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STEPHEN V. TRACY

## The Date of the Grain Decree from Samos: The Prosopographical Indicators

One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the epigraphical evidence from Samos is that few of the inscriptions can be dated precisely. Recently I had the opportunity to make an initial study of hands in Samian inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> One of the primary reasons for undertaking that study was the expectation that it might help with dating. In this we were not disappointed. One of the most important texts to be given a radically new date is the list of citizens published by B. THEOPHANEIDES in *Deltion* 9 (1924–25) pages 95 to 102. THEOPHANEIDES suggested, based on the style of lettering, a date at the end of the third or beginning of the second century B. C. This date has generally been accepted. But, almost all of the names on this stone were inscribed by a cutter whose dates are pretty well established as ca. 305 to ca. 270.<sup>2</sup> It should therefore be dated to ca. 285 B. C.<sup>3</sup>

In that initial presentation, I also offered the opinion, based solely on the shapes of the letters, that the well-known grain decree<sup>4</sup> should probably be dated 250 B. C. or earlier rather than 200 B. C., the date generally assigned to it. Its lettering exemplifies in developed form what I have termed the «elegant» style; this style flourished among the cutters on the island, especially in the first half of the third century, and it continued down to 200 and a little after.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows I shall marshal arguments, largely of a prosopographical nature, to support this earlier date. Prosopography offers special problems. Even in a place so rich, prosopographically speaking, as Athens such argumentation can be treacherous and new finds often prove one wrong. For one thing, the assump-

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<sup>1</sup> For the results, see the preceding article, «Hands in Samian Inscriptions of the Hellenistic Period.» I am deeply indebted in the present article, as in the former one, to CHRISTIAN HABICHT, who has encouraged this study from the start, read successive drafts, and offered numerous suggestions and corrections.

<sup>2</sup> He is the cutter of Samos 161 (= AM 44, 1919, pp. 9–10 no. 5 L), cutter II in the article mentioned in footnote 1.

<sup>3</sup> For further discussion of this text, its date, and some new readings, see p. 71 in the preceding article.

<sup>4</sup> Published by TH. WIEGAND and U. VON WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF, SB Berlin 1904, pp. 917–931.

<sup>5</sup> See my discussion of this style in the opening pages of the article referred to in note 1.

tion that two persons with the same name are identical or related is always a risky one and usually impossible to control. Arguments drawn from prosopography are far more subject to these dangers in Samos, for we have comparatively few names and no demotics (or their equivalent). Furthermore, the vast majority of known Samians are attested only once. Having sounded these warning notes, let us now list the persons known from the grain decree who seem to be attested elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> I take them up in the order in which they appear on the inscription.

1) Ἀρίσταρχος Ζωβίου, who is listed in line 30 on side B of the grain decree as contributing 200 drachmas, is very likely to be identical with the νεωποίης Ἀρίσταρχος Ζωβίου, who was honored about 270 by his son Ζώβιος with a statue.<sup>7</sup>

2) Διόδωρος Διοσκουρίδου (B line 42) may be, as CH. HABICHT thought, identical with the doctor of the same name who was praised shortly after 200 B. C. for his efforts on behalf of the people;<sup>8</sup> or he could, if one adopts the earlier date, be this doctor's grandfather, that is, identical with the Διόδωρος Διοσκουρίδου listed on a dedication of νεωποίαι.<sup>9</sup> This inscription is dated by letter style and the artist's signature to about 260 B. C.

3) Βοίσκος Πυθόλεω (B line 55) is surely, given the unusual combination of names, related to the man of the same name on an undated list of victors<sup>10</sup> and just as surely the father (or son) of the Πυθόλεω(ς) Βοίσκου listed as contributing for the repair of the temple of Hera.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, this latter text has (as yet) no sure date; it has been dated, based on the shapes of the letters, from shortly after 321 to around 200 B. C.<sup>12</sup>

4) Line C 18 of the grain decree may preserve part of the name of a man whose relative we can date quite precisely. WIEGAND and WILAMOWITZ report the patronymic as [ \_ \_ ]υλαγόρου and restore Pylagoras. But this name is not

<sup>6</sup> I have been aided greatly in this research by having access, thanks to the generosity of CH. HABICHT, to a file of Samians compiled by him; I have also derived much benefit from the opportunity to search (at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton) a computer data base of Samian inscriptions created under the direction of D. F. MCCABE with funding from the Packard Foundation.

<sup>7</sup> E. BUSCHOR, *AM* 68 (1953) pp. 13–14. The date is based on the style of the lettering and the profile of the molding, both of which BUSCHOR compared to the base of the Berenike statue (M. SCHEDE, *AM* 44, 1919, p. 20 no. 8). On the date of the Berenike base, see pp. 66 to 67 in the preceding article. This statue base for Aristarchos may in fact be the work of the same cutter who inscribed the Berenike base. It is not possible to be certain from the published photograph. (I have not had access to a squeeze.)

<sup>8</sup> *AM* 72 (1957) p. 233 no. 64 and HABICHT's discussion on p. 235.

<sup>9</sup> E. BUSCHOR, *AM* 68 (1953) pp. 12–13 line 3.

<sup>10</sup> E. PREUNER, *AM* 49 (1924) p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> SEG 1 (1923) no. 367 B line 5. See also E. PREUNER, *AM* 46 (1921) pp. 14–19.

<sup>12</sup> See PREUNER, *AM* 46 (1921) pp. 18–19. This inscription, it should be noted, was destroyed in a fire over a hundred years ago; all attempts to date it belong to the nineteenth century.

otherwise attested in the Samian evidence. Βουλαγόρας almost certainly is to be restored (so also CH. HABICHT in his file notes); a Βουλαγόρας Ἀλέξεω, doubtless a relative, is praised in an inscription which has been dated with some probability to the year 243/2.<sup>13</sup>

5) Line C 21 may offer another identifiable person. It lists a man (name lost) who was son of [ — — ]συδήιος<sup>14</sup> as contributing 500 drachmas. The only possible name attested on Samos is Θρασυδήιος. At least one man of this name is known in the list of citizens of ca. 285.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, a Θαλίτης Θρασυδηίου, possibly the same man as on the grain decree, is attested as νεωποιῆς in the dedication of ca. 260.<sup>16</sup>

These are the only persons on the grain decree who can with any likelihood be connected or identified with persons known elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Of the five, the first, Ἀρίσταρχος Ζωβίου, can be dated ca. 270. The other four either cannot be dated with any precision or are not unambiguously identified.

There is, however, an important piece of evidence which appears to establish the date for another one of these men and, in the process, to be decisive in indicating an early date for the grain decree. It involves the important decree for the repair of the temple of Hera.<sup>18</sup> On side D line 7 of that inscription a certain [Σ]θεννίδης Ζωίλου is attested as contributing two hundred drachmas. He is very probably identical with the man of the same name known from the list of citizens published by B. THEOPHANEIDES.<sup>19</sup> If this is correct, the name list and the temple repair inscription should be roughly contemporary and date to around 285 B. C. Moreover, since Sthennides is entered in the list of citizens just after his father, he may have been fairly young when it was inscribed. The list of names may then precede the repair decree by a few years. Be that as it may, the establishment of this date for the temple repair inscription enables the conclusion that the Πυθόλεω(ς) Βοίσκου attested on it (B line 5) is the father of the Βοίσκος Πυθόλεω known from the grain decree (B line 55). This dates the son and the inscription on which he appears to about 260.

<sup>13</sup> M. SCHEDE, AM 44 (1919) pp. 25–29 no. 13.

<sup>14</sup> The dotted sigma is based on note 2 on page 923 of WIEGAND – WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORF's article (above note 4).

<sup>15</sup> B. THEOPHANEIDES, *Deltion* 9 (1924–25) 100 band 8 section 2 line 2. THEOPHANEIDES also prints the name in line 1. This is a false reading, for on the squeeze (of rather poor quality) available to me I could make out with certainty in line 1 only kappa. G. DUNST, I am informed, records this line in his manuscript as reading Φιλ[ισ]κο[ς] — — — —].

<sup>16</sup> E. BUSCHOR, AM 68 (1953) pp. 12–13 line 6.

<sup>17</sup> Of the other possibilities, only Ἡγησίας Ἀρτεμιδ[ώρου] (B line 41) seems worthy of mention. He has been restored by CH. HABICHT (AM 72, 1957, pp. 231–232: Ἡγη[σίας Ἀρτεμιδ[ώρου]) as the speaker of a decree of the second century. The restoration is possible, but far from certain.

<sup>18</sup> Note 11 above.

<sup>19</sup> *Deltion* 9 (1924–25) 99 band 7 section 1 line 3.

With this added evidence, we appear to be justified in contending that the *floruit* of each of the five men from the grain decree who seems to be attested, either directly or indirectly, elsewhere suits a date around 260 B. C. To specify, Diodoros son of Dioskourides is known as a νεωποίης of ca. 260. The son of Boulagoras whose name is lost (C line 18) will be an older relative, perhaps even the father, of Boulagoras son of Alexis known about 243/2. Finally, we have in the Thrasysdeios known on the citizen list of ca. 285 a very likely candidate for the father of the man listed in line C 21, while the Thalites son of Thrasysdeios attested as a νεωποίης in ca. 260 will either be identical with him or a close relative. The prosopographical evidence available to us at this time, therefore, appears to require a date of about 260 for the grain decree. The long-awaited publication of the corpus of Samian inscriptions will surely increase our knowledge and give us more evidence with which to approach these difficult questions.

### *Postscript*

G. SHIPLEY in his recent study, *A History of Samos 800–188 B. C.* (Oxford 1987), has included a section called endnotes in which he discusses the evidence for Samians of wealth (pages 306 to 313). Although his use of prosopography often exceeds what I regard as sound practice, he has many observations of value and his specific conclusions regarding the persons mentioned in the foregoing agree *mutatis mutandis* with my own. Most importantly, his chronology differs. He accepts – there was no reason to do otherwise – the late date for the grain decree. Moreover, concerning Thrasysdeios, he makes no mention of Thalites son of Thrasysdeios on the dedication of ca. 260 nor does he list a son of Thrasysdeios as occurring on the grain decree. Rather, he records a Philiskos son of Thrasysdeios on the list of citizens. This person is unknown in the evidence available to me and is apparently a new reading of Theophaneides' line 1 in section 2 of the eighth band on page 100. My own investigation, I should perhaps add, was carried out based on the primary evidence of the squeezes in Munich with no prior knowledge of SHIPLEY's endnotes.

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