

AGE CATEGORIES AND CHRONOLOGY IN THE HELLENISTIC THESEIA

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THREE ATHENIAN INSCRIPTIONS from the second century B.C. (*IG* II² 956–958) are the best-preserved of a series of texts containing decrees honoring *agonothetai* of the Theseia and catalogues of victors in various events. These documents, it is now generally agreed, refer to the penteteric version of a festival known from earlier inscriptions which has come to be called the “Greater Theseia.”¹ Interest has centered on the lists’ chronological value, as they preserve the names of three archons, Aristolas, Anthesterios, and Phaidrias, usually dated to 161/0, 157/6, and 153/2 respectively.² Consequently, research into the age categories of victors has been aimed at establishing the archon dates rather than at elucidating the organization of the games themselves. But, in fact, a thorough examination of the age categories in use at the Theseia will show that one of these archons needs to be redated and that an important assumption about the nature of the festival requires revision.

The contests of the Theseia usually comprised a torch race (*lampas*), athletic events making up a *gumnikos agon*, as well as competitions in horsemanship and military displays. In one particular year, the agonothete’s expansion of the equestrian events caused him to be praised for putting on a fully-fledged *hippikos agon* in addition to the normal complement (*IG* II² 957, lines 4–5). In the list from that year, the events are as follows:³

<i>Euandria</i>	<i>Hoplomachia</i> (with shield and spear)
<i>Euhoplia</i>	<i>Hoplomachia</i> (with oval shield and
Trumpeters (<i>salpiktai</i>) ⁴	broad sword)
Heralds (<i>kerukes</i>)	Javelin (<i>akontismos</i>)
Torch Race (<i>lampas</i>)	Race with racing horse (<i>hippos lampros</i>)
Long Distance Footrace (<i>dolichos</i>)	<i>Diaulos</i> on warhorse
Stade Footrace (<i>stadion</i>)	Equestrian <i>diaulos</i>
Double Length Footrace (<i>diaulos</i>)	Equestrian straightaway race (<i>akampion</i>)
Wrestling (<i>pale</i>)	Equestrian <i>akontismos</i>
Boxing (<i>pugme</i>)	Hoplite and two-horse chariot race
<i>Pankration</i>	(<i>zeugei ekbibazon</i>)
Footrace in Armor (<i>hoplites</i>)	<i>Diaulos</i> with chariot
	<i>Akampion</i> with chariot

¹ Pélekidis 1962: 229–230; Bugh 1990; Habicht 1997: 240–241.

² For these dates, see Bugh 1990: 26–35.

³ For a description of these events, see Tracy 1991: 140–142; Kyle 1992.

⁴ In *IG* II² 956, lines 44–47, and 958, lines 40–44, the *salpiktai* and *kerukes* are listed first.

The first five events form the *proagon*, followed by the competitions of the *gumnikos agon* proper, from the *dolichos* through the *hoplites*, which appear here in the canonical order.⁵ The only commonly attested event missing is the pentathlon, for reasons which are beyond our grasp.⁶ After the foot race in armor there are competitions in weapons handling, with the agonistic part of the festival reaching its conclusion with the equestrian events.

Several overlapping principles lay behind the grouping and eligibility of competitors for these events. The military displays (*euandria*, *euhoplia*) and all the events following the footrace in armor, with their victors identified by patronymic and tribe, were open only to Athenians. Only adult Athenian males were eligible for the equestrian events also, from the *hippos lampros* to the straightaway with chariot. As with the majority of competitions these were subdivided, in this case according to military rank. The *hippos lampros* was apparently open to any Athenian with a suitable horse, while separate competitions in the *diaulos* with warhorse, the equestrian *diaulos*, and *akampion* were held for phylarchs (leaders of the tribal contingents) and rank-and-file cavalrymen (*hippeis*).⁷ In addition, there were open competitions (*ek panton*) in these events embracing competitors in both categories.⁸ No such division is evident for the remaining equestrian events, whose victors are not distinguished by their military rank.⁹

The first two events in the Theseia of 157/6, the *euandria* and *euhoplia*, were open to the Athenian elite infantry (*epilektoi*), the cavalry (both of whom competed by tribe), and mercenaries in Athenian employ, who contended in companies (*tagmata*).¹⁰ After these military displays came the first of the international events, in which non-Athenians might compete as trumpeters or heralds and whose victors were identified by ethnics.

⁵ Cf. SIG³ 314 (Lykaia in Arcadia): *dolichos*, *stadion*, *diaulos*, *pale*, *pentathlon*, *pugme*, *pankraton*, *hoplites*; SIG³ 959 (gymnasial games at Chios): *dolichos*, *stadion*, *diaulos*, *pale*, *pugme*; IG VII 1765 (Mouseia at Thespiiai): *stadion*, *diaulos*, *pentathlon*, *pale*, *pugme*, *pankraton*; IG VII 416 (Amphiareia at Oropos): *dolichos*, *stadion*, *pentathlon*, *diaulos*, *hippios*, *pale*, *pugme*, *pankraton*, *hoplites*; IG XII.9 952 (Herakleia at Chalcis, late second century B.C.): *dolichos*, *stadion*, *diaulos*, *pale*, *pugme*, *pankraton*. The same order appears in an honorary decree from Hydai (near Mylasa) for a *paidonomos* who donated prizes for contests in "*diadrome*, wrestling (*pale*), boxing (*pugme*), and *pankraton*" (I. Mylasa 909). Even Pausanias shows knowledge of how athletic contests were ordered (6.13.3), a practice first recognized by Collignon (1877: 68–69).

⁶ The motives behind such details could be idiosyncratic: a good example is the *pankraton* in games at Aegiale (Amorgos), whose winner was always to be the founder's dead son: IG XII.7 515, lines 84–85.

⁷ *Hippos lampros*: IG II² 956, col. ii, line 87; 957, col. ii, line 64; 958, col. ii, lines 78–79. Equestrian events: IG II² 956, col. ii, lines 78–87; 957, col. ii, lines 65–79; 958, col. ii, lines 80–89.

⁸ IG II² 956, col. ii, lines 88–90; 957, col. ii, lines 80–82; 958, col. ii, lines 90–94.

⁹ Team and some equestrian events in the contest of the Panathenaia were similarly restricted to Athenian citizens: Kyle 1992: 93–96.

¹⁰ On the *euandria* and *euhoplia* as military displays of good discipline and equipment maintenance, see Mommsen 1898: 292; for the *euandria* as a form of "beauty contest," see Crowther 1985; for the *euandria* as a choral contest, see Boegehold 1996: 97–103.

The remaining sets of events which make up the *lampas* and *gumnikos agon*, properly speaking, have elicited the most scholarly inquiry over the years, but with little progress made in understanding the relationship between the various categories (based either on age or citizenship) according to which the contestants were grouped. In the torch race, which was reserved for Athenians, there were usually three separate competitions—one between boys (*paides*) from the city's private palaestrae, one between the newly matriculated ephebes and those who had "graduated" a few weeks before,¹¹ and one between the young men (*neaniskoi*) from different gymnasia.¹² From the *stadion* to the *pankration*, the events are divided up into five separate competitions.¹³ Three of these competitions were reserved for Athenians, for "boys of the first age" (*paides tes proteas belikias*), "boys of the second age" (*paides tes deuterias belikias*), and "boys of the third age" (*paides tes trites belikias*). The other two competitions, an open competition (*ek panton*) for the *paides* class and a men's competition (*andres*), were also open to non-Athenians. The games of the Theseia were apparently unique, since only here were competitors segregated according to citizenship within a single event. At the Panathenaia, on the other hand, the team events and certain of the equestrian competitions were reserved in their entirety for Athenian citizens, as at the Theseia, but there is no evidence of any subdivision within events open to all.¹⁴

The apparent complexity of the age categories in these events is largely due to the application of two different systems. The first is the set of agonistic age categories that was standard, with a few variations, for panhellenic and other games that attracted competitors from more than one city; the second is the system of civic age grades that each city had for classifying its youth according to whether they had entered or left the ephebate. This latter system was very often used in place of the usual agonistic age categories for contests held in the gymnasium and open only to citizens.¹⁵

Panhellenic festivals either had two or three main age categories—*paides* and *andres*, or *paides*, *ageneioi*, and *andres*.¹⁶ The age limits for the *paides* category were usually from age twelve to eighteen, or nineteen in contests without an *ageneioi* division; in festivals that included *ageneioi*, the upper limit for *paides* was about

¹¹The Theseia was held on 6 Pyanopsion, about a month after the ephebic year began in Boeotromion. On the date of the Theseia, see Tracy 1990: 184–185.

¹²The *neaniskoi* are once called *andres* (*IG* II² 957, line 51). For the equivalence of the terms *neaniskoi*/*neoi*/*neoteroi* and *andres*, see *SIG*³ 959 (Chios); Ziebarth 1914: 42. Bugh (1990: 22) erroneously considered them two separate categories.

¹³The *paides* did not compete in the *dolichos* at the Theseia and the Panathenaia (Kyle 1987: 179).

¹⁴On the Panathenaia, see Kyle 1992: 93–96.

¹⁵An example of the two age-category systems at work can be found in a decree of the *koinon* of the Chersonasoi honoring a runner who won in international contests in the *paides*, *ageneioi*, and *andres* classes, while in local contests he won in the *paides* and *epheboi* classes: *I. Rhod. Per.* 555 (mid-second century B.C.).

¹⁶On a possible reason for these categories, see Petermandl 1997.

seventeen years old.¹⁷ In some contests the *paides* category was further subdivided in order to avoid offering an unfair advantage to boys approaching the upper age limits of the category. These subdivisions were commonly named after games in the original panhellenic circuit (*periodos*), such as *paides puthikoi* (12–14), *paides isthmikoi* (14–17), and sometimes *paides olumpikoi*.¹⁸ Other titles also appear that honor local benefactors, kings, and, later, Roman emperors.

In local civic contests the wide variety of names and limits for age categories reflected the variation in nomenclature and time span of civic age grades throughout the Greek world. The divisions in a civic contest could be simply *paides*, *epheboi*, and *andres*, as at Erythrai at the end of the second century B.C., or even *anebontes* (*paides*) and *heboi* (*epheboi*), as on Kos.¹⁹ A more complex arrangement is evident in a list of victors in the Herakleia at Chalkis, which divides the competitors up into *paides pampaides*, *paides*, *epheboi*, *ageneioi*, and *andres*.²⁰ In those cities where the ephebate still lasted more than one year, the *epheboi* category was itself subdivided: in contests on Chios from the early first century B.C. the age categories were *paides*, *epheboi neoterai*, *epheboi mesoi*, *epheboi presbuterai*, and *andres*.²¹ Like its panhellenic counterpart, the *paides* class in civic contests was also often subdivided, no doubt for the same reason. At Ephesos in the early part of the second century there appear *paides neoterai* and *paides presbuterai* in a children's contest; a new inscription from Knidos shows the *paides* divided into at least two groups, the *paides neoterai* and *mesoi*; and at Teos there is a close parallel to Athenian nomenclature in the categories *paides tes neoterias helikias*, *tes meses helikias*, and *tes presbuteras helikias*.²²

Recognizing the existence of the two systems allows us to see how and why they were applied in the Theseia. Simply put, the Athenians used the local age-category system for those events which were restricted to Athenians, while for events in which non-Athenians could compete, they also employed the panhellenic categories of *paides* and *andres*.²³ For instance, the torch races, which were open to Athenians only, were divided up into races for *paides*, ephebes and ex-ephebes, and *neaniskoi*.²⁴ The fact that the age of entry into the Athenian

¹⁷ On these age limits, see Klee 1918: 46–48.

¹⁸ Frisch 1988: 179–180, with earlier bibliography.

¹⁹ *I. Erythrai* I 81 (ca 100 B.C.); *Iscr. Cos* I ED 45 (= *SIG*³ 1028).

²⁰ *IG* XII.9 952 (end of second century B.C.).

²¹ *SIG*³ 959.

²² *I. Ephesos* 1101 (197–160 B.C.); *SEG* XLIV 902, line 5 (Knidos); McCabe 1985: no. 82. The Tean text is sufficient to vitiate Bugh's statement (1990: 27) that in the Theseia "the Athenians [created] an elaborate system of boys' age-class subdivisions, attested once only elsewhere in the Greek world," referring (1990: 27, n. 34) to *I. Didyma* 179. Although exact parallels for the titles of the three categories may not be plentiful, the Athenian system fits comfortably into the range of *paides* subdivisions known from other cities. On age categories in general, see Golden 1998: 104–123.

²³ At the Panathenaia certain events were reserved for citizens, but of the festivals we know anything about, the Theseia is the only one in which competitors in single events were segregated according to citizenship. On the Panathenaia, see Tracy 1991: 141–142.

²⁴ Contingents of Athenian cavalry or *tarantinoi*, horsemen equipped with javelins, also had races occasionally reserved for them: *IG* II² 958, lines 67–68; 960, lines 33–34; 961, lines 33–34.

ephebate was eighteen allows us to calculate the ages of the other categories of torch runner.²⁵ As a result, competitors in the *epheboi* class ranged from boys who had turned eighteen just before entering the ephebate all the way to youths who were nearly nineteen. Running against the current ephebes were the members of the previous year's corps, whose term of service had ended about a month previously.²⁶ Consequently, they would have ranged in age from those who had recently turned nineteen to young men who were almost twenty years old.

The ages of the *paides* and *neaniskoi* depend upon the status of the people who made up the categories. Hellenistic Athens had only one officially-sanctioned civic age grade, that of *ephebos*, unlike other cities where *paides* and *neoi* sometimes acted as civic bodies in honoring educational and athletic officials.²⁷ The voluntary nature of the Athenian ephebate of this time adds a further complication. Was provision made for the participation of Athenians who could not afford to enter the ephebate?²⁸ If the answer is yes, then the age limits of these two categories might very well have overlapped those of the *epheboi* and *henoi epheboi*, thus rendering it impossible to recover the precise age-category regime in use at the Theseia. However, I believe that no such accommodation was made in the torch race. Granted that no definitive answer can be given to that question, it is quite likely that in the torch race the age categories from *paides* to *neaniskoi* were reserved for members of what can be called Athens' ephebic class for the following reasons.

The torch race itself was the quintessential ephebic activity at Athens. In fact, before the reforms of Epicrates in 335 B.C. it is the sole attested ephebic activity.²⁹ Athenian practice, as everywhere else, was to consider it as a discrete event quite separate from the rest of the athletic *agon*.³⁰ The close link between ephebes and the *lampadephoria* was not confined to Athens; it can be found all over the Greek world.³¹ The *neaniskoi* are described as coming from the Lyceum, a gymnasium with a long-standing connection with ephebic training.³² Throughout the Hellenistic world it was common practice for young men who had passed through the ephebate to continue training in the ephebic gymnasium

²⁵ Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42.

²⁶ Pélékidis 1962: 256.

²⁷ For example, *IG XII Supp.* 116 (*neoi* give money to the city of Methymna); *TAM V* 700 (*paides*, *neoi*, and *epheboi* honor a benefactor at Julia Gordus); *IG IX* 259 (a *synagoge* of *neoi* at Kierion in Thrace); *TAM V.2* 1065 (*demos*, *paides*, and *neoi* honor a benefactor at Thyatira).

²⁸ Bugh (1990: 27) raised the question of the "fairness" of the Theseia's age categories, but he did not understand the principles behind them.

²⁹ Gauthier 1976: 190; Sekunda 1990.

³⁰ On the ritual nature of the torch race in Athenian festivals, see Kyle 1987: 190–193. At Pergamum, the torch race at one festival was held on a different day from the *gumnikos agon*. On a torch race separate from, though in combination with, a *gumnikos agon*, see Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993: 23 B, lines 59, 84.

³¹ For example, *TAM II.3* 838a, lines 13, 15, 18 (an ephebic agelarch [i.e., lampadarch] at Idebessos); *IG XII.5* 137 (ephebic lampadarch on Paros); *IG XII.5* 647 (ephebic torch race on Keos).

³² On the Lyceum, see Delorme 1960: 54–58.

and to form, in cities other than Athens, semi-official bodies for subsidizing the maintenance of the facilities.³³ Finally, the role of Theseus as the archetypical ephebe would naturally have caused Athenians to expect runners in the Theseia's torch races to be drawn from among the youths who were about to be, were already, or had previously been ephebes themselves.

If this argument is accepted, then it is possible to determine the ages of competitors in the *paides* and *neaniskoi* categories. Logically, the *neaniskoi* would have been older than the ex-ephebes, which means that they were at least twenty years old. The eldest of the runners in the *paides* category were seventeen years old, while the youngest were perhaps twelve, if, as is very likely, the Athenians followed the common Greek custom of opening athletic competitions to boys at that age.³⁴ Thus the age categories for Athenian competitors in the torch races were *paides* (boys aged twelve to seventeen years old), *epheboi* (eighteen year-olds), *henoi epheboi* (nineteen year-olds), *neaniskoi/andres* (twenty year-olds and up).

In the competitions of the *gumnikos agon*, there is an unnoticed correlation between the *paides* categories reserved for Athenian entrants and the *paides* category of the torch race, since they share the same upper age limit. This can be deduced from the expanded victor list in 157 B.C., where victors in the *hoplomachia* events that followed the *gumnikos agon* also won in the categories *paides tes prote helikias*, *paides tes deuterias helikias*, *paides tes trites helikias*, and *epheboi*.³⁵ From this it follows that the eldest of the *paides tes trites helikias* were seventeen years of age. Assuming that the youngest contestants in the first age category were twelve (as was normal), the three categories can be reconstructed as follows: *paides tes prote helikias* (twelve and thirteen years old), *paides tes deuterias helikias* (fourteen and fifteen years old), *paides tes trites helikias* (sixteen and seventeen years old). In this scheme the ephebes and ex-ephebes were not included among the *paides tes trites helikias*, as some have maintained.³⁶ They were, however, eligible for the *paides ek panton* category, which served as the equivalent of the undivided *paides* category in international athletic contests with only two age divisions. Thus, the *ek panton* category usually included all three *paides* subdivisions, the ephebes, the ex-ephebes, and any non-Athenian competitors aged between twelve and twenty. Finally, athletes in the *andres* category were twenty years of age and older. This scheme is best appreciated in tabular form (see Table 1).

The arrangement can best be tested by considering those athletes who are known to have won victories in two successive Theseia. In 161/0 B.C. Habron, son of Kallias, won the *pankration* in the *paides* of the second age category; four years later he won the boxing in the *paides ek panton* division.³⁷ Therefore, he

³³ Forbes 1933: 1–20. At Beroia *neoi* up to twenty-two years of age were still required to undergo daily military training: Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993: 20 B, lines 10–12.

³⁴ Klee 1918: 48–59.

³⁵ IG II² 957, col. ii, lines 47–61.

³⁶ Kirchner, *comm. ad* IG II² 958; Bugh 1990: 26. Meritt (1964: 206) came to a similar conclusion.

³⁷ IG II² 956, col. ii, lines 71–72; 957, col. ii, lines 35.

Table 1: Age categories in the Theseia

<i>Age</i>	<i>Lampadephoria</i> (Athenians)	<i>Gumnikoi Agones</i> (Athenians) (International)	
12 ⁺ 13 ⁺	<i>paides</i>	<i>paides A' helikias</i>	<i>paides</i> <i>ek</i> <i>panton</i>
14 ⁺ 15 ⁺		<i>paides B' helikias</i>	
16 ⁺ 17 ⁺		<i>paides Γ' helikias</i>	
18 ⁺ 19 ⁺	<i>epheboi</i> <i>henoi epheboi</i>		
20 ⁺	<i>neaniskoi/andres</i>		<i>andres</i>

was fourteen or fifteen years old in 161/0 and eighteen or nineteen in 157/6 B.C. Asklepiades, who was victorious in the stade race for *paides* of the third category in 161/0 and won as an adult in the cavalry straightaway in 157/6, also fits comfortably into this scheme.³⁸ But Euarchides, son of Andreas, is another matter, if we follow the accepted dating to 153/2 of the archon Phaidrias, under whom the Theseia of IG II² 958 was held. Euarchides was victor of the boys' boxing in the first age category in 157 and subsequently led the *henoi epheboi* to victory in the torch race at the later Theseia, in which he also won the wrestling *ek panton*.³⁹ If Phaidrias is dated to 153/2, then only four years intervened between the Theseia at which Euarchides won as a *pais* of the first age category and his victory as an ex-ephebe. Since he had to be at least nineteen under Phaidrias after a year as an ephebe, this would make him fifteen four years earlier, in the archonship of Anthesterios. Obviously, he would have been too old to box opponents of twelve and thirteen years of age. Although it was not unheard of for boys to compete in lower agonistic age categories, it would have been extremely unusual for someone at the upper age limit of one category to be allowed to compete in a younger category against boys just entering public athletic competition.⁴⁰

In light of similar chronological concerns, Benjamin Meritt proposed assigning Phaidrias to 149/8, the next quinquennial year available after 153/2, but Bugh has convincingly shown that eight years is too long an interval between IG II² 957 and 958 to account for the careers of athletes who won in both festivals.⁴¹ Both scholars were following Pélékidis's influential thesis that the inscriptions record a penteteric festival founded to commemorate Athens' recovery of Skyros

³⁸ IG II² 956, col. i, lines 80–81; 957, col. ii, lines 78–79.

³⁹ IG II² 957, col. i, lines 84–85; 958, col. i, lines 63–64; col. ii, lines 42–43.

⁴⁰ Frisch 1988: 182.

⁴¹ Meritt 1964: 205–206; Bugh 1990: 25–35.

in 167 B.C. and held every four years from then on.⁴² They are not alone, as the penteteric "Greater Theseia" has attained the status of orthodoxy.⁴³ For my part, I accept Pélékidis's contention that the Theseia of our inscriptions were not an annual festival: the notion that they were penteteric, however, rests on shaky foundations.

The idea that the Theseia took place every four years depends on a connection Pélékidis established between them and the Ptolemaia. He noted that the names of victors at the Theseia were to be proclaimed at the following Ptolemaia, among other festivals, and drew the logical conclusion that *le seul hasard* could not explain why the Ptolemaia are mentioned all four times that we know honors were decreed for victors in the Theseia.⁴⁴ Because the Ptolemaia, instituted in 224/3 in honor of Ptolemy III Euergetes, were supposedly held in the first year of the Olympiad, and since Athenians habitually accorded honors immediately after festivals, he reasonably concluded that the Theseia had to be held every four years as well, in the last year of each Olympiad.⁴⁵ The assumption that the Ptolemaia were penteteric, however, is not based on hard chronological evidence, but on a surmise of W. S. Ferguson. In a 1908 article, Ferguson inferred from the references in the Theseia decrees to proclamations at the City Dionysia and in the *gumnikoi agones* of the Panathenaia, Eleusinia, and Ptolemaia, as well as from a text found at Thebes in which these festivals are mentioned together with the Isthmia, Olympia, and Pythia, that the Ptolemaia also occurred only once every Olympiad.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the analogy does not hold, for of these festivals the Athenian Eleusinia and the panhellenic Isthmia were both trieteric. Moreover, this reasoning comes dangerously close to circularity, since Pélékidis established the periodicity of the Theseia on that of the Ptolemaia, which Ferguson had already determined by using the Theseia texts. The epigraphical evidence, as far as these scholars were aware, was admittedly consistent with the idea that the Ptolemaia were penteteric; even then, however, the extant testimony was too sparse to preclude other possibilities. The few references Pélékidis could muster pointed to the Ptolemaia being held in the first year of the Olympiad at the time of the texts under examination here, but he himself noted that these references apparently showed they were not penteteric by the later years of the second century.⁴⁷ Since Pélékidis's time, however, new epigraphical evidence has come to light which has dispelled the notion of a penteteric Ptolemaia and demonstrates that they were held every year.⁴⁸ To be specific, we now have

⁴² Pélékidis 1962: 229–230.

⁴³ Bugh 1990: 25; Meritt 1964: 205; Habicht 1997: 237.

⁴⁴ Pélékidis 1962: 299; *IG* II² 956, lines 32–35; 957, lines 18–20; 958, lines 29–31; 963, lines 2–4.

⁴⁵ On the date of the foundation of the Ptolemaia, see Habicht 1982: 107–108.

⁴⁶ Ferguson 1908: 341. Inscription at Thebes: *IG* VII 2411. Cf. Dinsmoor 1931: 261–262.

⁴⁷ Pélékidis 1962: 300.

⁴⁸ The newer epigraphical testimony for the periodicity of the Ptolemaia is collected by Habicht (1992: 83–84).

epigraphical references to the Ptolemaia from the years 187/6, 127/6, and 117/6, all second years of the Olympiad.⁴⁹ Of these, the testimony from 187/6 is the most significant, for Pélékidis's collection included one from 188/7.⁵⁰ References to the festival in two consecutive years strongly indicate that the Ptolemaia were an annual festival.

To my knowledge no one has yet noticed the impact this increase in our knowledge has on the periodicity of the Theseia, which has depended so closely on that of the Ptolemaia.⁵¹ If the Ptolemaia were an annual festival, then their particular connection with the Theseia is severed. Most important, the change to an annual celebration of the Ptolemaia frees us from trying to fit athletes' multiple victories at the Theseia into four-year intervals. How often, then, were they held? If the pomp and splendor with which the Theseia of the inscriptions were put on is thought too great for a mere annual festival (and this must, of course, remain utterly a matter of opinion), the solution quickly presents itself. For there were commonly three sorts of Greek festivals—annual, penteteric (held every four years), and trieteric (held every second year). If the "Greater" Theseia were not annual and could not have been penteteric, then one possibility remains: the Theseia were trieteric, and Phaidrias belongs to the year 151/0.

Now, with Phaidrias dated not four, but six years later than Anthesterios, a sufficient length of time is produced for Euarchides to have been thirteen at the Theseia in 157/6 and nineteen at the time of the games in 151/0, when he won the wrestling in the *paides ek panton* division.⁵² I accordingly propose that the Theseia were held in the second and fourth years of each Olympiad. The three surviving catalogues in *IG* II² 957–959 thus do not preserve the names of victors from three successive festivals, but from three of the six Theseia in the period 161/0 to 151/0.

This shift causes no problems in the career of the boxer Mnesitheos, son of Mnesitheos, victor in the A' *belikia* in 157/6 and in the *paides ek panton* in 161/0.⁵³ In fact, his second victory in one of the heavy events can now be partly attributed to his being, at eighteen or nineteen, among the oldest of the competitors. However, Eudoxos, son of Eudoxos, seems to pose a real obstacle to down-dating Phaidrias by two years because he won the hoplomachia as a *pais* of the A' *belikia* in 157/6 and again in the Γ' *belikia* under Phaidrias.⁵⁴ Therefore, if he were seventeen under Phaidrias, he should have been only eleven under Anthesterios. The solution to the problem lies in the relationship between the third age category

⁴⁹ 187/6: *SEG* XXI 435. 175/6: Agora Inv. I 7529 (Habicht 1992: 83). 117/6: *SEG* XLIII 68.

⁵⁰ Pélékidis 1962: 300 (*IG* II² 891, line 13).

⁵¹ Even Habicht (1997: 240) says that in the second century the Theseia "had become a quadrennial event."

⁵² *IG* II² 958, line 43.

⁵³ *IG* II² 957, col. ii, lines 29–30; 958, col. ii, lines 52–53.

⁵⁴ *IG* II² 957, col. ii, lines 49–50; 958, col. ii, lines 75–76.

of the *paides* and the ephebic year. I have already pointed out that in the various *hoplomachiai* of 157/6 the age categories were *paides* of the first, second, and third categories, as well as *epheboi*.⁵⁵ From this it can reasonably be deduced that the upper limit for the *paides tes trites helikias* was, strictly speaking, not one's eighteenth birthday but entry into the ephebate. As the Theseia were held only a few weeks after the beginning of the ephebic year, there must from time to time have been certain boys whose eighteenth birthdays fell between the first day of Boedromion, when the entrance rituals for new ephebes were performed, and the sixth day of Pyanopsion when the games for the Theseia were held.⁵⁶ Thus, although they were technically eighteen years of age, they were still eligible to compete as *paides tes trites helikias*, because they would not have become ephebes until the following Boedromion.⁵⁷ I suggest that Eudoxos was one of these boys, which means that he would have been eighteen just before the Theseia in 151/0 and twelve years of age six years earlier in 157/6.

The multiple victories of other athletes have no effect on chronology, but some are worthy of mention. In several instances, contestants were allowed to compete in two different age categories at the same Theseia. Two victors in ephebic events also competed as *andres* in the *gumnikoi agones* of the same year.⁵⁸ This should elicit no surprise, once we remember the essential difference between the two sorts of age category. Entrance into ephebic events was based almost exclusively on a contestant's age, whereas qualification for international age categories turned on physical development as well as date of birth.⁵⁹ "Playing up" into a category for older competitors was far from uncommon in international competition. "Playing down" was extremely rare, but apparently possible.⁶⁰ One example is recorded for the Theseia of 161/0, when Kairios, lampadarch of the *neaniskoi*, also won the *stadion* and *diaulos* that year in the *paides ek panton* division.⁶¹ Although Kairios was presumably twenty years old at the time, he was allowed to compete as a *pais* in two track competitions, for reasons which are unrecoverable. Nonetheless, we might speculate that Kairios would not have been allowed such latitude had he attempted to enter a combat event such as wrestling or boxing.

Finally, it is appropriate to consider the impact of Phaidrias' new date on the archon list for the middle of the second century. The argument that follows builds on the insights of an article Christian Habicht published in 1988, which constitutes the most recent detailed work on the subject. Habicht's reconstruction

⁵⁵ *IG* II² 957, col. ii, lines 47–63.

⁵⁶ On the date of the *eisiteteria*, see Pélékidis 1962: 215, 217–219. On the age of majority in the fourth century, see Golden 1979.

⁵⁷ I thank Meghan Miller for guiding me to this solution of the problem.

⁵⁸ *IG* II² 957, col. i, lines 49–50, 83; 958, col. i, lines 93–94; col. ii, lines 77–78.

⁵⁹ Frisch 1988: 181.

⁶⁰ Frisch 1988: 183–184.

⁶¹ *IG* II² 956, col. i, lines 67–69, 82–83; col. i, lines 48–49.

of the list for the decade 157/6 to 148/7 is as follows, with securely dated archons on the left and less-securely dated ones on the right:⁶²

157/6	Anthesterios	
156/5	Kallistratos	
155/4	Mnesitheos III	
154/3		
153/2	Phaidrias	
152/1		Andreas
151/0		Zaleukos
150/49		Speusippos v
149/8		Lysiades
148/7	Archon	

Now that Phaidrias has been moved to 151/0, 153/2 is available again for Speusippos, whom Meritt had earlier assigned to that year on the strength of his secretary's being from tribe V.⁶³ The archons Andreas and Zaleukos can be tentatively placed in the free years around Speusippos and Phaidrias to produce the following list:⁶⁴

157/6	Anthesterios	
156/5	Kallistratos	
155/4	Mnesitheos III	
154/3		Andreas
153/2	Speusippos v	
152/1		Zaleukos
151/0	Phaidrias	
150/49		
149/8		Lysiades
148/7	Archon	

Although the Theseia decree from the year of Phaidrias contains no reference to the secretary serving under him, another document that was once dated to 151/0 does include that information. In 1976 Habicht joined two previously published fragments into a single decree honoring a Thessalian dignitary.⁶⁵ He restored the missing archon's name as Epainetos and dated him to 151/0, in view of the dates of the honorand's family. Subsequently, he redated Epainetos to 166/5 and proposed instead to assign the decree to the archonship of Archon, since the missing archon's name had to have about nine letters in the genitive.⁶⁶ Like Archon's name, the genitive form of Phaidrias also contains eight letters and may consequently be restored in the first line of the decree. This supplement

⁶² Habicht 1988: 246.

⁶³ Meritt 1977: 183.

⁶⁴ For the relative chronology of Andreas and Zaleukos, see Habicht 1988: 242.

⁶⁵ Habicht 1976.

⁶⁶ Habicht 1988: 246.

would restore the document to the date for which Habicht originally argued and, incidentally, would provide Phaidrias with a secretary, from tribe VII. If this suggestion is accepted, then, to all appearances, the secretary cycle seems to have functioned at Athens through to the end of the 150s. Consequently, the period of interruption in the cycle can be narrowed down to the historically significant 140s.

To conclude, the extant inscriptions reveal the Theseia to be a hybrid of two sorts of agonistic festival—civic games reserved for citizens of a particular city and international, or panhellenic, games in which competitors from any Greek city were qualified to enter. Although competition in certain events at the Panathenaia was also confined to Athenians, only at the Theseia was there a division in single events between Athenian and international competitors. Once this principle is grasped, the age-category structure for both sorts of event becomes readily apparent. The Theseia were not of the same rank as other panhellenic Athenian festivals such as the Panathenaia, since Athenian victors won the overwhelming majority of the competitions nominally open to non-Athenians.⁶⁷ Even so, the agonothete of the Theseia was an official of the Athenian *demos* and as such received public honors consonant with his rank, notably a gold crown and proclamations at the City Dionysia, Panathenaia, Eleusinia, and Ptolemaia.⁶⁸ We have seen that the mention of proclamations at these games, specifically at the Ptolemaia, provides no support for the idea that the Theseia were penteteric; indeed, those references are irrelevant to the problem of periodicity. The remaining evidence, on the other hand, is consistent with the Theseia being a trieteric contest. This finding necessitates some rearrangement of the archon list for the middle of the second century and may indicate that the secretary cycle was still functioning through to 151/0. Much must, of course, remain tentative, as the archon list is far from attaining its final form and further discoveries may transform our view of the Theseia.

APPENDIX

I have attempted to show in this article that the inscriptions *IG* II² 956, 957, and 958 come not from three successive penteteric Theseia in 161/0, 157/6, and 153/2 but from three celebrations of a trieteric festival held in the years 161/0, 157/6, and 151/0. According to the corpus, the stones on which the texts were inscribed were all found in the same place, so it might be argued that this fact implies the inscriptions represent the totality of Theseia decrees inscribed in this period, which would mean that they recorded consecutive celebrations of the Theseia. The stones, however, were not found *in situ*, beside the Theseion, as their

⁶⁷ There are only four non-Athenian victors recorded: *IG* II² 960, col. ii, lines 13–14 (Kyzikene), 15–16 (Sidonian); 961, col. i, lines 50–51 (Chalcidian); 964, lines 29–30 (Smyrnaean). Habicht (1997: 241) suggests all were mercenaries serving in the Athenian army.

⁶⁸ *IG* II² 956, lines 29–35; 957, lines 17–20; 958, lines 25–31.

decrees required.⁶⁹ Instead, they were discovered immured in the Late Roman Wall during excavation on the site of the church of St. Demetrios Katiphori, just east of the Tower of the Winds.⁷⁰ Their discovery together with a large number of other ephebic inscriptions has given rise to a debate over identifying the location as the site of the Diogeneion, the gymnasium of Ptolemy, or even the Theseion itself.⁷¹ Thus, even though the inscriptions were found in the same section of Late Roman Wall, over 600 years had passed between their original erection and their utilization as emergency building material by the Athenians after the Herulian raid. In my opinion, it is highly unlikely that a complete series of *stelai* erected in the second century B.C. could have survived together into the later third century A.D. At the very least, the findspot can have no chronological significance for the grouping of the Theseia decrees *IG* II², 956, 957, and 958.⁷²

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⁶⁹ *IG* II² 956, lines 16–17; 957, lines 10–11; 958, lines 13–14.

⁷⁰ Frantz 1988: 137–138; Guidi 1921–22: 47. On the excavations at St. Demetrios Katiphori, see Karamanos 1861: 18–20.

⁷¹ Guidi 1921–22; Lippolis 1995.

⁷² I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for supporting the research project that gave rise to this article. I am also grateful for the advice that I have received from John Morgan, who gave generously of his time despite disagreeing with some of my conclusions, Christian Habicht, and the anonymous referees for this journal; they should in no way be held responsible for any remaining errors of fact or interpretation.

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