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Alan S. Henry

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Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Zentrale, Podbielskiallee 69–71, 14195 Berlin, Tel: +49 30 187711-0

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ALAN S. HENRY

Archon-Dating in Fifth Century Attic Decrees: The 421 Rule

In a customarily refreshing paper presented as a tribute to BENJAMIN DEAN MERITT,¹ HAROLD MATTINGLY has attempted inter alia to reappraise the date of the Eleusinian First-fruits Decree.² He urges against MERITT's date of 415 B.C.³ the absence of archon-dating in the prescript: this to MATTINGLY is a «decisive argument» against any date after 421 B. C. MATTINGLY maintains that the significance of the archon-dating criterion has never been properly recognised, chiefly because no-one has collated the evidence in assessable form. He attempts to remedy this situation and to argue the proposition that all Attic decrees of 421 B. C. or later show or, at least, can be restored to show, archon-dating.

As a preliminary MATTINGLY briefly deals with certain texts without archon-dates which have been placed later than 421 B. C. by various scholars. The Kallias Decrees, the Halieis Treaty and the second Athena Nike Decree⁴ are all rapidly disposed of, and few would question MATTINGLY's judgement in any of these.

This paper is a revised and expanded version of a communication originally presented at the VIIth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy in Constantza, Rumania, in September, 1977. It was my privilege on that occasion to have Professor H. B. MATTINGLY in my audience, and lest it be thought that my criticisms of this thesis display a churlish example of *odium epigraphicum*, I wish to record here my debt to the inspiration of his various studies of formal dating criteria.

Abbreviations, in addition to those in general use:

BM = D. W. BRADEEN and M. F. MCGREGOR, *Studies in Fifth-Century Attic Epigraphy*, University of Oklahoma Press 1973

ML = R. MEIGGS and D. M. LEWIS, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B. C.*, Oxford 1969

PAD = A. S. HENRY, *The Prescripts of Athenian Decrees*, *Mnemosyne Supplement* 49, Leiden 1977

Φόρος = ΦΟΡΟΣ, *Tribute to Benjamin Dean Meritt*, edd. B. W. BRADEEN and M. F. MCGREGOR, Locust Valley, New York 1974

In referring to inscriptions in the <Corpus> I omit the letters IG: thus I² 1 = *Inscriptiones Graecae* vol. I² n. 1.

¹ Φόρος, 90–103.

² I² 76 = ML n. 73.

³ See B. D. MERITT, *PAPhS* 115, 1971, 109–110.

⁴ I² 91, 92 (ML n. 58); I² 87 (SEG X 80); I² 25 (ML n. 71).

He then turns his attention to three other decrees without archon-dating, which he would likewise put back before 421 B. C. The first of these, the proxeny grant to Lykon of Achaia (I² 93), is generally placed between 425 and 412 B. C. MATTINGLY argues that the secretary Theaios («the name is rare at Athens») should be identified with the mover of I² 81, the decree about bridging the Rheitos at Eleusis, of the year 422/1. The remaining two, the proxeny decrees for Proxenides of Knidos (I² 144 + 155; ATL 2 D23) and for Kallippos of Gyrton (II² 27), passed in the same prytany, and probably on the same day, were placed by MERITT in 416/15.⁵ But MERITT had reservations about the Proxenides decree: no great confidence could be placed in the restoration of Δεμοσ- to yield as orator the demagogue Demonstratos, conspicuous in Plutarch⁶ in the debate on the Sicilian expedition, and furthermore MERITT had noted that the style of lettering looked to be rather earlier than his proposed date.⁷ MATTINGLY therefore has no hesitation in embracing a context in the 420s, and argues that the decree for Kallippos the Thessalian can equally well find a comfortable historical home in the same period.⁸

Possibly, therefore, but not quite indubitably, these three texts *may* belong before 421 B. C. There still remains, however, one document without archon-dating which *must* fall between 421/0 and 405/4 B. C., the decree for the Klazomenians at Daphnous, proposed by Alkibiades after his return to Athens from Samos.⁹ No archon appears (or can be restored) in the prescript; nor can one posit a missing crowning member. But the stone is broken at the *bottom*, which prompts MATTINGLY to entertain the possibility of archon-dating «in the text itself or in a kind of postscript'. The former suggestion seems inherently unlikely, and the latter has the slim support of the first decree for Sthorys the Thasian,¹⁰ in which MICHAEL OSBORNE has demonstrated that the archon-date in line 14 belongs to the *preceding* decree.¹¹ One cannot prove or disprove this contention: but it is methodologically unsound to draw any conclusion, one way or the other, from such evidence.

Let us now turn from MATTINGLY's case for texts *without* archon-dating to his detailed tabulation, presented in an Appendix, of the evidence for the years 421/0 to 405/4 B. C. Here MATTINGLY finds «twenty-one decrees with undeniable archon-dating», involving twelve different archons, and another six decrees of the same period which «should be restored with archons in their preamble», and which

⁵ See *Hesperia* 8, 1939, 65–69 and 10, 1941, 328–330.

⁶ *Nikias* 12, 4 and *Alkibiades* 18, 2 (both references are wrongly given by MATTINGLY, art. cit., 91 note 9).

⁷ Cf. WOODHEAD's comment in SEG XXV 37: «propter aspectum antiquiorem litteraturae non sine iure aetatem ante 416^a quaerere possumus».

⁸ He points to the evidence of Thucydides (4, 78–79, 1; 108, 1; 132, 2 and 5, 13, 1) for the intrigues of Perdikkas and Brasidas in Thessaly, and cites Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1245 ff. for jokes about Athenian embassies to Thessaly.

⁹ I² 117 = ML n. 88.

¹⁰ II² 17 (not II² 23+), of the year 394/3 (not 395/4).

¹¹ *BSA* 65, 1970, 150–174.

yield «one more archon to the tale».¹² It is the accumulated evidence of this Appendix whose solidarity I wish to challenge.

In Table A (Archons in decree headings, 421/0–405/4 B. C.) MATTINGLY lists the evidence in detail, distinguishing «heading title» from «preamble»,¹³ and indicating the sequence of prescript items: secretary (S), epistates (E), archon (A), and orator, or equivalent, (O). Of the texts cited one can accept without demur I² 82, 84, 94, 96, 103, 108, 109, 110, 115, 118, 124, 125 and 126, for in these the archon is surely attested. I would also be prepared to admit the validity of the restoration of archons in SEG X 111, I² 110a, 119 and II² 174.¹⁴ In I² 123 the prescript is almost entirely reconstructed:

[Λ]υσικλῆς ἴ--- stoichedon
 ἔγραμμ[άτευε],
 [ῚΑ]γτιγένε[ς ἔρχε].
 [ἔδοχ]σεν τῆ β[ολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμοι, -- ἐπρυτάνευε, Λυσικλῆς
 ἔγραμμάτευε, --]

5 . . 5 . . 5 ἐπ[εστάτε, -- εἶπε· --

But here, on the analogy of I² 124 (406/5), I think there can be no doubt about the restoration of line 3, that is to say the archon is listed in the superscript. There can, however, be no certainty whatsoever that the archon (or, for that matter, the secretary) reappeared in the prescript proper: for appearance in a superscript is no guarantee of reappearance in a prescript.¹⁵ MATTINGLY rightly places a question-mark after his S.E.A.O.

So far we have covered eighteen of MATTINGLY's twenty-one examples, and, as yet, we have found no occasion to fault his thesis. The three remaining examples, however, are more open to question. I consider them in detail:

i) SEG XVII 5:¹⁶

[Π]ασιφῶν Φρεάρ[ριος ἔγραμμάτευεν].
 stoichedon 62–65
 ἔδοχσεν τῆ βολῆι καὶ [τῶι δέμοι, . . . 6-? . . . ἐπρυτάνευε, Πασιφῶν
 ἔγρα]μμάτευε, . . .
 κλῆς ἐπεστάτε, Κλε[----- εἶπε· ----]σασθαι κτλ.

MATTINGLY's S.E.A.O. without qualification is perhaps too categorical: the secretary and epistates are manifestly represented, but Κλε[may or may not be the archon Kleokritos of 413/12. BINGEN¹⁷ restores: Κλε[όκριτος ἔρχε, ---- εἶπε, and

¹² Art. cit., 90 (with note 3).

¹³ I prefer the terminology «superscript» and «prescript»: see PAD xi.

¹⁴ There is a new text of II² 174 in *Hesperia* 39, 1970, 111–114. (Note that the order of prescript items is S. E. A. O., not S. A. E. O.).

¹⁵ See PAD 8 ff.

¹⁶ Cf. SEG X 64.

¹⁷ *RBPh* 37, 1959, 31–44.

this of course ties in well with a document concerned with the cult of the goddess Bendis. We may well, therefore, feel inclined to give MATTINGLY the benefit of the doubt. Nonetheless, doubt there is.

ii) I² 104: the subject of this decree is unknown. Indeed, only a handful of letters survive from the whole prescript, and only one letter remains in the superscript. It is on this single letter that the case for «undeniable archon-dating» in this text rests:

	[ἐπὶ Καλλίου ἄρχο]ν[τος].	
	[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολεῖ καὶ τῶι δέ[μ]οι·	stoichedon 26
	[Ἱποθοντὶς ἐπρυτάνευε, Αἰ]σχύλο	
	[ς ἐγραμμάτευε, . . . ? . . . ἐ]πεστ	
5	[άτε, -- εἶπε· --	

Now, we know from I² 103 that Aeschylus was secretary in the prytany of Hippothontis in the year of Kallias: so the restoration has a certain justification. But there can be no certainty that the *nu* of line 1 is part of the archon-formula. It could, for example, be part of the name of the recipient of some honour specified later in the decree, or of the name of the state with whom an alliance is being concluded (χρῶμυ]αχοι may appear in line 8). At the very least we should proceed with care before whole-heartedly embracing the archon Kallias here.

iii) SEG X 133 (I² 120): here again the subject-entry «unknown» should warn us to approach this highly restored prescript with caution:

	Δωρ[όθεος . . . ς : ς . . ἐγραμμάτευεν].	
	Θ [ε ο ί].	
	E[ὕκτέμον ἔρχεν.]	
	ἔδοχσ[εν τῆι βολεῖ καὶ τῶι δέμοι· . . . ? . . . ἰς ἐπρυτά]	stoichedon 41
5	νευεν, [Δορόθεος ἐγραμμάτευεν, . . . ? . . . ἐπεστάτ]	
	ε, Εὐκτ[έμον ἔρχεν, --- εἶπεν· ---	

The restorations are MERITT's.¹⁸ One could, of course, restore line 5 to read νευε, N[----- ἐγραμμάτευεν, provided, naturally, that Δωρ[in the superscript is *not* the secretary, but perhaps the honorand. MERITT, however, makes out a convincing case for the secretary Dorotheos, attested elsewhere (I² 313, line 175) as having held this office in the year of Euktemon. If, however, this conjunction is rejected, Εὐκτ[in line 6 could be taken as the orator.¹⁹

Of these three texts discussed immediately above we could perhaps call one of

¹⁸ AJPh 69, 1948, 70-71.

¹⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this prescript, with particular reference to the restorations with movable *nu*, see my paper: The Dating of Fifth-Century Attic Inscriptions, forthcoming in Calif. Stud. Class. Ant. 11, 1978.

them <probable> (SEG X 133) and one <possible> (SEG XVII 5), but the other (I² 104) is at least open to some doubt. Nevertheless, one may concede that all documents of MATTINGLY's Table A may well be accepted as showing archon-dating in their headings. At the same time we should be aware that the evidence is not quite as watertight as the neat tabulation may suggest.

I turn now to Table B (<some more decrees with archon-dating in this period>). Here MATTINGLY lists another six decrees which, he urges, *should* be restored with archons in their prescripts. Before accepting this further contention we would do well to look very carefully at the evidence.²⁰

For SEG X 138 (I² 105), the honorary decree for Archelaos of Macedonia, and SEG XII 29 (I² 149), a proxeny decree, MATTINGLY claims that «archon-dating has never been doubted . . . the only question was which archon should be restored.» I would agree with this in the case of SEG X 138, even though the archon-item is totally within a restoration:

[ἔδοχσεν τῷ βολεῖ καὶ τῷ δέμῳ· Ἄκα[μα]	stoichedon 31
[ντὶς ἐπρουτάνευε, Φελ]λεῦς [ἐγο]αμ[μ]άτ[ευ]	
[ε, Ἄντιγένες ἕρχε, Σιβ]ύρτιο[ς ἐ]πεστά[τε],	
[Ἄλκιβιάδης εἶπε·	

Between the secretary and the epistates there are thirteen available spaces in the stoichedon pattern, and these are most suitably filled by Ἄντιγένες ἕρχε.²¹ The resulting sequence, S.A.E.O., rather than the more customary S.E.A.O., is unobjectionable in principle. The same sequence is found in I² 126 (ML n. 94), of the year 405/4, and is probably to be restored in I² 119 (408/7).²²

SEG XII 29 (I² 149),²³ however, is more problematical. It has an extremely fragmentary prescript:

[ἔδοχσεν τῷ βολ]εῖ κ[αὶ τῷ δέμῳ]	stoichedon 25
[ν ἰς ἐπρουτ]άνευ[ε, . ε : ε̇ . ἐπε]	
[στάτε, . . ε : ε̇ . .]ς ἐγοα[μμάτευε, .]	
[. . . . ε̇ . . . ἕρχε, Ε]ὐφει[ος εἶπε . .]	

There can be no certainty whatsoever that an archon appears here, or even that the epistates precedes the secretary. MATTINGLY argues for Euphemos as orator, not archon, citing the authority of MERITT,²⁴ who dismissed the IG restoration on the

²⁰ Note the danger of circular argument here: if one restores chronologically appropriate archons in these texts, then of course they fall just within the period MATTINGLY is trying to demonstrate always shows archon-dating in decrees.

²¹ See MERITT, *Classical Studies Presented to E. M. Capps*, 1936, 246–252, in preference to the archon Theopompos. (See further the discussion in ML n. 91.)

²² But *not* in I² 174 = *Hesperia* 39, 1970, 111–114 (see note 14 above).

²³ See also BM 100–105.

²⁴ *Hesperia* 21, 1952, 344–346. MERITT proposed as archon either Epameinon (429/8) or Astyphilos (420/19).

grounds that it left room for demotics: these he contends, are not found till c. 406 B. C. In my opinion, however, this <rule> about demotics is open to question: demotics do appear in *superscripts* much earlier than 406 B. C.,²⁵ and I can see no reason for categorically excluding them from prescripts earlier than that date. If, in the text before us, the secretary were allowed a demotic, the epistates could then occupy his usual position *after* the secretary, Euphemos could remain as orator, and the archon would disappear altogether.²⁶

MATTINGLY, however, arguing for archon inclusion, posits a sequence E.S.A.O. Now, the sequence E.S.O. certainly occurs,²⁷ but is E.S.A.O. a reality or a mere figment of the imagination? The only possible parallel would seem to be the proxeny decree SEG X 88 (I² 72):

[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμοι]· Ἀντιοχίς [ἐπρῶτά] stoichedon 40
 [νευε, 19 ἐγρ]αμμάτευε, [. . 6 . . .]
 [. 3 . ἐπεστάτε, ? . . . εἶπε· ἐπ]αινέσαι E[.]

MATTINGLY would prefer to fill out the nineteen letter lacuna in line 2 by inserting the epistates: this in turn creates a commensurate gap between lines 2 and 3 where MATTINGLY now finds room for the archon:

[νευε, . . 5 . . ἐπεστάτε, . . 6 . . ἐγρ]αμμάτευε, [Ἀστύφι]
 [λος ἔρχε, 12 εἶπεν·

This is very ingenious, but entirely hypothetical. Astyphilos is selected because of his year, 420/19, «since the arbitrary inversion (of epistates and secretary) in the preamble suggests that they (this text and I² 149) are near the beginning of the archon-dated series.» Astyphilos fits nicely into MATTINGLY's reconstruction of I² 149, and so the ends are once more neatly tied together. This is dangerously persuasive – until we realise that a secretary with nomen and demoticum of nineteen letters ruins the whole proposition. I² 149 and I² 72 almost certainly stand or fall together: since they offer an otherwise unattested sequence E.S.A.O., I find them highly suspect.²⁸

What then of the three remaining examples for which MATTINGLY urges the

²⁵ For a discussion of I² 149 and of the evidence for secretaries with demotics see PAD 5–6 and 8–9.

²⁶ The resultant sequence S. E. O. would be unimpeachable: cf., e.g., I² 115 (ML n. 86) of 409/8.

²⁷ Restored, for example, in SEG XII 9 (I² 27), of c. 450/49, and surely attested in the fourth century: e.g. II² 31 (386/5).

²⁸ Even MATTINGLY himself marks the sequence in both cases with a query. In *Epi-graphica* 36, 1974, 40 n. 27, he in fact revises his position and argues for a sequence A. S. E. O. in both prescripts. But this mutually interdependent and otherwise unattested sequence is open to precisely the same criticism as E. S. A. O.

restoration of archon-dating? The first of these is SEG XIV 9 (I² 101), the honorary decree for the Samians, of the year 412/11:²⁹

stoichedon 98

Θε[οί].

ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμωι ᾽Ακαμαντίς ἐπρω[τάνευεν, ----
 ---- ἐγραμμάτευεν, ----- ἐπεστάτει, ----- εἶπε·

MATTINGLY points out that there is room in this text (LEWIS's) for an archon. Accordingly, he reconstructs as follows:

stoichedon 98

ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμωι ᾽Ακαμαντίς ἐπρω[τάνευε, .ς.᾽.᾽.᾽.
 ἐγραμμάτευε, .ς.᾽.᾽.᾽. ἐπεστάτε, Καλλίας ἔρχε, .ς.᾽.᾽.᾽. εἶπε· τῶ]
 ι μὲν δέμωι τῶι Σαμίον ἐπαινέσαι -----

thus affording us a series of officials all with conspicuously, though, to be sure, not impossibly, short names. It should also be noted that the sequence S.A.E.O. is equally restorable, a sequence which MATTINGLY himself adopts in the next text he deals with. He sees S.A.E.O., however, as a *late* development, not earlier than c. 408/7 B. C.³⁰

The text in question is SEG X 127 (I² 113), an honorary decree for Evagoras of Cyprus:

stoichedon 43

[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμωι . . 5 . . ἰς ἐπ]ρωτάνευε
 [--- ἐγραμμάτευε, --- ἐπεστάτε, Φρ]ασίδεμ[ος]
 5 [εἶπε·

On historical grounds this document must fall c. 410 B. C. MATTINGLY, assuming that Phrasidemus is the epistates, not the orator, easily works an archon into the prescript:

stoichedon 43

[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμωι . . . 7 . . . ἐπ]ρωτάνευε
 [. . . ? . . . ἐγραμμάτευε, . . . ? . . . ἔρχε, Φρ]ασίδεμ[ος]
 [ἐπεστάτε, 11 εἶπε· ἐπειδὴ ἀνὲρ ἀγα]θός ἐ[στι]
 [Εὐαγόρας ὁ Σαλαμίνιος -----]

One may note that *if* the archon's name contained nine letters, then the only candidates would be Theopompos (411/10) and Antigenes (407/6). But, of course, the nine-lettered archon and secretary are purely *exempli gratia*.

The last text to be considered is SEG X 136 (I² 47), the treaty with Carthage:³¹

stoichedon 36

[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βο]λῆι κ[αὶ τῶι δέμωι . . 6 . . ἐπρω]
 [τάνευε, . . 6 . . .]ς ᾽Αφιδ[ναῖος ἐγραμμάτευε, . 3 .]
 12 5 ἐπεσ[τάτε, . . 7 . . . εἶπε·

²⁹ See Thuc. 8, 21.

³⁰ Cf. my comments in PAD 7-8.

³¹ See MERITT, HSPH Suppl. 1, 1940, 247-253; ML n. 92.

In order to accommodate an archon here MATTINGLY is forced to lengthen the line to a tentative stoichedon 39. This in turn entails an epistates with nineteen letters (presumably nomen plus demoticum) and an orator of five:

[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βο]λῆι κ[αὶ τῶι δέμοι . . . ς. . ? . . . ἐπρου] stoichedon 39?
 [τάνευε, . . ς. . 6 . .]ς Ἐφιδ[ναῖος ἐγραμμάτευε,]
 [. 12]ς ἐπεσ[τάτε, Καλλίας ἔρχε, εἶ]
 [πε· ἐπειδὲ ἀφῆ]καν Κα[ρχεδόνιοι κέρουκας? ----]

Neither of these assumptions need worry us: more significant is the fact that MATTINGLY neglects to indicate how his remodelled line can be continued beyond line 4 into the body of the text to fit in with the traces there preserved.

The verdict then that we must pass on Table B (with the possible exception of SEG X 138) is well argued, but not proven. All the texts cited are open to alternative restoration and interpretation without omnipresent archons. In no case can it be demonstrated that an archon *must* (or even *should*) be included.

The «421 rule» is therefore open to considerable question. The «ample evidence» of which MATTINGLY speaks certainly leads one to expect archon-dating after 421 B. C., but it is misleading to suggest that all prescripts later than that year must be dated by archon. It is likewise methodologically erroneous to use absence of archon-dating as a criterion for putting documents earlier than 421 B. C.³²

Archon-dating is regular, but not mandatory, after 421 B. C.³³

³² No one would deny that II² 6 is to be dated after the fall of the Thirty. Moreover, if we extend our survey into the fourth century, we can still find examples of decrees without archons either in prescript or superscript: see PAD 23.

³³ The moral to be drawn from this exercise is that it is hazardous to attempt to establish rigid criteria based on the lamentably small body of evidence which the fifth century has bequeathed us. Furthermore, it was only very late in the *fourth* century that the Attic prescript began to approach anything like a stereotyped form. Indeed, it never did achieve a fixed and final pattern (see PAD 104–105).