

AFTER THE THREE-BAR *SIGMA* CONTROVERSY: THE HISTORY OF ATHENIAN IMPERIALISM REASSESSED*

Although I was one of the doubters when M.H. Chambers brought modern technology to bear on the Egesta decree, and there are some who continue to doubt,¹ I now accept that enough of the archon Antiphon's name has been seen on the stone by A.P. Matthaiou and others to guarantee a date of 418/7.² I must stress that the doctrine which has now turned out to be mistaken, and which to my knowledge goes back to Rangabé working on the tribute lists in 1842, was not unreasonable: when there is a body of securely dated material in which we can see changes in letter forms,

* This is a slightly revised version of the paper which I read to the Thirteenth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy in Oxford, in September 2007. I thank Dr. S.D. Lambert for inviting me to contribute to the panel which he was organizing, and all who have discussed this subject with me, there and elsewhere. In particular, I thank Dr. N. Papazarkadas for showing me two recent papers of his, one of which he is contributing to J. Ma et al. (edd.), *Interpreting the Athenian Empire. New Essays* (Duckworth, forthcoming), in which he performs the kind of exercise I am performing here – and for saving me from an error of mine: he accepts lower dates more consistently than I do; for the decree for Sigeum he proposes an even lower date (*IG I³ 17*: see p. 504 with n. 8, below); but he stresses that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and thinks that Pericles' imperialism differed from Cleon's in practices of publication rather than practices of rule.

¹ The earliest statement of the old orthodoxy, to my knowledge, is A.R. Rangabé, *Antiquités helléniques*, 1 (Athens, 1842), 282–5 (I owe this reference to Dr. B. Paarmann); it was supported and attributed to him by A. Böckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener* (Berlin, 1851²), 556–78 esp. 556; it was invoked by U. Köhler, 'Attische Inschriften', *Hermes* 2 (1867), 16–36 at 17, in the first publication of the decree for Egesta. H.B. Mattingly began his attack on the old orthodoxy with 'The Athenian Coinage Decree', *Hist.* 10 (1961), 148–88; many of his articles on the theme are collected in his *The Athenian Empire Restored* (Ann Arbor, 1999: references to Mattingly are to this book unless otherwise indicated). M.H. Chambers applied modern technology to the decree for Egesta in M.H. Chambers, R. Gallucci, P. Spanos, 'Athens' Alliance with Egesta in the year of Antiphon', *ZPE* 83 (1990), 38–57; A.S. Henry expressed doubts in 'Through a laser beam darkly: space age technology and the Egesta Decree (*IG I³ 11*)', *ZPE* 91 (1992), 137–46. A.P. Matthaiou reported that he read on the stone [Ἀν]τιφών, and suggested that what happened in 418/7 was not the making of a new alliance but the reaffirmation of an alliance made c. 427, in 'Περὶ τῆς *IG I³ 11*', in Matthaiou (ed.), *Πρακτικὰ συμποσίου εἰς μνήμην Adolf Wilhelm (1864–1950)* (Athens, 2004), 99–122. A. Moroo, 'Neglected three-bar sigmas: the numeral signs for stater', *ZPE* 141 (2002), 129–33, has drawn attention to the fact that in one particular context (e.g. the acrophonic sign for *stater*) the use of three-bar *sigma* persisted with some cutters even of the fourth century.

There were defences of the old orthodoxy against Mattingly by B.D. Meritt and H.T. Wade-Gery, 'The dating of documents to the mid-fifth century', *JHS* 82 (1962), 67–74 + 83 (1963), 100–17; R. Meiggs, 'The dating of fifth-century Attic inscriptions', *JHS* 86 (1966), 86–97; M.B. Walbank, 'Criteria for the dating of fifth-century Attic inscriptions' in D.W. Bradeen and M.F. McGregor (edd.), *Φόρος: Tribute to B.D. Meritt* (Locust Valley, NY, 1974), revised in his *Athenian Proxeny of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Toronto and Sarasota, 1978), 31–51.

² I supported the old orthodoxy in *The Athenian Empire* (*G&R New Surveys* 17 [1985]), 15–17, cf. (1993 reprint) 47; and in *CAH* 5² (1992), 53. I accepted Matthaiou's reading of the archon Antiphon in *A History of the Classical Greek World, 478–323 B.C.* (Oxford, 2005, dated 2006), 46, 50, 92–3, 173; and in K.H. Kinzl (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* (Oxford, 2006), 52–4.

Table 1

Meiggs JHS '66, 94	subject	older refs. (as in Meiggs)	M&L	IG 1 ³	IG 1 ³ date	Mattingly date (most recent ref. in <i>Ath. Emp. Rest.</i>)	Rhodes date (E = early, L = late)
—	Phaselis	IG 1 ² 16	31	10	469–450	early (514, n. 39)	E: 450s
7	Amphictyony	IG 1 ² 26	—	9	c. 458	—	E: c. 457
—	Erythrae	IG 1 ² 10	40	14	c. 453/2	c. 453/2 (367, n. 23)	E: late 450s
9	Erythrae	IG 1 ² 11, 12/13.a	—	15. a, d	c. 450	c. 450 (397)	E: c. 450
—	Allied city	SEG X 11. B. fin.	—	16	c. 450	—	non liquet
15	Egesta: —]ov	IG 1 ² 19	37	11. a	bef. mid. C5	418/7 (551–2)	L: 418/7
17	Sigum: Δv[—	SEG X 13	—	17	451/0	418/7 cf. 1 ³ 18 (347–51)	L: 418/7 (?)
18	Miletus: Εἰθυρος	ATL II D 11	—	21	450/49	426/5 (481–5)	L: 426/5
19	Hermione	SEG X 15	—	31	c. 450	425/4 (256)	non liquet
23	Aegina	IG 1 ² 18	—	38	457–445	432 (<i>Hist.</i> 16 [1967], 1–5)	E: 458–445
24	Athena Nike	IG 1 ² 24	44	35	c. 448	c. 430 (461–71)	E: c. 448
25	Coinage, etc.	ATL II D 14	45	1453, 1454 ter	—	425/4 (448 cf. 477–86)	L: c. 425
—	Tribute (Clinias)	IG 1 ² 66	46	34	448/7	c. 425 (401 cf. 477–86)	L: 425/4
26	Eleusinian <i>epistatai</i>	SEG X 24	—	32	449–447	432 or later (<i>ZPE</i> 162 [2007], 107)	L: 432 or later
27	Proxeny (Delphi)	IG 1 ² 27	—	27	c. 450/49	422/1 with 1 ³ 19, 28 (363–6)	L: late 420s
28	Proxeny (Acheioion)	IG 1 ² 28	—	19	c. 450/49	422/1 with 1 ³ 27, 28 (363–6)	L: late 420s
29	Men of Parium	SEG X 20	—	18	c. 450	c. 418/7 cf. 1 ³ 17 (387–90)	L: c. 418/7
30	Allied city	IG 1 ² 29	—	29	c. 450	—	non liquet
31	Man of Thera	IG 1 ² 31	—	30	c. 450	—	non liquet
32	Colophon	ATL II D 15	47	37	447/6	427/6 (372–4)	E: c. 447/6

Table 1—Continued

Meiggs <i>JHS</i> '66, 94	subject	older refs. (as in Meiggs)	M&L	IG I ³	IG I ³ date	Mattingly date (most recent ref. in <i>Ath. Emp. Rest.</i>)	Rhodes date (E = early, L = late)
33	Colophon	IG I ² 34	—	42	c. 445–442	c. 425 (98)	E: c. 445–442
38	Brea	IG I ² 45	49	46	c. 445	430s (381–5)	non liquet
—	Eretria	IG I ² 17	—	39	446/5	424/3 with I ³ 40, 41 (161–2) (but appar. prewar 514, n. 39)	E: 446/5
39	Chalcis	IG I ² 39	52	40	446/5	424/3 with I ³ 39, 41 (391–4)	E: 446/5
40	Hestiaea	IG I ² 40, 42	—	41	446/5	c. 424/3 with I ³ 39, 40 (246–8)	E: 446/5
—	Proxeny (Abydus)	IG I ² 143	—	28	450–440	422/1 with I ³ 19, 27 (250–3)	L: late 420s
—	Samos	SEG X 39	56	48	439/8	439/8 (372)	439/8
—	Tribute assessment: Σ _τ παροκλής	ATL II A 9	69	71	425/4	425/4 (527)	425/4
—	Eleusinian firstfruits	IG I ² 76	73	78	c. 422?	late 420s (485–6)	E: c. 435 or earlier

it is fair to assume that instances of a phenomenon which cannot be securely dated will fall inside or not far outside the same span of time as the instances which can.

But now we do have a decree with three-bar *sigma* for which I think 418/7 must be accepted. This does not mean that, in every case of a fifth-century inscription for which a later date has been proposed, that later date must now be right; only that later dates can no longer be ruled out simply because of the letter forms. What I want to do briefly is look at the other texts which are most important for the history of Athenian imperialism, consider which should now probably be given a later date than the old orthodoxy allowed and which should not, and see what kind of picture emerges.

Meiggs in his 1966 article in defence of the orthodoxy considered forty texts with older-style lettering and without a secure date. Twenty of those are particularly relevant here, and I add a few others not in his list (Table 1).

In addition to the Egesta decree there are some other texts for which a later date now seems right. There is a growing consensus in favour of dating the decree on coinage, weights and measures in the 420s (but not, I think, in favour of the even later date suggested – but not as a certainty – by Kallet): Mattingly strengthened the case when he identified the fragment from Hamaxitus, one of Mytilene's Actaeon cities where we should not expect to find the decree set up earlier than 427.³ There are similarities between that, Clinias' tribute decree (which does not have old-style lettering, and was dated in the 420s until the fragment identifying Clinias as proposer was found), and the assessment decree of 425: *inter alia* all three seem to envisage the possibility that the implementation of the decree may encounter opposition even within Athens. This suggests that Clinias' decree should belong in the 420s, probably shortly after that assessment.⁴ The date of 450/49 for the decree for Miletus required special pleading: 426/5 is the only year in the fifth century for which the archon's name was certainly Euthynus, and the decree should be placed in that year.⁵ However, we know from a decree of Miletus to be dated 434/3 that already by that date Athens had imposed on Miletus a constitution echoing features of the Athenian.⁶

Among the texts I am considering there are two proxeny decrees which refer to the (πόλεις) ὅσον Ἀθηναῖοι κρατοῦσι: one of these has a 5-talent fine for a city in which

³ IG I³ 1453. D.M. Lewis wavered towards the end of his life: 'The Athenian Coinage Decree', in I. Carradice (ed.), *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires* (BAR International Series 343 [1987]), 53–63 = his *Selected Papers in Greek and Near Eastern History* (Cambridge, 1997), 116–30, is agnostic; *CAH* 5² 130–1, supporting the earlier date, was published in 1992 but may have been written before his 1987 paper. Publication is awaited of the proceedings of a conference on 'The Athenian Standards Decree: New Text, New Contexts?', Oxford, 16–18 April 2004. C. 415/4: L. Kallet, *Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides: The Sicilian Expedition and Its Aftermath* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 209–25. Hamaxitus fragment (IG I³ 1454 ter): H.B. Mattingly, 'New light on the Athenian Standards Decree', *Klio* 75 (1993), 99–102.

⁴ IG I³ 34; cf. also the assessment decree IG I³ 71. N.B. messengers to be sent to the four districts; threats against offenders, whether Athenian or allied (Athenian offenders: 1453. §3, cf. addition to bouleutic oath §10; 34.31–41; 71.14–16, 28–33, 36–8); offerings at the Panathenaea (where Clinias' decree seems to reflect a requirement imposed in the assessment decree: cf. p. 506 with n. 21, below). Meiggs and Lewis, commenting on this as their no. 46, rejected the 420s on account of the lettering, but wondered about the 430s on account of the content.

⁵ IG I³ 21, where oligarchic προσέταιροι can no longer be restored in l. 7. Euthydemus 450/49, Diod. Sic. 12.3.1; 431/0, Diod. Sic. 12.38.1, Ath. 5.217a; 426/5, Diod. Sic. 12.58.1, Ath. 5.218b. But Euthynus 426/5, IG I³ 369.5, 468.6, cf. Philoch. *FGrH* 328 F 128. b.

⁶ P. Herrmann, 'Zu den Beziehungen zwischen Athen und Milet im 5. Jahrhundert', *Klio* 52 (1970), 163–73 (with a date of 437/6); 434/3 Rhodes, 'Milesian *Stephanephoroi*: applying Cavaignac correctly', *ZPE* 147 (2006), 116.

the honorand may be murdered, and that fine can be restored in a decree with the later style of lettering; the other does not specify the fine but refers to the killing of the honorand in one of the cities, and for that too there are parallels in decrees with later lettering. An allusion to this fine in Aristophanes' *Peace* favours the late 420s for Athens' trying to protect its honorands in that particular way.⁷ Two decrees concerning the Hellespont, for Sigeum and for men of Parium, are possibly the work of the same cutter, and that for Sigeum was enacted under an archon beginning $\Delta\nu$ [—]. The only such archon between Antidotus (451/0) and Antiphon (418/7) is Antiochides (435/4), too late for the old orthodoxy but too early for Mattingly. We are not informed of any Athenian concerns in the Hellespont around 418/7, but the Persians were active around Adramyttium not long before, and with the Egesta decree and the Miletus decree downdated the Sigeum decree with the archon-date 451/0 would be isolated, so 418/7 for Sigeum and a date in that area for the other decree is perhaps the more likely.⁸

There are other texts for which an early date still seems preferable. The decree for Phaselis I dates after 462/1 rather than before, since there is no good evidence for tribal prytanies in the council before, but I think the 450s provide a more credible context for this decree than the 420s. The only positive pointer to a later date is a short dative plural in *-αις*, but that may be, and Mattingly is prepared to believe that it is, an Ionicism.⁹ The major decree for Erythrae seems (from the printed facsimile which is the nearest thing which we have to the lost original) to have been inscribed in very old-fashioned lettering: editors have been divided between the 460s and the 450s, and Mattingly now accepts dates in the late 450s for that and for the fragments from a second decree. (I agree with him that the restoration of an archon's name in the major decree is extremely doubtful.)¹⁰ Even if the temple of Athena Nike was not built until the 420s, in the 430s there was a departure from symmetry in the Propylaea in order to avoid trespassing on the site, and I can accept an early date for the first Athena Nike decree as a sign that the temple was planned at the beginning of the acropolis building programme.¹¹ The settlements with the Euboean cities Eretria, Chalcis and Hestiaea

⁷ 5-talent fine *IG* I³ 19, cf. 161, Ar. *Pax* 170–2; allusion to killing in allied city *IG* I³ 27, cf. 28 and several other decrees. On 27 see most recently Mattingly, 'Two fifth-century Attic epigraphic texts revisited', *ZPE* 162 (2007), 107–10 at 107–8. A full list of texts which refer to the Athenians as 'ruling', often in connection with the possibility of an honorand's being killed, is given by P. Low, 'Looking for the Language of Athenian Imperialism', *JHS* 125 (2005), 93–111 at 95–6, n. 9. For none of the others does *IG* I³ insist on a date earlier than c. 430 (*IG* I³ 55 is for Aristonous of Larisa, mentioned in the context of 431 in Thuc. 2.22.3); in her discussion Low points out that this language is used in honorific decrees, in order to emphasize the extent of the honours which Athens is able to confer.

⁸ *IG* I³ 17 (archon $\Delta\nu$ [—]), 18. M.B. Walbank, 'Honors for Parianos of Issa and his sons', *Hesp.* 42 (1973), 334–9, thought not only *IG* I³ 17 and 18 (which he thus reinterpreted) but also 20 (not among the texts I am considering), 31 and 42 might be by the same cutter. Persians at Adramyttium: Thuc. 5.1, 8.108.4–5. For *IG* I³ 17 Dr Papazarkadas suggests $\Delta\nu$ [*τρύβενες*], the archon of 407/6 (cf. n. 1, above).

⁹ *IG* I³ 10. Mattingly once suggested 425/4 ('The financial decrees of Kallias [*IG* I² 91/2]', *PACA* 7 [1964], 35–55 at 37–9), but now accepts the text as Ionic and datable early (398, n. 35; 514, n. 39). A late date was championed once more by M.H. Jameson, 'Athens and Phaselis, *IG* I³ 10 (EM 6918)', *hópos* 14–16 (2000–3), 23–9.

¹⁰ *IG* I³ 14, 15. a, d. Mattingly once suggested the 430s (104, n. 25), but now accepts c. 453/2 (169 367, n. 23).

¹¹ *IG* I³ 35. Mattingly (n. 7), 107–10 at 109–10, argues for early 424/3 with prosopographical arguments from the restoration of [*Παρ*]αἰκός as proposer. For different recent views of the history of the building see I.S. Mark, *The Sanctuary of Athena Nike in Athens. Architectural*

surely belong in 446/5;¹² and in that case Mattingly's argument from the development of oath formulae will place the first decree for Colophon before then, and the second decree for Colophon can follow a few years afterwards.¹³ Early dates seem preferable also for the decree for Aegina (which must belong before the Peloponnesian War; Mattingly dates it in 432), and the decree for the Delphic Amphictyony (this again must be pre-war).¹⁴

I should also like to bring into the argument two decrees for the Eleusinian cult. That for the appointment of *epistatai* has the older style of lettering, but the imperfect $\epsilon\pi\epsilon\sigma\tau[\acute{\alpha}]\tau\omicron[\nu]$ used when the *epistatai* of the acropolis building projects are cited as a parallel points at face value to a time after the acropolis building programme had been wound up, and I think we should accept that implication and date the decree 432 or a little later.¹⁵ The firstfruits decree, which commands the allied states and invites the other Greek states to send firstfruits to Eleusis, has the later style of lettering but long dative plurals: suggested dates have ranged from the 450s to the 410s; Meiggs and Lewis and Lewis in *IG I³* date it tentatively *c.* 422, but Meiggs and Lewis commented that they would 'not be in the least surprised if new discoveries assigned the decree to, say, 435'. Cavanaugh has found in the fact that this decree mentions *hieropoioi* but not *epistatai* a good argument for placing this decree before the decree creating the *epistatai*, and I think this should be dated *c.* 435 or earlier.¹⁶

Finally, there are some texts for which I see no way of deciding between the earlier and the later date. There are plausible contexts for the alliance with Hermione either *c.* 450 or *c.* 425, and I think we should regard either as possible.¹⁷ The colony at Brea is presumably pre-war; as between the 440s and the 430s it might be easier to judge if we knew where Brea was.¹⁸ And there are small fragments of two decrees for unknown allied cities, one of them apparently containing an entrenchment clause to protect it against annulment, and for a man of Thera who helped Athens when there was a corn shortage.¹⁹

Stages and Chronology (*Hesp. Supp.* 26 [1993]); I.M. Shear, 'The western approach to the Athenian Akropolis', *JHS* 119 (1999), 86–127 at 120–5. S.V. Tracy attributes to the same cutter this and *IG I³* 435 ('Hands in fifth-century B.C. Attic inscriptions', in *Studies Presented to S. Dow* [Greek, Roman and Byzantine Monograph 10 (1984)], 277–82, at 281–2): that has been identified as the accounts for Phidias' statue of Athena Promachos, but R.S. Stroud doubts the identification (*The Athenian Empire on Stone* [David Lewis Lecture, Oxford, 24 May 2006, Athens, 2006], 26–32).

¹² *IG I³* 39, 40, 41 (in 41.38 the reference to $\chi\rho\epsilon\acute{\mu}\alpha\tau\omicron\nu \epsilon\sigma\phi\omicron\rho\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ is not necessarily to a tax modelled on the Athenian *eisphora*); 37, 42. Mattingly used to date *IG I³* 39 (Eretria) as well as 40 (Chalcis) 424/3, but recently he has seemed to accept a prewar date for 39 (514, n. 39).

¹³ *IG I³* 37, 42.

¹⁴ *IG I³* 38; 9.

¹⁵ *IG I³* 32 with ll. 10–13. Cf. M.B. Cavanaugh, *Eleusis and Athens. Documents in Finance, Religion and Politics in the Fifth Century B.C.* (American Classical Studies 35, Atlanta, 1996), 19–27, 73–95; K. Clinton, *Eleusis. The Inscriptions on Stone* (Athens, 2005), no. 30 (*c.* 432/1). Mattingly also dates this 432 or later (483, cf. *ZPE* 162 [2007], 107; 'prewar' in Mattingly 512 was probably just a slip).

¹⁶ *IG I³* 78. Cf. Meiggs and Lewis 73, with discussion of date pp. 222–3; Cavanaugh (n. 15), 73–95; Clinton (n. 15), no. 28 (*c.* 440–435). Supporters of an early date have cited as parallels Pericles' congress proposal (known only from *Plut. Per.* 17, which I do not dismiss as a later invention) and the colony of *c.* 444/3 at Thurii, in which Lampon, the proposer of the amendment to this decree, was involved (e.g. *Diod. Sic.* 12.10.3, *Plut. Praec. Ger. Reip.* 812D).

¹⁷ *IG I³* 31.

¹⁸ *IG I³* 46. Mattingly now dates this in the 430s (381–5), though he earlier suggested 426/5 (88–92); Meiggs and Lewis p. 132 (no. 49) considered the 430s possible.

¹⁹ *IG I³* 16, 29 (with entrenchment clause); 30.

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What kind of picture do we obtain if my datings are right? There is still some strong imperialism about the middle of the century, which can be linked with Pericles. Athens imposed a democratic constitution on Erythrae in the late 450s, and on Miletus not later than the mid 430s. *Episkopoi* helped to set up the new constitution in Erythrae, and a garrison and a garrison commander were to remain there. We can trace a series of increasingly strong oaths of allegiance from Erythrae via Colophon and Chalcis to Samos in 439 (allegiance to the allies as well as to Athens is sworn in Erythrae and then reappears in Samos, but I do not find this departure from strict linear progression worrying). In the decree for Erythrae we find Athens prescribing exile from the whole League, and forbidding Erythrae to bring men back from exile or to send men into exile without permission from Athens, and lawsuits in Chalcis were to be referred to Athens if they could lead to exile, death or *atimia*. Whether or not there was a Peace of Callias (and I do not intend to fight that battle here), regular warfare against Persia came to an end, but the League and the collection of tribute continued. In 447/6 the acropolis building programme began, certainly indirectly and perhaps directly subsidised by the tribute, and the plans included a temple of Athena Nike, perhaps intended to celebrate nearly half a century of Athenian victories.²⁰ Whenever we date the colony at Brea, there were colonies and cleruchies established from the middle of the century onwards, and Thurii c. 444/3 and Amphipolis in 437/6 show that the message which Athens took from the Thirty Years' Peace was that it could not expand in mainland Greece but it could still expand elsewhere. Erythrae, an Ionian city in the narrow sense, was required to send offerings to the Panathenaea in the late 450s; and all the allied cities were required to send firstfruits to Eleusis by the mid 430s.

Some phenomena are not now attested before the 420s: the requirement that the allies should use Athenian weights, measures and silver coinage; language which threatens penalties for non-compliance and envisages that there may be resistance to Athens' imperial decrees not only in allied states but even in Athens, or that men favoured by Athens may be killed in allied states; reference to the allied states as 'cities over which Athens rules'. The requirement for all allied states to send a cow and panoply to the Panathenaea was an innovation of 425/4.²¹ We do not know for how long before the Old Oligarch wrote (for me, 425–424) the allies had all been required to refer major lawsuits to Athens.²² To those in our time who want to regard the empire as wicked, but to follow Thucydides in regarding Pericles as virtuous but Cleon as vicious, this revised picture offers some comfort but not a great deal.

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²⁰ For my view of these matters see briefly Rhodes (n. 2), 47–50.

²¹ *IG* I³ 71. 55–7, alluded to in Clinias' tribute decree, *IG* I³ 34.41–3 (thus Mattingly, 11, cf. 317); cf. n. 4, above.

²² [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.16–18. For my view of the date see Rhodes (n. 2), 116–17.