Bajnok, Dániel

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DÁNIEL BAJNOK
(ELTE UNIVERSITY BUDAPEST)

AESCHINES' INSCRIPTION IN EPIDAURUS? AN OLD QUESTION REVISITED

R. Herzog (1931) proposed that a fragment from Epidaurus (IG IV² 1 255) was part of a votive inscription that contained an epigram attributed to the Athenian orator Aeschines preserved in the Anthologia Graeca *(AG VI, 330). Herzog's tentative hypothesis was reinforced by W. Peek in 1962, but scholars, hindered by an imperfect understanding of each other's languages, have not reached agreement over the attribution. With the assistance of the Archaeological Museum of Epidaurus, which has provided me with a photograph of the fragment, I have come to the conclusion that the inscription was probably not dedicated by Aeschines and does not contain the epigram in question.*

Keywords*: Aeschines, epigram, Epidaurus, inscription, Anthologia Graeca*

The miraculous healing of the orator Aeschines is not an anecdote preserved in any of his several ancient *vitae* but an event suggested by the conjectured supplementation of an inscribed fragment from Epidaurus (IG IV² 1 255) relying on a votive epigram from the *Anthologia Graeca* (*AG* VI, 330).[1] The inscription did not immediately raise specific attention: Johannes Baunack, one of the first editors of the famous Gortyn code, published a small tapered fragment of a marble inscription along with several other pieces from the Asklepieion of Epidaurus in the 1895 issue of the *Philologus*.[2] He made no attempt to make sense of the text but gave the

1 This research was supported by the European Union and the State of Hungary, co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of TÁMOP 4.2.4. A/1-11-1-2012-0001 'National Excellence Program'. I am much indebted to the anonymous reviewers of *Graeco-Latina Brunensia* who provided valuable hints at various parts of my paper and made me aware of several problems and mistakes.

2 Baunack (1895: 61, n. 5).

dimensions of the stone (7.5 × 21 × 4.5 cm) and provided a reading of the first two lines:

. κτου Ἀθηναῖος
ἀ]νέθηκ[εν]

Baunack realized, as the supplemented ἀ]νέθηκ[εν] reveals, that the item is a fragment of a votive inscription dedicated by an Athenian whose name was not preserved on the stone. In the third line, he tentatively read EI?N based on the upper remnants of three uncertain letters, which he supposed to be the name of a divinity he could not identify.[3] The reading of line 3 seems to be a rather poor contribution especially in the light of subsequent editions, because Maximilian Fränkel, the editor of the 4th volume of *Inscriptiones Graecae* in 1902, provided not only a drawing of the inscription, but also a new reading and a more thorough interpretation.[4]

. . . . . Διογν]ήτου Ἀθηναῖος
Ἀσκληπιῶι ἀ]νέθηκεν.
— UU — UU — U U — UU —]με τὸ θεῖον

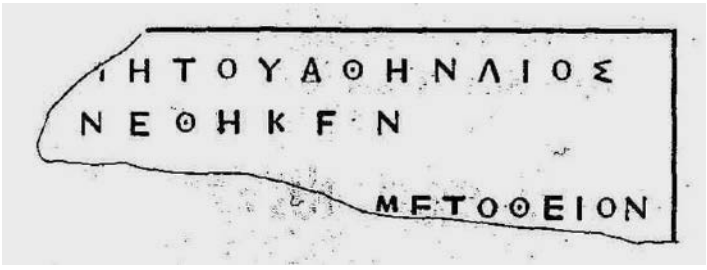

Fig. 1: Fränkel's drawing (IG IV 1214)

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Fränkel realized that the remnants of the text were inscribed as parts of a votive epigram dedicated by a patient who had spent time recuperating at the sanctuary. The end of the first line of the epigram is the third line of the preserved fragment. He conjectured that the line had the following meaning: I was ill, but the divine power cured me ("*me aegrotum servavit vis divina*"). The supplementation of the patronym in the first line as Διογνήτου was queried in the second edition of IG vol. IV by Friedrich Hiller von Gärtringen in 1929 as, apart from Diognetos, there are obviously several

3 Ibid. "Von einer dritten Zeilen nur wenige Zeichen: nach 3 oberen Zeichenresten EI?N. Unklar, welcher Göttername."

4 IG IV 1214. See FRÄNKEL (1902: 279).

other possible Greek male names ending -ητος.[5] However, the inscription itself could not be further examined in this period, because it was lost in the storeroom of the Archaeological Museum of Epidaurus, thus Hiller von Gärtringen did not publish a photograph of the stone but used Fränkel's edition and drawing. He did not implement further modifications but deleted his predecessor's supplement Diognetos. Still, he attempted to date the item based on the shape of the letters (he suggested 3rd c. BC), which seems rather arbitrary given that he was not able to look at the stone itself.

A year after Hiller's edition, Rudolf Herzog, who was publishing a book on the miraculous healing stories of the Asklepieion of Epidaurus (*Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros*), found a peculiar four-line epigram while looking through the votive items in the 6th book of the late antique collection of Greek epigrams known as *Anthologia Graeca*. According to the rubric, the author of the hexametric poem is Aeschines the orator.

> *Despairing of human art, and placing all my hope in the Divinity,*
> *I left Athens, mother of beautiful children,*
> *and was cured in three months, Asklepios, by coming to thy grove,*
> *of an ulcer on my head that had continued for a year.*[6]

Although several scholars had expressed doubts concerning the authorship of the Athenian orator Aeschines,[7] Herzog claimed that we cannot exclude the possibility that the poem was actually written by the famous orator,[8] since Aeschines himself admitted writing erotic poetry in his speech against Timarchos,[9] and the remark on "Athens of beautiful youth" (εὔπαιδας Ἀθήνας) in the epigram also seems to corroborate this view. Her-

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5 *"Fraenkelii supplementum* ΔΙΟΓΝ]ήτου *prorsus incertum es*t." IG IV² 1 255. See Hiller von Gärtringen (1929: 96).

6 Translated by W. R. Paton in Loeb Classical Library. *AG* VI, 330: ΑΙΣΧΙΝΟΥ ΡΗΤΟΡΟΣ

> Θνητῶν μὲν τέχναις ἀπορούμενος, εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον
> ἐλπίδα πᾶσαν ἔχων, προλιπὼν εὔπαιδας Ἀθήνας,
> ἰάθην ἐλθών, Ἀσκληπιέ, πρὸς τὸ σὸν ἄλσος,
> ἕλκος ἔχων κεφαλῆς ἐνιαύσιον, ἐν τρισὶ μησίν.

7 Stadtmüller (1894: 404): "*Ab oratore alienum ratus Aeschini rhetori Milesio vel Mitylenaeo tribuit* [Theodor] Bergk." See other sceptical points in Irigoin (1976: 122).

8 Herzog (1931: 39–41).

9 Aeschin. I, 135–136.: "And finally, as certain people are telling me, in an attempt to reduce you to laughter and idle talk, he says he will display all the erotic poems which I have written to people; and he says he will produce witnesses to certain quarrels and blows arising out of this activity in which I have been involved. ... As far as concerns the poems which they say I wrote, I acknowledge they are mine, but I deny that they have the character which they will, by distortion, impart to them." Translated by Fisher (2001: 102–103).

zog suggested that the poem might have originally been written as a votive inscription before being included in the collection of epigrams. When he started looking for an inscription to match the epigram, he soon encountered the above-mentioned – albeit still lost – fragment. He was the first to formulate the hypothesis that, in its original form, IG IV^2 1 255 contained the epigram written by Aeschines: the ending of the patronym in the first line matches the name Atrometos, father of Aeschines, whereas former editor M. Fränkel might have been mistaken in the reading of the third line (i.e. the first line of the hypothetical epigram), since the correct solution may be [εἰς] δὲ τὸ θεῖον instead of με τὸ θεῖον.[10] If all these assumptions were correct, we could complement the tiny fragment with the help of the epigram in the *Anthologia Graeca* and, moreover, we could cast light on an entirely new and unfamiliar part of Aeschines' life. However, as the inscription had been lost, Herzog could not prove his dazzling hypothesis.

After being lost for several decades, the stone was re-discovered in the storeroom of the Epidaurus museum. The find was announced by the renowned German epigrapher Werner Peek in two paragraphs of an article published in 1962, which seemed to settle the question permanently: his contribution justified Herzog's assumptions by reading με instead of δέ in the third line, and he could even identify the upper segment of the preceding letters reading εἰς.[11] Peek claimed Herzog was right but still did not publish a photograph but adduced only a sketchy drawing designed to show the supplementation of the inscription.

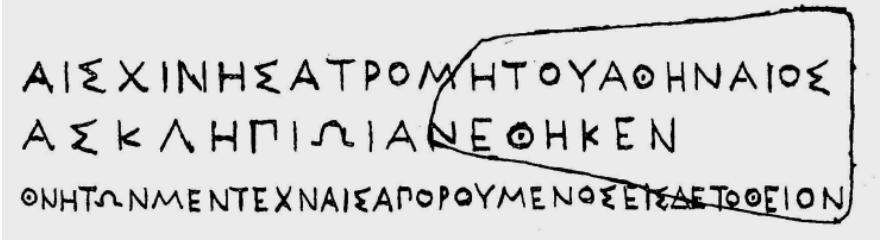

Fig. 2: Peek's drawing

10 HERZOG (1931: 40): „Wenn wir im Bruch statt der zwei Winkel eines M nur einen von einem Δ als wirklichen Buchstabenrest annehmen, so bekommen wir den Schluß des ersten Verses unseres Epigramms."

11 PEEK (1962: 1002–1003).

Peek's short note set the stone on a highly instructive course. The American philologist Clarence Forbes hailed the contribution of Herzog and Peek enthusiastically, since it substantiated a new, previously unknown, episode of the orator's life.[12] Vincenzo Longo, working some clumsy mistakes into it (see note 14), incorporated the full, supplemented inscription into his aretalogical textbook and dated it "before 330 BC", since that is the year when Aeschines left Athens.[13]

[Αἰσχίνης Ἀτρο]μήτου Ἀθηναῖος[14]
[Ἀσκληπιῶι ἀ]νέθηκεν.
[Θνητῶν μὲν τέχναις ἀπορούμενος, ε]ἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον
[ἐλπίδα πᾶσαν ἔχων, προλιπὼν εὔπαιδας Ἀθήνας,]
[ἰάθην ἐλθών, Ἀσκληπιέ, πρὸς τὸ σὸν ἄλσος,]
[ἕλκος ἔχων κεφαλῆς ἐνιαύσιον, ἐν τρισὶ μησίν.]

We might conclude that the Epidaurus inscription had now been definitively linked with Aeschines, but this is not the case. Although many scholars have referred to the orator's epigram in the Asklepieion as a verified fact in the five decades that have passed since Peek's announcement,[15] an investigation of the literature also reveals scepticism in the most unexpected places. The short note summarizing Jean Irigoin's article (1976) in the *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (*SEG*) writes that "Irigoin … rejects the identification of Aischines as the famous Athenian orator; the poem (AP 6.330) is an acrostich, ΘΕΙΕ with τὸ θεῖον L. 1, and belongs, with the lettering of the preserved fragment, in the 3rd cent. B.C. or later."[16] The truth is, however, that Irigoin did not deny the identification of Aeschines, but took certain aspects into account that had not been previously examined. He noticed that the first letters of the lines in the epigram can be read as an acrostich (ΘΕΙΕ), i.e. the vocative of the final word in the first line, and he concluded that the inscribed epigram is probably the oldest known Greek acrostich.[17] Though the author of the short note in *SEG* completely missed Irigoin's point, these seven lines written in English had a much deeper im-

12 Forbes (1967: 443–448).

13 Longo (1969: 77–78).

14 Longo printed *Ἀτρομέτου Αθηναῖος* [sic!].

15 Irigoin (1976: 119–123); Gourevitch (1984: 208, n. 90); Hansen (1989: 187–188. [=CEG II.776]); Girone (1998: 42–45); Muñoz (2009: 256–257); Perale (2012: 206). The only non-committed voice is that of Melfi (2007: 36 and 156).

16 SEG 26, 450.

17 Irigoin (1976: 123): "Si donc l'épigramme VI 330 de l'*Anthologie Palatine*, ne faisant qu'un avec l'inscription IG IV^2, 255, se rapporte à l'orateur Eschine, elle offre le plus ancien exemple d'acrostiche grec qui nous soit parvenu."

pact than an obscure French study and had more influence on the academic *communis opinio*.[18]

The above misconception might explain why even Edward Harris, the author of the authoritative monograph on Aeschines, did not give the inscription serious consideration. He made only a brief reference hidden in an endnote, which reveals not only his doubts concerning the authenticity of the inscription, but also the fact that he did not examine the surviving text: "Some have thought that the Aeschines listed on *IG* IV^2 255 is identical with the Athenian politician, but this is unlikely."[19] Aeschines is clearly not "listed" or otherwise mentioned in the surviving part of the text. Continuing the string of language-based misunderstandings, Maria Girone, in her textbook on stories of healing, "refuted" C. Forbes' aforementioned arguments, since (as she understands it) he denied the identification of the author of the inscription and the epigram with Aeschines, because the orator does not mention his illness and healing in any of his speeches. However, Forbes himself had maintained that the lack of references to this episode in the surviving works of Aeschines does not disprove his dedication in Epidaurus. In other words, Girone erroneously attributed a claim to Forbes that he had already rebutted.[20] Moreover, as no revised version has been published to the fourth volume of IG edited by Hiller von Gärtringen in 1929, the attribution of the inscription to Aeschines is still ignored in the entry (IG IV^2 1 255) available at the widely used PHI database.[21]

Given these misunderstandings and W. Peek's not entirely faultless short announcement[22], which, as already noted, had become a point of reference, I intended to ascertain if IG IV^2 1 255 can actually be matched with

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18 The misunderstanding in *SEG* was also noticed by M. Perale, see PERALE (2012: 206, n. 8).

19 HARRIS (1995: 177, n. 1).

20 GIRONE (1998: 142): "Forbes (1967, 448), di contro, afferma che questa iscrizione non può attribuirsi all'oratore ateniese, perché nelle tre orazioni pervenuteci sotto il nome di Eschine non si fa mai menzione di Epidauro o di una malattia o di una cura. Simili argomenti non paiono tuttavia cogenti."

21 See http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/oi?ikey=28691&bookid=7&region=2 (Accessed 15/11/2013).

22 A reader might be warned not only by the rough-and-ready sketch but also by Peek's dramatic voice that reported Herzog's hypothesis and his own justification of it, see PEEK (1962: 1002–1003): "Das [i.e. Herzog's theory] mag manchem wohl wenig überzeugend klingen. Und doch ist die anscheinend etwas schwach fundierte Hypothese bei der Nachprüfung des Steines, der bei der Neueinrichtung der epigraphischen Sammlung in Epidauros glücklicherweise wieder zutage kam, auf das glänzendste bestätigt worden."

Aeschines' epigram. After prolonged correspondence,[23] efforts to acquire a photograph proved successful: the responsible ephorate (Δ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων) kindly produced and sent me a digital image of the fragment held in the Archaeological Museum of Epidaurus. The photograph allows us to decide whether Herzog's assumptions can be verified or not.

Fig. 3: Photograph of IG IV² 1 255

The end of the first two lines is clearly legible in the photograph of the marble fragment (*see Fig. 3*), but the key to the present question is the remnant of the first letter in line 1 and the letters preceding τὸ θεῖον in line 3. In order to verify Herzog's theory, the fragment of the first letter in line 1 needs to be the bottom end of the right stem of an M, and ΔΕ should fit the remaining upper strokes of the letters in line 3 (instead of ΜΕ). If the first condition is met, this would strongly support the view that the name of the dedicator's father ended -μητος, which would fit Aeschines, whose father was called Ἀτρόμητος. If the second condition is also met, then we can positively read line 3 in agreement with the ending of first line of the epigram (εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον – *AG* VI, 330).

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23 I owe a great debt of gratitude to Sofia Zoumpaki, senior researcher at the National Hellenic Research Foundation (Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών – ΕΙΕ), and to András Patay-Horváth, assistant professor at ELTE University (Budapest) for their invaluable assistance in acquiring the photograph.

Fig. 4: Digital drawing of IG IV² 1 255 based on Fig. 3.

In my opinion, the surviving fragment of the first letter in line 1 is too small to determine what letter it belonged to. Based on its shape and phonological position, it could be Λ, M, N, or T. The plausibility of delta (Δ) is rather low, since in this case we should have a little remnant of the horizontal baseline as well. Pi (Π) can almost certainly ruled out, because in our period its right vertical stroke is shorter than the left stroke and does not reach the base line level. Unfortunately, the surviving fragment is too short to allow us to determine if the stroke was exactly vertical or not. It is common (though not universal) that none of the stems of M is vertical: M. The right stem of N, as can be observed in our fragment, was inscribed either vertically or slightly leaning to the right: *N*. The right stem of Λ always leans to the left. The constituents of T are a vertical stem with a horizontal stroke on top, and the angle of the break in the fragment allows us to assume that what we see is the bottom remnant of the stem: the horizontal stroke has vanished in the broken lacuna. Furthermore, reading a T does not require us to presume that the remaining stroke was askew in any direction. The distance between the letter particle and the left stem of H is exactly the same as that between the H and the following T.

Taking all the above into consideration, the following options are offered to supplement the fragmented patronym. If the dedicator is an Athenian citizen, the Periclean law implies that the father was also Athenian, thus we have to examine all male names from 4th c. BC ending *-ητος*. The reverse name index of the corresponding volume of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (*LGPN* vol. IIA) lists 39 items, one of which is probably the partially lost patronym of the Epidaurus inscription. The majority of these names are not attested in the 4th c. BC, thus we can delete these entries from the list. Considering names ending -λητος, -μητος, -νητος, or -τητος, ten possibilities remain: Admetos, Anenkletos, Atrometos, Diognetos, Eukte-

tos, Euphiletos, Kletos, Meletos, Theaitetos, and Theognetos. If the correct reading of the letter particle is T, as has been tentatively suggested, then Euktetos and Theaitetos are the attested examples. Nevertheless, no certainty can be obtained by investigating the initial letter fragment in the first line.

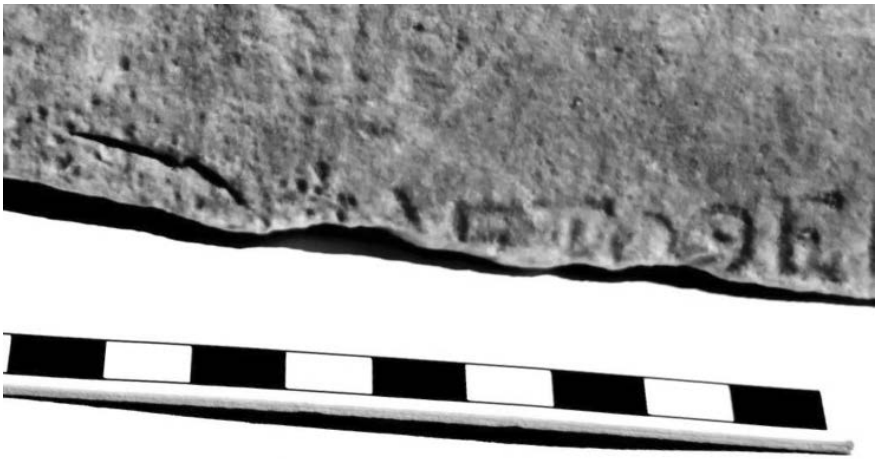

Fig. 5: Remnants of line 3.

However, the remnants of letters in the third line, as can be seen on the photograph (*cf. Fig 5*), do not prove Herzog's hypothesis and seriously challenge Peek's announcement.[24] The epsilon preceding τὸ θεῖον can be clearly identified, but the letter particles preceding the epsilon do not constitute a Δ (and a Σ before that) – they are more likely to be parts of a M. The correct reading of the line is probably με τὸ θεῖον – as was suggested by M. Fränkel in 1902. This is not good news for those who have attributed the inscription to Aeschines, since this ending does not fit the first line of the epigram. We have no reason to assume a scribal error here. Consequently, the photograph of the inscription does not confirm that IG IV^2 1 255 once contained the epigram attributed to Aeschines (*Anth. Gr.* VI, 330). A reliable dating of the stone, which would go a long way towards settling the question of attribution, is not available on the basis of letter forms although

24 PEEK (1962: 1003): "Nicht nur die Spitze eines Δ (bzw. Λ) ist erhalten, sondern vorher auch die obere Schräge eines Σ und davor wieder das obere Endstück einer Senkrechten, so daß [ε]ις δέ als gesichert gelten darf."

the V-shaped middle stroke of the first alpha in line 1 might hint at a later (hellenistic?) date.[25]

Fig. 6: Suggested supplementation

This conclusion, however, does not rule out either the possibility that the epigram was indeed written by the famous Athenian orator, or that Aeschines actually visited the sacred grove of Asklepios in Epidaurus in order to find a remedy for his ulcer. Manuscript tradition links the short poem to the orator Aeschines, and line 2 makes it clear that the author is not the orator from Mytilene or Miletus, but from Athens. We cannot disprove his authorship even if this item was the earliest known acrostich written in Greek, as maintained by Irigoin.[26] Yet he is not completely right on two points. Firstly, the so-called name acrostich, in which the initials of the lines form a name (usually that of the author), was a very old means of identification and "copy protection". Diogenes Laertios claims that the archaic poet Epicharmos (6th/5th c. BC) "has left memoirs containing his physical, ethical and medical doctrines, and he has made marginal notes (*παραστιχίδα*) in most of the memoirs, which clearly show that they were written by him."[27] It is disputed if the word *parastichis* is equivalent to an acrostich, but we have a fragment from the 4th c. BC dramatic poet Chaire-

25 The uncertainty in dating is admitted by Melfi (2007: 156).

26 Irigoin (1976: 123).

27 Translated by R. D. Hicks. Diog. Laert. VIII, 78: οὗτος ὑπομνήματα καταλέλοιπεν ἐν οἷς φυσιολογεῖ, γνωμολογεῖ, ἰατρολογεῖ· καὶ παραστιχίδα γε ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις τῶν ὑπομνημάτων πεποίηκεν, οἷς διασαφεῖ ὅτι ἑαυτοῦ ἐστι τὰ συγγράμματα. The testimony is listed among the *Ψευδεπιχάρμεια* by the latest edition, see Kassel–Austin (2001: 138).

mon (Fr. 14B Snell) in which the line initials can be read as XAIPHM-.[28] Thus, if acrostich was already used in the period of Aeschines, we should accept that he might have used the technique when he addressed Asklepios in an epigram.[29] Secondly, it escaped Irigoin's attention that from a formal point of view θεῖε is the vocative of the adjective θεῖος and not of the abstract neuter noun θεῖον, the vocative form of the latter being the same as the nominative.[30] This makes the interpretation of the epigram as an acrostich highly problematic.

To conclude: it seems unlikely that IG IV^2 1 255 contains Aeschines' epigram in its original form, since the photograph does not allow us to complement the letter fragments in the third line as εἰς δὲ τὸ θεῖον. We probably do not have the inscription of Aeschines, and the authenticity of the story told in the epigram is uncertain, regardless of the actual authorship of the poem.

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28 **Χ**ρὴ τιμᾶν θ[UU– …
Ἀρχὴ γὰρ θνητ[οῖς
Ἰμείρου πάση[ς
Ῥώμην τιμῶμεν μ[
Ἦθος ἔχειν ὅσιον ζῃ[
Μὴ πᾶν κέρδος ὅρα [
.[..]ν[.].ι̣αν σαυτ[
...

29 It is also important to note that no inscribed acrostich is attested before the 2nd c. BC. Moreover, Aratos (3rd c. BC) indeed seems to be the first to apply an acrostich in a way that letters do not add up to a name but a key poetical term (Λεπτή), see *Phainomena* 783–787. See also Courtney (1990: 6. and 10–11).

30 Irigoin (1976: 122) supports his idea with the address of Asclepius as μάκαρ θεῖε by Diophantos of Sphettos (IG II^2 4514), but in this case again θεῖε probably stands as an adjective and not as a noun.

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