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THE (?) 'FINEST' PLACE ON THE ATHENIAN AKROPOLIS

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IG I³ 165, lines 5–10:

τὸ δὲ φσ]-

έφισμα τ[όδε ἀναγρ]αφσά[το ho γραμματεὺς ὁ τ]-
 ἐς βολῆς [ἐν στέλε]ι λιθίνε[ι καὶ καταθέτο ἐμ]
 πόλει ὅς [ἐν καλλί]στοι καὶ ΕΜ[. . 6 . . βουλευτ]-
 [ε]ρίοι ἐ[ν σανιδί]οι ἴναπερ τὰ ἄλλ[α . . . 8 . . .]
 [. . .]τα· οἱ δὲ κολ]ακρέται κτλ.

Recent discussion of this fifth-century Athenian proxeny decree¹ has concentrated, properly enough, on the issue of the best stoichedon line-length to postulate: thirty five letters, as above (Pritchett, Lewis, Mattingly), or thirty two (Meritt, Walbank, Henry). Provided one can tolerate, in line 17, the unparalleled phrase ἐς τὸν εἰρεμέ]νον χρόνον – rather than ἐς τὸν νομιζόμε]νον χρόνον, which has a single fifth-century parallel in (of all places!) the Egesta alliance IG I³ 11 – the shorter version seems to be the more conducive to restoration, as follows (for the lines given above):

τὸ δὲ φσ]-

έφισμα τ[όδε ἀναγρ]άφσα[ς ὁ γραμματεὺς τ]-
 ἐς βολῆς [ἐν στέλε]ι λιθίνε[ι καὶ καταθέτο ἐμ]
 πόλει ὅς [ἐν καλλί]στοι καὶ ἐν [τῷ βουλευτ]-
 [ε]ρίοι ἐ[ν σανιδί]οι ἴναπερ τὰ ἄλλ[α φσεφί]-
 [σμα]τα· οἱ δὲ κολ]ακρέται κτλ.

I should like, here, to pay more attention to the first half of line 8² (which is the same in either version) than has been customary.

Lines 6–10 offer the match – it is said to be not, in physical terms, a join – between IG I² 85 and what has been recognized as its lower and concluding part, first published by Pritchett. As regards line 8, the photographs (plates 3–4 Pritchett, 17a–b Walbank) clearly show the upper part of the stone breaking off immediately to the right of ΠΟΛΕΙΟΣ, and no possibility whatever of fathoming the letter which occupied the eighth stoichos. With only this to go on, Hiller's ὅς [τάχιστα for IG I² 85 was irreproachable. (Adverbial injunctions to the *grammateus* to do his duty quickly are rare in any period, but cf., from the mid fourth century, IG II² 148 (treaty with Lokris), 9–10 (ὄ[πως] | [ἀν στ]αθῆι ἢ στήλ[η] ὡς τάχιστα), and II² 182.4 for αὐτίκα μά]λα in this connection.)

Something else, though, obviously had to be found once the datum became ΟΣ[. . 7 . .]ΣΤΟΙ.³ Pritchett printed ὅς [ἐν . . . ί]στοι. This was in keeping with his view that the new situation 'suggests a superlative in the dative case'; and since ὅς [ἐν ταχί]στοι would be one letter too short, what he tentatively proposed was either ὅς [ἐν βραχί]στοι or ὅς [ἐν ἐλαχί]στοι. Meritt then summarily adopted

¹ I cite the following items by author's name only: W. K. Pritchett, 'Lucubrationes epigraphicae', *CSCA* 5 (1972) 153–181, at 159–164; B. D. Meritt, 'A proxeny decree restored (IG I² 85)', *ZPE* 25 (1977) 289–295; M. B. Walbank, *Athenian Proxenies of the Fifth Century BC* (Toronto 1978) no. 35; IG I³ 165 (D. M. Lewis), with addenda; H. B. Mattingly, review-discussion of IG I³ fascicle 1 in *AJPh* 105 (1984) 340–357, at 342–344; A. S. Henry, 'Provisions for the payment of Athenian decrees', *ZPE* 78 (1989) 247–295, at 248–249.

² It is line 9 in Walbank, who reads an extra line at the top of the stone; but I shall adhere, here, to the IG I³ numeration.

³ The superseded text is still cited (and, incorrectly, as I³ 85 not I²) by S. Lewis, *News and Society in the Greek Polis* (London 1996) 187 n. 56.

the ὅς [ἐν καλλί]στοι suggested to him *per epistulam* by Lewis, which has also commended itself to Walbank. The only other suggestion in the public domain is a later one from Meritt (sent *per ep.* to Walbank) which takes a quite different, non-Pritchettian tack: ὄσ[ον ἐκλεί]στοι.

The problem here is the lack of precise parallels for all of these suggestions – or indeed for anything else that could be contrived as a supplement for ΟΣ[. . . 7 . . .]ΣΤΟΙ in this context (such as some phrase ending in ἐκά]στοι – but the photographs, especially Pritchett’s, show that enough of the fourteenth stoichos is preserved, and blank, to make [. . . 6 . . . ι]στοι a strong probability). All one can really do is determine, by a process of elimination, the least worst.⁴

First Meritt’s *per ep.* suggestion. It is difficult to be certain what he intended this to mean (and Walbank ventured no elucidatory comment), but I take it to be something like ‘in the closed-off (part)’. The problems with this are multifold: ἐκ(κ)ληστός (as opposed to simple κληστός) would be a hapax; ὄσον ἐκκληστῶ is uncomfortable Greek; and substantively speaking it can only be conjecture that part of the Akropolis was ever described as ‘closed-off’.⁵ I feel we can be confident, instead, that Pritchett’s line of attack is the right one: ‘a superlative in the dative case’.

Pritchett himself (like Hiller before him: see above) tried to make it a phrase relating to the task to be performed by the secretary – ‘a superlative form of an adjective meaning rapidly is desirable’; and, as we have seen, his suggestions were ὅς [ἐν βραχί]στοι and ὅς [ἐν ἐλαχί]στοι. Of these he implied a preference for the former, claiming a parallel in Antiphon 1.18 (πειράσομαι τὰ λοιπὰ ὡς ἐν βραχυτάτοις ὑμῖν διηγήσασθαι) and referring readers for the βράχιστος form to the appropriate page in Schwyzer’s *Griechische Grammatik*.

This fails to convince, on any level. That a phrase relating – on this view – to the task to be performed by the secretary is here appended to the mention of only the first of the decree’s two copies (before καὶ ἐν τῷ βουλευτ[ε]ρίοι κτλ.) is probably tolerable within normal practices of word-order, but an altogether more serious difficulty arises with the words themselves. Pritchett wants ὡς ἐν βραχίστῳ or ὡς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ to mean *quam celerrime* (as the now impossible ὡς τάχιστα would have done); but they do not naturally do so. In his Antiphon example, quoted above, this is especially clear ‘I shall try to give you as brief an account as I can of . . . [what] followed’ is the unimpeachable Loeb translation of the passage, and elsewhere too the connotations of both ἐν βραχυτάτῳ⁶ and ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ are those not of speed but space or scope.⁷ One can hardly imagine the secretary in IG I³ 165 being enjoined to economize on words.

We are therefore left with Lewis’s ὅς [ἐν καλλί]στοι, ‘in the finest (place) possible’ – the point of reference being no longer the behaviour of the secretary but the actual location of the stele, ἐμ] πόλει. Here at last there is a parallel, of sorts. Late in the fourth century the demesmen of Eleusis honoured the

⁴ In what follows I shall of course presuppose the correctness of Pritchett’s association of IG I² 85 with the new fragment, a proposition apparently anticipated by Wilhelm as well as subsequently being endorsed by Lewis and others. A challenge to this from someone working from photographs and printed texts only would be a great impertinence. It is nonetheless rather worrying to learn that M. F. McGregor (*ap.* Walbank) was less than fully convinced by the association. Walbank comments that ‘the facility with which the surviving letters fit into established formulae . . . is a strong argument in favour of Pritchett’s arrangement’. For ΟΣ[. . . 7 . . .]ΣΤΟΙ, I emphasize again, there are no such formulae – and no need to bemoan that fact if the two stones could somehow be dissociated.

⁵ Thucydides (2.17.1) is referring to the city as a whole when he uses the phrase πλὴν τῆς ἀκροπόλεως καὶ τοῦ Ἐλευσινίου καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο βεβαίως κληστὸν ἦν. For that very reason his words could be understood to imply that the entire Akropolis (and Eleusinion) was envisaged and, if need be, described as ‘closed-off’; the problem would then be why in the drafting of IG I³ 165 something so self-evident needed to be mentioned. And any relevance of Lampon’s rider in IG I³ 78 (the decree about Eleusinian first-fruits), which instructs the archon basileus ἡρῖσαι τὰ ἱερὰ τὰ ἐν τ[ὸ]ι Πελαργικῷ, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν μὲ ἐνηιδρῆσθαι βομὸς ἐν τῷ Πελαργικῷ ἄνευ τῆς βολῆς καὶ τὸ δέμο (lines 54–6) requires more assumptions than a prudent person should make.

⁶ The form ἐν βραχίστῳ required by Pritchett might actually be attested on stone, but very late: the phrase ὡς ἐν βραχί]στοι occurs in the late-second-century AD (?) *oratio ephabi* IG II² 2291b; βραχ[ι]ντάτῳ is printed, but who can tell?

⁷ For ἐν βραχυτάτῳ meaning (or at least being suitably rendered as) *quam celerrime* see merely Thuc. 3.46.1. Otherwise see Xen. *Cyrup.* 1.2.15 and 8.2.5 for ἐν βραχυτάτῳ; Hdt. 2.24, Thuc. 7.70.4, Isoc. 1.40 for ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ.

peripolarch Smikythion of Kephale, and their demarch Isarchos was instructed to erect the stele bearing the resolution ὅπου ἂν δο[κ]εῖ ἐν καλλί[σ]τωι εἶναι (IG II² 1193.30–1).

I call this a parallel 'of sorts' for two main reasons, one substantive and one verbal. The substantive point is that this Eleusinian official is apparently free to select a location anywhere he likes in the entire deme;⁸ the one in IG I³ 165 is restricted to choosing ἐμ] πόλει. As to the verbal or phraseological point, it is self-evident from the words quoted: ὅπου ἂν δοκεῖ ἐν καλλίστωι εἶναι is not quite the same manner of speaking as ὡς ἐν καλλίστωι would have been. Extra-Athenian examples all use the ὅπου ἂν formulation; some in reference to a circumscribed choice, others to an open one.⁹

Thus we do seem to have no option but to conclude that in IG I³ 165 the secretary was ordered to set up an Akropolis stele 'in the finest (place) possible'.¹⁰ (The phrase, whether or not used here for the first time, then failed to establish itself in the common parlance of such documents; nor are variants such as 'in the most conspicuous place' found until much later.¹¹)

Are there any objective means of determining where, for such a stele as IG I³ 165, 'the finest (place)' on the Athenian Akropolis might have been?¹²

⁸ Other Eleusinian deme decrees specify numerous possible locations: the theatre (IG II² 1185), the Dionysion (IG II² 1186), the (?)agora (IG II² 1188), the hieron of Herakles-in-Akris (SEG 28.103), 'by the Propylaia of Demeter and Kore' (IG II² 1187).

⁹ Restricted (e.g.): IG XII.9.230 (Eretria, third century), 3–6; IG XII.9.909 (Chalkis, third century), 5–8. Open (e.g.): Syll. 635 (Delphi, 180s), 19–21.

¹⁰ (Shorter superlatives of comparable meaning (ἀρί]στοι, μεγί]στοι) would create the problem of too many stoichoi to fill after ΟΣ.) I note here, *faute de mieux*, that ὡς [ἐν καλλί]στοι is rather loosely rendered 'in the most appropriate position' by T. L. Shear, Jr., 'Bouleuterion, Metroon and the Archives at Athens', in M. H. Hansen/K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 95 (Stuttgart 1995) 157–90, at 186. For her part, S. Lewis, *op. cit. supra* (n. 3) 129 renders the ὅπου ἂν δο[κ]εῖ ἐν καλλί[σ]τωι εἶναι of IG II² 1193 as 'in whatever place seems best'. I am not sure that utilitarian readings of these kinds quite capture what was intended by *kallistos*.

¹¹ e.g. IG II² 1227 (decree of Salaminian cleruchs, 131/0), 35–6: ἐν τῷ ἐπιφανεστάτῳ τῆς ἀγορᾶς τόπῳ.

¹² Without, myself, the topographical expertise to do more than pose this question I can only draw attention, as a starting-point, to Walbank 8–9: 'the exact location of these [Akropolis] stelai is never specified, but there is some evidence to suggest that the site of most, if not all, fifth-century proxeny stelai was in the neighbourhood of the Erechtheion'. Note 43 on p. 30 then gives the statistics to back this up (I summarize): of 78 stelai-fragments known to have been found in a specified sub-area of the Akropolis, 43 'seem to derive from the vicinity of the Erechtheion' (including the north slope); the next largest concentration, 17 from the south slope, is manifestly far smaller.