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Elizabeth Kosmetatou

PERGAMENE LETTER-CUTTERS POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITS

This paper is the result of my study of a large number of Pergamene inscriptions, which took place over a long period of time.¹ It follows on the footsteps of recent work that has been published on the identification of ancient letter-cutters from a number of Greek localities. Although important palaeographical remarks on ancient masons' hands had already been made by various scholars in the course of this century,² the guidelines for a systematic study were established by Stephen V. Tracy. This sort of work was initially viewed with scepticism, but it yielded undeniable results, as it allowed a more precise dating or redating of stones, produced a significant amount of new joints, and offered important historical information.³

¹ As ever, it is a pleasure to express my gratitude to those scholars who offered their help and support in my research related to this study: Professor Klaus HALLOF kindly allowed me to study, photograph, and publish FRÄNKEL's Pergamene squeezes at the *Inscriptiones Graecae* during three trips to Berlin: in 1993, 1996, and 1999. My heartfelt thanks go to Dr. Silvia SCHÖNE-BREHME of the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin for allowing me to see, study and make squeezes of several Pergamene inscriptions in that collection. Thanks are also due to Dr. Wolfgang RADT, Professor Stephen TRACY, Dr. Renate HEINRICH, and Wendy WATKINS. In its final form this article was written during my tenure as fellow of the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research, Belgium (F.W.O. Vlaanderen, België). Naturally, I assume all responsibility for all errors and flaws in this study.

² Most notably Sterling DOW. Cf. H. T. WADE-GERY, *BSA* 33 (1932-1933) 122-135; S. V. TRACY, "Identifying Epigraphical Hands", *GRBS* 11 (1970) 323-325; IDEM, "Identifying Epigraphical Hands II", *GRBS* 14 (1973) 189-195; IDEM, *The Lettering of an Athenian Mason* [= *Hesperia Suppl.* 15], Princeton 1975; IDEM, "IG II² 2336: Contributors of First Fruits for the Pythais", *Meisenheim am Glan* 1982; IDEM, "Hands in Samian Inscriptions of the Hellenistic Period", *Chiron* 20 (1990) 59-95; IDEM, *Attic Letter-Cutters of 229 to 86 BC*, Berkeley 1990; IDEM, *Athenian Democracy in Transition. Attic Letter-Cutters of 340 to 290 BC*, Berkeley 1995.

³ For a fascinating example, see the reconstruction of the career of the grandson of Demetrios of Phaleron that was made possible thanks to the redating of a crucial inscription by Tracy on the ba-

A brief account of the method followed is in order. In treating the lettering on inscriptions as a type of handwriting, one can identify the particular lettering of an individual mason. Any such project should be based on a long study of the peculiarities of the lettering of a text, so that the trained eye can recognize them in the disposition of letters and letter-strokes.⁴ In general, it is safer to study longer inscriptions that preserve hundreds of letters, and it is rarely possible to draw conclusions on the hand of a small fragment or an artist's signature. Peculiarities in the lettering are also best observed in inscriptions that were engraved in relatively small letters. Large letters that are higher than 0.012 m. were cut differently, were often more elaborate, and can therefore not compare with smaller ones. Dating larger inscribed documents on the basis of their lettering should therefore be tentative at best.⁵

Epigraphical hands are identifiable among the surviving Pergamene inscriptions. One should bear in mind that the relevant corpus, including the Hellenistic texts, is not as large as its Athenian counterpart which comprises thousands of inscriptions, a large percentage of which were related to the political process of a democratic city-state with a long tradition in inscribing public documents.⁶ There is a total of 797 inscriptions associated with Pergamon spanning the time from the Early Hellenistic through the Late Roman period.⁷ A large percentage of these inscriptions are dedications or are inscribed in large letters. Many of them are very fragmentary. However, a number of texts allows the identification of some letter-cutters, and this paper will hopefully become the basis for further work along these lines.

Following the death of Lysimachos, the collapse of his kingdom of Thrace, and the establishment of Philetairos (281-263 BC) as ruler of Pergamon, dependent on the Seleucid empire, the Pergamenes published a large number of inscriptions, many of which are dedications. A limited number of treaties and royal letters offer more possibilities for the identification of their cutters. A significant percentage of inscriptions comprise sculptural dedications and artists' signatures associated with the activities of the Attalid kings which are mostly useless in this study. A general remark that can be made about the Pergamene style of lettering is that texts were generally inscribed in very elaborate and ele-

sis of his identification of the letter-cutter. Cf. S. V. TRACY, "Hands in Greek Epigraphy – Demetrius of Phaleron," [in:] J. M. FOSSEY (ed.), *Boiotia Antiqua IV*, Amsterdam 1994; IDEM, *Athenian Democracy* (cit. n. 2) 171-174.

⁴ S. V. TRACY, "Hands in Samian Inscriptions" (cit. n. 2) 60.

⁵ S. V. TRACY, *Attic Letter-Cutters from 229 to 86 BC* (cit. n. 2) 4-5.

⁶ D. HARRIS-CLINE, "Freedom of Information and Accountability: The Inventory Lists of the Parthenon", [in:] R. OSBORNE & S. HORNBLLOWER (eds.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics, Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, Oxford, 1994, 213-225.

⁷ *IvP* nos. 638-1334 are excluded from a possible study of lettering because they are inscribed blocks, mostly comprising one word.

gant letters, and there is a marked preference in serifs. Since the Attalid kings were known to have often used their own artists, masons, and materials for the monuments that they set up in various localities outside Pergamon, future studies of Pergamene letter-cutters of the Hellenistic period should concentrate on comparing styles and cutters in Pergamon and elsewhere, especially when Pergamene involvement is suspected or known.⁸

My preliminary remarks on four letter-cutters follow:

THE CUTTER OF *IvP* 21
(SECOND HALF OF THIRD CENTURY BC)

This cutter inscribed generally large, elegant letters in close proximity to each other. His strokes are generally thick and their ends tend to be deeply-cut.

Peculiarities of Some Individual Letters

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| <i>Alpha</i> | The left slanting stroke is generally longer than the right one. |
| <i>Epsilon</i> | The middle horizontal stroke is disproportionately smaller than the other two. |
| <i>Omikron</i> | This letter is small and placed in the middle of the letter space. |
| <i>Sigma</i> | The upper and lower strokes are long and slant upward and downward respectively. |
| <i>Omega</i> | This letter is small and is placed in the middle of the letter-space. Its loop is petal-shaped, and its horizontal strokes are short and have triangular edges. |

Inscriptions Assigned to this Cutter

- IvP*21-28 A series of dedications celebrating victories of Attalos I against the Galatians and Antiochos (figs 1 & 2).

This cutter may have even inscribed *IvP* 20, the round base of the famous victory monument for Attalos I. However, the state of preservation of its letters, as well as their limited number and large size, can only make this a tentative assumption.

THE CUTTER OF *IvP* 40
(LATE THIRD – EARLY SECOND CENTURY BC)

This cutter carefully inscribed very elegant, wide letters. Spacing between the letters, as well as the interlines, are generous. The *hastae* of the letters are thick

⁸ M. KORRES, *Vorfertigung und Ferntransport eines athenischen Grossbaus und zur Proportionierung von Säulen in der hellenistischen Architektur, Bauplanung und Theorie der Antike* [= *Diskussionen zur archäologischen Bauforschung* 4], Berlin 1983, 201-207.

and the ends of terminal strokes are deeper and slightly wider. Some of them have a nascent v-shape.

Peculiarities of Some Individual Letters

<i>Alpha</i>	The crossbar is curved and tends to be placed above the mid-point of the letter, one third of the way down.
<i>Delta</i>	Like <i>lambda</i> , this is a wide letter
<i>Epsilon</i>	Either the upper or the lower horizontals is longer than the other. The middle horizontal is about half the length of the other two.
<i>Rho</i>	The vertical stroke is thinner on its upper part, thicker on the lower. The loop is perfectly rounded. It starts on the tip of the vertical stroke and ends in the middle.
<i>Sigma</i>	The upper and lower strokes slant upward and downward respectively.
<i>Tau</i>	The horizontal stroke is very long and often slants slightly upward.
<i>Upsilon</i>	The two diagonal strokes are curved.
<i>Omega</i>	This letter is large, and its loop is perfectly rounded. Its edges do not meet the edges of the horizontal strokes which are extended to the right and left respectively to occupy part of the opening of the loop.

Inscriptions Assigned to this Cutter

<i>IvP 40</i>	Dated to the reign of Attalos I (241-197 BC, fig. 3)
<i>IvP 66</i>	A dedication of Attalos (the later Attalos II) to Zeus and Athena Nikephoros
<i>IvP 67</i>	A dedication of Attalos (the later Attalos II)
<i>IvP 151</i>	A dedication of king Eumenes II to Zeus and Athena

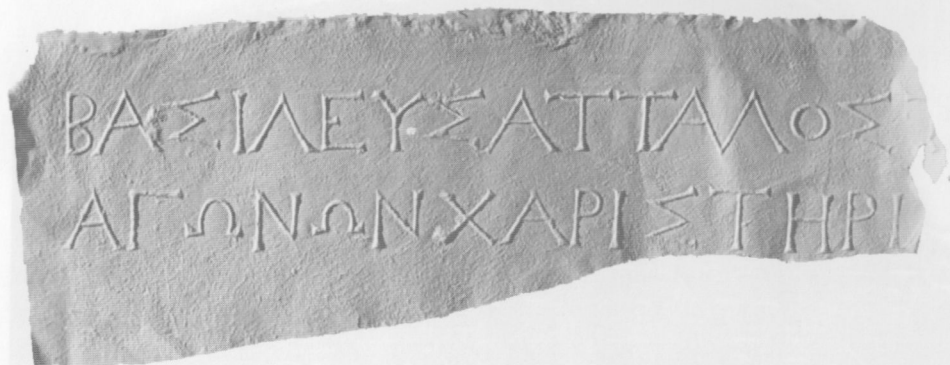
The association of the last three inscriptions with this cutter must still be tentative, as they are very fragmentary and are inscribed in large letters.

THE CUTTER OF *IvP 436*

This cutter was active at least in the early second century AD. He inscribed letters which are very elaborate and heavily adorned. They have thin strokes and, often, rather disproportionately large serifs which mostly belong to the wide inverted-v variety. One of the serif strokes is usually longer than the other one. Serifs appear on all terminal strokes and are often disproportionately long. The lettering is executed neatly and with great care. It is noteworthy that the cutter occasionally cared to mark the beginning of a new word, and this occurred in two cases:

- (1) When the first letter of a word was identical with the last one of the word before it

PLATE I



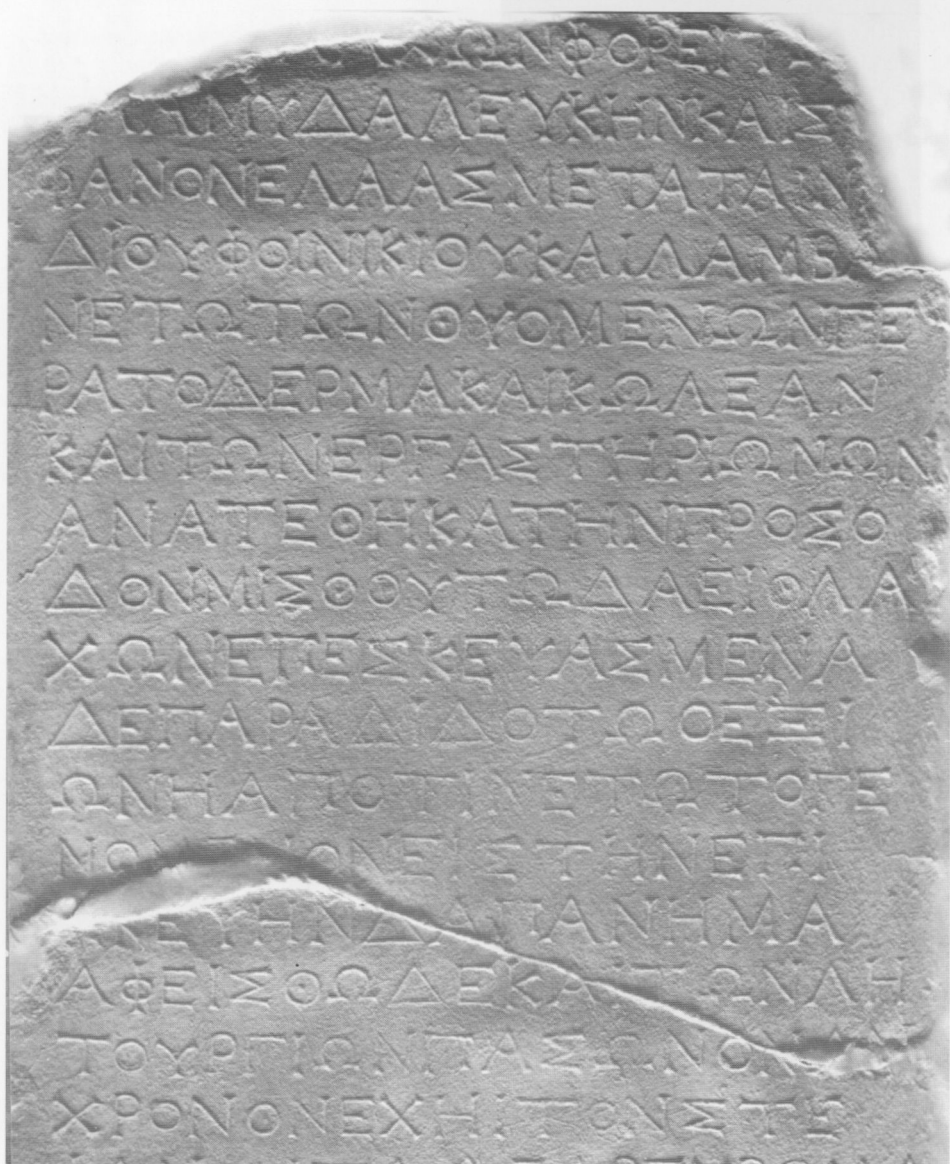
1. IvP 21



2. IvP 23

3. The upper part of IvP 40

PLATE II

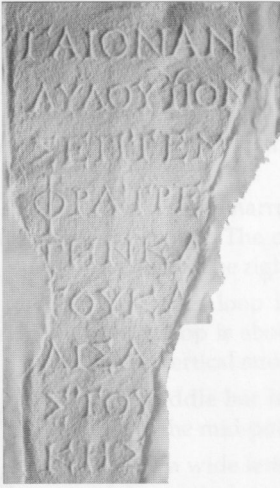


6. Inv 372

7. Inv 486

3. The upper part of *IvP 40*

PLATE III



4. IvP 436



5. A fragment of IvP 324



6. IvP 372



7. IvP 486

- (2) When a phrase had to stand out in the text, because it mentioned the family name and/or titles of an honoree. In these cases, the mason carved the first letter of the phrase that he cared to distinguish, larger. This habit is particularly observed in the letters *iota*, *tau*, and *upsilon*. Additionally, the first word of a presumably important sentence can be occasionally separated from the previous one by a v-shaped mark, composed of two diagonal strokes which joined each other to the right. Such marks usually occupy the middle of the letter space.

Peculiarities of Some Individual Letters

- Alpha* This letter is narrow, and its width is similar and comparable to that of *delta* and *lambda*. The crossbar is straight or, sometimes, slightly curved. The upper end of the right slanting stroke continues above the apex of the letter.
- Beta* The upper loop is round and ends above the mid-point of the letter. The lower loop is about 50% larger and round. Single serifs occur on both edges of the vertical stroke, the upper one pointing upward, the lower downward.
- Epsilon* The middle bar is half the length of the other two horizontals and starts at above the mid-point of the vertical stroke.
- Eta* This is a wide letter. Its crossbar is straight and comes at above the mid-point of the vertical strokes.
- Kappa* Its slanting strokes are usually longer than the vertical and start at above mid-point.
- Nu* This is a wide letter. The first vertical stroke joins the diagonal just below its upper end. The diagonal joins the other vertical at slightly above the bottom, its end curving slightly.
- Rho* This letter is shorter than the others. Its loop is small and u-shaped, its upper end projecting to the left beyond the joining point with the vertical stroke.
- Sigma* The lower diagonal is slightly curved. The upper part of the letter is larger than the bottom one.
- Upsilon* The v at the top of the letter is normally composed of two straight slanting strokes of which the one on the right is longer than the other. Occasionally, when it is important for the cutter to indicate the beginning of a new word starting with upsilon, the letter in question is much taller than usual and is composed of two v's above a vertical stroke. Both their slanting strokes are curved then, the upper left being larger.
- Phi* This letter is larger than the others. Its vertical stroke starts under the letter directly above it and ends just over the letter below. The loop is large and is placed at the bottom of the letter space. It is composed of two asymmetrical semi-circles.

Inscriptions Associated with this Cutter

- IvP* 324 A hymn to Zeus (fig. 5)
IvP 436 Inscription in honor of Gaius Antius Aulus Iulius Quadratus, Pergamene benefactor, chief priest, and consul (fig. 4).
IvP 269 Letter of Emperor Trajan to the Pergamenes.
IvP 363 Unknown, fragmentary dedication
IvP 440 Honorary inscription for Gaius Antius Aulus Iulius Quadratus.
IvP 478 Honorary inscription for Sextus Iulius, a priest and benefactor.

THE CUTTER OF *IvP* 324
 (FIRST HALF OF SECOND CENTURY AD)

This cutter inscribed letters that were heavily adorned and placed rather crowded together. His style is very similar to that of the Cutter of *IvP* 436, but his serifs are even more pronounced.

Peculiarities of Some Individual Letters

- Kappa* It is similar to the *kappa* of the Cutter of *IvP* 436, but its lower slating stroke is proportionately shorter.
Omega This letter is slightly smaller than the others and is placed at the bottom of the letter space. Its loop is rounded and its horizontal strokes disproportionately long with pronounced serifs

Inscriptions Associated with this Cutter

- IvP* 372 Honorary inscription for Emperor Hadrian (fig. 6)
IvP 486 Honorary inscription of an otherwise unidentified Iulius, chief priest of Dionysos Kathegemon (fig. 7).

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