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THE ATHENIAN ARCHON PLEISTAINOS

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In *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 277-279, no. 74, W.K.Pritchett published a prytany decree of Kekropis (Agora I 4462), in which he read the patronym of the secretary, Philoxenidou, and the first letter of his demotic, Rhamnousios.¹ Pritchett described the letter (*ibid.* 278) as follows:

"The first letter of the demotic is read as rho. Schweigert, while in Athens, provided a transcription in which the letter was so read by him. Part of the upright stroke is clearly visible on the squeeze, and to the right are two dots which might be the loop of the rho, as is characteristic in this inscription."

After a restudy of the stone in Athens, Meritt and Traill in *Agora* XV 181, read the rho of the demotic as certain, and added the next letter, of which parts of the right and left strokes were preserved, as dotted alpha. In the meantime, another Agora inscription (I 7188), which I published in *Hesperia* 40 (1971) 308-311, no. 9, provided the missing name of the secretary, Philoxenides, and of the archon, Pleistainos:

Αἰγ
ἐπὶ Πλεισταίνου ἄρχοντος [ἐπὶ τῆς εἰδος πρώτης πρυτανεί]
Οἶν

ας ἦι Φιλοξενίδης Φιλοξ[ενίδου Ῥαμνούσιος ἐγραμμάτευεν·]

The demotic of the secretary had permitted Pritchett to date I 4462 to 184/3, and that date was accepted for the archon Pleistainos both in my 1971 *Hesperia* article and in *Agora* XV. This dating, incorporated in the archon table of Meritt in *Historia* 26 (1977) 181, stood until the publication of a new fragment of the didaskalic list *IG* II.2 2323 by A.P.Matthaïou in *Horos* 6 (1988) 13-20 revealed that the name of the archon of 184/3 terminated in -les. Pleistainos clearly had to be evicted from 184/3, and a new date for him, near the middle of the second century, was proposed by S.V.Tracy both in *Athenian Letter-Cutters of 229 to 86 B.C.* (Berkeley 1991) 141-142 and in *Horos* 7 (1989) 41-43 ("The Archon Pleistainos"; both references cited in *SEG* 39 136). Tracy's prime motivation for the redating of Pleistainos, however, was not the new didaskalic fragment, but, rather, his earlier work on the letter-cutter of *IG* II.2 3479, a dedication which mentions Pleistainos.² The dated inscriptions of this cutter covered a span of years from 175/4 to ca 135, and Tracy felt that

¹ The relevant text, lines 25-27, is as follows:

[Ἐπὶ - - ca. 13- - ἄρχοντος ἐπὶ τῇ]ς Πανδιονίδος [δω]
[δεκάτης πρυτανείας ἦι- - ca. 10 - -] Φιλοξενίδου Ῥ[αμ]
[νούσιος ἐγραμμάτευεν· βουλῆς ψηφίσματ]α·

² The relevant text is as follows:

Πλείσταινον ᾤκλέους Κεφαλῆθεν
ἡ γυνὴ Πλείστις καὶ ἡ θυγάτηρ ᾤωινίκη
ἄρχοντα γενόμενον Διονύσῳι ἀνέθηκαν.

an additional 9 years dating back to 184/3 caused an implausibly long career. The new didaskalic list seemed to confirm his suspicions. The only problem was the demotic of the secretary. There was no place in the secretarial cycles for another deme from Aiantis (phyle X in this period) between 184/3 and *ca.* 150, the latest plausible date for the cutter of the two Agora decrees of Pleistainos' year (I 7188 & 4462 = *Agora* XV 180 & 181). Using "two separate and good squeezes" at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton³ he quickly disposed of the dotted alpha: "I can see no trace of alpha" (*Letter-Cutters* 142), "there is no trace of alpha" (*Horos* 7 42), and, then, in turn, rho: "only a possible vertical at the edge of the worn area" (*Letter-Cutters* *ibid.*), "I suspect that this 'stroke' is a scratch and that we possess no evidence for the demotic of this secretary" (*Horos* *ibid.*).

The reading of rho followed by dotted-alpha was made by Meritt and Traill from a study of the stone itself, which must be the ultimate court in matters of this kind. During the spring of 1993 I reexamined this inscription on a number of occasions both by myself and with others. We studied the text using a technique I first learned from Eugene Vanderpool, but which has been employed by epigraphers for generations, *viz* by adding water to the dust which had naturally accumulated on the surface of the stone. See Plate XIII a) dry, b) wet.⁴ There can be no doubt about the presence of the rho. The surface of the stone is preserved here, and both the vertical stroke and the "two dots which might be the loop of the rho" are present. The rho is exactly of the same shape as the two rhos in the line below. The alpha is less certain, because there is damage to the surface at this point, but there is not enough damage to destroy all evidence of the original lettering. There appear, enhanced by the water-dust suspension, two oblique, but straight, lines of the correct disposition and coloration (the original surface has a brownish tint) and in the right location for alpha, and I assume they belong to this letter. The upper portion of the left stroke and the cross-bar have been lost. The presence and identification of these traces, however, add little to the argument, for there are many demotics of which the second letter might be either alpha or lambda. What is important is the certainty of the first letter, rho, for there is only one demotic commencing in this letter, *viz* Rhamnousios.

The prosopographical information was used as a supporting argument by Pritchett:

"The name Philoxenides is well attested for the deme Rhamnous (X). One Philoxenides of Rhamnous is known to have been a councillor in the very early years of the second century another, possibly his nephew, was councillor in 166/5..."

³ In this instance squeezes seem to improve with age, for the "good" squeezes of *Attic Letter Cutters* (142) become "very good" squeezes in the *Horos* article (42). However objective, or subjective, this judgment, it may be noted that one of these squeezes is very likely the squeeze used by the *editor princeps* to confirm the reading of the demotic Rhamnousios in the first place.

⁴ On other occasions I have used with much success pre-powdered charcoal (emery paper for powdering is useful), but one must be careful to wash the charcoal from the stone when one has finished.

This argument has been countered by Tracy, who has pointed out that the name Philoxenides occurs in 5 Attic demes in addition to Rhamnous, namely Hagnous (*Eleusiniaka* I 226 lines 42 & 46 = *TAPS* 64.3 51, dated in II a.), Aigilia (*IG* II.2 5380, dated *ca* 360), Aixone (*AthMitt* 66 (1941) 218, no. 1, line 2, dated 313/2), Apollonieis (*IG* II.2 1008 col. IV, line 107, dated 119/8), and Semachidai (*Studies Robinson* II 351 = *SEG* 13 130, dated II/I), but each of these is a single occurrence in comparison to the multiple attestations in Rhamnous, and, more significantly, most are of a different date, either earlier or later, than the period required for the secretary. On prosopographical grounds Rhamnous is preferable to any of these other demes.⁵

The solution to the problem of the date of Pleistainos comes from a different source. The crucial point in the Tracy argument pertains to *IG* II.2 3479, a dedication to Dionysos by the wife and daughter of the archon Pleistainos. If this dedication belongs to the year of his archonship, there is indeed a problem. The dedication, however, was probably set up *after* his archonship, for Pleistainos is designated ἄρχοντα γενόμενον a phrase which might be used to describe an *ex-archon* or *former archon* (cf. Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek English Lexicon* ed 9, s.v. γίγνομαι II, b *having ceased to be*). We do not know the circumstances, but there might easily be a considerable interval in time between the archonship and the erection of the monument. Given Athenian marriage practices, the wife might be considerably younger, or she might be a second wife; Pleistainos could even be dead. There is no reason that such a private monument might not be set up some time after the event it commemorated.

The other citations of the archon Pleistainos offer little help to the dating. The reference to Pleistainos in *IG* II.2 1019, as has been pointed out on numerous occasions,⁶ offers only a *terminus ante quem* for an ephebic dedication cited in an inscription dated to the end of the second century B.C. And the attestation of Pleistainos on the horos stone published in *Deltion* 17 A (1961-2) 215-216 cannot be dated with any great precision. Tracy states (*Letter-Cutters* 142, note 6) that it "fits comfortably around 150." I see no reason that it might not be just as "comfortable" a half century earlier.

Accordingly, I suggest that the archonship of Pleistainos be dated in 196/5, the year vacated by the transfer of Charikles to 184/3, correct in the succession of secretarial phylai for a demesman of Rhamnous in Aiantis. The dedication *IG* II.2 3479 will have been erected perhaps 20 to 25 years after his archonship in the period to which the other inscriptions of "The Cutter of *IG* II.2 3479" have been assigned. The redating of *Agora* XV 180 and 181 to one cycle earlier should cause no difficulty. Their mason, "The cutter of

⁵ It may be noted that none of these other demes commences with a letter resembling the first letter of the demotic preserved on the stone.

⁶ W.S.Ferguson, *AJP* 55 (1934) 331, note 40, W.B.Dinsmoor, *The Athenian Archons in the Light of Recent Discoveries* 194, J.S.Traill, *Hesperia* 40 (1971) 309, and S.V.Tracy, *Letter Cutters* 142, note 6 and *Horos* 7 42.

Agora I 247," is already attested in the year 194/3, and although his career is long, the addition of another year or two poses no obstacle.

The secretary of Pleistainos' year might be identified with the Philoxenides of Rhamnous (the demotic is totally restored, but certain) who was prytanis in either 180/79 or 179/8 (*Agora* XV 170, which must be dated after Hippias, who was archon in 181/0, but cannot be as late as 178/7, for the flutist is still Neokles Berenikides and not Kallikrates Thorikios who is first attested in that year). Either he, serving his second councillorship, or his homonymous son, was prytanis in Achaïos' year (*Hesperia* 3 (1934) 21, no. 19 = *Agora* XV 216, line 31; again the demotic Rhamnousioi is restored, but again on very solid grounds). The probability of identification would be enhanced if, with Tracy (*AJA* 9 (1984) 43-7), we move back the date of Achaïos from 166/5 to 190/89. The argument from the hand of the mason is strong, viz this cutter's inscriptions, omitting *Agora* XV 216, "span the years 226/5 to 192/1" (*op. cit.* 43). There are, however, strong contrary arguments, as Tracy admits (*ibid.* 44-45). There is no other citation of an Athenian archon dating to the period before 166 in a Delian inventory after that year. Although an Athenian dedication conceivably could have been made in the year 190/89, it is much more likely to have been made after 167.⁷ Roussel, Dinsmoor, and others, accepted the strength of this argument.

The second contrary argument concerns the sequence of heralds of the boule and demos. Philokles of Trinemeia is attested as herald in 173/2 and 169/8, following Eukles of Berenikidai, and preceding Eukles of Trinemeia. This distinguished family clearly returned to its original deme. To thrust another Philokles of Trinemeia into the interval between 193/2 and 181/0, and thereby interrupt a natural succession of careers, seems hardly cogent.⁸ The list of heralds as published in *Agora* XV (and, for the earlier period, revised by M. Piérart in *BCH* 100 (1976) 443-447 and, after a suggestion by G. Daux *per lit.*, by myself in *Hesperia* 47 (1978) 281) provides a simple and reasonable sequence: Eukles of Berenikidai (*ca* 210 to *ca* 175), Philokles of Trinemeia (*ca* 175 to *ca* 165), and Eukles of Trinemeia (164/3 to 140/39). Contrast this scheme with the much more complicated alternative proposed by Tracy: Eukles of Berenikidai (*ca* 210 to *ca* 192), Philokles of Trinemeia (190/89 to *ca* 182), Eukles of Berenikidai (181/0 to *ca* 174/3), Philokles of Trinemeia (173/2 to *ca* 165), and Eukles of Berenikidai (164/3 to 140/39). I cannot see how the splitting of the tenure of Eukles of Berenikidai into two terms, the placing of another Philokles of Trinemeia in 190/89 and the positing of 2 branches of the family

⁷ The observation by Tracy of the *reverse* phenomenon, viz a Delian archon attested in an inscription from the period after Athenian control, carries little weight, for a Delian archon might be expected at Delos in any period, and likewise for an Athenian archon at Athens. It is the supposed presence of an Athenian archon in an inscription at Delos before the time of Athenian influence that is remarkable.

⁸ Contrary to Tracy (*ibid.* 44) there is a securely dated attestation of Eukles "in the period with which we are concerned," for *Agora* XV 259 must be reassigned from 97/6 to the year 193/2 (H.B. Mattingly, *Historia* 20 (1971) 26-28; M. Piérart, *BCH* 100 (1976) 444-7; B.D. Meritt, *Historia* 26 (1977) 161-2).

simultaneously in two different demes providing "alternating heralds" is either "plausible" or "preferable".

An additional argument for keeping Achaïos in 166/5 is derived from the prosopographical information of *IG* II.2 947. The name of the Pergamene honored in this decree has been plausibly restored by G.A. Stamires (*Hesperia* 23 (1954) 253, note 11 = *SEG* 14 74) as Apollonides, who is honored as a companion of King Attalos in 2 dedications, one at Pergamum (*OGIS* 334 = *InPerg* 172), the other at Delos (*ID* 1554, line 3), from the middle of the second century. In the latter he is attested as a naturalized Athenian from the deme of Halai.

The dilemma remains, but I think it must be resolved from a restudy of the letter-cutters. The precisely dated works of the Cutter of *IG* II.2 912 fall into 3 periods: *Agora* XV 121 (I 3684) in 226/5, *IG* II.2 1539 in 215/4, *Agora* XV 135 (I 6625) in 214/3, *IG* II.2 1304 in 211/0, then, after an interval of 10 years, *IG* II.2 916 in 192/1, and, following an interval of 26 years, *Agora* XV 216 (I 165) in 166/5. A career of 60 years, although not impossible, is clearly unlikely.⁹ After an examination of the documents which have been dated precisely I suggest that the hand of I 165, which probably should be identified with the hand of *IG* II.2 916, is very close, but not identical to that of the earlier inscriptions, viz *Agora* I 3684 & 6625 and *IG* II.2 1539 & 1304. In the lettering of I 165, which is more widely spaced than that of I 3684 (226/5) and I 6625 (214/3), the left and right strokes of mu slant, whereas they are vertical in the two *comparanda*. There are small differences in the treatment of other letters, e.g. omega on I 165 does not have the "V-shaped serifs turned on their sides" which appear in the earlier documents. The writing in general of I 165 is lighter and simpler than that of 3684 and 6625, which is more deeply cut with more widening of the tips of strokes. Yet the cutters are clearly closely related, probably as master and apprentice, perhaps also as father and son. Finally, the return of Achaïos to 166/5 allows Demetrios, who has not been easy to relocate, to remain in 190/89.¹⁰

A similar problem, it may be noted, is evinced by *Agora* I 6053 (*Hesperia* 17 (1948) 25-29, no. 12, republished as *Agora* XV 261), which Tracy has redated from 95/4 to 143/2 on the basis of the identification of hand (*Hesperia* 47 (1978) 263, and *Letter-Cutters* 159; cf. *Hesperia* 57 (1968) 238), but the old date must stand and another explanation must be found for the similarity of script, for the herald of the boule and demos, Kleon of Kikynna (line

⁹ Another implausibly long career, viz that of "The Cutter of *Agora* I 6006," was resolved by Tracy (*Letter-Cutters* 160) by the supposition of "inscribing copies of earlier documents."

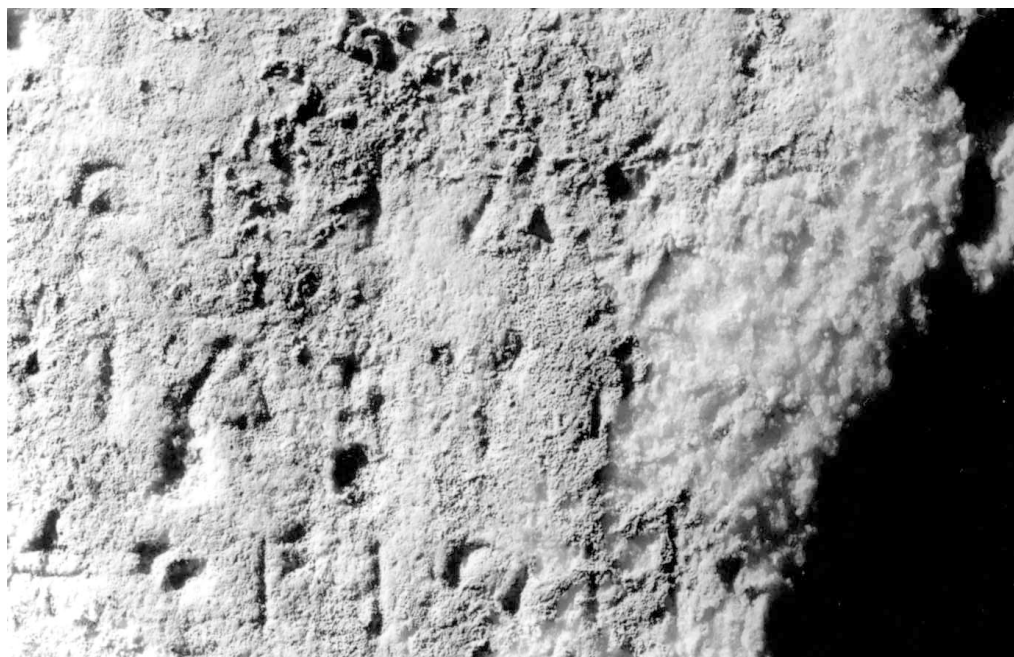
¹⁰ The reading of the two letters of the demotic of the secretary of Demetrios' year by Pritchett and Meritt (*Chronology of Hellenistic Athens* 125) as alpha followed by dotted lambda of Halaieus, and later by Meritt (*Athenian Year* 186) as alpha followed by dotted delta of Deiradiotes is more secure than Tracy grants (*AJAH* 9 (1984) 46, note 15). The apex of two letters, each of which might be alpha, delta, or lambda, is preserved, the second more clearly than the first. In addition, part of the cross-bar, which would make the first only alpha, may be preserved at the bottom edge of the stone, but I am not confident in the reading of this trace, and I would dot both letters.

55), cannot be inserted into the 140's, when Eukles of Trinemeia clearly held this office. Furthermore, the flutist in the same text, Athenopolis of Lamptrai (line 57), is attested at Delphi in 98/7 (*FD* 3.2 6, line 16).¹¹

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a)



b)

a) + b) Detailaufnahme der Inschrift Agora I 4462