Looking for the Language of Athenian Imperialism
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LOOKING FOR THE LANGUAGE OF ATHENIAN IMPERIALISM[*]

Abstract: Conventional portrayals of Athenian imperialism, heavily influenced by Thucydides, tend to assume that the Athenians thought of, and described, their imperialistic actions in frank, even brutal, terms. This article seeks to challenge that assumption by exploring two sets of fifth-century Athenian epigraphical material: documents which contain the phrase 'the cities which the Athenians rule', and inscriptions imposing regulations on allied states which are erected at the ally's expense. In both cases, it is argued that if these apparently overtly aggressive documents are considered in an epigraphic rather than a Thucydidean context, they reveal the existence of a more subtle, nuanced and diplomatic approach to imperial politics.

WHY bother looking for Athenian imperial language? It is, it might be thought, not the most challenging of tasks: just open up Thucydides and there it is. And the broader subject – the language, and the styles of expression, which are used by the fifth-century Athenians towards and about their subject allies – could hardly be described as a neglected area of study. But in what follows I want to try to think about that familiar subject in a slightly different way, by doing two things in particular. First, I want to avoid (for reasons that will be discussed below) the imperial language found in Thucydides, and embrace instead the other main source for the fifth-century empire – inscriptions. Second, in thinking about that epigraphic material, I want to explore the relationship between the language used in imperial documents and the behaviour – imperialistic or otherwise – which it represents.

The substance of this article falls into two halves, each dealing with a different aspect of imperial language and its representation (and each dealing with a different subset of epigraphic material); but it is probably necessary to start with a methodological excursus, to try to make clear exactly what I mean by claiming to be interested in the connection between language and behaviour. Studies of the relationship between action and description run a serious risk of being sucked into theoretical quicksand, but the extended pause is still necessary, especially because I want to try to show how this issue – or rather, how failure properly to acknowledge that it is an issue – has, often implicitly, influenced the study of the nature of Athenian imperial language, and of Athenian imperialism. I should, perhaps, make it clear at the outset that I do not want to suggest that these two aspects of activity – the action and the language used to describe it – can, at the most basic level, be treated as discrete entities: language and experience are, of course, inextricably connected; moreover, the language by which particular acts are represented can have a powerful influence on subsequent actions and patterns of behaviour. Things that might start off as (allegedly) purely presentational matters can quickly become substantive political issues.

Nevertheless, there is a danger of framing this connection (between action and description) in rather simplistic, over-rigid, terms. One line of approach which seems to me to be unhelpful, for example, is the linguistically deterministic attitude which can sometimes float around accounts of ancient empires and imperialism. There is no great merit to the view which suggests that the lexical richness, or poverty, of a particular area of a particular language should be seen as directly proportional to the interest the speakers of that language have in that area of activity: the 'Eskimos have many words for snow' line of thought. Such approaches can be questioned on both empirical and theoretical grounds: the Inuit, it turns out, do not have an unusually specialized vocabulary for snow, but that is no reason to revise our views of their expertise in

Arctic survival techniques;[1] similarly, there need not be any necessary correlation between the presence or absence of a specialized vocabulary of imperialism in fifth-century Athens and the presence or absence of a fifth-century Athenian urge to rule the Greek world.

But there exists also a less extreme, but more insidious, variant of that approach to the relationship between action and description. It is an approach, for which I hold Thucydides primarily responsible, that operates on the understanding that Athenian statements on the subject of their empire can be taken, more or less, at face value. Thucydides' Athenians are not ashamed of their imperialism. They are quite happy to give a full, unabashed, un-spun account of their imperial aims and objectives to themselves (as in Pericles' or Cleon's speeches to the Athenian assembly),[2] to other Greeks (as in the Athenian ambassadors' unguarded comments to the Spartans),[3] and even to prospective slaves to the imperial machine (as to the unfortunate people of Melos).[4] And although views on the degree of inventiveness involved in the composition of Thucydides' speeches have changed radically in the past few decades, the Thucydides-derived picture of the Athenians as the least diplomatic diplomats in the history of interstate politics has persisted: the Athenians had no time for diplomatic niceties, and when they were going to oppress someone, they came straight out and said so. According to J.S. Grant, in his 'Note on the tone of Greek diplomacy':

> Greek diplomats talked like any other Greeks, and we should not be surprised at frankness, realism, directness, lack of diplomatic reticence ... When the whole of Greek history testifies to lack of restraint and political common sense, it would be foolish to expect the constant presence of these qualities in the diplomatic exchanges between these little states.[5]

Grant was writing 40 years ago, but this view of the straight-talking style of Greek diplomacy (and particularly of the fifth-century Athenian diplomacy on which he concentrated) has remained widespread.[6] And what are equally, or more, significant are the negative implications of that view; or rather, the inferences which are drawn from the absence of this frankness and directness – especially in the context of the Athenian empire. If the Athenians can always be trusted to tell the world when they are being aggressive, it follows that an absence of aggressive language should indicate an absence of aggression. This negative side of the equation is, of course, almost entirely irrelevant to the Thucydidean story of Athenian imperialism, where unfrank, reticent Athenians are rather hard to find. But it has been much more important in the study of the non-Thucydidean sources for fifth-century Athenian history – and, above all, in the study of the epigraphic sources for that period. Work on this material has often been dominated by the quest to pinpoint the moment when 'imperial language' first emerges in the epigraphic record – the point when the language of alliance mutates into the language of domination, or of imperialism: this is, of course, one of the big issues which lurks (often, admittedly, almost imperceptibly) behind the still-fierce arguments over the dating of, and dating-criteria for, fifth-century

[1] Pullum (1991) reports research showing that the Central Alaskan Yupik language has 'about a dozen different stems with "snow" in the gloss' (170); the agglutinative nature of Inuit languages makes it hard to determine a more precise figure.

[2] Thuc. 2.60-4 (Pericles), 3.37-40 (Cleon).

[3] Esp. at Thuc. 1.75-6.

[4] Thuc. 5.85-113.

[5] Grant (1965) 262. It is worth noting that Grant's picture of the 'tone' of Greek diplomacy is based primarily on Thucydidean speeches. Attempts have been made

find a broader context for these Thucydidean exchanges: see especially Strasburger (1958); but note that Strasburger's broader context is created primarily by widening the chronological scope of enquiry beyond the period of the Athenian empire – a valid approach, but not one which will be very helpful for the question being addressed here.

[6] Expressed most influentially, perhaps, in the analysis of the nature of Athenian (and Greek) foreign politics in de Ste Croix (1972), esp. at 16-28.

Attic inscriptions.[7] A change in language is seen to be so important, however, largely because of the presumed existence of a close, if not absolute, link between changes in language and changes in the type of behaviour that it represents: if the language of decrees is not overtly imperialistic then it follows that the Athenians were not overtly imperialistic either; a shift from the language of alliance to the language of empire is indicative of a shift from the fact of alliance to the fact of empire.[8]

But there is, in fact, a paradox here. These epigraphic sources are often appealed to in an attempt to 'fill in the gaps' in Thucydides' narrative. But they are also, perhaps more frequently, used as a sort of control against which to test the Thucydidean story – especially his story of the growth and development of the empire. However, the terms in which the key inscriptions are analysed – and in particular the terms in which the language and tone of those inscriptions (rather than their substantive content) are analysed – are based, ultimately, on a view of Athenian imperial diplomacy which is derived precisely from Thucydides. The inscriptions tend to be read, that is, not just in a Thucydidean narrative context, but also in an analytical framework which is equally dominated by the historian. And, since Thucydides encourages us to believe that the Athenians were not interested in diplomatic niceties, he has also encouraged an overly trusting view of the things which can be read in the documents of Athenian imperialism.

What I want to do, therefore, is to look at some of these inscriptions in a less Thucydidean way; to set them back into their epigraphic context; and, in doing so, to seek to find in them a rather different contribution to the story of Athenian imperialism – one that is less concerned with a diachronic story of the development of power than with the ways in which that power is used, controlled and represented. The two groups of material on which I focus are not at all unfamiliar; in fact, I have chosen to focus on these documents exactly because they have so often been central to accounts of Athenian imperialism and Athenian imperial language.

'THE CITIES WHICH THE ATHENIANS RULE'

That is especially true of my first example. This is an expression which appears in a reasonably large set of Athenian inscribed documents: the phrase 'the cities which the Athenians rule' (πόλεις ὅσων Ἀθηναῖοι κρατοῦσιν, or some variation on that formula). It is a phrase that is restricted almost exclusively to epigraphic texts,[9] and that has become one of the focal points for the sort of debate discussed above: here is an apparently blatant assertion of power, which seems to appear in the historical record at a particular moment in the development of the Athenian empire. Opinion may be sharply divided about when that precise moment is, but there is wide-

[7] The disputes centre on (but are not restricted to) the possibility of dating by changing letter-forms, especially the changing form of sigma. The 'revisionist' line (arguing that the forms traditionally considered to fall out of use in the 440s persist into the 420s or later), promoted above all by Harold Mattingly, can most conveniently be sampled in Mattingly (1996a) *passim* (and the opposing line in Henry (2001)). Recent epigraphic developments have tended to support Mattingly's view that the presence of 'early' forms cannot be used as an argument against a later date (note especially the work carried out on the Egesta decree (*IG* I³ 11): Chambers *et al.* (1990); Matthaiou (2004)), and have shown that, while Mattingly's arguments for downdating many imperial inscriptions need not necessarily be correct, they cannot be rejected on grounds of letter-forms alone.

[8] See, for example, Mattingly (1996b) 367 for the claim that 'public language normally reflects the style and tone of government faithfully and shifts perceptibly as that develops'.

[9] *IG* I³ 19 (proxeny for Acheloïon, of ?Boeotia); *IG* I³ 27 (proxeny for some Delphians); *IG* I³ 98 (= *IG* II² 12) (honours for Pythophanis, of ?Carystus); *IG* I³ 161 (= *IG* II² 38) (proxeny decree); *IG* I³ 162 (proxeny for some ?Illyrians); *IG* I³ 174 (proxeny for Lycon of Achaea; the phrase occurs in a clause offering trading concessions); *IG* I³ 175 (another trading allowance, recipient unknown); *IG* I³ 227 (= *IG* II² 8) (honours for Heracleides of Clazomenae); *IG* I³ 228 (= *IG* II² 32) (honours for Archonides and Demon, Sicels). In two cases the restoration is less secure: *IG* I³ 173 (proxeny decree); *IG* I³ 179 (= *IG* II² 73) (proxeny decree, often attributed to Teisamenes). In *IG* I³ 156 (two decrees recording honours (perhaps proxeny) for Leonides of Halicarnassus), two verbs of ruling are used: ἄρχοσι in the first decree (line 6); κρατôσι in the second (line 15). In *IG* I³ 55 (proxeny for

spread – though not universal[10] – consensus that it does exist, and should be seen as marking a significant turning point in Athens' imperial history: this is 'proprietorial language';[11] it marks a move to 'acknowledged Empire';[12] even defenders of the popularity of the Athenian empire acknowledge that it is a 'strikingly realistic formula';[13] and when scholars are looking for inscriptions with which to illustrate the development of Athenian imperialism, these are the ones that are pointed to as marking the culmination of the process.[14]

Although, as will become apparent, I have some reservations about the specific conclusions which have been drawn from the appearance of this expression, I do agree, absolutely, that the expression itself is both important and interesting. It is not the claim to *kratos* by itself which should be seen as overly surprising or worrying: the language of *kratos* is, after all, a regular part both of narratives of conquest – particularly military conquest – and of political power.[15] What is striking here, though, is the scope of this claim to power: this is not just conquest after a specific military engagement, or rule within a defined political unit, but power that spreads over an undefined number of cities; cities which, in fact, seem almost to be defined only by the fact that the Athenians control them.[16] Athenian power, the phrase suggests, is something almost visible, tangible; certainly something that supplants any other sort of military or political *kratos* which might exist within or between these *poleis*.

This expression does, then, represent a significant claim to a particular type of power which could quite legitimately be labelled 'imperialistic'. And it is, to that extent, 'imperial language'. But if we are in a non-Thucydidean world, in which the Athenians might not always give entirely accurate representations of what it is that they are up to, the second half of the argument remains unproven: does 'imperial language' require, and prove, the existence of 'imperialism'? Again, the standard response to that question would, I think, be 'yes'. This is a view which is most

Aristonis of Larisa), ἄρχοσι is the verb restored. All these examples are conventionally dated to the fifth century (see below, pp. 97-8); in almost all cases, the exact date is disputed.

There are three relevant instances in literary texts: Thuc. 5.18.7 (Thucydides' account of the wording of the Peace of Nicias; the subject is the Athenians); [Plut] *Vit. X Orat.* 834b (alleged quotation from a decree exiling Antiphon and regulating places in which he cannot be buried). A puzzling variant appears in Thuc. 5.47.2 (and is restored to *IG* I³ 83 on the basis of Thucydides), a reference to the *allies* whom the Athenians rule (τοὺς συμμάχους ὧν ἄρχουσιν Ἀθηναῖοι).

Similar phrases do appear in some comparable contexts: *IG* I³ 89, line 40 (in a supplement; treaty between Athens and Perdiccas of Macedon, *c.* 417-413; the subject of the phrase is Perdiccas); RO 55, line 7 (Mausolus and Artemisia award proxeny to Cnossus, 350s; the Cnossians are offered immunity ὁπόσης Μαύσσωλλος ἄρχει); *IG* II² 43, lines 60-1 (charter of the Second Athenian League: those who try to dissolve the alliance will face punishment ὅ[περ] Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ οἱ σύμμαχο|ι κρατôσι[ν]. 'The new confederacy is advertised as a condominium' (Mattingly (1996b) 368).

[10] For a dissenting voice, see Osborne (2000) 36.

[11] Rhodes (1992) 58.

[12] Mattingly (1996b) 368.

[13] De Ste Croix (1953/4) 19.

[14] Rhodes (1993) *ad* [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 24.2. The process of change in the nature of Athenian imperialism, hinted at in the changes in vocabulary in this passage (from ἡγεμονία to ἀρχή to δεσποτικωτέρως), is rein-

forced, and expanded on, by reference to epigraphic material: 'the change in the way in which the Athenians thought of the League is reflected in the language of their inscriptions'; two of the decrees listed in n.9 above (*IG* I³ 19 and 27) are picked out as being equivalent to the final element of the Aristotelian tricolon. See also Meiggs (1972) 425-7 for a discussion of the significance of the phrase (in the context of the problem of dating).

[15] For the origins of the term *demokratia*, see Aesch. *Supp.* 604, with Hansen (1991) 69-71; on the use of the word in external politics, see Woodhead (1970) 35-51. Generally on the vocabulary of *kratos* in Greek politics, see Loraux (2002) 68-71, who argues (69) that the term 'always designates superiority, and thus victory' (and therefore, by extension, absolute power). The significance of the occasional appearance of ἄρχοσι (*IG* I³ 55 and 156) is hard to assess: it is difficult to see any reason in the context for the choice of a different verb; the context, however, is very poorly preserved.

[16] De Ste Croix (1953/4) 19 comments that the expression seems to apply to 'any and every city in the empire in which the writ of Athens could be made to run'. That assessment seems almost too mild: the writ of Athens is certainly not always tied down to political units (in *IG* I³ 173 χορίοις is the spatial qualifier), and it might also be worth questioning the extent to which the Athenians felt that their *kratos* was restricted to states which were formally part of their empire (or, to put it the other way round, worth questioning how far the Athenians conceived of their empire as a formally defined entity).

obvious, not in any explicit arguments, but in the fact that the presence of this phrase in any otherwise undated inscription seems to have become – at least since the middle of the last century – an established reason for giving that inscription a fifth-century date.[17] *IG* I³ 179 (= *IG* II² 73), for example, records the proxeny of a (now) unknown man, possibly proposed by the orator Teisamenos. The inscription is in the Ionic alphabet; moreover, it is inscribed in what is, apparently, a very similar hand to a small group of other inscriptions (also proxeny decrees) which have been allowed to retain their fourth-century date.[18] But, argues Walbank, 'the reference to the Empire [by which he means the reference to places ruled by Athens], of course, places the decree firmly before 404 BC'.[19]

The assumption that this claim to rule over cities cannot be dissociated from the fifth-century Athenian empire has also found its way into less epigraphically specialist accounts of Athenian interstate language. For example, a discussion of a fourth-century decree offering privileges to some Thasians points out the presence of 'clauses that do betray what may be called an *arche-mentality*',[20] in this case, a promise of protection from harm in Athens or cities allied to Athens:

[... καὶ] ἐάν τις ἀποκτε[ίνη]ι ῎Αρχ[ιππον ἢ ῎Ιππα]-
[ρχον τ]ὸν ’Αρχίππο ἀδελ[φὸν], φεύγ[εν τὴν πόλιν]
[τ]ὴν ’Αθηναίων καὶ τὰ[ς ἄλλ]ας πόλ[ες, ὁπόσαι ’Αθ]-
ηναίων ἐσὶν σύμμαχο[ι].

If any man kills Archippus or his brother Hipparchus, he shall be an exile from the city of the Athenians and from the other cities that are allies of the Athenians. (*IG* II² 24(b), 3-6)

But the further gloss on that phrase is also worth noting:

The proposer or drafter of this Athenian decree ... was doing his best to remember his manners. He knew better than to say 'from the other cities whom the Athenians *rule*', as they used to say in the bad old days of the fifth century.[21]

In fact, however, there is clear evidence that the Athenians were quite happy to use, or at least repeat, that kind of ill-mannered language well after the official collapse of their empire. Not all of the instances of the expression can be pushed back into the fifth century. The prescript of the inscription recording the proxeny of the Sicels Archonides and Demon (*IG* I³ 228), for example, leaves no doubt that this stone was inscribed in the archonship of Dexitheos, in 385/4. This decree, and other similar examples, are almost certainly fifth-century productions in origin;[22] but, if it is accepted that the re-inscription and re-erection of these documents in the fourth century also marks a re-activation of the decrees that they represent, then there is an important sense in

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[17] I have not been able to find any place where this principle is explicitly argued for, but it is stated as a firm rule by Weston (1940) 346, whose line is taken up by Meiggs (1949) 10.

[18] E.g. *IG* II² 54, 58.

[19] Walbank (1978) 479.

[20] Griffith (1978) 129.

[21] Griffith (1978) 130; emphasis original.

[22] In this instance, and that of the two other re-inscribed decrees which include the 'rule' clause (*IG* I³ 227 (= *IG* II² 8) and *IG* I³ 98 (= *IG* II² 12)), there is no absolute evidence for a particular fifth-century date, but the circumstantial case that can be made for each decree is persuasive. *IG* I³ 228 fits well into a context of Athenian interest in Sicily and the West. *IG* I³ 227 seems to share a Secretary, and therefore almost certainly a date, with the treaty between Athens and Halieis (*IG* I³ 75), and with the second of the Athena Nike decrees (*IG* I³ 36); the exact date of this set of documents is disputed (opposing views can be sampled in Meritt and Davidson (1935) and Thompson (1971)), but there is consensus on the general period in which they should be placed (late 420s or early 410s). The apparent reference to *proedroi* in the preamble to the reinscribed decree in *IG* I³ 98 suggests that it should be dated to the period of political upheaval around 411 (Wilhelm (1922-24) 147-52).

which they have to be taken seriously as fourth-century documents.[23] And if that is the case, then the claim to *kratos* included in these documents also has to be treated with some sort of seriousness. But in a fourth-century context, in what has been called the 'nursery-tea atmosphere' of Athens' post-Peloponnesian War foreign politics,[24] it becomes easier to see precisely what sort of seriousness is required: such claims cannot have any bearing on the realities of power; but they surely do have an important relation to Athenian imperial memory, imperial daydreaming, and imperial ambitions.

An objection is still possible, however: even if that argument does work for the fourth-century instances of this phrase, it could quite reasonably be pointed out that it has no necessary relevance to its appearance in the fifth century. Imperial daydreams are, in fact, exactly what we would expect to find in the early fourth century; there is no need for daydreaming in the genuinely power-filled world of fifth-century Athens. Moreover, since the phrase seems to appear only in documents whose origin lies in the fifth century, it should be seen, in origin and in essence, as a product of the fifth-century Athenian mentality.

The possibility that this language might have more to do with display than reality is, however, worth pursuing a little further, even in that fifth-century context. The fact that it seems possible to fit the instances of this expression into a neat (or relatively neat) chronological category has often distracted attention from the fact that they also fall into an even neater generic category: almost every extant inscribed instance of this expression – and every single instance in which the Athenians are the subject of the verb of power – appears in an honorific decree; most usually a proxeny decree.[25] And the apparent restriction of the use of this phrase to such a clearly delimited context should be thought to matter, for two, connected, reasons.

First, this language may be entirely 'imperialistic', but it is language that is used *about* the allies, not *to* them. Members of allied states wandering round the Acropolis may, of course, have caught sight of these proclamations but they were not the primary audience for them.[26] Although, therefore, one of the most striking things about this language (as I suggested earlier) is its scope – the extent of the power which it claims – this broad claim is actually being made to a very narrow audience and, crucially, to an audience which is not the direct object of the *kratos* that is being described; an audience which does not even necessarily fall inside the boundaries of Athenian power, but is sometimes an external observer, and certainly always a beneficiary, of it.[27] The appearance of this phrase does not, in other words, mark a point at which

[23] The re-erection of decrees is not an automatic process: it seems unlikely that all destroyed decrees were re-inscribed (re-inscription seems often to result from a specific request), and re-inscribed decrees could be subject to extensive editing. Both phenomena are well illustrated in *IG* II² 6 (a proxeny decree, probably for two Thasians, re-erected after being destroyed by the Thirty).

[24] Griffith (1978) 143.

[25] For the exceptions, see n.9 above.

[26] This is not to rule out the possibility of secondary audiences, or of secondary interpretations. These inscriptions would have been seen by members of allied states, in their home states as well as in Athens: for example, *IG* I³ 156 (honours for Leonides) contains an explicit provision for the erection of a copy of the decree in Leonides' home state (Halicarnassus) and it is likely that other honorands would have taken similar measures. In some contexts and for some readers these documents might have been interpreted as a direct statement of Athenian power. I do not want to deny the possibility, or potential importance, of those secondary contexts, but I do want to insist that they are secondary. The question of multiple audiences could also be extended in another direction, towards the Athenian assembly: if it can be assumed that the wording of these documents is an accurate representation of the language used in the assembly (and the fragility of the assumption should be emphasized: see Osborne (1999)), then it is worth wondering how far the language is also being used as a sop to an Athenian audience's self-esteem.

[27] External observer: several of the honorands to whom this claim of Athenian *kratos* is made are citizens of states which are not Athenian subject allies (the Delphians of *IG* I³ 27, for example). Beneficiary: a *proxenos*, almost by definition, is in a mutually advantageous relationship with the city whose *proxenia* he holds; on the potential difficulties of the divided loyalties that might result, see Mitchell (1997a) 71-2. Compare also the arguments used by Euphemus at Thucydides 6.87: Athenian power is beneficial to those who come under its protection. The benefits of empire for the other party to the agreement – the Athenian *demos* – are obvious enough.

the Athenians directly announce to the various cities which made up their empire that the only *kratos* which now matters in their cities is Athenian *kratos*. These inscriptions are not simply the epigraphic manifestation of the Melian Dialogue, and they do not reveal anything about the frankness, cynicism or realism of Athenian imperial diplomacy.[28]

But if it is accepted that this language is not being used here for purely descriptive reasons – to remind the allies of their precise position under the Athenian thumb – then it becomes necessary to ask (just as for the fourth-century instances of the phrase): why use this language in this particular context? One possible answer would be that this is simply a case of Athenian boasting. That is, surely, part of the answer; but what is also crucial is the fact that this is not idle boasting, but boasting with a specific purpose. Here, again, the context of the claim is of central importance. Proxeny decrees record, in theory, a reciprocal exchange: the *proxenos* provides a service to Athens, and he receives certain benefits in return. The assertion of power that appears in these decrees forms a central part of the benefits which the Athenians are able to offer: the *proxenos* will receive certain tax breaks, or, more usually, protection from harm, and will be entitled to these not just in Athens but in a whole range of cities.[29] In specifying the limits of their power in this way the Athenians simultaeneously emphasize its extent, and, through this assertion that their power extends far beyond the boundaries of their own *polis*, they are able to promise benefits which, correspondingly, go far beyond those that would normally be in the gift of an honouring state.

The outcome of that is partly practical – the *proxenos* gets the promise of better perks – but it is also, and more importantly, symbolic. It is something of a cliché, but an accurate one never-theless, to say that honorific decrees bring as much credit to the honourer as they do to the honorand: being in a position to hand out honours is a symbol of status in itself, and – because the honorand is placed in a position of obligation to the honouring state – it is a means of main-taining and enhancing that status.[30] In these decrees, the Athenians are offering benefits which go beyond those that any other Greek state could claim, with any seriousness, to offer; benefits which give the Athenians an unrecoverable advantage in the sequence of reciprocal exchanges; and which will leave the honorand perpetually in the subordinate, powerless, position in that exchange.[31]

These decrees are, then, all about power, and all about imperial power. But although the power which they describe may be the coercive variety – the type of power associated with political and military dominance – the power which they are being used to create and sustain is of a rather different sort: one that depends on status, prestige and the ability to out-bid one's rivals in a battle of competitive generosity.

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[28] Contrast the form of words used in decrees that relate more directly to the control of the empire: in the standards decree too (*IG* I³ 1453, ML 45), and in Cleinias' decree on tribute payment (*IG* I³ 34, ML 46), the somewhat vague definition of the scope of the decree is repeated (the targets of the decree are defined simply as πόλεις) but the verb of ruling is absent.

[29] The negative implications of the 'harm' clause have often been emphasized: the clause has been seen to show that the Athenian empire was so unpopular that anyone associated with it would require special levels of protection (for this sort of interpretation, see, for exam-ple, Hornblower (1991) *ad* Thuc. 3.70.3; Henry (1983a) 182 n.2; Osborne (2000) 121). The question of the pop-ularity of the empire is beyond the scope of this article; what needs to be emphasized here is that two clauses can, and should, be considered separately. The two clauses do not always appear in combination: the 'harm' clause appears in some decrees even when the 'rule' clause is absent (e.g., in fifth-century proxeny decrees, in *IG* I³ 57, 91, 164; the continued appearance of 'harm' clauses in fourth-century proxeny decrees should also be noted: for a convenient listing of examples, see Henry (1983a) 189 n.68); conversely, the 'rule' clause appears in contexts other than clauses offering protection from harm: in *IG* I³ 174 and 175 the benefit that is being offered within the sphere of Athenian *kratos* is freedom from trading restrictions.

[30] See Henry (1996); Hedrick (1999) 408-25.

[31] On Athenian manipulation of reciprocity, see Missiou (1992) ch.5; (1998). Others have emphasized that these manipulations may be more oppressive than altruistic: see Mitchell (1997b) on coerced friendship.

PAYMENT, AUTHORSHIP AND AGENCY

It is this theme of power, and the different ways in which varieties of power might be manifested in the documents of the empire, that I want to continue to explore in the second part of this article. But in order to do so, I want to make a rather abrupt change in focus, and, in looking at this second set of evidence, to concentrate on questions not so much of audience as of authorship and agency.

Those questions will be reached by a slightly circuitous route, but I hope the reasons for this apparent detour will become clear once the destination is reached. The starting point is, again, a small set of fifth-century Athenian documents which have been identified as being indicative of a particularly 'imperialistic' – exploitative, oppressive, and so on – attitude. The set of documents is that group of decrees, passed by the Athenians, erected in Athens and apparently a product solely of Athenian initiative, which regulate the behaviour of allied states in some way; and which then – and this is the defining feature – stipulate that the cost of setting up the inscription should be borne by the allied state.[32] A classic example might be the decree laying down regulations for Chalcis (*IG* I³ 40, ML 52). Copies of the decree are to be set up in Athens and in Chalcis; the Chalcidians will pay for both (lines 57-63).

τὸ δε φσέφισμα τόδε καὶ τὸν
*h*όρκον ἀναγράφσαι 'Αθένεσι μὲν τὸν γρα-
μμ[α]τέα τες βολες ἐστέλει λιθίνει καὶ κ-
αταθεναι ἐς πόλιν τέλεσι τοῖς Χαλκιδέ-
ον, ἐν δὲ Χαλκίδι ἐν τοι *h*ιεροι τοι Διὸς το
'Ολυμπίο *h*ε βολὲ Χαλκιδέον ἀναγράφσασ-
α καταθέτο.

The secretary of the Council is to write up this decree and oath at Athens on a stone stele and set it up on the Acropolis at the expense of the Chalcidians, and let the council of the Chalcidians write it up and deposit it in the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios at Chalcis.

The settlement with Colophon – another rebellious city brought back into the alliance – provides a further example (*IG* I³ 37, ML 47);[33] the decree setting out the agreement reached with Selymbria after its revolt in 410 (*IG* I³ 118, ML 87) may be another.[34] The tendency to make

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[32] On the requirement (concentrating on the epigraphic manifestations of this sort of payment clause, rather than the political implications), see generally Larfeld (1902) 720-6 and Henry (1983a) 144 n.15; for a more wide-ranging discussion, Lalonde (1971) 67-75.

[33] The clause is heavily restored, but the restoration is reasonably secure: [τὸ] δὲ ψέφισμ[α τόδε καὶ τὸν ὄρκον ἀναγραψάτο ὁ γραμ[μα]τεὺς ὁ τες β[ολες ἐστέλει λιθίνει ἐμ πόλει τέλεσ[ι τ]οῖς Κολοφο[νίον] (lines 38-40). The alternative restoration suggested by Mattingly (1984) 344 changes the order of the clauses but not the overall sense of the instruction.

[34] The payment clause (τέλεσι τοῖς αὐτôν: line 36) is ambiguous: it is not clear whether the pronoun refers to the Selymbrians (who were named in lines 31-2) or the Athenian generals (who appear in line 33). The former would become more likely if it could be shown that the thing erased from line 35 was a reference to the Selymbrians, but there are other equally plausible suggestions for words or phrases to fill that gap (see Meritt (1941) 327-8).

Other secure examples of non-Athenian payment for fifth-century decrees setting out 'imperial' regulations are the agreement made with Phaselis (*IG* I³ 10, ML 31) and the two treaties with Aphytis (*IG* I³ 62, 63). It has been plausibly argued that the requirement was applied to two more documents: *IG* I³ 38 (Athenian settlement with Aegina after the failed revolt of the mid-440s: see Lewis (1954) 23, and n.53 below) and *IG* I³ 39 (fragments of an allied loyalty oath, probably sworn by the Eretrians: see Schweigert (1937) 319). A further example might be *IG* I³ 66 (an agreement with Mytilene), but this is a complicated case, for two reasons. First, the reconstruction of the payment clause here is disputed. The text in *IG* reads (at line 22): τέλεσι τοῖς σ[φετέροις αὐτôν; this has been objected to on grammatical grounds (Henry (1980), (1983b), (1986)); Henry's proposed alternatives have a payment clause reading either τέλεσι τοῖσς ⟨τ⟩[ô ν Μυτιλεναίον or τέλεσι τοῖσς ⟨τ⟩[ô ν κλερόχον; both reconstructions are, in turn, objected to (primarily on epigraphic grounds) by Meritt and McGregor (1980), (1986). Second, the stone on which the treaty is pre-

allies pay for their own inscriptions seems, in other words, regularly to be associated with an Athenian assertion – or re-assertion – of power over that ally.[35] Moreover, it is a measure which often seems to form part of a punitive package. The additional financial burden involved may be negligible – if we assume an average cost of 20 to 30 drachmas for the production of the inscription, then the sums involved are only tiny percentages (or even fractions of percents) of the annual tribute payments of these states.[36] But this perhaps makes it still harder to avoid the instinctive feeling that this payment clause is a petty, almost vindictive, add-on to those broader imperial regulations: not only do the Chalcideans have to swear perpetual loyalty to the Athenian people, and not only do they have to have a public and permanent reminder of that subservience erected in the heart of Athens, they also have to pay for the privilege of that public humiliation. The sense that in these documents we can see, again, the sort of blunt Athenian imperialism described by Thucydides can be hard to shake off.[37]

Once again, however, I want to try to see what happens if that feeling of instant recognition is resisted, and if these inscriptions are placed in a rather different context: not the Thucydidean image of Athenian imperialism but – as before – the contemporary epigraphic environment.

Or perhaps environments. There seem, initially at least, to be two quite distinct epigraphic contexts in which this type of payment arrangement occurs (payment by the party which is, in grammatical terms, the object rather than the subject of the inscribed text). We have already seen one category of inscription for which payment might be demanded (or requested): unequal treaties, imposing regulations on (often) recalcitrant allies. But the same clause also appears in what seems to be a very different sort of document: honorific decrees, particularly proxeny decrees. The request (or demand) that the honorand should pay for their own honour to be advertised is not an absolutely standard feature of these documents, but it is regular enough to make its appearance fairly unsurprising.[38]

The practical consequences of that financial involvement are, however, not immediately apparent, and in order to get a clearer sense of the rights or responsibilities that might be associated with payment for an inscribed monument it is necessary to pause briefly and think about the processes by which the production and erection of inscriptions was managed in fifth-century Athens. The key figure was the Secretary of the Council (γραμματεὺς τῆς βουλῆς), and it is this official who is described in decrees (typically in the publication clause) as having responsibility for seeing that the decree is written up on a stone stele and placed in one or more specified

served is probably not the one to which the payment clause refers, but a 'dossier' assembled and inscribed at some later date: see Meritt (1954) 362, 367. It is extremely likely that the allies were required to pay for the erection of copies of the Standards Decree in their own cities (a newly discovered fragment allows a payment clause to be convincingly restored: Hatzopoulos (2000-2003) 35, lines 29-30 of the new text).

For the sake of completeness, it is worth mentioning a possible fourth-century example: StV II.267 (alliance between Athens and Cephallenia, c. 372), lines 23-7 (the phrase is largely restored).

[35] Note, for example, Busolt's rule on payment for inscriptions, set out in Staatskunde 2.819-20 n.3, cited (with approval) by Ferguson (1932) 175: demand for payment is associated with Beschlüsse rather than Verträge.

[36] Exact calculations are difficult (given fluctuations in tribute payments, the disputed dating of many of the texts involved, and uncertainty over precise costs of producing inscriptions), but approximate figures can give an impression of scale: the highest possible proportion (based on an inscribing cost of 30dr) would be approx 3.3% (Selymbria: lowest recorded Selymbrian tribute is 900dr); the lowest, approx. 0.02% (Aegina: highest recorded tribute is 30T). On the costs of inscriptions (based on fourth-century figures, but providing a useful overview nevertheless), see Nolan (1981); Loomis (1998) ch.8 (esp. 158-65).

[37] See, for example, Lalonde (1971) 74: the practice 'may simply be another instance of aggressive Athenian imperialism, characteristic of the later half of the fifth century'; Thomas (1994) 43-5 makes a similar argument.

[38] See Woodhead (1948) 55 n.2, who points out that the number of securely attested instances of this sort of payment clause is much smaller than often assumed: of 46 fifth- and fourth-century proxeny decrees, 22 have no explicit instructions on payment; fourteen specify Athenian payment; four specify that the proxenos (or his state) should pay. Lalonde ((1971) 74-5 and Appendix 1) produces very similar figures from a sample of 54 Athenian proxeny decrees (34 Athenian-funded; six foreign; one joint-funded; six with no payment clause preserved; seven with no provision for payment).

locations.³⁹ The impression of direct and individual responsibility which arises from the language of these publication clauses must, however, be slightly misleading: the Secretary has overall control, but he does not act completely unilaterally.⁴⁰ Most importantly (in the context of this discussion), it seems that the Secretary did not have complete control of the financial side of the operation. *IG* I³ 71 (ML 69), for example, provides a usefully explicit set of instructions for the process by which this decree (a re-assessment of tribute) was to be published:

ἀνα]γρά[φσίας] *ho* γρ[αμματεὺς τῆς βολῆς ἐν δυοῖν στ]έλα[ι]ν λιθίναιν [καταθέτο τὲμ μὲν ἐν τῶι βο]λευ[τείρ]ίοι τὲ[ν δὲ ἐμ πόλει· ἀπομισθοσάντον δὲ] *ho*[ι] πολεταί, τ[ὸ δὲ ἀργύριον παρασχόντον] *ho*ι κ[ο]λακρέτ[αι. (lines 23-6)

The Secretary of the Council is to write this up on two stone stelae and place one in the *bouleuterion* and the other on the Acropolis. The *poletai* are to let out the contract, and the *kolakretai* to provide the money.⁴¹

Evidence from other situations in which the *poletai* were responsible for arranging contracts suggests that this procedure did not allow them total control over the form that those contracts took: they would be required to report back to, and have their decisions approved by, the official or body with overall responsibility for the task.⁴²

It is important to emphasize how little of this system has to change when an inscription was paid for by someone other than the Athenian state. The source of money, of course, is now different, and it seems reasonable to assume that the *kolakretai* (or other Athenian financial officials)⁴³ would no longer be involved in the publication process. The *poletai* are not mentioned on any documents which specify non-Athenian payment, but since they are also missing from several publication clauses for internally funded inscriptions their absence here need not be significant.⁴⁴ What is both most clear and most important, however, is that the role of the Secretary remains unchanged: just as in other official Athenian documents, it is the Secretary who is given responsibility for 'writing up' the decree, and, just as in other official documents, this responsibility should entail ultimate control over the form and content of the inscribed text.⁴⁵

As with Athenian-funded documents, however, that overall control could leave room for negotiation with other interested parties, particularly those who were responsible for providing

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³⁹ In the fifth century, this task was performed by a single official who served for one prytany only. On the status and tasks of the Secretary, see [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 54.3-5, with Rhodes (1972) 134-40. See also Ferguson (1898); Lalonde (1971) 12-21; Sickinger (1999) 140-3.

⁴⁰ The 'managerial' role of the Secretary is emphasized by Lalonde (1971) 18-19. In addition to the evidence for financial delegation discussed below, there is also some evidence for the existence of assistants to the secretaries, to whom it can be assumed that many of the day-to-day tasks of taking minutes and maintaining records would have been delegated (Rhodes (1972) 139 (the ὑπογραμματεύς) and 141-2 (public slaves working in the archives)).

⁴¹ For other examples, and discussion of the role of the *poletai* in setting up these contracts, see Rhodes (1972) 96 n.6; Langdon (1991) 62-3.

⁴² Rhodes (1972) 96-7; Langdon (1991) 58. There is no direct evidence for the procedure followed in setting up contracts for inscriptions, but in other contexts it is possible to see the *boule* making the final decision on the letting of a contract for tax-farming ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.*

47.2; Andocides 1.134), and the archons ratifying the sale of confiscated property ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 47.2, Agora 19.P4, lines 1-2).

⁴³ For the range of possible officials, see Henry (1989).

⁴⁴ Langdon (1991) 63.

⁴⁵ The hallmark of 'officialness' of Athenian inscribed documents has (since Hartel (1878) 29-30) been seen to be the presence of the Secretary's name in the prescript of the decree (Ferguson (1898) 30; Lalonde (1971) 37-9; Henry (1977) 43-4). In fifth-century inscriptions known to be funded by non-Athenians and in which the prescript is preserved, there is only one case in which the Secretary is not named there: this is the Chalcis decree (*IG* I³ 40), and it is hard to know what the significance of that omission is, since everything else about the document (alphabet, style, findspot) suggests that this was an 'official' publication. In every case of externally financed publication, the publication clause (where preserved) states that the Athenian Secretary was responsible for the inscription and erection of the decree.

the funds for the inscription. There are times when it seems relatively clear that honorands who were asked to pay for the inscription of their honours took advantage of this financial involvement in order to make sure that the resulting monument was suitably impressive. One famous example is the inscription and relief recording the posthumous honours for Euphron of Sicyon (*IG* II² 448, esp. lines 72-3), where it is stipulated that Euphron's friends and relatives should contribute to the cost of the inscription, and where the quality of the resulting monument suggests that this opportunity was enthusiastically exploited.[46] Another, more relevant, example is the inscription that records the honours awarded by Athens to the people of Neapolis in the closing stages of the Peloponnesian War (*IG* I³ 101, ML 89; PLATE 4). The cost of the inscription was covered by the people of Neapolis (lines 42-4):

καὶ τὸ φσήφισμα τόδε ἀναγρά[φσας ὁ γραμματεὺς ὁ]
τῆς βουλῆς ἐστήληι λιθίνηι καταθ[έτο ἐμ πόλει τέλεσι τοῖ]-
ς Νεοπολιτῶν.

this decree shall be inscribed by the Secretary of the Council on a stone stele, and set up on the Acropolis at the expense of the Neapolitans.

Here too, as in the case of Euphron, the expenses provided by the Neapolitans covered not only the cost of a good-sized stone (and reasonably lengthy decree), but also the production of a document relief, which would almost certainly have increased the total cost of the monument.[47]

I am focusing on the Neapolitan inscription, and on the issue of cost, for a particular reason. The Neapolitans are subject allies of the Athenian empire: this is something known from the tribute lists, and which also becomes clear in the second decree recorded on this stone (where the Neapolitans are more obviously seeking Athenian concessions on some financial issue).[48] But in spite of this subject status, no-one (I think) would want to suggest that the Neapolitans would not have been quite happy to pay, and to pay more than the basic amount, for the production of this inscription. The Neapolitans come out of this decree extremely well: they have been loyal; they have provided financial help to the Athenians; the Athenians are, literally and metaphorically, indebted to them. So it is not at all implausible that they would want to ensure that the monument recording that decree would look as good as possible; that it would emphasize the importance of the Neapolitan relationship with Athens; and, even, that it would convey

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[46] The specification: συνεπιμεληθῆναι δὲ τῆς ἀν[αγρ]|αφῆς τοὺς φίλους καὶ τοὺς οἰκείους τοὺς Εὔφρο[νος]. Lawton (1995) 108 notes that the relief is 'unusually large and elaborate', and would have included decorations in metal; on the location of the monument, see Oliver (2003). Other secure examples of non-Athenian-financed inscriptions that include a document relief are rare: apart from the case of Neapolis (discussed below), the only other certain examples are *IG* II² 130 (honours for Sochares of Apollonia), *IG* II² 2496 (private lease from the Piraeus). Two other potential examples can be rejected: fragmentary reliefs once attached to *IG* I³ 62 and *IG* I³ 66 have now been dissociated from those documents (on the former, see Meritt (1967) 57-8 and Lawton (1995) no.104; on the latter, Bradeen and McGregor (1973) 121-2 and Lawton (1995) no.69). On the practical and political implications of providing a decree with a document relief, see Blanshard (2004).

[47] This last point not universally accepted. Uncertainty arises because, in those cases where the cost

of an inscription with document relief is known, these inscriptions do not seem to be any more expensive than the undecorated variety. There are two possible explanations: either inscriptions with document reliefs do not cost more than an undecorated inscription (the view of Lawton (1995) 26-7, who suggests that the presence or absence of a document relief might rely on the ability of the Secretary responsible to strike a good deal with the stonemason); or (as I would prefer) further contributions were possible (whether made by Secretary, honorand or other interested party) to cover the cost of the production of a decorated monument (suggested by Clinton (1996), who emphasizes the likelihood of further negotiations on the form of inscriptions *after* the passing of the decree: 'the decree tells us only what is authorised, not who actually pays'; similar view in Lambert (2001) 65).

[48] For the details of the financial transaction, see the commentary on ML 89 and, more recently, Alessandri (1998), who suggests that the payment referred to is the *eikoste*.

an impression that Neapolis is almost on equal terms with the Athenians. This last message would emerge most strongly from the document relief, which, as far as can be seen from the remaining fragments, depicted representative deities of Athens and Neapolis in the classic gesture of reciprocal equality, the handshake.

All this might seem unproblematic, even expected, in the case of a (comparatively) friendly imperial relationship like that which operated between Athens and Neapolis.[49] But if the possibility that payment for an inscription could bring with it the chance to exert influence over its form is allowed in this case, does it also have to be considered in other, less co-operative, instances – in those decrees where the stipulation for non-Athenian payment has been seen as an imposition rather than a concession, and where the parties involved might be less inclined to produce a monument celebrating their connection with the controlling power?

Such a possibility can be found to have informed discussions of these documents. Various scholars have noted that the standard of workmanship on some of these inscriptions is far from top-class: a decree recording the remains of the Eretrian loyalty oath (*IG* I³ 39; PLATE 5a) is, according to Schweigert, 'engraved … in a careless hand';[50] the Colophon decree (*IG* I³ 37; PLATE 5b) is classed as 'chaotic' by Lewis,[51] who makes an even harsher judgement on the document which seems to record the settlement imposed on Aegina after an abortive rebellion in the 440s (*IG* I³ 38; PLATE 5c):

> There is certainly a faint odour of the cheap job about our inscription … The first five letters down of the ninth column are extremely badly set, the chequer is closely drawn, as if to cram a great deal into a small stone, and the stone was not only small but faulty.[52]

Lewis goes further than most, however, in suggesting a reason for this poor-quality work. If Aegina was paying for the inscription herself,[53] then, he suggests – this time more in sorrow than anger – we should not be surprised that she was 'in view of her disappointment, disinclined to get the job done as well as possible'.[54]

The explanation is appealing, but some of the arguments on which it is based might be questioned. The potential subjectivity of aesthetic judgements of this sort (even in their more regulated epigraphic form) is hinted at by the absence of any criticism directed at the quality of *IG* I³ 31 (a treaty between Athens and Hermione), even though this was apparently produced by the same mason as the Aegina decree, and (more significantly) uses a stoichedon chequer which is of nearly identical dimensions to that which was condemned in the Aeginetan stone.[55] The criticism may, perhaps, be easier to sustain in the cases of the Colophonian and Eretrian decrees, both of which are far from elegant: the carver of the Colophonian decree does makes some minor

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[49] There might seem to be a parallel example in the impressive monument recording the post-427 settlement with Mytilene (*IG* I³ 66), which is (or appears to be) much more interested in celebrating a renewed friendship between Athens and Mytilene than in emphasizing Mytilenean submission (for this view, see especially Gomme (1953), who characterizes the tone of the decree as 'most cordial' (335)). The parallel would not be very secure, however: the content of the texts included on this monument is extremely uncertain; more importantly, it is not clear who was responsible for funding its erection. Gomme (1953) 336-7 and Meritt (1954) 362 argue that the impetus for the creation of the dossier came from the Mytileneans, but were making this judgement on the basis of a text which included a heading Μυτιλη[ναίον]. The fragment containing that heading is no longer con-

ventionally assigned to this document: see Bradeen and McGregor (1973) 121-2; Lawton (1995) no.69.

[50] Schweigert (1937) 319.

[51] Lewis (1954) 23.

[52] Lewis (1954) 22.

[53] Lewis (1954) 23 proposes that the payment clause could be reconstructed in the first three lines of the decree: [ἀναγράφσαι τὸν γραμματέα τὲς β]|[ολὲς ἐστέλ]ε[ι] λ[ιθίνει καὶ καταθἐναι ἐμ πόλει τέ]|[λεσι τ]οῖς Αἰγι[νετôν …

[54] Lewis (1954) 23.

[55] Chequer of *IG* I³ 38: 0.0122m x 0.0127m; of *IG* I³ 31: 0.011m x 0.0127m. The identity of the cutter of the two stones is suggested at *IG* I³ 38. The cutter of *IG* I³ 31 is praised for his 'well-cut nu' by Oliver (1933) 495.

slips,[56] but what is more striking is the layout of both inscriptions. The appearance of 'chaos' arises above all from the failure to use the stoichedon style, and from the cramped and irregular format that results. A financial motivation might lie behind this stylistic decision: avoidance of the stoichedon style can allow for a more efficient (and cost-effective) use of horizontal space on the stone.[57] And if that explanation for the appearance of these documents is correct, then it might just be possible to see here some faint, and admittedly inconsistent,[58] traces of the negative counterpart to the Neapolitan method of exerting financial influence: the Neapolitans provided the maximum funds, in order to ensure a suitably impressive record of their services; less enthusiastic allies made the Secretary's task harder by offering him as little money as possible.

There is, however, another way in which allied influence has been seen to be visible in the inscriptions that they financed: that is, in the choice of alphabet. The agreement with Phaselis (*IG* I³ 10), the oath of the Eretrians (*IG* I³ 39) and the first of the settlements of Aphytaean affairs (*IG* I³ 62) are all inscribed in the Ionic alphabet; the regulations for Colophon (*IG* I³ 37) show strong Ionic influence, as does the settlement with Selymbria (*IG* I³ 118). The Ionic intrusions into this last example are not too hard to explain, since by the last decade of the fifth century the use of the Ionic alphabet was becoming more widespread, even in official inscriptions.[59] But the appearance of Ionic forms in a state document of the middle of the fifth century does seem to require some sort of special explanation.

The explanation that is regularly provided centres, again, around the question of finance. The provision of payment, it is argued, brought with it responsibility for commissioning the inscription. A Phaselite delegation (for example) would, naturally, commission someone – whether an Athens-based expatriate or a multi-lingual Athenian – who could produce a stone in a suitably Phaselite script. Meiggs and Lewis sum up the prevailing opinion in their commentary on that document (ML 31): 'The Ionic lettering no doubt [reflects] the fact that the Phaselites paid for the stone themselves.'

That same correlation – between non-Athenian payment and non-Attic script – is also argued to apply to the other cases where Ionic script is used: non-Athenian payment results in non-Athenian script, and does so because there is a non-Athenian element in the circumstances of the stone's creation. An Ionic alphabet, it is argued, should involve, if not an Ionian stonemason, then at least an Ionian commission.[60] The implication of these arguments (not always spelled

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[56] Most obviously, failure to add a cross-bar to the third alpha of line 54 (and possibly to the second alpha of line 56).

[57] Suggested by Walbank (1978) 32 (who is looking for explanations for the occasional failure to use the stoichedon style in proxeny decrees). Generally on the use of the style in Attic decrees of the fifth century, see Austin (1938) 50-4. This explanation does depend on the cost of stone being an important factor in the overall cost of producing an inscription: the published prices of inscriptions do not prove that this was the case, but these prices are unlikely to reflect the cost of the whole inscribing process (see n.47 above; on the specific difficulty of including quarrying costs in the published prices, see Loomis (1998) 162-3).

[58] Note especially the comparison between *IG* I³ 62 and 63: both concern Aphytis, are erected at Aphytaean expense, and (as far as it is possible to tell) are similar in tone. The former is in Ionic script and is stoichedon; the latter is Attic and non-stoichedon. Were the Aphytaeans more budget-conscious on the second occasion, or is the variation simply incidental?

[59] The carver of this decree appears to be making a sustained (if unsuccessful) attempt to remember to use

Attic forms: as well as the uncorrected appearances of Ionic forms, there are also points where the mistake has been spotted and remedied (eta replaced by epsilon three times; one substitution each of Attic for Ionic lambda and gamma).

[60] See, for example, Meritt (1944) 215 (on the Aphytis inscription): 'when the expense of the inscription was borne by foreigners, to whom Ionic script was natural, Ionic lettering was appropriate for an Athenian decree at any time in the fifth century'; similar views in Ferguson (1932) 175-6 and Schweigert (1937) 319 n.1. An alternative explanation (proposed by Walbank (1974) 164 n.10; (1978) 33, 48-9 nn. 10 and 11) argues for an Athenian stonemason, working from an Ionian draft of the decree: such an explanation has similar – or perhaps even more striking – implications for the question of agency (the allies might not carve their own decrees, but they do draft them). Balcer (1978) 91-4 produces a different (and less plausible) explanation for the Ionic script of *IG* I³ 39, involving the total disappearance of an Attic original and the migration from Euboea to Attica of this Ionic interloper.

out, but hard to avoid), is that we should imagine the Phaselites, Colophonians, Aphytaeans and Eretrians all setting off to the stoneyards themselves, ready to present their own version of the text to a suitable stonemason, and to commission their own record of this Athenian decision. If this image of the practical circumstances of the stone's creation were correct, then it would introduce a quite striking degree of direct allied involvement in, even complicity with, the creation of these decrees – a degree of involvement which would be even more striking in view of the strongly unilateral flavour of many of the decisions that these inscriptions record.

This picture of direct allied agency, direct involvement in the creation of these decrees, is, however, hard to accept. If non-Attic script is a reflection of allied authorship of these documents, then it is difficult to see why the script used is always Ionic rather than the relevant local script, and why the texts show no sign of local dialect.[61] Even if an explanation could be found for that feature, a crucial objection would still remain: these documents are explicitly marked as Athenian productions: they open and close with the official endorsement of the Athenian Secretary, and it is that official who must be assumed to retain ultimate control over the content of the inscribed text.[62] The fact of non-Athenian funding cannot, I think, function as a direct and complete explanation for the presence of non-Attic script.

The direct explanation may not, then, quite work; but there is another, indirect, and potentially more interesting, way of accounting for the form of these inscriptions. If the Ionic script is not used in these documents for simply technical reasons, then it seems likely that it is there as a result of a deliberate choice; and if it is accepted that it is the Athenian Secretary who has the final say over the content and form of an inscribed document, then it follows that the choice must be, ultimately, an Athenian one. Which raises the obvious question: why would the Athenians make a deliberate choice to use a non-Attic script? Why, in particular, would they choose to use Ionic script?

Recent work on the development of alphabets, and especially of the Ionic alphabet, has emphasized the fact that choice of script is very rarely a neutral matter.[63] Although there are circumstances in which a script might be preferred for purely practical reasons – because it provides a more efficient way of representing a language – a decision to use a particular script, or to move to a different script, will frequently have broader, political or ideological, connotations. In the case of the use of the Ionic alphabet at Athens, these possible connotations are, it is true, quite confusingly varied, and it is unlikely that one explanation will ever account for all examples. A distinction must be made, first of all, between private inscriptions (where Ionic is used from an early date, particularly in dedications) and Athenian state inscriptions. Chronological change must also be accounted for: as was noted above, the use of Ionic becomes so widespread by the last decade of the fifth century that its appearance even in public decrees might be considered unexceptional. But before the start of this 'transitional period' (conventionally placed at 411/10),[64] the use of Ionic in public documents is restricted almost exclusively to

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[61] Suitable comparisons are not available for all the examples, but the ones that do exist are suggestive. Phaselis: Buck (1955) no.51 (Phaselite dedication at Delphi, late fifth century) has many Ionic features, but does not use eta or omega (both are used in *IG* I³ 10; Buck no. 51 may, however, reflect Delphian rather than Phaselite practice). Eretria: arguments from alphabet are inconclusive (the alphabet changes from Attic to Ionic in the fifth century; *IG* I³ 39 is cited by Jeffery (1990) 86 as the earliest example of this change), but the question of dialect remains: see, for example, ML 82 (proxeny decree, 411) for the characteristic features of the Eretrian dialect (notably, intervocalic rhotacism: see Buck (1955) 143). Dialectal features in *IG* I³ 39 are, if anything, char-

acteristically Attic (for example, presence of alpha pure in line 9).

[62] Circumstantial evidence against the 'drafting' thesis might also be seen in the Neapolitan decree, *IG* I³ 101: the fact that the Neapolitans felt the need to make representations to have the text of the original decree amended suggests strongly that they were not directly involved in creating that text. (The request – for the removal of references to the Neapolitan status as colonists of Thasos – appears in lines 58-9; erasures in lines 7 and 8 of the first decree show that the request was granted.)

[63] D'Angour (1999) 110.

[64] Walbank (1978) 33.

two categories: honorific or proxeny decrees, and decrees recording relations with the members of the empire.[65] In this second category, it is only when the decree is paid for by the subject state that the Ionic alphabet is used (although the reverse does not hold: non-Athenian payment enables, but does not require, non-Attic script).[66] In Athenian public documents of the mid fifth century, then, the use of the Ionic alphabet is associated above all with decrees that describe and regulate Athens' relations with the rest of the Greek world.[67]

It is tempting – but probably too tendentious – to try to map this alphabetic dichotomy (Attic versus Ionic) onto the much broader debate between Atticism and Ionianism which is visible in Athenian political discourse, particularly in the records of interstate politics, in this period.[68] One side of Athens' fifth-century, and especially post-Persian War, persona is that of a self-reliant, self-standing city, whose increasing appeal to a autochthonous story of origin and identity requires a severing of mythical, ideological, and societal ties with the broader Ionian community.[69] The other side, which never completely disappears, shows the maintenance of those links with the Ionian world, albeit often combined with a deliberate effort to demonstrate Athens' position as the most important member of that interstate family.[70] The persistence of arguments based on Ionian kinship is visible even in Thucydides, although it is quite clear that, in Thucydides' analysis, such appeals to kinship are entirely valueless. Some years before the Sicilian expedition, for example, the people of Leontini appealed to Athens for help, on the basis of a shared Ionian kinship; in response, according to Thucydides,

ἔπεμψαν οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι τῆς μὲν οἰκειότητος προφάσει, βουλόμενοι δὲ μήτε σῖτον ἐς τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἄγεσθαι αὐτόθεν πρόπειράν τε ποιούμενοι εἰ σφίσι δυνατὰ εἴη τὰ ἐν τῇ Σικελίαι πράγματα ὑποχείρια γενέσθαι.

The Athenians did send the ships, allegedly because of their long-standing relationship, but really because they wanted to keep grain from reaching the Peloponnese from the west, and wanted to feel out whether it would be possible to take control of things in Sicily. (Thuc. 3.86.4)

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[65] On the use of Ionic in proxeny decrees, see Walbank (1978) 33. There are a few exceptions to this general rule: some decrees of demes or other non-*polis* groups use Ionic at a relatively early stage (*IG* I³ 248 (accounts from Rhamnous, 440s); *IG* I³ 256 (sacred law, found at Lamptrae, 430s); *IG* I³ 258 (accounts of the deme Plotheia, *c.* 420)). Note also the new casualty list from the Athenian Metro excavations (Parlama and Stampolidis (2000) 396-9), which seems to date to the mid-420s, and which contains two lists of names: the first in Ionic, the second in Attic. It is not clear, however, whether this was a public inscription or a semi-private publication produced by the Athenian cavalry.

The Ionic alphabet is also used in some Athenian imperial inscriptions erected outside Attica: an explanation based on conformity to local practice might have more force here, but can still be challenged. The most famous example, the Standards Decree (*IG* I³ 1453, ML 45), is also the least helpful: it seems plausible that the Ionic copies were inscribed locally, and under the supervision of local officials, but the ambiguity of the publication clause (clause 8), the shortage of suitable comparative material from the allied states, and the variation between the fragments leave considerable room for debate (note especially the variation in the use of the stoichedon style in the Ionic fragments: on the possible

significance of this, see Mattingly (1977) 86-7). Use of Attic outside Attica (as in the Cos fragment of the Standards Decree) presents yet another set of problems, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

[66] It would be dangerous to draw too firm conclusions from this, however, on the basis of current evidence: an argument from absence is never totally secure, particularly when the argument from presence is based on so few examples. It is worth noting that the same pattern does not quite apply to proxeny decrees: some Athenian-funded decrees do use Ionic script (for example, *IG* I³ 174).

[67] D'Angour (1999) 121 notes the use of Ionic as 'a practical and diplomatic concession to Athens' wider Hellenic connections' (and also discusses other potential implications of the use of this alphabet: its relationship to literary writing, to oligarchy, and to Athenian relations with Samos).

[68] On which see Hall (1997), esp. 51-6.

[69] Hall (1997) 54.

[70] Visible in the depiction of Ionian cities as colonies of Athens (e.g. at Hdt 7.95, 9.106; Thuc. 1.2.6, 1.12.4, 1.95.1), and, in some form, in the presence of land dedicated to 'Ion at Athens' on Samos (*IG* I³ 1496, with Parker (1996) 145). On Athenian use of the rhetoric of Ionianism in imperial contexts, see Hornblower (1991) 520-1; (1992) 173-5.

It is perhaps taking things too far to try to claim that the Ionic script of these documents can be used as evidence that appeals to Ionian kinship were more embedded in Athenian imperial discourse than Thucydides is prepared to allow. It is hard to tell how far the Ionic alphabet still had any specifically Ionian connections by this time, and how far it was already on its way (outside the borders of Attica) to becoming a global script, a sort of alphabetic Esperanto.[71] But even if the second characterization is much more accurate, the basic dichotomy remains, and, most importantly, it is a dichotomy that sets a specifically, distinctively, Athenian style of writing against a style that is the cultural property of a much broader group, a style to which the Athenians have no privileged or exclusive claim.

If, then, the use in these documents of Ionic rather than Attic script is a deliberate choice – and an Athenian choice – then it is a choice that privileges a particular way of representing the relationships which those documents describe and control, and, more to the point, which makes particular suggestions about exactly who is in control of those relationships. These are not, to judge from their appearance, Athenian documents; they are Ionic, even Panhellenic, texts. They exemplify a move towards a style of representing an interstate relationship in which the power that is being exercised over the allies is not, straightforwardly, Athenian *kratos*, reaching out beyond the boundaries of Attica and overtaking everything in its path. What is represented is, instead, a more subtle, homogenizing approach to the construction of power, in which Athens is not so much the enforcer of an Athenian way of life as a facilitator of some wider, perhaps Panhellenic, relationship. Might it, therefore, be possible to see the demand (or request) for allied payment as acting more as a gesture of inclusion than as a symbol of oppression?

What I think these stones represent is more or less the exact opposite of the set of examples which were considered in the first half of this paper, and it is an opposition which is, I would argue, quite significant. There is a lack of fit, in both cases, between the primary purpose of the decree and the way in which it is presented. In the first set of inscriptions – whose primary content has little direct link with control of the empire – we find the most explicit assertions of that control. In this second set, in which the Athenians are not just asserting but demonstrating their *kratos* over the *poleis* of the empire, there seems to be a much more subtle presentation of the nature of that *kratos*. The picture that is at least hinted at by these stones is one of co-operation rather than coercion, one in which it is not the Athenian voice that shouts the loudest. The practical outcome, the direct experience of imperialism, may well be much the same – the Athenians get the power, the allies get what they're given – but it is a way of representing that distribution of power that is not generally associated with the fifth century, and which is perhaps much more widely thought of as typifying the gentler world of the fourth century. The Athenians are, I think, being cleverer – being more diplomatic (if only in the 'lying for their country' sense of the word) – than they are often given credit for.

They were not always so clever, or subtle, or deceptive (depending on your point of view). It will not have escaped notice that the settlement with Chalcis, the paradigmatic case of Athenian extortion with which the second part of this article began, has slipped slowly from view; and it will perhaps not be a surprise, either, to find out that that document – paid for by the Chalcideans and directing Chalcidean affairs – shows absolutely no trace of Chalcidean, or non-Attic, influence in its presentation. Gestures of inclusion were not, it seems, an invariable part of the Athenian diplomatic repertoire.

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[71] On 'Ionic intrusion' into epichoric alphabets from the seventh to fourth centuries, see Woodhead (1967) 18-19; problems of dating, and paucity of material, make the construction of any firm chronology extremely difficult.

Nevertheless, such gestures did form some part of the language of Athenian imperialism, and a much greater part than a reading of Thucydidean imperial language would suggest. More important still is the fact that the explicit, domineering assertions of power and control which, in Thucydides' world, form such a characteristic part of Athenian communication with her subject allies, are strikingly absent from these non-Thucydidean sources. There was another world of Athenian imperialism, and it is one to which these inscribed documents provide intriguing, and authoritative, access.

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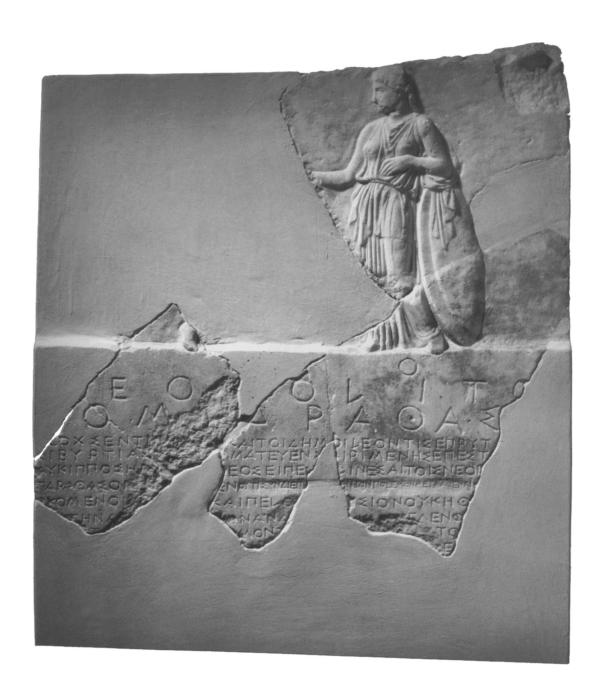
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PLATE 4   THE LANGUAGE OF ATHENIAN IMPERIALISM   *JHS* 125 (2005)

IG I³ 101 (ML 89), Athens and Neapolis
(photograph: Athens, Epigraphical Museum; EM 6598)

(a) *IG* I³ 39, Athens and Eretria
(photograph: Athens, Epigraphical
Museum; EM 7000)

(b) *IG* I³ 37 (ML 47), fragment A
Athens and Colophon
(photograph: Athens, Epigraphical
Museum; EM 6564a)

(c) *IG* I³ 38, Athens and Aegina
(photograph: Athens, Epigraphical
Museum; EM 5573)