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KEVIN CLINTON

Two Decrees of Maroneia from Samothrace: Further Thoughts

In Chiron 33, 2003, 379–417 I stated that the dimensions of two fragments of Maroneian decrees, concerning embassies to the emperor, suggested that they belonged to separate stelai, although the lettering appeared to have been carved by the same cutter.¹ In particular, the slight taper of «Decree A» seemed not to match that of the second fragment («Decree C»). However, given the slightness of the taper and the relatively short distance over which it was measured in each case, a perfect measurement was difficult to achieve. In June 2004 a more rigorous test was applied.² Placement of the second fragment («Decree C») at some distance below «Decree A» with metal rods attached to their sides demonstrated that their tapering sides lined up perfectly with the rods when the two stones lay at a distance of ca. 0.835 m. apart. While this does not definitively prove that the two stones were part of the same stele, it renders this conclusion highly probable. Given the greater thickness of the second fragment, we have to assume, in addition, that the stele thickened toward the bottom. Its total preserved height, with the two fragments so separated, amounts to ca. 2.00 m., and its original height of course, since the bottom is not preserved, would be greater. It was thus an extraordinarily tall stele, its missing section considerably larger than either preserved fragment. Line plus interlinear space between lines 37 and 47 of «Decree A» measures on the average 0.0112 m. According to this measurement a height of ca. 0.835 m. should contain ca. 76 lines, but in view of the variability of letter height and interline elsewhere it would be safer to estimate that the missing section could accommodate ca. 65–80 lines. Thus the entire document, if the present arrangement is correct, would amount to ca. 159–174 lines.

Much that was formerly unclear is now clear. With the second fragment (which we may now call frag. *b*) assigned to the same stele as the first (frag. *a*, which can still be called Decree A), several conclusions immediately follow:

1) The oath of the ambassadors referred to in Decree A (*a*, lines 35–36) as appended must be the oath inscribed in *b*, lines 21–31, clearly as an appendix.

¹ Page references in what follows refer to this article.

² The notion that the two fragments belonged to a very large stele was strongly urged by LOUIZA LOUKOPOULOU. The specific test was suggested by DIMITRIS MATSAS. To both I am deeply grateful; they are of course not responsible for the views expressed here.

2) Consequently, «the decree concerning such an embassy» mentioned in Decree A (*a*, lines 30–31) as τὸ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ ψηφίσματος γεγραμμένον («written at the end of the decree [A]), ought to be the one that appears in frag. *b*, lines 1–21, since this, as it lies above the oath, is indeed «written at the end of the decree (A)». Thus Decree A consists of the entire frag. *a*, the missing section, and frag. *b*, lines 1–21; then comes the appended oath of the ambassadors (followed by the oath of the citizens).

3) The reasoning behind the original assumption that the «eternal decree passed as a law» proposed in Decree A, line 26 (*a*, line 26, cf. 47–48) occurred chronologically between frags. *a* and *b* was flawed. It is now clear that it was incorrect to assume that the eternal decree was to be a decree subsequent to Decree A. No such subsequent decree is actually indicated in the motion formula of Decree A (*a*, lines 29ff.). The only decree described there is ψήφισμα ὑπὲρ τῆς τοιαύτης πρεσβείας τὸ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ ψηφίσματος γεγραμμένον, namely what we now know is partly preserved as frag. *b*, lines 1–21 (see conclusion 2, above); this decree is not referred to as an «eternal decree», and its actual language (*b*, lines 1–21) confirms that it is not an eternal decree.³ Decree A does of course call for an «eternal decree legislated as law» (*a*, line 26) but it does not propose it in the motion (lines 29ff.) as a separate decree. The motion proposes «the decree concerning such an embassy» that will be «written at the end of (this) decree» (i.e. as part of this decree), and then proceeds to state «let it be assured in advance, for all time (εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον) that, if an occasion of need for such an embassy comes upon us . . ., all those who wish to have themselves registered on the decree (given at the end) as ambassadors by means of an official document, having sworn the oath attached to the present decree, have the power etc.» (*a*, lines 31ff.). The phrase «let it be assured in advance, for all time» must apply to this very decree, Decree A: it designates it as an eternal decree, i.e. as equivalent to a law that will be valid for all time. This status may be further reflected in the extraordinary title at the head of the decree (lines 1–2):

[Γνώμη βουλευτῶν καὶ ἱερέων καὶ ἀρχόντων καὶ Ῥωμαίων τῶν ^{vvv}
 [τ]ῆν πόλιν κατοικοῦντων καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν πολιτῶν ἀπάν[των ^{vvv}].

I regarded (p. 401) the subjects of the eternal decree to be the procedure for the appointment of ambassadors to the emperor and various other matters pertaining to such embassies. These subjects are actually taken up in Decree A: the description of these matters begins in Decree A, line 34, continues for the rest of frag. *a*, and presumably concluded in the missing section between frags. *a* and *b*. Such matters as the number of ambassadors and payment of their expenses were probably addressed in the missing part (cf. p. 390). At the end of the eter-

³ See the discussion of this point, p. 396.

nal decree (A), there was inscribed the text of the decree (*b*, lines 1–21) that was to be passed on every occasion when it became necessary to send an embassy to the emperor (conclusion 2, above), a «decree . . . written at the end of the decree (A)». Thus Decree A, the eternal decree (equivalent to a law), included within itself («at its end») the text of another decree, which we may call Decree B, to be used whenever a certain type of embassy to the emperor became necessary.

It is now clear that M. WÖRRLE and H. MÜLLER were correct (p. 406) in interpreting this decree (B) as a blank document, i.e. one that did not contain the actual name of the emperor to whom the embassy was to be sent; it was to be used on every occasion that threats to Maroneia's status were perceived. The emperor's name would presumably be inscribed when the decree was issued. What led me to think that this was an actual decree passed in the time of Claudius (pp. 400, 406) were both its date, as indicated in the attached oath, and the fact that the final sentence of the decree (*b*, lines 21–22) stated that the ambassadors had already been appointed (ἤρξθησαν). However, this aorist verb should now be interpreted as simply what the decree would say when the blank decree was actually posted, for at that moment the ambassadors would indeed have been already chosen (by χρηματισμός). Their names do not appear in our inscription because this blank document had not yet been passed. At the time of its passage, however, their names of course would be appended, as indicated in Decree A (*a*, lines 34–35).⁴ The intention to use this blank document verbatim except for inserting the emperor's name and adding at the end the ambassadors' names is evidently expressed in Decree A, lines 48–50: «. . . neither removing nor making additions (in the document) [except for the name of?] the ruler of the empire [- - -] at the end the [names?] of the ambassadors.» Further inspection of lines 50–51 shows that it is possible to read: ἐπιγ[ράφον]τας ἐπὶ τέλει τὰ τῶν πρεσβευ[τῶν] ὀνόματα (the last word suggested by M. WÖRRLE, p. 396).

Decree B, as stated above, is not the eternal decree legislated as law (A) but, together with many regulations concerning the appointment of ambassadors and the sending of embassies, is one element of this law.

As for the «three stelai» mentioned in the ambassadors' oath (*b*, line 25), it seems best not to attempt to identify them. The present stele may have been one of them; the stele authorizing the successful embassy to Claudius (*a*, lines 5 ff.) may have been another (cf. p. 401).

Finally, the citizens' oath, which appears in frag. *b*, lines 31–40, is not mentioned in the preserved part of Decree A. It may have been an afterthought, not mentioned at all in Decree A, for this part of frag. *b* was probably not intended

⁴ Cf. p. 407, ad lines 20–21, where it is correctly stated that the names of the ambassadors would be registered on a copy of «Decree B», which we now must understand as frag. *b*, lines 1–21 (similarly, on p. 390 «Decree B» must be so understood [not as the «eternal decree»]).

for inscription (p. 407); but its content suits well the concern expressed in Decree A about not obstructing embassies, so it would not be surprising if the oath was prescribed in the decree.

In general, the discussion in Chiron 33, 2003, 379–417 needs to be revised so that what is referred to there as «Decree B» (the eternal decree) is now to be understood as Decree A, and «Decree C» («the decree concerning such an embassy, written at the end of the decree [A]») is what we now refer to as Decree B, which is part of Decree A.

Specific revisions:

P. 394, ad lines 29–30, delete the paragraph and read: The «decree concerning such an embassy» is Decree B (*b*, lines 1–21).

P. 394, ad line 36, instead of «Decree B» or «Decree C» read «Decree A».

P. 395, ad lines 31ff.: Note that the beginning of what I now call Decree B, «the decree written at the end of the decree (A)», is lost.

In summary, the two fragments contain (1) an eternal decree, Decree A (beginning in *a* and terminating in *b*, lines 1–21), (2) a blank decree, Decree B (terminating in *b*, lines 1–21), which is part of Decree A, (3) the ambassadors' oath (*b*, lines 21–31), appended to Decree A, and (4) the citizens' oath (*b*, lines 31–41), also appended.

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