

GIULIA TOZZI

Some inscriptions from and of the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus in Athens

Identifying the original place of publication is a major point in the study of an ancient inscription. The analysis of the content is, indeed, crucial, but not enough to come to a comprehensive interpretation of a written text, the significance of which can be examined in depth and clarified only if the tangible features of its support (material, shape, measures, etc.) and its original context are carefully evaluated, too. As a matter of fact, the authority of an inscription is consolidated in its meaning also by its location, which, in turn, is reinforced in its symbolic and representative value throughout the inscribed documents set in its frame. It might seem pointless to reiterate this concept, but in the past the attention paid to texts has too often prevailed over that devoted to contexts, which in many cases had been (almost) completely ignored. For this reason, it is more than appropriate here to reaffirm the importance of the relationship between text and context in epigraphic studies and to praise the fruitful interest of those scholars who, in recent times, have given this topic the right weight¹.

Re-contextualizing an inscription does not only imply a focus on the place of publication (with its natural, urban or architectural features), but also on the function of that specific place (public, private, sacred, funerary, etc.), and on the identity of its frequenters, that is to say those to whom the text was thought to be addressed. Furthermore, it is worth considering who decided (and why) to

¹ For an overview of the recent bibliography concerning this issue, see Tozzi 2021, *Introduction*. The importance of the relationship between text and context has been largely further discussed during the last international congresses of Greek and Latin epigraphy, among which one should especially consider the 14th *CIEGL*, which took place in Berlin in 2014 and which was dedicated to *Öffentlichkeit – Monument – Text*.

carve a determinate text on a durable material to be displayed publicly and what kind of prominence and legibility it gained within the context. These steps of investigation represent a hard task for epigraphists, which is made more challenging by the possible fragmentary state of preservation, the potential later re-use of stones and the sometimes obscure or confuse circumstances of the discovery, which often leave us very few (if any) chances to trace the original provenience. This investigation becomes a more serious issue when it turns into a large-scale analysis, focusing not just on one text, but on various, supposed to be located in the same place. Nevertheless, only this way we can attempt to rebuild and recognize, as far as reasonably possible, the purposes and the meaning of the ‘exposed writing’ within the ancient city.

These considerations have been crucial for the outset and the development of the research project which prompted the creation of the online database *The Epigraphic Landscape Athens*, aiming at reconstructing the ‘epigraphic landscape’ of Athens through the mapping of the places of discovery and location of ancient inscriptions². Similarly, my research on the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus on the southern slopes of the Acropolis set out to identify all the surviving texts that were once exposed in the proximity of the theatre of Dionysus annexed to the sanctuary, in order to understand why and when the Athenians considered it an appropriate site for locating inscriptions. It is important to recall that this building had a strong political significance in Athens, not only because it was the site where the Great Dionysia took place, but also because it frequently hosted city assemblies³. Since public display was reserved only to a restricted number of texts and inscriptions, as ‘original and speaking documents’, often provide valuable historical, socio-cultural and political information, I then postulated the hypothesis (later confirmed) that the reconstruction of the ‘exposed writing’ in the sanctuary of Dionysus – examined together with the evidence of literary texts and of archaeological finds – could tell us much

² See <http://www.epigraphiclandscape.unito.it>.

³ The political use of the theatre is attested for many Greek cities and must be analysed with an understanding of the diverse values and functions which typified theatrical buildings in Greek society. However, this phenomenon becomes more complex in Athens because of the existence of a dedicated *ekklesiasterion* on top of the Pnyx, whose construction saw three different phases between the 5th and the 4th century BC and whose activity is documented by written sources and archaeological finds. The theatre of Dionysos (together with the theatre of Munichia at Piraeus, which was similarly used for the meetings of the *ekklesia*) was seldom used in the 5th century for city assemblies, but became gradually to be used more and more frequently for this scope from the second half of the 4th century and came across time even to supplant the role of the *ekklesiasterion* on the Pnyx. For a detailed, diachronic examination of all the literary and epigraphic sources mentioning the use of this theatre as assembly place see in particular Tozzi 2014.

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more about its history and functions in the different phases of its use⁴.

Although many studies on the theatre of Athens have been carried out since the 19th century, a census of all the documents displayed in antiquity near or inside the building had never been done⁵. This may be explained essentially for two reasons: on the one hand, the disjointed excavation campaigns held in its area during the 19th and the 20th centuries and, on the other hand, the aforementioned scholarly inclination to focus chiefly on the texts overlooking their contexts. This means, in this specific case, that for a long time the inscriptions found in the sanctuary of Dionysus have been studied mainly in relation to their content and that the theatre itself has been considered just the setting for dramatic performances, rather than a space used for political meetings, too. Moreover, the sanctuary was abandoned after the Late Antiquity and gradually involved in the transformations that affected the whole southern slopes of the Acropolis (in particular the construction of defensive long walls in the Byzantine, Medieval and Modern times). These circumstances inevitably compromised the integrity of the decorative and epigraphic elements that qualified the site, but it is worth considering that the progressive neglect of the sacred area, gradually crowded by later structures, actually favoured the conservation of many inscriptions, which fortuitously remained under the ruins until the start of the Modern archaeological excavations.

My research has been articulated in different gradual phases, the last of which has been the input of the classified inscriptions in the *ELA* database. I considered a wide chronological time-span from the 5th century BC to the 4th century AD, that is from the first installation of a *theatron* on the southern slopes of the Acropolis in the Classical period until the end of its use in the Late Antiquity. The survey has been based on three cornerstones:

⁴ For some research results yielded on this topic see in particular Tozzi 2011; 2013; 2014; 2016; 2021.

⁵ The inscriptions once exposed in the sanctuary of Dionysos are of course all published: their discovery has been periodically reported since the middle of the 19th century and they have been all included in the *Inscriptiones Graecae*, partially arrived now to the third edition. Many of these inscriptions have also been collected and commented in works dedicated to specific historical periods or to particular themes, but, in both cases, they have never been examined organically in relation to their original location. In this panorama, the exceptions are represented by some studies relating to particular epigraphic categories, such as the inscriptions engraved on the seats reserved for the *prohedroi*, which have been carefully catalogued, reviewed and acutely discussed by Michael Maas in his volume of 1972; the valuable results achieved by Maas still represent a reference point for the study of this category of texts and clearly demonstrates as the analysis of a homogeneous group of inscriptions originally exposed in the same location can shed light on many aspects that would not be inferable only from the exam of the same inscriptions taken under consideration just individually.

- 1) The revision of the excavation data (not limited to the sanctuary of Dionysus, but extended to the whole southern slopes of the Acropolis);
- 2) The autopsy and reading of the texts;
- 3) The comparison between them and the whole Athenian surviving epigraphic documentation.

The scope of my work has been that of distinguishing, among the inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary, those that can be considered pertinent to it (with certainty or at least with good reliability) and those that, on the contrary, though found there, have to be attributed to other places of the city. Of course, it has not always been possible to reach absolute certainty one way or the another, since sometimes the fragmentary state of the inscribed stones prevented to obtain useful information for identifying their original location and, in other cases, the vagueness of the excavation reports did not let me verify the exact site of discovery. The research was inevitably influenced also by the broader phenomenon regarding ‘wandering stones’, that was, in this case, the widespread and composite reuse of materials occurred throughout Athens since Late Antiquity, and by the fortuitous conservation of some documents compared to others. However, the cross-check of all the available sources and a careful comparative study of the whole Athenian epigraphic production allowed me to collect a fairly large sample of documents, that turned out to be significant especially when analysed in comparison and in relationship one with another as an organic set of texts attributable to the same site. I divided the inscriptions into three macro-groups:

- 1) Inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary and once actually set there, which are represented by numerous seats reserved for the *prohedroi* and by some honorary dedications on statue bases, honorary decrees, votive dedications and catalogues⁶;
- 2) Inscriptions discovered in the sanctuary but pertaining to other places of the city (in particular the adjacent Asklepieion or the above Acropolis);
- 3) Inscriptions discovered elsewhere but attributable to the sanctuary on the basis of historical, chronological or textual reasons.

This would not be the place to examine all these inscriptions or the ample variety of issues encountered during their analysis. Instead, it would be appropriate to consider some texts pertaining to the abovementioned second and third groups and, in particular, just a few examples of decrees, whose publication

⁶ The majority of these inscriptions is dated between the 4th and 2nd century BC. It means that the practice of displaying texts in the sanctuary of Dionysos started after the permanent construction of the theatre in stone and the monumentalisation of the sacred area itself, completed in the Twenties of the 4th century; in this same period citizens’ custom of assembling in the theatrical building, just rarely documented in the 5th century, is more frequently attested.

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clause is now partially or completely lost, but whose original location can be recognized or at least hypothesized thanks to some external or internal features⁷.

(1) The first example concerns four decrees partially preserved on a marble stele, severely damaged at the edges and broken at top and bottom (H. 1,00, W. 0,51, Th. 0,12), discovered in the area of the theatre in the first half of the 19th century⁸. Above the inscription is a relief with a scene of *dexiosis* between Athena, sitting on a rock, wearing a chiton and an aegis with gorgoneion, and a standing smaller female figure dressed with short chiton and accompanied by a dog⁹.

Μεθοναίον ἐκ Πιερ[ίας].
[Φ]αίνιππος Φρυνίχο ἐγραμμάτ[ευε].
[ἔδ]οχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τοῖ δέμοι· Ἐρεχθεὶς ἐπρ[υτάν]-
[ευε], Σκόπας ἐγραμμάτευε, Τιμονίδες ἐπεστάτε, Δ[ιοπ]-
5 [εἰ]θες εἶπε· δι[α]χειροτονῆσαι τὸν δῆμον αὐτίκ[α πρὸ]-
[ς Μ]εθοναίος εἴτε φόρον δοκῆι τάπτεν τὸν δῆμο[ν αὐτ]-
[ίκ]α μάλα ἔ ἐχ[σ]αρκῆν αὐτοῖς τελῆν ἡόσον τῆι θε[ῶι ἀπ]-
[ὸ τ]ῷ φόρο ἐγγυετο ἡὸν τοῖς προτέροις Παν[αθ]ε[ναί]ο[ι]-
[ις] ἔτετάχατο φέρειν, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο ἀτελεῖς ἕνα[ι· τὸν δὲ ὄφ]-
10 [εἰ]λεμάτων ἡὰ γεγράφαται τοῖ δέμοσι τοῖς ἀπαιτε]-
[μέ]νομ Μεθοναῖοι ὀφείλοντες, ἂν ὄσι ἐπιτ[έδειοι Ἀ]-
[θ]ε[ναί]οις ὅσπερ τε νῦν καὶ ἔτι ἀμείνος, ἐπι[χορῆν ἀπ]-
[ὸτ]αχσιν περὶ τῆς πράχσεος ἈθENAίος, καὶ ἕαν [κοινὸ]-
[ν] ψέφισμά τι περὶ τὸν ὀφειλεμάτων τὸν ἐν τέ[ισι σα]-
15 [νί]σι γίγνεται μεδὲν προσηέκετο Μεθοναῖο[ις] ἕαμ μ]-
[ἔ χ]ορις γίγνεται ψέφισμα περὶ Μεθοναῖον· π[ρέσβε]-
[ς δ]ἔ τρεῖς πέμφσαι ἡυπὲρ πεντέκοντα ἕτε γεγον[ότας]

⁷ A catalogue (including a new edition, translation and commentary) of all the decrees attributable to the sanctuary of Dionysos is published in Tozzi 2021; in the same volume, all the decrees pertaining to the aforesaid second group are listed and briefly discussed in the Appendix *Decreti esclusi*.

⁸ Pittakis 1838, 96-98 no. 45: «εὐρέθη εἰς τὸ θέατρον τοῦ Διονύσου τοῦ ἐν Λίναϊς». See *IG* I³ 61, with photo and previous bibliography; Tozzi, Giulia, *Decrees for Methone*, 2020, DOI: [10.13135/ELA-313](https://doi.org/10.13135/ELA-313); Tozzi 2011, no. 1*. Now in the Acropolis Museum, inv. no. EM 6596.

⁹ For a detail description of this relief, very worn and damaged, see Meyer 1989, 265 no. A 4, Pl. 4, 1, and Lawton 1995, 81-82 no. A2, Pl. 1. It is very likely that the female figure depicted with Athena has to be identified with Artemis, because the document concerns some economic regulations between Athens and the Eretrian colony Methone and Artemis was one of the most important deities of Eretria.

- [ho]ς Περδίκκα[ν], εἶπεν δὲ Περδίκκαι ἡότι δοκεῖ[ι δικά]-
 [ιο]ν ἔναι ἔαν Μεθοναῖος τῆι θαλάττει χρέσθα[ι μεδῆ]
 20 [έχσ]ἔναι ἡορίσασθαι, καὶ ἔαν εἰσεμπορεύεσθ[αι καθ]-
 [άπε]ρ τέος ἐ[ς] τὴν χόραν καὶ μέτε ἀδικῆν μ[έ]τε [ἀ]δ[ικῆσ]-
 [θαι] μεδῆ στρα[τ]ιὰν διὰ τῆς χόρας τῆς Μεθ[ο]ναῖον [διά]-
 [γεν ἀ]κόντομ [Με]θοναῖον, καὶ ἔαμ μὲν ὁμολ[ο]γῶσιν [ἡεκ]-
 [άτερ]οι χσυ[μβι]βασάντον ἡοι πρέσβες, ἔαν δὲ μέ, [πρεσ]-
 25 [βεί]αν ἐκάτ[ερ]ο[ι] πεμπόντον ἐς Διονύσια, τέλος [έχον]-
 [τας] περὶ ἡῶ[ν] ἄν διαφ<έ>ρονται, πρὸς τὴν βολὴν κα[ι τὸν]
 [δέμ]ον· εἰ[ι]πῆν δὲ [Π]ερδίκκαι ἡότι ἔαν ἡοι στραπ[ι]δο[ι]
 [ἡοι] ἐμ Ποτειδ[ά]αι ἐπαινῶσι γνόμας ἀγαθὰς ἡέ[χσοσι]
 [περι] αὐτῷ Ἄθε[ν]αῖοι. ἐχειροτόνεσεν ἡο δῆμος [Μεθον]-
 30 [αῖο]ς τελέν ἡ[όσο]ν τῆι θεῶι ἀπὸ τῷ φόρο ἐγίγνε[το ἡὸν]
 [τοῖ]ς προτέρο[ις] Παναθηναῖοις ἐτετάχατο φ[έ]ρεν, τῷ
 [δὲ ἄ]λλο ἀτε[λῆς] ἔναι. ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ [τῷ δέμ]-
 [οι· ἡ]ιπποθο[ν]τῆς ἐ[π]ρυτάνευε, Μεγακλείδης [έγραμμά]-
 [τευ]ε, Νι[κ]ο[...⁵ . . .] ἐπιστατάτε, Κλεόνυμος εἶπε· Μ[εθοναῖ]-
 35 [οις] εἶν[αι ἐχ]σα[γο]γῆν ἐγ Βυζαντίο σίτο μέχ[ρι] . . . α]-
 [κισχ]ιλίον μεδίμνον τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ ἐκάστο, ἡοι [δὲ ἔλλε]-
 [σπ]οντοφύλακες μέτε αὐτοῖς κολυόντον ἐχσάγεν μ[έ]τε-
 [ε ἄλ]λον ἐόντον κολύεν, ἔ εὐθυνέσθον μυρίασι δρ[αχ]-
 [μείσ]ιν ἕκαστος· γραφσαμένος δὲ πρὸς τὸς ἔλλεσπ[ον]-
 40 [το]φύλακας ἐχσάγε[ν] μέχρι τῷ τεταγμένο· ἀζέμιος [δὲ]
 [έσ]το καὶ ἐ ναὺς ἐ ἐχσάγοσα· ἡοι τι δ' ἄν κοινὸν φσηφ[ισμ]-
 [α π]ερὶ τῶν χσυμμάχο[ν] φσεφίζονται Ἄθηναῖοι πε[ρ]ι β[ι]-
 [οε]θείας ἔ ἄ[λ]λο τι προ[σ]τάττο[ν]τες τῆσι πόλεσι ἔ [περ]-
 [ι σ]φῶν [ἔ] περὶ τῶν πόλεον, ἡό τι ἄν ὀνομαστὶ περὶ τ[ῆς π]-
 45 [όλε]ος τῆ[ς] Μεθοναῖον φσεφίζονται τοῦτο προσέ[κεν]
 [αὐτοῖ]ς, τ[ᾶ] δὲ ἄλλα μέ, ἀλλὰ φυλάττοντες τὴν σφετ[έρα]-
 [ν αὐτῶν ἐ]ν τῷ τεταγμένοι ὄντον· ἡὰ δὲ ἡυπὸ Περδ[ίκκ]-
 [ο ἀδικῆσ]θαί φασι βουλεύσασθαι Ἄθηναῖος ἡοι τι ἄ[ν δο]-
 [κ]εῖ [ἀγαθ]ὸν εἶναι περὶ Μεθοναῖον ἐπειδὰν ἀπαν[τέσ]-
 50 [ο]σι ἐ[ς] τὸν δῆμον ἡοι πρέσβες [ἡ]οι παρὰ Περδίκκο [οῖ τ]-
 ε μετ[ὰ Πλ]ειστίο οἰ[χ]όμενοι καὶ ἡοι μετὰ Λεογό[ρο· τῆ]-
 [σ]ι δὲ [ἄλλ]εσι πόλε[σι χ]ρηματίσαι ἐπειδὰν ἐσέλ[θει ἐ]
 [π]ρυ[ταν]εῖα ἐ δευτ[έρα] μετὰ τὰς ἐν τῷ νεορίοι ἐ[δρας]
 [ε]ύθ[υς] ἐκκλεσίαν [πο]έσαντες· συν[ε]χῶς δὲ ποῆν τ[ὰς ἐκ]-
 55 [εἰ] ἔ[δαα]ς ἔος ἄν δι[απρ]αχθεῖ, ἄλλο δὲ προχρεμα[τίσαι]
 [το]ύ[το]ν μεδὲν ἔαμ μέ τι οἱ στρατε[γ]οῖ δέοντα[ι. ἔδοχ]-
 [σεν τῆι] βολῆι καὶ τῷ δέμοι· Κεκροτῆς ἐπρυ[τάνευε, .]

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[..⁶...]εξ ἐγγραμμάτε[υ]ε, η[ι]εροκλείδες ἐ[πεσάτε, ..]
[..⁶...] εἶπε· ἐπειδὲ ἔ[ταχσαν ἡοι τάκται τέσι πόλεσ]-
60 [ι ἡοπόσα]ι Ἀθηναί[οις φόρον φέροσι¹³.....]
lacuna
[ἔδοχσεν τῆι βολῆι καὶ τῶι δέμοι· Ἀκαμαντῖς ἐπρυτά]-
[νευε, Φαίνιππος ἐγγραμμάτευε,¹⁷.....]

The four decrees inscribed on the stele – two of which are almost complete – were voted between 430/29 and 424/3 BC and ruled some financial conventions and commercial privileges between Athens and Methone, a colony of Eretria in the Thermaic gulf¹⁰. We are dealing with an area of Macedonian influence and thus of considerable importance for the Athenians, who proclaim their support to the Methonians against the king Perdiccas II. The political relevance of this document, deeply discussed by scholars since its first discovery, is given principally to the information provided on the tribute paid by the members of the Delian League to Athens, on the Athenian policy in the area of the Hellespont, and on the relations between Athenians and Macedonians, since Methone occupied a strong strategic position especially for the control of grain trade in the Black Sea¹¹.

Even if the stele was found near the theatre, the themes discussed, the chronology of the decrees and the more general political context led me to conclude that it was originally exposed on the Acropolis, from which it should have fallen down as happened to many other fragments discovered in the same area. Various arguments and in particular the comparison with the surviving epigraphic Athenian evidence support this conclusion. First of all, it should be underlined that in the second half of the 5th century the Acropolis was still the place of the city most usually chosen for displaying inscriptions. Moreover, it is worth observing that the three well-known Athenian decrees so-called of Kleonymos, Thoudippos and Kleinias after the name of the proposer, issued between 426 and 424 BC to regulate the payment of the tribute by the members of the Delian League after the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, were certainly published on the Acropolis, as the findspots (and in one case the restored publication clause) confirm¹². Apropos the decree of Kleonymos, it must be pointed out also that the same Kleonymos proposed the second decree for Methone inscribed on our stele (line 34): it undoubtedly puts in closer relation the decisions voted in favour of the Methonians with those proposed by the same person and established in the same year to regulate the payment of the *phoros* by the allies.

¹⁰ See Hatzopoulos - Knoepfler *et al.* 1990, 639-668.

¹¹ See Burstein 1999, with ample previous bibliography.

¹² Respectively *IG I³ 68* (426/5 BC), *IG I³ 71* (425/4 BC) and *IG I³ 34* (425/4 BC or slightly later).

The place of discovery and the reference, in the oldest of the four inscribed decrees¹³, to some ambassadors who should have been sent by Perdiccas and the Methonaians to Athens during the Dionysia, if no agreement would be reached between the two counterparts (lines 24-27), has led some scholars to argue that the stele was instead located in the theatre of Dionysus¹⁴. Nevertheless, this argument seems to be rather weak, not only in comparison with the sure publication on the Acropolis of the three above-mentioned coeval decrees concerning the *phoros*, but also because the stele was engraved and publicly exposed some years after the proclamation of the aforementioned decree which refers to the legation at the Dionysia. If anything, the reference to this latter should be explained in relation with the political significance of the festival for Dionysus, which was periodically attended by a lot of people (among which many foreigners) and during which, right in the theatre, the tribute paid by the allies of the League was solemnly exhibited. With respect to this last point, it will not be useless to remind that also the so-called decree of Kleinias – surely exposed on the Acropolis – prescribes the convocation of an assembly for the *hellenotamiai* right after the Dionysia to announce which members of the League had paid the tax in full¹⁵, but this do not implicate the display of that decree in the theatre of Dionysus.

The hypothesis of a publication in the theatrical area can thus be based, in my opinion, only on the excavation data, which are however rather uncertain and much less decisive than the chronological and historical-political background of the four decrees for Methone. That this stele could not be located in the sanctuary of Dionysus is suggested, by the way, also by the sanctuary's architectural history: indeed, in the second half of the 5th century the sacred area had still a very simple structure and the *theatron* was completely wooden except for the first line of the *proedria*, and was therefore temporary and needed onerous and periodic maintenance to be used. This makes very unlikely the hypothesis that the city decided to set a stele of such monumentality and importance in the *Dionysion* and makes instead more and more plausible its original location on the Acropolis.

¹³ The date of this decree is uncertain, but should likely be placed between the 429/8 and the summer of 426 BC: see Mattingly 1996, 525-527.

¹⁴ See Liddel 2003, 83.

¹⁵ See cf. *IG I³* 34, lines 18-22.

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(2) The second decree I would like to focus on is inscribed on the upper left corner fragment of a small white marble stele with pediment (H. 0,198, W. 0,212, Th. 0, 108)¹⁶, probably to be identified with a small inscribed piece of marble found during the demolition of some houses East of the theatre of Dionysus between 1961 and 1962 walled up in a modern private house¹⁷.

[i]ερεῖ γενομέ[νωι - - - - -].
θεοί· *vacat*
ἐπὶ Χρέμητ[ος ἄρχοντος, ἐπὶ τῆς]
[Παν]διονίδ[ος ...ης πρυτανεί]-
5 [ας, ἥ]ι Κηφι[σοκλής¹¹.....]
[- - - ἐγραμμάτευεν· - - - - -]

The decree is dated in 326/5 BC, as the mention of the archon in line 3 proves. The indication [i]ερεῖ γενομέ[νωι] in line 1 attests that it was in honour of a priest, whose name is missing as well as the name of the deity for which he carried out his service. The irremediable *lacunae* and the uncertainty on the excavation data do not allow us to define the original location of the stele, but its discovery in a context of reuse East of the theatre let us assume that it was set in the sanctuary of Dionysus or in that of Asclepius. The issue is still open, but in this case palaeography is very helpful to lean towards this latter alternative: a close similarity of the lettering style of this text with that of another decree¹⁸ in honour of a priest of Asclepius, voted two years earlier (328/7 BC) and surely exposed in his *temenos*, makes indeed very likely that both decrees were produced by a same workshop, which could thus be regularly designated to engrave honorary decrees for the Asklepieion¹⁹.

(3) Again, to the Asklepieion should be assigned a fragmentary decree readable on a white marble stele (H. 0.27, W. 0.238, Th. 0.092) broken on all

¹⁶ See *IG II³ 1, 2, 365*, with photo and previous bibliography. Tozzi, Giulia, *Decree honouring a priest*, 2021, DOI: [10.13135/ELA-331](https://doi.org/10.13135/ELA-331); Tozzi 2011, no. 5*. Now in the deposits of the First Ephoria of Athens, inv. no. NK 424.

¹⁷ For this possible identification see Palagia - Clinton 1985.

¹⁸ *IG II³ 1, 2, 359*.

¹⁹ See Palagia - Clinton 1985, 137-139.

sides except for the back, which was found before 1877 South-East of the theatre scene near the little church of Agia Paraskevi²⁰.

[-----]
 [--- c.6 ---]αν τοῦ ἱερ[οῦ -----]
 [--- c.4 --- α]κοσίας δραχμάς· ὅπως [ἄν οὖν καὶ ἡ βουλή καὶ]
 [ὁ δῆμος] πᾶσι φιλοτιμουμένοις φαί[νωνται τὴν προσ]-
 [ήκουσ]αν τιμὴν καὶ χάριν ἀποδιδόντ[ες, ἀγαθεῖ τύχει],
 5 [δεδόχθ]αι τεῖ βουλεῖ· τοὺς λαχόντας π[ροέδρους εἰς]
 [τὴν ἐπιούσ]αν ἐκκλησίαν χρηματίσ[αι περὶ τούτων, γνῶ]-
 [μην δὲ ξυμβ]άλλεσθαι τῆς βουλῆς εἰς τὸν δῆμον, ὅτι
 [δοκεῖ τεῖ βουλεῖ] ἐπα[ι]νέσαι τὸν ἱερεᾶ τ[----- c.9 -----]
 [----- c.12 -----]ν Σαραπίωνος Παμ[βρωτάδην καὶ στε]-
 10 [φανῶσαι αὐτὸν θα]λλοῦ στεφάνωι ε[ύσεβείας ἐνε]-
 [κα τῆς πρὸς τοὺς θε]οὺς καὶ φιλοτιμία[ς τῆς εἰς τὴν]
 [βουλήν καὶ τὸν δῆμον]· ἀναγράψαι δὲ τό[δε τὸ ψήφισ]-
 [μα τὸν γραμματέα τὸ]ν κατὰ πρυτανε[ῖαν ἐν στήλει]
 [λιθίνει καὶ στήσαι αὐτ]ὴν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ [----- c.11 -----].
 15 [εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀναγραφὴν] καὶ τὴν στήλιν [μερίσαι τὸν]
 [ἐπὶ τεῖ διοικήσει τὸ γενόμ]ενον ἀνάλ[ωμα -----]
 [-----]

The text, datable around 170 BC on the basis of the letter-cutter²¹, was voted for a priest whose name is lost (only the patronymic and the first part of the demotic are readable in line 9), who receives a foliage crown for his benevolence towards the gods and his generosity towards the Athenians. Since god's name is lost, it is not possible to verify the original location of the decree, but the publication clause partly preserved in line 14 gives us a valuable clue in this sense: on the stone are still readable the words ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, which are never used in Athens for specifying the publication of a decree in the sanctuary of Dionysus – for which the formula στήσαι ἐν τῷ τεμένει τοῦ Διονύσου²² is the only one attested – but are instead documented for the decrees of the

²⁰ Koumanoudis 1877, 486-489 no. 4: «εὐρέθη νοτιοανατολικῶς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ Διονυσιακοῦ Θεάτρου καὶ παρὰ τὸ ἐκκλησιδίον τῆς γ. Παρασκευῆς». See *IG II³ 1, 5, 1386*, with photo and previous bibliography. Tozzi, Giulia, *Honours for a priest (of Asklepios?)*, 2021, DOI: [10.13135/ELA-330](https://doi.org/10.13135/ELA-330); Tozzi 2011, no. 6*. Now in the Epigraphic Museum of Athens (inv. no. EM 7575α).

²¹ Tracy 1990, 134: «The cutter of *IG II² 903*».

²² See *IG II³ 1, 4, 920*, lines 35-36; 995, lines 23-24; 1014, line 23; 1, 5, 1284, lines 19, 54-55.

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sanctuary of Asclepius²³: that lead us to argue that also this stele was originally located in the Asklepieion²⁴, as the discovery of the fragment in the South-Eastern part of the theatre scene seems to confirm.

(4) To completely change our topographical perspective, I would like to discuss a white marble fragment belonging to a small pedimental stele (H. 0,33, W. 0,225, Th. 0,102-0,129) discovered in 1886 in a context of reuse in a wall of the so-called Hadrian's library²⁵.

[θε]οί·
 [ἐπι Θερσιλόχου ἄρχοντος, ἐπι τ]ῆς [[Ἀντιγονί]δος] ἐνάτης π-
 [ρυτανείας, ν ἢ Διόδοτος Διογν]ήτου Φρεάρριος ἐγραμμιά-
 [τευεν· Ἐλαφηβολιῶνος δεκάτη] ὑστέρα· τετάρ[τ]η καὶ εἰ-
 5 [κοστῆ τῆς πρυτανείας· ἐκκλησ]ία ἐν Διονύσου· τῶν προέδ-
 [ρων ἐπεπήφιζεν Χα....⁹....]ου Ὁῆθεν καὶ συμπρόεδροι·
 [νννν ἔδοξεν τῆ βουλῆ καὶ τῶ δ]ήμῳ· vacat
 [.....²⁷..... εἶπεν· περὶ ὧν ἀπαγγέλ-
 [λει ὁ ἄρχων περὶ τῶν ἱερῶν, ὧν ἔθυσεν τῶ] τε Διονύσῳ καὶ ν
 10 [τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς, οἷς πάτριον ἦν, ἀγαθῆι τύ]χηι, δεδόχθ[α]-
 [ι τῆ βουλῆ· τοὺς λαχόντας προέδρους εἰς τὴν ἐπι]οῦσ[αν]
 [ἐκκλησίαν - - - - -]
 [- - - - -]

The text can be dated in 251/0 BC on the basis of the name of the archon Thersilochos, which has been convincingly restored by Koumanoudis in line 2 thanks to the few surviving letters of the prescript²⁶; the decree was voted during an ἐκκλησία ἐν Διονύσου (line 5), that is to say during one of the regular assemblies which were held each year in the theatre after the Great Dionysia²⁷.

²³ See e.g. *IG II²* 1019, line 37; 975+1061, line 32; *IG II²*, 1, 2, 359, lines 28-29.

²⁴ See already Hubbe 1959, 179-181 no. 5, with photo, who properly underlined that the formula partially preserved in lines 1-2 is very close to the expression that can be read in other three decrees from the Asklepieion.

²⁵ *IG II³* 1, 4, 1001, with photo and previous bibliography; Tozzi, Giulia, *Honours for the archon*, 2020, DOI: [10.13135/ELA-308](https://doi.org/10.13135/ELA-308); Tozzi 2011, no. 11. Now in the Epigraphic Museum of Athens, inv. no. EM 7356.

²⁶ Koumanoudis 1886, 12-14 no. 6.

²⁷ This periodic assembly at the end of the festival is documented by Demosthenes (XI 8-10) and Aeschines (II 61; III 52) and by many Athenian decrees, some of which were exposed in the sanctuary of Dionysos itself (*IG II²* 1, 2, 347; 436; 1, 4, 995; 1001; 1014; 1284). The formula ἐκκλησία ἐν Διονύσου, already attested since the Classical period to indicate the *ekklesiai* carried

The honorand is an archon, who is praised for the sacrifices made to Dionysus and other gods for whom it was traditional; his name is lost as well as the honours bestowed to him.

The decree was passed on the same day of another Athenian decree, which was enacted in honour of the *agonothetes* Agathaios of Prospalta and was surely displayed in the sanctuary of Dionysus, as the surviving publication clause attests²⁸. Even if the bad state of preservation and the discovery in a context of reuse impose us caution, the chronological correspondence between these two decrees and the explicit mention to sacrifices carried out firstly for Dionysus and then for the other gods lead us suppose that also this fragment was part of a stele originally set in the Dionysion. It will not be a chance, in this respect, that in the whole Athenian surviving epigraphic documentation there are only two other honorary decrees enacted for individuals who sacrificed firstly for Dionysus, and both of them were published in the sanctuary of Dionysus²⁹. This hypothesis can be supported also by a palaeographic feature, because the *rasura* detectable in line 2, which deleted the name of the tribe Antigonis as a result of the *damnatio memoriae* voted in 201/0 BC against Macedonians, is very similar, in its features, to the *rasurae* cut for the same reason on other steles that were once surely set in the Dionsysion³⁰.

(5) I conclude this brief overview with an ill-preserved decree in the upper left fragment of a stele of white marble (H. 0.47, W. 0.30, Th. 0.097), broken away below and to the right, found in 1938 in the wall of a modern house South-East of the agora and West of the Panathenaic Way³¹.

[ἐ]πὶ Φιλόνεω ἄρχο[ντος], ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀκα[μαντίδος ἐνάτης
πρυτανείας, ἧι ..]
 [.....²¹]ΔΗΜΟΥΥΜ[.....²⁷ ..]

out in the theatre of Dionysus, became from the 4th century the distinctive formula for those organized after the Dionysia; constantly used until the 2nd century BC, it seems to have fallen into disuse by the end of the Hellenistic period, when it was replaced by the formula ἐκκλησία ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ, which had been already extensively used to indicate each type of political meetings held in the theatre (for a detailed analysis of this topic see in particular Tozzi 2016, 100-112, 188-203).

²⁸ *IG* II³ 1, 4, 995, lines 23-24.

²⁹ *IG* II³ 1, 4, 920 and 995.

³⁰ *IG* II³ 1, 4, 877; 991; 995. For a further analysis of these *rasurae* see Byrne 2010, 163 no. 22.

³¹ Pritchett - Meritt 1940, 22: «found in the wall of a modern house in section BB on 12 September 1938». See *IG* II³ 1, 4, 1014 (= *Agora* XVI 214), with photo and previous bibliography. Tozzi, Giulia, *Honours for an official*, 2020, DOI: 10.13135/ELA-307; Tozzi 2011, no. 12. The fragment is in the deposit of the Agora Museum, inv. no. Ag. I 5559.

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[...¹¹.....]· ἐκκλησία ἐν Διονύσου· [ν τῶν προέδρων ἐπεψήφισεν]
 5 [.....¹⁶.....]ΟΙ[... ἔ]δοξεν τ[.....²⁷.....]
 [.....²⁵.....]ΕΥΠ[.....²⁷.....]
 [.....²⁶.....]ΧΗ[.....²⁷.....]
 [-----]
 [-----]
 10 [[...⁷...]] [-----]
 [-----]
 [...8.... καλῶς καὶ εὐ]σεβῶς· ὡς ΕΠ[.....²⁹.....]
 [.....¹⁹.....]ΩΝ[.....³⁴.....]
 [.]ΕΡ[.....²⁰.....]ΕΙ[.....³⁰.....]
 ΜΕΝΑ[.....⁵¹.....]
 15 [.4.] καὶ [.....⁴⁸.....]
 ΙΤ[.]ΕΡΟ[.....¹⁴.....]ΡΕ[.....³².....]
 [...5..]Τ[.]Ρ[.....¹².....]ΓΕ[.]Ω[.....²⁷..... εὐσε]-
 β[εία]ς ἕνεκα τῆς πρὸς τοῦ[ς] θε[ο]ῦς καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς τὸν δῆμον τὸν
 Ἄθ]-
 [ηναίων]· εἶναι [δ'] αὐτῶι καὶ εἰ[ς τὸ λοιπὸν εὐρέσθαι, ὅτου ἂν δέηται
 κατα]-
 20 ξίως τῆς πρὸς τὸν δῆμον εὐνοία[ς καὶ ἄλλο ἀγαθὸν¹⁴..... δι]-
 καίως συνάρχουσι τὴν ἀρχήν· ὡς [.....³¹.....]
 ΘΕΝ· ὡς ἀναγράψ[αι δὲ] τότε τὸ ψήφισ[μα τὸν γραμματέα ἐν στήλι
 λιθίνῃ]
 [καὶ στήσ]αι ἐν τῶ[ι] τεμένει τοῦ Δι[.....²⁹.....]
 [...⁸.....]ΜΟΥ τὸ γεγόμενον ἀ[νάλωμα -----]
 vacat
 25 [.....¹⁹.....] Οἰῆθεν [.....²⁷.....]
 [-----]

The name of the archon Philoneos in line 1 allows to date the text in 246/5 BC, whilst the formula ἐκκλησία ἐν Διονύσου, almost complete in line 3, attests that the assembly took place in the theatre of Dionysus after the festival yearly organized in the month of Elaphebolion. Neither the reasons of the honours nor the identity of the honorand are still known.

From the publication clause (line 23) we learn that the stele had to be set in the *temenos* of a god, whose name is preserved only for its first two letters Δι-. The first editors of the decree believed that it referred to the Stoa of Zeus and thus restored the formula as στήσαι ἐν τῶι τεμένει τοῦ Διός³². However,

³² Pritchett - Meritt 1940, 22.

this expression is never documented in the even ample literary and surviving epigraphic evidence, where the prescriptions $\sigma\tilde{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota \pi\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \tau\epsilon\tilde{\iota} \sigma\tau\omicron\tilde{\alpha}\iota \tau\epsilon\tilde{\iota} \tau\omicron\tilde{\upsilon} \Delta\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ or $\sigma\tilde{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota \acute{\epsilon}\mu\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\theta\epsilon\nu \tau\eta\varsigma \tau\omicron\tilde{\upsilon} \Delta\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \sigma\tau\omicron\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$ are usually used³³. Instead, as it has been appropriately argued by Osborne and Byrne in their new edition of the decree in the *IG*, the most suitable restoration here is to supply the name of Dionysus, not only because it is consonant with the extent of the lacuna but also because the clause $\sigma\tilde{\eta}\sigma\alpha\iota \acute{\epsilon}\nu \tau\tilde{\omega}\iota \tau\epsilon\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota \tau\omicron\tilde{\upsilon} \Delta\iota\omicron\nu\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\omicron\upsilon$ is well attested in Athenian inscriptions to denote the erection of steles in the sanctuary of Dionysus³⁴. That would indicate a connection between the Dionysion and the honorand, who may have served as *agonothetes* or held an office involving the organization or the management of the Dionysia (even archonship can be taken in consideration). The fact that the honours were discussed during an assembly convened in the theatre after the Dionysia could constitute a further clue in this line of interpretation.

giuliatozzi85@gmail.com

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³³ *IG* II³ 1, 4, 903, lines 28-29; 950, lines 7-8; 953, lines 12-13; *IG* II² 1075, line 17. Cf. also *Agora* XVI 304.

³⁴ See above, no. 3.

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Abstract

Individuare il luogo di pubblicazione originario di un'iscrizione antica rappresenta spesso un compito arduo per gli epigrafisti, reso ancor più difficile dal possibile stato frammentario di conservazione, dal potenziale successivo riutilizzo della pietra e dalle circostanze talvolta oscure o confuse del suo ritrovamento. Si deve anche notare che in passato l'attenzione rivolta ai testi ha troppo spesso prevalso su quella dedicata ai contesti, che in molti casi sono stati (quasi) del tutto ignorati: per tale motivo è opportuno ribadire l'importanza del rapporto tra testo e contesto negli studi epigrafici e apprezzare l'interesse dimostrato per questo argomento nei tempi più recenti. Queste considerazioni sono alla base del progetto di ricerca *The Epigraphic Landscape Athens* e su queste stesse basi si è fondato il mio lavoro sul santuario di Dioniso Eleutereo ad Atene, il cui scopo è stato quello di individuare tutti i testi superstiti esposti in prossimità del teatro di Dioniso annesso al santuario, per capire perché e quando gli Ateniesi considerarono questo luogo, che ebbe nel tempo una forte valenza politica, come spazio appropriato per la pubblicazione di testi ufficiali. L'analisi dei dati archeologici, la lettura delle iscrizioni rinvenute all'interno e nei pressi del santuario e l'esame comparativo di tutta la produzione epigrafica ateniese mi hanno permesso di raccogliere un gruppo significativo di iscrizioni un tempo collocate nel santuario (1) ma anche di identificare (con certezza o comunque con buona attendibilità) altre epigrafi rinvenute nella stessa area ma pertinenti ad altri luoghi della città (2) e, viceversa, altre iscrizioni rinvenute altrove ma riconducibili al santuario per ragioni di natura storico-archeologica o per motivi testuali (3). In questa sede sono presentati e discussi alcuni esempi di decreti pertinenti ai gruppi (2) e (3).

Identifying the original place of publication of an ancient inscription represents often a hard task for epigraphists, which is made more challenging by its possible fragmentary state of preservation, the potential later reuse of the stone and the sometimes obscure or confuse circumstances of its discovery. It should be even noted that in the past the attention paid to texts has too often prevailed over that devoted to contexts, which in many cases have been (almost) completely ignored: for this reason, it is worth reaffirming the importance of the relationship between text and context in epigraphic studies and to praise the interest demonstrated to this topic in the more recent times. These considerations have been at the basis of the research project *The Epigraphic Landscape Athens* and on these same foundations my research on the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus in Athens has been grounded, whose purpose has been to identify all the surviving texts once exposed in the proximity of the theatre of Dionysus annexed to the sanctuary, in order to understand why and when the Athenians considered this place, that had a strong political significance over the time, as an appropriate site for the publication of official texts. The analysis of the archaeological data, the reading of the inscriptions discovered in and near the sanctuary and the comparative exam of all the Athenian epigraphic production have enabled me to gather a significant group of inscriptions once set in the sanctuary (1) but also to identify (with certainty or at least with good reliability) other inscribed stones found in the same area but pertaining to other places of the city (2) and, conversely, other inscriptions discovered elsewhere but attributable to the sanctuary on the basis of historical, chronological or textual reasons (3). A selection of a few examples of decrees pertaining to groups (2) and (3) is here presented and discussed.