

## Reintegrating a Stained Community: A Reevaluation and Historical Contextualization of the Demotionidai Decrees

The Decrees of the Demotionidai is among the most famous and most debated inscription series in Attic history, with nearly all of the attention paid to the identification of the two named groups: the Demotionidai and the Deceleans. For nearly one and a half centuries, the debate has cleaved along one axis: either the Demotionidai were a phratry and the Deceleans a privileged subgroup (Wilamowitz 1893), or the Deceleans were the phratry and the Demotionidai the privileged subgroup (Wade-Gery 1931). Charles Hedrick and S.D. Lambert, despite claims to the contrary, largely adhered to this axis: the former by essentially equating the deme of Decelea to the phratry of the Demotionidai (Hedrick 1990); and the latter by refining the idea of the Deceleans as a subgroup of the Demotionidai phratry so that the Deceleans were in the process of forming their own phratry (Lambert 1993). With the exception of Carawan, this scholarship shares one great flaw: they have utterly neglected the historical context of the decree and failed to consider the circumstances of Decelea, where this decree was installed and where the phratry it describes was based. And even Carawan, although he makes an admirable attempt at contextualization, fails to progress beyond material considerations.

In this paper, I argue that in the years after the restoration of the democracy, Decelea was laboring under the shadow of the last phase of the Peloponnesian War to which it had leant its name, and was stained by its role as a base of operations for the enemy and as a refuge for Athenian oligarchs and traitors during the Decelean War (e.g., Diod. 13.103). I do so with particular attention paid to the appearance of such figures in the works of the fourth century orators such as Lysias and Demosthenes. It is under the circumstances that the first Decree of the Demotionidai was passed in 396/5, with the Corinthian War looming in its future.

With this proper historical context in place, I propose that the old prescriptive model in which the Demotionidai must be either the phratry or a subgroup of the phratry must be abandoned. Instead, I argue that the Demotionidai are, in fact, a body appointed by the central state of Athens to interfere in and oversee the critical citizenship registrations of this troubled and troubling area on the eve of renewed hostilities with Sparta. Although this may seem extreme to some scholars, groups such as the *Nomothetai* and *Anagraphes* prove that Athens was willing to take unique and extreme measures as it tried to heal as a community and as a state in the wake of the war and oligarchic revolutions. Indeed, Andocides even links Decelea to the actions of the Athenian efforts to reconcile its citizenry to each other (1.103). Furthermore, I would suggest that comparison to known, regular procedures of deme registration even call into question how abnormal or harsh the Demotionidai truly would have seemed (e.g. *Ath. Pol.* 42).

Decelea was particularly damaged by the Decelean War, both materially and psychologically. It is naïve to think that the memory of Decelea's role as first a beneficiary of Spartan friendship (Hdt. 9.73), then a base for Spartan raids of Attica, and finally as a safe-haven for oligarchs and traitors, faded within less than a decade. The Demotionidai were both a response to these exceptional circumstances and an attempt to reincorporate the disconnected Decelean community to the Attic community as a whole.

### Bibliography

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