

Oropos. Decree concerning loans for the reconstruction of the wall

Description: white marble stele partially preserved (the initial part of the decree on the left side and the final part are missing), in five pieces; h: 0.47 m w: 0.445 m d: 0.095 m ; the superior edge shows on the right side what's left of a pediment

Layout: writing direction: left to right; not stoichedon

Letters: h: 0.008 m

Origin: Amphiareion, sanctuary dedicated to Amphiaraus at Oropos

Dating: between the end of 4th and the beginning of 3rd century BC

Findspot: four pieces were found north of the bases in the Amphiareion; the fifth piece was found on 26-10-1926 by B. Leonardos behind the pedestals and identified as part of the decree by Petrakos (Oropos, 183; I.Oropos, 210)

Current location: Amphiareion, inv. A301

Reference edition: I.Oropos 302, with changes

Other editions: ed. pr. Mitsos 1953-1954 [1958], II, 158-161 (SEG 16 295); J. et L. Robert, BE 1958 251; F.G. Maier, Mauerbauinschriften 26bis; L. Moretti, ISE I 61; H.W. Pleket, Epigraphica 28; Petrakos 1968, no. 42 (SEG 25 486); L. Migeotte, Emprunt 8 (Roesch 1985, Appendix Epigraphica 85.20; Meier 2012, no. 13)

Photographs: Mitsos 1953-1954 [1958], II, 159; Petrakos 1968, pl. 61a (squeeze); I.Oropos, 27 pl. 302 (squeeze)

Translations: L. Moretti, ISE I, 155-157 (in Italian); L. Migeotte, Emprunt 8 (in French); Meier 2012, no. 13 (in German)

Bibliography: J. et L. Robert, BE 1959 43; Robert 1960, 194-202; Petrakos 1967, 7-8; Migeotte 1994, 3-15; Knoepfler 1992, 454

[θεοί]. [- - - εἶπεν]· δεδόχθαι τ[ῶι δή-]
 [μωι]· [ὅπως ἂν - - -] ἡμῖν κατασκευ[υα-]
 [σθῆι καὶ τὰ πεπτωκότα τείχη ἀνοι]κοδομηθεῖ, τ[οὺς]
 [ἄνδρας τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ τείχη ἡρημέ]νους, Κράτυλλ[ον],
 5 [- - -]ON, Ἐξηκεστίδην,
 ἐπιμελη[θῆναι ὅπως ἂν εἰς τὸ]ν τειχισμὸν χρήμα-
 τα πορισθῆι τῆι πόλει· [τὰς δὲ] προσόδους τῆς πόλε-

ως πάσας ὑπάρχειν εἶ[ς τε τὸ]ν τε[ιχ]ισμὸν καὶ εἰ-
 ς τὴν ἀπόδοσιν τῶν δα[ν]εισθέντων χρημάτων (vac.)
 10 εἰς τὰ τεῖχη· ἀφαιρεθ[ῆ]ναι δὲ ὅσα τε εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ ἀνα-
 λίσκεται καὶ μισθοὺς [το]ῖς ὑπηρέταις καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο
 ἀνάλωμα τῆς πόλεως [έ]στι κατὰ νόμον ἢ κατὰ ψή-
 φισμα· ὅπως δ' ἂν εἰδῶσι πάντες τοὺς προελομέ-
 νους εἰς τὸν τειχισμὸν τῆς πόλεως βοηθῆσαι, τοὺς
 15 τειχοποιοὺς ἀναγράψαι ἐν στήλαις λιθίναις τό τ[ε]
 ψήφισμα τοῦ δήμου καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν τειχοπο[ι-]
 ῶν καὶ τῶν δανεισάντων τῆι πόλει καὶ ὅ τι ἕκαστος
 [έ]δάνεισε καὶ τῶν ἐνγυησαμένων, καὶ στήσαι (vac.)
 20 [τῆν μ]ὲν ἐν τῶι ἱερῶι τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου, τὴν δὲ ἐν
 [τῆι ἀγο]ρᾶ[ι], ὅπου ἂν δοκεῖ ἐν καλλίστῳ εἶναι· ἐπι-
 [σκέψασθαι] δὲ τ[ὸ]ν δήμ[ον] καθότι ἀξίως αὐτοῦ (vac.)
 [- - - συν]οικισμὸν τῆς
 [- - -]Ε σωτ[η]ρί-
 [ας - - -]
 [- - -]

Apparatus criticus: I. 1: [θεοί. - - - εἶπεν] Mitsos, almost everyone agrees : [- - - εἶπεν] Petrakos 1968, 1997. I. 2: [ὅπως ἂν - - -] Mitsos, almost everyone agrees : [ὅπως ἂν φρουρίά τε ἰσχυρά] Petrakos 1968, 1997. I. 3: [οἰ]κοδομηθεῖ Mitsos; Maier, Moretti, Pleket agree : κατασκε[υα]σθῆι καὶ τὰ πεπτωκότα τεῖχη ἀνοι]κοδομηθεῖ Petrakos 1968, 1997 : κατασκε[υα]σθ - - - καὶ τὰ πεπτωκότα τεῖχη ἀνοι]κοδομηθεῖ Migeotte. I. 4: [τοὺς ἰσταμέ(?)]νοὺς Mitsos; Maier, Moretti, Pleket agree : [ἄνδρας τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ τεῖχη ἠιρημέ]νοὺς Petrakos 1968, 1997, Migeotte agrees. I. 6: ἐπιμελη[θῆ]μεν ὅπως εἰς τό]ν Mitsos; Maier, Moretti Pleket agree : ἐπιμελη[θῆ]ναι ὅπως ἂν εἰς τό]ν Petrakos 1968, 1997: ἐπιμελη[θῆ]ναι ὅπως εἰς τό]ν Migeotte. I. 10: ἀφαιρεθ[ῆ]τ[ω]σαν δ' ὅσα Mitsos; Maier, Moretti, Pleket agree : ἀφαιρεθ[ῆ]ναι δ' ὅσα Petrakos 1968, 1997, Migeotte agrees. I. 20: [τῆι ἀγο]ρᾶι Mitsos, almost everyone agrees : [τῆι χῶ]ρα[ι] Petrakos 1968 (but [τῆι ἀγο]ρᾶι Petrakos 1997). II. 20-21: ἐπι[σκέψασθαι] Petrakos 1968, 1997, Migeotte agrees. I. 21 τ[ῶ]ι δήμ[ω]ι κ[α]θότι Mitsos; Maier, Moretti, Pleket agree : τ[ὸ]ν δήμ[ον] καθ' ὅτι Petrakos 1968 : τ[ὸ]ν δήμ[ον] καθότι Migeotte, Petrakos 1997 agrees. I. 22: [συν]οικισμὸν τῆς Robert, BE, 1958, no. 251; Maier, Moretti agree : [τιμήσει τοὺς δανείσαντας εἰς τὸν] οἰκισμὸν Petrakos 1968, 1997 : [ἂν ἔχη τιμήσασθαι τοὺς εἰς τὸν συν]οικισμὸν Migeotte. II. 23-24: [- - - εἰδό]τες ὅτι [..][- - -] Mitsos, Pleket agrees : [πόλεως - - - εἰδό]τες ὅτι [..][- - -] Maier; Moretti agrees: [χώρας - - - χάριν τῆς τ]ε σωτ[η]ρί[ας τῆς πόλεως καὶ T - - -] Petrakos 1968, 1997: [πόλεως βοηθήσαντας - - -]ΕΣΛΤ[- - -] Migeotte.

Translation:

[Gods - - - has proposed]: people have decided that, in order to pre[serve] for us and to rebuild [the fallen wall, the designated men in charge of the wall], Kratyllos, [- - -] Exekestides, have to take care that money will be provided to the city for the wall-building; that all city incomes will be destined to the wall-building and to the refund of the money lent out for the wall, except for what it is spent for sacrifices, for the pay of the attendants and for any other expenses of the city depending on a law or on a decree; that, in order to let

everyone know the men who have chosen deliberately to contribute to the wall-building of the city, the teichopoioi will engrave on stone stelai the people's decree and the names of the teichopoioi and of the city's beneficiaries, which amount of money everyone has lent and the guarantors' names; that one stele will be standing in Amphiaraus' sanctuary, while another one in the [agora], in a place where it seems best (for it to be standing); that people [will consider(?)] in a way that is worthy of themselves [- - - syn]oikismo [- - -] saf[ety(?) - - -]

Commentary:

Oropos' wall had fallen down between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century BC; the circumstance is not specified in the current text (or maybe it was once, in the initial part of the decree, now lost). The city had demanded a loan from private citizens (their names must be engraved on stone stelai), but the money obtained was not sufficient. This is the reason why the decree was written: the people established that all income of the city, except for expenses for sacrifices, attendants' pay and other extra expenses contemplated by law or decree, must be used for the building of the wall and to pay down the loans. This decree has an honorific function too: the teichopoioi, who had the office to engrave the decree and to administrate money for the reconstruction, as is specified at ll. 6-7 (if Kratyllos and Exekestides really are the teichopoioi whose mention is made at ll. 15 and 16-17), the lenders and the guarantors will be remembered in the same stone stelai where the decree will be written. The last part is too mutilated to say what it was about. By analysing the shape of the letters, the document can be dated within a period between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BC; more precisely nowadays there are three plausible suggested dates: the first would be the years between 322 and 313 BC, the second 295-294 BC, the third 287 BC.

As a matter of fact, Oropos was disputed between Attica and Boeotia for a long time; in 338/7 Philip of Macedonia gave Oropos to Athens (Paus. 1.34.1), which distributed this area among its phylai (Hyp. Eux. 16); it is known from some decrees (cf. Robert 1960, 195-196) that under the administration of Lycurgus Oropos was still subject to Athens' control. In 322, after the Lamian war, Oropos became independent (Diod. 18.26), but in 313 Cassandrus conquered Oropos and, after making an alliance with Thebes, he gave Oropos to the Boeotian Confederacy (Diod. 19.77-78). In the year 303/2 the city was again under Athens' domain, as can be seen in an Athenian decree (SEG 3 117) mentioning a phyle in the area of Oropos. When Demetrius Poliorketes headed to Greece against Cassandrus, he separated Chalcis from the Boeotian Confederacy (Diod. 20.100) and, after the conquest of Phyle, Panakton and Salamis, he consigned these territories to Athens (Plut. Demetr. 23.1-3); it may be that on the same occasion Demetrius handed Oropos over as well (this hypothesis has been proposed by De Sanctis 1926, 222-223). After 287 the Boeotian Confederacy gained control over Oropos once again. Etienne and Roesch (1978) have analysed a pact between Orchomenos and Cheronaea: the two cities organised a campaign together in Oropos and Thebes in order to control these areas; thanks to both linguistic and prosopographical evidence the scholars dated this document between 285 and 280 BC. It is possible that in this period Oropos was a member of the Boeotian Confederacy, and that the campaign represented a display of power in a recently obtained territory.

Back to the current text, it is noteworthy that neither the federal archon of the Boeotian Confederacy nor an Athenian official is mentioned in the decree. It is not impossible that their mention is today lost but once present, considering that the stele is broken in the initial part, but by comparison with another decree from Oropos (IG VII 4263), similar to the

current one, though later (221 BC ca), it can be stated that when the decree was drawn up, Oropos was independent. Moreover, the decree was shown only in Amphiaraus' sanctuary and probably in the agora, yet, if Oropos had been under the control of another authority, a copy of the decree would have been put in the lead city too.

So, the text has to be assigned to a period in which Oropos was free: that is to say, to 322-313 or to some moment at the beginning of the 3rd century between Athens' rule and membership in the Boeotian Confederacy. According to Maier, a probable date could be 294-286 BC, that is during the dispute between Athens and Demetrius: the latter had conquered Piraeus, Salamis, Eleusis and Rhamnous (Plut. Demetr. 33.5), but in 288/7 Athens gained Museion and Eleusis again; then in 287 Demetrius took Phyle and Panakton. Maybe in this juncture Demetrius freed Oropos; indeed, Diogenes Laertius relates that the philosopher Menedemos from Eretria went before Demetrius to negotiate the situation of Oropos (Diog. Laert. 2.141) in 294 BC, and according to Petrakos (1995, 8) he managed to obtain freedom for his wife's native land.

Another element that could be taken into account is the mention of Kratyllos and Exekestides, because a person called Kratyllos is mentioned also in another inscription, IG VII 2724a, as son of a certain Amphidamios and aphestrateuon (that is, one of the Boeotian officials subordinate to Boeotarchs) under the archon of the koinon Triax (in the years 312-308 or 287-280 according to Feyel 1942, 28-29; 73). A person called Exekestides was priest of the Amphiareion (IG VII 251) under the archon Nikon (218-204 BC according to Feyel 1942, 37-40; 74) and Petrakos (1968, 185) thinks that he was this same Exekestides' grandson. However, Migeotte objects that, without patronymics, the identification of these two officials cannot be certain. Concerning the use of patronymics in Boeotia cf. Vottero 1987, 211-231; besides, this scholar proposes to date IG VII 2724a (with other three inscriptions, IG VII 2723, 2724 and 2724b, all nearly contemporary) at least thirty years later respect to the dating suggested by Feyel, in the first half of the 3rd century.

Considering that none of the elements analysed can provide an answer, it is still uncertain whether Oropos had drawn up this decree in the period 322-313, after Athens' rule, which was responsible for the destruction of Oropos' wall, or in the period between 294 and 287, during the struggles between Athens and Demetrius, which caused the fall of the wall. In fact, on the one hand there is no proof that a freeing of Oropos really took place in 294 or in 287; on the other hand it is also probable that Oropos' wall fell down for other reasons than a conflict. It is true that such an onerous demand for funds may indicate considerable damage, yet this still could have been caused by an earthquake as well. No trace of walls in Oropos have survived, but it can be conjectured that they were made of some non-durable material such as raw bricks (Petrakos 1968, 184), so that even the passing of time could have caused them to fall.

It is almost certain that another decree had been voted for before this one, similar to IG VII 4263. In the latter, a loan by voluntary subscription was asked for (possibly with a fixed minimum) in order to repair the wall. This request was followed by a formal offer of money that also listed the conditions of the loan, namely, payment methods, guarantees and honours that the loaners would obtain. The current decree is subsequent to this step and has two purposes: it aims on the one hand to continue the gathering of funds for the reconstruction; on the other hand to pay down the debts. Although disposing of no liquidity, the city was confident that it could refund the lenders, while these were feeling safe enough to lend their money, thanks to the presence of the guarantors too. It should be noted that Oropos incurred further debts before being able to pay down its previous loans. Therefore,

the city did not find itself in a period of crisis, but rather in a condition of general economical and financial stability (cf. Migeotte 2010, 61-66, 233-245), although in a temporary state of necessity. A similar situation can be observed in Halicarnassus in the years between 279/8 and 221, when the city fell into debt for the construction of a portico and of a gymnasium (Wilhelm 1908, 53-56) before it could pay off previous loans for public buildings (GIBM 897).

The teichopoioi were officials whose existence is attested as stable authority both by literary and epigraphic sources in Athens in 4th century BC (cf. IG II² 1658-1661; Dem. 18.55; Aeschin. 3.24; see also Arist. Pol. 1321b 26), in Miletus in 3rd-2nd century BC (Syll.³ 577, l. 82, where it seems they had their own funds, called τειχοποιοικᾶ), and elsewhere in Greece; cf. Busolt 1920, 630a, no. 2. It remains uncertain whether in Oropos the teichopoioi were permanent officials too or elected only by necessity. The people mentioned in lines 4-5 of the decree, among which are Exekestides' and Kratyllos', may have been the teichopoioi, although it is strange that they were already mentioned in the initial part. Perhaps their names were repeated in the final part, with guarantors' and lenders' names, with an honorific purpose, while in the first part their office was specified. The teichopoioi in this text have the duty to engrave the decree and to collect money, but it is still unclear how the latter operation should have taken place. Meier suggests that another subscription was planned (Meier 2012, 220 n. 230).

The guarantors were almost certainly people who guaranteed for the city that the debt contracted for the building of the wall would be paid back to creditors, as Migeotte (Emprunt, 37) affirms. Therefore, because of the risks they had taken, their names would be remembered in the stone stelai. For a different point of view, although less convincing, cf. Maier, Mauerbauinschriften, 120, and Moretti, ISE I, 156 no. 1.

It is not known how much money the city needed to rebuild the wall. An estimate can be made by comparing the expenses for the extension of the wall of Colophon dated between 311 and 306 BC (SEG 19 699), which amounted to some hundreds of thousands of drachms (see Maier, Mauerbauinschriften, II, 66-68; Migeotte, Emprunt 69). However, the cost varied considerably according to the specific kind of work required. In the case of new buildings, reconstructions, transformations, and repairs, large amounts of money were needed, so the cities resorted to different economic sources, as can be clearly remarked in this inscription. In fact, not only are there explicit references to previous debts incurred in order to cover the expenses of the reconstruction, but the city had also decided to invest nearly all its incomes on these works – perhaps, it would even need to ask for further loans under the form of a voluntary subscription. Some years later another subscription is announced for the same reconstruction, this time addressing foreigners (IG VII 4263): the city requested the interest rate to be as low as possible, and restricted the lenders that would be remembered in the inscription to those who lent a talent or more. The stele only displays one name: evidently the last subscription had little success. Likewise, in Colophon there was an investment of different funds for public constructions at the end of the 4th century BC. In order to occupy an abandoned site and to expand the wall, the city first resorted to the sale of lots and accepted funds under the form of foreign loans, and then proclaimed a voluntary subscription among the citizens.

Regarding public resources and funds reserved for specific expenses (as in the current text, ll. 10-13: 'except for what is spent for sacrifices, for the pay of the attendants and for any other expenses of the city depending on a law or on a decree') see Migeotte 2014, 58 and 66.

The restoration by Robert, συνοικισμόν (l. 22), seems more convincing than the one preferred by Petrakos, οἰκισμόν, which is meaningless here. Συνοικισμός means here the repopulation and the reconstruction of a polis abandoned or destroyed, according to Robert, BE 1958 251: if the restoration is correct, it is the evidence that the fall of the wall was not caused by a natural catastrophe, but was due to a hostile action, whose result was the dispersion of the people as well. As a consequence, after the freeing of Oropos, it was necessary to repopulate the place by gathering people. For further occurrences of συνοικισμός and συνοικίζειν cf. I.Amyzon, 188-190. According to Hansen, Nielsen 2004, 115-119, the term often involves the relocation of people: «In a broader and less precise sense, however, synoikismos also covers the relocation of a community to a new-built settlement without any merging of different communities. ... A synoecism seems invariably to have involved relocation of people from one or more settlements to one settlement which thereby was founded or reinforced» (Hansen, Nielsen 2004, 115, 117).

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