

## The Ephebic Corpus: Work in Progress?

Scholars have long recognized that the twenty-eight ephebic inscriptions dating to the Lycurgan period (i.e. 334/3 to 322/1 B.C) form a distinctive group in comparison to later Hellenistic and Roman examples because they commemorate the ephebes of a single tribe (Pélékidis 1962; Reinmuth 1971; Petrakos 1997, 1999). While our understanding of the Athenian ephebeia has increased greatly over the last century, resting primarily upon inferences and deductions from the corpus, one aspect of the epigraphic evidence has received insufficient attention, namely the selection and arrangement of information on the honorary inscriptions.

This paper argues that even if we allow for different types of dedications, such as whether the stone was a stele or a base with a cutting for a herm, there was a significant variation in format within the corpus. A dedication of Cecropis dated to 333/2 B.C. (*EM* 7743), for instance, contains a roster of each ephebe's name followed by a patronymic under a deme caption, below which four decrees are inscribed. Yet a stele of Oineis (c. 329/8 B.C.) has a roster (without patronymics) but omits the decrees and includes a list of officials on the front and sides (*Agora* Inv. No. I 5250). Another example is the marked divergence in the number and order of officials honored in the corpus, to the extent that it is often difficult to identify untitled officers with certainty (e.g. *EM* 3590). Additionally, some inscriptions separate the ephebic *lochagoi* from the rest of the non-ephebic officials, as can be seen in a dedication of Leontis (*Oropus* Inv. No. 344: c. 332/1-326/5 B.C.), while others are inclusive (e.g. *Eleusis* Inv. No. E 1103: 332/1 B.C.).

The most plausible explanation for these differences is to be found in the likely post-Chaeronea origin of the ephebeia (Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1893). When the

institution began to function in 334/3 B.C. as a result of Epicrates' legislation "concerning the ephebes" passed during the previous archon year (Harp. s.v. Ἐπικράτης = Lyc. Fr. 5.3 Conomis), it necessitated the introduction of a new type of inscription to commemorate the completion of the ephebes' military service or their victory in athletic competition. If we consider that the tribe or deme rather than the *boule* or *demos* was probably responsible for their dedication, it follows that the content of each inscription was left to the former's discretion without the input of other honoring corporations. Moreover, the Lycurgan corpus can be contrasted with *IG II<sup>2</sup> 478* (306/5 B.C.), which is the earliest attested ephebic dedication to incorporate all the tribes on one stone. Erected by the *demos*, *IG II<sup>2</sup> 478* became the model for all subsequent Hellenistic inscriptions (Reinmuth 1955).

#### Works Cited

Pélékidis, C. (1962) *Histoire de l'éphébie attique: des origines à 31 avant Jésus-Christ*.

Paris.

Petrakos, B.Ch. (1997) *Οἱ Ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ὀρωποῦ*. 2 Vols. Athens.

Petrakos, B.Ch. (1999) *Ὁ Δῆμος τοῦ Ἰαμνοῦντος*. 2 Vols. Athens.

Reinmuth, O.W. (1955) "The Ephebic Inscription, Athenian Agora I 286." *Hesperia* 24, 220-39.

Reinmuth, O.W. (1971) *The Ephebic Inscriptions of the Fourth Century B.C.* Leiden.

Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, U.von. (1893) *Aristoteles und Athen*. Vol. I. Berlin.