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TOWARDS A REGIONAL HISTORY

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by Björn Forsén

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Cover: The Early Hellenistic fortress Agios Donatos of Zervochori seen from the south.
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Some Notes on Inscriptions of Roman Date from Thesprotia

Erkki Sironen

Published inscriptions of Roman date from Thesprotia are relatively few, most of them sepulchral monuments cut in Latin that have been found in the neighbourhood of the Roman colony Photike just to the north of modern Paramythia.¹ The number of inscriptions relevant to this particular area and period has not changed dramatically in the past few years. I will therefore mostly concentrate here on proposing new readings based on autopsy for inscriptions that have already been published.²

1) Dedication to the Emperor Maximinus Daia

Present location: 32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Fragma Kalama, no. ΘΕ 6941.

This statue base was found at Agios Athanasios, on the bank of the brook Liveri, close to the church of Panagia Lambovithra, and thus originates from Photike. The inscription, while still partly under water, was published first by V. Papadopoulou.³ Heil (who had not seen the stone) amended some readings in an article published soon afterwards.⁴

Measurements of the base: height 0.99, width 0.67, thickness 0.67 m. Letter height 0.03-0.053 (taller in lines 1-4), interlineation 0.003-0.032 m (greater in lines 1-4).

Fortissimo et piis-
simo Caesari d(omino) n(ostro)
Gal(erio) Val(erio) [[Maximino]]
P(io) F(elici) Inv(icto)
5 *Coranius Titianus v(ir) p(erfectissimus)*
praes(es) prov(inciae) vet(eris) Epiri
num(ini) eorum dicatissi-
mus.

¹ Cf. especially the collection of 38 various epigraphical documents (including *instrumentum domesticum*) in Samsaris 1994, 113-140 (cf. *SEG* XLIV 470). Furthermore, on the proportion of Latin vs. Greek inscriptions, cf. Hatzopoulos 1980, 97-105. For a more general view of Roman colonies in Western Greece, see Rizakis 1996, 255-324, especially p. 271, footnotes 54-56.

² I cordially thank Björn Forsén for providing me with the chance to travel to and around Thesprotia, and to make a separate trip to Ioannina in 2005 and 2006 respectively, and for all the additional help I have received from him during the past years. I also thank the Greek Archaeological Service (8th and 12th Ephorates of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and 8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities) and their staff for giving me permission to search for the inscriptions and to study the ones found. My photos were initially edited (especially fragments joined) by Akhilleus Sironen. Finally, I would like to acknowledge Elizabeth Meyer (University of Virginia) for making numerous amendments and substantial suggestions to a draft of this paper, thus saving me from many mistakes.

³ Papadopoulou 1988, 323, fig. 186 g. A clearer photograph has been published in Preka 1997, fig. 228 a.

⁴ Heil 1995, 159-162, whence *AE* 1993, 1406 and *AE* 1995, 1394.

Critical apparatus: There are barely visible marks of interpunctuation in line 3 (after the abbreviated name GAL), and in line 6 (on both sides of the word VET). Line 3 *CAEVAL* Papadopoulou, *Gal(erio) Val(erio) [Maximiano]* Heil. Line 4 *p(io) f(elici) inv[icto Augusto]* Heil. Line 5 *CORONIV STITIANUS* Papadopoulou, *Coronius Titianus* Heil. Line 7 *NUMEORUM* Papadopoulou, *num(ini) eorum* Heil.

Coraninus Titianus, *vir perfectissimus* and *praeses* of the province of Old Epirus (dedicates this) to the most brave and pious Caesar, our master Galerius Valerius [[Maximinus]], to the pious, lucky and unvanquished (Augustus), being most loyal to their divinity.

The reign of the Emperor Galerius Valerius Maximinus is dated between AD 309 and 313.⁵ Despite the fact that Maximianus was called Maximinus until 305 when he became Augustus,⁶ I regard the Emperor Maximinus Daia as the more probable recipient of this dedication, especially because he was in charge of the eastern part of the empire. Peculiarly enough, the word *Augustus* has not been cut in the end of line 4, but the large space has been left uninscribed. The emperor's name, following *damnatio memoriae*, has been incompletely deleted in line 3. The name of the dedicant *praeses* is Coraninus Titianus, previously unknown to us. Finally, the plural *eorum* in line 7 has been thought to indicate that further dedications were also made for the remaining Tetrarchs, but the form could as well be an error: the letter-spaces are uneven and the disposition of the whole is haphazard – apparently the letter cutter was Greek or not very professional. The monument, however, is the latest certainly datable Roman inscription from this area. As for the language choice, Latin was revived especially for many Tetrarchic dedications in Greece proper.⁷



2) Milestone (?) under a *procurator Augusti*

Present location: Philoproodos Omilos Paramythias, no inventory number.

The stone was found in the village Karyoti, ca. 3-4 km to the south of Photike. The inscription has been published by Samsaris and Mouselimis.⁸

⁵ If he were not yet *Augustus*, the period would be between AD 305 and 309.

⁶ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 18, 13. See also *PLRE* I, s.v. Maximianus 9.

⁷ Sironen 1997, 53, with footnotes 15, 17, and 20.

⁸ Samsaris 1994, 134, no. 23 as well as Mouselimis 1994, 56.

Preserved measurements of the slab (broken above and at left and right): height 0.425, width 0.43, thickness 0.185 m. Letter height 0.03-0.04, interlineation 0.01-0.015 m.

The transcriptions available so far for this fragmentary Latin inscription turn out to be inadequate. Even after looking at the stone, however, I can only propose a reading in which several problems of interpretation remain.

[---]II vi iusserun[t ----]
 [---] m(ilia) p(assuum) III
 [---] VIAN ope STIRP[---]
 [---]NAPOVI proc(uratoris) Aug(usti) [---].



Critical apparatus: There are barely visible marks of interpunctuation in line 2 (on both sides of the letter P). Line 1 *VINSSKVN* Samsaris, Mouselimis. Line 2 *II P III* Samsaris, Mouselimis. Line 3 *IFAN ORESTIR* Samsaris, Mouselimis (Samsaris supposing *Orestin[us?]*). Line 4 *IAEOY POCAVC* Samsaris, Mouselimis (Samsaris supposing *[p]roc[uratoris?] Aug(usti)?*).

--- ordered by force --- three Roman miles --- with the help of --- procurator of *Augustus* ---.

Although *m(ilia) p(assuum)* usually stands at the end of a milestone, my new readings hopefully give a clue to a further understanding of the inscription. The end of line 3 could include a form of the Latin noun *stirps*. The inscription is probably later in date than the second century AD.

3) Milestone (?) under the Emperor Maximinus Thrax

Present location: 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Ioannina, no. 403 (ΑΙΘ ΔΥΒ 32).

The stone was found during 1931 in the district Paliouria on the east side of the Kokytos river below Veliani. It is since 1939 preserved in Ioannina and was first published by Hammond in 1967. It is also included by Samsaris and Mouselimis (who gives Chalasma, church of Panagia as provenance for the inscription).⁹

Limestone slab with inscription cut in Greek with good craftsmanship. Preserved measurements of the slab (broken below): height 0.41, width 0.605 (original), thickness 0.16 m. Letter height 0.036-0.045, interlineation 0.005-0.013 m.

⁹ Hammond 1967, 736, no. 15; Samsaris 1994, 130-131, no. 18; Mouselimis 1994, 32. Cf. also *SEG* XXIV 443 and *AE* 1980, 849.

- τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν αὐτο-
 [κρ]άτορος Καίσαρος Γ(αίου)
 [Ἰουλί]ου Οὐήρου Μαξ[ιμίνου]
 [Σεβασ]τ[ο]ῦ κ[αὶ]
 5 [τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ]
 [Γ(αίου) Ἰουλ(ίου) Οὐήρου]
 [Μαξίμου Καίσαρος]



Critical apparatus: Line 2 [κρ]άτορος Hammond, [κρά]τορος Samsaris. Line 3 [αίου] Σουήρου Μαξ Hammond, [Ἰουλί]ου Οὐήρου Μαξ[ιμίνου?] Samsaris. Line 4 τ υ Hammond, [Σεβασ]τ[ο]ῦ Samsaris. Line 5 [καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ] Samsaris.

Of our master the Emperor Caesar Gaius [Iulius] Verus Max[iminus *Augustus*] and [of his son Gaius Iulius Verus Maximus Caesar] ---.

Although we cannot ascertain that the inscription is a milestone, I read more in lines 2 and 4 than previous editors; note that the first surviving letter in line 3 has now been lost. The date is between AD 235 and 238.

4) Epitaph Set up by Trophimus

Present location: Philoproodos Omilos Paramythias, no inventory number.

The inscription was found in 1963 while constructing a public road through the cemetery of Photike. It was originally published by Dakaris, with later amendments by Daux and Šašel Kos. It is also published by Samsaris and Mouselimis.¹⁰

Fragmentary inscription. Preserved measurements of two main fragments (broken at left): height 1.39 (original), width 0.70, thickness 0.15 m (original). Letter height 0.068-0.115 (smaller below), interlineation 0.024-0.037 m. A further matching small fragment was found by myself in 2005; on the basis of letter height (0.10 and 0.095 m respectively) it seems to belong to lines 2 (NA) and 3 (ILL).

- [-----] Memmi
 [-----] NA[...]*onis et*
 [-----] Ill[aria]*e Nicomedae.*
 [f(ilia) (?)-----] A
 5 [--- vix(it ?) a]nn(os) XXXX.
 [-----] Trophimus
 [uxori (?)-----] *be]ne merita*
 [v(ivus) f(ecit)] *et sibi.*

¹⁰ Dakaris 1964, 312; Daux 1967, 688 with plate 4; *AE* 1967, 445; Šašel Kos 1979, 72, no. 166; more recently Samsaris 1994, 123-124, no. 8 and Mouselimis 1994, 55.

Critical apparatus: There are marks of interpunctuation in line 2 (before the word ET), line 3 (before the letter N), line 5 (on both sides of the number XXXX), and line 8 (after the word ET). Line 1 [...] *memmi* Samsaris. Line 3 *ENCMEDEA* Šašel Kos, *ENC Medea* Samsaris, *Illariae Nicomedeae* (i.e. *Nicomediae*) suggested to me by E. Meyer. Line 5 *NN XXXX* Šašel Kos. Line 6 e.g. *Euphronymus*, *Hieronymus* Šašel Kos, *ROIIMVS* Samsaris. Line 8 [v.f. *e*] *t sibi* Šašel Kos, Samsaris.

[---a, the daughter (?) of --- Memmius
---na ---o and Illaria Nicomedia. She
lived for 40 years. --- Trophimus
[made (the grave), while he was still
alive, for his] deserving [wife (?)],
and for himself.



The epitaph apparently mentions two persons in the genitive case, a male in lines 1-2, and a female in line 3. The monument was erected by Trophimus (line 6), a name previously unrecognized because of the ligature of the letters P and H; ligatures are also used in line 3 (NI, CO, ME and AE), perhaps because of the limited space in this line. Trophimus set up the monument possibly for his wife (line 7), probably at first mentioning her parents (lines 1-3), and thereafter set it up for himself. As no cognomen NAO is plausible, E. Meyer suggested that the matching small fragment in lines 2 and 3 should be placed four letter spaces further to the left as above. The inscription probably dates to the first or second century AD.

5) Epitaph of Sosipatra

Present location: 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Ioannina, no. 3 (ΣΥΝΤΕΠΙΚΘ/ΡΩΜ 19).

Found in 1953 built into the wall of a water cistern, presumably in the neighbourhood of Photike. The inscription was originally published by Mouselimis in 1955, but later also included in Mouselimis' and Samsaris' overviews of Photike.¹¹

The inscription, which is glued together from two fragments, is short but interesting. Measurements of the stele: height 0.60, width 0.36, thickness 0.05 m. Letter height 0.034-0.055, interlineation 0.004-0.015 m.

¹¹ Mouselimis 1953, 701 (*non vidi*), whence Anonymous 1955, 267, anew by Samsaris 1994, 127, no. 12 and by Mouselimis 1994, 29-30.

Sosipatra
vixit an(nos) VII.
Euthycus filia<e>
fecit. Vale.

Critical apparatus: There are marks of interpunctuation in line 2 (on both sides of the word AN), line 3 (after the word EVTHYCVS), and line 4 (after the word FECIT). Line 3 *Euthycus filia* Samsaris, *EVTHYCV SFILIA* Mouselimis.

Sosipatra lived for 7 years. Eutyclus set up (the grave) for (his) daughter. Farewell!



Both the daughter Sosipatra and the father Euthycus (probably misspelt for Eutyclus: the letters T and H in ligature are followed by a Greek *upsilon* with a horizontal bar midway) had a Greek name. At the end of line 3 the noun *filia* should be in the dative case, but obviously the amateur cutter ran out of room. The whole sepulchral formula is similar to that found in other Greek epitaphs from second century AD Greece.¹² The special Greek-style *upsilon* in the centre of the inscription also indicates a date in the second or third century AD.

6) Sepulchral Inscription Ending in a Fine

Present location: 12th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Ioannina, no. 8875 (AIΘ DUB 31).

Found in 1953 in a water cistern, presumably in the neighbourhood of Photike. It was first published by Mouselimis in 1994, and later also included by Samsaris.¹³

This fragmentary inscription originally consisted of 12 joining fragments, of which only two survive today. Preserved measurements of the stele (broken above): height 0.38, width 0.462 (original), thickness 0.045-0.05 m. Letter height 0.02-0.035 (f = 0.045), interlineation 0.012-0.017 m.

My reading is based upon an autopsy of the two surviving fragments, which cover the five lowermost lines, in connection with Mouselimis' original photograph of all fragments. Letters subsequently lost are underlined>.

¹² E.g. in Sparta, cf. *IG V 1*, nos. 748, 753, 757, 758, 761, 762, 765, 766, 767, 769, 771, 772, 775, 778, 779, 781, 783, 784, 785, 788, 789, 790, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 801, 802, 803, 804, 813, 815a, 816, 817, and 818.

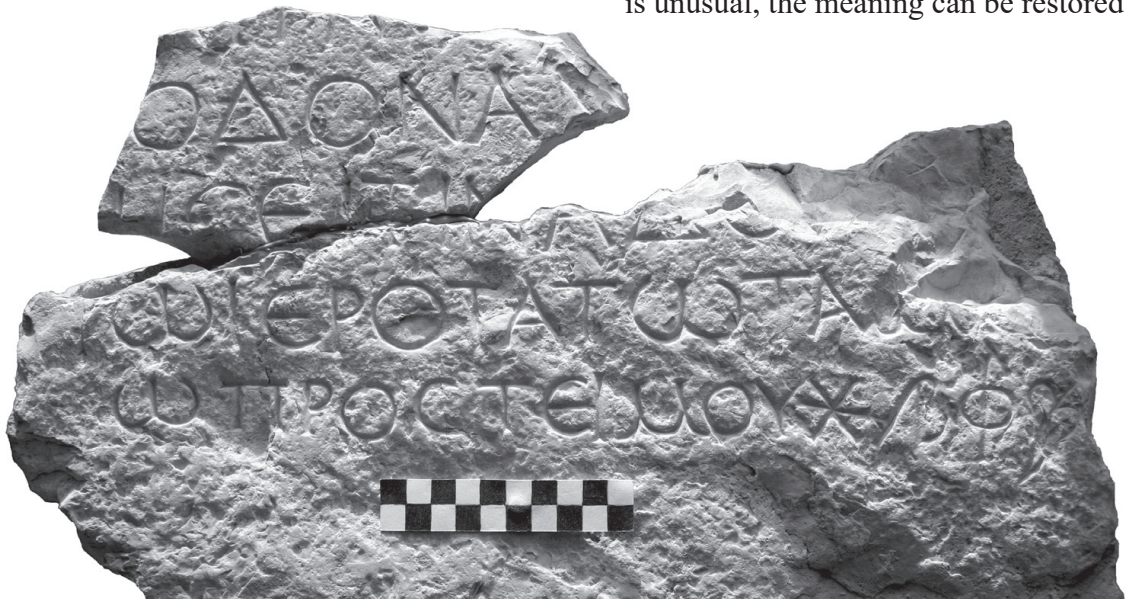
¹³ Mouselimis 1994, 31 gives a partly inaccurate majuscule transcription next to a small photograph of the inscription, which is only referred to by Samsaris 1994, 121-122, no. 5.

- KO[-----]
I[-----]
αὐτῷ [-----]
αὐτοῦ A[-----]
5 τὸν τρο[-----]
ἐπὶ πρ[-----τ]
ῆς κυρί[ας-----]
ου Αἰλ(ίου) Κουάρτ[ου. εἰ]
δὲ τις ἑτερος [εἰς]
10 τα(ύτ)ην, ἐτέραν ἑ-
ξοδον ἀνοίξας,
θήσει τινά, δώσ[ει]
τῷ ἱεροτάτῳ ταμε[ί]-
ω προστίμου *ΒΦ'. *leaf*

Critical apparatus: Letters underlined have been lost, but read from the photo published by Mouselimis in 1994. Lines 1–9 KO / I / ΑΥΤΩ ... / ΑΥΤΟΥΑ ... / ΠΟΝΤΡΟ ... / ΕΠΙΤΡΦ... Τ... / Η ΚΥΤΡΙΑΚ Ι / Ο ΥΑΙΛΚΟΥΑΡΤ... / ΔΕΤΙCΕΤΕ, ΟΜΟ Mouselimis. Line 9–10 [εἰς] / ταύτην, suggested to me by E. Meyer. Line 10 ΤΑΤΙΝΗΙ ΕΤΕΡΑΝΕ Mouselimis, ΤΑΛΙΗΝ photo, traces of letters ΛΙΗΝ on stone. Line 11 ΞΟΔΟΝ ΑΝΟΙΞΑC... Mouselimis. Line 12 ΘΗΣΕΙΤΙΝΔΩ... Mouselimis. Line 13 Τ ΩΙΕΡΟΤΑΤΩΤΑΜ Mouselimis. Line 14 Ω Π Ρ ΟCΤΕΙΜΟΥ + ΑΒΦ Mouselimis.

--- of --- us Aelius Quart[us. If] somebody else puts someone [into] this (grave), after having opened another exit, he shall give 2,500 denarii fines to the most sacred treasury.

The fine of 2,500 *denarii* was used by Samsaris as a clue to the dating of this inscription into the early imperial period, although he thought the fine was 500. On the basis of the lunate letter forms this inscription could date to the second or third century AD. I restore a new name (Aelius Quartus) in line 7. Although the formula in lines 8-10 is unusual, the meaning can be restored.



7) Bilingual Grave Altar for Tychicus Ending in a Fine

Present location: 32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Igoumenitsa, no. ΘΕ 6940.

Found at Photike in a pile of stones on the banks of the Kokytos river. First published by Preka in 2003, with amendments in *SEG LI 763*.¹⁴

Measurements of the grave altar with *cymatia*: height 0.94, width 0.44, thickness 0.45 m. Letter height 0.018-0.033, interlineation up to 0.036 m.

D(iis) M(anibus)
Tychico vern(ae) disp(ensatori?)
sui fecerunt et suis.
 εἴ τις ἔτερος ἐν ταύτῃ
 5 [τ]ῇ σοροῦ θήσῃ τινά,
 δώσει τῷ ταμείῳ
 *ΒΦ'.



Critical apparatus: There are marks of interpunctuation in line 2 (on both sides of the word VERN).

To the spirits of the dead. The relatives put up (the grave) for the steward (?) slave Tychicus and for themselves. If somebody else puts someone into this grave, he shall give 2,500 denarii to the treasury.

The round lettering of the Greek parts (lines 4-7) is similar and the fine identical to the previous one, so the inscription could be as late as the second or third century AD.

8) Epitaph of Soteri[chus]

Present location: 32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Igoumenitsa, no. ΘΕ 6941.

No information concerning provenance, but probably originating from the necropolis of Photike. Previously unpublished.

Monumental Latin grave stele, even larger than the Trophimus monument discussed above. Consists of two joining fragments. Preserved measurements of the stele: height 1.405, width 0.87, thickness 0.16 m. Letter height 0.055-0.12 (taller in lines 1-2), interlineation 0.042-0.065 m (actually 0.103 between lines 1 and 2, and separated by a horizontal line).

¹⁴ Preka 1997, 628, fig. 228 b, according to whom the text refers to Tiberius. A. Chaniotis' preliminary edition in *SEG LI 763* is made on the basis of Preka's photograph.

- D(iis) [M(anibus)]
Soteri[chus vixit (?)]
anni[s ..?]
T(itus) Flavius [---]
 5 Au(la) Pege Pap[iana ---?]
Doroth[eae f(ilia?)]
cont(ubernales?) [---].

Critical apparatus: Letters underlined belong to the upper right fragment. There are marks of interpunctuation in line 4 (after the letter T) and line 5 (on both sides of the word PEGE), possibly also in line 7 (after the word CONT).

To the spirits [of the dead]. Soteri[chus lived (?)] --- years. Titus Flavius [---], Aula Pege Pap[iana ---(?), daughter(?) of] Doroth[ea]. Fellow slaves (?)---.



The formula is unknown, because the entire inscription seems to provide us with only names, some of them suggesting Greek origins. The first two letters in line 5 are beyond the left margin, apparently added afterwards. The inscription probably dates to the first or second century AD.

9) Fragment of Epitaph

Present location: Philoproodos Omilos Paramythias, no inventory number.

No information concerning provenance, but probably originating from the necropolis of Photike. Previously unpublished.

Fragmentary sepulchral stele, broken below and at right, with an *aëtoma* and a *clipeus*. Preserved measurements of the stele: height 0.415, width 0.24 (originally ca. 0.48, based on measuring the *clipeus*), thickness 0.105-0.13 m (original). Letter height 0.065-0.07, interlineation 0.07 m.

Εὐτ[----]
 Ε[----]
 ----.



The funerary character of this monument can be deduced only on the basis of the monument itself. The letters are likely to be Greek. Because so few letters remain, the date must be left indeterminate, probably first to third century AD.

10) Epitaph of Rhodope

Finally I take up one example of the difficulties we face in interpreting lost inscriptions, because in such cases the readings are often based on unfortunately inexact drawings made by earlier generations. This applies especially to Latin inscriptions, often misunderstood by local Greeks copying them.

In 1939 Hammond received from K. Metsiones a drawing of a stone plaque found at Liboni near Paramythia.¹⁵ Hammond proceeded to publish the inscription on the basis of Metsiones' drawing as:

RHODOPEVI·X.
ANNXVI·ORINVS
AVGLPIREPTAE FEC

However, Hammond was unaware that the text had been published in Greece by Mouselimis already in 1953,¹⁶ on the basis of which it was included again by Samsaris in the 1990s as follows:¹⁷

Rhodope vix(it)
ann(os) XVI Orinus
Aug(usti) libertae fec(it).

with a transcription by Mouselimis, even more corrupt than the original:

RHODOPEVI X
ANNXVIORINVS
AVGLHREPTAE FEC.

Samsaris and Mouselimis again were unaware of the fact that the text had been corrected already in 1980, without an autopsy, into this more correct form:¹⁸

Rhodope vix(it)
ann(os) XVI, [Vict]orinus
Aug(usti) l(ibertus) <d>ireptae fec(it).

Rhodope lived for 16 years; Victorinus, freedman of Augustus, made (the monument) for the (female) one taken away (by death).

¹⁵ Hammond 1967, 743-744, no. 48. The measurements of the stone plaque were given as 0.70 x 0.55 m, with a full description of the decoration.

¹⁶ Mouselimis 1953, 701 (*non vidi*).

¹⁷ Samsaris 1994, 122-123, no. 7 and Mouselimis 1994, 29.

¹⁸ *AE* 1980, 848.

The discussion of these ten inscriptions shows the value of an examination of the stones themselves, and makes me hope that in the future more old inscriptions from Thesprotia will be located and the stones themselves carefully studied. This is how we not only get a more trustworthy text, but also clues to the dating, and even from fragments we can identify the type of inscription.

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