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TWO NOTES ON LEASES OF SACRED PROPERTY IN ATTICA

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Some years ago D. Behrend produced a study of Attic Lease-Documents.¹ In 1990 I amplified his catalogue in light of discoveries since Behrend compiled his list.² I now append to these catalogues two more records of leases of property in Attica.

1. *IG*, I³, 462–466 (*IG*, I², 363–367) is the record of the construction of the Mnesikleian Propylaia to the Akropolis, from 437/6 to 433/2 B.C. Among the recurring items of income that are reported by the Epistatai in charge of this project is the rent received as a result of the lease of a “Sacred House”. The entry is a simple one: merely “rent of the Sacred House” (οἰκίας ἱερᾶς μίσθωσις), with no indication as to the location of this building, of the identity of the lessee or lessor, or of the terms of the lease. This entry occurs for the years 437/6 (I³, 462.24), 436/5 (I³, 463.74), and 433/2 B.C. (I³, 466.146). Since the stele is fragmentary, it is likely that the same entry was made for the other years of the project, 435/4 and 434/3 B.C., but is now lost; similarly, only one year’s record is complete, that of 436/5 B.C. (I³, 463.74), showing the rent for that year as 82 drachmai: since this record is the second in what seems to be a series, I believe that we can restore this figure for the other years as well.

Thus, if these hypotheses be correct, we can, perhaps, suggest that this was a multiple-year lease, and that the lessee or lessees paid a fixed amount of rent throughout the life of the lease. Whether it was a five-year lease, or one for a longer term, such as ten years, we cannot say. It is not impossible that the lease was put out to tender every year, but the absence of any indication of the lessee’s name, I think, militates against such a suggestion. Rather, when the project for building the Propylaia was mooted, the Epistatai would have looked around for reliable and continuous sources of income for what was probably an open-ended project. The long-term lease of a building would be one such reliable source of income, and one that would be rendered yet more reliable if the same lessee were contracted for the full term of the lease.

The designation of this property as the “sacred house” is intriguing: the Propylaia to the Akropolis did not, so far as we can tell, have any sacred character; yet here we have the rent of a “sacred house” being used to support a secular building-project. Was this house on the site to be occupied by the new Propylaia, or adjacent to them, so that its sacred functions were compromised? Was it used by one of the contractors as a store-room for tools or materials, while the project was underway, to be returned to its former function when work on the Propylaia ended? Speculation can only go so far.

2. *IG*, II², 598 is part of a relief-stele, now lost, that bore the record of the lease of a sacred temenos; the date is unknown: the first editors of this fragment placed it towards the end of the fourth century B.C., although the letter-forms reported in *IG* suggest, perhaps, a slightly later date. It is probably a decree of a phyle or a deme, as the absence of a demotic in the name of the mover of the decree suggests (line 1).³ As such, it accords well with the trend in the later fourth century, amply attested in the epigraphic record, for such bodies to seek ways of regularizing their income from the property controlled by them. The property in question was the temenos of a shrine (line 2): the lessee was a certain Arcestr[atous] (lines 2–3); and, although the precise terms of the lease are unknown, they seem to have included a restriction on erecting any building within the temenos (restored, lines 4–5): thus, it seems likely that the lessee was intended to use this temenos for agricultural or pastoral purposes, not for industrial

¹ D. Behrend, *Attische Pachturkunden*, München, 1970.

² In G. V. Lalonde, M. K. Langdon & M. B. Walbank, *Agora XIX*, pp. 149–169.

³ See A. Wilhelm, *Ath. Mitt.*, 39, 1914, p. 180 (= *IG*, II², 598, *Addenda et Corrigenda*, p. 662); for further bibliography, see C. Lawton, *Attic Document Reliefs*, Oxford, 1995, p. 150, no. 159.

operations. Too little survives of the relief for it to offer any clue as to the identity of the lessor. However, the reported find-spot of this document, “ad radices occidentales arcis”, may be of some help: if, as seems likely, this stele was set up in the temenos with which it was concerned, this temenos is likely to have been within the lessor’s territory: thus, if it is a decree of a deme, it will have been one of the city-demes lying west of the Akropolis, either Koile, Kollytos or Melite.⁴ If it is a decree of a phyle, too few temene of the phyle-heroes are known for speculation to be of any use.

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⁴ See J. Traill, *Hesperia* Supplement XIV, Princeton, 1975, Map 1.