

Athens. Honours for Straton the King of Sidon

Description: engraved white Pentelic marble stele; after a reuse, it was damaged on the upper side, intact on the others. Dimensions: h: 0.787 m w: 0.518 m d: 0.134 m

Layout: stoichedon 27. The stoichedonic square is 0.018 m on each side. On the left and right sides, traces of black ink guidelines are visible. The text is divided into two paragraphs separated by a vacat (l. 28)

Letters: dimensions: h: 0.008-0.014 m. The final part of the strokes of the letters is slightly thicker; theta, omicron and omega are smaller. Ionic alphabet, but in some cases ε for ει and ο for ου is retained. Attic dialect

Origin: Athens

Dating: 365-359 BC

Findspot: found on the Acropolis of Athens near the Parthenon. In 1751 it was acquired at Athens by James Dawkins and, after his death, it was donated by his brother Henry in 1759 to Oxford University

Current location: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, gallery 16. Inventory number: ANChandler 2.24

Reference Edition: E. Culasso Gastaldi, *Prossenie* 5, 105-106 (autopsy 2002)

Other Editions: R. Chandler 1763, n. 24 (editio princeps); W. Roberts 1791, n. 24; A. Boeckh, *CIG* 87; U. Koehler, *IG* II 86; E.L. Hicks *GHI* 87; W. Dittenberger, *Syll.* I 93; C. Michel, *Recueil*, 93; E.L. Hicks, G.L. Hill, *GHI* 111; F. Bleckmann 1913, n. 53; J. Kirchner, *IG* II² 141; W. Dittenberger, *Syll.*³ 185; M.N. Tod, *GHI* II 139; P.J. Rhodes, R. Osborne, *GHI* 21; I. Vagionakis 2017, 170-171; C. de Lisle 2020, 9-10 n. 1

Photographs: Chandler 1763, 35 (drawing); Austin 1938, pl. 11; Culasso Gastaldi, *Prossenie*, 104; Demetriou 2012, 207, fig. 16; de Lisle 2020, 19, fig. 1

Translations: Chandler 1763, 37 (Latin); Austin-Vidal Naquet 1972, 298-299 (French); Moysey 1975, 245 (English); Harding 1985 no. 40 (English); Brodersen-Günther-Schmitt, *HGIÜ* II 229, 26 (German); Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI* 21, 89 (English); Vagionakis 2017, 171 (Italian); de Lisle 2020, 10 (English)

Bibliography: Hicks-Hill, *GHI* 111; Tod, Austin 1944, 98-100; Tod, *GHI* II 139; Austin-Vidal Naquet 1972, 297-299; Gauthier 1972, 81-82, 119; Moysey 1976, 182-189; Whitehead 1977, 8-10, 14, 29, 72, 152; Hagemajer Allen 2003, 230-232 Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI* 21; Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 103-123; Elayi-Elayi 2004, 651-655; Elayi 2005, 99-105; Engen 2010, 321-322; Demetriou 2012, 206-208; Migeotte 2014, 460-461; Matthaïou 2016, 113-119; Vagionakis 2017, 159-169; de Lisle 2020, 9-19

[- - -]

[.] Ἀθηναί[ων κ]αὶ ἐπεμελ[ήθη] ὅπως ὡς

κάλλιστα πορευθήσονται οἱ πρέσ-

βεις ὡς βασιλέα, οὓς ὁ δῆμος ἐπεμψ-

εν, κ<α>ὶ ἀποκρίνασθαι τῶι ἦκοντι π-

5 παρὰ τῷ Σιδωνίων βασιλέως ὅτι καὶ

ἔς τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ὦν ἀνὴρ ἀγαθ-

ὸς περὶ τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων οὐ-

κ ἔστι ὅτι ἀτυχήσει παρὰ Ἀθηναίω-

ν ὦν ἂν δέηται. εἶναι δὲ καὶ πρόξεν-

10 ον τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων Στράτω-

να τὸν Σιδῶνος βασιλέα καὶ αὐτὸν
καὶ ἐγγόνος. τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀν-
αγραψάτω ὁ γραμματεὺς τῆς βολῆς
[ἐ]στήληι λιθίνῃ δέκα ἡμερῶν καὶ
15 καταθέτω ἐν ἀκροπόλει, ἐς δὲ τὴν ἀ-
ναγραφὴν τῆς στήλης δοῦναι τοὺς
ταμίαις τῶι γραμματεῖ τῆς βολῆς Δ
ΔΔ δραχμὰς ἐκ τῶν δέκα ταλάντων. π-
οισάσθω δὲ καὶ σύμβολα ἢ βολὴ πρ-
20 ὄς τὸν βασιλέα τὸν Σιδωνίων ὅπως
ἂν ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων εἰδῆι ἔάν τι
πέμπῃ ὁ Σιδωνίων βασιλεὺς δεόμε-
νος τῆς πόλεως καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς ὁ Σ-
ιδωνίων εἰδῆι ὅταμ πέμπῃ τινὰ ὡ-
25 σ αὐτὸν ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων. καλέσα-
ι δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ ξένια τὸν ἦκοντα παρὰ
τῷ Σιδωνίων βασιλέως ἐς τὸ πρυτα-
νεῖον ἐς αὔριον. (vac.)
Μενέξενος εἶπεν· τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καθά-
30 περ Κηφισόδοτος· ὅποσοι δ' ἂν Σιδω-
νίων οἰκῶντες ἐς Σιδῶνι καὶ πολι-
τευόμενοι ἐπιδημῶσιν κατ' ἐμπορ-
ίαν Ἀθήνησι, μὴ ἐξεῖναι αὐτὸς μετ-
οίκιον πράττεσθαι μηδὲ χορηγὸν
35 μηδένα καταστῆσαι μηδ' εἰσφορὰν
μηδεμίαν ἐπιγράφειν. (vac.)

Apparatus criticus: Initio/l. 1: [- - - τῆ/ι] Ἀθηναῖ· Ἡ [βο]λή ἐπεμελ[ήθη] Boeckh apud CIG 87; [- - - κατασ/τ(?)]αθηναί [.. ? ..] ας Hicks; [ἐπαινέσαι Στ|ρ]]ά(τω)να, (ἐπ)[ει](δή) dubit. Dittenberger apud Syll.; [- - - κατασ/τ(?)]αθηναί [ἐπει]δή Bleckmann. I. 1: [·Η Α]θην[αίη βολή] ἐπεμελ[ήθη] Chandler; [ν] Ἀθηναί[ων κ]αὶ ἐπεμελ[ήθη] Wilhelm apud Hicks-Hill; [.. ? ..] Ἀθηναί[ων κ]αὶ ἐπεμελ[ήθη] Kirchner apud IG II² 141; Ἀθηναί[ων κ]αὶ ἐπεμελ[ήθη] ὅπως de Lisle.

II. 1/2 ὡ[ς] | κ]άλλιστα Chandler; ὡ[ς] | [κ]άλλιστα Boeckh; ὡ[ς] | κάλλιστα Hicks; ὡ[ς] | κάλλιστα Kirchner.

I. 4 ΚΛΙ lapis; καὶ alii praeter de Lisle.

II. 9/10: καὶ πρόξεν/[ο]ν de Lisle.

II. 12/13: ἀν/[α]γραψάτω de Lisle.

I. 14: [ἐς] στήληι Chandler, sed una littera superest.

II. 15/16: ἀ/ναγραφὴν de Lisle.

I. 21: Ἀθηναίων de Lisle.

II. 23/4: Σ/ιδωνίων Kirchner; Σ/ιδ[ω]νίων Koehler apud IG II 86.

II. 31/32: πολι/τευόμενοι alii praeter de Lisle.

II. 33/34: μετ/οί[κ]ιον Chandler.

Translation:

[- - -] of the Athenians, and has taken care that the envoys to the King whom the people sent should travel as finely as possible. And reply to the man who has come from the king of Sidon that if in the time to come he is a good man with regard to the Athenian people there is no possibility that he will fail to obtain whatever he needs from the Athenians. Also Straton the king of Sidon shall be proxenos of the Athenian people, himself and his descendants. The secretary of the boule shall have this decree inscribed on a stone stele within ten days and

set it down on the Acropolis: for the engraving of the stele the treasurers shall give to the secretary of the boule 30 drachmas from the Ten Talents. Also the boule shall make tokens (symbola) with the king of Sidon, so that the Athenian people shall know if the king of Sidon sends anything when in need of the city, and the king of Sidon shall know when the Athenian people send any one to him. Also invite the man who has come from the king of Sidon to hospitality in the Prytaneion tomorrow. Menexenos proposed: in other respects in accordance with Kephisodotos; but as many of the Sidonians, living in Sidon and enjoying civic rights, as are visiting Athens for purposes of trade, it shall not be permitted to exact the metic tax (metoikion) from them or to appoint any of them as choregos or to register them for any eisphora.

(English translation: Rhodes, Osborne, *GHI* 21, with changes)

Commentary:

The honorific decree for the Phoenician king Straton is a very useful document for reconstructing Athens' political and commercial relations with Sidon and, more generally, with the Persian Levant area in the first half of the 4th century. The total loss of the prescript, however, makes it extremely difficult – if not impossible – to place the inscription in a precise chronological perspective. This is particularly the case if one considers how densely eventful those years were, when Athens struggled to re-establish its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, which had been seriously undermined by its defeat in the Peloponnesian War. A chronological shift of even a few years, therefore, would considerably change the state of Athenian relations with Sidon and especially with Persia, of which the Phoenician city was a vassal. This would consequently transform the interpretation of the reasons that led to the promulgation of this decree.

The text is composed of a main motion (ll. 1-28) proposed by Kephisodotos – as indicated in l. 30 – and of an amendment by Menexenos (ll. 29-36), which occupies the final section of the decree. The formula with which the latter is introduced, *τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καθάπερ Κηφισόδοτος*, is rather unusual since the reference was generally to the boule, not to the proposer (*τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καθάπερ τῆι βουλῆι*). This expression, in fact, occurs only on one other occasion after 403, in the honorific decree for Spartococ II and Paerisades I, rulers of the Cimmerian Bosphorus (*IG II² 212*). This has led the majority of scholars to think that this decree was a non-probouleumatic one, namely not a direct expression of a proposal originally presented in the Council (Rhodes 1972, 65; 71-74; De Laix 1973, 132; Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI*, 90; Vagionakis 2017, 172; on non-probouleumatic decrees see also Jones 1957, 112-114; Sinclair 1988, 94-98). Enrica Culasso Gastaldi, in order to overcome the problem arising from the great rarity of the formula and the uneven structure of the decree – the section on symbola, external to the honorific initiative, unusually follows the instructions for publication – assumed that Kephisodotos was the member of the boule who originally proposed the motion in Council. Later, in the Assembly, he might have expanded or modified it, and this latter version might have been referred to by Menexenos in the amendment (Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 110-111). However, the loss of the technical data of the prescript, the contradictory nature of the documentation and the impossibility of proving that Kephisodotos was a member of the boule do not allow this proposal to be confirmed. It seems likely, however, that at least the last part of the main motion could be the result of an Assembly discussion, due to its unusual position and the topic being unrelated to the original honorific intention of the decree.

Turning to the reasons that led to the promulgation of the inscription, the first four preserved lines explain that the honours attributed to Straton are motivated by the logistical support offered by the latter to an Athenian embassy sent to the Great King (on the form of the causal statement introducing this sentence and the following one see Veligianni Terzi 1997, 169-172). The Persian ruler mentioned is certainly Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404-358 BCE), while the honoured Straton is the king of Sidon known as Abdashtart I from Phoenician sources (on the identity between the two see Masson 1969, 692; Elayi 1988, 133-134; it seems, however, that he is not the Sidonian ruler to whom the bilingual Greek-Phoenician inscription *I. Délos 50 = CIS I 114* is dedicated; cf. Elayi 2005, 95; Bonnet 2014, 501-503). This figure, whose historical events will be addressed when discussing the chronology of the decree, is also known from several references in Greek literary sources: in a long quotation, Athenaeus of Naucratis reports a passage from Theopompus' *Philippika* (*FGrHist 115 F 114 = Ath. 12.531a-531d*) and one from Anaximenes of Lampsacus (*FGrHist 72 F 18 = Ath. 12.531d-531e*). In the account of the two historians, Straton is primarily characterised by his immoderate tryphé, being continually devoted to luxurious pleasures and entertainment. The two most interesting aspects in this passage – highlighted by both Theopompus and Anaximenes – are the rivalry in luxury with the king of Salamis in Cyprus, Nicocles, and the violent death of the two. The same characteristics are also reported by Aelianus, in a passage dependent on Theopompus (Ael. *VH* 7.2); the rhetor Maximus of Tyre, on the other hand, mentioned an end in poverty (Max. *Tyr.* 14.2). Jerome, finally, tells that he was killed by his wife at the approach of the Persians, whom he had betrayed by forming an alliance with with the king of Egypt (Hieron. *Adv. Jov.* 1.45).

The specific occasion that led to the attribution of the honours is the arrival in Athens of an envoy from Straton, to whom the demos had decided to respond with a promise of future support in case of a continuation of the good relations between the Sidonian ruler and the Attic city (ll. 4-9). In this context, in fact, *ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός* is a

technical expression, frequently used by the Athenians to indicate a positive relationship in foreign policy: in many cases, it is used without further specification with both Greek and non-Greek kings and dynasts (see for example *IG II² 31*, ll. 5-8; *IG II² 103*, ll. 19-22; *IG II² 212*, ll. 12-14; cf. Veligianni Terzi 1997, 247-250). The following lines (9-12) see the granting of proxenia to Straton and his descendants (the literature on the subject is incredibly vast, for an introduction to proxeny see Gauthier 1972, 17-61; Gschnitzer 1973, 629-730; Mack 2015, 1-89; on proxeny and the Athenian epigraphic habit see Walbank 1978, 2-9; Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 11-34). The position of Straton's name in the formulation is atypical, since the subject usually preceded the title of proxenos (Henry 1983, 140-141). While this honour is not unusual, the absence of the reference to euergesia, in the usual combination *πρόξενος καὶ εὐεργέτης*, is surprising: it is true that sometimes only proxeny was attributed, but these cases are much rarer (cf. Henry 1983, 116; 143 n. 2; Mack 2015, 38-43). In general, it seems possible to detect a cautious attitude of Athens towards the Sidonian king: besides euergesia, other honours such as enktesis and ateleia frequently attributed to proxenoi are also absent (Walbank 1978, 4-9; Hagemajer Hallen 2003, 230). Moreover, Straton is not granted Athenian citizenship, a privilege that the Attic polis was undoubtedly not very generous in dispensing, but very frequent in cases where the honoured person was a sovereign or a dynast who, moreover, would not have resided in Athens (see for instance the cases of Evagoras I of Salamis, *IG I³ 113*; Dionysius I of Syracuse, *IG II² 103*; the satrap Orontes, *IG II² 207*; Arybbas the Molossian, *IG II² 226*; the Bosporan kings, Dem. 20.30; on this topic see Osborne 1983, 187-192). The scarcity of honours cannot be explained by the non-Greekness of Straton, since it has been shown that the ethnicity of the honoured persons did not influence the choice and number of grants (Hagemajer Allen 2003, 199-250). This impression of coldness (noted en passant only in Hagemajer Hallen 2003, 230-231) is reinforced by the fact that the title of *ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός* is not given, as is usually the case, as a reason for the honorific provision. Rather, it is a condition to which permanence even in the future the help of the Athenians is bound. Nevertheless, in itself, the promise of future support is not negatively connoted, since in the same years it also appears in the decree – of a completely different tone – in honour of the Spartocids (*IG II² 212*) and in that for a person from Chersonesus (*IG II² 275*). It is possible, as it has been suggested, that this decree represented only a preliminary contact and that the Athenians, before offering further honours, wanted to obtain more benefits from Straton (de Lisle 2020, 13). The impression, however, is that more clarity on this attitude can only be provided in light of an understanding – as far as possible – of the historical context in which the decree was inserted.

Another peculiar aspect of this section is the formulation of the name and title of the honoured person. The name Straton appears here for the first time, at least within the preserved text. There is also a certain stylistic variety in the configuration of the title of the ruler: in the other five occurrences Straton is alternately referred to as *ὁ Σιδωνίων βασιλεύς* (ll. 5; 22; 27) and *ὁ βασιλεύς ὁ Σιδωνίων* (ll. 20; 23-24), through the use of the ethnic ('the king of the Sidonians'), according to the appellation traditionally used by the Greeks; on this single occasion (ll. 10-11), however, he is called *ὁ Σιδῶνος βασιλεύς* ('the king of Sidon'), thus unusually using the toponym. André Aymard has explained this dissimilarity by suggesting that the alternation of the first wording according to an ABABA scheme may be motivated by simple stylistic reasons, while the use of the toponym at the moment of the granting of privileges is determined by the need to identify the honoured through the official titlature of the non-Hellenic East (Aymard 1948, 237-239; so also Vagionakis 2017, 175-176). The kingdom of Sidon, however, seems to be an exception to this rule: Josette Elayi, overturning the interpretation, stated that the official title – which would reproduce the Phoenician MLK ṢDNM – was 'the king of the Sidonians' and that the wording *Στράτων ὁ Σιδῶνος βασιλεύς* is due to the personal attribution of the proxeny (Elayi 2005, 100; on the titlature of the Sidonian rulers see also Sader 2019, 103-106). This theory, however, may perhaps explain why the king's personal name appears on this occasion, but it is not convincing regarding the use of the toponym, a form that is foreign to Greek usage (cf. Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 114 who however sees the use of the toponym as a simple stylistic variation). A solution to the problem could be found by accepting Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo's reading of the title MLK ṢDNM: according to the Near East antiquity scholar, this would not indicate an ethnic group – which should instead be ṢDNYM – but the dual or plural of the toponym Sidon. The correct title would therefore be 'king of the two Sidons' or 'king of the Sidons', in accordance with traditional Phoenician usage (Amadasi Guzzo 2013, 257-265). The one used by Athens in ll. 10-11, therefore, would have been a Greek calque of the official title, as Aymard had rightly guessed. Indeed, it is reasonable to think that, since the decree was promulgated in the presence of Straton's envoys, they informed the Athenians about the correct title (and this would contradict, at least on this occasion, the claims about their inability to qualify foreign political institutions by Austin-Vidal Naquet 1972, 297 n. 2).

Lines 12-18 contain the provisions for the publication of the decree and its placement on the Acropolis. Clearly, such provisions are typical of public Attic epigraphy, so the specific formulae used often give chronological indications. This is particularly the case when the prescript data is missing, as in this decree. The specific formulaic aspects will be analysed in detail later when discussing the dating of the inscription. The treasurers (ll. 16-17) entrusted with the delivery of the money are generally identified with those of the Goddess Athena (*οἱ*

ταμίαι τῆς θεᾶς; cf. Dittenberger, *Syll.*³ I, 260 n. 4; Johnson 1914, 420; Tod, *GHI* II, 118; Henry 1989, 254-5; more doubtful Moysey 1976, 183), since in other cases, they are the ones who manage the Ten Talents, a fund used for the publication on stone of decrees in 4th century Attic inscriptions (on this fund see Johnson 1914, 420; Dinsmoor 1932, 158-159 n. 6; Rhodes 1972, 103 n. 7; Henry 1982, 97-118; Faraguna 1992, 182 n. 35; Bubelis 2016, 208-209 n. 42 has argued that it could be an emergency fund at tamiai's disposal, thus covering not only the engraving expenses; on inscriptions cost cf. Loomis 1998, 121-165). An attractive hypothesis – although difficult to verify – is that ἐκ τῶν δέκα ταλάντων could be another formulation for the same fund elsewhere referred to as ἐκ τῶν κατὰ ψηφίσματα ἀναλισκομένων τῶι δήμῳ, a much more attested expression (Lalonde 1971, 68; Pébarthe 2006, 251; Berti 2013, 15).

The subsequent section (ll. 18-25) prescribes the boule to create symbola with the king of Sidon in order to recognise their respective envoys without uncertainty. In this case, the term σύμβολον must be understood in an etymological sense, as derived from the verb συμβάλλειν ('to bring together'): as Philippe Gauthier has explained, it «désigne un objet incomplet, qui doit être rapproché d'un autre pour prendre toute sa signification. Ainsi, la moitié d'un osselet, d'un bâton, d'une tablette soigneusement brisés ou sciés pourra être rapprochée de la partie manquante; et, comme dans un puzzle, seules les deux parties du même objet pourront coïncider» (Gauthier 1972, 65-66). In the same sense, for instance, this term is used by Plato in the *Symposium* to describe the two halves of the original human beings, irremediably separated but perfectly coinciding (Plat. *Sym.* 191d; 193a). Thus, the symbola of our inscription must have been two complementary parts of one or more objects – similar to the Roman tesserae hospitales – possessed by the two counterparts as a guarantee of recognisability of their respective diplomatic envoys (cf. Hdt. 6.86.α.5-β.1; see Tod, *GHI* II, 118; Gauthier 1972, 81-82; Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI*, 91; Wallace 1949, 70-73, through a comparison with *IG* I³ 34, preferred to identify them as public seals recognised by the two cities, contra Gauthier 1972, 83-84). This practice, however, is rather rare in Athenian legislation: apart from the honorific decree for Straton, in fact, it is present for sure only in Kleinias' decree on the payment of phoros («χσύμβολα δὲ π[ρο]ίεσα[σθαι] π[ρ]ὸς τὰς πόλεις, ἡ[ό]π[ρο]ς ἄ]μ με ἐχσ[ῆ]ι ἀδικῆν τοῖς ἀ[πά]γοσι τὸμ φ[ό]ρον», *IG* I³ 34, ll. 11-14). On the nature of symbola mentioned in the decree for Orontes (*IG* II² 207), scholarship has been divided between those who see them as tesserae hospitales (Parke 1935-1937, 372; Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 112 n. 5) and those who consider them as legal agreements (Gauthier 1972, 82 n. 4). The reason for the introduction of these tokens between Athens and Straton has been variously interpreted as a system to maintain the confidentiality of diplomatic communications between the two cities (Austin-Tod 1944, 100; Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 111-112) or as a sign of Athens' lack of trust towards the Sidonians (Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI*, 91).

As rightly noted by Culasso Gastaldi, the possibility of a future diplomatic contact is here expressed in two different ways: while in the case of an embassy sent from Athens the sending of 'someone' (τινά, l. 24) is generically mentioned, in that of Straton the need for a future intervention of the polis is made explicit. This aspect seems to denote a situation of necessity or urgency on behalf of Sidon, clearly connected with the occasion that led to the promulgation of the decree, namely the dispatch of an envoy from the Phoenician king (Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 111-112). In addition, within the same inscription, a promise of help had already been made by Athens in ll. 7-9. In this respect, the unusual structure of this psephisma, as discussed above, could be a trace of a request for support from Straton – and the consequent discussion in the Assembly – the result of a particular political contingency that only proper chronological placement of the decree can explain. The main proposal closes with the traditional invitation to lunch at Prytaneion of the Sidonian envoy for the following day (ll. 25-28; ξένια is generally used in relation to foreigners, δειπνον to citizens, Tod, *GHI* II, 118).

The final section of the inscription (ll. 29-36) preserves the amendment to the main motion proposed by Menexenos. This is presented as external to the honorific motives of the decree, so that the object of the Athenian decision is no longer Straton but those among the Sidonians – generally merchants – who visited Athens for business. The latter are exempted from the payment of *metoikion*, *choregia* and *eisphora*. The amendment, therefore, is the part of the document with the greatest economic significance.

The privileges listed above did not apply to all those who came from the Phoenician city, but only to the citizens (πολιτευόμενοι) permanently residing in Sidon – or, at least, those whom the Athenians could consider citizens according to their parameters (ἐς Σιδῶνι corresponds to ἐν Σιδῶνι by assimilation, cf. Vagionakis 2017, 175). This latter aspect involves the legal status of foreigners in Athens: the exemption from the payment of the *metoikion* appears to qualify the recipients of the privilege as metics since, as confirmed by Pollux, 'metic is the one who pays the *metoikion*' ('μέτοικος ὁ τὸ μετοίκιον συντελών', Poll. 3.55). The debate is currently open regarding the date when the legal status of metic and, possibly, *metoikion* were introduced: some scholars believe that they were established during the 460s (Bakewell 2013, 20), others prefer to link the introduction of *metoikia* with Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0 (Watson 2010, 271-272; cf. also Kasimis 2018, 5 n. 6): mentions of these terms prior to these years, therefore, should not be understood in a juridical sense (Whitehead 1977, 64 n. 44). The Hellenistic grammarian Aristophanes of Byzantium clarifies that the foreigner visiting the city –

called *παρεπίδημος* – up to a certain number of days (the precise duration is not specified, possibly one month according to Gauthier 1972, 122) was not obliged to pay any tax; if he stayed longer, however, he became a metic and had to pay the *metoikion* (Ar. Byz., fr. 304). This was an annual tax of 12 drachmas for men and 6 for independent women, the collection of which was contracted out to *telonai* (Harp. s. v. *μετοίκιον*; Hsch. s. v. *μετοίκιον*; Suid. s. v. *μετοίκιον*; Xen. Vect. 2.1-2; see also Clerc 1893, 15-22; Gauthier 1972, 118-126; Gauthier 1976, 57; Whitehead 1977, 7-10; 75-80; Migeotte 2014, 460-461; 507-508; Sosin 2016, 2-13). A problem arises here: the exemption is provided exclusively to Sidonians who have settled in Athens for a short period – since it is specified that they must be residents in Sidon – but, apparently, exceed the limit for payment of the tax. However, to the state of our knowledge, on the contrary to what has been claimed in the past (Francotte 1910, 213; Busolt 1920, 292-303), there was no legal distinction in Athens between short and long-term resident metics: a metic who resided permanently in Athens was juridically identical to one who transited through Athens on business for long periods of the year but still resided elsewhere (Gauthier 1972, 109; 117-118; Whitehead 1977, 7-10). The specifications in the amendment of Menexenos, however, seem to be an exception to this, since in practice they differentiated between permanent residents of Athens and Sidon. A possible solution to this problem has been identified by David Whitehead: the privilege granted to Sidonian merchants does not consist of a simple *ateleia*, but of «an exemption from metic-status qua fiscal category» (Whitehead 1977, 8; 102 n. 72; in this sense also Brun 1983, 7-8; Hansen 1991, 117). Following this reasoning, therefore, a Sidonian merchant who needs to establish himself in Athens for business during part of the year – i.e. for a period longer than the limit set for a non-metic *xenos* – can do so without being subject to the fiscal obligations of the metics and without having to register as such, although probably enjoying the legal advantages of the latter (an exemption from the payment of the *metoikion* is also found in *IG II² 545*, a decree of the end of the 4th century for Thessalian exiles; in this case it is probably valid until their return home).

In light of this, the other exemptions raise fewer problems. The *choregia* was a liturgy – thus restricted to wealthier individuals – consisting in the financing and organisation of the choir during Athenian theatrical competitions, even if this practice was not an Attic exclusive. The *choregos*, literally ‘choirmaster’, was originally selected by the eponymous archon at the time of his entry into service. Later – during the 4th century – his recruitment was entrusted to the phyle. The *choregia* is generally recognised as one of the most expensive liturgies, since the selected person had to recruit the members of the choir, who necessarily had to be compensated for lost working days; hire a professional *chorodidaskalos*, who would instruct the choir and organise the choreography; pay for stage costumes and rehearsal space. Of course, the great expenses incurred by the *choregoi* would have been rewarded by the honours bestowed on them by the Athenians, especially in the case of victory in one of the city’s theatrical competitions (for an introduction to the subject see Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 75-91; Wilson 2000, 11-103; Agelidis 2019, 59-73).

The chronological limits of *choregia*’s vitality are not clear: if before 490 it is already possible to see signs of it – although a higher date cannot be excluded – it is necessary to wait until 476 to know with certainty the name of a *choregos*, namely Themistocles with Phrynichus’ *Phoenissae* (Wilson 2000, 11-21). Secondly, the traditional assumption that *choregia* was abolished and replaced by the public magistracy of the *agonothetes* under the oligarchic rule of Demetrius of Phalerus (Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 91-92; Gehrke 1978, 171-173), has been challenged: according to the most recent interpretations, the replacement may have been promoted by the restored democracy of 307/6 (O’Sullivan 2009, 168-185; Csapo-Wilson 2010, 83-105) or the transition between the two may have been more gradual than previously thought (Faraguna 2011, 81; Ackermann-Sarrazanas 2020, 34-68). Actually, most *choregiai* were reserved for citizens, such as those for the *Dionysia*, the most important city festival. In fact, we know with certainty that metics could only serve as *choregoi* and chorus members in the *Lenaia*, as Lysias and his brother *Polemarchos* did (Lys. 12.20; cf. Schol. Ar. Pl. 953; Plut. *Phoc.* 30.3; it is not excluded, however, that metics could also be selected for other events, cf. Whitehead 1977, 82). This is the only case attested for sure, but the decree for *Straton* shows that the selection of metics as *choregoi* must have been a more widespread practice (on metics and *choregia* cf. Davies 1967, 34; Whitehead 1977, 80-82; Wilson 2000, 28-31).

The *eisphora*, the last of the burdens from which Sidonian merchants were exempted, was an extraordinary levy, usually imposed to cover war expenses. It too was reserved for the wealthiest, whether citizens or metics: their choice, at the time of the decree for *Straton*, was based on a self-assessment of movable and immovable wealth (*timema*; cf. Brun 1983, 8-23). It is not clear when this tax was introduced: in a famous passage, Thucydides states that for the first time in 428, during the Peloponnesian War, 200 talents were collected in Athens as *eisphora* («οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι [...] ἐσενεγκόντες τότε πρῶτον ἐσφορὰν διακόσια τάλαντα», Thuc. 3.19.1). Interpreting Thucydides’ words in an absolute sense, some have assumed that 428 is the date of the first exaction (Mattingly 1968, 451; Sealey 1984, 77-80; Kallet-Marx 1993, 134-136; Christ 2007, 54). This reading, on the contrary, is not accepted by those who believe that *eisphora* existed – perhaps in different forms – also in earlier periods of Athenian history (Thomsen 1964, 119-146; Brun 1983, 22-26; Van Wees 2013, 84-97; Migeotte 2014, 519). In any case, in 378/7 the modalities of *eisphora* collection were reformed: the taxpayers were divided into 100 fiscal groups – *symmoriai* – and the three richest individuals in each *symmoria* were required to

pay in advance a proeisphora for the whole group, subsequently having the money returned by the others (Dem. 42.25; 50.9; cf. Brun 1983, 28-31; Fawcett 2016, 157).

Like choregia, eisphorai affected both citizens and metics. Lysias, in fact, in the same passage in which he claims to have been selected as a choregos, complains that he was subjected to the exaction of eisphora many times (Lys. 12.20; for other attestations cf. *IG II²* 421; 554; 715). Following an uncertain Demosthenic passage, moreover, it is possible that the metics as a whole had to pay one sixth of the total amount of eisphorai (Dem. 22.61; *IG II²* 244, l. 20; cf. Thomsen 1964, 98-100; Whitehead 1977, 78-80; Brun 1983, 6-7). In the oration *Against Leptines*, Demosthenes himself claims that Athenian law forbade ateleia for eisphorai (Dem. 20.18; cf. Whitehead 1977, 78; Migeotte 2014, 458). Mirko Canevaro has considered precisely the amendment of Menexenos to demonstrate the falsity of the orator's claim (Canevaro 2016, 220). This stance, however, would no longer be necessary if one considers, as already mentioned, the exemption granted to the Sidonians not as an ateleia, but as a derogation from the metic-status and the fiscal obligations it implied. The Demosthenic statement, indeed, would constitute a confirmation of the accuracy of this interpretation.

However, beyond these legal issues, the general sense of the amendment of Menexenos is clear: in the context of a positive diplomatic meeting, such as the one with king Straton, it aimed at attracting Sidonian merchants to Athens through advantageous fiscal conditions. The sudden change of topic that occurs here could be attributed to the Athenian desire to seize this opportunity to bring economic benefits to the polis. As a confirmation of the lively commercial relations between the two cities, from the 4th century onwards there is a conspicuous presence in Attica of individuals from Sidon, as attested by the large number of funerary inscriptions, including bilingual ones (*IG II²* 10265a-10286; *CIS I* 115; 116; 119; cf. Osborne-Byrne 1996, 283-286, nos. 6648-6709). Moreover, a decree honouring the Sidonian Apollonides, son of Demetrios, for his support of the Athenian emporoi and naukleroi who travelled to the Phoenician city, is dated to the second half of the 4th century (*IG II²* 343). Finally, in the early Hellenistic period, a *κοινὸν τῶν Σιδωνίων* is active in Piraeus, known thanks to a bilingual inscription in honour of Šama'baal son of Magon, superintendent of the koinon and in charge of the management of a sanctuary of an unknown Sidonian deity (*IG II²* 2946 and *KAI* 60; cf. Vélissaropoulos 1980, 103; Ameling 1990, 189-199; Baslez-Briquel-Chatonnet 1991, 229-240; on dating see especially Lipiński 2004, 171-172). In general, since the 4th century, Sidon experienced a great commercial expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean, which left numerous archaeological and epigraphic evidence both in Athens and in other Greek sites in the Aegean (on which cf. Elayi 1988, 61-105; Manganaro 2000, 255-268; Lipiński 2004, 145-188; Demetriou 2012, 205-217). It is precisely this development, of which the decree for Straton is one of the earliest traces, that led Diodorus Siculus to assert that «Sidon was distinguished for its wealth and its private citizens had amassed great riches from its shipping» (Diod. 16.41.4; translation by C. L. Sherman).

As a whole, the decree in honour of Straton has many useful elements to clarify its chronological position. However, as becomes evident from the wide-ranging and tormented debate among scholars over the last decades, few of them are decisive and often the resulting information is contradictory at first sight. In this section, therefore, an attempt will be made to summarise the available data and to set the various dating proposals in order.

The simultaneous use of E and EI for εΙ and O and OY for ου, as in this text, is quite common in the first half of the 4th century and its presence does not allow for a date lower than 350 (Threatte, *Grammar I*, 177-184; 242-247).

The literary sources mentioning Straton, as noted above, establish a connection with the Cypriot ruler Nicocles of Salamis, the son of Evagoras. He ascended the throne in 374/3 (Diod. 15.47.8; cf. also Theopomp. *FGrHist* 115 F103; Arist. *Pol.* 5.1311b); the low end of his reign, however, is uncertain, but a passage in Isocrates' oration *On Antidosis* suggests that in 353 Nicocles must have already died (Isoc. 15.67). Moreover, Jerome's indication of betrayal towards the Persians and the alliance with the king of Egypt (Hieron. *Adv. Jov.* 1.45) has led to the assumption that Straton took part in the so-called Great Satraps' revolt against Artaxerxes II (see below). This fact – and the literary contemporaneity of Straton and Nicocles of Salamis – has been relied upon by most early commentators, who have dated the inscription to roughly between the late 370s and the 360s (Boeckh, *CIG*, 127; Hicks 1882, 155-157; Hicks-Hill 1901, 220-22; Fiehn 1931, 273).

The other two persons mentioned in the decree are the proposer Kephisodotos and Menexenos, author of the amendment. The former is generally recognised as Kephisodotos of Kerameikos (PA 8331 = PAA 567790), an orator of some importance between the late 370s and the middle of the century: in 371 he was a member of an embassy to Sparta (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.2) and in 369 he persuaded his fellow citizens to establish the principle of alternating leadership in the alliance between Athens and the Lacedaemonians (Xen. *Hell.* 7.1. 12-14); in 367 he was the proposer of a decree concerning relations with the Aetolian League (Tod, *GHI II* 137) and in the same years perhaps of an honorific decree towards the king of the Pelagones (*IG II²* 190; the proposal of restoring his name is in Culasso Gastaldi 2000, 71-72); in an Aristotelian passage, moreover, Kephisodotos is remembered for having urged the Athenians for an expedition to Euboea (358) and for the public accusations made against Chares for his conduct in the war of Olynthus in 349 (Arist. *Rh.* 3.1411a; cf. D.H. *Amm.* 8); finally,

in 355/4, he was a defender of the law of Leptines and, as such, attacked by Demosthenes, who nevertheless recognised his oratorical qualities (Dem. 20.146; 150). An influential figure, therefore, and with marked sensitivity to foreign policy and the imperialistic expansion of Athens, factors that accord well with the objectives of our decree. Menexenos, on the other hand, is more difficult to determine, given the large number of homonyms. It has been proposed, however, to identify him with the proposer of *IG II² 111* of 363/2 (PA 9972 = PAA 644845; cf. Hicks-Hill 1901, 222; Tod, *GHI* II, 117; Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 113).

The prosopographic elements provided so far would seem to point to a date around the 360s. Some aspects of the publication clause, however, complicate the picture. The pairing of the imperatives *ἀναγραφάτω* (l. 12-13) and *καταθέτω* (l. 15) is used sporadically, but covers a wider chronological span than that identified by Culasso Gastaldi, who limits it to the 370s (Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 108). In fact, it already has antecedents in the 5th century (*IG I³ 10*; *IG I³ 174*); moreover, it appears in only one case outside of a gap in a decree that can certainly be dated (*IG II² 43*, from 377). While it is true, therefore, that this pairing is not clearly used in dates lower than the 370s, the highly fragmentary and rarefied state of the documents means that its presence does not provide particularly solid evidence. A similar argument applies to the very lexical choice of the verb *κατατίθημι*, which sees a greater diffusion until around 370, when it is progressively replaced by *ἵστημι* (cf. Knoepfler 1986, 80-81). The former term, however, occasionally continues to be used in publication clauses in the following decades (*IG II² 188*; *IG II² 226*; *IG II² 571*). Although not decisively, therefore, these expressions see a more attested use before about 370.

On the contrary, there is the case of the invitation to the secretary of the boule to have the decree engraved within ten days (*δέκα ἡμερῶν*, l. 14). This formula is found in a limited group of inscriptions apparently close in time: the first one that can be dated with certainty dates back to 355/4 (*IG II² 130*) and the last one to 349/8 (*IG II² 206*), even if the presence of several inscriptions of uncertain dates can make these limits shift by a few years. Reginald P. Austin, in particular, has relied on the presence of this formula to date the decree to a year close to 360: according to the scholar, therefore, the decree would constitute evidence of Athens' involvement in the Satraps' revolt (Austin-Tod 1944, 98-100; cf. also Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 108 n. 9). As it has been pointed out, however, Straton could hardly have been of help to the above-mentioned Athenian embassy if he had already been revolting against the Great King at that time (Moyses 1975, 247).

There is no great issue with the use of the expression *ἐν ἀκροπόλει* (l. 15), which tends to replace *ἐν πόλει* from the year 386/5 onward, so it is not strange, therefore, to find it in our decree (on this see Dinsmoor 1932, 157-158; Henry 1982, 91-97). On the contrary, the reference to the already mentioned Ten Talent fund (l. 18) is more problematic: it appears in a handful of inscriptions (besides this one, *IG II² 43*; 84; 173; in *IG II² 22* it is completely restored) and only one of them can be dated with certainty (*IG II² 43*, from 377). As already said, on some occasions the fund is associated with the treasurers of the goddess Athena; Johnson first and Dinsmoor later, believing that this body was active between 385/4 and 377/6, argued that so was the Ten Talent fund, thus dating the decree for Straton to the years around 378/7 (Johnson 1914, 423; Dinsmoor 1932, 158-159 and n. 5). This hypothesis has been quite successful in later years, and it has often been adopted by scholars (Knoepfler 1995, 329-330; Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI*, 89-90; Vagionakis 2017, 174-175). They have linked the decree to the activities of Iphicrates in Phoenicia during the first half of the 370s, in preparation for the Persian campaign against Egypt (Diod. 15.29.3-4; 15.41) and the mentioned embassy – not attested by the sources – to the attempt to reassure the Great King after the creation of the Second Athenian League (Rhodes-Osborne, *GHI*, 90; Vagionakis 2017, 174). However, the dates proposed by Johnson and Dinsmoor for the treasurers of Athena and the Ten Talent fund have been challenged by Alan Henry, following a careful investigation of the sources, which led the scholar to lower the period of activity of the treasurers to around 364 and to reject the chronological limits of the fund outlined above (Henry 1982, 91-118 and especially 110-111). Moreover, if we accept the hypothesis of considering the Ten Talents and the *ἐκ τῶν κατὰ ψηφίσματα ἀναλισκομένων τῶν δήμων* as a single fund (see above), the strength of the former formulation as a dating element would be considerably reduced. Beyond this specific issue, however, it seems that the election of these formulae as a strict chronological parameter may generate the risk of a vicious circularity: they, in fact, come from inscriptions that are themselves difficult to date; nevertheless, the presence of these same formulae has often been used to demonstrate the belonging of a given inscription to a certain historical period. In the case of the honorific decree for Straton, given the contradictory information that these formulae provide, it is difficult to rely on them as a conclusive dating element.

In recent years, the support offered by Greek literary sources on the period of Straton's reign has been augmented by data from Phoenician numismatics: a careful study by Josette Elayi of the Sidonian coin corpus has led to a more precise definition of the years of the king's reign. In fact, the predecessor of Straton/Abdashtart I, Baalshillem II, began to date his monetary issues by the year of his reign, beginning with the thirtieth. This innovation was continued by all his successors – including Straton/Abdashtart I – until, in early 332, Alexander entered Sidon and overthrew the last king of the dynasty, Abdashtart II, replacing him with Abdalonymus (Arr. *An.* 2.15.6; cf. Bosworth 1988, 232). Thus, by proceeding backwards from this event and

adding up the years of the reign of the various known rulers, it is possible to obtain an absolute chronology of the Sidonian kings. Using this method, Elayi has established that the 14 years of Straton's reign were between 365 and 352 (she admits the possibility of a margin of error of one and a half years in this dating; Elayi-Elayi 2004, 635-637; 650-667; Elayi 2006, 11-43). Until this dating, it had always been assumed that the Sidonian ruler died when the Satraps' revolt failed. This event, which Diodorus condenses to only 362/1, had in fact a stratified and complex development, the intensity and extent of which have been the subject of much debate that does not need to be discussed here (Diod. 15.90-93; for a brief survey of the literature and historiographic interpretations see Styliou 1998, 522-548). Indeed, both Theopompus and Anaximenes, the authors closest to the events who cite Straton, mention only a generic violent death and cite neither the manner nor the chronology of the fact; the same, as we have seen, occurs with Aelianus and Maximus of Tyre, although the latter describes an end in poverty. The first – and only – account that relates Straton's death to the Persians is the late Jerome: to explain this aporia, Elayi proposes that it could refer to a settling of accounts by the Achaemenid garrison imposed on Sidon after the failure of the uprising (Elayi 2005, 142-143). It is also possible, however, that Jerome, more interested in showing the degenerate moral portrait of the Phoenician ruler than in historical accuracy, combined into a single episode the repression of the revolt – evidently derived from a source that has not survived – and the violent death mentioned by the other authors.

If the dates proposed by Elayi are correct, the decree should therefore be dated to the years between 365 and 359 (Elayi 2005, 103; also Migeotte 2014, 460-461; more cautious Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 115-123, who generically dates it to the 360s). While the high term is Straton's accession to the throne, the low one is the probable joining of Sidon to the Satraps' revolt, in relation to the extension of the insurrection of the Egyptian king Tachos (Elayi 2005, 125-138; on Sidon's participation to the uprising see also Cawkwell 1963, 137-138; Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 118-119). Following this, it should also be excluded the year 367, proposed by Tod: he saw in the Athenian embassy the one directed towards Artaxerxes II for the renewal of the common peace (Tod, *GHI* II, 118-119; Xen. *Hell.* 7.1. 33-38). In fact, Straton was not on the throne at the time and, as it has been argued, the outcome of the negotiations in Susa was a disaster for the Attic polis, which would hardly have remembered that moment in an honorific decree (Moysey 1976, 182). The embassy, as Robert Moysey has suggested, could have been held in 364 – at the time of the Athenian claim to Amphipolis and Chersonesus – which would have passed through Sidon because of Ariobarzanes' insurrection in Asia Minor (Moysey 1976, 184-185; see also Engen 2010, 321-322). The absence of certain information, however, obliges caution, also in light of the fact that it is possible that the honorific decree was voted a few years after the embassy (cf. Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 117).

Recently, Angelos Matthaïou has claimed to have recognised the hand of 'the Cutter of *IG* II² 17' in the stonecutter of this inscription (on which see Tracy 2016, 149-180). The activity of this figure has very high dates compared to the various proposed dates of the Straton decree (414/3-386/5). Matthaïou, without providing technical indications of this recognition, has therefore proposed a dating of around 386/5 (Matthaïou 2016, 113-119; also accepted in de Lisle 2020, 9-19). This hypothesis, however, is not based on any other support within the text and contradicts all historical-literary, prosopographic and numismatic considerations provided so far that would suggest a lower date. Therefore, it seems more cautious to reject it.

Ultimately, the information discussed above points to placing the decree in the second half of the 360s. A more general analysis of the text would seem to confirm such a dating: the request for support from Straton and the promise of future help that the Athenians grant can be reconciled with a situation shortly before the defection of the Phoenician city from Persia. On the contrary, those would clash with the explicit statement of the decree of Aristoteles that excludes from the Second Athenian League of 378/7 the states subjected to the Great King (*IG* II² 43, II. 15-19): even if the relationship with Sidon can hardly be considered a traditional *symmachia*, if a dating to those years were accepted, this would be rather politically contradictory behaviour on behalf of Athens. The Attic polis, on the other hand, in the years following the foundation of the League tended to expand its intervention in the Levant area and in Asia Minor as an anti-Persian policy: if between 380/79 and 373 Iphicrates was sent alongside the satrap Pharnabazus to gain the King's favour by fighting against the rebel Egypt (Diod. 15.29.4; 41-43; on dates cf. Styliou 1998, 261; 337), in the following years the Athenians began to cautiously support the initiatives of contestation to the Persian power. In 366, in fact, Timotheus was officially sent to support the rebel satrap Ariobarzanes, with the mandate not to break the peace with the King in order to avoid Artaxerxes' possible remonstrances (Dem. 15.9); subsequently, Chabrias was in Egypt in the service of king Tachos (Diod. 15.92.3). The Athenian general was acting in a private capacity, but the polis support for the Egyptian cause seems to be confirmed by the decree honouring Tachos' envoys, possibly dated 360/59 (*IG* II² 119; cf. Alessandri 1982, 58). In 355, moreover, Chares was dispatched to Artabazos in support of a further revolt against the Persians, until his withdrawal following the latter's complaints (Diod. 16.22). Finally, despite the persistent uncertainty in scholarship about the dating of the decree honouring Orontes (for a survey of the various theories cf. Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 112 n. 24), leader and then traitor of the Satraps' revolt, a comparison with our inscription is worthwhile, also because of the mysterious symbola cited in it (see above).

The decree in honour of Straton, therefore, seems to fit into this context, in which Athens supported the threats to the Persian Empire from the outside, while at the same time being careful not to expose itself excessively and to avoid an open conflict with the Great King (cf. Culasso Gastaldi 2004, 120-121). The seemingly reticent wording with which aid is promised to Straton, the scarcity of honorific concessions and the unusual use of the instrument of symbola may perhaps be explained by this ambivalent and opportunistic attitude of the Athenians. Finally, the simultaneous granting of tax exemptions to the Sidonian merchants could be explained as an attempt to guard against Epaminondas' maritime activities in those years, which could have threatened Athenian imports (Diod. 15.79.1-2; Isoc. 5.53; Plut. *Phil.* 2; cf. Engen 2010, 321).

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