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A NOTE ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

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Several years ago, I published an article in which I argued that the document preserved in chapter 30.2-6 of the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* is the Constitution of the Five Thousand, which was put into effect after the overthrow of the Four Hundred in 411.¹ In that article I sought *inter alia* to demonstrate that the Constitution of the Five Thousand called for the creation of a system of four tribes to replace the system of ten tribes instituted by Cleisthenes. In the old system fifty men from each tribe acted as *prytaneis* for a period of 36 or 35 days (*Ath. Pol.* 43.2), which was known as a prytany. Under the Constitution of the Five Thousand, the *prytaneis* were replaced by a board of five men selected by lot, who were to preside over meetings of the Council (*Ath. Pol.* 30.5). To manage the transition from the old Cleisthenic system to the new system, the reformers of 411 promulgated and put into effect the Interim Constitution, which is preserved at *Ath. Pol.* 31.1-3.

After I published my article, I came upon new evidence that appears to confirm my view of the relationship between the Interim Constitution and the Constitution of the Five Thousand. The evidence is found in an inscription that preserves a decree (*IG* i³ 373) passed during the archonship of Mnesilochus, who held office in 411 during the reign of the Four Hundred.² The decree records payments made by the Treasurers of Athena. Normally the payments in this type of document are dated by the prytany in which the Treasurers made them. See for instance *IG* i³ 370 (Meiggs and Lewis # 77), lines 5, 11, 16, 27-28, etc. and *IG* i³ 375 (Meiggs and Lewis # 84), lines 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, etc. In the document of 411, however, the payments are dated by the day of the month without any mention of the prytanies.³ This would appear to indicate that the system of ten tribes with its rotating prytanies was in abeyance at the time. Although the Four Hundred appear to have finished the previous year under the prytany system (*Th.* 8.70.1), once the new archonship began, the old system was abolished to make way for the new system of four tribes, which was to be instituted in the near future. Not only does the inscription support the view advanced in the article about the Interim Constitution; the new analysis of the constitutions found in *Ath. Pol.* 30 and 31 enables us to understand a hitherto puzzling feature of *IG* i³ 373.

New York

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¹ Edward M. Harris, "The Constitution of the Five Thousand," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990) 243-80.

² *Ath. Pol.* 33.1 with P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 410-11.

³ Lines 11-19: παρέδοσαν ἑλληνοταμίαις Ἀντιθένηι Ἑρμείωι καὶ συνάρχουσιν ψηφισαμένης βολῆς Ἐκατ[ο]μβαιῶνος ἐνάτει | [φθί]νοντος ἀπὸ τῶν | [χρημάτ]ων Ἀθηναίας [Πολιά]δος.