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## Documents, Public Information and the Historian: Perspectives on Fifth-Century Athens

1. Following the past decades when scholars, applying different approaches and interpretative paradigms, have attempted to come to terms with the emergence and impact of literacy and literate culture in Greek society, and, in particular, with the many and multifaceted ways orality and literacy (or, perhaps better said, «literacies»<sup>1</sup>) interacted in the different political, cultural and religious contexts, the status and meaning of «documents», as written texts providing information or serving as records, still remains difficult to pin down<sup>2</sup>. Recent investigations have no doubt focused on the «epigraphic habit» and examined the somewhat anomalous case of classical Athens, both in its fluctuations over the course of time<sup>3</sup> and with a comparative approach so as to highlight, and account for, the differences with respect to other epigraphically productive centres<sup>4</sup>. However, the question why inscriptions were produced at all, whether with functional value to make information available to the public or with symbolic and ideological significance as statements of piety, power or political transparency, still remains highly

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas 2009a; 2009b, 356-358; Baird - Taylor 2011, esp. 9-11; Taylor 2011.

<sup>2</sup> On the concept of «document» and the use of documents in ancient literary sources cf. Davies 2007; for the methodological problems posed by «literary epigraphy» see also the Editors' *Introduction* and the essays included in Part I of Liddel - Low 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Hedrick 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Liddel 2009, 2010; Osborne 2009.

controversial<sup>5</sup>.

The possibility to provide an answer to this intriguing question revolves around another equally important issue, i.e. the role played by documents on perishable material – wooden tablets and papyrus in the first place – as a means for both temporary display and archival safekeeping and their relationship in terms of quantity and quality to the inscribed monuments. The question is, in other words, whether the inscriptions *were* the actual documents or, to the contrary, their meaning must be investigated against the background of a much larger body of texts written on diverse materials, publication of which on stone was generally selective.

That the second case applied to fourth-century Athens is widely accepted. In the *Constitution of the Athenians*, to quote an example, at 54, 3 Aristotle states that «they appoint by lot the secretary called the prytany secretary (γραμματέα κατὰ πρυτανείαν καλούμενον); he is in charge of documents, keeps the texts of decrees that are enacted, checks all other records and attends meetings of the council» (ὄς τῶν γραμμάτων ἐστὶ κύριος καὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα τὰ γιγνόμενα φυλάττει, καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα ἀντιγράφεται καὶ παρακάθεται τῇ βουλῇ), while at 54, 5 he refers to another secretary whose task was to read out documents to the assembly and the council, and, significantly enough, «had no other responsibility than reading» (χειροτονεῖ δὲ καὶ ὁ δῆμος γραμματέα τὸν ἀναγνώσόμενον αὐτῷ καὶ τῇ βουλῇ, καὶ οὗτος οὐδενός ἐστι κύριος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀναγνῶναι)<sup>6</sup>. It can consequently be assumed that, after the Metroon was established as the repository of records of the

<sup>5</sup> For the question why inscriptions were produced and preserved in large numbers in classical Athens see Harris 1994; Scott 2011; Meyer 2013, reviewing earlier literature.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of public secretaries at Athens cf. Rhodes 1972, 134-140; Henry 2002, 91-94. Ismard 2015, 167-202, holds the view that the classical *polis*, and especially democratic Athens, was, in the Aristotelian definition (*Pol.* 1276b 1-2), a «community (*koinonia*) of citizens» with an egalitarian ethos because all administrative functions involving some form of technical expertise were attributed to public slaves, who thus embodied the «bureaucratic» side of the Greek city, while removing it from the political sphere (172: «Or, en confiant à des esclaves pareilles tâches, indispensables mais soigneusement tenues en dehors du champ du politique, les Athéniens visaient à dissimuler, en la projetant dans une figure d'alterité absolue, la part bureaucratique ou administrative inhérente au fonctionnement du régime démocratique»). Ismard's argument, brilliant though it is, is contradicted by the evidence and does not carry conviction. For secretaries in fifth-century Athens, all unquestionably citizens, see below. Cf. the critical reviews of Ismard's book by A. Maffi, «Dike» 17 (2014), 191-194; Chr. Pébarthe, «REA» 117 (2015), 241-247; D. Lewis, «CR» 66 (2016), 476-478; G. Marginesu, «BMCR» 2016.01.06.

council and the assembly at the end of the fifth century<sup>7</sup>, documents were organised in the archive probably by year and prytany and could be retrieved when needed<sup>8</sup>, and even those scholars who have taken a minimalist view about ancient literate practices generally concede that by the middle of the fourth century Athens had developed some form of «document-mindedness» (though, according to R. Thomas, not of «archive-mindedness»)<sup>9</sup>.

In this paper it is my objective to explore these issues by extending the analysis back to the fifth century, for which the literary evidence is on the whole more limited, lacking – some may argue, in a telling manner – the speeches of the orators and «constitutional» treatises comparable to the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians*.

2. In the past, following the influential arguments of U. Kahrstedt, it was commonly believed that there was no public archive at Athens before 403/2 BC and that documents «were written on wood, stone or were not written at all»<sup>10</sup>. My first task is therefore to show that we do happen to have some archival texts that were kept in the Bouleuterion before the Metroon was established. I will leave aside the question of the documents included in Andocides' *On the Mysteries*, in particular the decrees of Patrokleides and Demophantos (respectively Andoc. I 77-79 and 96-98), whose authenticity has recently been questioned and rejected by M. Canevaro and E.M. Harris<sup>11</sup>, and will focus instead on the document included as an appendix in the

<sup>7</sup> Coqueugniot 2013, 13-17.

<sup>8</sup> Sickinger 1999, 139-159; Boffo 2003, 20-22, 35-36; cf. also Boffo 2012. West 1989 remains essential reading.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas 1989, 34-94, esp. 68-72 (72: «It is one thing to produce written decrees, put them up on stone and (probably) deposit the original in the archive; quite another to refer systematically to archive copies once their immediate relevance has passed. This awareness is an expression of an increasing importance of the written word, its recognition as proof alongside the older oral methods, and thus of the usefulness of its preservation»); 1992, 96-97. Cf. also Hornblower 1996, 357.

<sup>10</sup> Kahrstedt 1938, 25-32 (esp. 31: «Es gab also vor 403/2 kein Staatsarchiv in Athen, vorher hat der Staat auf Holz, Stein oder gar nicht geschrieben»). Cf. Thomas 1989, 73-78, maintaining that «documents in some form were put in the council house before the Metroon was formally established as an archive» but that the Bouleuterion did not house an «archive» but an incoherent, asystematic and haphazard accumulation of different kinds of records on different media; *contra* see, however, Sickinger 1994, with important qualifications.

<sup>11</sup> Canevaro - Harris 2012, with the replies by Sommerstein 2014 and Hansen 2015. For the decree of Demophantos see also the counterarguments in Harris 2014. Cf. also Joyce 2014, 39-40. On the correct methodology to approach «suspicious» documents as

*Life of Antiphon* in the *Lives of the Ten Orators* in Plutarch's *Moralia* (833-834b)<sup>12</sup>. This text is of great interest as it concerns the *eisangelia* brought against Archeptolemos, Onomakles and Antiphon in 411/0 BC after the overthrow of the Four Hundred, during the regime of the Five Thousand (833a: μετὰ δὲ τὴν κατάλυσιν τῶν τετρακοσίων εἰσαγγεληθεῖς σὺν Ἀρχεπτολέμῳ, ἐνὶ τῶν τετρακοσίων, ἐάλω, καὶ τοῖς περὶ προδοτῶν ἐπιτιμίῳις ὑπαχθεῖς ἄταφος ἐρρίφη καὶ σὺν τοῖς ἐκγόνοις ἄτιμος ἐνεγράφη; cf. 833d: ἐπαινεῖται δ' αὐτοῦ μάλιστα ὁ περὶ Ἡρώδου, καὶ ὁ πρὸς Ἑρασίστρατον περὶ τῶν ταῶν καὶ ὁ περὶ τῆς εἰσαγγελίας, ὃν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ γέγραφε, where εἰσαγγελίας is Xilander's conjecture for the MS αγγελίας)<sup>13</sup>. It actually consists – as a sort of dossier – of two closely related documents, the decree of the council (ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ) referring the three ambassadors to Sparta to a *dikasterion* for trial on a charge of treason and providing for their arrest, and, appended to it, the verdict against Antiphon and Archeptolemos (Onomakles had probably escaped<sup>14</sup>) enjoining, alongside execution by the Eleven, confiscation of property, the razing of the house, denial of burial in Attica and in territory controlled by Athens, and, finally, hereditary *atimia* for both the convicted's families. The verdict was to be inscribed on a bronze stele and set up in the same place as the decrees concerning Phrynichos (<καὶ> ἥπερ ἀν<α>κειτ<αι> τὰ ψηφίσματα τὰ περὶ Φρυνίχου, καὶ τοῦτο θέσθαι).

The decree, as I have shown elsewhere, is in all likelihood authentic<sup>15</sup>, and we even happen to know that its tradition ultimately went back via Caecilius of Kale Akte to Krateros' collection of Athenian decrees (Συναγωγὴ ψηφισμάτων; Harpocr. s.v. Ἄνδρων; [Plut.] *Mor.* 833d-e). An *eisangelia* to the council and its preliminary judgment are fully plausible since the three ambassadors were acting on an official mission<sup>16</sup>, while the prescript of the decree, though revealing some anomalous features, can be explained on the assumption that, during the time the Five Thousand were in power, there were some deviations from democratic practice and procedure<sup>17</sup> and that the

transmitted by later authors or inscriptions see Chaniotis 2015.

<sup>12</sup> For a recent commentary see Erdas 2002, 103-112 (frg. 5); Roisman - Worthington 2015, 91-102.

<sup>13</sup> Hansen 1975, 113-115 (nos. 135-137); Ostwald 1986, 527 (no. 7).

<sup>14</sup> *PA* 748215; Ostwald 1986, 461.

<sup>15</sup> Faraguna 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Hansen 1975, 27. For a partly different view see Ferguson 1932, 349-354, who believed that «the Council was empowered extraordinarily to dispense with the concurrence of the *demos* in this particular case».

<sup>17</sup> Rhodes 1972, 29 n. 7; Gomme – Andrewes - Dover 1981, 197-198.

document was in actual fact copied not from the bronze stele but from the archival record<sup>18</sup>. In particular, while it can be surmised that «failure to specify the prytany by name or number may well be due to careless transmission of the text», the prytany date, which is otherwise attested only from the 360s (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 105+523 = RO 34 [368/7 BC]; 109 [363/2 BC])<sup>19</sup>, is not totally without parallel in the last quarter of the fifth century after the publication of the honorary decree for Polypeithes of Siphnos, enacted in 422/1 (under the archonship of Alkaios) upon the motion of Alkibiades, which is dated to the nineteenth day of the prytany of the tribe Akamantis (*SEG L* 45, ll. 4-6; cf. *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 227bis). The lettering of the stele reveals that the decree was inscribed some twenty years after it was voted. Since the last two lines of the publication clause of another enactment are preserved on the stone above Alkibiades' decree, it can be surmised that some time after the restoration of the democracy the first decree ordered the republication of the earlier one proposed by Alkibiades and that the unusual prescript of the latter originated from the fuller prescript of the copy kept on file in the archive<sup>20</sup>.

Likewise, we owe to Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades* the verbatim quotation of the indictment for the *eisangelia* lodged before the council by Thesalos son of Kimon of Lakiadai against Alkibiades for the profanation of the Mysteries in 415 BC (22, 4-5)<sup>21</sup>. It details the circumstances under which the offence had been committed referring to the persons involved and their precise role in the events. Again, the verdict of the *ekklesia* sentencing Alkibiades to death *in absentia* and ordering that his property be confiscated and Alkibiades be cursed by all priests and priestesses is appended (ἐρήμην δ' αὐτοῦ καταγόντες καὶ τὰ χρήματα δημεύσαντες, ἔτι καὶ καταρᾶσθαι προσεψηφίσαντο πάντας ἱερεῖς καὶ ἱερείας; cf. 19,2-3)<sup>22</sup>. Scholars generally agree that Plutarch must have found the text in a documentary source<sup>23</sup> and in all probability this can be again identified with Krateros' collection of Athenian decrees. In his biographies, Plutarch himself refers to this work more than once (*Cim.* 13, 5; *Arist.* 26, 1-4) and in the *Life of Aristides* he

<sup>18</sup> For Krateros obtaining some of his documents «from stelae and others from various Athenian archives» cf. Higbie 1999, 46-54.

<sup>19</sup> Henry 1977, 27 with n. 31; Sickinger 1999, 152-153.

<sup>20</sup> Sickinger 1999, 88-90, 225-226 n. 136. For a similar case cf. Matthaiou 2010, redating *Agora XVI* 50, a treaty between Siphnos and Athens, where again the date of the prytany is indicated (ll. 2-3), «a little later than 410/09».

<sup>21</sup> Hansen 1975, 76-77 (no. 12); Ostwald 1986, 526-527 (no. 6).

<sup>22</sup> See also Thuc. VI 61, 7: οἱ δ' Ἀθηναῖοι ἐρήμη δίκη θάνατον κατέγνωσαν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν μετ' ἐκείνου, on which see Hornblower 2008, 457.

<sup>23</sup> Stadter 1989, LXIX-LXXI with n. 102; Pelling 2000, 27.

significantly refutes Krateros' version of the facts leading to Aristides' death in Ionia stressing that he had provided no documentary proof for his version, in particular *neither a court judgment nor a decree* (οὔτε δίκην οὔτε ψήφισμα), «although he customarily and properly records such things and sets forth his written sources» (καίπερ εἰωθῶς ἐπιεικῶς γράφειν τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ παρατίθεσθαι τοὺς ἱστοροῦντας) (Arist. 26, 2). Krateros' work, in other words, not only compiled the text of decrees but also *dikai*, «court judgments», and, while records of trials, as we have seen, could occasionally be inscribed as exemplary memorials (as in the case of Phrynichos and Antiphon), indictments were, as a rule, stored in the archive of the magistrate who was responsible for the charge and, in the case of an *eisangelia*, in the archive of the council and of the assembly, where Krateros probably consulted it<sup>24</sup>.

It needs to be underlined that both the documents concerning Antiphon's trial and the complaint for the *eisangelia* against Alkibiades for impiety go back to before the last decade of the fifth century when the Metroon was established, possibly in connection with the revision of the laws<sup>25</sup>, and that they were kept long enough to be consulted more than a century later by Krateros. In addition, in his speech *On His Return*, delivered after 410, Andokides asked the secretary to read a decree proposed by Menippos granting him immunity after he had turned informant in 415 BC that «was still among the records ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ, in the council house» (ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν ἐγγέγραπται ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ) (II 22-23). Once more, the decree had clearly been kept on file in the archive of the council and the assembly for several years<sup>26</sup>, notwithstanding the fact that, between 415 and the date of the speech, the democracy had been overthrown and replaced by two successive oligarchic regimes. As in this case, the trial of Antiphon, Archeptolemos and Onomakles was also held before the democracy was restored and, together with the decree of Pythodoros and the constitutions «for the present» and «for the future» inserted in Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 29, 2-3 and 30-31<sup>27</sup>, it testifies to the survival in the public archives of documents stemming from this troubled period of Athenian history.

<sup>24</sup> Harris 2013, with the observations by Faraguna 2013, 168-169.

<sup>25</sup> Boegehold 1972; Sickinger 1999, 105-113; Shear 2011, 116-118.

<sup>26</sup> On the verb ἐγγράφω as always referring to «information recorded or registered on documents that were stored away and not set out in public» see Sickinger 1999, 82; Canevaro - Harris 2012, 103. Cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 42, 1; 49, 2; Lys. XXX 2 and 5; Dem. XXXVII 22; XLIV 41; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 344, l. 61. *Contra* Wilhelm 1909, 236-237.

<sup>27</sup> On these documents and on the problems connected to their tradition cf. Wilcken 1935; Gomme - Andrewes - Dover 1981, 242-251; Rhodes 1981, 364-367, 387-404; Ruzé 1993; Heftner 2001, 177-210.

3. This brings us to the next point to be considered. I have so far mentioned records that were stored in archives and texts inscribed on stone or, sometimes on bronze, for permanent display, but what was the relationship between these different types of documents? Until recently it would have hardly been necessary to pose this question because it was widely accepted that publication on stone was selective both in content – as inscribed documents often were published in an abbreviated form – and from a quantitative point of view, because, for different reasons, only a limited number of documents was deemed worth inscribing<sup>28</sup>. This has, however, been recently challenged by M.J. Osborne, who maintains to the contrary that «inscribed *stelai* were the official texts approved by the secretary and there is no reason to envisage that they were different from those filed in the archives» and also that «all decrees were in practice inscribed on public *stelai*»<sup>29</sup>. I will not go into the question whether inscribed texts were shorter, abridged versions of the archival documents. M.J. Osborne bases his argument mostly on the evidence of some very long Hellenistic decrees but, as far as the fifth century is concerned, R. Osborne has convincingly shown that the organization of the text of some decrees inscribed on *stelai* becomes virtually incoherent and «illogical» unless we posit some degree of editing and abbreviation before publication in monumental form<sup>30</sup>.

As for the argument that all decrees were permanently inscribed on stone, which is *a priori* unconvincing with regard to the overwhelming predominance of honorary decrees for foreigners<sup>31</sup>, even some of the proxeny

<sup>28</sup> Wilhelm 1909, esp. 249-250, 271-280; Klaffenbach 1960, 1-20, 26-36; cf. Sickinger 1999, 62-92, 155; Rhodes - Lewis 1997, 3-4; Rhodes 2001, 37-41; Davies 2003, 328.

<sup>29</sup> Osborne 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Osborne 1999, 341-346. A case in point is represented by *IG I<sup>3</sup> 35*, the decree on the priestess and the temple of Athena Nike, for a new study of which cf. Blok 2014. At p. 115 Blok notes that «the logical coherence of this decree is also difficult to see: the proposal first concerns the creation and selection of a priestess, next doors for the sanctuary with the necessary design and costs. Then it returns to the priestess, namely her perquisites, and next again to the sanctuary, its new temple and a new altar». Blok explains the lack of coherence in the provisions of the decree by suggesting that a «pre-35» decree introducing new sacrifices in honour of Athena Nike was inscribed above it on another stone joined with dowels to the one that has been preserved. For the dating of the decree see also Tracy 2016, 94-96.

<sup>31</sup> For a critique of Osborne's views see Lambert 2016. For the fifth century cf. also Sickinger 2007, 199-200, underlining «[t]he absence of laws and decrees related to the inner workings of the democracy from the monumental record of the fifth century». For

decrees quoted by M.J. Osborne, such as *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 110 and 126, where a distinction is made between registration as *proxenos* and publication of the decree awarding the honours on a stele, clearly show that publication of the document on stone required a special order from the assembly and the grant of the use of a specific place for the stele, thus being not an automatic, but rather an additional honour «over and above the particular package of honours this status conveyed»<sup>32</sup>. In particular, as recently observed by W. Mack in his study of proxeny, the selective character of the publication of proxeny decrees is most strikingly revealed by comparison with inscriptions recording lists and catalogues of *proxenoi*, which show how complex networks of *proxenoi* of prima facie minor Greek cities could be also during the classical period<sup>33</sup>.

Clearly, not all proxeny decrees, and let alone all other types of documents, were recorded in monumental form on stone (or other durable media), and this leads us to the question in what way and by what methods public information of a political and administrative nature was disseminated and made accessible to the public. We must, first of all, remember that the Acropolis, where most *stelai* were erected in the fifth century<sup>34</sup>, was not a place Athenians would visit on a daily basis, so that epigraphic monuments often happened to be removed from people's every day experience. The role played by (whitened) wooden tablets or boards in providing public notice should therefore not be underestimated. Some fifth-century proxeny decrees, for instance, order publication of the honours both on a *stèle* ἐμ πόλει, on the Acropolis, and in the Bouleuterion. This is for instance the case of a proxeny decree for Delphians, now dated to the 420s (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 27)<sup>35</sup>, where the order to record the honorands as *proxenoi* and benefactors ἐμ πόλε[ι ἐστέλει καὶ ἐν] τῷ βουλευτε[ρίῳ] must imply that the second copy was not intended to be written on durable material. Likewise, in *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 155, a roughly contemporary proxeny decree, some unknown honorands are to be registered as *proxenoi* and benefactors both on a stele to be set up on the Acropolis and on a wooden tablet (ἐξ σανίδα) in the Bouleuterion at their own expense (ll. 5-9; cf. also *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 56).

an early intriguing, albeit fragmentary decree mentioning the *πρυτανεῖον* and *εὔθυνα* see now Kavvadias - Matthaïou 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Mack 2015, 13-17.

<sup>33</sup> For the case of Karthaia on Keos shortly after 363/2 BC, where more than 86 *proxenoi* are listed, cf. Mack 2011; 2015, 182-188, 320-323.

<sup>34</sup> Liddel 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Mattingly 2007, 107-108, comparing it with *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 155 (see below; cf. *SEG* LVII 56/57); Papazarkadas 2009, 84 n. 73. See also Rhodes 2008, 501.



Taken literally, these decrees would appear to refer to the recording of the honorands in lists of *proxenoi* and *euergetai* but, since the preserved decrees must correspond to the inscriptions set up on the Acropolis, it may be inferred that the *sanis* that was to go to the Bouleuterion similarly contained a copy of the honorific award of the assembly. This is in fact what we find in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 165* (with *addenda* at p. 951), where the publication clause is slightly different and provides for double registration of the decree (ll. 5-6: τὸ δὲ φσ]έφισμα τ[όδε ἀναγρ]αφσά[το ho γραμματεὺς ho τ]ῆς βολῆς) both on a stone stele and on a wooden tablet (ἐν [σανιδί]οι) that were to be placed respectively on the Acropolis and in the Bouleuterion, in the latter case «where the other *psephismata* are» (ἵνα περ τὰ ἄλλ[α φσεφίσμα]τα).

This provision raises several issues concerning the function of the wooden tablet. The verb κατατίθημι (καταθέτω) recurs in the publication clauses of decrees with respect to the location where the written document was to be placed (*IG I<sup>3</sup>, Index*, s.v. κατατίθημι, p. 1102) and could in some cases be applied to wooden tablets (cf. *IG I<sup>3</sup> 133*, ll. 9-11; 78 [= ML 73], ll. 26-30). Since the literal meaning of the verb is «deposit», one possible explanation of the clause is that the text of the decree was to be «deposited», «stored» in the archive<sup>36</sup>.

Should this be correct, the information we gain would be of great value because, despite the prevailing opinion that archival copies kept in the Metroon were written on papyrus<sup>37</sup>, there is in fact very little evidence to this effect and, as far as I am aware, it consists of only one document, the honorary decree for the Samian Poses, where the secretary of the council is ordered to hand over to him the *biblion*, a copy clearly written on papyrus, of the enactment (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 1* [= RO 2], ll. 62-63: τὸ δὲ βιβλίον [τὸ ψηφίσματος παραδῶναι αὐτ]ῶι τὸν γραμματέα τῆς βολῆς αὐτίκα μάλα; cf. *Ar. Av.* 1024, 1035-1039, 1286-1289; *IG I<sup>3</sup> 476*, ll. 288-292; 477, ll. 1-2)<sup>38</sup>. Since we know that wooden tablets were also used for safekeeping of archival records<sup>39</sup>, the possibility that *IG I<sup>3</sup> 165* alluded to the deposit of the decree in the archive should not be automatically ruled out. I am nonetheless inclined

<sup>36</sup> Lalonde 1971, 29-31.

<sup>37</sup> Del Corso 2002, 171-180, esp. 174 n. 53 with earlier bibliography; Boffo 2012, 24 and n. 6. For the parallel of Hellenistic Delos see now Chankowski 2013.

<sup>38</sup> For a fifth-century writing set, «the oldest known example of Greek writing on papyrus and wooden tablets», cf. Pöhlmann - West 2012. I guess that when, in *Thuc.* III 49, 4, Paches read to the Mytileneans the first decree approved by the Athenian *demos*, he was doing so from a copy of the document written on papyrus.

<sup>39</sup> Klaffenbach 1960, 17-22; Fischer 2003; Faraguna 2015, 2.

to believe that the tablets were after all meant to be posted for public display, possibly in the vestibule of the (Old) Bouleuterion, both because in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 155* the cost of publication was to be borne by the honorands and, secondly, because in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 133*, concerning a shipping tax (ἐπιβατικόν) collected for the cult of the Anakes<sup>40</sup>, the verb καταθεῖναι is associated to the well-known democratic formula σκοπεῖν τῷ βουλομένῳ, «for anyone who wishes to see», which, as first recognised by Wilhelm, invariably referred to public display on wooden boards<sup>41</sup>. According to an anecdote told by Plutarch in the *Life of Pericles*, the Athenian Megarian decree was recorded on a *pinakion* (30, 1). In the administration of the Athenian empire, *sanides* and *pinakia* were furthermore used, among other things, to display lists recording the allies who had paid the *phoros* and those who were in arrears (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 34* [= *ML 46*], ll. 43-46: τὸς δὲ [ἡλλεν]οτ[αμίας ἀναγράφσαντες ἐ]ς πινάκιον λελ[ευκομέν]ον ἀποφαίνειν καὶ τὴν τάχσιν τῷ φόρῳ καὶ [τὰς πόλεις ἡόσαι ἂν ἀποδοῖσιν ἐντελεῖ κα]ὶ ἀπογ[ράφεν.....]; 68 [= *ML 68*], ll. 18-20: ἀναγ[ραφόντων δὲ οἱ ἐλλ]ενοτα[μ]ίαι ἐς σανίδα [τὰς πόλεις τὰς ἐλλεπό]σας τῷ φό[ρ]ῳ καὶ τῶν ἀπαγόντ[ων.....κα]ὶ τιθέναι ἡεκάστοτε πρόσθε[ν.....]). In the Standards Decree the *epistatai* of the mint are ordered to display in front of the ἀργυροκοπεῖον wooden tablets recording the amounts of foreign currency turned in by the allies for conversion into Athenian owls (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 1453*, § 12) «for anyone who wishes to see».

All these inscriptions are unfortunately fragmentary and heavily restored but the sense of what was contained in the lost parts of the texts can be made out with sufficient confidence because they integrate to some extent one another. After the final settlement of the three-bar sigma controversy, they are now all to be dated to the 420s during the Archidamian war<sup>42</sup>, but it can be assumed that such administrative practices were not introduced then for the first time<sup>43</sup>. As shown by B. Paarmann, the process of receiving the tribute and deducting the *aparache* to be dedicated to Athena consisted of a sequence of steps each involving written records drawn by the *Hellenotamiai* and the Treasurers of Athena on wax and wooden tablets and, though again in a selective manner, on stone<sup>44</sup> and we may surmise that written documents

<sup>40</sup> Schlaifer 1940, 234-235; Mattingly 1999, 120-121.

<sup>41</sup> Wilhelm 1909, 285 and *passim*; Hedrick 2000; Sickinger 2009, 88-90.

<sup>42</sup> Rhodes 2008; Papazarkadas 2009. On the Standards Decree see now Hatzopoulos 2013/14, with a new thorough discussion of its date and nature following the publication of the new Aphytis fragment.

<sup>43</sup> Samons 2000, 312-317. For a minimalist position see Thomas 1994, 43-49.

<sup>44</sup> Paarmann 2004, 88-91.

recording the payments against which the amounts of the quota consecrated to Athena was calculated must have existed at least since the treasury of the league was transferred to Athens.

In the fourth century, moreover, copies of the indictments of lawsuits were posted before the statues of the Eponymous Heroes in the agora and references to *sanides* in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (348-349, 848) point to public notices of charges already in the fifth century. Finally, Andokides, in introducing and summarising the decree of Patrokleides, refers to different categories of ἄτιμοι, among whom those who owed money to the state on various accounts, such as, for example, magistrates who owed money after their *euthynai*, men who owed money as a result of a suit of ejection, prosecutions or a fine, or men who had defaulted after being granted tax-farming rights, etc. (I 73-76). While mentioning these categories, Andokides never actually refers to wooden tablets where their names were listed and publicly displayed (at § 76 he actually obscurely alludes not to lists but to *psephismata* that had been cancelled)<sup>45</sup> but, concerning public debtors we are otherwise informed that their names were publicly displayed on a *sanis* posted on the Acropolis (Harpocr. s.v. ψευδεγγραφή) and that being registered in the list carried the stigma of public shame<sup>46</sup>, and may assume that this was also so in the fifth century.

4. The evidence for the use of wooden boards for communication and public display is patchy but familiarity with them and their function appears to be taken for granted by Aeschylus in a well-known, though difficult *locus* of the *Suppliants*, most probably produced in the late 460s (942-949). In this passage King Pelasgus, while opposing the arrogance of the Egyptian herald, contrasts the firm legal binding force of a democratically voted unanimous decision of the *demos* that is «nailed up» (an image underlined by the adverbs *τορῶς* and *διαμπάξ*, «through and through», which are virtually synonyms) on the wall for everyone to see (*τῶν δ' ἐφήλωται τορῶς γόμοφος διαμπάξ ὡς μένειν ἀραρότως*), and whose contents can as a result be heard «from the tongue of a free man» reiterating the text aloud (*σαφῆ δ' ἀκούεις ἐξ ἐλευθεροστόμου γλώσσης*), with documents «written on wax tablets or sealed in folded papyrus sheets» (*ταῦτ' οὐ πίναξίν ἐστιν ἐγγεγραμμένα οὐδ' ἐν πτυχαῖς βύβλων κατεσφραγισμένα*). The implied opposition is not, as is often

<sup>45</sup> I am deliberately avoiding to use as evidence the text of the decree inserted at § 77, since, as we have seen, its authenticity has recently come under dispute.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Canevaro - Harris 2012, 103-104, with the observations of Hansen 2015, 889-890. On public debtors see also Hunter 2000.

assumed, between oral and written discourse<sup>47</sup>, in other words between oral «democratic» and written «despotic» forms of communication, but between the «openness» of written documents that are publicly displayed and accessible to all and the «secrecy» of written texts that, being sealed, are not visible and cannot be freely consulted, thus appearing potentially deceptive (like, for instance, the letter written with «baneful signs», σήματα λυγρά, in a folded *pinax* in Hom. *Il.* 6, 167-170) and reflecting the methods of autocratic power<sup>48</sup>.

As a result, the explanation of the passage provided by T.G. Tucker is still the most plausible: «The king gives the herald his message, but he refuses to make a state secret of it, as if it were a diplomatic negotiation»<sup>49</sup>. In Euripides, the only tragedian who «appears to have given letters serious attention on the tragic stage», the most frequently used term to indicate a «letter» is *deltos* (*Hipp.* 857-880; *IA* 34-44, 97-123; *IT* 582-594, 603, 636-642, 666-667, 727-792), which sometimes occurs in expressions such as ἐν δέλτου πτυχᾶϊς, «in the folds of a tablet», again alluding to sealed wax tablets<sup>50</sup>.

Aeschylus' image of the decree «nailed up with a nail that has pierced through» consequently testifies to the regular use of *sanides*, *pinakia* and *leukomata* as a medium to disseminate official information and is all the more significant since the *Suppliants* go back to a time before the Athenian democracy began to develop an intense «epigraphic habit», the number of inscribed texts starting to considerably increase around the mid-fifth century (although, with the recent downdating of many «imperial decrees» to the 420s or later, this happened less dramatically and less suddenly than was indicated in 1999 by Ch. W. Hedrick's charts)<sup>51</sup>. What I am suggesting is that Athenian, and more generally Greek, literate practices in the fifth century should not be investigated with a narrow approach focusing on the dialectic relationship between «archival documents» and lapidary «inscribed texts» but that we should take into account that writing materials were diverse (and included whitened or wax-covered tablets, papyrus, bronze and lead plates), with texts written on the same medium having different functions (and being, consequently, «addressed» to different audiences), and that each admin-

<sup>47</sup> Friis Johansen-Whittle 1980, III, 248-252; Tarn Steiner 1994, 167-169.

<sup>48</sup> Grethlein 2001; Vasunia 2001, 144-146. For a different, «literary» interpretation of this *locus* see now Ceccarelli 2013, 194-197.

<sup>49</sup> Tucker 1889, 178.

<sup>50</sup> Rosenmeyer 2001, 61-97 (the quotation is from p. 61).

<sup>51</sup> Hedrick 1999, now to be read in the light of Rhodes 2008; Papazarkadas 2009, and the contributions collected in Matthaiou-Pitt 2014. Cf. also Tracy 2014 and 2016. On the relationship between democracy and written texts Musti 1986 still remains fundamental.

istrative act, depending on its nature and significance, could generate a sort of «documentary chain» – a variety of permanent and, in varying degrees, temporary documents and records both for safekeeping (I would like to stress here that Aeschylus' passage, though often neglected in this respect, is also the oldest attestation of the practice of public sealing at Athens<sup>52</sup>) and for public display<sup>53</sup>.

I would like to emphasise that the assumption of a considerable and diversified production of written records is confirmed by the number of «secretaries», γραμματεῖς, attested by fifth-century Attic inscriptions – the secretary of the council (γραμματεὺς τῆς βουλῆς), who appears for the first time in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 7, 1. 2* (c. 460-450 BC), as well as secretaries of the *Hellenotamiai*, of the treasurers of Athena (whose earliest preserved record is a mid-sixth-century dedication cum inventory of sacred objects on a bronze plaque [*IG I<sup>3</sup> 510*]<sup>54</sup>), of the ξενοδίκαι (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 439*, ll. 75-76) and of the several boards of *epistatai* in charge of public building projects such as the Parthenon (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 436-451*), the statue of Athena *Parthenos* (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 458*, ll. 1-8), the Propylaea (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 462-466*) and the *opus incertum* (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 433*)<sup>55</sup>.

It is therefore not by chance that new discoveries are slowly but steadily changing our concept of public literate practices also in other cities of the Greek world. As for mainland Greece, I will leave aside the recent finding of the «archive» from Argos, consisting of a collection of some 136 inscribed bronze plaques recording financial transactions of the treasure of Pallas, of which Ch. Kritzas has so far given us only some glimpses and which can be dated to the early fourth century<sup>56</sup>, and would like to refer instead to four late sixth-century bronze tablets discarded in a cist from Thebes, one of which may offer the earliest testimony for the public sale of confiscated properties, well before the Attic *stelai* from Athens<sup>57</sup>.

It is worth stressing that these documents have been preserved only by accident, because they were for some reason inscribed on bronze, and not on

<sup>52</sup> On public seals in Greek poleis cf. Haensch 2006 (not quoting Aeschylus' *locus*).

<sup>53</sup> Faraguna 2005, 2015. For writing media in the sixth century see Meyer 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Butz 2000, 154-156.

<sup>55</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>, Index*, s.v. γραμματεὺς and γραμματεῦω, p. 1073-1074; Marginesu 2010, 64-65; Missiou 2011, 113-119. On the accounts of the Athenian boards of *epistatai* for the building projects of the fifth century see Marginesu 2010, 64-65. For a new study of *IG I<sup>3</sup> 433* cf. Pitt 2015.

<sup>56</sup> Kritzas 2006; 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Matthaiou 2014. The tablet most probably referring to the sale of confiscated landed properties is no. 3, 215-220. The other possible interpretation is that the document recorded leases.

perishable material, and were hidden and/or stored in containers. It is difficult to say whether the examples I have quoted qualify to conclude that fifth-century Athens had developed some form of document-mindedness – a rather vague concept which in turn is in need of a more precise definition – but they certainly seem to reflect *attention* to the written word and the need of records for political, legal and administrative purposes.

5. Several elements hint to the fact that the need to retrieve and consult earlier documents could, and did, arise as a part of institutional procedures. The public action of γραφή παρανόμων, which made it possible to indict a bill for being against the laws and whose earliest reliable attestation is for 415 BC (Andoc. I 17, 22), for example required that the accuser «present a written text to the *thesmothetai* explaining why the decree was illegal, citing as supporting evidence the statutes that proved that it was illegal»<sup>58</sup>. Moreover, as forcefully shown by J.P. Sickinger<sup>59</sup>, proposing a new law or decree often entailed consideration, and careful study, of earlier enactments. Already in the fifth century, the decree of 418/7 concerning the fencing off and leasing of the sanctuary of Kodros, Neleus and Basile twice orders officials to act in accordance with some specific law, in the second case «in accordance with the law on sanctuaries» (κατὰ τὸν νόμον τῶν τεμενῶν) (IG I<sup>3</sup> 84, ll. 17-18, 23-25)<sup>60</sup>. Other similar examples were analysed by Sickinger but I would like to briefly consider here the evidence offered by the new Aphytis fragment of the Standards Decree recently published by M.B. Hatzopoulos (SEG LI 55)<sup>61</sup>. Strikingly, the most intriguing revelation of the new fragment is that in the Aphytis copy the decree ended with the bouletic oath and that the longer version of the Smyrna fragment (IG I<sup>3</sup> 1453, G), where nine more lines are inscribed and where the decree proposed by Klearchos is mentioned ([τὸ πρότε]ρον ψήφισμα ὃ Κλέαρχ[ος εἶπεν...]), must represent a different, somewhat expanded redaction of the same document. We can only put forward hypotheses about how the relationship between the two variants should be construed but scholars are gradually beginning to come to terms with the idea that we have two separate enactments<sup>62</sup> and that, after the original de-

<sup>58</sup> Canevaro 2015, 10-11.

<sup>59</sup> Sickinger 2002, 157-163.

<sup>60</sup> Pernin 2014, 32-41 (no. 2). For the «law about the *temene*» see Papazarkadas 2011, 51-75, esp. 74-75. For a similar case, with a reference to «the law concerning traitors» (κατὰ τὸν νόμον, ὃς κεῖται περὶ τῶν προδοτῶν), cf. [Plut.] *Mor.* 833f.

<sup>61</sup> Hatzopoulos 2000-2003. Cf. also Hatzopoulos 2013/14.

<sup>62</sup> Stroud 2006, 26 («...it would not be surprising if Athens tailored some of the

decree (possibly the decree of Klearchos) was voted, some time later a second decree with further provisions was proposed and carried through to be inscribed on the Smyrna document. In the same perspective, T.J. Figueira has even gone so far as to suggest that «the fragments [scil. of the Coinage decree] represent a sequence of versions, redactions, or reissues of a piece of Athenian monetary legislation, a sequence that may extend into the fourth century» and thus posit «multiple iterations of the Klearchos psephism»<sup>63</sup>.

The assumption underlying such hypotheses is that the original version of the decree could be accessed and consulted in order to adapt it to the changing needs of Athens' imperial monetary policies. It should be stressed that the Standards (or Coinage) decree is not the only Athenian decree referring to a πρότερον ψήφισμα, to an earlier enactment<sup>64</sup>.

Two other parallel phenomena should moreover be brought into the picture, namely 1) the republication in monumental form after 403/2 under the re-established democracy of a number of proxeny decrees whose *stelai* had been destroyed by the Thirty Tyrants<sup>65</sup>, and 2) dossiers, such as the four decrees for the city of Methone in Macedonia, which were enacted between 430/29 and 424/3 and, as shown by the heading, inscribed together on a stele in 424/3 (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 61* [= *ML 65*], ll. 1-2: Μεθοναίον ἐκ Πιερί[ας]· [Φ]αίνιππος Φρονίχο ἔγραμμάτ[ευσε]), and the honours for the Athenian *proxenos* Pythophanes (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 98* [= *ML 80*], the latter being a most interesting example since it was enacted during the oligarchy in 411, but still provided for the publication of an earlier honorary decree (ll. 12-15), which must have been passed some time before under the democracy, thus painting «a vivid picture of honorific continuity»<sup>66</sup>.

rules in these decrees to fit other local considerations. That is, regulations to enforce the use of Athenian silver coinage, weights, and measures in the Empire may have been much more complex than we ever imagined. It may also be that our search for the date of the Athenian Coinage Decree has been too monolithic. Perhaps we should be searching for more than one date – or possibly for more than one decree»); Hatzopoulos 2013/14, 264 («the most likely scenario would be that in the late twenties of the fifth century, not long after the enactment of the original, "Klearchos", decree represented by the Aphytis fragments and dealing with coins detained by the allied states, it was deemed necessary to extend its dispositions to privately held coins. Consequently, a second decree proposed by an Athenian whose name has not survived was voted and, at least in the "Smyrna" fragment, was appended to the "Klearchos" one»).

<sup>63</sup> Figueira 2006, 11-19, 23-37.

<sup>64</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup>, Index*, s.v. πρότερος, p. 1130-1131.

<sup>65</sup> Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 244-248; Shear 2011, 176-177, 235-238. For a list of the texts see *IG I<sup>3</sup>*, p. 196.

<sup>66</sup> Significantly, a third decree, presumably in honour of the same Pythophanes, was

We cannot, no doubt, be certain that in all cases these decrees, published (or republished) some years after their enactment, had an archival origin (in most cases it is actually the honorands who have to cover the costs of inscription and it could be surmised that they also had to provide a copy of the text) but this appears to be very likely at least in the case of the Methone dossier which regulated relations between Athens and an allied community within the Delian league.

In the light of this, we can pose the question of the origin and function of the so-called headings, or «epigraphic titles», in most cases detailing the name of the secretary but sometimes, as in the case of the Methone dossier, indicating the subject-matter of the document, inscribed in larger letters on a substantial number of fifth-century Athenian *stelai* (cf. e.g. *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 21, 61, 65, 66, 68, 71, 72, 75, 78, 82, 86, 91, 92, 97, etc.). In the *Athenian Boule* P.J. Rhodes suggested that, while the prescripts of decrees «are to be interpreted as a kind of running headline from the secretary's minute book»<sup>67</sup>, headings «were added primarily for purposes of identification», and restated his view in *The Decrees of the Greek States*, where he clarified that the heading «would help identify the inscription among the many set up in the city»<sup>68</sup>. This may well be true but the possibility should also be entertained that the heading reproduced some note already recorded on the archival copy of the document, either as a *scriptura exterior* on the papyrus or as a label attached to the wooden tablets or *diptychon*, thus reflecting the methods the documents were marked and organised in the Bouleuterion, so as to make them easier to retrieve<sup>69</sup>.

The upshot of the argument is therefore that the role of writing in fifth century Athens has been somewhat underestimated in the orality *vs.* literacy debate. No doubt, oral communication played a significant role in political,

inscribed on the same stele by a different hand in 399/8 BC. Cf. Mack 2015, 96: «*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 98 paints a vivid picture of honorific continuity, despite the political vicissitudes of late fifth-century Athens. Pythophanes, already *proxenos* of Athens, was recognised by the oligarchic regime of the Four Hundred (or Five Thousand) which granted him additional honours, including inscription of the original decree on the stone. Subsequently...in 399/8 the democracy, once again in power, added yet another decree in his praise, which was inscribed below the oligarchic one». Cf. also Culasso Gastaldi 2003, 246-247 n. 15. For further epigraphic evidence on «dossiers» see Mattingly 2000, listing, together with *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 35 and 36, «eighteen other examples in fifth-century Attic epigraphy where decrees are followed on the same stone by other texts».

<sup>67</sup> Rhodes 1972, 135. Cf. Rhodes 1981, 602.

<sup>68</sup> Rhodes - Lewis 1997, 18-19.

<sup>69</sup> Wilhelm 1909, 281-282. Cf. also Boffo 2012, 28 with n. 25.



social and cultural life – on the Pnyx, in the *dikasteria*, in the agora or in the theatre – and, as we have seen, there were many an occasion when official information, even when based on written documents, was conveyed to the community in oral form via public reading by heralds or secretaries<sup>70</sup>, but from the first half of the century, owing to the increasing complexity of political, administrative and financial practices, both within Athens and for the running of the Delian league, Athenian citizens – at least those who were not *apragmones* and were in various degrees involved in the institutional management of the city, both at *polis* and at deme level – more and more found themselves increasingly confronted with writing and its manifold uses.

6. The realization that fifth-century Athens was a world where documents and records were to some extent part of the «landscape» of people's everyday experience is in turn not devoid of implications also for our concept of the *modus operandi* of ancient historians and the methods with which they conducted research and obtained the information they needed for their investigations. Since I have chosen the fifth century as the focus of this paper, I would like to briefly use Thucydides' work as a form of test-case.

Modern bibliography on the use of documents in Thucydides is extensive, almost discouragingly so, since, starting from the nineteenth century, scholars have wondered why the Athenian historian did not offer any specific thoughts on documentary material in his methodological chapter in the first book (I 22) and, consequently, whether he subsumed documents under *logoi* or under *erga* or, alternatively, whether he simply did not mention them because they were not part of his conceptual horizon<sup>71</sup>. A related question is why full verbatim quotation of diplomatic agreements (truces, treaties or alliances) is only a feature of the fourth, fifth and eighth books, and whether this is an indication of the incompleteness of Thucydides' work, whose hypothetical final version would have blended them into the text<sup>72</sup>, or

<sup>70</sup> Faraguna 2006, 63, listing several other instances. An interesting example is provided by Isocr. XVIII 61: ἐψηφίσασθ' ἡμᾶς στεφανῶσαι καὶ πρόσθε τῶν ἐπωνύμων ἀνειπεῖν ὡς μεγάλων ἀγαθῶν αἰτίους ὄντας. See further Thomas 1989, 61-64.

<sup>71</sup> Cf., among the more recent works, Meyer 1970, 96-97; Müller 1997, 112-129; Zizza 1999; Porciani 2003.

<sup>72</sup> Kirchhoff 1895; Gomme – Andrewes - Dover 1981, 361-383, esp. 374-375, 383 (cf. 383: «Though other views can be and have been taken, the documents in iv-v and viii seem to be out of scale in relation to Thucydides' regular narrative method, and to introduce unexplained detail in an uncharacteristic way. This might represent the deliberate adoption of a new method, or the full verbatim documents might in the final version have been replaced by shorter summaries. The latter appears to me very much

reflects intentional experimenting and innovation on the part of Thucydides, either to achieve a greater effect of precision in his narration and give his readers all the elements to compare the diplomatic and legal framework and the development of events<sup>73</sup>, or, for literary purposes, to «underline the discrepancy between professions of enduring stability and the rapidly shifting reality of events»<sup>74</sup>.

In general, the prevailing opinion is, at any rate, that Thucydides made use of inscriptions and documentary material predominantly in connection with earlier history and the more distant past, while for contemporary history he relied on the oral accounts of eyewitnesses and participants who could be questioned and whose versions of events and motivations could be analysed and weighed one against the other<sup>75</sup>. In a fascinating recent article, R. Lane Fox attempted to concretely reconstruct how Thucydides obtained copies of the nine verbatim documents he inserted in his work either as a result of his personal contacts with individual members of the Spartan elite and of his personal visits to Sparta and the Peloponnese<sup>76</sup>. He thus concluded that a) «Thucydides is most 'documentary' when his researches are still most interpersonal», so that «[t]he documents he includes arrived only by the personal type of research which he discussed at 1.21», and, as a consequence, that b) «Thucydides never went near a documentary store or deposit»<sup>77</sup>.

Lane Fox may well be right in his attempt to trace the movements of people and documents across the Greek mainland, although in the past it was equally and plausibly suggested that the source of the texts might have been Alkibiades<sup>78</sup>. The question about the origin of the documentary material he exploited must unfortunately be left unanswered, in the same way as we are never provided with any information concerning the source of oral reports. In my opinion, the weakness of Lane Fox's minimalist approach, however,

more likely. The documents may have been placed where they stand as a provisional measure; or possibly the editor, finding at these points two versions, the full text and a briefer summary, thought it right to cancel the shorter version and have the fuller one copied»; Müller 1997.

<sup>73</sup> Hornblower 1996, 113-117, and, with some different nuances, Bearzot 2003, 272-278.

<sup>74</sup> Connor 1984, 144-147, 217-219; see also Rood 1998, 91-93. For a «literary» reading of the role of letters, in particular Nikias' letter (VII 10-16), in Thucydides cf. Ceccarelli 2013, 136-149.

<sup>75</sup> Smarczyk 2006, esp. 512; Rhodes 2007, 58-60.

<sup>76</sup> Lane Fox 2010; cf. also Clark 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Lane Fox 2010, 25.

<sup>78</sup> Kirchhoff 1895, 143-147; Brunt 1952, 65-80 (= 22-34).

lies in the fact that he only focuses on the nine verbatim interstate agreements, while it is clear that Thucydides directly or indirectly drew his information from a much larger body of documents (and types of document) including decrees, letters, oaths, oracles and lists<sup>79</sup>. With a certain degree of overstatement, L. Canfora, for instance, emphasised that Thucydides' text «pullulates» with «latent» decrees that are never cited in full but only summarised and integrated in the narrative fabric for the simple reason that his approach was selective also with regard to *types* of documents and that, consistently with his intention to narrate the history of a war, he deliberately chose to provide verbatim transcriptions only of interstate agreements<sup>80</sup>. Similarly, in a recent article, U. Fantasia has convincingly argued for the documentary origin of the list of Sparta's naval allies at II 9, 3<sup>81</sup>. The correct inference is, in my opinion, that we cannot solely trace back Thucydides' acquaintance with documentary material to personal contacts but that we must assume that the modalities with which he acquired it could range from examination of inscriptions to the inspection of a copy in an archive, oral reports, i.e. copies or summaries of informants, or even be based on common knowledge.

7. In order to analyse some specific cases I will be selective myself and limit my observations to three intriguing examples:

1) Thuc. V 41: the document inserted in this somewhat neglected passage records the draft of a treaty (*σπονδαί*) between Argos and Sparta negotiated in 420, including, at the beginning, the proposal to come to a settlement of the long-standing border dispute over Kynouria by means of an arbitration. As we learn from the following chapters, the rapidly shifting political conditions quickly caused the Argives to change their minds and seek

<sup>79</sup> For a comprehensive survey cf. Bearzot 2003. For the letter of Nikias (VII 11-15) cf. most recently Luginbill 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Canfora 1990, 206 («Ma vi sono, ovviamente, anche le deliberazioni delle assemblee: quali quelle che prepararono l'attacco contro Siracusa, delle quali Tucide dà una descrizione minuziosa, ma dei cui deliberati fornisce soltanto i sommi capi (VI 8, 2; 26, 1). Da questo punto di vista si può anzi osservare che il testo tucidideo *pullula* di decreti «latenti»...ovvero stringatamente abbozzati e incorporati nel contesto narrativo al punto di influenzarne lo stile....Se dunque solo in quei casi e solo di quei documenti viene fornita una trascrizione integrale, ciò non dipenderà da un loro eccezionale rilievo, ma, sembrerebbe, innanzitutto dalla scelta tucididea di dare il testo integrale *soltanto nei casi di trattati internazionali*: una scelta coerente con il proposito di scrivere la storia di una guerra, non una storia generale»).

<sup>81</sup> Fantasia 2014.

an alliance with Athens (V 44, 1-2). The treaty was therefore never concluded. The language of this passage is technical<sup>82</sup>. In particular, the Lakedaimonians, out of eagerness «to have Argos friendly to them», are said to have «accepted the conditions and signed the written agreement» (V 41, 3: *ξυνεχώρησαν ἐφ' οἷς ἤξιον καὶ ξυνεγράψαντο*). The verb *ξυνεγράψαντο* is crucial, although it cannot by itself give us a clue about the source of Thucydides' knowledge about the treaty, since it shows that the conditions which the Spartans agreed to were spelled out in a written document. Since the negotiations were never finalised and the text of the treaty cannot have been made public on a *stèle*, the possibility that Thucydides had access to an archival copy should be taken into serious consideration<sup>83</sup>.

2) Thuc. IV 118-119: one-year truce (*ἐκεχειρία*) between the Spartans (and their allies) and the Athenians with a view to discussing proposals about bringing the war to an end (118, 13: *καθ' ὃ τι ἔσται ἡ κατάλυσις τοῦ πολέμου*). The document inserted by Thucydides may *prima facie* appear to be a rather incoherent and composite *mélange* of diverse texts. As shown by E.J. Bickerman in a masterly analysis, the document, however, makes perfect sense from a diplomatic point of view<sup>84</sup>. It consists of three parts: a) the text of the truce proposed by the Spartans, accurately defining its terms and territorial implications on the basis of the *status quo ante* (IV 118, 4: *ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῶν μένειν ἑκατέρους ἔχοντας ἄπερ νῦν ἔχομεν*)<sup>85</sup>; b) the decree of the Athenian *demos*, inclusive of the prescript, accepting the conditions and stating precisely the date (day and month) starting from which the armistice was to be in force; c) final ratification of the agreement by the Spartans and their allies and list of the names with patronymic of those who took the oath, first the Spartans and their allies and then the Athenians. The last element is particularly instructive because it shows that Thucydides must in all likelihood have consulted a copy of the original document (as a rule, in Attic inscriptions we are never given the names of those who were selected to swear the

<sup>82</sup> For Argos' association with arbitration from a relatively early time cf. Hornblower 2008, 96-97.

<sup>83</sup> Bearzot 2003, 275-276. To say the truth, the fact that *τοῖς δὲ Λακεδαιμονίοις τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἐδόκει μωρία εἶναι ταῦτα* (V 41, 3) could be taken to indicate that the historian learned about the negotiations through an oral report. But he must have seen the text of the treaty, of which he quotes, almost verbatim, several clauses (V 41, 2).

<sup>84</sup> Bickerman 1952, not quoted by Hornblower 1996, 356-362, in his commentary. Cf. also Canfora 1990, 206-215; Porciani 2003.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussions of the details of the territorial clauses see Hornblower 1996, 365-368.

oath confirming an alliance or a treaty)<sup>86</sup>. From IV 122, 1 we are fortunate enough to learn about the names of the ambassadors, Aristonymos for Athens and Athenaios for Sparta, who were to «announce» the truce in the Chalkidic region and who may have possibly transmitted the document to Thucydides, at the time probably an exile in Thrace<sup>87</sup>.

Two further points need to be underlined: the first is that the Atheno-Sparta truce document of 423 clearly is a reflection of the «paperwork» regularly used in Greek international relations and offers a glimpse of the kind of records that no doubt existed but were never inscribed on stone. It is in particular a dossier of closely related texts and can, to some extent, be compared to the Methone «dossier». The second point is that full quotation of its terms was relevant, and functional, to the narration of the ensuing events since the date of Skione's revolt, whether the city defected before or after the truce had come into effect, immediately became a matter of controversy (IV 122, 3-5). This must in fact be the «historiographical» reason for the insertion of the document in the text.

3) Thuc. VI 6, 2-3; 8,1-3; 26,1: Athenian assemblies and decrees about sending the Sicilian expedition. The contents of the motions voted by the assembly are summarised by Thucydides in some cases apparently reproducing their «technical» language (VI 6, 2: καὶ τᾶλλα τὰ ἐν Σικελίᾳ πράξει ὅπη ἂν γινώσκωσιν ἄριστα Ἀθηναίους; 26, 1: περὶ τοῦ παντὸς πλοῦ τούσ στρατηγούσ πράσσειν ἧ ἂν αὐτοῖσ δοκῆ ἄριστα εἶναι Ἀθηναίους). This is, however, hardly an unassailable argument for their archival origin because Thucydides must have been familiar with formulaic institutional terminology and could have easily made it up in his account of the decisions<sup>88</sup>.

The issue is, furthermore, complicated by the fact that we have some epigraphical fragments (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 93) that appear to only partially confirm the details of Thucydides' account<sup>89</sup>, and that, when referring to the Athenian alliance with Leontini<sup>90</sup> and ignoring the much more relevant alliance with

<sup>86</sup> Gomme 1956, 605-606.

<sup>87</sup> Whether it may have been Aristonymos or Athenaios is disputed: cf. Canfora 1990, 214 (Aristonymos); Lane Fox 2010, 20-21 (Athenaios).

<sup>88</sup> Chaniotis 2015, 682-683.

<sup>89</sup> For a discussion of their significance and of the problem whether they belong to the assemblies of 415 contrast Kallet 2001, 184-193, connecting the inscription to the reinforcements sent to Sicily under Demosthenes in 413 BC, and Hornblower 2008, 312-314, reasserting the traditional date of 415.

<sup>90</sup> For this reading of Thuc. VI 6, 2 (τὴν γενομένην ἐπὶ Λάχητος καὶ τοῦ προτέρου πολέμου Λεοντίνων οἱ Ἐγεσταῖοι ξυμμαχίαν ἀναμνησκόντες τοὺς Ἀθηναίους) see the linguistic arguments in Matthaiou 2011, 60-63.

Egesta, confirmed by a well-known inscription (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 11*), Thucydides gives the impression of being ill-informed – unless he deliberately chose not to mention it in order «to enhance the impression that the Sicilian expedition was undertaken in a mood of sudden folly without proper diplomatic preparation»<sup>91</sup>. The most plausible conclusion is that his source was on oral informant, according to P.A. Brunt no less than Alkibiades<sup>92</sup>, and that for some reason he (or Thucydides) failed to get everything right.

As the examples I have discussed show, it is apparent that Thucydides was, after all, interested in documents also for contemporary history and, at least in some cases, he made use of them, for historiographical and not only «literary» purposes, when he could. We could also conclude that he sometimes used the language of documents to convey the information he collected from oral reports in «decree form», which itself is an intriguing sign of «document-mindedness». But, I would like to stress, this is not at all surprising in the light of the Athenian «documentary habit» which I have tried to trace in the first part of this paper.

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<sup>91</sup> For an overview of recent discussion on this point see Hornblower 2008, 303-307. On *IG I<sup>3</sup> 11* cf. Chambers-Gallucci-Spanos 1990; Matthaïou 2004; 2011, 57-70.

<sup>92</sup> Brunt 1952, 70 (= 26).

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*Documents, Public Information and the Historian*

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*Abstract*

Anche dopo l'intenso dibattito che, a partire dagli anni '80 del secolo scorso, ha mirato a dar conto dell'impatto della diffusione della scrittura e della «literacy» sulla cultura tradizionalmente orale del mondo greco, lo statuto e il significato dei documenti epigrafici rimangono ancora non sempre ben chiariti. Gli studiosi hanno analizzato le dinamiche dell'«abitudine epigrafica» ateniese ma la questione fondamentale del perché i testi venissero iscritti su materiale durevole, se con valore funzionale oppure con significato simbolico, ideologico e religioso, è tuttora dibattuta.

L'articolo si propone di contribuire alla discussione su questi aspetti collocando il fenomeno epigrafico nel quadro più ampio della produzione di documenti su materiale deperibile

per l'affissione pubblica, che dobbiamo immaginare come un regolare strumento di comunicazione e di diffusione delle informazioni ufficiali, e per la conservazione in archivio – pratiche scritte rispetto alle quali già un passo delle *Supplici* di Eschilo (942-949) rivela la familiarità del pubblico ateniese. Si insiste sul carattere selettivo della pubblicazione epigrafica, su come la conservazione dei documenti in archivio sia anteriore alla creazione del *Metroon* alla fine del V sec. e appaia anzi presupposta dalla procedura della *graphe paranomon* e dai processi dell'iter legislativo e giudiziario, e sull'importanza, come strumento euristico, dello studio dei dossier e dei titoli epigrafici.

Nell'ultima parte della relazione si confrontano i risultati di tale indagine con il contemporaneo uso dei documenti nell'opera di Tucidide. A titolo esemplificativo vengono considerati il trattato tra Argo e Sparta (5,41), il dossier di testi relativo alla tregua di un anno stipulata da Sparta e Atene nel 423 (4,118-119) e i decreti ateniesi sulla spedizione in Sicilia del VI libro.

Following the past decades when scholars have attempted to come to terms with the emergence and impact of literacy and literate culture in Greek society, and, in particular, with the ways orality and literacy interacted in the different political, cultural and religious contexts, the status and meaning of epigraphic documents still remains difficult to pin down.

Recent investigations have focused on the «epigraphic habit» and examined the somewhat anomalous case of classical Athens so as to highlight, and account for, the differences from other epigraphically productive centres. However, the question why inscriptions were produced at all, whether with functional value to make information available to the public or with symbolic and ideological significance still remains highly controversial.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussion by placing the epigraphic habit within the larger context of the production of documents both for posting and temporary display, which must have played a significant role in the dissemination of public information, and for storing as archival records. Familiarity with such literate practices appears to be already reflected by Aeschylus in a *locus* of the *Suppliants*, most probably produced in the late 460s (942-949). It is stressed that publication on stone was selective, that archival texts were already kept in the Bouleuterion before the Metroon was established (and e.g. is taken for granted by the procedure of the *graphe paranomon*), and that so-called «dossiers» and «epigraphic titles» can be useful heuristic tools to shed light on archival practices.

The last section of the paper compares the results of the first part with the use of documents in Thucydides. By way of example, the text of the aborted treaty between Argos and Sparta (5,41), the dossier of texts concerning the one-year truce between the Spartans (and their allies) and the Athenians of 423 (4,118-119) and the Athenian decrees for the Sicilian expedition in book 6 are briefly considered.