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AMYMON OF SIKYON: A FIRST VICTORY IN ATHENS AND A FIRST TRAGIC
KHOREGIC DEDICATION IN THE CITY? (*SEG* 23, 103B)

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In the third decade of the fourth century, a man from the Attic deme of Pallene (his name lost) was a victorious khoregos at the Great Panathenaia (probably that of 375/4 or 370/69). His khoros was one of boys dancing the pyrrhikhe for Athene. He commemorated the occasion with a monument which carried an account of the victory in formulaic terms familiar from comparable inscriptions; and which had a delicate relief of part at least of the victorious khoros carved on the same surface, underneath and dividing the letters of the inscription.¹ Although the find-spot of this monument is not known, a Panathenaic dedication such as this seems certain to derive from an urban setting, very probably – like a number of similar cases – from the Akropolis.²

To this monument a second victory-inscription was added, probably soon after the first was cut (since the letter-forms are the same), but certainly after the design of the monument had been conceived. It was put on the right-hand side of the stone, not on its principal front face. The right-hand edge of this side of the stone is roughly broken, and allows for no certain calculation of its original width. This second inscription is rendered by Poursat (and subsequently in *SEG* 23, 103b) as follows:

[Π]αλληνε[ὺς Διονύσια τὰ]
ἐν ᾧσται [παισὶ χορηγῶν ?]
ἐνίκα.
Ἄμύμων[ν ἐποίησεν].

The name of the khoregos is lost from this inscription also, but he is more than likely to have been the same man as the Panathenaic victor. His demotic is secure, and certain is the fact of his further victory, presented here as his own in the third person singular. Nor can the festival be doubted: the words ἐν ᾧσται are hardly explicable otherwise, and although the phrase Διονύσια τὰ ἐν ᾧσται is not attested on other khoregic monuments, that is largely because it does not need to be included on them. This, however, was a monument designed to celebrate a Panathenaic victory, and so an explicit statement as to the nature of the festival for this second, Dionysiac victory is in order, since one would expect the monument to have been erected in a region where Panathenaic rather than Dionysiac victories were normally commemorated.³ Poursat envisaged a situation in which, after his victory in pyrrhikhe at the Panathenaia in Hekatombaion, this khoregos won again at the Dionysia seven months later, and had the

* Many thanks to Pat Easterling, Robin Osborne and Oliver Taplin for helpful discussion and comments.

¹ Published (with photographs) and first fully described by Poursat (1967); Mus. Nat. No. 3854, now = *SEG* 23, 103a. This inscription:

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[ἀνέθηκεν ν]ι	[κήσας πυρρι]-
[χιστ]αῖς παί	δων χορηγῶν
Παναθήναια	τὰ μεγάλα.

In the space between the two columns of this inscription is the naked body of a victorious pyrrhikhistes, carried on the shoulders of another. An excellent colour photograph of this inscription and relief appears as fig. 100 of *Mind and Body* (1989). For the possible nature of the sculpture almost certainly dedicated above this base see Poursat (1967) 106; and 108–9 on the date, based on grounds of the artistic style of the relief and letter-forms.

² Other monuments recording victories in pyrrhikhe found on the Akropolis: *IG* II² 3025 (*SEG* 30, 128); *IG* II² 3026.

³ This argument largely holds, despite the fact that the principal inscription also explicitly states that the victory in pyrrhikhe was won at the Panathenaia. The motivation for this may have been to advertise the fact that it was won at the Great as opposed to the Lesser festival.

monument that was still being prepared altered to include mention of the second victory.⁴ Bases with multiple victories can certainly be paralleled. Some were designed to celebrate a number of past victories on a single monument specially designed for them all;⁵ while the famous khoregic monument of Thrasyllus in the theatre itself was substantially altered, some fifty years after its erection, by his son, Thrasykles, to include a record of his service as agonothetes.⁶ The attraction of creating these minor “treasuries of agonistic glory” of an individual or family was clearly considerable.

The nature of the agon is lost from the stone, and the restoration which introduces the boys’ dithyramb is not certain.⁷ There are no signs of the victory-tripod which it was largely the point of dithyrambic monuments to house, and Poursat’s supplements produce something that would be unparalleled among the substantial number of khoregic inscriptions from the Dionysia relating to dithyramb; and it would be close to unacceptable: a monument for a phyletic victory that was quite silent as to the identity of the victorious phyle.⁸ However, given the state of the stone and the perhaps somewhat improvised quality of the inscription, we need not be constrained to assuming that the second line necessarily had as many letters as the (in any case, restored) first. There may have been space here for a khoros that had no phyletic association, a khoros of tragoidoi: ?τραγωιδῶν χορηγῶν.

The key may lie in the mysterious five letters of the last line: AMYMQ[---. These are of a slightly smaller size than the others (1.2 cm. compared to 1.5-1.8 of the rest). Poursat restores the line to read “Amymon made this”, a signature of the sculptor for which there is no good parallel among the extant khoregic monuments (the vastly more elaborate works made for Lysikrates, Nikias and Thrasyllus did not concede as much⁹).

⁴ Poursat (1967) 106.

⁵ E.g. *IG* II² 3022, 3025; cf. 3130. Khoregic victory-monuments from the demes often record multiple past victories: cf. e.g. *SEG* 34, 174; *IG* I³ 970; II² 3091, 3092, 3106, 3109.

⁶ *IG* II² 3056 (of 320/19: Thrasyllus) and 3083 (of 271/0: Thrasykles); Travlos (1971) 562–5. The fourth-century khoregic monument of Kimon recently published by Matthaïou (1994) may be another example of a dedication which subsequently had further victories of Kimon or other family members added to it.

⁷ Since the width of this side cannot be determined, the lines may well be longer than as in the restored text.

⁸ It will hardly do to claim that the khoregos’ demotic was a sufficient indication of the phyle to which he and his khoreutai belonged. Poursat (1967) 105 compares *IG* II² 3022: this is extremely fragmentary, but may celebrate victories in the gymnasiarkhia and euandria at the Panathenaia and in boys’ dithyramb at the Thargelia, apparently without reference to the phylai involved in the latter. Our inscription is not directly comparable, however, since in itself it refers to a single victory at a single festival (in 3022 the three are joined in one sentence). Moreover, the absence of phylai for a Thargelian victory is somewhat less surprising than for a Dionysian: in the former, the fact that the khoregos represents his phyle *and another* tends to weaken the strong link between khoregos and phyle detectable in Dionysian inscriptions.

IG II² 3029 (of ca. 400) is a fragmentary khoregic inscription which lists khoregos, poet and auletes but, as it stands, no phyle. The fact that the phyle is not at the (extant) head of this inscription (as is usual for Dionysian examples) encouraged Brinck (1906) 17–18 to doubt whether it was khoregic – “vix recte” (Kirchner). Amandry (1976) 44–48 (cf. *SEG* 26, 216) argues that there were two further blocks to the right of this one, and on these restores the names of two phylai + ἀνδρῶν, assigning the victory to the Thargelia. On this interpretation it ceases to represent an anomaly.

⁹ Poursat (1967) 106: “Il ne fait pas de doute en effet que le nom Amymon,... soit le nom d’un artiste, qui semble inconnu par ailleurs...” It seems odd that Amymon the sculptor should have added his name to this secondary side of the monument, particularly if the inscription is a later addition to a monument on which he had already completed his work.

The best parallels for possible artists’ signatures on khoregic monuments are: (1) *SEG* 30, 128, apparently the base of a dedication by Stratos which *may* be part of a victory-monument for pyrrhikhe of [Lysi]stratos, if the two additional blocks to the left and right of the extant one hypothesised by Oikonomides (1980) 21–22 are accepted. He produces this text:

πυρριχισταίς νικήσας Λυσί]στρατος Ἀτάρβου Θορίκιος ἀνέθη[κε - - - - ἦρχε]
Οἰνιάδης Σουσιεύς Ἐπιχάρης ἐποίησαν

This is, however, a very radical supplement to the existing text, and firm conclusions cannot be drawn from the stone, as it is built into the northern wall of the Akropolis: Immerwahr (1942) 343–344.

(2) *IG* II² 3109 (from Rhamnous), a dedication for gymnasiarkhiai won in the deme by Megakles *and* for a comic khoregia. Its base carried a large statue of Themis by the Rhamnousian sculptor Khairestratos, a fact recorded on it.

(3) *IG* II² 3018, the dedication of a victorious gymnasiarkh Kallias son of Telokles with Pandionis. Raubitschek (1943) 52 n. 114 suggests a new reading of the last two lines which introduces the sculptor Aristeides: Ἀριστηίδης / [ἐπό]ησεν.

David Lewis aired an altogether different alternative for the last line, the possibility of reading AMYMΩNHI, as the title of a play.¹⁰ This would give us an example of something that is otherwise – curiously – unattested in the material record: a khoregos, victorious in drama at the Great Dionysia, commemorating his victory *in* the city. We do seem to have a number of memorials for dramatic victories won at the city festival erected back in the victors’ home demes (*IG* I³ 969, II² 3101, (?) 3091);¹¹ but urban dedications remain elusive. The inclusion of the titles of poems or plays on khoregic monuments can be paralleled, if not quite as here. At a date very close to our monument (ca. 380) a deme khoregic dedication included the titles of the successful dramas: *IG* II² 3091 (from Halai Aixionides); while later in the century we find the great monument of Nikias to the west of the theatre carrying on its epistyle the name of its victorious “classic” dithyramb, the *Elpenor* of the fifth-century poet Timotheos.¹²

The daughter of Danaos Amymone gave her name to the satyr-play of Aiskhylos’ Danaid trilogy,¹³ and in 364 a tragic *Amymone* by Nikomakhos, the man remembered for unexpectedly defeating Euripides, was part of a group that came third at the Lenaia.¹⁴ Our stone certainly has enough space to accommodate further play-titles from a trilogy or a group of unconnected dramas, but I want to suggest another restoration of this last line that both retains the link to tragedy and gives us the name of its poet – a solution that would thus remove some of the oddities from this inscription as it now stands.

A large monument was set up in Athens in the early third century, perhaps by an agonothetes, that was designed to record, among other things, the victorious poets in tragedy from the Dionysia and the number of their victories. The order in which the poets appear on this list is that of the dates of their first Dionysiac victory. A small fragment for the period including and soon after 372 shows the partial names of four poets: [Ast]ydamos 7[?+] victories, [Theo]dektas 7 victories, [Apha]reus 2 victories, – and [. . . ω]v 2 victories.¹⁵ The last name is tentatively – “*fort.*” – conjectured by Snell to have been one

(4) *IG* II² 3038, a highly unusual inscription, apparently recording a victory in men’s dithyramb of Erekhtheis, but uniquely, it seems, erected by the didaskalos; the text of *IG*:

ἐπὶ Τιμ]οκρά[τους ἄρχοντος]?
 ἀνέθηκε Κλείδημος Μείδωνος Πλωθεὺς [διδάξας]?
 Ἐρεχθῆς ἀνδρῶν ἐνίκᾳ.
 Μενετέλης Μένητος Ἀναγυράσιος ἐχορήγε.
 Ἄρατος Ἀργῆιος ἠΰλε.
 Νικόμαχος ἐποίησεν

Lines 1, 2 and 6 seem to have been added some time after the rest, which probably dates to the first quarter of the fourth century. And so the relation of the dedicatory sculpture by Nikomakhos to the khoregic victory remains obscure. Nikomakhos the sculptor is known from *IG* II² 3464, 4274. Matters are clouded further by the fact that the restoration of διδάξας in line 2 is probably impossible: Amandry (1976) 27–28, *SEG* 26, 214.

¹⁰ Reported in Osborne (1993) 33 without further discussion.

¹¹ Whitehead (1986) 234.

¹² *IG* II² 3055. These cases are not direct parallels, since the former comes from a deme, where theatrical organisation and its commemoration were extremely diverse, and the latter represents the special circumstances of a “repeat” performance (cf. note 14). But then there is no clear material evidence for dramatic khoregic monuments in the city to offer parallels. For the evidence of the literary tradition see Plu. *Them.* 5.5: Themistokles’ inscription on a pinax for a tragic victory; Arist. *Pol.* 1341a33–37: a pinax dedicated by a comic khoregos; Theophr. *Char.* 22.1–2: a wooden tainia with only the tragic khoregos’ name on it, used by Theophrastos to illustrate “Illiberality”; Lys. 21.4: a comic khoregos dedicates the skeue after a performance. See Wilson (forthcoming).

¹³ *P. Oxy.* 2256 fr. 3 = *TrGF* 1 DID C6, III Aesch. T70 Radt. It may well have been this important papyrus fragment, whose third line reads Δαν[αί]σι Ἀμυ[μόν]η σατυρικῆι which encouraged Lewis to read Amymo- in *SEG* 23, 103b as *Amymone*. *TrGF* 2 adesp. 1c may be another satyric *Amymone*.

¹⁴ *TrGF* 1 DID A2b.87. Amymone could certainly have provided material for a dithyramb (cf. esp. the *Io* of Bakkhyliades, 19 S–M; *PMG* 757 – the *Danaides* of Melanippides), but in addition to the arguments adduced above against this being a record of dithyrambic victory, one cannot parallel the inclusion of a title for dithyramb, certainly not without the name of its poet, although this may have followed the title on our stone. The nearest parallel would be from the monument of Nikias already mentioned, where we find αἶσμα: Ἐλπήνωρ Τιμοθέου. But this is unusual for recording a *reperformance* of a classic piece. The many other extant classical dithyrambic khoregic inscriptions do not mention the name of the poem.

¹⁵ Pickard-Cambridge (1988[1968]) 112–120, 362. *TrGF* 1 DID A3a44–47 = *IG* II² 2325 I.

Amymon. The identification is far from certain,¹⁶ but it is considerably strengthened by the fact that no other six-lettered name of a tragic poet from the appropriate period is known to us; and the name itself is extremely rare.¹⁷ The only reference we currently have to Amymon the tragedian is in a third-century catalogue of tragic poets (*P. Tebt.* 695 col.2 = *TrGF* 1 CAT A6; cf. *TrGF* 1.123), which reads simply: Ἀμύμων Σικυώ[νιος· οὗτος ἐποίησε] τραγωιδίας [number of plays]. This is enough, however, to warrant him a candidacy for the lost place in the List of Dionysiac Victors, where his name fits perfectly.

Fifth-century tragedy was a profoundly Athenian performance-genre. And it is clear from numerous recent studies that it in some sense derived from, and spoke to, the deepest preoccupations and problems of the most powerful, rapidly-developing polis in the Greek world. But by the end of the fifth century, after the loss of empire and of the wealth and confidence it had generated, and in the growing shadow of the power of Macedon, the rôle of tragedy as a forum to expose to the most intense public scrutiny problems and tensions within the city's ideological and mental structures had most certainly changed. We are sadly ill-equipped to describe that change in any detail, but one very practical development within the institution of tragedy was the increased number of non-Athenian poets in a genre that had virtually been an Athenian monopoly in the fifth century.¹⁸ As the city lost its power and had its autonomy threatened, the poetic performance which more than any other was distinctively Athenian and which contributed greatly to its cultural prestige, ceased to be the special reserve of Athenians. Others sought a share of that prestige. The powerful desire for a tragic poetic victory in Athens had long preoccupied – (and in the end, if we are to believe Diodoros, killed) – the mighty Dionysios, tyrant of Sicily.¹⁹ And the Macedonian appropriation of tragedy had equally powerful symbolic ramifications. Even in the fourth century, Athenians far outnumber non-Athenians among known tragic poets. But the performance of tragedy had by this time become widely popular in the Greek world, and had been carried to many other centres beyond Attike for performance by both Athenians and non-Athenians.

Amymon has his place among the handful of “foreign” tragic poets to have achieved some considerable success, in the first half of the fourth century, at what was still the most important festival for drama in the Greek world. His home had claims to an extremely ancient tradition of *tragikoi khoroi* (*Hdt.* 5.67),²⁰ and a significant number of the known early non-Athenian tragic poets came from the north-east corner of the Peloponnese: Pratinas and his son Aristias (Phleious); Aristarkhos, Euripides’

¹⁶ And Snell also retains the . . . ο]ν of *IG* II² 2325 as a distinct poet in *TrGF* 1 (74).

¹⁷ The Attic volume of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* knows of only this example, and lists him as a sculptor from Athens (with a question-mark), on the basis of *SEG* 23, 103b. Volume 1 (1987 – Aegean islands, Cyprus and Cyrenaica) knows of only one other, a Lindian from Rhodes of the first century B.C.E. Elaine Matthews of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* kindly informs me that on current evidence the name is otherwise attested with great rarity: twice from Antikyra (*FD* III (2) 235, 4; *IG* IX (1) 3, 3, both second century); twice from Megara (*IG* VII 42, 13; *RA* 1917 (2), p. 35 no. 4, both third century; once from Medeon (*SGDI* 2241, 10, second century); once from Skodrai (*Iliria* 2, p. 403, second century); twice from Erythrai (*BMC Ionia* 155, *IEK* 76, 10; *BMC Ionia* 214, third and first century); once from Teos (*Syll.*³ 656, 1, second century). The distribution is unusually wide for such a rare name.

¹⁸ Possible fifth-century non-Athenian tragic poets are: Pratinas of Phleious and his son Aristias (Snell 4, 9), but both of these were known primarily as writers of *satyrika*; Aristarkhos of Tegea (Snell 14); Neophron of Sikyon (Snell 15); Ion of Khios (Snell 19); Akhaios I of Eretria (Snell 20); Karkinios of ?Akragas (Snell 21 – but most evidence points to his being Athenian); Akestor (Snell 25 – but knowledge of his status as a “foreigner” depends on attacks in comedy for being a “Sakas” and a *xenos*, and these may not be a good guide to the facts); Spintharos (Snell 40 – but the same considerations apply for him as for Akestor, and the name itself – the “Spark” – leaves room for doubts.) If Meletos I (Snell 47), from the end of the century, is indeed distinct from and father of Meletos II (Snell 48) – one of Sokrates’ prosecutors and part-time tragic poet – then the fact that he (Meletos I) likewise had his Athenian birth attacked in comedy (as a “Thracian”), when his son was certainly an Athenian, throws further doubt on the evidential value of any such comic attacks.

¹⁹ *Diod.* 15.73–74; cf. 15.6.1, 15.7.3.

²⁰ Untersteiner (1984).

contemporary (Tegea); and the dramatic innovator Neophron, who was of sufficient standing to have Euripides' *Medea* credited to his hand, came from Amymon's own polis, Sikyon.²¹

The earliest possible date for the first of [Amy]mon's Dionysiac victories would be 369. Astydamas won his first in 372 (according to the *Marmor Parium* 71), and so, counting one year after that date for each of Theodektas' and Aphareus' first victories, 369 is the first available year for [Amy]mon's. And it may well be the right year. For Amymon is also, I would suggest, a strong contender for the last line of *SEG* 23, 103b. 'Ἀμύμων ᾠκυώνιος ἐδίδασκειν surely demands as serious consideration as the current text of the third line of this inscription. The less conspicuous right-hand side of this monument may then become not only the record of Amymon's first victory at the Dionysia in the City.²² It becomes our first archaeological record of a tragic khoregos memorialising his victory in the city.²³

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²¹ Cf. Herington (1985) 91. The evidence which connects the Sikyonian poet of paian Aripheon (*PMG* 813) to a tragic victory in Athens is extremely tenuous: see Snell 53.

²² If his first victory was in 369, this would suggest the latter of Poursat's two Panathenaic years (370/69) was the more likely for the monument. [Amy]mon's first victory could have fallen some time later than 369, but his active and successful career in Athens will certainly have coincided with the date of the victory-monument.

²³ I consider the significance of this fascinating pattern of (non-)dedication in Wilson (1997) and at greater length in Wilson (forthcoming); cf. also Makres (1994).