

## RENT! and Diplomacy in Fifth Century Crete: A New Reading of IC IV.80

While the study of Hellenistic Crete constitutes a growing field that is yielding a rich and complicated portrait of how Cretan city-states interacted with one another, our knowledge of the Classical period is scarce by contrast. Much of our information comes from epigraphic sources, a good portion of which records treaties between Gortyn – at this time, the leading city in the central Mesara region, later a leading city of Crete – and one or more cities. Later inscriptions, however, are not often brought to bear on the Classical material. One of the earlier inscriptions, IC IV.80, is the focus of this paper; it records an agreement between the Cretan cities of Gortyn and Rhitten dating from the fifth century BCE, which lays out a judicial arrangement (or a series of judicial arrangements) that encompasses the jurisdictions of both cities, while also acknowledging their political and legal independence.

IC IV.80 is one of the earliest Cretan interstate agreements; it is also fairly complete, consisting of fifteen lines of text laying out four provisions. Although the inscription has generated a respectable amount of scholarly attention, most interpretations have treated it in a piecemeal fashion, regarding the clauses as independent of one another rather than as one coherent text (e.g. Kristensen 2002, to some extent, Van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994). I argue that its provisions are better understood to all address the same matter of concern. In my reading, the issue central to the text is the potential conflict arising from landowners from one of the cities claiming the benefits from renters, citizens of the other community, who have improved the property by building or planting upon it (ll. 3-4); I propose that the provisions that follow address this particular problem, since the opening clause (l.1) declares that the Gortynians otherwise regard the Rhittenians as “*autonomoi kai autodikoi*”. My understanding also offers new ways to consider the meaning of several terms that have defied explanation.

This inscription holds far-reaching implications beyond the individual agreements between Gortyn and Rhitten. Certainly IC IV.80 testifies to two cities, one very likely more powerful than the

other, establishing legal procedures to address a potential source of interstate tension that was clearly important enough to warrant the attention from both, and involving administrative officials from each. My reading will show some ways in which the two cities made unequal arrangements to accommodate their disparate circumstances, and in what ways they safeguarded the procedures so that they would not be abused. The agreement is also forward-looking, anticipating changing circumstances by providing an emendation clause. Perhaps the most wide-reaching observation concerns the use of “*to koinon*”, understood by previous scholars to mean “the community [of the Rhittinians]” or “communally”, but understood by my reading to refer to the agreement itself. This might even provide a fifth-century antecedent for later political developments on Crete, confirmation that scholars have long sought.