

# PHORMION AND PEISISTRATOS

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MARY WHITE HAS DEVOTED THE MAJOR PART of her scholarly life to *Phoenix*, which, as first editor, she brought to the front rank among classical journals, and to the tyrannies of archaic Hellas, a complex subject to which her contribution has been equally distinguished. I offer her a modest note concerning Peisistratos in the hope that, if it does not convince her, it will at least provoke her interest.

In 1939 B. D. Meritt published<sup>1</sup> a small fragment of inscribed marble preserving the remains of six names cut in a column. He identified this remnant as part of the list of archons set up on a marble stele in Athens about 425 B.C. This identification was brilliantly confirmed by D. W. Bradeen when, in 1960, he recognised three more splinters of the same monument lying on the epigraphic shelves in the Stoa of Attalos.<sup>2</sup> It is with one of these splinters, Bradeen's fragment *b*, that I am here concerned.

Bradeen's text of the second column (only a final sigma of the first has survived) is as follows:

K[- - - - -]  
 Φα[- - - -]  
 Τε[- - - -]  
 Ἐρχ[σικλείδες]  
 5   Θεσ[- - - -]  
       Φ[ο]ρ[- - -]

Bradeen's restoration of line 4 as Ἐρχ[σικλείδες], the archon of 548/7 B.C., is utterly convincing and I do not repeat his arguments.<sup>3</sup>

The first letter of line 6 required a central vertical (i.e., iota or phi), of which only the upper tip, about 0.003 m. in length, is extant. The distance between lines in the four fragments is 0.007 m.; the distance between the tip and the base of the letters of line 5 is 0.005 m. That the tip extends slightly above its line is, I believe, apparent to the eye. Since the iotas in the four fragments do not project above the line, phi should be regarded as a sure reading; no dot is needed.

Of the second letter no mark of the chisel is visible but the upper right-hand corner of the *stoichos* is the original surface, which restricts the

<sup>1</sup>*Hesperia* 8 (1939) 59-65, including a photograph.

<sup>2</sup>*Hesperia* 32 (1963) 187-208, with photographs on Plates 58 and 59.

<sup>3</sup>The precise year is guaranteed by the equation in Pausanias 10.5.13: . . . Ἐρξικλείδου μὲν Ἀθήνησιν ἄρχοντας, πρῶτῳ δὲ τῆς ὀγδόης ὀλυμπιάδος ἔτει καὶ πεντηκοστῆς.

possibilities for restoration to theta or kappa or lambda or omicron. As Bradeen observes, only omicron can be combined with the first and third letters to form a name; consequently the restoration is certain.

On the left-hand side of the third letter-space the upper tip of a vertical is joined by a stroke that clearly begins its curve into a loop<sup>4</sup> before it is broken off by the stone's fracture. The letter is either rho or beta; epsilon and pi must be excluded. Johannes Kirchner catalogues<sup>5</sup> no name beginning Φοβ and I cannot supply one that has appeared since his time. I therefore concur in Bradeen's judgement and take the third letter of line 6 as rho.

The archon of 546/5 B.C., then, was Φ[ο]ρ[- -]. The known names that fit are Phormisios, Phormion, Phormos, Phorys, Phoryskides, Phoryskos, and Phorbas. Of these, only one, Phormion, is cited from the sixth century and his memory, significantly, persisted because he held the archonship. The other names are in fact comparatively rare and only one Phormion is placed before 450 B.C., by a scholion on Aristophanes' *Pax* 347: πέμπτος (sc. Φορμίων) ἀρχαῖος Ἀθηναῖος, μετὰ Σόλωνα ἄρξας. Εὐπολὶς ἐν Δήμοις.<sup>6</sup> It is already tempting to restore Φ[ο]ρ[μίων] and to make the obvious equation.

What does the phrase μετὰ Σόλωνα mean? The easy answer is "the year after Solon," as T. J. Cadoux takes it.<sup>7</sup> But in Philostratos (1.16.2)<sup>8</sup> Kritias refers to Dropides, δς μετὰ Σόλωνα Ἀθηναῖος ἥρξεν. It looks as though we must make a choice. Fortunately that choice is not a difficult one, for there is earlier testimony about the close relationship between Solon and Dropides. In Plato's *Timaeus* 20e Kritias speaks of Solon: ἦν μὲν οὖν (sc. Σόλων) οἰκείος καὶ σφόδρα φίλος ἡμῖν Δρωπίδου τοῦ προπάππου, καθάπερ λέγει πολλαχοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ ποιήσει. On this evidence we are justified in granting to Dropides the archonship (593/2) after Solon's. Cadoux (99) goes further: he "may have owed his election to Solon's influence."

Thus the words μετὰ Σόλωνα in the scholiast's note mean nothing more than "in some year after Solon." This vagueness of reference, with Solon used as an era, seems to me quite appropriate to the scholiast's characteristic imprecision. His interest is not in chronology; it lies rather in the fact that a man named Phormion held the archonship a long time ago and he adds that this Phormion occurs in a play by Eupolis. The context in Philostratos is different: it is more intimate and it reflects a close chronological connexion between Solon and Dropides.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup>This is more than Bradeen's "cross stroke on the top."

<sup>5</sup>*Prosopographia Attica* 2 (Berlin 1903).

<sup>6</sup>Conveniently printed as fragment 109 of Eupolis by J. M. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy* 1 (Leiden 1957) 344 (Edmonds' reference to *Pax* is inaccurate).

<sup>7</sup>"The Athenian Archons from Kreon to Hypsichides," *JHS* 68 (1948) 70-123 (see 99).

<sup>8</sup>T101 in Cadoux 76.

<sup>9</sup>The expression occurs in Plutarch *Solon* 14.2 (Loeb), T67 in Cadoux 74, of Solon:

I therefore believe that the case for restoring Φ[ο]ρ[μίον] in the archon-list, although not unassailable, is very strong, strong enough to be used as chronological evidence. Since Erxikleides held the office in 548/7, Phormion's year was 546/5 B.C.

The scholiast knows the name of the archon Phormion from Old Comedy; that the poet was Eupolis is irrelevant so far to my theme. Now, however, I approach Eupolis in an effort to discover why Phormion appeared in the *Demoi*.

The plot of the *Demoi* turned upon the reincarnation of famous Athenians of the past, among whom was Peisistratos.<sup>10</sup> We have already noted that Eupolis in this play introduced Phormion the archon, whose year of office is now, I claim, established as 546/5 B.C. by the epigraphic evidence. If we ask why the magistrate appeared in the play the answer that forces itself upon us is that he had some association with Peisistratos, an association, moreover, that must have been well known.

Phormion is not the only archon whose name is connected with Peisistratos: the latter first came to power in the archonship of Komeas;<sup>11</sup> he went into exile under Hegesias;<sup>12</sup> he died during the term of Philoneos.<sup>13</sup> Peisistratos established himself at Athens, finally and decisively, as a result of the battle of Pallene: νικήσας δὲ τὴν ἐπὶ Παλληνίδι μάχην . . . κατέχευε ἤδη τὴν τυραννίδα βεβαίως.<sup>14</sup> In a play in which the resurrection of Peisistratos is a feature, which archon, we ask, is most apt to be coupled with him? The reply: that archon in whose year the battle of Pallene was fought and the tyranny of Peisistratos became firmly rooted. Eupolis names him, Phormion; our inscription dates him, 546/5 B.C.

The dates of the tyrannies and exiles of Peisistratos have ever comprised a formidable enigma for scholars. J. S. Ruebel has lately published<sup>15</sup> a thoughtful essay on the subject, with no realisation of the assistance to

ἡρέθη δὲ ἄρχων μετὰ Φιλόμβροτον. The context here makes the meaning unmistakable: "the year after Philombrotos." *Solon* 32.3 (Cadoux T69) is similar. The famous Solon, of course, could be used as a general indication of date, before and after; Philombrotos, a comparative nonentity, could not.

<sup>10</sup>Fragment 96 Edmonds: Εὐπολὶς ἐν Δήμοις εἰσάγει Πεισίστρατον βασιλέα. Cf. fragment 118: Εὐπολὶς ἐποίησεν ἀναστάντα τὸν Μιλτιάδην καὶ Ἀριστείδην καὶ Σόλωνα (Γέλωνα, Κλέωνα mss) καὶ Περικλέα. Edmonds, in an Appendix (978–994), attempts a reconstruction of the plot.

<sup>11</sup>*Ath. Pol.* 14.1: κατέσχε τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἔτει δευτέρῳ καὶ τριακοστῷ μετὰ τὴν τῶν νόμων θέσιν ἐπὶ Κωμέου ἄρχοντος. The exact year is here irrelevant; see Cadoux 104–106 (he prefers 561/0).

<sup>12</sup>*Ath. Pol.* 14.3: ἔκτω ἔτει μετὰ τὴν πρώτην κατάστασιν ἐφ' Ἡγησίου ἄρχοντος. Whether this dates the first or the second exile is irrelevant; Cadoux 107–108.

<sup>13</sup>*Ath. Pol.* 17.1: ἀπέθανε νοσήσας ἐπὶ Φιλόνεω ἄρχοντος. The archon-list (the first fragment) confirms the date as 528/7.

<sup>14</sup>*Ath. Pol.* 15.3.

<sup>15</sup>GRBS 14 (1973) 125–136 with the pertinent bibliography.

be gained from the archon-list. The cumulative evidence, which is not unsupported by Herodotos and Aristotle, merits respect.

The amount of history that has been revealed by four small fragments of marble is impressive.<sup>16</sup> In this instance I put the question to Miss White: should we not build our chronological studies of the adventures of Peisistratos on this firm foundation, that he became undisputed ruler of Athens in the archonship of Phormion, 546/5 B.C.?

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<sup>16</sup>The return of the Alkmaionidai and the reconciliation of the leading groups in Athens after the accession of Hippias; the archonship of Peisistratos the younger; the archonship of Kypselos; the demonstration that the Philaidai were Eupatrids; the near-proof that Solon's archonship belongs in 594/3.