

GLENN RICHARD BUGH

THE THESEIA IN LATE HELLENISTIC ATHENS

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The saga of Theseus, legendary king of Athens, is a full and rich one.¹ But only certain events of his life concern us here, specifically the circumstances of his death, the recovery of his bones and the creation of a state cult in his honor in the 470s. Plutarch in his life of Theseus records that Kimon son of Miltiades attacked the island of Skyros in 476/5, expelled the native Dolopians, infamous for their piratical activities, and colonized the island with Athenians (36.1-4; *Kimon* 8.3-7; cf. Thuc. 1.98.2). But this is not just a story about ridding the Aegean of notorious pirates and asserting Athenian naval supremacy; involved in this adventure, as cause or effect,² is a Delphic oracle. According to legend, Theseus had become embroiled in a power struggle in Athens, fled to Skyros where he had ancestral estates, and was treacherously pushed off a cliff to his death by Lykomedes, king of the island. Centuries had passed, but Apollo had not forgotten. After the Persian wars, it seems, the Athenians received an oracle from Delphi instructing them to recover Theseus' bones and return them to Athens for proper heroic burial. When the Dolopians proved obstructive, Kimon reduced the island. Aided by an eagle, Kimon located a tomb on Skyros containing the remains of a gigantic man. He promptly identified him as Theseus, and returned the sacred bones to Athens. The Athenians received these with splendid processions and sacrifices and placed them in a sacred enclosure in the center of the city. This *Theseion*, described as being near the Gymnasium of Ptolemy (Paus. 1.17.2; Plut. *Theseus* 36.2), is likely to be located at a site east or southeast of the ancient agora below the north slope of the Acropolis.³ Scattered sources confirm that a state festival was instituted in honor of Theseus at this time and that it took place on 8 Pyanopsion (October in the Julian

¹ See H. Herter, 'Theseus', *RE Supplement* xiii (1973) cols.1045-1238 and A.G. Ward (ed.), *Quest for Theseus* (London: 1970).

² Plutarch's accounts in *Theseus* and *Kimon* are ambiguous on this point. Of course, divine justification for aggression is an old and familiar theme; cf. Paus. 1.17.6.

³ For testimonia and discussion see R.E. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora* iii: *Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia* (Princeton: 1957) pp. 113-147, E. Vanderpool, 'The "Agora" of Pausanias I, 17, 1-2', *Hesperia* 43 (1974) pp.308-310, S.N. Koumanoudis, 'ΘΗΣΕΙΩΣ ΣΗΚΟΣ', *AE* (1976) pp.194-216, R.E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton: 1978) p.64 and K.A. Christensen, 'The Theseion: A Slave Refuge', *AJAH* 9 (1984 [1988]) pp.23-32.

calendar).⁴ Accounts of the Treasurers of Athena for 332/1 and 331/0 BC (*IG ii²* 1496, 134-135, 143) show that the Theseia had become a major state festival in the Classical period: (a) 1183 drachmas were disbursed in 332/1, an amount greater than that allocated for the Lesser Panathenaia of the previous year⁵ (the figure for 332/1 is not preserved), and (b) its presence in two consecutive years proves that it was celebrated annually. What is not known is the nature and extent of the athletic program of the Theseia in the Classical period. There are, of course, the Theseia inscriptions of the second century BC, *IG ii²* 956-965, the topic of this paper. But it is perilous to argue, as E.N. Gardiner did,⁶ that on the basis of the “religious conservatism of the Greeks” these documents “may be considered as representing the general character of the festival in the fifth century, and that such changes as had been introduced were merely changes in details”. In fact, we will have occasion later to suggest that the athletic program detailed in the second century BC represents a significant new festival.

What then are these Theseia inscriptions and what can they tell us about late Hellenistic Athens? I have examined all of the stones in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens, except 963 and 965, which could not be located. If we may generalize from our best-preserved stones, 956, 957 and 958, each Theseia was recorded on a free-standing stele approximately two meters tall, over 0.50 meters wide, and approximately 0.20 meters thick, and judging from 958, surmounted by a pediment with three acroteria. Inscriptions 956, 957, 958, 960, 962 and 964 are of grey Hymettan marble; 959 and 961 of Pentelic. The provenience of 956-958 is of special interest. These were uncovered, along with sculptures depicting Theseus and the Minotaur, by S. Koumanoudes in 1861 while excavating the Post- Herulian wall near the church of St. Demetrios Katephores (no longer standing), approximately 200 meters east of the Roman market.⁷ Vanderpool suggested, and I think quite rightly, that the *Theseion* ought to be located nearby. For we know that the stelae were set up in the *temenos* of

⁴ Plut. *Theseus* 36.4, *Kimon* 8.6; for date and discussion see A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig: 1898) pp.288-298, L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin: 1932) pp.224-226, J.D. Mikalson, *The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year* (Princeton: 1975) pp.70-71, H.W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (Ithaca: 1977) pp.81-82 and D.G. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden: 1987) pp.40-41 (hereafter Kyle, *Athletics*).

⁵ See Mommsen, op.cit. pp.291-292.

⁶ *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* (London: 1910) pp.246-247, note the cautionary words by Kyle *Athletics* pp.40-41.

⁷ See Vanderpool, op.cit. p.309 and A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora xxiv: Late Antiquity: AD 267-700* (Princeton: 1988) pp.137-138.

Theseus, ἐν τῷ τοῦ Θησέως τεμένει (956, 16-17; 957, 11; 958, 13-14).

The inscriptions record public decrees in honor of the *agonothetai* of the Theseia. Following a decree detailing the liturgical generosity and administrative skill of the *agonothete* are lists of the victors in the games, inscribed in two columns. Not surprisingly, the *agonothetai* come from well-known and well-to-do families of late Hellenistic Athens:⁸ Nikogenes son of Nikon of the deme Philaidai (956; *PA* 10850); Miltiades son of Zoilos of the deme Marathon (958; *PA* 10215); Leon son of Kichesias of the deme Aixone (960; *PA* 9108, *NPA* p.117); [Apolexis son of Lysa]nder of the deme Peiraius (961; *PA* 1363); and Buttakos son of Purrhos of the deme Lamptrai (963; *PA* 2934, *NPA* p.43).

What then of the athletic program itself?⁹ The first events were competitions for trumpeters and heralds. Then followed categories of military reviews termed *euandria* and *euoplia*, nicely defined by Gardiner¹⁰ as “general smartness and equipment”.¹¹ Three military groups competed in these events: the picked troops (*hoi epilektoi*), the foreign troops (*hoi en tois ethnesin*) and the Athenian cavalry. Native troops competed by tribes, foreigners by *tagmata*. Torch races followed these competitions. The participants were divided into classes of youths (*paidēs*), ephebes, ex-ephebes, young men (*neaniskoi*), men, and occasionally horsemen.¹² The *paidēs* are actually identified as belonging to a specific palaistra; e.g., of Timeas (956 I, 61-62; 957 I, 46-47; 961 I, 25-26) or Antigenes (958 I, 60-61); the *neaniskoi* to gymnasia; e.g., the Lyceum (956 I, 67; 958 I, 65; 961 I, 31-32).¹³

⁸ See G.R. Bugh, *The Horsemen of Athens* (Princeton: 1988) p.204 for comments on the hippic activities of these *agonothetai*. For full prosopography of Leon son of Kichesias see Ch. Habicht, *Studien zur Geschichte Athens in hellenistischer Zeit (Hypomnemata 73)*; Gottingen: 1982) pp.194-197.

⁹ For the hippic events see M.A. Martin, *Les cavaliers athéniens* (Paris: 1886) pp.211-225; for the whole program see Gardiner, op.cit. pp.245-248, Mommsen, op.cit. pp.292-298, Herter, op.cit. cols.1227-1228, Parke, op.cit. p.82 and Kyle, *Athletics* pp.40-41 and 178-194 (succinct descriptions of individual *agones*).

¹⁰ Op.cit. p.247.

¹¹ The sequence of contests in the Theseia is consistently maintained except for *IG* ii² 957 where the trumpeters and heralds compete after the military reviews.

¹² The cavalry does not participate until *IG* ii²958 I, 67-68 and later only by the specialized cavalry units called *tarantinoi* (960 I, 33-34; 961 I, 34-35); they also accompanied the Pythais to Delphi later in the second century: *FD* iii.2 nos.24, 28, 35, 37.3 and 46; see Bugh, op.cit. pp.197-198.

¹³ In *IG* ii²957 I, 51 the representatives of the Lyceum are *andres*, not *neaniskoi*.

The remainder of the events can be neatly divided into two broad categories: gymnastic and equestrian. The gymnastic program included the long race (*dolichos*), the sprint (*stadion*), the double stade (*diaulos*), wrestling (*pale*),¹⁴ boxing (*pygme*), the *pankration*, race in armor (ὄπλίτην),¹⁵ limited to men, “armed combat” (*hoplomachia*), and the javelin throw (*akontizon*), the last reserved for epebes (957 II, 62-63; 958 II, 77-78). The armed combat event was apparently not introduced until the Theseia of IG ii² 957 (II, 147-157) and took two forms based on the weapons used: (a) round shield and spear (ἐν ἄσπιδίῳ καὶ δόρατι) and (b) oval shield and broadsword (ἐν θυρεῶι καὶ μαχαίραι).¹⁶ The competitors for these events included five separate age-class divisions: three age-classes of *paides*, an open division (*ek panton*) for them, and a men’s class, also open to foreigners. The precise terminologies for the three age-classes of boys were παῖδες τῆς πρώτης ἡλικίας, τῆς δευτέρας ἡλικίας, τῆς τρίτης ἡλικίας. An interesting feature is that the first two age-classes of boys were excluded from the long race, the competitors limited to *paides* third age-class, *paides ek panton*,¹⁷ and men. If we compare the victor-lists of the Panathenaic games of this period, we find that the competitors in the *dolichos* included only boys (*paides*) and men.¹⁸ Yet there was also a third age-group in the Panathenaia, the “beardless youths” (*ageneioi*), but apparently no *dolichos* reserved for them. I think we can assume that the Athenians expected the *ageneioi* to compete under the general *paides* heading and that they would ordinarily dominate the event because of their advanced age and physical

¹⁴ For the so-called “heavy events”, wrestling, boxing and the *pankration*, see M. Poliakoff, *Studies in the Terminology of Greek Combat Sports* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 146; Meisenheim: 1982), and recently *Combat Sports in the Ancient World* (Ithaca: 1987).

¹⁵ 965 II, 77-78; 957 II, 46; 958 II, 66; 960 II, 27-28; for Panathenaia cf. 2314 II, 66 and 2315 I, 15.

¹⁶ In IG ii²957 the *machaira* is omitted, but judging by 958 II, 69 and 73 it can be assumed in 957. Besides, the epebes also participated in this event (957 II, 61), making it rather unlikely that they fought with shield alone. The *thureos* and *machaira* are sometimes translated in modern literature as “oblong shield” and “short sword” but Dr. N.V. Sekunda (now with the LGPN project in Oxford) informs me *per litteras* that (1) despite the normal meaning of *thureos* as “door”, it is not really “oblong” but rather “oval” in shape, and (2) the type of *machaira* referred to here is Celtic in origin and has been attested 75-80 cm. in length, and therefore cannot be considered “short”; also, it acquires its Greek appellation from its function as a cutting (or slashing) – as opposed to thrusting – weapon. Thus, Sekunda proposes to translate *machaira* as “broadsword” and I have followed him in this. My sincere thanks to Dr. Sekunda for this information.

¹⁷ See 956 I, 72-73; 957 I, 57-58; 958 I, 71-72; 961, 38-39; 964, 19. Also, it has been restored at 962, 4-5 by Ch. Pélékidis, *Histoire de l’Éphébie attique des origines à 31 avant Jésus-Christ* (Paris: 1962) p.232 n.1 (hereafter Pélékidis, *Éphébie*).

¹⁸ IG ii²2313, 21 and 41; 2315, 11 and 33, incidentally, all foreigners.

conditioning.¹⁹

In the equestrian competitions, there were events for race horses (*lamproi hippoi*), chariots and possibly the chariot and hoplite tandem (*apobates*). The bulk of the program, however, was dominated by the Athenian cavalry. They include separate contests for officers (*phylarchs*) and the rank and file; these are paralleled in contemporary Panathenaic inscriptions (2316, 28-41; 2317, 6-18). Sometimes riding horses decked out for war (ἵππῳ πολεμιστῆϊ), sometimes not, the phylarchs and *hippeis* compete over the *diaulos* and straight courses (*akampios*) distances.²⁰ Limited to the phylarchs was a *diaulos* race in which the officer competed “in armor” (ἐν ὄπλοις).²¹ There were open equestrian competitions (*ek panton*) as well as one, javelin-throwing on horseback, which appears only in this category (956 II, 90-91; 957 II, 83; 958 II, 95-96).

My discussion will concentrate on 956, 957 and 958, our best-preserved Theseia and datable by eponymous archons. But first it might be useful to say a few words about the other inscriptions. *IG ii² 959*, inscribed by the cutter of the ephobic inscription *IG ii² 1028* (100/99 BC), has now been joined to *IG ii² 1014*, dated to 109/8 by the archon Jason. This makes 959 the latest dated Theseia inscription.²² The others have also been closely examined by Stephen Tracy and to his skill at identifying letter-cutters’ distinctive “hands” I owe the following observations: 960, 961 and 962 were inscribed by the so-called Agora I 6006 Cutter whose floruit Tracy now dates to 169/8-135/4 BC.²³ This fits the suggested approximate dates in the *Corpus*; i.e., c.142-140, though plainly leaning towards the end of his professional activity.²⁴ Tracy cannot attribute a known cutter to 964, but on the basis of

¹⁹ C.A. Forbes, *Neoi. A Contribution to the Study of Greek Associations* (Middleton, Conn.: 1933) p.2 (hereafter Forbes, *Neoi*), divided the three age-classes of the Panathenaia (and at Nemea and Isthmia) into *paides* = 12-16, *ageneioi* = 16-20 and *andres* = 20 and up.

²⁰ Interestingly, *IG ii² 957 II*, 65-74 would seem to indicate that in that year the phylarchs enjoyed two sets of competitions of the same event and that no one phylarch was victorious twice. The cavalry program seems to be the one subject to the greatest variation from Theseia to Theseia.

²¹ Occurring only once in the Theseia documents: 956 II, 78-79; also found in the contemporary Panathenaia: 2316 I, 28-29; 2317, 6 (restored).

²² New text to appear in a forthcoming book by Stephen Tracy on the Athenian letter-cutters from 229 to 86 BC. A.S. Henry, *The Prescripts of Athenian Decrees (Mnemosyne Supplement 49; Leiden: 1977)* pp.92-93, provides a brief note on the unusual nature of the prescript for *IG ii² 1014*.

²³ This represents a change from his earlier suggestion in ‘Five Letter-Cutters of Hellenistic Athens (230-130 BC)’, *Hesperia* 47 (1978) pp.261-266, where he dated him 148/7-135/4.

²⁴ See Appendix for additional comments.

its letter forms he would put it after 120 BC.²⁵ Finally, as I noted earlier, 963 and 965 are now apparently lost.

Now, let me state some basic premises. We know from the documents themselves that the archons for *IG* ii² 956, 957 and 958 are Aristolas, Anthesterios and Phaidrias, respectively. Also there is common agreement that the dates for Aristolas and Anthesterios are 161/0 and 157/6. I also accept the argument proposed by Pélékidis, particularly from the reference in the Theseia inscriptions to the penteteric festival of the Ptolemaia (956, 34-35; 957, 19-20; 958, 31), that our documents record not an annual Theseia but a new lavish penteteric festival which we should properly call the Greater Theseia.²⁶ I am also convinced that this new penteteric festival was established to commemorate the return of Athens' old colonial possessions, Lemnos, Imbros, Delos and especially Skyros by the Romans at the conclusion of the Third Macedonian War in 167 BC.²⁷ What better time to honor Theseus with something special? Because there is no hint of the establishment of a new festival in *IG* ii² 956, I would imagine that it marks the second occurrence of the Greater Theseia; that is to say, the first probably took place in the archonship of Pelops in 165/4. There could have been too little time to organize the new festival for the Fall of 166 BC.

So far, so good. However harmony ends on the date of the archonship of Phaidrias. *IG* ii² 958 records a Greater Theseia, but which one: the festival we would expect in 153 BC, as Pélékidis argued,²⁸ or the following one, in 149 BC, as Meritt proposed exactly twenty-five years ago?²⁹ In his *Hesperia* article, Meritt observed that the answer to this question might

²⁵ I am particularly grateful to Professor Tracy for supplying the results of his latest research to me.

²⁶ See Pélékidis, *Éphébie* pp.229-230, and in detail pp.295-300, he himself borrowed a suggestion of W.B. Dinsmoor, *The Archons of Athens in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1931) p.262 n.2. This argument has gained the support of B.D. Meritt, 'Greek Inscriptions', *Hesperia* 33 (1964) pp.205-206, O. Reinmuth, *Gnomon* 38 (1966) p.799, P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale* (Paris: 1970) p.35 and most recently Ch. Habicht, 'The Eponymous Archons of Athens from 159/8 to 141/0 BC', *Hesperia* 57 (1988) p.240.

²⁷ Although Skyros and Imbros are not mentioned by Polybius (30.20), they are documented as Athenian possessions later; W.S. Ferguson, *Hellenistic Athens* (London: 1911) pp.315-316 and F.W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius* ii (Oxford: 1979) p.443, think it probable that despite Polybius' silence these islands were also granted to Athens at this time.

²⁸ Accepted by Habicht, op.cit. pp.239-240.

²⁹ *Hesperia* 33 (1964) pp.205-206 and 'Athenian Archons 347/6-48/7 BC', *Historia* 26 (1977) pp.183-184. He has recently received support from R.S. Fisher, 'A New Priest of Sarapis on Delos', *ZPE* 58 (1985) pp.117-118, who posits as priest of Sarapis a Lenaios Hermeios, therefore of the tribe Akamantis (VI), to 149/8, assuming the application of the tribal cycle from 166/5 BC; but see the objections by Habicht, op.cit. pp.240-241.

be found in a closer examination of the participants in the Theseia and particularly at the age-classes in which they competed. In this, he was quite right.

There seems to be general agreement that between 160/59 and 140/39 a break occurred in the cycle of secretaries of the Athenian *boule*. Meritt dates the break to the single year of archonship of Epicrates in 146/5.³⁰ When Pélékidis suggested that *IG* ii² 958 and, correspondingly, the archonship of Phaidrias, belonged to 153/2, this displaced Speusippos from the year that Meritt had assigned to him. The secretary of Speusippos came from the deme Phlya, thereby positioning Ptolemais, the fifth tribe in the official order, just two years after the securely dated archonship of Mnesitheos in 155/4 whose secretary belonged to Pandionis, the third tribe in the official order. This seemed to work out neatly, until Pélékidis redated Phaidrias. Meritt turned to the victor-lists for assistance.

Now, in the notes to *IG* ii² 958 Kirchner determined, on the basis of scattered epigraphical and lexicographical information, that the age-classes of the boys' 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd class were divided into 14-15, 16-17 and 18-19, respectively, and the men's 20 and older.³¹ This scheme seemed to fit Euarchides son of Andreas of the tribe Antiochis rather well. In the archonship of Anthesterios (157/6) he won the boys' wrestling in the 1st age-class (957 I, 84-85). In the archonship of Phaidrias he won in two events, the torch race for ex-ephebes (ἐκ τῶν ἔνων ἐφήβων, 958 I, 63-64)³² and the boys' wrestling in the open competition (*ek panton*, II, 42-43). It follows that if as an ex-ephebe Euarchides was 19 years old in the archonship of Phaidrias, then counting back, he would have been 15 in the archonship of Anthesterios in 157/6 and thus would comply with Kirchner's age-class limits. One must also conclude that the ephebes and ex-ephebes competed in the boys' divisions and not the men's.

But Meritt correctly observed that Kirchner's scheme did not fit Habron son of Kallias of the tribe Aigeis. In the archonship of Aristolas (161/0) Habron won the boys' *pankration* in the 2nd age-class (956 II, 71-72). But in the archonship of Anthesterios (157/6) he won the boys' boxing in the open division (*ek panton*, 957 II, 35). Meritt reasoned that if he were under 20, that is still in the boys' competitions, in 157/6, then he could not be any older than

³⁰ See *Historia* 26 (1977) p.184.

³¹ Repeated by Kirchner in his notes to *SIG*³ 667 and M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* ii (Paris: 1950) p.820 (hereafter Launey). However, Dinsmoor, op.cit. pp.262 and 265, assumed an age-class scheme of 1st age-class = 12-13, 2nd age-class = 14-15 and 3rd age-class = 16, 17, 18 and 19. It could also be argued that the *ageneioi* of the Panathenaia were equivalent to the *paides*, 3rd age-class of the Theseia.

³² On the status of ex-ephebes see Forbes, *Neoi* pp.59-62.

15 four years earlier, and that would place him not in the boys' 2nd-age class but in the 1st age-class. Meritt could only conclude that Kirchner's scheme was incorrect, that the age-classes needed to be divided differently. He suggested that the Theseia of *IG ii² 958* and the archonship of Phaidrias belonged to 149/8, the next opportunity after 153/2, in the penteteric cycle of the Greater Theseia. Meritt broadened the age-classes and reasoned in the following way: "the πρώτη ηλικία runs up to and includes age 13, the δευτέρα ηλικία runs from 14 through 15, and the τρίτη ηλικία from 16 through 17, with the *epheboi* and the graduated *epheboi* in the top ages of 18 and 19. Euarchides, who was eleven years old in 157/6, was nineteen years old in 149/8 (from Anthesterios to Phaidrias); and Habron, who was not more than 19 in 157/6, was not more than 15 in 161/0 (from Aristolas to Anthesterios)".³³ This means, of course, that we must be missing the victor-list for the Greater Theseia of 153/2, that of the archonship of Speusippos.

I believe, however, that Meritt's assignation of Phaidrias to 149/8 is incorrect. Also I think that his argument falters on the very issue he brought to our attention: the age-classes of Athenian competitors. His revised system certainly resolves the problem of Habron son of Kallias, but it creates other more troubling problems. For example, in his *Hesperia* article he dismisses in a footnote (p.205 n.93) the fact that in *IG ii² 958* Euarchides son of Andreas won the boys' wrestling competition in the open division and also the torch race of the ex-ephebes. Yet his system must limit the *paides* 3rd age-class to "16 through 17". Does it make sense for the Athenians to create an elaborate system of boys' age-class subdivisions, attested only once elsewhere in the Greek world,³⁴ and then add a *paides* open division that is onomastically related but has no direct connection with the official *paides* age-classes? Furthermore, what about those young men of 18 (and 19) who did not participate in the *ephebeia*, recalling that ephebic service in the second century BC was voluntary and lasted only one year.³⁵ According to Meritt's system they could have competed in only one category, the *ek panton* division, yet all of the *paides* age-classes as well as the ephebes and ex-ephebes had the opportunity of competing in two age categories, their own and the open competition. This strikes me as a bit unfair.

³³ Meritt, *Hesperia* 33 (1964) p.206.

³⁴ *Inscr. Didyma* 179, of imperial date, also attracts our attention because it records a four-year old victor in boxing, but offers no clue as to the precise divisions of first, second and third age-classes. I am indebted to Professor Habicht for this reference. For other age-class divisions see T. Klee, *Zur Geschichte der gymnischen Agone an griechischen Festen* (Leipzig: 1918) pp.43-44.

³⁵ See Pélékidis, *Éphébie* pp.155ff.

In any event, what is demanded of us is to examine individual victors to gauge the consequences of shifting Phaidrias to 149/8. Euarchides won the torch race of ex-ephebes and the boys' wrestling *ek panton* in 149, thus making him 19 years old, or at any rate less than 20. He had won the boys' wrestling, 1st age-class, back in the archonship of Anthesterios in 157/6. That would make him 11 years of age, or no more than 12, when he won the division that allowed 13 year-olds to compete. A similar situation exists for Mnesitheos son of Mnesitheos of the tribe Oineis. He won the boys' boxing event *ek panton* in 149 (958 II, 52-53), making him under 20 years of age. He had won the boys' boxing, 1st age-class, back in 157 (957 II, 29-30). He must have been under 12 at the time. Now when we consider that it was viewed as an extraordinary achievement for Damiskos of Messene to have won the stade-run at Olympia in 368 BC at the age of 12 (Paus. 6.2.10), these youthful victories become even more worrisome. Twelve must mark the lowest limit of the *paides* division at the Olympic Games and we can assume by this reference in Pausanias that most *paides* competitors and victors were older than this. The men's division appears to have begun at age 18.³⁶ Of course, we should not equate Panhellenic games with local games - and the Theseia remained predominantly local in nature. It is true that it was open to foreigners, as we can see from the *ek panton* category, but very few appeared to have competed, if we may judge from only four individuals recorded.³⁷

Euarchides and Mnesitheos, then, seem a little young to be competing *and winning* athletic contests, even at the local level, but not enough to warrant outright disbelief.³⁸ The case of Eudoxos son of Eudoxos of the tribe Hippothontis is, however, another matter. Eudoxos won the *hoplomachia* with shield and spear in the 3rd age-class in 149 (958 II, 75-76), that is when he was 16 or 17 years of age. He had won the *hoplomachia* with *thureos* (and broadsword) in the archonship of Anthesterios in 157/6 (957 n, 49-50). If Meritt is correct, then we are faced with the fact that Eudoxos won this "armed combat" competition at

³⁶ See Paus. 6.14.2 on Nikasylos of Rhodes; for discussion see Klee, *op.cit.* pp.46-48.

³⁷ See Mommsen, *op.cit.* p.295 n.3.

³⁸ H.I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris: 1965) pp.182-183, does note, however, that boys as young as 9 or 10 competed in games at Sparta, and others as young as 7 or 8 elsewhere. But not, as far as I can discover, in armed-combat sports, even at Sparta (not a typical polis, in any case), where a boy's wrestling victory is recorded: A.M. Woodward in R.M. Dawkins (ed.), *The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta* (London: 1929) pp.288-290 and 318 n.41. Even this evidence from Sparta is not without problems, as the puzzling presence in certain inscriptions of the term συνέφηβος attests. An interesting reference can be found in Lucian, where he observes that in Sparta one can see their *epheboi* learning the art of dance no less than that of *hoplomachia*. When they quit sparring and striking one another, they finish their *agonia* with dancing (*Salt.* 10.11-12).

a time when he was no more than 9 years old! Moreover if he were 16 rather than 17 in 149/8, then he would be 8 years old in 157/6! Not only is he not even close to the upper limits of his age-class; i.e., 13, where one would expect to find most athletic winners,³⁹ but also Eudoxos is ridiculously young, particularly in a contest that has such an obvious military flavor to it. Do we imagine a tall, strapping lad of 8 or 9 destroying the competition of boys four or five years his senior? Are these *hoplomachia* events simply “mock duels between lads of twelve, fifteen, and eighteen years of age, not youthful gladiators, but scions of the noblest Athenian families”, as Ferguson believed?⁴⁰ I think not.

Comparative evidence from both Athens and elsewhere would suggest that the *hoplomachia*⁴¹ and *thureamachia*⁴² were usually reserved for older boys. In Athens the references to armed training occur most frequently with the institution of the *ephebeia* attested in the Classical period (*AP* 42.3: ὄπλομαχεῖν) and in the inscriptions of Hellenistic Athens.⁴³ This institution translated to Athens' possessions as well. In the 140s, a decree of the Athenian cleruchs on Delos honors Apollonios of Laodicea who for many years supervised the ephebes and *neaniskoi* ἐν τοῖς ὄπλοις (*IDelos* 1501, 9-11).

Outside Athens, we find some revealing information from Sestos, Teos, Pergamon, Priene, Erythrai, Babylon and Samos. It should be carefully noted from the outset,

³⁹ Klee, *op.cit.* pp.47-48.

⁴⁰ *Hellenistic Athens* p.295.

⁴¹ On this term see J. Juthner, ‘Hoplomachie’, *RE* viii (1913) cols.2298-2299, and the recent work by E.L. Wheeler; e.g., ‘Hoplomachia and Greek Dances in Arms’, *GRBS* 23 (1982) pp.223-233 and Kyle, *Athletics* p.182

⁴² On the *thureamachia* I am indebted to N.V. Sekunda for the following information. Fighting with *thureos* and *machaira* appears to be Celtic in origin (see Polyb. 3.114.3; 2.30.8) and it is likely that this style of combat was introduced into Greek warfare in the Hellenistic period (see Plut. *Philopoemen* 9.1-7; Paus. 8.50.1) as a consequence of the invasions of the Galatians beginning in 279 BC. By the second century BC the *thureamachia* had apparently made it into the training program of various Greek cities; e.g., Athens and Samos. Sekunda writes: “Thus when, in inscriptions concerning military-style combat competitions, we see *hoplomachia* contrasted to *thureomachia*, we are to understand the contrast as being between Greek-style fighting with shield and spear and Celtic-style fighting with *thureos* and *machaira*”. For a possible representation of the *thureamachia* as a combat sport see P. Bienkowski, *Les Celtes dans les arts mineurs gréco-romains* (Krakow: 1928) pp.127 and 129 fig.179, a terracotta from Myrina which depicts two youths (“juvéniles”) equipped with oval shields and swords engaged in duelistic combat. For a general discussion of the Galatians, their equipment and style of fighting, see Launey i pp.490-534

⁴³ See e.g. *IG* ii² 766, 10 and 40 (243/2 BC); *Hesperia* 2 (1933) pp.158-160 no.6, 1 (c.232/1 BC) with additional notes in *Hesperia* 11 (1942) pp.299-302; *IG* ii² 900, 21 *hoplomachon* (restored); 1006, 44-45; 1008, 38-39; 1009, 21; 1011, 28; 1028, 52; *Hesperia* 15 (1946) p.193 no.38, 15; *Hesperia* 30 (1961) p.12 no.8, 9 (partially restored, but secure); for general discussion see Pélékidis, *Éphébie* pp.267-273.

however, that age-groups differed from city to city; for instance, that of *ephebos*. In some places ephebic status came with the boy's rite of passage to puberty; i.e., in the 15th year of age, not at age 18, as was the case in Athens. Thus, Athens' 1st and 2nd age-classes, according to Kirchner's scheme, would be considered *epheboi* in other cities.⁴⁴

From Sestos comes the well-known late second century BC inscription in which the twice gymnasiarch, Menas son of Menes, is praised for his munificent administration of the festival of Hermes and Herakles, patron gods of the gymnasium.⁴⁵ Menas exhibited decorated *hopla* (shields?) inscribed with the names of the victorious ephebes; provided *athla* for the *paides* and instituted special monetary prizes (*themata*; cf. *SIG*³ 1063) for the ephebes and the men in the contests of the *hoplomachia*, archery and the javelin (lines 79-82). He also provided *hopla* as prizes in the *makros dromos*, *eutaxia*, *philoponia* and *euexia*; that is, the long run, good order, industrious training and good conditioning. With respect to the last three events, Krauss comments "Neben den sportlichen Agonen veranstaltet Menas in seinen beiden Amtszeiten als Gymnasiarch Agone, deren Hauptzweck militärischer Natur ist".⁴⁶ Earlier in the text, Menas is praised for having taken care of the *eutaxia* of the ephebes and *neoi* (line 31). If we may draw from Pergamene evidence, *eutaxia*, *philoponia* and *euexia* seem to signal the matriculation of a *pais* to an ephebe: ἔγκρισις εἰς τοὺς ἐφήβους ἐκ τῶν παίδων.⁴⁷ At Sestos, it would appear, military-style contests were reserved for ephebes, young men and mature men, while the contests of good order, industrious training and good conditioning offered a sort of rite of passage, a preparation, for the *paides* to the ephebate.

⁴⁴ For general discussion see M. Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule* (Munich: 1955) pp.34-42 (hereafter Nilsson, *Schule*); for the ephebate of Pergamon, for example, see E.V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamon*² (Ithaca: 1971) pp.392-393.

⁴⁵ *OGIS* 339; see now J. Krauss, *Die Inschriften von Sestos und der thrakischen Chersones* (Bonn: 1980) no.1 pp.14-63 for text, translation and commentary.

⁴⁶ For other epigraphical examples of *eutaxia*, *philoponia* and *euexia* in the Greek world see Krauss, *ibid.* pp.59-60. For example, at Tralles, *euexia* *SIG*³ 1060, 4 (*andres*) and 1062,5 (*neoi*); see now F.B. Poljakov, *Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa* i (Bonn: 1989) nos.106 and 107 for text and commentary.

⁴⁷ See P. Jacobstahl, 'Die Arbeiten zu Pergamon 1906-1907', *AM* 33 (1908) pp.387-388 = *IGR* 4 no.482; E. Ziebarth, *Aus dem griechischen Schulwesen* (Leipzig & Berlin: 1914) pp.142-143 and Poljakov, *op.cit.* p.60. An inscription from Erythrai lists the three events (restored, but secure) immediately above the heading for ephebes; although the age-class heading for the three is not preserved, a good argument for *paidon* can be made: see H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* i (Bonn: 1972) no.81 pp.176-178 for text and commentary.

This does not mean that *paides* were prohibited from participating in archery and javelin competitions elsewhere; see e.g. the third century BC inscription from Koressos on Keos (SIG³ 958, 33-34), in which it may be relevant to note that whereas the men-victors received appropriate *weapons*; e.g., quiver, bow, spears, helmet, as prizes, the *pais*-victors in the bow and the javelin were awarded only a portion of meat (lines 27-34), and a second century BC inscription from Teos, recording the foundation of a school by Polythrous son of Onesimos.⁴⁸ From the latter we learn that the *paidonomos* and gymnasiarch are to hire a *hoplomachos* and an instructor of archery and the javelin and that these men are to teach the ephebes and “*tous paidas* who have been registered to learn music” (lines 22-25). Unless there is an implied division of labor; i.e., *hoplomachos* for ephebes and archery/javelin instructor for *paides*, it would appear that the *paides* were to receive hoplite training as well (cf. IG xii 9, no.234, 5-11).

But how old are these boys? In lines 8-13 of the text it is reported that three schoolteachers are to be hired, one to teach the first class (τὸ πρῶτον ἔργον) at a 600-drachma per year salary, the second to teach the second class at 550 drachmas, and the third the third class at 500 drachmas. In this system the first class should logically consist of the older, more advanced, boys and girls because the teacher receives a higher salary. The text continues by detailing that a lute-player is to be appointed at 700 drachmas a year. His responsibility will be to teach music and the lute to the *paides* “whom it is appropriate to select for the higher class (εἰς τοῦπιον) and those who are a year younger than them (τοὺς τούτων ἐνιαυτῶι νεωτέρους)”⁴⁹; he is also expected to teach music to the ephebes. The *paidonomos* will determine the age of these *paides* (περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡλικίας τῶν παίδων τούτων, lines 19-20). One can conclude, then, that the boys who had been registered to learn music and thus were eligible for instruction by the *hoplomachos* and the archery/javelin instructor were *older* boys, nearer the age of the ephebes with whom they are associated in the school regulations. The *paidonomos* would ensure that no boy too young was admitted to this type of training.

From Pergamon we possess a number of inscriptions which link armed-combat contests with ephebes, young men and men. In one (OGIS 764), a gymnasiarch is honored for

⁴⁸ SIG³ 578. For discussion see L. Robert, *Études anatoliennes* (Paris: 1937) p.402 (hereafter Robert, *Études*) and Launey ii pp.821-822. For translation see M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation* (Cambridge: 1981) no.120 (hereafter Austin, *Documents*).

⁴⁹ Austin, *Documents* p.211.

taking care of the *diadrome* (running events) and τοὺς διὰ τῶν ὄπλων ἀγῶνας for the ephebes and *neoi* (lines 24 and 29). Other inscriptions refer to the *hopla* for ephebes and *neoi*, and *hoplon agones* for ephebes and men.⁵⁰ There is no sign that the *paides* were eligible for these weapons events.

From Priene comes an inscription, dating to about 80 BC, which details the honors for a certain Zosimos (*IPriene* 112). Not only did he provide the playing balls (*sphairas*) and *hopla* for the use of the ephebes (line 73), but also he established a new event for the ephebes called the *kallioplia* (lines 109-110), “probablement concours d’entretien des armes” (Launey ii p.822). The usual division between ephebes and *neoi* under the supervision of the gymnasiarch on the one hand and the boys under the supervision of the *paidonomos* on the other hand is maintained in the procession to accompany Zosimos to the agora for his coronation (*IPriene* 113, 114-116).

In an agonistic list (c.100 BC or later) from the gymnasium of Erythrai, the contests for the ephebes include the bow, the javelin and the *hoplomachia* (line 11), the last won by [Am]monios son of Agathon.⁵¹ These events are closely paralleled in inscriptions from Babylon and from Samos. An inscription from Babylon clearly records two age-class categories, ephebes and *neoi*.⁵² For the ephebes, the contests include the bow, the javelin, the *hoplomachia* (ὀπώλωι κοίλωι, line 12), the *thureamachia* (θυρεῶι, line 13), the *dolichos* and the stade-run. This list of ephebic competitions is immediately followed by contests for *neoi* (the heading reads τῶν δὲ νέων, line 16). Although the tablet breaks off at the line recording the javelin event, Haussoullier (pp.360-361) is safe to suggest that the rest of the list of events for the *neoi* duplicated that of the ephebes. There cannot have been a τῶν δὲ παίδων age-class category since the heading τῶν δὲ ἐφήβ[ων] immediately follows the prescript and, programmatically, a boy-victors’ list would not have followed the *neoi* who must be older than the ephebes.

From the gymnasium at Samos come similar agonistic lists. A third-century BC inscription (Michel 899) records month by month the following events: catapult, javelin, bow, *hoplomachia*, *thureamachia*, *dolichos* and the stade-run. The age-class heading is lacking, but a strong case could be made for it having been *neon* on the basis of another

⁵⁰ Hansen, op.cit. p.394, argues that these military-style contests ought to imply a military purpose.

⁵¹ See Engelmann and Merkelbach, op.cit. no.81 pp.176-178.

⁵² See B. Haussoullier, ‘Inscriptions grecques de Babylone’, *Klio* 9 (1909) pp.352-363 and the discussion by Forbes, *Neoi* pp.46 and 51, Robert, *Études* p.402 and Nilsson, *Schule* p.44.

Samian inscription which nearly duplicates these events and clearly identifies the victors as *neoi*.⁵³ A related inscription (*SIG*³ 1061), dated to the second century BC, adds the following events to those recorded in Michel 899: *diaulos*, *euexia*, *eutaxia*, *philoponia* and *lithobolos* (engine for hurling stones), in that order (lines 15-19). Sostratos son of Sostratos won the *hoplomachia* and the stade-run (lines 11 and 14); Apollas son of Apollonius, the *thureamachia* and *philoponia* (lines 12 and 19). Interestingly, this list of victors falls under the heading *παλλήκων*, defined by Nilsson as *mellepheboi*; i.e., “diejenigen, die auf dem Übergang zum Ephebenalter stehen”.⁵⁴

In addition, this inscription preserves a partial victor-list immediately above the *pallekon*-heading; this list, unfortunately, does not retain its heading, but it does duplicate the final six contests of the *pallekes*. The lost heading could have been *ἐφήβων* or *νέων*,⁵⁵ or possibly even *παίδων*. If the last, then the nature of these final events, notably the *lithobolos*, would argue for more advanced boys, not much younger than 15.

On this point, compare the inscription from Beroia in Macedonia, dated between 167 and 148 BC, wherein it is decreed that the gymnasiarch shall “offer as prizes a weapon (*hoplon*) and three others for fitness (*euexia*), good discipline (*eutaxia*), and hard training (*philoponia*) for those up to the age of 30... As for (the contests of) good discipline and hard training, the gymnasiarchs shall swear by Hermes and judge for good discipline who seems to him to be most well behaved of those up to the age of 30, and for hard training who seems to him to have trained hardest during the year of those up to the age of 30” (Side B, 46-57).⁵⁶ Launey considered these contests strongly military in tone, describing the gymnasium at Samos as an “*école militaire plus que d’établissement d’athlétisme*” (ii p.817).

To return to the point. The victory of Eudoxos in 157 BC in *armed combat* with oval shield and broadsword, 1st age-class, does not seem appropriate for a competitor 8 or 9 years *young*. But we still have not addressed the issue of Habron son of Kallias and the fact that he does not fit Kirchner’s age-class divisions. The answer, I think, is disarmingly

⁵³ See E. Preuner, ‘Siegerlisten von Samos’, *AM* 28 (1903) pp.357-358 (corrected by Robert, *Études* p.402 n.3); in this article, Preuner also published a new victor-list from Samos which included the *hoplomachia* and *thureamachia* with two victors in each event (p.354, lines 7-12).

⁵⁴ *Schule* p.37.

⁵⁵ See Launey ii p.833.

⁵⁶ For text and brief commentary see J.M.R. Cormack, ‘The Gymnasiarchal Law of Beroea’, *Ancient Macedonia* ii (Thessaloniki: 1977) pp.139-150 and J. & L. Robert, *REG* 91 (1978) pp.431-435 no.274; for translation see Austin, *Documents* no.118 p.205.

simple: Habron was younger than 16 years old, the minimum age for the 2nd age-class, but he competed and won in the 2nd age-class, the *pankration* τῆς δευτέρας ἡλικίας (956 II, 71-72). In other words, he “jumped” an age-class. Within the Theseia documents themselves we have two examples of this phenomenon (noted by Pélékidis, *Éphébie* p.233), although they do differ slightly from Habron. First, Demetrios son of Antimenes of the tribe Kekropis won the torch race for ephebes in Theseia of 157 (957 I, 49-50) and also won the men’s *diaulos* in that same festival (957 I, 83). Secondly, Theophrastos son of Herakleitos of the tribe Oineis won the spear-throwing event for ephebes in the archonship of Phaidrias (958 II, 77-78) as well as the mens’ *diaulos* in the same Theseia (958 I, 93-94).

Outside Athens, we can cite the case of Artemidoros of Tralles who, technically still a boy, won the *pankration* at the Ionian games at Smyrna in the first century AD in all three divisions in a single day, the boys, the *ageneioi* and the men (Paus. 6.14.2-3), and that of Kallistratos of Sikyon who won the boxing competition in the *ageneioi* and men’s age-classes in the same Isthmian games in the third century BC.⁵⁷ There were no restrictions placed on athletes competing above their age group, only the reverse.⁵⁸ This is only fair, as is the case in modern sports. There were safeguards against a young man competing in his own age-class or above, when his physique did not appear adequate; for example, Pherias of Aigina, who was barred by the judges from competing at Olympia in 468 BC in boys’ wrestling (Paus. 6.14.1).⁵⁹ The judges at Olympia seemed to have concerned themselves as much with physical equity as with ages, if the story Xenophon reports is true: the Spartan king Agesilaos, in love with the son of the Athenian Eualkes, used his influence on the judges to admit the boy to the stade competition, even though he was μέγιστος τῶν παίδων (*Hell.* 4.1.40; cf. Plut. *Ages.* 13).

This finally brings us back to Habron. Problems remain. If he were really say 15, then we would expect to find that he had won not only the 2nd age-class *pankration* in 161 BC, but also logically the 1st age-class *pankration*. But in fact that was won by a Phileas son of

⁵⁷ On Artemidoros see Ch. Habicht, *Pausanias’ Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: 1985) pp.82-83; on Kallistratos see L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche* (Rome: 1953) no.40 pp.103-108.

⁵⁸ This prohibition should also apply to ephebes who might have been older than 18 in their ephebic year; e.g., in the case of a father holding back one of his sons in order to have both participating in the *ephebeia* in the same year: see J. von Freeden, ‘Πιστοκράτης καὶ Ἀπολλόδορος Σατύρου Ἀυρίδαί (IG ii² 2949)’, *ZPE* 61 (1985) pp.215-218. See also S. Dow, ‘The Athenian Epheboi; Other Staffs, and the Staff of the Diogeneion’, *TAPA* 91 (1960) pp.381-409, especially 391-392. This is not the same situation as with the *neaniskoi*, traditionally a much less precise term than *epheboi*, at least in Athens; see Appendix.

⁵⁹ See comments by Klee, *op.cit.* pp.47-48

Phileas of the tribe Akamantis (956 II, 69-70). Several possible explanations come to mind: certain events took place at the same time⁶⁰, or with respect to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd age-classes, a competitor could only enter one level, or perhaps the judges decided that Habron was physically too developed to compete fairly in his own age-class and consequently bumped him up. This would have made Habron's victory all the sweeter and have brought special honor to both himself and his family. We note also that Habron's events, the *pankration*, a nasty combination of boxing and wrestling, and its cousin, boxing, in which he defeated all comers in 157 BC, requires significant strength and body mass, physical features easy enough to evaluate. We should not forget that modern boxing and wrestling are divided by weight, not age.

In conclusion, I am persuaded that the archon Phaidrias rightly belongs to 153/2, not 149/8. Put in its simplest terms, Eudoxos is much more of a problem to explain away than Habron. *Hoplomachia* with either *aspis* and *doru* or with *thureos* and *machaira* is not the business of young men under ten years of age, let alone as *victors* at that age, and cannot be dismissed as "mock duels" without any connection to military training. *IG* ii² 956, 957 and 958, uncovered together, represent the three consecutive penteteric Theseia of the years 161, 157 and 153 BC.

GLENN RICHARD BUGH

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University/
The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

⁶⁰ An idea suggested by Mommsen, *op.cit.* p.295, to accommodate the many events, and presumably preliminary bouts, into the single day of 8 Pyanopsion. But it now appears that the athletic program took place several days *before* the eighth: in joining *IG* ii² 1014, Tracy has revealed that the *agonothete* of the Theseia of 109 BC was honored by public decree on 6 Pyanopsion, leading him to suggest that "the elaborate games honoring Theseus, no doubt of several days duration, came during the week before the great sacrifice". We do know that Aristos son of Archiades of Aiantis won both the boys' boxing, 3rd age-class, and the boys' *pankration*, 3rd age-class, in the same Theseia (960 II, 11-12 and 21-22); Kairios son of Telon won the boys' stade-run *ek panton* and the boys' *diaulos ek panton* in 161 BC (956 I, 82-83; II, 48-49); Epikrates son of Arkesas of the tribe Oineis won two "armed combat," events, the *hoplomachia* with shield and spear, 3rd age-class, and then with *thureos*, 3rd age-class, in the Theseia of 157 BC (957 II, 54-57); Meleton son of Strombylion of the tribe Aigeis won three events in the boys' 2nd age-class, the stade, *diaulos* and wrestling, in 161 BC (956 I, 78-79; II, 44-45 and 53-54); and Xenon son of Iason of the tribe Aigeis or Oineis who won two events in the boys' 1st age-class, the stade and the *diaulos*, in the Theseia of *IG* ii² 961 (I, 42-43 and 52-53).

APPENDIX

Another line of argument may be employed to cast doubt on Kirchner's age-class divisions. In the Theseia of 161 BC, Kairios son of Telon was the leader of the *neaniskoi* of the Lyceum who were victorious in the torch race (956 I, 67-69) and he also won two boys' open contests in the same festival, the stade run and the *diaulos* (I, 82-83 and II, 48-49). Similarly, in the Theseia of IG ii² 958 Silenos son of Lykos won the boys' *dioulos ek panton* (I, 91-93); he should be the same [Silenos]⁶¹ son of Lykos of the tribe Hippothontis who won the torch race of the *neaniskoi* of the Lyceum (I, 65-66). This should mean that the *neaniskoi* were younger than 20 for Kairios and Silenos to have competed in the boys' division. Now, if we look at IG ii² 960 and 961, dated to the 140s, we find an Aristos son of Archiades of the tribe Aiantis who won the boys' boxing and *pankration*, 3rd age-class, in 960 (II 12 and 21-22) and the torch race of the *neaniskoi* of the Lyceum in 961 (I, 31-33). If 960 and 961 record penteteric Greater Theseia, then Kirchner's age-classes cannot work, assuming the *neaniskoi* are under 20 years of age, because Aristos would have to be no older than 15 in the Theseia of 960 to be under 20 in the Theseia of 961, yet we know that he belonged to the 3rd age-class, that is 18-19, in 960. Obviously something is wrong with one or the other of our assumptions. Also even Meritt's scheme would have to be rejected because his 3rd age-class is limited "16 through 17".

The simplest and most likely explanation, aside from discarding the penteteric idea, is that the term *neaniskoi* is not limited to young men under 20 years of age. There is some agreement that it commonly means youths past ephebic age, but as Forbes has stated "this term is slippery and is hard to define"⁶² If we examine the Theseia documents, we observe that in 956, 957, 960 and 961 the sequence of participants is (1) *paides*, (2) ephebes and (3)

⁶¹ Restored by Pélékidis, *Éphébie* p.233 n.3.

⁶² *Neoi* p.61 (cf. p.2), but I cannot accept his conclusion that the *neaniskoi* of the Lyceum in the Theseia inscriptions were ephebes on the basis of an inscription from the 2nd-3rd centuries AD (IG ii² 3758). Austin, *Documents* no. 118 p.207, also seems to follow this line when he suggests that the *neaniskoi* referred to in the gymnasiarchy law of Beroia (Side B line 14) are "probably ephebes". But this strikes me as too restrictive – in the preceding passage (lines 10-11) regulations are set forth concerning practice in the javelin and bow for the ephebes and "those about the age of 22" (οἱ ὑπὸ τὰ δύο καὶ ἑικοσιν ἔτη). For what reason should the prohibition against the *neaniskoi* talking or mingling with the *paides* (lines 14-15) not also apply to the second group as well? Cormack, *op.cit.* p.148, thought that the *neaniskoi* were to be identified with the *neoi* mentioned in lines 80, 88 and 95. In any case, it still remains unclear what exactly "those about the age of 22" meant – Nilsson, *Schule* p.38, conjectures "vielleicht sind die zweiundzwanzig Jahre eine Altersgrenze für die *neoi*, mit denen die Epheben Militärlübungen vornahmen".

neaniskoi. In 958, the ex-ephebes replace the ephebes (I, 63) and in 957, curiously, the *neaniskoi* have been replaced by the men (*andres*) of the Lyceum (I, 51). In these torch races the *neaniskoi* always belong to the Lyceum and so do the *andres* who are recorded only once.⁶³

I suggest that in such gymnasia the ages of the members were more fluid, extending from the late teens into the early twenties, than in the age-classes, and that in competition involving the various gymnasia and *palaistrai*; e.g., of Timeas and Antigenes, precision in age-classes was less important than club identity. This ambiguity might explain the reference to the “men of the Lyceum” in the slot regularly occupied by the *neaniskoi*. If this is correct, then Kairios and Silenos could well have been under 20 years of age in the Theseia of 161 BC and Aristos could have been in his early 20s in the Theseia of *IG ii² 961*, thus preserving Kirchner’s age-classes and the penteteric nature of the festival. Furthermore, it would allow us to conclude that the span of time between 960 and 961 cannot represent more than one penteteric cycle.⁶⁴

⁶³ On the Lyceum see Pélékidis, *Éphébie* pp.260-261.

⁶⁴ I wish to express my appreciation to Emeritus Professor H.B. Mattingly, respondent to this paper at the University of New England epigraphy seminar held in July 1989, for his very helpful and thoughtful comments, to Dr. Ian Worthington, convenor of the seminar, and Professor Greg Stanton, for their gracious hospitality. Thanks go also to the various Seminar participants who generously offered suggestions informally. The final version has incorporated some of these and has added further documentation where appropriate, while preserving the general scope and thesis of the original paper. I am also indebted to Professor Christian Habicht of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, who kindly consented to critique a draft of this paper: his comments have spared me a number of careless mistakes. Flaws yet remaining are, of course, my own.