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EPIGRAPHICAL STUDIES IN GREECE

I thought at first to give to my talk the title «Epigraphical Scholarship in Greece», but I prefer not to be bound so much by the personalities of the discipline to whom it would be difficult for one to assign, to each one alike, his proper praise, but in a more general way to follow, briefly, from the beginning the development of the discipline and the ever increasingly satisfactory solution of its problems.

From the beginning means roughly from the time of the War of Liberation when the first modern collections of inscriptions were made. On Aigina Andreas Moustoxides started a small museum in 1829 and gathered a number of antiquities together, mostly from the islands, both epigraphical and other, some of which he published in the *Journal Aiginaia*¹. Another pioneer was Kyriakos Pittakys, who was himself a soldier of the Revolution, to whom we shall return later.

From the founding of the University and the founding of the Archaeological Society the first duty was to learn what had to be done. Obviously, there were hundreds of inscriptions waiting to be assembled, catalogued, studied, and published. Moustoxides, as we have noted, had made a small collection on Aigina. Other small collections grew up on mainland Greece, and in Athens there was the most important and challenging problem of all. Stones were gathered on the Acropolis, in the so-called Theseion, and in the halls of the Archaeological Society, and finally in the National Archaeological Museum. Zealous in the work of collecting and transcribing texts was Kyriakos Pittakys, a task which he accomplished with energy and affection. Pittakys copied and published in the Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς, to say nothing of his *Ancienne Athènes* (1835), 4158 Greek inscriptions, of which he himself said in 1860: Μέχρι τοῦδε ἐδημοσίευσα... τέσσαρας χιλιάδας

1. Α. Α. Παπαγιαννόπουλος - Παλαιός, Ἀρχαῖαι Ἑλληνικαὶ Ἐπιγραφαί, 1², 1950, 31 - 32.

ἑκατὸν πεντήκοντα ὀκτὼ ἐπιγραφάς... ἔπραξα τοῦτο κινούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἔρωτα τῶν προγονικῶν μου λειψάνων πόθου, ὃς καὶ ἐν καιρῷ πολέμου μοι ἦν ἀδιάσπαστος σύντροφος. And later : ὡς ἄνθρωπος πιθανῶς νὰ ὑπέπεσα εἰς λάθη, ἀλλ' οὐδεὶς ἀναμάρτητος ¹.

The epigraphical world owes a great debt to Pittakys, which it has been all too prone to forget. In the midst of an overwhelming abundance of material he did much to save texts from loss by destruction and attrition. It has been fashionable in some circles to say that he did not always copy correctly, and that he made restorations without noting them as such. We should rather remember the good that he accomplished. It has been found recently, in the records of sale of the confiscated goods of Alkibiades, that some copies made by Pittakys years ago are superior to all others ². And let the epigrapher, in any event, who has never been mistaken in his readings cast the first stone.

The conventions of epigraphical editing had not become stereotyped in the early days of Pittakys, and he had frequently to operate with improvised type. The Attic numerals were an especial difficulty, which I have sensed more than once in my study of the Athenian Tribute Lists. Yet it is usually possible to interpret his meaning, and his restorations of names rarely lead one astray. Now we should, of course, always indicate any supplement of letters not actually preserved on the stone.

As collections were made, the several classes of document began to appear. Marcus Tod once remarked that epigraphy touched on every phase of human life ³. This is indeed true, but by and large there are several main categories well represented in Athens, among which one may perhaps name the following as the most important : decrees, accounts, sacred laws, building inscriptions, grave monuments, lists of councillors, lists of epheboi, the mining leases, naval catalogues, dedications. These have been studied individually and as groups by various scholars. The funeral monuments were first collected primarily by Stephanos Koumanoudes, whose work, *Ἀττικῆς Ἐπιγραφαὶ Ἐπιτύμβιοι* (1871) still remains a standard of reference. Of mining leases the new excavations of the last 38 years have given abundant evidence ⁴. These documents should be studied not only in the museum but in a careful exploration of the mining district in the hills

1. Op. cit., 32-33.

2. See W. K. Pritchett, *Hesperia* XXIII, 1954, 289-290.

3. *Sidelights on Greek History*, 1932, 11.

4. Margaret Crosby, *Hesperia* XIX, 1950, 189-312; XXVI, 1957, 1-23; R. J. Hopper, *B.S.A.* LXIII, 1968, 293-326.

behind Laureion. It is a part of Attica that is too seldom visited by us moderns who, if we approach Laureion at all, prefer the lovely hill at Sounion with its columns and the drive back to Athens along the coastal road at sunset, recalling perhaps the lines of Lord Byron, who also loved Sounion, as he loved all Greece :

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun.

Another great contribution of the Athenian Agora in the last 38 years has been the wealth of material about the Attic demes and their representation in the Council. Whole lists of councillors have been found, of 304/3, of 303/2, and of 281/0, in addition to many lists from individual phylai, giving us far more precise knowledge than we have ever had before, and making possible a new study of the population of Athens and its political organization¹. A new volume is now being written which will record all the names and their affiliation with demes and phylai. K i r c h n e r's, *Prosopographia Attica* was published in 1901 and 1903 and contained some 18000 names, more or less, down to the Age of Augustus. There is now maintained in Princeton a catalogue of Athenian names numbering about 150.000 and including the documents after Christ as well as earlier. New names are being added constantly².

Research on old problems and on old stones continues without interruption. I mention as of particular interest to my own work the discovery in 1928 of the use of a solar calendar by the Athenian Council in the Fifth Century³. This has helped enormously in the solution of many difficult problems. The new texts from the Agora have given also the names of many new Athenian archons of later years, and have thus provided a chronological background for Athenian history in the Hellenistic Age when the literary evidence is lacking, or largely so⁴.

1. John S. Traill, *Hesperia* XXXV, 1966, 205 - 240; XXXVII, 1968, 1 - 24; XXXVIII, 1969, 459 - 494. For the separate catalogues, see S. Dow, *Hesperia* Suppl. I, 1937, passim, and Meritt and Traill, *The Athenian Agora*, XV: The Athenian Councillors (in preparation).

2. This catalogue is available for inspection to all scholars.

3. B. D. Meritt, *The Athenian Calendar in the Fifth Century*, 1928; Meritt, *Athenian Financial Documents of the Fifth Century*, 1932, 104, 176 - 179; *The Athenian year*, 1961, 218; *Trans. Amer. Phil. Assn.*, XCV, 1964, 200 - 212; B. D. Meritt and Malcolm McGregor, *Phoenix*, XXI, 1967, 87 - 88; Mabel Lang and B. D. Meritt, *Clas. Quart.*, XVIII, 1968, 84 - 94; B. D. Meritt, 'Apγ. 'Eφ., 1968, 92 with notes 1 and 2.

4. W. K. Pritchett and B. D. Meritt, *Chronology of Hellenistic Athens*,

Improvement in our knowledge of the Hellenistic Age has been one of the great achievements of the last generation. The new archons, and the new secretaries *κατὰ πρυτανείαν* by whose names public decrees were dated, have made possible a thorough revision of our chronological data and of our conception of the calendar used by the Athenians for their festivals and in their religious life — not only the new calendar of the fifth century but the continuing lunar calendars which were used throughout classical antiquity. There are even sequences of years where the reforms of the great Athenian astronomer Meton can be traced in actual practice¹. So there is constant reworking of the old evidence and, with improved techniques of study, constant improvement in the results obtained.

After the venerable August Böeckh there have been two editions of the Attic inscriptions, and a third is now in preparation for the texts earlier than 403 B.C. The use by scholars of the paper squeeze has been a great boon. Inscriptions can be studied, and readings verified, away from the stones. Photographs, too, are now generally available, a useful tool which the pioneers did not possess. These can be studied in connection with the squeezes, and both in the last analysis should be studied with the stone itself. The photograph has a certain advantage over the squeeze in that it shows more than the mere surface of the inscription. The squeeze is of necessity in two dimensions only; the photograph can be made to give at least an inkling of the third dimension. One can use it to study mouldings, the sides of the inscribed block, and many other details that lead to a better understanding of the whole monument, not merely of its inscribed surface. There is thus born a kind of epigraphical study which has come to be known as «architectural epigraphy», in which all the evidence of the whole stone is taken into account².

An outstanding example of the application of architectural epigraphy has been the reconstruction in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens of the first two of the great stelai of the Athenian Tribute Quota Lists. The first stele, containing the records of quota (one mina from each talent) given to Athena from the allied tribute for the fifteen years from 454/3 to 440/39 had been broken into more than 180 fragments. These fragments join each

1940; B. D. Meritt, *The Athenian Year*, 1961; *Trans. Amer. Phil. Assn.*, XCV, 1964, 200 - 260; *Hesperia*, passim, but especially XXXVII, 1968, 235 - 236, and XXXVIII, 1969, 432 - 441.

1. 'Αρχ. 'Εφ., 1968, 92 - 105. B. D. Meritt, *Metonic Intercalations in Athens*, *Hesperia* XXXVIII, 1969, 107 - 113.

2. W. S. Ferguson, *The Treasurers of Athena*, 1932, viii; cf. H. T. Wade-Gery, *J.H.S.* LIII, 1933, 134.

other in so many ways that it has been possible to reconstruct the original monument, a massive pillar of Pentelic marble more than 3.583 m. high and 1.109 m. wide and 0.385 m. thick¹. The extent of each of the preserved lists is determinable, and the number of cities paying tribute in any one year can be counted. The amount of tribute collected can thus be estimated, in the one year 443/2, for example, as less than 400 talents, and, with the help of one of the Parthenon building accounts, in 444/3 as exactly 376 talents 4550 drachmai. For the first time we are able to compare the actual figures with the text of our ancient author, Thucydides, and to find that the alleged 10.000 talents (less 300) which the traditional version says was the maximum at one time on the Acropolis could not actually ever have been there². There are many instances in which the literary texts help in the restoration of an inscription, but this is one instance in which the epigraphical evidence serves to control the text of an ancient author. The matter is of such vital importance to the history of Periklean Athens that it deserves to be examined more in detail³.

At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War Perikles encouraged the Athenians with hopes of victory, recounting to them, among other assets, their financial strength, in current income and in resources of various kinds, including an accumulation of coined money which lay on the Acropolis ready to their use at the time he made his speech. The dramatic date was 431 B.C. just before the Spartan invasion of Attica. Thucydides reports the speech in indirect discourse, making his main points in order, and adding explanatory footnotes of his own (II, 13, 3):

Θαρσεῖν τε ἐκέλευε προσιόντων μὲν ἑξακοσίων ταλάντων ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ φόρον κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ξυμμάχων τῇ πόλει ἄνεν τῆς ἄλλης προσόδου, ὑπαρχόντων δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ἔτι τότε ἀργυρίον ἐπισήμουν ἑξακισχιλίων ταλάντων.

And now the footnote:

τὰ γὰρ πλεῖστα τριακοσίων ἀποδόντα μύρια ἐγένετο, ἀφ' ὧν ἔς τε τὰ προπύλαια τῆς ἀκροπόλεως καὶ τὰλλα οἰκοδομήματα καὶ ἔς Ποτεΐδαιαν ἀπανηλώθη.

This is the *textus receptus*, the book text. But the passage exists in another version, different from that of the book texts, which we know from

1. B. D. Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery, Malcolm F. McGregor, The Athenian Tribute Lists, I, 1939, 3-66.

2. B. D. Meritt, Indirect Tradition in Thucydides, *Hesperia* XXIII, 1954, 185-231.

3. H. T. Wade-Gery and B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia* XXVI, 1957, 163-197.

the scholia on the *Plutus* of Aristophanes which go back to Alexandrian scholarship. Beginning with the participle *ὑπαρχόντων* we have a changed wording :

ὑπαρχόντων δὲ ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει αἰεὶ ποτε (not *ἔτι τότε*) *ἀργυρίου ἐπισήμου ἑξακισχιλίων ταλάντων.*

And now the footnote :

τὰ γὰρ πλεῖστα τριακοσίων ἀποδέοντα περιεγένετο (not *μύρια ἐγένετο*) *ἀφ' ὧν ἔς τε τὰ προπύλαια τῆς ἀκροπόλεως καὶ τὰλλα οἰκοδομήματα καὶ ἐς Ποτεΐδαιαν ἐπανηλόθη.*

The meanings of these two versions are radically different. The book text has a grand total of 9700 talents once on the Acropolis ; the scholiast has a normal sum *αἰεὶ ποτε* of 5700 talents regularly on the Acropolis. The Tribute Lists and the building inscriptions (epigraphical evidence) with some help from a papyrus fragment in Strasbourg (the Anonymus Argentinensis) show that the total of 10.000 talents at any one time is not possible. When the later orators and the historian Ephoros say that Perikles put 10.000 talents on the Acropolis they must refer to the sum total of all deposits, like a bank statement, regardless of withdrawals. But from 449 on expenditures were being made in about the same measure as deposits, so that during the fifteen years before the outbreak of the war a balance of roughly 6000 talents was, as the scholiast's version says, currently available. After all, the Parthenon and the Gold and Ivory Statue (which alone cost between 700 and 1000 talents) were begun in 448/7 and the Propylaea in 437.

The epigraphical evidence, with annual income from the allies controlled down through the years by what we learn from the Tribute Lists shows that the scholion was true to the fact while the book text was not. We do not have to emend the text of Thucydides. This would be unsound in method, and the problem of how to interpret him would remain an insoluble mystery (as indeed it has been in the past) were it not for the scholiast's version and the now firm evidence of the Tribute Lists. We simply choose, of the two, the better version. I have discussed this problem at length elsewhere, but it is good to have it explained again ¹.

There are other instances in which the epigraphical evidence controls a literary text, of which I cite one clear example ².

In the literary tradition a reference in Suidas names a certain Akou-

1. B. D. Meritt, Greek Historical Studies (Lectures delivered at the University of Cincinnati in Memory of Louise Taft Semple), 1962, 16 - 20; also op. cit., p. 43, n. 2, supra.

2. B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia* XXXII, 1963, 24 - 25.

silaios : 'Ακουσίλαος· 'Αθηναῖος ὢν, 'Αγαθοκλείας. οὗτος ἠρώσθη λόγων ἐν 'Αθήναις καὶ ἐλθὼν εἰς 'Ρώμην ἐπὶ Γάλβα διέτριβεν ἐν λόγοις ῥητορικοῖς, καὶ χρηματισάμενος ἐν τῷ τελευτᾷ κατέλιπεν 'Αθηναίους δώδεκα (A : δέξα rell.) μυριάδας ἐκ τόκων.

The manuscript tradition exists in two versions. One has the bequest at 12 myriads of denarii, the other at 10 myriads, between which editors have usually chosen the 12 in preference to the ten. But we now have a recent epigraphical discovery in the Athenian Agora which preserves this provision from the will of Akousilaos on stone : [τῇ μὲν πόλει] 'Ακουσίλαον 'Αζηνιέ(ω)ς κατα[λιπόντος κατὰ διαθήκην δηναρίων μυ]ριάδας δέκα εἰς χωρίον ἀγορᾶς[- - -]. The correct reading in the text of Suidas, therefore, is 10, not 12, μυριάδας (δηναρίων). The inscription adds the demotic to the name and adds the purpose for which the bequest was made. Akousilaos had learned rhetoric in Athens as a student, and had become wealthy as a teacher of rhetoric in Rome under Galba (A.D. 68 - 69). He was an Athenian citizen and left a generous bequest in his will to his native Athens. Incidentally, the manuscripts which carried the correct reading of the numeral were not the preferred or «better» copy (Paris. MS. A). They furnish a salutary example that better readings are sometimes found in the so-called *recentiores*.

There are also cases in which the literary and the epigraphical evidence are complementary and each helps toward a better understanding of the other. In September of 1969 there was found in the new excavations of the Athenian Agora along ὁδὸς Ἀδριανοῦ north of the Peiraeus railway a fragment of a decree already partially preserved in two fragments in the Epigraphical Museum (I.G., II², 174). The new fragment bridges the gap between the other two fragments and a continuous text is now possible. The Athenian people had voted praise to one Epikerdes of Kyrene for his benefactions past and present ¹.

At the time of the disastrous defeat of the Athenians at Syracuse in 413 B.C. Epikerdes had given a hundred minas to help ransom the Athenian captives and restore them to their native land. The text reads in part as follows : 'Αλεξίας [ἦρχε,10..... εἶπε· ἐπ]αινέσαι 'Επικέρδηι τῷ Κυρηναίῳ ὡς ὄντι ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ καὶ μάλα αἰτι]ώι γεγεννημένῳ τὸς ἀλόντας πολί]τας τὸς ἐξ Σικελ]ίας τὸ μὴ ἀποθανῆν ἐν] τῷ πολέμῳ· αὐ]τὸς γὰρ μῶς ἐκατόν] ἐβελοντῆς ἐς σω]τηρίαν ἤνεγκεν...]. And a little later on the stone : ἀτελείας δε]δομένης ὑπὸ τῷ δ[ίμῳ νῦν ἐπέδωκε τά]λαντον ἀρ- γυρίῳ 'Α[θηναίους καὶ ἄλλα] εὖ πεποιήκεν

1. B. D. Meritt, *Hesperia*, XXXIX, 1970.

These benefactions have found reference in a speech of Demosthenes (XX) *πρὸς Λεπτίνην* many years later, in which Demosthenes argues against a law which would deny the granting of ἀτέλεια to benefactors. He cites Epikerdes as a notable example, quoting the decree once passed in his honor and saying in part (XX, 42): οὗτος γὰρ ἀνὴρ, ὡς τὸ ψήφισμα τοῦτο δηλοῖ τὸ τότε αὐτῷ γραφέν. τοῖς ἀλοῦσι τότε ἐν Σικελίᾳ τῶν πολιτῶν, ἐν τοιαύτῃ συμφορᾷ καθεστηκόσιν, ἔδωκε μνᾶς ἑκατὸν καὶ τοῦ μὴ τῷ λιμῷ πάντας αὐτοὺς ἀποθανεῖν αἰτιώτατος ἐγένετο. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, δοθείσης ἀτελείας αὐτῷ παρ' ὧμων, ὁρῶν ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ πρὸ τῶν τριάκοντα μικρὸν σπανίζοντα τὸν δῆμον χρημάτων, τάλαντον ἔδωκεν αὐτὸς ἐπαγγελάμενος.

The quotation which Demosthenes gives from the inscription is remarkably close: [μάλα αἰτ]ίῳι from the stone corresponds to αἰτιωπάτω of Demosthenes; [τὸς ἀλόντας πολί]τας τὸς ἐξ Σικελ[ί]ας from the stone corresponds to τοῖς ἀλοῦσι τότε ἐν Σικελίᾳ τῶν πολιτῶν of Demosthenes; and [τὸ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν ἐν] τῷ πολέμῳ from the stone corresponds to τοῦ μὴ . . . ἀποθανεῖν of Demosthenes. The correspondence continues, for both the stone and the text of Demosthenes mention the grant of ἀτέλεια and the gift of a talent to the Athenian people. Demosthenes goes on to say that the gift of a talent was made because Epikerdes saw that Athens was hard pressed for money shortly before the time of the Thirty. With the new fragment dated securely by the name of the Archon Alexias, we know that the talent was indeed given shortly before the time of the Thirty, and the book texts have been in error in athetizing the phrase which states this fact: πρὸ τῶν τριάκοντα μικρόν. The text was correctly given by Henri Weil in the first edition of his *Plaidoyers politiques de Demosthène* in 1877, but was wrongfully «corrected» in the second edition of 1883 by omitting these words as spurious. They were thought to be inappropriate to 413 B.C., but they are admirably suited to 405/4 B.C. when we know in fact that Athens had come to the end of her resources. The epigraphical discovery confirms the validity of Weil's text of 1877, and the text of Demosthenes makes possible the restoration of the inscription.

One cannot look back, as I do, on fifty years of scholarly work in Greece without a profound sense of gratitude to the Country, to its people, and to his colleagues in the University and in the Archaeological Service, for the priceless opportunity of having spent so happy and profitable a time in one's life work. I have frequently said that this is my second πατρις and I repeat this again now. One who loves Greece as I do cannot come without emotion to what every classicist must regard as his spiritual home, and one cannot leave without a tremendous feeling of homesickness for the mountains, the sea, the sun, the antiquities, and even — this may seem strange

to some — the familiar stones of the Epigraphical Museum, the Acropolis, and the Ancient Agora. For epigraphical study Athens is indeed unique in all the world. Here is where the evidence can be found. Here are the original documents for the history of a great people. Here is the court of last resort, the Ἀρείος Πάγος, the inspection of the stones themselves, when any epigraphical problem is to be studied or any question settled. It is an ideal spot, made more so with every passing year by the splendid care, hospitality, and courtesy of those in charge of these invaluable collections. To all colleagues and friends I quote from the correspondence between Gregory of Nazianzos and Basil the Great. They had both been students at the University of Athens in the fourth century after Christ :

οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως οὐδενὶ λυπηρόν ὥς τοῖς ἐκεῖσε συννόμοις Ἀθηναίων καὶ ἀλλήλων τέμνεσθαι.

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