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A Note on the Rhodian Expedition against Aigila

Mario Segre, in an article published in 1932,¹ was the first person to connect a Rhodian civic decree honouring the participants in an expedition against Aigila (the modern island of Antikythera) to a second Rhodian inscription, a funerary inscription, heavily damaged, recording the deaths of the three sons of Timakrates of the Rhodian deme Kasareis.² The decree records the participation of Polemarchos son of Timakrates of the deme Kasareis in the expedition at lines 7-9 (Πολέμαρχος Τιμακράτεος | Κασαρεύς καταπαλαφέ|τας). Segre restored the funerary inscription at line 9 to read [?Polemarcho]s son of Timakrates ([?Πολέμαρχο]ς Τιμακράτευς), and dated both inscriptions to 260-250 BC.

Alain Bresson has argued, correctly in my view, against Segre's dating of these inscriptions, mainly on epigraphic grounds.³ He notes (at p. 154) the appearance of guidance lines and separation marks in the Aigila inscription, which are a feature of the fourth century and not of the third. He also notes the appearance of genitive patronymics such as /εο/ in the Aigila inscription, and points out that the use of the /ευ/ form replaced the earlier /εο/ form in Rhodian epigraphy at the end of the fourth century.⁴ Bresson concludes (p. 155) that it would be difficult to date the Aigila inscription much after 284. It is difficult to argue with the chronological arguments which Bresson has advanced.

He therefore dates these inscriptions before the great siege of 305/4 BC, and links them with the reference in Diodorus 20,81.3 that the Rhodians had pursued a war against the pirates before 306 BC, and with the statement in Polybius 30,5.6-8 that Rhodes had co-operated with Rome for a hundred and forty years (that is since 306) without concluding a treaty with the city.

It is important to note that the earlier patronymic genitive form /εο/, as well as the guidance lines and separation marks appear only in the inscription honouring the officers who participated in the expedition against Aigila, but not in the funerary inscription of the three

1. Mario Segre, *Due nuovi testi storici*, *RFIC* 60 (1932) 452-460.

2. First published by Fr. Hiller von Gärtringen, *Inscriptionen aus Rhodos*, *AM* 20 (1895) 222-229, 395. See no. 2 in the epigraphic dossier of Bresson (pp. 162-163) for full critical apparatus.

3. Alain Bresson, *Rhodes, Rome et les pirates tyrrhéniens*, in Patrice Brun (ed.), *Scripta Anatolica. Hommages à Pierre Debord* (= Ausonius éditions, Études 18, Bordeaux 2007) 145-164.

4. He cites several examples of this practice (on pp. 154-5). At Lindos the two forms are used interchangeably between c. 329 and 284. At Kamiros in the list of high priests of Athena the form /εο/ is used systematically down to 307, but in 308 comes the first attestation of the /ευ/ form. In the list of *damiourgoi* which runs from 279 the older form of /εο/ is entirely absent. In the list of priests of Helios from Rhodes the /εο/ form is found systematically down to 323/2 or 316/5, and makes sporadic appearances thereafter (at 309/8 or 303/2) shortly after which the list becomes too mutilated to be read.

brothers, which has the later patronymic form /ευ/ (Τιμακράτευσ). The obvious conclusion is that the tombstone is later, perhaps considerably later, than the inscription honouring those who had taken part in the expedition against Aigila.

Furthermore, in the inscription honouring those who distinguished themselves in the expedition against Aigila, Polemarchos son of Timakrates holds the rank of καταπαλταφέτας, which is probably to be interpreted as ‘officer of artillery’ as he is listed after one Rhodian citizen who holds the rank of *syntagmarchēs* over the mercenaries (συνταγματάρχας ἐπὶ τῶν ξένων), but before two other Rhodian citizen marine infantrymen. The names of non-Rhodians honoured by the state are listed later. On the tombstone, however, [?Polemarcho]s son of Timakrates holds the higher rank of *syntagmarchēs*. The conclusion this time, as Polemarchos holds different ranks in the two inscriptions, is that the inscriptions have to be separated one from another. If Polemarchos lost his life in the expedition against Aigila, he would be given the rank of καταπαλταφέτας in the funerary inscription. It is inherently improbable, furthermore, that the Aigila inscription honours those who have fallen in battle. The historical incident in which [?Polemarcho]s son of Timakrates lost his life came later, and followed his advance in rank to *syntagmarchēs*, if, indeed, the two individuals are to be identified at all.

Finally, the funerary inscription records the circumstances of death of three sons of Timakrates. The circumstances of death of the first son are not preserved but the word λαιστάς in line 5 has been restored in the lacuna, but the second fell in battle against Tyrrhenians (l. 8), and the third ([?Polemarcho]s) against τοὺς λαιστάς (l. 10). Bresson argues (p. 149) that ‘il paraît presque certain que les trois frères sont morts dans la même période, en combattant les mêmes ennemis, c’est-à-dire des pirates tyrrhéniens’. To my mind this does not follow at all. The enemies against which the brothers fell are listed separately, because the brothers fell against separate enemies: otherwise the enemy against which they all fell would be listed once, at the end or at the beginning of the inscription.

So, even if the state inscription honouring the participants in the expedition against Aigila is contemporary with the funerary inscription listing the sons of Timakrates (which I do not think is the case), it does not follow that this expedition was conducted against Tyrrhenian pirates, rather than other unspecified Greek, for example Phalasarrian, pirates.

In conclusion then, Bresson has given convincing arguments against Segre’s dating of the inscription recording the Rhodian expedition against Aigila to 260-250. Indeed it would be difficult to date the Aigila inscription much after 284, although one does not need to necessarily concur with Bresson’s date of before 306. This inscription needs to be dissociated from the funerary inscription recording the death of the sons of Timakrates, which must belong to a later date, and in any case records the death of [?Polemarcho]s against pirates, not Tyrrhenians.