ATTIC INSCRIPTIONS: EDUCATION

TEACHERS' NOTES ON A-LEVEL ANCIENT HISTORY

A. Period Study: 'Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492–404 BC'

1. The Tribute

Slide 2: Fragment of an Athenian Tribute List, 448/7 BC. British Museum 1863,0516.1 (*IG* I^3 264).

Relevant to: Pericles' foreign policy (including the Delian League)

During the period of the Delian League, confederacy members would pay a pre-determined amount of tribute to the Athenians. The sums of money were received by the Athenian officials known as the *Hellenotamiai* (Treasurers of the Greeks). One-sixtieth of this money was handed over to the treasury of the deity Athena. This sum was recorded on stone lists set up probably on the Acropolis at Athens. These lists, therefore, act essentially as accounts of offerings made to Athena and probably had as much sacred as accounting value. They are known as the Athenian Tribute Lists, though as they record only a portion of the tribute this is in fact a misnomer.

The BM fragment pertains to the year 448/7 BC and records contributions by four communities to the Delian League. It is part of the 'first stone' (*lapis primus*), which at 3.8 m. high is the most massive of Athenian inscriptions, covered the years 454/3 to 440/39 and was inscribed on four sides. Composed of 184 fragments, some aspects of the current reconstruction and that of the 73 fragments of the 'second stone' (439/8-432/1) have been questioned.

The high quality of the marble, with crystalline mica, is evident and may reflect significant financial investment in setting up these documents, the view of Miles (*Hesperia* 80, 2011, 657-75) is that the size of the stones reflects the possibility that they were blocks re-used from building projects, such as the Older Parthenon.

In this fragment we can see only the Athenian acrophonic numbers that listed one-sixtieth sums received by Athena's treasury (see the KS3 AIE slides explaining the acrophonic numerical system). The association of this fragment with another piece still in Greece has enabled scholars to associate the sums with particular groups. Note that 6 obols make up one drachma and 6000 drachmai make up one Talent. In order to calculate the total amount of tribute annually paid by these states each year, one has to multiply the amounts by 60. So in this case, we would expect that:

- the Chersoneioi have paid 60 X 300 = 1800 drachmai = **3 Talents** per annum;
- the Pyrnioi and Neapolis each have paid 60 X 16 = 960 drachmai **and** 60 X 4 = 240 obols, making of **1000 drachmai;**
- the Kyllantioi have paid 60 X 200 drachmai = **1200 drachmai = 2 Talents** per annum.

It seems that the ancient Athenians would have calculated the amount of tribute to be paid on the basis of the resources of the individual communities (sometimes changing the amounts to reflect other forms of imposition). So we might be able to get a sense on the relative resources and population size of the communities listed here.

Athenian tribute-paying allies were classified into five regional groups: Hellespontine, Ionian, Carian, Thracian and the Islands. Of the communities paying here, the Pyrnioi, the Chersoneioi and Kallyntioi belonged to the Carian district; the city of Neapolis belonged to the Hellespontine district.

The fragment is now in store at the BM.

Questions for discussion: Why would Athenians write down the amount of tribute being dedicated to Athena? Think about the amount coming in (note that an artisan's wage was 1 drachma a day in this period): would this have transformed Athens' finances?

Note: The first assessment in 478 BC amounted to 460 Talents, according to Thuc. 1.96.2. By the mid 420s, the Athenians were asking for much more from their allies. However, as Kallet-Marx shows, Athenian financial management means that it is unlikely that tribute would have directly funded either the Athenian building programme or the remuneration of Athenian public officials. Tribute would have been managed by the *Hellenotamiai* ('treasurers of the Greeks'), Athenian officials who would have been responsible for management and disbursal (mostly for overseas ventures) of the tribute.

Slides 3 and 4. Kleinias' decree about tribute collection, 425/4 or later. *AIUK* 4.2 (British Museum. Decrees) no. 5 (fragment c)

This decree is commonly referred to, after its proposer (who is not otherwise identifiable), as the 'Kleinias' decree'. It cannot be dated with certainty, but its provisions seem to presuppose the arrangements made in other inscriptions of the mid-420s relating to tribute collection, including the Thoudippos decrees (mentioned in the specifications for A-level AH and the subject of an AIO paper).

The main thrust of the provisions is to tighten up the administrative arrangements to ensure tribute was paid and conveyed to Athens as assessed. A written record authenticated with special seals is henceforth to accompany the tribute to Athens, to be opened on delivery and compared with the tribute received (1-18). The 'Greek treasurers' (*Hellenotamiai*), the Athenian officials responsible for tribute collection, are to report to a special Assembly, to be held in the spring after the City Dionysia, on which cities have paid and which have not (18-22). Four commissioners are then to be appointed to go to the different regions of the Empire to deliver tribute receipts to the cities and to pursue non-payers (22-30). A legal process is provided for anyone who is suspected of abusing this new system (31-41). The same process is to apply to the cow and suit of armour (panoply) which each city was obliged to send to Athens together with the tribute (41-45). This obligation had been recently imposed on all allies by Thoudippos' decree.

The text on the British Museum fragment (c) is not well enough preserved to enable restoration, but it is clear enough from the reference to 'the incoming Council' (57) and

‘last year’s’ (73) that measures taken under the decree might run over into the following year, and that this part of the text included arrangements for cases in which allies disputed allegations of non-payment (61-76).

The decree, introduced with the phrase ‘The Council and the People decided’ is evidently a probouleumatic decree: that is, one that was formulated in the Athenian council (as a *probouleuma*) and then ratified, possibly with minor amendments, at the assembly. A short explanation can be found of the decree-making process in Stephen Lambert’s Attic Inscriptions in UK Collections 4.2 (British Museum: Decrees), pages 7-8.

Questions for Discussion: What lengths did the Athenians go to ensure the regular payment of the tribute? How did they deal with disputes? What does this say about the nature of the Athenian Empire?

2. Athens and other city-states

Slide 5. Decree about Erythrai, c. 454-450 BC. British Museum 1816,0610.346 (*AIUK* 4.2 (British Museum Decrees) no. 2)

This is a decree which arranges for an Athenian garrison to be imposed upon the large and wealthy Ionian city of Erythrai, which is likely to have joined the Delian League at the time of its foundation in 478 BC. We cannot be sure of the exact date and context of this particular intervention. It is one of a number of inscriptions in which the Athenian assembly is recorded as interfering in affairs of the city: another inscribed Athenian decree, now lost, accounts for Athenian intervention after a revolt or civil upheaval and made provision for the establishment of a democratic council at Erythrai. The BM inscription may suggest upheaval of a similar nature and attests certainly to Athenian intervention in the 450s.

Questions for Discussion: What lengths did the Athenians go to ensure compliance with the decisions of their assembly? How did they deal with uprisings? What does this say about the nature of the Delian League/Athenian Empire? How might empire have been experienced by the subject states of the empire?

Slide 6. Athenian Regulations for Hestiaia, 446 BC or later (*AIUK* 4.2 (British Museum. Decrees) no. 3)

Hestiaia was one of the four major cities of Euboea, located in the north of the island. It was a tribute-paying member of the Delian League, and with Chalkis and Eretria revolted against Athens in the aftermath of Athens’ defeat at the battle of Koroneia in Boeotia in 447/6 BC. The suppression of the revolt by an Athenian force under Pericles is described by Thucydides in a single sentence: ‘And the Athenians . . . subdued the whole of it [Euboea], and settled the rest by agreement, but expelled the Hestiaians, occupying their land themselves’ (1.114.3). This decree is generally thought to contain the arrangements for Athens' settlement of Hestiaia on this occasion, though some scholars (e.g. Mattingly) have preferred to connect it with a campaign against Euboea

in 424/3 BC mentioned by the fourth-century historian Philochoros. (The date of the decree relating to Chalkis, prescribed in the specifications, is similarly debated).

This decree seems to have envisaged the levying (on Athenian colonists?) of an *eisphora* (lit. 'a bringing in') an occasional tax based on capital. This is notable, since on the usual dating of this decree it precedes by nearly 20 years 428/7 BC, when the Athenians 'first levied on themselves an *eisphora* of 200 talents' (Thuc. 3.19.1).

In this decree the Athenians also Athenians regulated the charges levied on the ferry that plied between their settlement at Hestiaia, Chalkis and the mainland at Oropos, the territory north-east of Attica which was also under Athenian control at this period. Those participating in a religious procession appear to have been charged half-fare.

Lines 79 and 86 seem to make arrangements at Hestiaia similar to those for 'circuit judges' (*dikastai kata demous*), which had been reintroduced at Athens in 453/2 BC. This perhaps involved the [seven?] men resident at Hestiaia referred to in 83-84. At 86-89 it seems that provisions are made for cases to be heard three times (a year?) in Hestiaia, and for separate hearings in Dion and Ellopia, which were dependencies of Hestiaia.

Questions for Discussion: How did the Athenians deal with allies who revolted from their Empire? What does this say about the nature of the Athenian Empire? This decree is hard to date, and some have opted for a date in the 420s: is there anything about the nature of the provisions here that point to a date in the 440s or the 420s?

Slide 7. Athenians renew their treaty with the Rhegians, 433/2 BC. British Museum 1816,0610.206 (*AIUK* 4.2 (British Museum. Decrees) no. 4)

This is an inscription which reveals how long-standing Athenian interests were in the West. Rhegion was a Greek city on the western side of the toe of Italy, opposite Sicily. It features for the first time in the literary evidence in connection with Athens in 427 BC, during the early stages of the Peloponnesian War. In that year Leontinoi, a Sicilian city a little north of Syracuse, together with its allies, including Rhegion, asked the Athenians to intervene in a conflict between them and Syracuse and its local allies, who were aligned with Sparta. According to Thucydides 3.86, among Athens' reasons for accepting the appeal of Leontinoi and her allies were a desire to interfere with the Peloponnesian supply of grain from this region, and to assess the potential for bringing Sicily under Athenian control, thus foreshadowing Athens' major expedition to Sicily in 415 BC, which was to end in disaster. In 427 BC Leontinoi and her allies appealed to the Athenians 'in accordance with an old alliance'. It seems that our inscription, was, or at least reflected, that 'old' alliance, or components of it.

The first 8 lines of this inscription – which consist of the heading and prescript which contain the details about the Athenian institutions of the decree – are inscribed over an erased portion of the stone. This seems to be because they renewed and updated a previous version of the treaty. So we learn that the alliance had been renewed in 433/2 BC: perhaps the original dated back to the 440s. Rather than inscribe the treaties afresh on that occasion, the old prescripts were replaced with new ones,

dating to the time of the renewal, the same day for both inscriptions. Though the renewals of 433/2 are not mentioned by Thucydides or any other literary source, the timing suggests that they may have been connected with Athens' alliance that year with Corcyra, one of the contributory causes of the Peloponnesian War.

The early 8 lines give us insight into the process: it seems that, during the archonship of Apseudes (433/2 BC) envoys had come from Rhegion to request or discuss a renewal of the treaty. We can presume that he would have visited the Athenian Council where a proposal would have been formulated and then sent to the assembly. This appears to have been to renew the old alliance and had originally been proposed by a certain Kallias. In a damaged part of the treaty (in red font), the Athenians appear to have sworn an oath to be faithful allies of the Rhegians.

We don't know where the inscription was originally set up, but it is likely that it would have been set up on the Athenian acropolis, like many other treaties. The heading 'Gods' underlines the fact that the treaty was addressed to an audience both of humans and deities. In a general sense, an invocation of the Gods was something that drew attention to the subject matter of a decree. Demosthenes, the fourth-century orator, wrote (*Letters* 1.1): 'I assume that it is right for anyone who is embarking on any serious discussion and task to begin first with the gods.' The practice of invoking the Gods at the top of a decree has been discussed by Will Mack, who has argued that it demonstrates a widespread view that 'Athenian decision-making was underpinned by the gods' (Mack, *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 2018. He suggests that collective public authority at Athens was thought of as underpinned by divine agency and observes that this 'idea that gods might have a role in legitimating political power is hardly surprising from a wider historical perspective or, indeed, from a Greek perspective, given that, in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's authority as a king, symbolised by his sceptre, was derived from Zeus'.

The inscription is kept in Gallery 78 (Classical Inscriptions) of the British Museum, but that is a room that is rarely open to the public except by appointment.

Questions to consider: what does this tell us about Athenian relations and ambitions with the west in the Periclean period? Was the Sicilian Expedition of 415 as much of a sudden enterprise as Thucydides presents it in book 6? The omission of its mention means that it is a good example of what epigraphy can add to our literary texts and leads us to questions about how Thucydides may have selected what to include in his history and what to leave out.

Slide 8. Treaty between Athenians and Halieis: *AIUK* 3 (*Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*) no. 1. 424/3 BC (?)

Halieis was a city on the southern coast of the Argive peninsula of the Peloponnese with an excellent natural harbour. In the fifth century BC its strategic location made it liable to the attentions of the rival powers during periods of conflict between the Athenian and Spartan alliances. It first appears in the historical record in a brief reference by Thucydides to an Athenian landing there in 459 BC (Thuc. 1.105.1). In the ensuing battle with Corinthian and Epidaurian forces, the Athenians were defeated. In the second summer of the Peloponnesian War (430 BC), Halieis was among the

cities raided by Pericles (Thuc. 2.56.5). At the height of the Archidamian War in the summer of 425 BC, we again find an Athenian and allied force launching attacks in this area, landing first in Epidaurian territory (Thuc. 4.45).

This decree, providing for a truce between Athens and Halieis and allowing the Athenians to establish a garrison at Halieis, is dated to the period between the Athenian incursion of 425 BC and the one-year truce between Athens and Sparta of spring 423 BC. The establishment of forts and garrisons in or close to allied cities was a common Athenian measure, and their location in or close to enemy territory was a common tactic by both sides in the Peloponnesian War, practised with spectacular success by Athens at Pylos on the west coast of the Peloponnese shortly before the date of this agreement.

A video about this inscription is available on the AIO Youtube channel.

3. Commemorating the war-dead

Slide 9. Casualty list of the Argives listing the dead from the battle of Tanagra, 458 or 457 BC: BM 1923,1017.1.

This object has a remarkable history. It was originally seen in Athens by James Stuart near the Library of Hadrian (1751-3); then it was missing until discovered in a garden in Finchley in 1771, and then in 1901 another fragment of it was found in a rockery in Essex.

Thucydides (1.108.1) reports that the Athenians were joined by 1000 hoplites from Argos to fight the Spartans and their allies at Tanagra in 458 BC, and that the slaughter was great on both sides; and indeed the number of Argive dead estimated from this list is at least ca. 280. The casualty list was in fact seen over the tomb of the war dead in the Kerameikos by Pausanias in the second century AD (1.29.7-9), and it is the earliest such monument for foreign allies set up at Athens; it would have stood out from other casualty lists by its pedimental crowning and very distinctive Argive script. The Athenians had commemorated their war-dead on inscriptions in the Kerameikos since the mid-460s.

As with Athenian casualty lists, casualties are described only by their name with no details of how they contributed in battle or details of their family. The effect may be to emphasise their individual contribution to the collectivity that was the city-state. It may be relevant that Argos too, like Athens, was a democracy at this time.

The relative position of many of the fragments of this monument can not be determined, but 106 names survive, and on the hypothetical reconstruction by Papazarkadas and Sourlas, at least ca. 280 names were recorded, and there may have been significantly more. This would seem to confirm the literary record of unusually high casualties: P. Krentz, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 26 (1985), 13-20, calculates average casualty levels in hoplite battles at ca. 14% on the losing side, 5% on the winning, with greater than 20% being rare. It seems that, as with Athenian dead, the dead Argive soldiers were cremated at the battle site and the bones then brought back to Athens.

The allusions to the Athenian alliance with Argos of 462/1 in Aeschylus *Eumenides* (289-91, 667-73, 772-74), first performed shortly before the battle, are suggestive as to its political importance at Athens, and it seems that the Athenians wished to bestow an unusual honour on their allies from the Argolid by affording them burial at Athens (Papazarkadas and Sourlas suggest a connection with the burial Athens afforded to Argive casualties in the myth of the Seven Against Thebes). One wonders whether the intention may also have been to reduce the impact at Argos of a ceremony in which more than a quarter of her army was brought back dead.

The fragments were initially believed to belong to two separate stelai for the Kleonians and the Argives, following Pausanias' description of the foreign war dead in the Demosion Sema, but the stone was convincingly reconstructed by Meritt in 1955 as a single catalogue of the Argives. For a translation of the whole monument with further commentary, see https://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/OR/111.

Questions and issues to consider: *Why would the Athenians have commemorated Argives in a monument set up in Athens? How useful is this inscription in helping historians move beyond purely Athenocentric assessments of ancient Greek history?*

Slide 10. Poem for the Athenians who fell at the Battle of Potidaia in 432 BC: BM 1816,0610.348

This inscription was written up to commemorate the Athenians who died fighting at Potidaia (in Chalkidike, Northern Greece) in 432 BC.

In 432 BC, just before the Peloponnesian War broke out, the Athenians were involved in hostilities at Potidaia (Thuc. 1.56-65) after the Potidaians, tribute-paying members of the Delian League, revolted from Athens with the help of the Corinthians. Both Socrates and Alcibiades are known to have served at Potidaia (Plato, *Symposion* 219-20). Athenian intervention in that part of the Greek world was one of the 'causes of complaint' of the Peloponnesians against the Athenians that led to the outbreak of war in 431 BC (Thuc. 1.66, 118, 139).

It is likely that this inscription was the base for a bigger monument. Thucydides says that the Athenians won an easy victory at Potidaia but that 150 Athenians died in the battle, including the general Kallias (Thuc. 1.63). Their names could have fitted on a single stone slab set upon this base (originally ca. 1.34 m long).

The inscription consists of 12 lines of verse which was made up of three four-line epigrams. The behaviour of the Potidaians, some of whom fled the battle, is contrasted with the honourable fate of the dead, who receive glory (*arete*) and brought good fame (*eukleia*) to their homeland (*patris*). The epigram of three elegiac poems is of high quality and remarkable both for its reflection of civic attitudes about the war dead and for the references to the separation of body and soul at death: *aither* (the air) takes the souls of the dead whereas the earth takes their bodies.

The translated text here refers to the Athenians as ‘the people of Erechtheus’. However this should be treated with caution: this part of the stone is broken away and the words have been restored by modern scholars. Nevertheless, the Athenians did sometimes refer to themselves in this way, referring to Erechtheus, one of their mythical kings, often thought to be the founder of their city.

Topics of discussion: the significance of verse as a way of commemorating a group of soldiers. This was something which had a long history, e.g. in the Thermopylai (Herodotus 7.228). What was the importance of Potidaia for the Athenians and how important was it in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War?

Slide 11. **Casualty List for Athenians who died in 424/3 BC, British Museum 1816,0610.173.**

During the second half of the fifth century BC the Athenians fought a series of bloody wars. They commemorated their dead by listing them on marble slabs (*stelai*) like this. One view is that the representation of the war dead with just their names (and no reference to their family background in the form of patronymic or demotic) reflected the egalitarian nature of their socio-political organisation. The setting up of such slabs demonstrate the value of public commemoration and perhaps even tensions between it and private forms of commemoration. We should also bear in mind in the habit of public burial of the war-dead at Athens and the speech of a prominent statesman over the bodies of the dead at the end of each year (e.g. Thuc. 2.34-46).

The part of this inscription preserved at the British Museum consists of 2 columns of those who had died in Athenian battles in the year 424/3 BC; there are 77 of them in total. The upper part of the stone is lost and would have consisted of further names and a heading. Our slide, for reasons of space, offers a translation only the first 29 lines of column 1.

The casualties are listed according to the 10 tribes of Athenian citizens. They are followed by names of those described as ‘enrolled people’ (*engraphroi*, that is possibly mercenaries), ‘archers’, and ‘foreigners’ (*xenoi*): this demonstrates that non-citizens died in the Athenian war effort and were recognised as doing so.

Beneath the tribal dead in column I are further individual casualties listed not by tribe but by place: Amphipolis, Thrace, Pylos, Sermylia, and Singos. These places have been linked with a series of battles in the north of Greece narrated by Thucydides in book 4 of his book on the Peloponnesian War. These battles took place in the year 424/3 BC, and there may also be a reflection of the heavy causalities taken at Delion (Thuc. 4.101); those mentioned on the inscription as the dead from Pylos might be left over from the previous year when the Athenians suffered losses there.

After the stele was engraved and set up, several additions and corrections were

undertaken on the stone. It is likely that such changes were made as information became clearer in the months following the battles and the public burial. This provides remarkable evidence for the official nature of the inscribed versions of these lists, demonstrating a very detailed procedure of subsequent checking of spellings (did family members notice these mistakes?) and the addition of further dead whose circumstances were perhaps discovered too late. These stones were perhaps not meant only to embody by their monumentality expressions of public commemoration, they were also raised to be read and to form an official record of the campaign dead, another indication of the officious nature of public record keeping in democratic Athens.

We might contrast the modern idea of something being set in stone (and accordingly, petrified or unchanged) with the ancient Greek employment of inscriptions as dynamic. Ancient Greeks engaged with their inscriptions in many different ways, making changes to their texts to suit their social and cultural environment and told stories about them: this is something that is studied by Polly Low in her recent *Histos* article on the subject.

Topics for discussion: how and why did the Athenians list their dead? Can we see similarities in ancient and modern forms of commemoration of the dead?