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THE DATE OF IG II² 1273

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The modern attempt to reconstruct the sequence of eponymous archons was boosted by the discovery of the secretary cycles, that is the rotation of the office of secretary among the different Athenian phylai.¹ However, by the end of the century, it seems that this tool should be reappraised. Osborne² argued that the secretarial rotation was the symbol of the Athenian democracy and the rule for the periods of stability. In the period of the Macedonian domination or upheaval, especially in the middle of the third century B.C., this system simply did not work.

In this brief note I would like to discuss the name of the eponymous archon figuring in IG II² 1273 and the implication of Osborne's restoration for the relationship between IG II² 1273 and IG II² 1316.

IG II² 1273 is the only epigraphical testimony about the existence of a group of θιασῶται worshipping the Mother of the Gods.³ It preserves two honorific decrees of this group, bestowing honours, the first on a certain Soterichos from Troizen and the second on Kephalion from Herakleia. The former was honoured for his contribution to the building of the house,⁴ the latter for his term as priest.

Many scholars debated the length of the first line and a wide variety of restorations were put forward. Foucart⁵ dated the inscription in the year of the archon Γοργίας (280/79 B.C.) following the restoration suggested by Dumont.⁶ The editors of IG² have dated it in the year of the archon Ἀριστόνυμος [281/80 B.C., now ascribed to 289/8 B.C. according to Meritt⁷] who followed Nikias III (Νικίας Ὀτρυνεύς), only on the ground that his name was one letter shorter than the other possible solution, that of Νικόστρατος who followed Nikias I (296/5 B.C.). Ferguson⁸ in 1934 suggested that the inscription should be dated in the year of the archon Πειθίδημος. Meritt⁹ proposed to date the document in the year after the then newly discovered archonship of Nikias II and restored accordingly [ἐπὶ Οὐρί]ου ἄρχοντος [μη]νὸς Ἀνθεστηριῶν[ος]. Dinsmoor followed the predominant opinion and dated the

¹ W.S.Ferguson (1898) *The Athenian Secretaries*.

² M.Osborne (1989) "The chronology of Athens in the mid-third century B.C." *ZPE* 78, pp.209-42.

³ Also in Foucart No 22 and Michel 978. Related literature to be found in *SEG* XXVIII 108, XXX 90, XXXIX 152 and 310, XL 295.

⁴ For οἶκος, see F.Poland (1909) *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens*, pp.459-63, Leipzig.

⁵ P.Foucart (1873) *Les associations religieuses chez les Grecs*, pp.205-206, Paris.

⁶ A.Dumont (1870) *Essai sur la chronologie des archontes atheniens posterieures à la CXXIIe Olympiade*, p. 117, Paris.

⁷ B.D.Meritt (1977) "Athenian archons 347/6-48/7 B.C." *Historia* 26, pp.161-91. In principle I follow Meritt's chronology unless otherwise specified.

⁸ W.S.Ferguson (1934) "Polyeuktos and the Soteria" *AJPh* 55, pp.318-336 especially p.330 n.37.

⁹ B.D.Meritt (1938) "Greek Inscriptions" *Hesperia* 7 pp.108-109.

decree after the archonship of Nikias III (267/6 or 266/5 B.C.).¹⁰ He considered that the length of the line above the moulding should be 36 letters, since the vertical axis on the final -ς- of ἄρχωντος is an axis of symmetry and on its right side there are 18 letters. In the left side of the inscription there is space of 8 letters for the name of the archon, who followed Nikias III.¹¹ Pritchett¹² accepted the basis of Meritt's argument, namely that the inscription can be dated after Nikias II and not either after Nikias I or II. However, he claimed that

"these two (decrees in IG II² 1273) at last are quite appropriately dated at the same time in Anthesterion of Nikias' year. This is a better interpretation than to assume that Kephalion had to wilt before being praised from Boedromion of one year around to Anthesterion of the next, an interval of almost a year and a half" (p.92)

Oikonomides¹³ suggested, without any particular argumentation, that this inscription should be dated in the year of the archon Εὐξεινος (222/21 B.C.). Finally, Osborne argued that it should be dated in 265/4 B.C. in the year of the archon Φανόμαχος who followed Νικίας Ὀτρυνεύς.¹⁴ Osborne's main argument concerns the length of 1273:1. He assumes that its length is 36 1/2 letters and that the name of the archon should have in the genitive nine letters. This consideration rules out the possibility of any archon whose name has fewer letters. Osborne does not explain why the archon is called simply Νικίας and not Νικίας Ὀτρυνεύς, as it is in all the preserved inscriptions referring to this archon (IG II² 665, 666, 668 and SEG XXV 186). One may argue that such an abbreviating reference to the year of the archon Νικίας would not mislead anybody in the group of θιασῶται. However, the election of three Νικίας within a short period of the first half of the third century B.C. would have made a simple reference by name quite confusing.

From my own examination of the squeeze it became evident that any suggestion relies on a tentative restoration of the missing left upper part of the stele. The stele consists of a pediment and the main body of the stele which contains the decree written stoichedon. The line above the moulding is not written stoichedon but extends from the left to the right acroterion of the pediment. The spacing of the letters is slightly wider than in the main body of the decree and the size of letters in the decree is on average 0.2 cm smaller than the letters in the first line.

¹⁰ W.B.Dinsmoor (1939) *The Athenian archon list in the light of recent discoveries*, pp.45-46, reprint 1974.

¹¹ However, it seems to me that here is not enough space for the final two letters of Ἀνθεστηριῶν and it is possible that they were either squeezed or they have never been cut. In this respect, it is doubtful whether the axis affected the cutting of the letters.

¹² W.K.Pritchett (1940) *The chronology of Hellenistic Athens*, pp.91-93, Cambridge, Mass.

¹³ A.N.Oikonomides (1978) "P.Haun 6 and Euxenos the Athenian Eponymous of 222/1 B.C." *ZPE* 32, pp.85-86.

¹⁴ Osborne (above n.2) p.230 n.97. For a similar conclusion see the commentary of Koehler in IG II 614 "sed intelligendum esse probabile est Niciam Olynensem".

In the left half of the line only 10 letters are preserved; hypothesizing that the spacing of the word ἄρχοντος, which is 5.5 cm long, is representative of the spacing and letter size of the missing part, one would expect that there would be available space for Osborne's candidate.

However, measurements reported by Pritchett,¹⁵ as well as mine, prove that the available space does not exceed 4 cm. In this space it is hardly possible to cut more than 6 letters of the size and spacing mentioned above.

Therefore, Osborn's suggestion seems to be unfounded. The alternative is provided by Meritt's and, although I am not fully convinced, by Pritchett's restoration. Although both readings do not fill exactly the gap, it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that the stone-cutter may have started with wider spacing and only later saw that there may not be available space and hence ended in squeezing the final two letters.¹⁶ In this respect, the proposition put forward by Meritt fits in the available space, since the restoration [ἐπὶ Οὐρί]ου gives us exactly the required number of letters, counting -ι- as 1/2 letter.

The condition of the stone makes any attempt to date these decrees, only on the basis of internal evidence, highly conjectural. However, I think that the examination of the relationship between IG II² 1273 and 1316 can contribute to the solution of the problem.

IG II² 1316 (272/1 B.C.)¹⁷ is a decree honouring Agathon, son of Agathokles, from Phlyous and his wife Zeuxion for their contribution, during her priesthood, to the ὀργεῶνες of the Mother of the Gods. What is unusual in this document is the existence of the term ὀργεῶνες in the body of the decree and of the term θιασῶται in the crowns to describe the members of the association. The respective groups were quite distinct since the ὀργεῶνες held their meetings in Ἐκατομβαιῶν, had citizens among them and an ἱέρεια, whereas θιασῶται were meeting in Ἀνθεστηριῶν, they were served by an ἱερεὺς and among their members foreigners were included. Ferguson¹⁸ ascribed the occurrence of the terms ὀργεῶνες and θιασῶται to a mistake of the stone-cutter due to confusion. The background of the error can be found either in the fact that in Peiraeus in the third century B.C. there were two groups of devotees of the Mother of the Gods, sharing the same facilities, or that there was a transfer of the temple from the θιασῶται group to the ὀργεῶνες group sometime between 284/3 B.C. (IG II² 1273) and 246/5 B.C. (IG II² 1316). Ferguson favoured the explanation of a transfer, due to the harsh economic condition of the early third century, although he admitted that there is no precedent for such a transfer.¹⁹

¹⁵ Pritchett (above n.11) p.91 writes: "Measurements made at the squeezes available in Princeton showed clearly that in line 1 it was impossible to restore such long names as [ἐπὶ Νικοστράτ]ου, to follow Νικίας of 296/5, or [ἐπὶ Πειθιδήμ]ου to follow Νικίας of 268/7."

¹⁶ This may account for the apparent squeeze of the last two letters of Ἀνθεστηριῶνος.

¹⁷ IG II.5 620b, Michel 983, Poland A2c. In IG II² edition it is dated in the year 246/5 B.C.

¹⁸ W.S.Ferguson (1944) "The Attic Orgeones" *HTHR* 37, pp.138-40.

¹⁹ It is no need to imagine a transfer of a formal character but rather an implicit change in the administration of the plot. Nevertheless it remains unknown how this group of θιασῶται, which consisted

Osborne's dating of IG II² 1273 to 265/4 B.C. implies that the θιασῶται group established later than the group of ὀργεῶνες of IG II² 1316 while Ferguson's assumption presupposes the early existence of the thiasotic group.

However, Osborne's interpretation cannot be accepted in view of the simultaneous reference to the terms θιασῶται and ὀργεῶνες in IG II² 1316. The existence of these two words in the same document implies confusion of the stone-cutter, as Ferguson pointed out, about the name of the group and that in the near past two such group co-existed. Nevertheless, there is no other document later than IG II² 1316 referring to a thiasotic group worshipping the Mother of the Gods, while there are many honorific decrees from the orgeonic association (e.g. IG II² 1314, 1315, 1327, 1328, etc.). Moreover, IG II² 1273:6-8 refers to the building of a house probably in the sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods in Peiraeus; if an orgeonic group used the sanctuary earlier than the θιασῶται group then a house should have existed there before for cultic needs. Therefore, IG II² 1316 provides a terminus ante quem for the thiasotic group and IG II² 1273 cannot be dated later than IG II² 1316.

To sum up then, I think that I have demonstrated that Osborne's proposal for the archon in IG II² 1273 is unfounded and that on epigraphic grounds Meritt's restoration is more plausible. The chronological relation between IG II² 1273 and IG II² 1316 strengthens the above suggestion and renders more likely the fact that IG II² 1273 should be dated at or after the archonship of Nikias II, in 281/0 B.C.*

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mainly of foreigners, acquired land, when we know that enktesis was accorded by the assembly of the citizens as late as the late 3rd or early 2nd century B.C.

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