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γεγενῆσθαι. μνηύεται οὖν ἀπὸ μετοίκων τέ τινων καὶ ἀκο-
 λούθων περὶ μὲν τῶν Ἑρμῶν οὐδέν, ἄλλων δὲ ἀγαλμάτων
 περικοπαί τινες πρότερον ὑπὸ νεωτέρων μετὰ παιδιᾶς καὶ
 οἴνου γεγενημέναι τῶμας ἑλληνικῆς καὶ ρωμαϊκῆς ἀρχαιοτήτως ποιεῖται ἐν
 οἰκίαις ἐφ' ἑρμῆς. ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ • ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
 NATIONAL HELLNIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION • INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH
 SECTION OF GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITY καὶ
 αὐτὰ ὑπολαμβάνουντες οἱ μάλιστα τῷ Ἀλκιβιάδῃ ἀχθόμενοι
 ἐμποδῶν ὄντι σφίσι μὴ αὐτοῖς τοῦ δήμου βεβαίως προεστάναι,
 καὶ νομίσαντες, εἰ αὐτὸν ἐξελάσειαν, πρῶτοι ἂν εἶναι, ἐμεγά-
 λυνον καὶ ἐβόων. **Τεκμήρια** τὴν ἐπὶ δήμῳ καταλύσει τά τε μυστικά καὶ
 ἡ τῶν Ἑρμῶν περικοπή γένηται καὶ οὕτως εἴη αὐτῶν ὅτι οὐ
 μετ' ἐκείνου ἐπράχθη, ἐπιλέγοντες τεκμήρια τὴν ἄλλην αὐτοῦ
 ἐς τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα οὐ δημοτικὴν παρανομίαν. ὁ δ' ἐν τε
 τῷ παρόντι πρό- ΣΥΜΒΟΛΕΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΡΩΜΑΙΚΟΥ
 ΚΟΣΜΟΥ • CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF THE GREEK
 AND ROMAN WORLD • CONTRIBUTIONS A L'HISTOIRE DU
 MONDE GREC ET ROMAIN • BEITRÄGE ZUR GESCHICHTE
 DER GRIECHISCHEN UND RÖMISCHEN WELT • CONTRIBUTI
 PER LA STORIA DEL MONDO GRECO E ROMANO πρὶν ἐκπλεῖν κρυσσόμενος ἦν (ἤδη
 γὰρ καὶ τὰ τῆς παρανομίας ἐπεπερισσότερα, καὶ εἰ μὲν τούτων
 τι εἴργαστο, δίκην δοῦναι, εἰ δ' ἀπολυθείη, ἄρχειν. καὶ
 ἐπεμαρτύρετο μὴ ἀπόντος πέρι αὐτοῦ διαβολὰς ἀποδέχεσθαι,
 ἀλλ' ἤδη ἀποκτείνειν, εἰ ἀδίκησε καὶ ὅτι σωφρονέστερον εἴη
 μὴ μετὰ τοιαύτης αἰτίας, πρὶν διαγνώσι, πέμπειν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ
 τοσοῦτ' στρατεύματι. οἱ δ' ἐχθροὶ δεδιότες τὸ τε στράτευμα
 μὴ εὖνουν ἔχρη, ἦν ἤδη ἀγωνίζονται, ὃ τε δήμος μὴ μαλα-
 κίζεται θεραπεύων ὅτι δι' ἐκείνου οἱ τ' Ἀργεῖοι ξυνεστράτευον
 καὶ τῶν Μαντινέων τινές, ἀπέτρεπον καὶ ἀπέσπευδον, ἄλλους
 ῥήτορας ἐνιέντες οἱ ἔλεγον νῦν μὲν πλεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ μὴ
 κατασχεῖν τὴν ἀναγωγὴν, ἐλθόντα δὲ κρίνεσθαι ἐν ἡμέραις
 ῥηταῖς, βουλόμενοι ἐκ μείζονος διαβολῆς, ἦν ἔμελλον ῥᾶον
 αὐτοῦ ἀπόντος ποριεῖν, μετὰπεμπτον κομισθέντα αὐτὸν ἀγω-
 νίσασθαι. καὶ ἔδοξε πλεῖν τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην.
 Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα θέρους μεσοῦντος ἤδη ἡ ἀναγωγὴ ἐγγίγνεται

Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε: a Dedication by Hadrian in Arcadia

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Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε: a Dedication by Hadrian in Arcadia

A previously overlooked and geographically misattributed marble inscription preserves just two Greek words: Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε (“Hadrian dedicated”).¹ This epigraphic document is of exceptional significance, as it is the only known example to explicitly reference a dedication made by Hadrian using this formula. The offering was likely made during his first official visit to Greece as emperor.² But what did the emperor dedicate and where was this inscription set up?

The inscription is recorded only in *IG XII*, with its findspot identified as Steno on the island of Andros. No sketch or photo of it exists. As multiple inscriptions in honor of Hadrian have been found on Andros –five of which are displayed in the island’s archaeological museum– it seemed plausible that this one also originated from the island.³ However, careful research to trace the inscription’s findspot and year of discovery revealed something different. Thanks to the digitization of old newspapers by the Greek government, the *editio princeps* in a brief anonymous reference in the *Εφημερίς των Φιλομαθών* of 1859⁴ is now easily accessible; it records the findspot as the village of Steno in Arcadia. The newspaper article further lists 1852 as the year of the discovery of the marble stele in an old church in the village of Steno, located near Tripoli. In Paschalis’ book on Andros, it is listed in the inscriptions section as no. 151, identified as coming from Steno on Andros, with a reference to its publication in *Εφημερίς των Φιλομαθών*.⁵ The *IG* entry refers to the re-edition as Andrian inscription by Paschalis; however, Hiller also mentions the *editio princeps*, but had obviously not seen it. Nothing is further noted about

1. *IG XII Suppl.* 271, ed. F. Hiller von Gaertringen, Berlin 1939.

2. Hadrian visited Greece at least three times as emperor; his first tour of the Greek provinces occurred in 124/125, the second in 128/129 and the third in 131/132. Note, however, that he had a long-standing connection with Greece prior to becoming emperor, having served as eponymous archon of Athens in 111/112 and likely studied there around the year 100. On this topic in general, see especially Kouremenos and Mitropoulos 2024; Kouremenos 2022; Boatwright 2000; Birley 1997.

3. On Hadrian and Andros, see Sauciuc 1914, 92-93.

4. Anon. 1859, 1045.

5. Paschalis 1925, 549. We thank Dimitris Grigoropoulos for providing a scan of this hard to access book.

this inscription in subsequent publications, and it remains virtually unknown in scholarship.⁶

Steno is situated near the site of Tegea, a city which Hadrian is known to have visited on more than one occasion. The Tegeates even introduced a new era following Hadrian's arrival, a distinction shared only with Athens and Eleusis.⁷ Arcadia experienced a renaissance under Hadrian, not only as a result of his broader Panhellenic policy and its status as the homeland of the founders of Rome,⁸ but also because one of its cities, Mantinea, was the ancestral homeland of his favorite, Antinous. Ancient authors and numismatic evidence note that Antinous was from the city of Bithynion-Claudiopolis in Bithynia,⁹ and Pausanias adds that the citizens of that city were descended of Arcadians from Mantinea.¹⁰ Indeed, Antinous' name is the masculine version of the appellation of the legendary Arcadian queen, Antioe, and the locality of his residence in Bithynion-Claudiopolis was a village on its outskirts called Mantineion.¹¹ Hadrian was certainly in Mantinea during his first tour of Greece as emperor in 124/125, when he wrote and dedicated an inscription for the grave of Epaminondas.¹² Unfortunately, neither the inscription itself nor a copy of its text survive, but Pausanias mentions two inscribed slabs, one written in the Boeotian dialect of Thebes and the other by Hadrian. Moreover, Mantinea received further benefactions from the emperor since after Antinous' drowning in 130 and his subsequent apotheosis, the youth's ancestral homeland in Arcadia became a major center of his cult. Another intervention in this city was in

6. Except for short mentions in the context of Andrian dedications to Hadrian, without citing it verbatim, in Benjamin 1963, 79, and Camia 2018, 119 n. 59.

7. *IG V* 2, 51 and 52; see Bérard 1893, 19.

8. Rome's foundation by Arcadians: Porod 2018. The city of Pallantion (Pallantium) in Arcadia gained special privileges from Antoninus Pius due to a myth that claimed it was the mother city of Rome. See Paus. 8.43.2.

9. Cass. Dio 69.11.2; for coins of Bithynion-Claudiopolis bearing the obverse inscription *Η ΠΑΤΡΙΣ ΑΝΤΙΝΟΩΝ ΘΕΩΝ*, see, e.g., *RPC III*, 1112: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/1112> (accessed 1/5/2025).

10. Paus. 8.9.7-8.

11. Robert 1980, 138-140. See also Roy 2016, 124-126. Although unconvincing, see Pretzler 2005b on skepticism regarding Bithynion-Claudiopolis' Mantineian connection.

12. Paus. 8.11.8. On Hadrian's honoring of the grave of Epaminondas, along with other graves of Greek figures from the past, see especially Kouremenos forthcoming. On his presence in Arcadia: Bérard 1893, 19; Weber 1907, 185-188; Birley 1997, 180. Concerning his Greek tour in 124/125, there is no new evidence, as explicitly stated by Halfmann 2019, 238.

the Temple of Poseidon Hippios, where Hadrian not only restored the old temple but also commissioned the building of a new one around it,¹³ enclosing the original structure inside the new edifice.¹⁴

Steno, where the inscription we are concerned with was found, lies about 22 kilometers southeast of Mantinea in a sub-region of the Tegeatike which holds particular geographic, strategic, and mythological importance. The East Arcadian basin series, described by Alfred Philippson as “the natural cultural center of Arcadia” and “the most centrally located cultural landscape of the Peloponnese”, forms a secondary basin here –a marshy plain that drains into a chasm (καταβόθρα). To the east, towards Argolis and Thyreatis, the basin is enclosed by the Parthenion mountains, which rise up to 1,215 meters. At the narrow entrance of this secondary basin lies Steno (**fig. 1**), which takes its name from this topographical position, while at the other end is present-day Partheni, which appears in older literature under the names Berzova, Verzova, or Persova.¹⁵ The road from Tegea to Argos, suitable for chariots, passed through this basin. One of the four Tegean tribes, the Corytheis, can certainly be located here.¹⁶

Pausanias describes the sub-region in some detail, coming from Tegea and passing two sanctuaries that were no longer in use during his time:

“The road from Tegea to Argos is well suited for carriages, in fact a first-rate highway ... Along the straight road there are many oaks, and in the grove of oaks is a temple of Demeter called ‘in Corythenses.’ Hard by is another sanctuary, that of Dionysus Mystes. At this point begins mount Parthenios. On it is shown a sacred enclosure of Telephus, where it is said that he was exposed when a child and was suckled by a deer. A little farther is a sanctuary of Pan, where Athenians and Tegeans agree that he appeared to Philippides and conversed with him ... Crossing the peak of the mountain you are within the

13. Paus. 8.10.2.

14. On the Mantinea sanctuary of Poseidon Hippios, see Balériaux 2019; on the games for Antinous, see Gordillo Hervás 2020.

15. Philippson 1959, 245-259 on the East Arcadian basin; 255 on the “Bucht von Verzová”, as he calls it. See also the descriptions by Leake 1830, 328-332, and by Howell 1970, 88-89.

16. Leake 1830, 334, already calls it the “Corythic plain”. Localization of the Corytheia: Bursian 1872, 216-217; Bérard 1892, 537-538. On the tribal constitution of Tegea, see Nielsen 2002, 318; Pretzler 1999, 103-104.

cultivated area and reach the boundary between Tegea and Argos; it is near Hysiae in Argolis.”¹⁷

Close to Steno, Victor Bérard excavated an ancient sanctuary which he identified as that of Demeter and Dionysus Mystes in 1889; he found two rectangular structures and a seventh-century BC *kore* there.¹⁸ Based on the two building structures, he assumed it was a double shrine.¹⁹ Since the sanctuary was close to a church of Agia Triada, this could well be the place where Hadrian’s inscription was found, but we cannot be certain. Further up, the sanctuary of Pan was famous for the epiphany of the god reported by Herodotus: the swift runner Philippides was to bring news of the arrival of the Persians to Sparta, and he encountered Pan on Mount Parthenios. The Athenians then established their sanctuary of Pan.²⁰ This sanctuary, like that of Telephos, must have been situated on the western slopes of the mountain, but it remains unidentified.²¹ Nonetheless, the close connection between Telephos, Pan, and Mount Parthenion was longstanding and emerges from

17. Paus. 8.54.5-7; transl. W. H. S. Jones: ἡ δὲ ἐξ Ἄργος ἐκ Τεγέας ὁχήματι ἐπιτηδειοτάτη καὶ τὰ μάλιστα ἐστὶ λεωφόρος ... κατὰ δὲ τὴν εὐθείαν αἶ τε δρυὺς εἰσι πολλαὶ καὶ Δήμητρος ἐν τῷ ἄλσει τῶν δρυῶν ναὸς ἐν Κορυθεῦσι καλουμένης; πλησίον δὲ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἱερὸν Διονύσου Μύστου. [6] τὸ ἀπὸ τούτου δὲ ἄρχεται τὸ ὄρος τὸ Παρθένιον: ἐν δὲ αὐτῷ τέμενος δαίκενται Τηλέφου, καὶ ἐνταῦθα παῖδα ἐκκείμενον φασιν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ ἐλάφου τραφῆναι. ἀπωτέρω δὲ ὀλίγον Πανός ἐστιν ἱερὸν, ἔνθα Φιλίππιδι φανῆναι τὸν Πᾶνα καὶ εἰπεῖν ἃ πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀθηναῖοί τε καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα Τεγεᾶται λέγουσι [7] ... ὑπερβαλόντι δὲ τὴν κορυφὴν τοῦ ὄρους ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς ἥδῃ γεωργουμένοις Τεγεατῶν ὄρος καὶ Ἀργείων κατὰ Ὑσιὰς τὰς ἐν τῇ Ἀργολίδι. On Pausanias and Arcadia in general, see Balériaux 2017.

18. Bérard 1890. The excavations were not published, and no further work was carried out in this sanctuary afterward; see Jost 1985, 162-164, and Baumer 2004, 38 and 116. A modern signpost on the road points the way there, but on the spot there is nothing left to see.

19. Demeter and Dionysus Mystes (the initiated one) formed a unique blending of the two gods, hence their likely co-presence in the sanctuary in Corytheia. On the close connection between Demeter and Dionysus Mystes, who may have shared a single sanctuary, see Jost 1985, 435-436. On Arcadian mystery cults in general, see Jost 2003. The sanctuary is possibly the setting for the scene depicted on panels 44-46 of the Pergamene Telephos frieze: Robert 1888, 89-91. Schrader 1900, 130-131, argues against this interpretation.

20. Hdt. 6.105. On the importance of the shepherd god Pan in Arcadia, see Cruz Cardete 2018.

21. The attempts at identification are discussed in Pritchett 1980, 91-95.

a fragment of Euripides' tragedy *Telephos*.²² This cult was probably the one that was most characteristic and identity-forming for Corytheia. Their eponym, King Corythos, was the foster father of the exposed hero,²³ and from here he traveled to Pergamon. The isopolity treaty that Pergamon and Tegea concluded under Eumenes II²⁴ naturally goes back to this localization of the birth legend. Some building components of temples found in Partheni²⁵ and on the nearby Mouchli hill²⁶ point to developed sanctuaries, but it is impossible to locate or even identify them. At a sanctuary of Artemis east of the pass, an "Arcadian herm", or rather a pyramidal pillar, was found in 1888 which bears the inscription Κληνίας ἀνέθηκε.²⁷

When Hadrian traveled from Argos to Arcadia at the end of 124 or the beginning of 125, his route almost inevitably led him through the Parthenion mountains and the land of the Corythians. The road from Tegea to Argos, as described by Pausanias, was not just any road, even if it was a well-built one, but the most important and most frequently traveled route in the entire Peloponnese. Anyone wanting to travel from Argolis into the Arcadian mountains as well as to Laconia, Messenia, or Olympia, had to take this route unless they were willing to endure considerable hardships. Countless references confirm this –for example, the aforementioned Athenian Philippides, who encountered Pan there. The fluctuating relations between Sparta and Tegea and Sparta and Argos can only be fully understood when considering that the Spartan army preferred to take this road whenever it marched north. In 195 BC, the Roman army under T. Quinctius

22. Eur. Fr. 696 (932) 1-7. In the prologue, Telephos says: "Greetings, ancestral land, which Pelops marked out as his own — / and you, Pan, who haunt Arcadia's stormy crag whence I claim descent. / Aleos' daughter Auge bore me secretly to Heracles of Tiryns; my witness is / Mount Parthenion, where Eileithyia released my mother from her labour / and I was born." ὦ Γαῖα πατρίς ἦν Πέλοψ ὀρίζεται, / χαῖρ', ὅς τε πέτρῃν Ἀρκάδων δυσχεΐμερον / Πὰν ἐμβατεύεις, ἔνθεν εὖχομαι γένος / Αὔγῃ γὰρ Ἀλέου παῖς με τῷ Τιρυνθίῳ / τίκτει λαθραῖως Ἡρακλεῖ· σύννοϊδ' ὄρος / Παρθένιον, ἔνθα μητέρ' ὠδίνων ἐμὴν / ἔλυσεν Εἰλειθυῖα, γίγνομαι δ' ἐγώ. Transl. Collard, Cropp, Lee.

23. Apollod. 3.103; Diod. Sic. 4.33.9-11. Delucchi 2025, 32-35; 155; 157-158; 185; Pretzler 2005a, 528; Collard, Cropp, Lee 1995, 22-24.

24. *I. Pergamon* 156. See Dignas 2012; Kuttner 2005, 147-154.

25. *BCH* 79 (1955), 254.

26. Ross 1841, 148.

27. *ArchDelt* 1888, 116. With photograph in Rhomaios 1911, 151f. The sanctuary: Pritchett 1980, 91-92. For this specific Arcadian type of stelae, see Nilsson 1955, 206-207; Miller 1974, 247-248. For Artemis in Arcadia, see Zolotnikova 2017.

Flamininus also marched along this route.²⁸ Even in modern times, this remained the most important road across the Peloponnese until the opening of the Αυτοκινητόδρομος Μορέας in 2016. One of many travelers who took this path was Leo von Klenze, who used the road in 1834 on his journey from Nafplio to Katakolo.²⁹ During the Ottoman period, the road was renewed as a carriage route. After the Ottoman stronghold of Tripolitza was captured in 1821, cannons were transported down from there to Argos.³⁰ In 1825, when Ibrahim Pasha marched with his army from Argos to Tripolitza, Kolokotronis ordered the three access routes from the valley of Achladokambos to Tegea to be blocked.³¹ Some research along the route has shown that there are three main paths that branch out after Steno and merge again on the eastern side of Mount Parthenios, in the valley of Achladokambos (Hysiai). There is some disagreement about which of these routes was passable for wagons in antiquity, but the most likely candidate, although doubted by Pikoulas, appears to be the one called Gyros. This route forms a wide curve to the north, passing around the Byzantine refuge settlement of Mouchli and featuring several ancient sanctuaries along the way. A fourth road coming from the Achladokambos valley follows more or less the modern railroad. It had two entrances into the plain of Tegea: one at modern Partheni, like the railroad, and the other at the pass of Agioi Deka where the modern Tegea-Astros road runs.³²

The inscription found along this strategically and mythologically significant route demonstrates that Hadrian was aware of the region's importance as a myth-historical center and a key crossroads. In the second century, the land of the Corytheans was not as remote as it may seem today; rather, it was both a crucial transit hub and a central place in mythology. If the inscription was indeed set up in the sanctuary of Demeter or of Dionysus Mystes, as we suspect, what might Hadrian have dedicated there?

28. Liv. 34.26.9. For further examples for the significance of the route in antiquity, see Tausend 2006, 137-147.

29. von Klenze 1838, 642-645. Pritchett 1980 lists many others.

30. Petronotis 2005, 191.

31. Kolokotronis 1846, 131.

32. Modern research on the road: Loring 1895, 78f.; Pritchett 1980 and 1982; Pikoulas 1995, 320-322, and 1999, 258-260; Petronotis 2005; Tausend 2006, 119-125. For a different interpretation, see *RE* 18.2 (1949) 1888-1889, s.v. Parthenion (E. Meyer). The significance of the route is particularly well emphasized by Sanders, Whitbread 1990. A good map of the roads can be found in Fougères 1898, pl. X; see also the sketch in Pritchett 1980, 82.

Paschalis remarks that the only discernable words in the inscription were Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε,³³ but he does not describe the shape of the marble. As no drawing or photograph of the inscription exists, we can only surmise from his statement that the original inscription was likely longer. The verb ἀνατίθημι, the simple past tense of which is ἀνέθηκε, could refer to the dedication of buildings, altars, objects, epigrams, and even books. This is in accordance with Hadrian's other dedications throughout the Greek world, and here again, Pausanias serves as our guide. He describes Hadrian's dedication for the grave of Epaminondas in Mantinea thus:³⁴

“On the grave stands a pillar, and on it is a shield with a dragon in relief. The dragon means that Epaminondas belonged to the race of those called the Sparti, while there are slabs on the tomb, one old, with a Boeotian inscription, the other dedicated by the Emperor Hadrian, who wrote the inscription on it.”

Note the use of ἀνέθηκεν Ἀδριανὸς to refer to the dedication of a separate slab with an epigram composed by the emperor for the grave of the Boeotian statesman. As is well known, Hadrian left behind several epigrams for the graves of Greeks and Romans, as well as to deities such as Eros in the sanctuary of the Muses at Thespieae in Boeotia.³⁵ In the latter, his epigram came with the dedication of a bear skin, but it does not refer to the dedication directly –and thus the word ἀνέθηκεν does not appear in the epigram– but rather δίδωσι δέξο (“receive what he offers”).

To our knowledge, no other parallel of the expression Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε has been found in epigraphy from the Greek East. The dedication from Ephesus that mentions Ἀδριανὸς Μούσαισι μέλων ἀνέθηκε Σεουήρον has been shown to have been dedicated by his namesake, the sophist Hadrian of Tyre, in the later part of

33. Paschalis 1925, 549: ἐκ τῆς ὁποίας ἀνεγνώσθησαν αἱ δύο μόνον ἀνωτέρω λέξεις.

34. Paus. 8.11.8; transl. W. H. S. Jones: τῷ τάφῳ δὲ κίων τε ἐφέστηκε καὶ ἀσπίς ἐπ’ αὐτῷ δράκοντα ἔχουσα ἐπειρασμένον: ὁ μὲν δὲ δράκων ἐθέλει σημαίνειν γένους τῶν Σπαρτῶν καλουμένων εἶναι τὸν Ἐπαμινώνδαν, στήλαι δὲ εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῷ μνήματι, ἡ μὲν ἀρχαία καὶ ἐπίγραμμα ἔχουσα Βοιωτίων, τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν τε ἀνέθηκεν Ἀδριανὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ ἐποίησε τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τὸ ἐπ’ αὐτῇ.

35. Hadrian's dedication to Eros in Thespieae: *IG VII 1828*. See also Bowie 2002, 180-181 for commentary on this dedication. Bowie 2002, 184, based on the title of *Anth. Pal.* 6.332 (Ἀδριανοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἀναθήμασι), suggests that Hadrian had published a collection of his dedicatory epigrams.

the second century.³⁶ Thus, the inscription from Steno in Arcadia is unique so far, and, without further information, we can only offer some informed conjectures on what Hadrian dedicated there. According to the *Historia Augusta*, he refrained from inscribing his name on the buildings he constructed, with the sole exception of the Temple of Trajan in Rome.³⁷ This suggests that the dedication we are dealing with was likely for an object or an epigram rather than a building, another type of infrastructure, or a restoration of one. If the most likely candidates for the location of the inscription are the sanctuaries of Demeter or Dionysus Mystes, it was likely an object, probably a sculpture, accompanied by an epigram. Hadrian is known to have dedicated expensive gifts in Greek sanctuaries, with a particularly noteworthy example being a gold peacock encrusted with jewels to the goddess Hera in her sanctuary at Argos.³⁸ Why not suppose that he made a similar type of dedication in the sanctuary of Demeter or Dionysus Mystes in Arcadia, both deities that were linked with fertility, transformation, and the afterlife, but also with the Eleusinian Mysteries in which he had already been initiated by 124/125?³⁹

Finally, we should briefly consider another type of dedication. For this, we must ponder the landscape and Hadrian's known interests. Arcadia was –and still is– prime hunting territory, and as many of our ancient sources state, his favorite pastime was hunting,⁴⁰ especially for big game. He was likely in Corytheia during the colder months of 124 and 125, but the weather would not have deterred him from indulging in his favorite sport in this region of the Peloponnese. After all, one of our sources claims that he bore cold and hot weather with great endurance and never covered his head to protect himself from the elements.⁴¹ Thus, even the frosty conditions of Arcadia in the winter would not have deterred him from pursuing game, which the region had in abundance. It is, therefore, not unlikely that what he dedicated in Corytheia was the skin of one or more animals together with an epigram.

To sum up: the stele from Arcadia bearing the dedication with the words Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε is unique in epigraphy thus far, as it is the only known instance

36. *IEph* 1539 (SEG 13, 505).

37. SHA *Hadr.* 19.9: *cum opera ubique infinita fecisset, numquam ipse nisi in Traiani patris templo nomen suum scripsit.*

38. Paus. 2.17.6.

39. On Hadrian's initiation in the Eleusinian Mysteries and his first initiation before he became emperor, see especially Clinton 1989a and 1989b; Galimberti 2010.

40. On Hadrian and hunting, see Anderson 1985; Birley 1997, 184–185; Gutsfeld 2000.

41. SHA *Hadr.* 17.9.

directly referencing a dedication by the emperor using this formula. Although the marble stele itself has been lost since the mid-nineteenth century and was likely repurposed as building material in a nearby church or other structure, its misattribution to Steno on Andros and subsequent scholarly confusion have now been clarified. As we have discovered, the inscription was found in the village of Steno in Arcadia and was most likely dedicated in the sanctuary of Demeter and Dionysus Mystes within the village's territory. Such a dedication aligns with Hadrian's well-documented penchant for offering gifts and writing epigrams for sites of historical and religious significance. The formula of the inscription suggests that the dedicated object was most likely a statue or portable votive item, possibly with an epigram that was composed by the emperor himself. Alternatively, it cannot be excluded that the dedication involved a skin or another part of an animal hunted by the emperor in Arcadia and offered to one or both deities. What is clear is that this inscription provides a unique insight into Hadrian's personal role in dedications, preserving the only known example thus far of this particular dedication formula.

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Summary

An intriguing inscription bearing the words Ἀδριανὸς ἀνέθηκε (Hadrian dedicated) appears in *Inscriptiones Graecae* (IG) and is the only example in the Greek world of this specific formula. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the inscription has been misattributed to an island, but our research reveals that it originated from a village near Tegea in Arcadia. Ancient literary sources and epigraphy confirm Hadrian's active presence in Arcadia, where he made various dedications. But what exactly did he dedicate in this case? The inscription's findspot –near a major road network and a site of multiple sanctuaries– offers clues about the nature of the emperor's dedication. The formula suggests that the dedicated object was likely a statue or portable votive item, possibly accompanied by an epigram composed by Hadrian himself. This aligns with his well-documented habit of offering gifts and composing epigrams for sites of historical and religious significance. Thus, this inscription provides a rare glimpse into Hadrian's personal role in dedications, preserving the only known instance of this dedication formula.

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1: 250000

Deutsche Meile.

10 20 30 40 50

100 Olymp Stadion.

Bg Ostrakina

Mantinea

Bg Alesion

Nestane

Bg Artemision.

118