]θεκε].

<sup>88</sup> Lambert 2011, 188-190. Conversely, the removal of the damaged statues listed in this inscription had likely more to do with decor than with anything else. In any case, Lykourgan-era policies against ostentation of private wealth and the increasing praise for men willing to spend their wealth for the city' benefit in more useful ways (on the general mindset cf. Faraguna 2011, 76-85) hardly hindered this decision.

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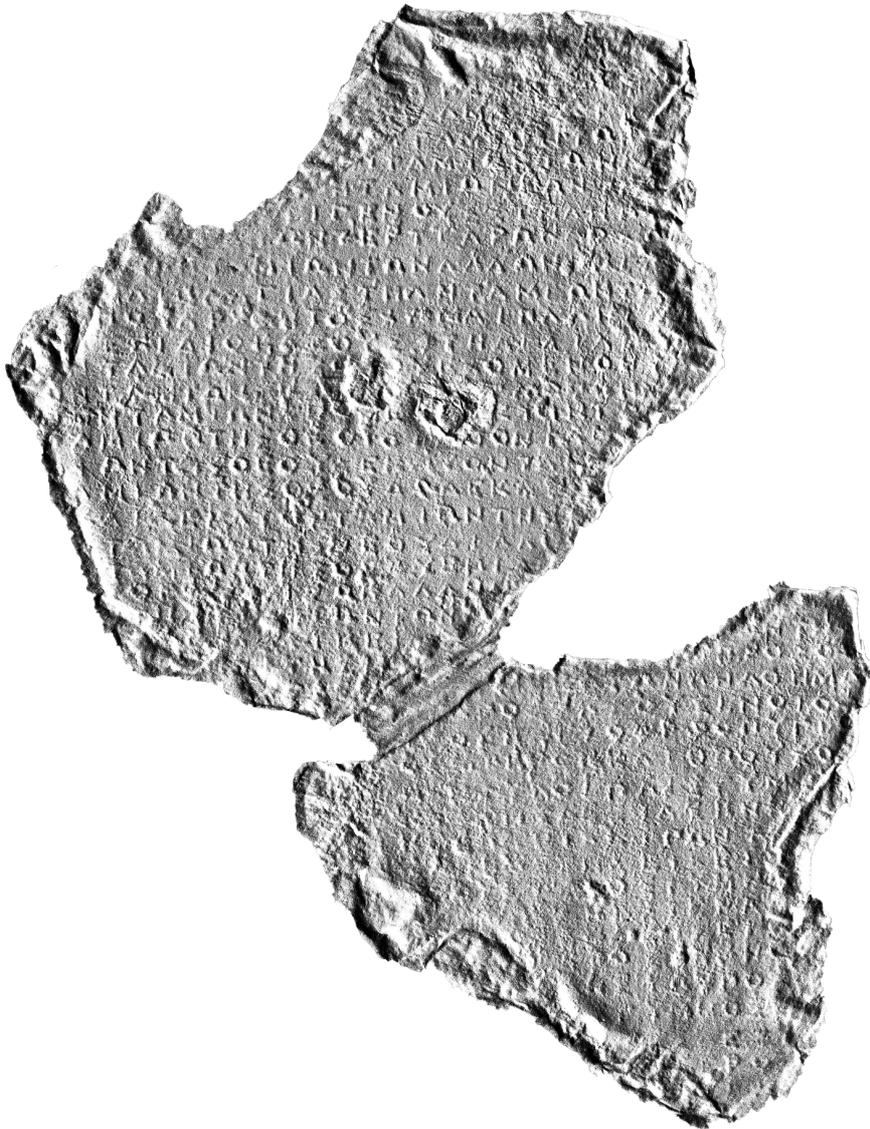
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*Emilio Rosamilia*



*Fig. 1* Squeeze of IG II<sup>2</sup> 1498A (courtesy of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton; from the Meritt Collection, IAS #2365). Photographs of the squeeze are accessible online at: <https://albert.ias.edu/handle/20.500.12111/7567> (last accessed: 26/05/2023).

*Broken stelae, fallen stones*



*Fig. 2* Louvre Museum, Ma 831: the Choiseul Marble, front (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 375*). The upper half of the stone is decorated with a bas-relief portraying the goddess Athena in arms, an olive tree, and a male figure, possibly the Athenian Demos. © 2005 Musée du Louvre - Daniel Lebée and Carine Deambrosis. The image is accessible online at: <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010252274/> (last accessed: 26/05/2023).

*Abstract*

Nel corso dei secoli, le antiche città greche hanno prodotto numerosi testi su pietra e metallo, e da nessuna parte tanto quanto nell'antica Atene. Tuttavia, quando un'iscrizione diventava obsoleta, si poneva il problema del suo riutilizzo. Le dediche agli déi in pietra e bronzo, essendo oggetti sacri, presentavano difficoltà in termini di smaltimento. Il risultato era un paesaggio di stele rotte e iscrizioni danneggiate accanto a nuovi testi. Le norme contro il danneggiamento delle iscrizioni nei periodi arcaico e classico spiegano in parte questa situazione. Tuttavia, due documenti epigrafici specifici fanno luce su questa coesistenza: un inventario dell'Acropoli ateniese e un'iscrizione di Larisa. Analizzando questi testi, l'articolo esplora le loro implicazioni metodologiche per la ricostruzione del paesaggio iscritto. Confrontando le situazioni che hanno portato alla loro pubblicazione, l'articolo esamina se l'interesse per la documentazione dei luoghi sacri sia stata l'unica motivazione e se siano seguite iniziative di restauro. La riflessione presentata può migliorare la nostra comprensione dello sviluppo del paesaggio epigrafico in generale e quello ateniese in particolare. L'assenza di attenzione per le iscrizioni più antiche viene infatti qui presentato come un fattore significativo nella formazione del paesaggio epigrafico, mettendo in discussione l'opinione prevalente secondo la quale esso sarebbe stato unicamente il risultato di decisioni deliberate dalla *polis*.

Over the centuries, the cities of ancient Greece produced numerous texts on stone and metal, and nowhere more so than in ancient Athens. However, when an inscription outlived its purpose, the problem of reuse arose. Dedications to the gods in stone and bronze, as sacred objects, presented difficulties in terms of removal. The result was a landscape of broken stelae and damaged inscriptions alongside new texts. The rules against damaging inscriptions in the Archaic and Classical periods partly explain this situation. However, two specific epigraphic documents shed light on this coexistence: an inventory from the Athenian Acropolis and an inscription from Larisa. By analysing these texts, the article explores their methodological implications for the reconstruction of the inscribed landscape. By comparing the situations that led to their publication, the article examines whether the interest in documenting sacred sites was the sole motivation and whether restoration initiatives followed. The considerations presented may improve our understanding of the development of the epigraphic landscape in general and the Athenian landscape in particular. Indeed, the neglect of older inscriptions is presented here as a significant factor in the formation of the epigraphic landscape, challenging the prevailing view that it was solely the result of deliberate decisions by the *polis*.