

THE NEOKOROI OF POSEIDON HIPPIOS

A. M. WOODWARD has published two fragments of an inventory of the cult equipment of Poseidon Hippios set up *ca.* 406/5 by the neokoroi of his cult.¹ As one would expect, Woodward has studied this inscription with his usual care and great learning. At one point, however, I venture to disagree with his interpretation. While he believes that the neokoroi were the wardens of Poseidon's sanctuary at Kolonos and that the inscription was set up there, I would suggest that the stele was erected on the Acropolis at Athens and that the cult equipment was transferred thither from Kolonos at the beginning of the Dekeleian War. One of the fragments was found some 200 m. north of Monasteraki, the other on the North Slope close to the Acropolis wall. Of course, inscriptions have traveled great distances from their original locations to serve as building materials, but it would be pointless to transport one from Kolonos up to the Acropolis, where plenty of stones were available. By way of comparison, eighteen other fragments of fifth century inscriptions found in the North Slope excavations have since been associated with fragments which had been published previously.² In every instance the original stele was located on the Acropolis. In all probability, then, that is where the neokoroi set up their document.

When we compare this inscription with the better known *traditiones* of the Parthenon (*I.G.*, I², 232-288) we find a significant difference. While the treasurers of Athena list the complete contents of each chamber of the temple every single year, the document prepared by the neokoroi begins with a long list of items (lines 1-14 of Woodward's fragment *a*) but thereafter lists only a few items each year. As Woodward has concluded, the first section must be the complete inventory of Poseidon's cult equipment, while the remainder consists of accessions.³ The question is, then, what is the date of the first section and why did the neokoroi choose this particular year to publish a complete inventory?

It so happens that each of the fragments of this inscription preserves a list of accessions dated to the archonship of Kallias. No other fifth century inventory has

¹ *Hesperia*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 155-163. One of the fragments was originally published by Oscar Broneer, *Hesperia*, II, 1933, pp. 391-393.

² *Hesperia*, II, 1933, pp. 372-414, nos. 5, 9, 10, and 12; IV, 1935, pp. 148-188, nos. 11-13, 19, and 23; VII, 1938, pp. 264-310, nos. 1-6; XI, 1942, pp. 275-278, no. 52, *e*; XXXIV, 1965, pp. 25-28; XXXIV, 1965, pp. 29-33. The inscriptions include decrees, *traditiones*, *rationes*, tribute lists, and a naval catalogue. See also above, pp. 146-204, nos. 8, 12, 23, 25, 51, 53, of various periods.

³ The treasurers of Athena served for just one year and then handed the sacred possessions over to their successors. The neokorate, on the other hand, was a continuing office, perhaps for life. The membership of this board did not change annually, but only gradually as the neokoroi were replaced one by one. As a result there was no annual transfer of the cult equipment and thus no series of *traditiones*.

two lists of accessions for the same year. Again, while it is theoretically possible that the neokoroi had charge of two different cults and posted separate inventories for each on the same stone, there is no parallel for such an unlikely procedure.⁴ Therefore, we ought to assign one list of accessions to the archonship of Kallias Skambonides (412/1) and the other to the year of Kallias Angelethen (406/5). One of these two lists immediately follows the complete inventory and will, therefore, belong to the term of Kallias Skambonides. It is possible, of course, that no accessions were received for a year or two after the complete inventory was drawn up, but it is more likely that Woodward is correct in dating this initial record one year before Kallias Skambonides.⁵

In all likelihood the inventories of Poseidon Hippios begin with the year 413/2 because the Spartan invasion of Attika caused the transfer of the cult equipment from Kolonos to the Acropolis. The First Kallias Decree shows that on the eve of the Peloponnesian War the treasuries of numerous small cults were removed to the Acropolis for safekeeping,⁶ and we now learn that in 416/5 the treasury of Artemis was removed from Brauron to Athens.⁷ Consequently, it is not surprising to find the beginning of the inventories of the neokoroi coinciding with the outbreak of war. (There is nothing in this inscription to show whether the office of neokoros was instituted in 413/2 or was itself transferred from Kolonos.)

Later the neokoroi apparently began to receive items from other sanctuaries besides the one at Kolonos. In their initial inventory they describe one of the items as damaged, ο[ὐ]χ ὑγιέ[ς] (fragment *a*, line 13). If Woodward is correct in restoring this same phrase, [οὐ]χ ὑγιέ[ς], in the list of accessions of 407/6 (fragment *b*, line 4), the item in question would not be a dedication by a pious Athenian but rather a piece of equipment transferred from another sanctuary. Again, in 406/5 (fragment *b*, line 6) the neokoroi received some items from a certain Phayllos. Since a man of this name was one of the leaders in the restoration of the democracy in 403/2,⁸ this transaction is probably an official, not a private one, i.e., the transfer of equipment from one official to a group of other magistrates.

One difficulty remains in the way of accepting my explanation of the document. Woodward notes that the stele was originally surmounted by another block, presumably inscribed. This piece would precede the complete inventory. To make my

⁴ When the Eleusinian epistatai had to record possessions lying in three different sanctuaries, they grouped them by location but included them all in the same annual record; cf. *I.G.*, I², 313-314.

⁵ The accounts of the cult statues of the Hephaisteion (*I.G.*, I², 370/371) include a notation for each year from 421/0 to 416/5: either the amount of money received for the project or a statement that nothing was received during the year.

⁶ B. D. Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery, and M. F. McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists*, II, Princeton, 1949, D1.

⁷ Cf. E. Vanderpool, *A.J.A.*, LXIII, 1959, p. 280.

⁸ Aristotle, *Ath. Pol.*, 38, 3.

theory plausible it is necessary to account for the contents of this superior piece. There is no parallel to justify the hypothesis that the upper stone contained the inventory of a different cult, and it would be pointless to suppose that it contained inventories for the years before 413/2. Instead we may find a likely parallel in *I.G.*, I², 88/89, which records on one face a decree authorizing work on the temple of Athena Nike and on the other face an accounting of expenditures for this construction. In the case of the neokoroi I suggest that the upper part of the stele may have contained a decree authorizing the transfer of the cult equipment from Kolonos and possibly establishing the office of neokoros. The inventories would naturally follow this decree. But in view of the fact that the basic inventory and the lists of accessions were inscribed at one single time and not one each year there is a more likely explanation. Since Woodward has shown that the neokoroi turned over their equipment to the shipwrights at the end of the Dekeleian War, the superior piece may have contained the decree authorizing them to do so and ordering them to publish an accounting of their stewardship from the time of the transfer in 413/2.

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