

# METRONOMOI

(PLATE 9, a)

THE Metronomoi or Inspectors of Weights and Measures were a board of ten men chosen by lot, five of whom served in Athens and five in Piraeus. They were responsible for all weights and measures and had to see to it that sellers used honest ones. This information comes from Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians* (51, 2) and is repeated by some of the lexicographers. Apart from this we know very little of the Metronomoi. It is probable, however, that they are referred to in the late second century B.C. decree concerning weights and measures.<sup>1</sup> Their secretary is mentioned in an inscription from the Agora; and a lead weight countermarked apparently by the Metronomoi and several pots with lead validating seals attached have been found at the Agora.<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1967 an inscription set up by the Metronomoi themselves was discovered in the Agora Excavations. It gives the names of the five Athenian members of the board and their two secretaries for the year 222/1 B.C. and goes on to record the handing over of certain weights and measures, including bronze measures for grain, to the board of the following year.

1 (Plate 9, a.) Upper part of a flat-topped stele of Pentelic marble, broken below. A moulding runs across the top of the face and carries around the two narrow sides. The back is roughly picked. Clear traces of red coloring are preserved in the letters of lines 1, 7 and 9 and in the numeral in line 12. Found July 6, 1967, lying face upwards and imbedded in one of the uppermost (latest) earth floors of the third room from the east in South Stoa I (N 16).

Height, 0.275 m.; Width of stele above, 0.325 m., below 0.334 m.; Thickness, 0.06 m.

Height of letters, 0.005 m.-0.012 m.

Inv. No. I 7030

a. 222/1 a.

μετρονόμοι οἱ ἐπὶ Ἀρχελάου ἄρχοντος (red)  
Δημόστρατος Ἐστιαίοθεν  
Ἀριστοκράτης Ἀγγελήθεν

<sup>1</sup> I.G., II<sup>2</sup>, 1013, plus *Hesperia*, VII, 1938, pp. 127-131.

<sup>2</sup> Their secretary: *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 457-460, no. 7, line 18. The lead weight: Mabel Lang and Margaret Crosby, *The Athenian Agora*, X, *Weights, Measures and Tokens*, pp. 21-22, 27-28, no. LW 17; also illustrated in Mabel Lang, *The Athenian Citizen*, Excavations of the Athenian Agora Picture Book, No. 4, fig. 15. Pots with lead validating seals, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 108-113, and Lang-Crosby, *op. cit.*, p. 54, no. DM 66; and Lang, *op. cit.*, fig. 18.

- Ἀπολλόδωρος Ἀπολλωνίου Λαμπτρέυ(ς)  
 5 Θεόδωτος Ἐκαλήθειν  
 Ἐρητυμένης Οἰναῖος  
 καὶ γραμματεὺς κληρωτός (red)  
 Νικίας Φίλωνος Κυδαθηναίεύς  
 καὶ γραμματεὺς αἰρετός (red)  
 10 Ἡράκλειτος Τιμοθέου Κριωεύς  
 τάδε παρέδωκαν μέτρα καὶ σταθμ  
 ἄ· χαλκᾶ σιτηρὰ ἡμιέκτεα ΔΙΙ, χοῖνι (ΔΙΙ red)  
 κας δύο, ἡμιχ[ο]ί[νικας - - - - -]

The writing is not very careful and the letters are not always well formed or of uniform size. There are several mistakes some of which have been corrected, at least in part, by the scribe. In line 4, after the tau of the demotic, epsilon was written first then clumsily corrected to rho. After this comes epsilon without the middle cross bar, then upsilon. There was no room for the final sigma which was omitted. In line 6 the initial epsilon lacks the middle cross bar. There are several cases where the cross bar of an alpha has been omitted. In line 12, the lambda of χαλκᾶ was omitted, then crowded in later. An attempt was made to have each name more or less fill the line in which it stood. The letters of the shorter names are therefore larger and more widely spaced. Sometimes several letter spaces are left vacant between name and demotic. There are apices on some of the letters.

The use of red coloring in the letters of lines 1, 7 and 9 and for the numeral in line 12 is obviously intended to call attention to these parts of the inscription and particularly to set off the three lines as headings, making them true *rubrics*. Whether some other color was used in the remaining lines is not certain. No trace has survived, but we may guess that a dark color, perhaps blue, was used for contrast. Coloring, usually red, was frequently and probably generally used in Greek inscriptions to make the letters more easily legible. Different colors were occasionally used for alternate lines and even for alternate letters for decorative effect. I have not found any other instance of its use to emphasize headings as in our inscription, but the practice may have been more common than we realize as color has usually vanished completely from inscriptions as we find them today. Some Delian accounts pick out the numerals in red.<sup>3</sup>

Of the people mentioned in the inscription several either can be identified as individuals or can be associated with known families.

Ἀπολλόδωρος Ἀπολλωνίου Λαμπτρέυς. He served as thesmothetes eight years later

<sup>3</sup> Examples of the use of color in various ways are cited by Wilhelm Larfeld, *Handbuch der griechischen Epigraphik*, I, Leipzig, 1907, pp. 205-207; Adolf Wilhelm, *Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde*, Wien, 1909, p. 240, note 5; Louis Robert, *C.R.A.I.*, 1955, p. 211; Margherita Guarducci, *Epigrafia greca*, I, Rome, 1967, pp. 457-458. For the Delian accounts see *B.C.H.*, XXIX, 1905, p. 561.

in 214/3 B.C.; see *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 1706, line 114. For other references to himself and other members of his family, see *Index to Hesperia, Volumes I-X, Supplements I-VI*, p. 17, and J. Sundwall, *Nachträge zur Prosopographia Attica*, p. 20.

Ἐρητυμένης Οἰναῖος. He had served as councillor in the previous year, 223/2 B.C.; *Hesperia*, Supplement I, no. 28, line 60. For the date, see *Hesperia*, X, 1941, pp. 394-397. For possible descendants, *Hesperia, Index, op. cit.*, p. 55.

Νικίας Φίλωνος Κυδαθηναεύς. For the family, see J. Kirchner, *Prosopographia Attica*, no. 10807.

Ἡράκλειτος Τιμοθέου Κριωεύς. Timotheos Krioieus, whose name appears on the tombstone of his wife dated in the first century after Christ, may be a descendant; *Hesperia*, XXIII, 1954, p. 263, no. 68.

The Metronomoi and their secretaries appear to have been chosen on the basis of one from each tribe as was the case with other similar boards. At least, if we allow the man from Lamptrai to come from Lamptrai B (Erechtheis) rather than Lamptrai A (Antigonis), there is no duplication of tribal affiliation among the seven men named.

The board had two secretaries, one chosen by lot, the other elected. For other instances of this practice see *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 1710 and 1711, and *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, pp. 445-446, 458-460. The two Corpus inscriptions, 1710 and 1711, may in fact be lists of metronomoi (or agoranomoi) serving in Piraeus.

The topographical implications of the new inscription are tantalizing. The stele was found in the third room from the east of South Stoa I. It was lying face up and was imbedded in one of the latest clay floors of the room. As the letters are still quite fresh and even retain traces of color, it was certainly never walked upon. It may possibly have served as a support for a table or some other object, but its location directly inside the door and just 1.05 m. away from it is against this. It seems more likely that the stele was on hand when the last clay floor was being laid in the room and that it was accidentally or deliberately placed where we found it and covered over.

Where the stele was originally set up we do not know, but the presumption is strong that it is to be associated with the room in which it was found. To be sure, among the bases for which we have evidence in the room or in the colonnade in front of the room none is suitable for our stele, but a suitable base might well have existed and have later disappeared. The stele might also have been set into one of the walls of the room the upper parts of which were of mud brick.<sup>4</sup>

If the stele is indeed to be associated with the room in which it was found it gives us a clue to the use of the room, namely as the office of the Metronomoi. This is obviously not enough to enable us to identify the whole building beyond suggesting

<sup>4</sup> A stele is still to be seen set into the wall of a room in the Palaestra by the Lake in Delos: Philippe Bruneau and Jean Ducat, *Guide de Délos*, p. 123; *Rev. Arch.*, XXIX-XXX, 1948, pp. 263-264 (= *Mélanges Charles Picard*).

that it was used, in part at least, as government offices, a reasonable enough suggestion in any case on general grounds. Nor is the mention in the inscription of grain measures enough to establish an identification for the building. Yet in this connection it is worth recalling the Alphetopolis Stoa, the flour market of ancient Athens, which was certainly on or near the Agora, and which is mentioned in 391 B.C. by Aristophanes along with two other Agora stoas (*Ecclesiazusae*, 684-686). South Stoa I, built in the last quarter of the fifth century B.C., and remaining in use until the middle of the second century B.C., is at least a possible candidate for the Alphetopolis. But unfortunately the evidence does not really suffice to support this, or any other, suggestion that has been made as to the identification of this building.<sup>5</sup>

EUGENE VANDERPOOL

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES  
ATHENS

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 55-56.



a. Metronomoi Inscription (I 7030)



b. Base for Votive Offering (I 7015)

c.-d. Silver Drachm found below Floor of South Stoa I, Room VIII