

DOCUMENTARY CONTEXTS FOR THE ‘PISTIROS INSCRIPTION’

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Abstract: This preliminary study of the so-called ‘Pistiros Inscription’ challenges the dominant interpretation of the document that has crystallized in the years since its preliminary publication, namely, that the inscription somehow guarantees the rights of traders operating within Pistiros. A reexamination of the rhetorical structure of the inscription and a reconstruction of the inscription’s relationship with preexisting documents on this subject, which are not extant, raises the possibility that the function of the inscription was somewhat different than the *communis opinio*: the ‘Pistiros Inscription’ appears to have supplemented earlier regulation concerning Pistiros and to have attempted to limit the authority of an official, possibly a Thracian royal, who exercised dramatic power within Pistiros.

Keywords: Pistiros, the ‘Pistiros Inscription’, the Odrysian kings, Kotys.

Introduction

In 1988 a program of systematic archaeological research began at a Classical and early Hellenistic site located at Adzhiyska Vodenitsa, near Vetren, Bulgaria, in the upper Maritsa (anc. Evros) valley, close to the western edge of the Thracian plain. This project, initially led by Mieczysław Domaradzki, the great Polish archaeologist and historian of ancient Thrace, brought together an international team of scholars.¹ Their excavations revealed a Classical and Hellenistic settlement that complicates traditional assumptions about the urban development of this area of the eastern Balkans and its associated econo-

¹ Mieczysław Domaradzki (1949–1998), born in Brzeg, Poland, studied archaeology at Jagiellonian University in Kraków and completed his Master’s thesis there in 1972 under the direction of Prof. Dr. K. Godłowski on the topic of Celtic shields in central Europe. In 1973, he won a fellowship to conduct doctoral research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), and in 1976 he completed a dissertation at BAS under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ivan Venedikov on the subject of Thrace and the Celtic invasions. He would continue to work in Bulgaria for the next twenty-plus years. Among his many achievements are his leadership of the project ‘Archaeological Map of Bulgaria,’ an attempt to compile a map of every known archaeological site in Bulgaria, and his direction of numerous archaeological excavation and survey campaigns in Bulgaria, including in the upper Maritsa valley and the site of Pistiros. He remains a towering figure in Bulgarian archaeology. For a complete bibliography of Domaradzki’s publications, see Bouzek/Domaradzka 2005: vi–xiii.

mies.² In 1990, soon after the excavations at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa began, there was discovered a large, granite block with a lengthy, partially preserved inscription from the nearby site of Assar Dere, located some 2 km to the northeast of Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa. The inscription is dated on historical and palaiographic criteria by most scholars to the period ca. 359–339 BCE.³ Assar Dere corresponds most probably with the late Roman road station of Lissae or Bona Mansio on the so-called ‘via diagonalis’ that led from Belgrade (anc. Singidunum) and points further north and west to Istanbul (anc. Constantinopolis). Given the chronological correspondence between the site at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa and the inscription from Assar Dere, and the lack of other contemporary sites of sufficient magnitude in the vicinity of Assar Dere, it is assumed that the inscription had originally been published at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa and was later reused in a building associated with the road station. The inscription, as preserved, falls into two distinct parts: the first consists of a series of imperative constructions that appear to regulate a broad range of judicial, military, and economic practices concerning a range of constituents. A vivid trade is imagined, with goods moving within an elaborate network of *emporia* and Greek *poleis*, many of which are specifically named – Maroneia, Pistiros, ‘the emporia Belana of the Prase[no]n.’ The second half of the inscription contains the text of an oath that would seem to refer at least partially to some of the activities regulated in the first half of the inscription, as well as to other guarantees offered to other constituents – Apollonians and Thasians at Pistiros – not mentioned in what is preserved of the first half of the inscription. The centrality of the place Pistiros in the inscription coupled with the close geographical relationship between the inscription’s *Fundort* (at Assar Dere) and presumed *Standort* (at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa) have lead some scholars to assume that archaeological site at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa was in fact Pistiros, and, however problematized the identification may be, the ‘Pistiros Inscription’ is a generally recognized, if not always fully endorsed, title for the document.⁴

As even this most preliminary sketch of the monument’s archaeological context and substantive content has revealed, there is little about the Pistiros inscription that can be considered certain or uncontroversial. Inquiry into the document has tended to fall along three separate but often implicated lines: topography and historical geography, namely, where were/are the locations mentioned in the inscription, above all Pistiros; political history, namely, within what macro-political context is this monument best understood; and, finally, economies and *emporia*, namely, how did these exchanges work on the ground in real time and, ultimately, what was the Pistiros described in the inscription.⁵ The tentative answers offered to these questions have tended more often than not to re-

² For excavation publications, see Bouzek *et al.* 1996; Bouzek *et al.* 2002; Bouzek *et al.* 2007, and Bouzek *et al.* 2010. Although it does not reflect results from most recent campaigns, an excellent synoptic presentation of the site in archaeological and historical context is Archibald *et al.* 2002.

³ That is, after the assassination of Kotys I and before Thrace fell under Macedonian hegemony in 340 or 339. For a synopsis of the arguments and reference to key bibliography, see Archibald 2004: 887.

⁴ The identification of the archaeological site at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa as Pistiros nevertheless remains extremely controversial. For recent assessment of the key issues, see Demetriou 2010. I do not take a position in this debate. For the title of the inscription, cf., e.g., Bravo/Chankowski 1999, who would seem to prefer ‘Septemvri Museum inscription.’

⁵ Cf. Domaradzki 2000, an important collection of essays that situates Pistiros within a broader framework of exchange in the north Aegean and eastern Balkans.

flect the individual assumptions of scholars and, indeed, given the exceptional character of the document, some such circularity is only to be expected until either new evidence comes to light that can further explicate the content of the inscription or existing evidence can be brought into a more productive relationship with it.

The Text

I offer now a text of the most recent critical edition⁶ of the inscription, together with an English-language translation.⁷ These are furnished solely *exempli gratia* and to provide a point of departure for the preliminary study that follows:

- [---- ca 20 ----] IKI/
 [---- ca 12 ----] ΔENNY . . Η ει δὲ . .
 [. . . . ὀμνύτ]ω τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ
 4 [. . . .] ὀφειλέτω · ὅ τι ἄν δέ τις τῶν
 [ἐμπ]οριτέων ἐπικαλῆι ὁ ἕτερος τ-
 [ῶι ἐ]τέρωι, κρίνεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τ-
 [οῖς] συγγενέσι καὶ ὅσα ὀφείλετα[ι]
 8 τοῖς ἐμπορίταις παρὰ τοῖς Θραιξ-
 [ί]ν, τούτωγ χρεῶν ἀποκοπὰς μὴ
 ποιεῖν · γῆγ καὶ βοσκὴν ὅσην ἔχουσ-
 τιν ἐμπορεῖται, ταῦτα μὴ ἀφαιρεῖ-
 12 [σθ]αί · ἐπαυλιστὰς μὴ πέμπειν το-
 [ῖς] ἐμπορίταις · φρουρὴν μηδεμίαν
 εἰς Πίστιρον καταστῆσαι μήτε α-
 [ὕτ]ομ μήτε ἄλλωι ἐπιτρέπειν ·
 16 [κλ]ήρους *vel* [ὀμ]ήρους Πιστιρηνώμ μὴ λαμ-
 [βάν]ειμ μηδὲ ἄλλωι ἐπιτρέπειν ·
 [τὰ *vel* γῆν] τῶν ἐμποριτέωμ μὴ [ἀ]φαιρεῖ-
 [σθ]αί μήτε ἀτόμ μῆτ[ε το]ὺς ἐ-
 20 [αυτ]οῦ · τέλεα κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς
 μὴ πρήσσειν, ὅσα εἰς Μαρώνεια[v]
 [εἰς]άγεται ἐκ Πιστίρου ἢ ἐκ τῶν ἐ-
 [μ]πορίων ἢ ἕγ Μαρωνείης εἰς Πίστ-
 24 [ιρ]ον ἢ τὰ ἐμπόρια Βελανα Πρασε-
 [. ω]ν, τοὺς ἐμπορίτας τὰς ΑΠΑΞ

⁶ Chankowski/Domaradzka 1999. Cf. *SEG* XLIX, 911 (*editio princeps* – Velkov/Domaradzka 1994). I examined the inscription directly in the Septemvri Museum in May 2011 and again in May 2012 and have been able to improve on Chankowski and Domaradzka's text in some areas. I intend to present the results of this autopsy in a subsequent publication. I am grateful to S. Popova, Director of the Septemvri Museum, for facilitating this research.

⁷ Velkov/Domaradzka 1996: 207, based on Velkov and Domaradzka's *editio princeps* (Velkov/Domaradzka 1994). I have endeavored to bring this translation into agreement with the revised edition of Chankowski/Domaradzka 1999.

- [- 2-3 -] καὶ ἀνοίγειν καὶ κλείειν · ἄμα
 [καθ]άπερ καὶ ἐπὶ Κοτυος (:) ἄνδρα M-
 28 [αρω]νίτην οὐ δῆσω οὐδὲ ἀποκτ-
 [ενέω] οὐδὲ ἐφαιρήσομαι χρήμα-
 [τα] οὔτε ζῶντος οὔτε ἀποθανόν-
 [τος] οὔτε αὐτὸς οὔτε τῶν ἐμῶν
 32 [οὔ]δεῖς · οὐδὲ Ἀπολλωνητέων, οὐδ-
 [ἐ Θ]ασίων, ὅσοι ἐμ Πιστίρωι εἰσί[ν],
 [οὔ]τε ἀποκτενέω οὐδένα, οὔτε
 [δήσω] οὔτε ἀφαιρήσομαι χρήμα-
 36 [τα οὔ]τε ζῶντος οὔτε ἀποθανό-
 [ντος οὔτε] αὐτὸς οὔτε τῶν ἐμῶν
 [οὔ]δεῖς · εἰ δέ τις] τῶν οἰκητόρων
 [---- ca 14-16 ----]των οὔ ὁ ἐμπορ-
 40 [---- ca 14-16 ----]ον εἰσὶν ΑΙΜ-
 [---- ca 14-16 ----]ν, ἐὰμ μὴ ΑΜ-
 [---- ca 14-16 ----]τις ἀδικῆι τὸ
 [ν δεῖνα vel ὑς δεῖνας] τε ΕΨΩΑΛΛΑ
 44 [ἀναδο- vel ἀποδο]χεῦς τῆν ἐπ-
 [---- ca 5-6 ---- δι' ἐκάστ]ου ἐνιαυτοῦ
 [-----]Α.

‘(Let him swear by) Dionysus and [4] ... let him owe a due. If any of the *emporitai* has a cause to plead against another, they will be judged each among his own relatives, and with respect to such things as are owed [8] to the *emporitai* by the Thracians, no cancellation of debts is to be made. The land and pasture belonging to the *emporitai* shall not be taken from them. [12] The *epaulistai* shall not be sent to the *emporitai*. No garrison is to be placed at Pistiros, neither by him nor should (any) be handed over to another. [16] *Kleroi* (or hostages) of the inhabitants of Pistiros are not to be taken nor handed over to another. Neither shall the possessions of the *emporitai* be appropriated by him or by any of his people. [20] No dues shall be levied on the goods which are imported to Maroneia from Pistiros or from the emporia, or from Maroneia to [24] Pistiros and to the emporia Belana of the Prasenoι. The *emporitai* ... to open and close. At the same time valid is as in Kotys’ time: I will not send over any citizen of Maroneia; nor will I [28] kill him, nor will I let his property be confiscated, neither during his lifetime nor after his death, neither I myself nor any of my people. [32] Nor (will I kill) any of the Apollonians, nor the Thasians who are at Pistiros, nor will I (imprison any of them) nor will I deprive any man of his property, [36] neither alive or dead, neither I myself nor any of my people...’

Interpretations

While there continues to be uncertainty about the constitution of the text and its interpretation in isolated passages, a scholarly consensus has coalesced about the overall function of the document. As D. Demetriou has recently observed: ‘The treaty records

the rights of the Greek resident traders in relation to other Greek traders and the Thracian natives and rulers, the rights of the Thracian authorities in relation to the resident Greeks in Thracian lands, and various economic provisions that describe the trade routes used and the inviolability in general granted to traveling merchants and those residing in Pistiros. It also guarantees the Greek resident traders of Pistiros the same privileges they had under Kotys I, Kersobleptes' father, who ruled the Odrysian kingdom from 383/382 to 359 BC.' While different scholars add different nuances⁸ and describe the inscription differently in terms of genre,⁹ the overall picture of Thracian royal authority guaranteeing rights of Greek traders at Pistiros has been remarkably stable since the publication of the *editio princeps*.

I aim in this modest contribution to complicate in some measure the interpretive framework within which this inscription has been considered. I attempt this not by introducing new or previously unconsidered evidence, but by returning, somewhat myopically, to the language and rhetoric of the inscription itself. Two central possibilities will be raised. First, the 'Pistiros Inscription' gives hints that it did not exist in a vacuum, but that it was part of a broader documentary ecosystem that can be somewhat speculatively reconstructed in general outline. Specifically, I will suggest that, rather simply reaffirming an earlier set of regulations concerning activity within Pistiros, the 'Pistiros Inscription' actually supplemented them.

The second central possibility that I wish to raise concerns the type of power on display in this inscription. Interpretations of the 'Pistiros Inscription' that emphasize the document as somehow guaranteeing Greek merchants' rights within Pistiros lay inappropriate emphasis on the idea of positive rights. For unambiguous examples of such positive rights, compare the so-called 'Prospectus of the Second Athenian League' (*JG* II² 43), dated to 378/377, where adherents to the prospective treaty are 'free and autonomous, governed under whatever form of government he wishes, neither receiving a garrison nor submitting to a governor nor paying tribute'.¹⁰ Compare the corpus of proxeny decrees, now rapidly growing by the early fourth century, which offers examples of such positive rights at the level of the individual (including, but not limited to, *asylia* of person and property, including relatives and their property, etc.). Such rights are not on display in the 'Pistiros inscription'. What can be seen instead is an attempt by the issuing authority to limit the power of an individual who seems to have exercised some form of command over or within Pistiros. This is a dramatically different conception of power.

For the moment, these can only be possibilities, incapable of confirmation or refutation in the current state of evidence. My hope, nevertheless, is that by returning attention to the monument itself, away from assumptions rooted in what is thought to be known

⁸ As, indeed, does Demetriou 2010: 77, n. 1: 'All scholars cited in this paper consider this a bilateral treaty between one of the Thracian dynasts and the Greeks of Pistiros, or between the three dynasts acting as a collective and the Greeks of Pistiros. I will argue below that this is a multilateral treaty among each of the three dynasts individually and the Greeks of Pistiros.'

⁹ E.g., Picard 1999: 331: 'la « charte » de l'*emporion*'; Loukopoulou 1999: 362: 'la forme d'un traité'; Archibald 2000: 267: 'It is not a treaty between one community and another, but a royal edict concerning specific groups operating within his subject territories.'

¹⁰ Trans. Rhodes-Osborne.

from the broader historical context, new and potentially more productive questions may be asked.

Building Documentary Context

In simplest terms, the preserved content of the ‘Pistiros Inscription’ falls into two distinct halves: the first, characterized by an asyndetic series of imperatival clauses of varying content and with varying subjects. I describe these clauses non-prejudicially as regulations, that is to say, the issuing authority, whoever or whatever it is, is presented within the rhetoric of the inscription as capable of regulating certain activities within a region that includes Pistiros and other *emporia* in the region; the second, following directly upon the first with no real transition expressed, is more fragmentary but is clearly marked by a shift to first-person singular, future tense verbs that are typical of an oath.

Before taking up these two sections, let us begin by focusing on what has functioned as the hinge of the inscription in most interpretations, a short phrase in ll. 26–27: ἄμα [καθ]ἄπερ καὶ ἐπὶ Κορυϋος. Scholarly debate has tended to focus on which direction the phrase looks – to the immediately preceding regulation, or perhaps even the entire series, or to the following oath.¹¹ The absence of transition between regulations and oath has been perceived as abrasive, intolerably so, and this sense of the Greek has provided at least some partial motivation for interpretation of the phrase as introductory for the oath. But this may be a red herring. Such an abrupt transition finds a good parallel in a Tegean inscription published at Delphi probably in 324/323 concerning the return of exiles to Tegea. In addition to providing incomparable insight into the complexities of reintegrating a population within the social, political, economic, and cultic life of a polis, the process eventually implemented by the local authority, Tegea, seems to have emerged via possibly contentious negotiation with the regional hegemon, almost certainly Alexander the Great.¹² The passage in question reads: ‘...as for those who did not go into forced exile after <their marriage> and who are now creeping back on the present occasion, themselves or their children, they shall be examined, both themselves and their descendants, in respect of their paternal and their maternal possessions in accordance with the transcript. I swear by Zeus, Athena, Apollo, Poseidon, that I shall show good will to those who have returned whom the city resolved to receive back...’ (ll. 53–59).¹³ In this particular passage, a lengthy series of regulations concerning the return of Tegean exiles to their home city concludes and is followed immediately by the text of an oath,

¹¹ For summary of the debate, see Demetriou 2010: 87, n. 62.

¹² Trans. Rhodes-Osborne, ll. 0–4: ‘--- With reference to the things about which the city sent the envoys and King Alex]ander sent back his judgment to us, the transcript shall be written according to the corrections made by the city of what was spoken against in the transcript.’

¹³ *IG V*, 2, p. xxxvi–xxxvii (trans. Rhodes-Osborne). Concerning the absence of transition, cf. Plassart 1914: 159: ‘Avec un manque de liaison plus frappant encore que celui qu’on a remarqué, au passage d’un quelconque des autres articles au suivant, on trouve..., sans un mot d’introduction, la formule, à la première personne du singulier, du serment, par lequel les citoyens restés à Tégée s’engageront à l’égard des bannis rentrés d’exil.’

the contents of which indicate unambiguously that the oath-takers are current residents of Tegea who had not left the city as exiles.

With no need to affect a transition between regulations and oath, one may consider the other key piece of evidence concerning the phrase and its direction of reference. In their 1994 *editio princeps*, V. Velkov and L. Domaradzka noted in their epigraphic commentary the presence of an interpunct before ἄμα and a second one after Κοτυς. Neither interpunct was introduced into the formal text of their edition, however.¹⁴ Such interpuncts could impact interpretation by marking the phrase as a heading of sorts for the following oath. In their 1999 re-edition, Chankowski and Domaradzka modify this position. The initial interpunct before ἄμα is no longer mentioned in the epigraphic commentary, while the second interpunct is printed as an editorial correction.¹⁵ This presentation of the text would strongly suggest that the phrase belonged to the preceding regulations.

My autopsy of the stone revealed only a slight dimple on the surface of the stone before ἄμα. It is not of depth equivalent to other letter strokes and not obviously the product of a tool. What the editors regard as an interpunct after Κοτυς is more complex. There is certainly a gouge on the surface, as deep as the typical letter strokes on the stone, but it is impossible to determine whether it is the result of deliberate activity on the part of the cutter of the inscription in antiquity or of subsequent and accidental damage to the stone. If deliberate, it has either been clumsily executed, as have, indeed, many of the letter strokes on the stone, or the original clean borders of a punch into the surface of the stone have been worn down by subsequent weathering or damage and resulted in the small crater visible today. Rather more probative, in my opinion, is the spacing between the sigma of Κοτυς and the initial letter of the word that opens the oath.¹⁶ Even taking into consideration the fact that spacing between individual letters varies broadly throughout this inscription, there is a noticeable gap between these two letters. Such a finding would add support to a construal of the phrase ἄμα [καθ]ἄπερ καὶ ἐπὶ Κοτυς with what precedes rather than what follows.

With the need to find a transition between the regulations and the oath assuaged and good evidence for a *vacat* and possible punctuation between the end of the ἄμα-clause and the beginning of the oath, there are good grounds for associating the ἄμα-clause with the series of regulations, before even considering what 'at the same time just as in the time of Kotys' might mean. I focus for the moment on an important implication of the expression of 'just as in the time of Kotys,' namely, that activity within Pistiros had previously, during the time of Kotys,¹⁷ been subject to oversight by the issuing authority

¹⁴ Velkov/Domaradzka 1994: 4, *ad ll.* 26–27.

¹⁵ Chankowski/Domaradzka 1999.

¹⁶ These observations substantially agree with Bravo/Chankowski 1999: 277–279, although they continue to argue in spite of this spatial arrangement that the ἄμα-clause introduces the oath.

¹⁷ Who was this Kotys? The assumption driving much scholarship is that he is to be identified with the great Odrysian king who ruled much of Thrace ca. 383/382–359. Two important observations must be made at this point, though. First, the name Kotys was quite common in Thrace in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and not simply among Odrysian elites (cf. *LGN IV*, s.v. Κότυς 24–82). The extent to which this represents fourth-century reality is unknowable. Such data would in any case encourage caution in identifying this Kotys with the great king on the basis of shared prosopography alone. It is not good method. Cf. the apposite comments of Picard, 1999: 339–340. But a circumstantial case can be built on the basis of broader

of the current inscription, in the form of a series of formal regulations. Presumably these regulations would have been inscribed and publicly displayed.¹⁸ The current inscription must therefore be seen within this broader context.

This point, although relatively uncontroversial and implicit in the dominant interpretations of the inscription, nevertheless merits expansion. A fragmentary, Hellenistic inscription from Mesambria is particularly suggestive on the matter of this broader documentary context.¹⁹ In a decree, the Mesambrians award Sadalas, a little known dynast, certainly Thracian and possibly Odrysian, and his descendants citizenship, proxeny, and associated honors, including the annual award of a crown of fifty staters to Sadalas. The arrangement may be essentially tributary. The occasion for the declaration of these honors was apparently connected with the conclusion of an oath and agreements between Sadalas and the Mesambrians, and indeed the beginning of the text of one of these agreements (concerning, it would appear, shipwrecks²⁰) is contained on the same stele, located just beneath the honorary decree after a *vacat*. The publication clause of the introductory honorary decree is worth quoting in full:

- τὸν δὲ ταμίαν τὸν ὄρκον καὶ τὰς ὁμολογία[ς]
 12 γράψαντα εἰς στάλαν λιθίναν κοῖλα γράμ-
 ματα ἀναθέμεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλ-
 λωνος παρὰ τὰς στάλας τῶν προγόνων
 Μοψηστιος καὶ Ταρουτινου καὶ Μηδιστα
 16 καὶ Κοτυος.

‘And let the treasurer, after inscribing²¹ the oath and the agreements²² on a stone stele in hollow letters²³, set the stele up in the sanctuary of Apollo beside the stelai of his forbears, Mopsyestis and Taroutinos and Medistas and Kotys.’

historical context, viz., the Odrysians are well-known to have had fiduciary interests in emporia in (coastal) Thrace; cf. Dem. 23, 110. Some royal suzerainty over a place like Pistiros would seem an easy bet and is assisted by the Naukratis paradigm where similar dynamics would seem to be on display (cf. Loukopoulou 1999: 366–368). There is little evidence, these assumptions notwithstanding, for the date of the inscription beyond the *terminus post quem* offered by the foundation of the settlement at Pistiros. The letter forms, always unreliable in the absence of closely dated and sited *comparanda*, would nevertheless appear somewhat earlier (particularly the slanted-bar alphas, which have a distinctly Archaic or early Classical appearance, at least in an Aegean context). Second, the phrase ἐπὶ Κοτυος indicates time, not agency. The two may be closely related, of course.

¹⁸ This point is also emphasized at Archibald 2000: 266: ‘The second half of the text incorporates what appears to be a citation from a similar set of injunctions, issued in the name of Kotys.’ Archibald assumes here that the problematic ἄμα [καθ]ἄπερ καὶ ἐπὶ Κοτυος looks forward to the oath. Cf. Archibald 2004: 895.

¹⁹ *IGBulg* I², 307; cf. *IGBulg* V, 5086. There is considerable uncertainty about the date of the inscription. Mihailov, *ad loc.*, has argued plausibly for 281–277.

²⁰ Cf. Mihailov, *ad loc.* The situation resembles in some measure that described at Xen. *An.* 7, 5, 12–14.

²¹ That is to say, the treasurer will arrange for payment for such an inscription; most likely he would not have done the actual inscribing.

²² ‘The oath and the agreements’ would also well capture the content of the ‘Pistiros Inscription’.

²³ A curious phrase that presumably refers to a distinction between letters that are simply painted on a stele and those that are actually inscribed. Mihailov (*ad loc.*): ‘non atramento picta, sed insculpta.’

The content of the stelai of Sadalas' *progonoi* is not mentioned, but it is probable that they too contained the text of honors awarded by the Mesambrians to them as well as oaths and agreements previously concluded between king and city. If such an assumption is correct, then there may have been a considerable corpus of inscriptions detailing the history of the relationship between Mesambria and these local dynasts, possibly extending for some decades into the past. It is unknown whether Sadalas' oath and agreements with the Mesambrians would have resembled substantially those of Kotys. Some aspects of the relationship may have been traditional and relatively fixed for this duration – the type of honors awarded to the dynast *du jour* by the Mesambrians, for example; others perhaps appeared, disappeared, or evolved in response to changing internal or external dynamics.

At this point, I would like to open an editorial parenthesis on the opening word of the phrase ἄμα [καθ]άπερ καὶ ἐπὶ Κοτύς. If 'just as in the time of Kotys' can be made into tolerable sense, the presence of the adverb ἄμα, 'at the same time,' complicates interpretation considerably. Some scholars ignore the word altogether.²⁴ Velkov and Domaradzka's English translation reads: 'At the same time valid is as in Kotys' time.' The suggestion is that the following oath, which is regarded here as an extract from an earlier oath dating to the time of Kotys, is valid 'at the same time' as, presumably, the preceding regulations. Having diminished the likelihood that the phrase applies to the oath, however, one must find a way to understand the phrase solely with the preceding regulations. Are these regulations to be regarded as valid 'at the same time, just as in the time of Kotys'? In such an interpretation, ἄμα would be superfluous and frankly jarring in so stylistically sparing an inscription. To insist upon the simultaneity of the validity of the regulations seems overdetermined, even anxious.²⁵

An easy correction of ἄμα to ἄ<λλ>α removes some of these difficulties. Such an error would be easy to explain as a misreading of the exemplar, for example, or even a technical error on the part of the cutter. Autopsy of the stone moreover reveals that, while the lettering of the inscription as a whole is fairly erratic, this mu deviates even more fully from what is expected; it cannot be ruled out that two lambdas were in fact inscribed, but done so in a cramped manner.²⁶ There is occasionally visible elsewhere on the stone at the right edge a tendency to crowding letters. I would interpret ἄ<λλ>α adverbially and translate the phrase: 'in other respects, just as in the time of Kotys.' Such an interpretation would indicate that these regulations were somehow additions to or changes of an earlier set of regulations dated to the time of Kotys. There are good partial parallels in Aegean Greek epigraphy, especially from Attica, where riders to decrees are regularly introduced: τὰ μὲν ἄλλα κάθ'απερ, 'In other respects, in accordance with,' usually followed either by the name of the initial proposer of the decree, or, in the case of probouleumatic decrees, simply τῆι βουλῆι or the equivalent.²⁷ The scenario that I im-

²⁴ E.g., Avram 1997: 45, who translates 'comme du temps de Kotys.'

²⁵ One could entertain the possibility that the ἄμα, perhaps the entire ἄμα-clause, applies to the two infinitives preserved in the immediately preceding regulation, ἀνοίγειν and κλείειν, were it not the case that opening and closing are opposite actions typically incapable of being performed simultaneously.

²⁶ The stone is damaged where the two middle strokes of the mu may have joined.

²⁷ See the discussion at Rhodes 1997: 22. The greatest obstacle to such an emendation and the interpretation following from it – and it may militate decisively against it – is the absence of the definite article τὰ, which is invariably present in the Aegean evidence.

agine in the case of the ‘Pistiros Inscription’ is parallel to the paradigm of the amended decree in the sense that the phrase points out a modification to existing legislation and indicates that everything beyond what is mentioned is to remain the same as in that existing legislation. In the case of the Pistiros inscription, such a modification would only strengthen the observation made earlier, namely, that this document supplements some earlier set of regulations and was perhaps displayed alongside them, as was perhaps the case for Sadalas and his *progonoï* at Mesambria.

At this point, I would like to transition to a broader consideration of the regulations in the first half of the inscription and to consider the nature of the power displayed therein. The concerns of the first half of the inscription are quite disparate and their seriatim presentation does not give an impression of being a systematic restatement of a ‘charter’ for Pistiros. Rather, these regulations read more like *ad hoc* responses to discrete problems or reflections of changed social, political, and economic conditions. I emphasize in particular the series of prohibitions in ll. 7–21 that seem to be limiting the power of a specific individual or officer. The subject of these prohibitions is only vaguely and occasionally mentioned, a nameless ‘him,’ sometimes linked with his associates. ‘He’ is prohibited: from establishing a garrison in Pistiros or entrusting that right to any other (ll. 13–15); from seizing *kleroi* or hostages of the Pistirenes or entrusting that right to any other (ll. 16–17); and from confiscating the possessions of the *emporitai* (ll. 18–20).²⁸ There are several other prohibitions in this section of the inscription, in which there is no explicit mention of the subject: there is to be no cancellation of debts owed to the *emporitai* by the Thracians (ll. 7–10); land, arable and pasture, owned by the *emporitai* is not to be confiscated (ll. 10–12); *epaulistai* are not to be sent among the *emporitai* (ll. 12–13); and transit tax is not to be charged on goods moving by road²⁹ (ll. 20–22). Construing these clauses as essentially subjectless and directed towards a general audience³⁰ is implausible. In each of these four cases, it is likely that the same ‘him’ is to be understood as subject. ‘He,’ too, may be the subject of the third-person imperatives in ll. 3–4.³¹

²⁸ The prohibition in this last case is extended to this individual’s associates as well: μήτε αὐτόμ μήτ[ε το]ῦς ἐ[[αυτ]οῦ].

²⁹ With Avram 1997: 39–41, I regard τέλεα κατὰ τὰς ὁδοὺς | μὴ πρήσσειν (ll. 20–21) as a complete regulation; and the following relative clause (ὅσα ... Πρασε | [vω]v: ll. 21–25) as dependent on the main clause that begins in l. 25 (τοὺς ἐμπορίτας ... κλείειν) and in effect beginning a new, distinct regulation. I understand the content of that regulation, however, differently from Avram.

³⁰ As in the translation of Velkov and Domaradzka offered above.

³¹ Avram 1997: 42–44, followed by Domaradzka at Chankowski/Domaradzka 1999: 250, suggests that the entire string of infinitives in ll. 4–26 is dependent upon ὀφειλέτω in l. 4 in the sense of ‘s’engager à.’ This is a clever reading that warrants serious consideration. Avram sees two merits in such an interpretation. First, it allows one to remove the inconcinnity of distinct imperatival constructions following one upon the other, viz., the third-person singular imperatives followed by accusative and infinitives. Second, it allows for a smoother transition between the two halves of the inscription. The subject of the third-person imperative ὀφειλέτω can now easily be the first-person subject of the oath of the second half of the inscription. As A. Chaniotis observes at *SEG XLIX*, 911: ‘the use of the verb ὀφείλω in L. 7 in the sense “owe” makes this interpretation improbable.’ Note also that parallels for the intermingling of third-person imperatives and accusative and imperatival infinitive constructions are not lacking. Although geographically and chronologically remote, if comparable in terms of its very liminality, column A of the curious *lex sacra* from Selinous displays similar mixing (ed. pr. Jameson *et al.* 1993; cf. *SEG XLIII*, 630 and *NGSL*² 27). A greater problem is that Avram understands the subject αὐτόμ of the infinitives to be identical with the subject of ὀφειλέτω, upon

Many scholars, building on the assumption that one of Kotys' successors is the issuing authority of the document, imply that this Thracian royal is essentially limiting his own powers in this passage and that this constitutes the guarantee of privileges for those conducting business at Pistiros. But, *prima facie*, this would be a very curious way for an Odrysian king to express himself. It is easier to imagine the issuing authority prohibiting a third party from this range of activities rather than limiting itself. Given the nature of the prohibitions, this third party would have been an individual of considerable power: presumably the sort of person, who would need to be prohibited from installing garrisons, imposing taxes, and the like, possessed the capability of doing precisely that. Indeed, if my general reconstruction is correct, one may suspect that this individual had acted abusively towards Pistiros and that his powers are here sharply restricted.

What was the identity of this individual? While the Odrysian state does not seem to have wielded a complex or highly developed bureaucracy on a par with the Seleucid or Ptolemaic kingdoms of the following centuries, it would be a mistake to think that there was no bureaucracy at all. All that can be stated with certainty, however, is that he was powerful and that he was not identical with the issuing authority.³² It is worth noting in this connection that these prohibitions carry no apparent sanction in the event of non-compliance.³³ So, far from guaranteeing that the residents of Pistiros would be free from garrisons and the like, this document cannot even guarantee that an individual who contravenes these explicit prohibitions would be punished. The *emporitai* remain in a very tenuous position.

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which the infinitives depend. In that case, however, one might expect a nominative subject of the infinitives rather than an accusative.

³² Two other regulations are well-preserved in the first half of the 'Pistiros Inscription' that do not have this hypothetical Odrysian official as subject: guidelines for the arbitration of inter-emporitai disputes and a lengthy and complex directive regarding the movement of goods between Maroneia on the one hand and Pistiros (and other *emporía*) on the other. The latter in particular would appear to reflect some formal treaty between the Odrysians and Maroneia. If true, this would add an additional layer of documentary context to the Pistiros inscription. In any case, enforcement of both of these regulations would seem to fall within the purview of the hypothetical Odrysian official who is subject of the prohibitions.

³³ It is possible that the subject of these prohibitions is identical with the subject of the third-person imperatives that open the inscription as we have it, but there is no clear connection between that act of owing and the prohibitions that follow.

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