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# THE ARCHON'S NAME IN THE ATHENS-EGESTA ALLIANCE (IG $I^3$ 11)

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# THE ARCHON'S NAME IN THE ATHENS-EGESTA ALLIANCE (IG I$^3$ 11)

In this journal, M.H.Chambers, R.Gallucci, and P.Spanos have tried to show that, when the Athenians approved a decree forming an alliance with Egesta, the archon was Antiphon (418/7), and not Habron (458/7), as several historians had maintained.[1] Professor Alan Henry has set forth his reasons for not accepting this conclusion.[2] A brief reply is in order.

## I. Photographs

The crucial evidence we presented is photographs. Color photographs (Plates A, B) show the letters IΦ and IΦON from ANTIΦON, first unenhanced and then enhanced by the use of a computer-assisted image processor. Henry finds some difficulties with these pictures and at one point goes so far as to say that we are "exactly where we were before these techniques [of image enhancement] were applied."[3] The iota, for example, is for him (though with the caveat "I readily admit that this is merely an impression") too tall to be a letter rather than a fortuitous mark on the stone. Since I believe that the colored pictures speak for themselves, I simply turn the case over to the reader.

Moreover, Plates II-II show the letters ΦONE (part of ANT]IΦON ERXE) as they were brought up to the surface from within by a laser beam directed through the stone from the back. Henry seeks to discredit the laser-generated photographs by warning that the marble may have been distorted by the blows of the mason's chisel. "[M]icrocracks form in a zone of microcrack dilatancy. This bulbous zone of microcracks will coalesce as more blows are struck. It will be preserved in the stone beneath the letters, even when the stone is abraded, and this zone of microcracking might indeed be detected by variation in the transmission of light intensity, as a laser beam scans through the material."[4] Further, "unless the images so produced by the laser beam are such as to engender immediate and universal conviction on the part of the observer, some element of doubt must remain."

Henry does not tell us which letters in the laser-generated photographs may have been distorted, or where his element of doubt is focused. Why does he not attack the letters ONE, which are three-fourths of the letters shown? Why does he not warn that one or more of

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[1] "Athens' Alliance with Egesta in the Year of Antiphon," Acta of the University of New England International Seminar on Greek and Roman Epigraphy, edited by Ian Worthington (Bonn, 1990) 38-63, with Plates I-III and color plates A, B = ZPE 83, 1990, 38-63. - Among those who have sponsored Habron are A.E.Raubitschek, B.D.Meritt, M.F.McGregor, and A.G.Woodhead.

[2] ZPE 91, 1992, 137-146.

[3] Henry 142.

[4] 144-145.

these letters may be "an image which is an amalgam of all the defects encountered in the passage of the beam and the effect of viewing - in this case from behind - bulbous microcrack zones which have coalesced"?[5]

Is his silence due to the fact that these letters are accepted by all as clear on the surface and are reproduced in the laser photograph without distortion, as the reader can easily see? And, if ONE have suffered no distortion through microcracking within a bulbous zone, what reason is there to reject their neighbor, phi? Again the reader is invited to inspect these plates for himself or herself and decide whether the letters have been accurately identified. And one might apply a negative test to this phi: can anyone seriously maintain that it is an attempt to carve a rho?

Nor do I understand Henry's statement, "there is no reason why transmission from behind should improve the image,"[6] for it seems obvious that directing the beam through the stone from the back will, as indeed it did after other directions were tried, bring the letters to the front and produce the best illumination of letters that lie just beneath the surface of the marble.

The phi thus illuminated by the laser is of the same shape as the only completely preserved phi, namely that in the name Euphemos, line 15. The mason did not carve the vertical right through the letter; rather, it stops at the bottom of the oval or perhaps goes just a bit above it. Henry denies this, saying that ("if I am not mistaken") the phi in line 15 has a vertical that "*does* continue up for some distance into the loop, as well as a damaged area at the top of the letter which makes any judgement as to whether the vertical appears again at the top very difficult if not downright impossible."[7] Again we invite readers to examine the photograph, Plate I, and evaluate the matter for themselves. Whether other masons ever carved phi in this way is not important, since the letter cannot be misread.

## II. Measurements

We also presented many measurements of the space occupied by various combinations of letters. In particular, we showed that the space occupied by the letters IΦON, line 3, measures 4.086 cm.,[8] and that this space was less than one would expect for the letters BRON, which would have been engraved in this space if the archon had been Habron. It is thus most unlikely that these four letters in line 3 are an attempt to carve BRON.

Henry first seeks to discredit this argument in principle by pointing out that the letters in the stoichedon pattern are not always perfectly aligned under one another in the exact middle of their respective stoichoi. This is true but not important. The critical measurements are

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5 145.
6 145.
7 144.
8 The mean among five measurements, ranging from 4.05 to 4.12 cm.

those within the horizontal lines: only these show how much space the mason allowed for a given group of letters.

Henry then concentrates on the group IXΣE in line 14 (from the words ΕΠΙ ΧΣΕΝΙΑ); these letters occupy a mean of 4.528 cm., thus more than the usual group of four letters beginning with iota. We pointed out that the letters occupy this unusually, indeed uniquely, large space only because the epsilon is out of position, carved too far to the right. We think the mason's eye skipped over to the iota of ΧΣΕΝΙΑ, which he carved in the middle of a stoichos; having seen his error, he corrected the iota into epsilon, the vertical of which was now in the center of a stoichos rather than at the left edge of one, as it should be. Since even Henry agrees that this epsilon is out of position,[9] I do not understand how he can maintain that this exceptional group "of necessity weaken[s] any argument based on comparative measurements." The reader who studies a photograph of the stone[10] will see that there is no other example of a letter so clearly out of position as this epsilon, whether or not our explanation for the anomaly be accepted. Unless we believe that there are widespread such anomalies causing serious violation of the pattern of measurements we present, this one example of a mistake in spacing may be set aside.

Then Henry goes on to the very next group, ENIA, also in line 14, which occupies some 3.97 cm., as if to show that this narrow space for a group of four letters beginning and ending with broad letters also discredits our method of measuring intervals between letters. But he does not point out that the narrowness of this group, ENIA, is due precisely to its beginning with the out-of-position epsilon just discussed: that is, the mason had observed and corrected his error in carving this epsilon too far to the right and sought to restore the normal spacing to his stoichedon letters. In doing so, he carved the nu and the other letters of ENIA in the right place, thus causing the group to be unusually narrow.[11]

There are therefore no examples of four letters beginning with iota that occupy about the same space as four letters beginning with a broad letter such as beta (except the example IXΣE in line 14, clearly due to the misplaced epsilon). Only with the greatest reluctance, however, does Henry admit that "[o]ne could *at the very most* argue that a sequence of four letters with initial beta *might on average* occupy more space than an equivalent sequence with initial iota" (emphasis M.C.). Our tables, I believe, show that this admission is unduly cautious.

Henry predicts that "orthodox interpreters of fifth century Athenian international policy" will continue to believe that three-barred sigma, which is alone used on our inscription, was

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[9] Henry, 140 with n. 18.

[10] For example, the one published by T.E.Wick (supplied by Meritt), JHS 95,1975, plates.

[11] I apologize for wearying the reader with further argument about such details. As to the combination BEIA, line 14, which has a smaller than usual mean of 4.19 cm., we have said all we need to: the left leg of alpha descends close to the iota. For Henry, this is "pleading ... special pleading"; we leave judgment to the reader.

not carved in public documents after the mid-forties.[12] Is historical orthodoxy like that in religion, or should it be based on evidence? Many readers, I believe, will share the view of J.Tréheux, that "la measure des intervalles entre les lettres, la superposition des photographies multiples et, surtout, le bombardement du marbre par un rayon laser ont prouvé (les photographies en couleur A et B ne permettent pas d'en douter) qu'il fallait lire et rétablir ʾΑντ]ιφῶν (*a.* 418/7)."[13]

## III. Conclusions

Finally, the historical conclusions that follow from dating the Athens-Egesta alliance to 418/7. Thucydides' failure[14] to make the Egestan envoys appeal to this recent alliance, during their nearly desperate visit to Athens in search of an alliance in 416, must have an explanation. Note, however, that there was always a problem with their silence, even when the alliance was dated in 458/7 (Habron's year): why do they not refer to an old alliance made with them, rather than to "the alliance [between whom?] made in the time of Laches," i.e. in 427 - an ambiguous phrase that, as we showed, has never received an interpretation agreed to by all commentators? No matter when the Athenian-Egestan alliance was made, the Egestans must appeal to it in their attempt to gain Athenian support; but they do not - rather, in the acceptable interpretation of Dover and other commentators, they offer a much weaker argument and point to an alliance made in 427 between Athens and Leontini. Not knowing why Thucydides omitted to give the Egestans the most persuasive case, I should like to have Professor Henry's explanation, or any other, for the omission. Our conclusion has been that Thucydides, living in exile, did not know that an alliance had been made in the year of Antiphon, 418/7, when he wrote book 6. Henry finds this explanation quite inadequate, "given the considerable space and detail" Thucydides devotes to the dispatch of the Sicilian expedition and to the campaign itself. In other words, whenever the historian writes at length about anything, his information must be impeccable. Comment is perhaps unnecessary.[15]

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12 145.

13 REG 104,1991,469, in the Bull. épigraphique.

14 In 6.6.2.

15 One could possibly offer another explanation for the Egestans' argument. Perhaps they reached Athens as known, accepted allies on the strength of the recently passed treaty and Thucydides saw no need to make them appeal to it, allowing them instead to refer to Athens' previous support for Leontini.