

AGORA 2022 - Preliminary Report

This short report is written for the volunteer excavators of the Agora in the summer of 2022. It is very preliminary in terms of presentation and analysis and is not intended for general consumption; any and all results are subject to radical reinterpretation. I am indebted to the supervisors for their work and observations which make up most of this account.

Excavations were carried out in the Athenian Agora from June 14th to August 5th, 2022, with a workforce of 55 volunteers and supervisors. This is the first time in three years that a full staff of American and European students could safely be assembled. A limited number of cases and the ability to self-quarantine in the CYA apartments kept most of the participants relatively healthy.

As usual, the excavations were supported primarily by the Packard Humanities Institute, and it is a pleasant duty here to record our appreciation for the ongoing support of the Institute and its President, David W. Packard. Additional support came from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Randolph-Macon College, and several private donors, including the Marcus and Behrakis family foundations.

The initial plan of excavating under the modern house at 14 St. Philip Street was curtailed by delayed demolition, and actual excavations were carried out south and north of the Stoa Poikile and within the western third of the building. **Fig. 1**

Beta Theta East was supervised by Nick Seetin, assisted by Jacob Seaton. Additional Byzantine levels were explored as the Leokoreion had been heavily sheltered to prevent any possible rockfalls from the intended adjacent demolition. More of several rooms were exposed, south of the Poikile Stoa, including one with two well-preserved pithoi, used for storage, their mouths giving a clear sense of the floor levels in use at the time. A crudely paved area and drain near the mouth of one of the pithoi seems to have been used to manage liquids in the area.

Fig. 2

In Beta Theta West the work was supervised by Vassia Dimitrakopoulou, assisted by Jackson Vaughn. Here we explored the later levels within the west end of the Painted Stoa, removing layers of early Byzantine and latest Roman fills underneath the Middle Byzantine rooms and above the floor levels of the Classical Stoa. An Ionic column base of Pentelic marble was found built into one of the late walls and matches another found years ago some 20 meters to the west, suggesting that they are part of a large unrecognized monument or building in the area. Both have been cut in a way which suggests they were reused set up against a rectilinear element, presumably a wall or anta. **Fig. 3**

More of the lowest step of the façade of the Poikile Stoa was revealed for the first time near its western end. As elsewhere, the well-cut hard limestone step-blocks are joined by substantial double-T clamps, with blocks of a much softer limestone used as backers.

Fig. 4

To the north, in Section BZ, Brian Martens, assisted by Allene Seet, cleared up an area of fallen late Roman walls, a collapse caused by unusually heavy rains during the winter. Finds included a fragmentary late Hellenistic inscription (2nd BC) concerning an associate of one of the Antiochid kings of Syria. **Fig. 5**

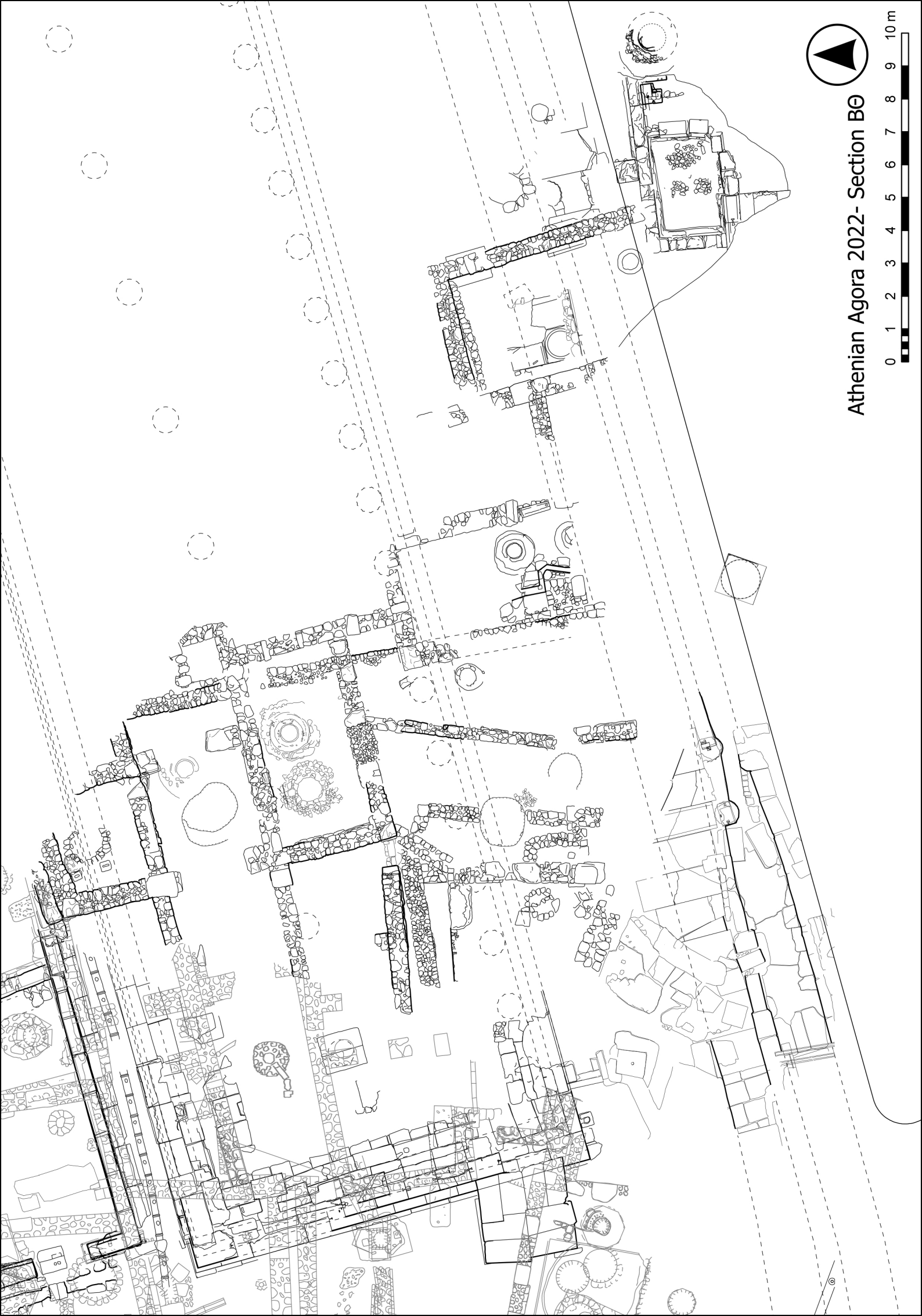
Lower down we excavated late Archaic/early Classical layers, along with the usual collection of ostraka, probably discarded in the 480's: as in the past, Xanthippos, the father of Perikles, was relatively common in this year's collection, along with Themistokles and Aristides. **Fig. 6 & Fig. 7** Lesser-known candidates included Habron, Acharnion, and Knoithon. This year over 80 new ostraka were recovered from deposit J 1-2:1, bringing the total to more than 160. Several of the ostraka demonstrated serious examples of dyslexia and specific insults for targeted individuals. Late archaic levels included some well defined floor levels, high-quality pottery, and another embedded amphora. Traces of Mycenaean pottery and half of a small ivory inlay of some sort presumably came originally from furnishings of disturbed Mycenaean tombs which were dug into the underlying bedrock. **Fig. 8**

A separate small excavation to clean up and clarify several issues prior to publication was carried out by Dr. Susan Rotroff and Dr. Kathleen Lynch at the Crossroads Enclosure in section Beta Gamma, with the assistance of Aspasia Efstathiou. A fragmentary inscription was found in the fabric of the later Roman round structure which partially overlies the enclosure. It concerns honors for the *prytaneis* of the tribe of Hippothontis and their officials in the 1st century BC. **Fig. 9** A separate summary of preliminary readings is attached.

In collaboration with the A' Ephoreia and our colleagues Maria Liaska and Kleio Tsoga, we also mounted on the upper floor of the Stoa an exhibition from the PHI collection of Dodwell and Pomardi views of Athens done in 1805. They have been very popular, as have Craig Mauzy's reconstructions of several camera obscuras of the sort used to create the original drawings.

This report is being written in the final week of the excavation, when many objects and remains tend to come to light, so not everything can be included in time to print and distribute it. In closing it should be noted that due to external circumstances the season was not carried out entirely as planned and I would like to thank all of you for your patience, productivity, and good will. It has been a pleasure to work with you.

John Camp
August 2022



Athenian Agora 2022- Section BΘ







Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

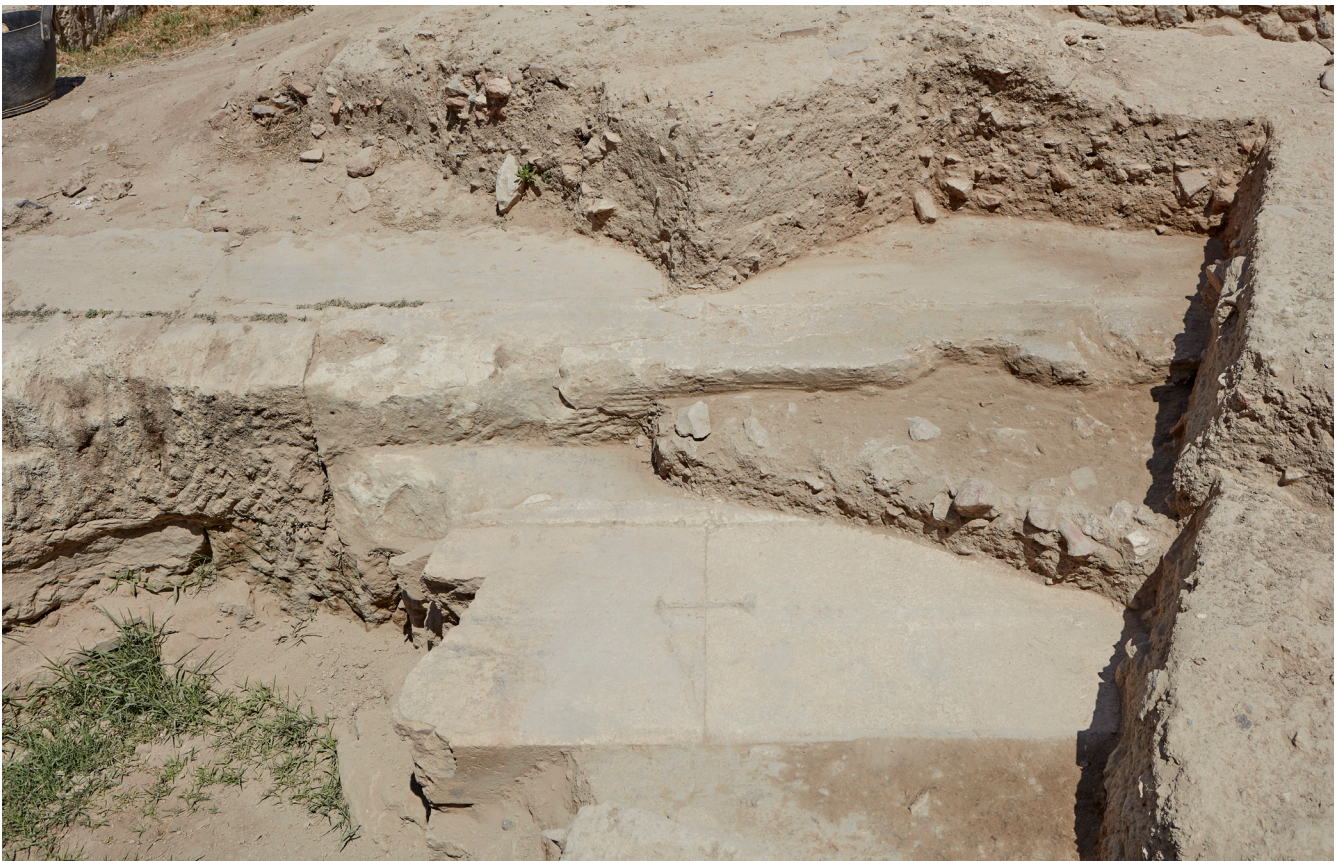


Fig. 4



Fig. 5

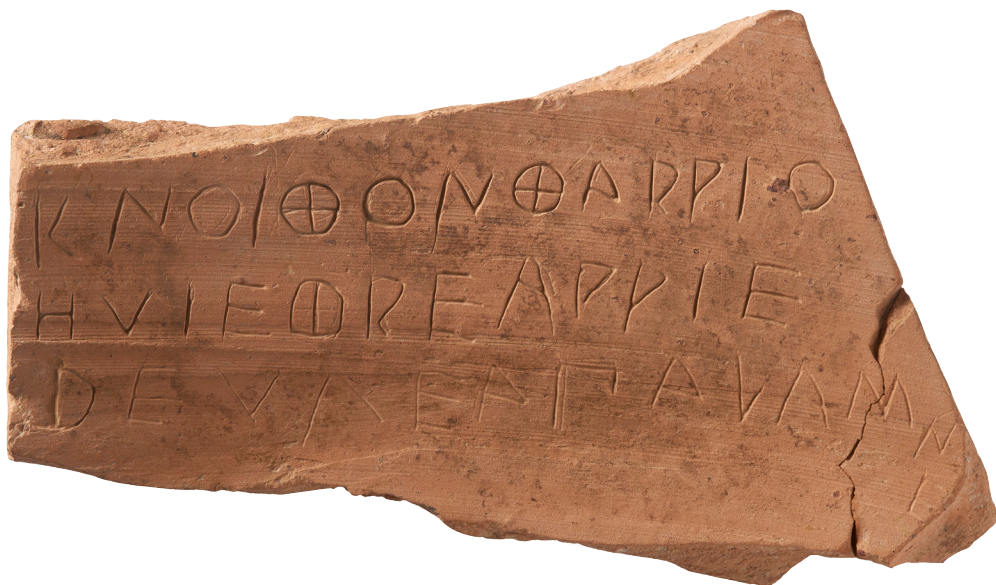


Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

ΒΓ 2216: PRYTANY DECREE

Found June 29, 2022, built into the round circular building/monument which overlies the Crossroads Enclosure, at grid square J/7 – 5/ 9, at 52.27 m.

Pentelic marble, broken all around, except for part of original right side.

p. H. 0.27 m., p. W. 0.15 m., p. Th. 0.10 m.

Letter heights: 0.008-0.009 m. (B and φ: 0.01 m.). Abundant use of serifs. A: broken-barred; E: central stroke shorter than at top or bottom; Σ: sloping hastas at top and bottom.

Non-stoichedon

ca. 53

(trace)
και του δημου και παιδων και γυναικων και των φ]ΙΛΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΣΥ[μμαχων
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· · · · · δια ταυτα παρακαλ]ΟΥΣΙΝ ΤΗΝ ΒΟΥΛ[ην επι]
χωρισαι εαυτοις ποιησασθαι αυτου γραπτης]ΕΙΚΟΝΟΣ ΑΝΑΘΕΣΙΝ [εν] 5
οπλωι επιχρυσωι εν τωι βουλευτεριωι. Αγαθηι]ΤΥΧΗΙ ΔΕΔΟΧΘΑΙ Τ[ηι]
βουληι επαινεσαι [ca 20:-name-patronymic-demotic] ΚΑΙ ΣΤΕΦΑΝΩΣΑΙ ΑΥΤ[ον]
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ανδρων. · · · · ·]Ν ΤΗΣ ΙΠΠΟΘΩΝΤΙΔΟΣ
· · · · · α]ΙΤΟΥΝΤΑΙ ΤΟΠΩΙ ΕΧΟΥ 10
σαν την επιγραφην τηνδε οι πρυτανεις Ιπποθω]ΝΤΙΔΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΑΕΙΣΕ
τοι οι επι - name, (patronymic ?)- αρχοντος - · · · · ·]Ν ΑΡΕΤΗΣ ΕΝΕΚΕΝ
· · · · ·] ΤΩΝ ΣΥΝΤΕΛΟΥ
μενων φαινεται η βουλη τιμωσα · · ca. 18 · · · · ·]ΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ
· · · · · αναγραφαι τοδε]ΤΟ ΨΗΦΙΣ 15
ΤΑΝ

Up to sixteen lines partially preserved. Longest line (10) preserves 17 letters.

The preserved text carries parts of phrases and instructions common in *prytany* lists and honors in the 1st century BC (e.g. *IG II*² 1048, 1049, 1050 and 1070; *Hesperia Suppl.* 1, nos. 115 and 116; *Agora XV*, nos. 278, 280, 281, and 291). The formulae and instructions commonly appear with slightly different phrasing and in a different order, making the general sense clear, if not always the specific phrasing.

In the new inscription honors are being voted and awarded to or by the tribe of Hippothontis and their accompanying *Aeisitai* (various officials and priests who dine regularly with the prytanizing tribe in the Tholos). If some common restorations are applied one arrives at a line length of ca. 53 letters per line (e.g. lines 5, 8, and 11) whereas the longest surviving line (10) preserves only 17 letters, less than the third of a full line, *i.e.* plenty of opportunity to go astray.

Named officials and archon dates do not appear on the stone as preserved, though both would be expected and are lurking somewhere. Honors, usually for the tribal treasurer (ταμίας), include a portrait (*graptis eikon*), crowns (usually of olive), and praise, along with requests and suggestions as to where and how the honors are to be displayed and recorded. Texts like this also often include honors for the 50 *prytaneis* from the tribe, along with the names of the individuals, listed by deme.