

Teos and Abdera: The Epigraphic Evidence

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It is generally accepted that Greek colonies replicated the model of their founding city. Indeed the entire colonization process, from the conception to the birth of a new colony and to the relations subsequently entertained with its founding city, is often paralleled to the human reproductive process. Typically, most of the terms related to the process derive from the family and home vocabulary (metropolis – mother city, *oikist*), while relations between founding and founded city, just like relations between members of the same family, are qualified as *philia*, *oikeiotes* or *syggeneia*. In compliance with the rules of progeny, the colonies are shown to share common family traits with their mother city, such as civic and cultural institutions: cults, calendar, dialect, script, state magistracies, citizen divisions. Furthermore, they tended, more often than not, to entertain close contacts with their mother city, nurtured by powerful sentimental links, pre-eminently – and regularly – expressed in traditional and religious connections.¹ As a result, they were considered natural allies, while enmity between them was regarded as shameful. Yet as a rule, colonies, like children, were from the start independent entities: separate states with a separate citizenship; such political relationships as were favoured, they depended on the choice of either party, on the extent to which a colony or mother city was willing to exploit the otherwise undisputed tie of relationship.²

As in most cases, our knowledge on the relations between Abdera and Teos is based on the interpretation of tantalizing, circumstantial literary

testimonia. In the case of Abdera, chance proved relatively generous only for the initial period of the colony's existence: thanks to the literary sources we know the identity of the colonizers of Abdera (Clazomenians in the seventh century BC, Teians in the sixth), the name of the first Clazomenian *oikist*, the ill fate of the Clazomenian colony, the struggles of the Teian colonists against the hostile native hosts, the promptly acquired wealth and prosperity of the new colony, the eventual repatriation of part of the Teian colonists.³ For the subsequent periods, literary sources remain completely silent; their sparseness speaks for the laborious scrutiny of archaeological findings in search of identifiable supporting evidence.

Inscriptions discovered in Abdera remain silent as to the relations of the colony with its metropolis. Despite decades-long excavations on the site of the ancient city and a relatively rich harvest of chance discoveries, epigraphic finds of archaic or classical date are very few, most of them still unpublished; it is thus impossible to discuss possible script, or dialectical affinities, morphological or other. More significantly, a comparative study of personal names of Teians and Abderitans is now underway; it is enhanced by the recent development of electronic data bases for inscriptions found in Asia Minor⁴ on one hand and by the strenuous work of our own group on the other hand to collect, study and publish the complete corpus of inscriptions found in Abdera and in adjacent areas of Aegean Thrace, indeed of the entire region bordered between the lower courses of the rivers Nestos to

the west and Hebros to the east. The study of this material has established the undisputable Ionian origin of the great majority of personal names variously attested for Abderitans, but has failed to identify any specific characters related to the onomastics of Teos. Similarly, the personal names of Teians give no hint of specific relations with the colony, despite literary evidence that Teos was partly at least repopulated by repatriated colonists or their offspring, as noted above.⁵

Yet, there is other evidence indicating close relations between Abdera and her metropolis, not least the extraordinary fact that colony and mother city struck almost concurrently their first series of silver coins of high intrinsic value (octodrachms and tetradrachms) and exquisite artistic quality, opting for almost identical coin types: a griffin sitting or standing to the left in the case of Abdera, respectively to the right in the case of Teos. Based mainly on the dating of the first emissions of Abderitan coinage to 540-535 proposed by May,⁶ the earliest series of Teian coins was formerly dated a decade or so earlier.⁷ Only recently, the exhaustive study dedicated to the coinage of Abdera and to its presence in Archaic and Early Classical coin hoards has determined on the basis of stylistic and other affinities that the first series of Abderitan coins should be dated no earlier than 520/15;⁸ most importantly, that it is probably concurrent with or antedates the first staters of Teos by a few years. We have no doubt that more than anything else, this fact indicates the concrete and close relations bonding colony and mother city, at least during the early phases of the colony's existence. It may also be thought to point out the actual cause which lead to the colonization of Abdera: the colony was meant to secure the financial independence of Teos, which had evidently been curtailed by the Persian occupation, by providing access to sources of precious metals located outside Asia Minor. The striking of coinage, first in the colony and soon thereafter in the mother city speaks for the success of the operation, despite the eventual extension of Persian rule in Thrace. Most importantly, it reveals the joint sharing of colony and mother city in the profits and the risks of this dangerous venture.

If Abdera remains silent on the question of her relations with her metropolis, more than one public documents discovered in Teos reveal their extent and persistence. Indeed some well known inscriptions that span over a period of three centuries (from the first half of the fifth to the first half of the second century BC) illustrate important turning-points in the history of the two cities.

The first of these inscriptions, and also by far the most significantly eloquent on the subject of our interest, was recovered in 1976, having served as building material in some construction in the village Sigacik, in the vicinity of the site of ancient Teos. The fragmentary text was engraved in stichedon style on all four sides of a truncated pillar measuring ca 0.46-0.47 m in width by 0.28 in depth, with preserved height of 0.83. It was brilliantly published by P. Herrmann in a lengthy publication in *Chiron* in 1981.⁹ The editor underlines the varying size of the letters, calculated to 18 in each line,¹⁰ and notes the regular use of interpunction. For the letterforms,¹¹ he stresses the strong similarity with some well known documents of the fifth century,¹² concluding that, on palaeographic evidence, the new document should be dated between 480 and 450, rather closer to 450 BC. Most importantly, Herrmann demonstrated that the new document represented a direct counterpart, indeed a second exemplar of the long lost, famous inscription usually referred to as *Teiorum dirae*, (*Τῆίων ἀραί* or 'Teian imprecations'). That equally fragmentary and lacunary text, copied in the early eighteenth century AD by several amateurs and scholars in the cemetery of the village Hereke, not far from ancient Teos,¹³ and extensively edited and commented by eminent specialists,¹⁴ has obstinately defied scholarly efforts of restitution, interpretation and complete understanding.¹⁵ It was usually dated on external, palaeographic, and internal evidence¹⁶ to the years immediately following the liberation of Teos from Persian rule and the establishment of the Delian League (ca 470 BC). As to the context, it contains special measures, pledged under vows of publicly and officially repeated imprecations, meant to safeguard the city from specific, mainly internal perils threat-

ening the citizen body and the civic institutions.¹⁷ This was enough to support the often repeated view that it represents the 'fundamental state law' ('Staatsgrundgesetz', according to Ziebarth, Wilhelm and Gottlieb¹⁸) of Teos, guaranteed by citizen oath, in the form of sacral public imprecations against prospective perpetrators of crimes of high treason.

The extraordinary novelty deriving from the recently discovered text is that this 'fundamental state law' instituted in metropolitan Teos is concurrently and explicitly validated for its colony, Abdera. The situation is unique. Indeed, we know of instances where mother cities promulgated legislation regulating their relations with their colonies,¹⁹ but the Teos inscription appears to be the first known case of a state law of such fundamental importance applying to both the metropolis and its colony.

The terms stated in the law are all negative provisions, prohibiting specific acts, aiming presumably at safeguarding the constitution from imminent dangers or at securing state order from threats recently experienced. This particular trait of our text is believed to offer some clues concerning its relative chronology and its historical interpretation:

1. In the case of Teos and Abdera, metropolis and mother city were bound with exceptionally strong parental relations, both at the political and the personal-familial level, probably also at the financial level. The establishment of these bonds, which are unequivocally attested for the latter part of the first half of the fifth century, must go back to the initial phase of the foundation of the colony, as inferred from references to the re-foundation of Teos by Abderitans,²⁰ and from the unusually strong formal and chronological affinity of their coinage.

2. Metropolis and colony shared an essentially identical institutional background, which allowed for regulations in the one to be adopted almost automatically in the other. In fact, the Teian imprecations provide important evidence on common institutions shared by the metropolis and its colony:

— Both Teos and Abdera had a democratic

constitution and legislature, magistrates (*timouchoi*), a powerful demos (*xynon*), a Council possessing jurisdiction in political crimes.

— Abdera's religious life essentially reproduced that of its mother city: it shared with Teos at least three important festivals, the Anthesteria, in honour of Apollo, the Herakleia and, celebrating Zeus, the Dia, the last festival in Abdera under the name *Ζηνός ἐορτή*.

It is actually our opinion that the recently discovered text extends the application in Abdera of the initial Teian law, which is preserved on the older inscription, a fact obscured by the lacunary conservation of our text; in so doing, however, it does not fail to take into account minor institutional variations, such as the different number of the members of the council (a 20-22) or a varying name for one of the festivals in the two cities (d 5-11).

3. Last but not least, the study of the Teian imprecations indicates that Teos and Abdera, though significantly distanced, were facing the same critical situation, experiencing similar internal threats probably induced by a similar cause. That cause can only be the overthrow of such internal balance as was established under Persian rule following the liberation of both cities in the wake of the Battle at Mykale — in the case of Teos — and Athenian expeditions in Thrace — in the case of Abdera. Both cities seem to have painfully experienced the political and social disturbances generated by the establishment of pro-Persian governments during the period of Persian rule. Indeed the uncompromising resolution voted against prospective *aisymnetai* clearly reveals that in both cities the Persian rule had been supported through the establishment of tyrants. In fact, as indicated by the absence of all mention of Abdera from the older Teian imprecations text, the law appears to have been initially voted in Teos, which had been first in shaking Persian rule; upon their liberation, the Teians reinstated democratic institutions²¹ and promulgated strict legislature in view of safeguarding political, indeed democratic stability in the future. Some years later, when the Persians were definitely expelled from south-

eastern Thrace, the same law was extended to apply in the colony.

Literary sources give no hint of continuing relations between Teos and Abdera. The situation would remain unknown but for a second inscription, also found in Teos, which speaks for the persistence of the bonds linking the metropolis with its colony in the Early Hellenistic period. A decree of *sympoliteia* between Teos and Kyrbissos published in 1976 includes a banning clause against revolted *phrourarchs* – in fact against the eventual threat of tyranny – formulated in closely similar terms.²² The provision in the Hellenistic decree imposing exile “from Teos and from Abdera and from Teian and Abderitan territory” (lines 23-25) practically rephrases the formula used in the fifth century Teian imprecation (“from Teos and from Abdera and from Teian territory”) for the banishment of prospective *aisymnetai* (tyrants). While it is hazardous to define the actual form of political relationship inferred, it is clear that during the Hellenistic period, as in the early phases of the life of the colony, particularly solid political bonds still existed between Teos and Abdera.²³

That far, the above mentioned inscriptions reveal unity of the two cities in negative dealings. However, further epigraphic evidence confirms that their relations provided just as well for positive undertakings. In fact, a well known and often commented honorary decree of Abdera, published and discovered in Teos, honours two distinguished Teians, Amynon and Megathymos, for undertaking an embassy in Rome to defend Abdera's claims in a territorial dispute against the Thracian king Kotys.²⁴ This important document has usually been dated to the immediate aftermath of the Third Macedonian War (namely to 168 or 166 BC) and is believed to reveal a territorial contestation of the Odrysian Kotys, a former ally of Perseus,²⁵ at the expense of Abdera's ancestral territory.²⁶ Even though there are independent indications that the Teian intervention proved unsuccessful,²⁷ the terms of praise for the unrelenting efforts of the Teian ambassadors clearly reveal Teos' genuine concern for her colony's vital interests, undoubtedly motivated by the traditional but ever active

sentimental no less than political unity.

Interestingly enough, yet another Abderitan decree, recently found in Teos, has confirmed not only close relations between the two cities during the first half of the second century BC but a yet more significant diplomatic initiative and active intervention undertaken by the mother city in support of her colony during those days of ominous distress for Abdera. Uncovered in 1966 in the temple of Dionysos at Teos, the new inscription was recently published and commented by Christian Marek:²⁸ it is a decree of the Abderitans honouring not individual citizens but the entire demos of Teos. In the introductory general clauses the Abderitans acclaim the Teians as fathers of their city (line B1) and praise them for consistently sustaining the ancestral good will and for constantly fostering a mutually beneficial unity (*homonoia*) between the two cities (lines B5). The Teians are honoured for vigorously and successfully supporting the case of her colony (the Abderitans are qualified as *syggeneis*-kinsmen in line B10-11) under obscure but critical circumstances: the lacunary text speaks of a siege (line B14), of human loss (line B15) and enslavement of the inhabitants (line B16). In view of the chronology of the inscription – it is roughly dated for palaeographic reasons to the second century BC – Marek associated the decree with the well known devastation of Abdera by the Roman praetor L. Hortensius in 160 BC, during the final phase of the Third Macedonian War. Livy's account of the tragedy mentions the storming and plundering of Abdera, the execution of leading Abderitans and the enslavement of a large percentage of the population.²⁹ The same author gives a summary account of Abderitan imputations promptly submitted to the Roman Senate, which sentenced L. Hortensius, proclaimed the disgraceful occurrence an *injustum bellum*, restored the freedom of Abdera and ordered that those who had been enslaved should be sought out and restored to freedom. Teos is not mentioned in the literary sources in this context. However, assuming that the historical context proposed by Marek is justified, both Abderitan decrees found in Teos seem to be closely

connected with the Senate's dealings concerning the fate of the city of Abdera and of its territory following the defeat of Perseus and the subjugation of Macedonia to the Roman rule; the new inscription only antedates by two or three years the decree in honour of the Teian ambassadors.

Unfortunately, there is no way of ascertaining the precise role that Teos played in favour of Abdera. Whether it pleaded in favour of Abdera's case in the Senate or gave refuge to Abderitan exiles, or offered funds to restore the plundered city and to ransom enslaved Abderitans, Teos earned the deep gratitude of her colony for honouring the ancestral, parental bonds of unity, persisting through four centuries.

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Notes

1. For a characteristic example of these connections, see the inscription dedicated by the 'οἰκῆται Περσίνθιοι' in the Heraion of their metropolis Samos in ca 580-570 BC: G. Klaffenbach, "Archaische Weihinschrift aus Samos" *MdI* 6 (1953) 15-20, pl. 3 (= *BullEpigr* 1954, 205; *SEG* 12 [1955] 391); cf. L.D. Loukopoulou, *Contribution à l'histoire de la Thrace Propontique* (*MEΛETHMATA* 9, Athens 1989) 97-100.
2. See the relevant remarks of A.J. Graham, "The colonial expansion of Greece. XI. Relations with the mother city" *CAH* III.3 (1982²) 154.
3. See mainly Herodotos 1.168-69; Strabo 14.1.30 (C644) and Pindar's *Second Paean*.
4. We mainly refer here to the PHI.7 CD-Rom of the University of California, Irvine, which has greatly facilitated research in a material widely dispersed and not always easily accessible.
5. Almost a hundred inscriptions are known today as deriving from Abdera and its territory and dating from the Late Archaic period to Late Antiquity. Only few of them are published, while many are summarily presented in preliminary reports or remain totally unknown. For the main bibliography on the subject see Ch. Avezou and Ch. Picard, "Inscriptions de Macédoine et de Thrace" *BCH* 37 (1913) 117-41; J. Bousquet, "Inscription d'Abdère" *BCH* 62 (1938) 51-54; M. Feyel, "Nouvelles Inscriptions d'Abdère et de Maronée" *BCH* 66-67 (1942-1943) 176-99 and, for specific publications, D. Kallintzi and Chr. Veligianni, "Eine neue Weihinschrift aus Abdera" *The Ancient History Bulletin* 10.2 (1996) 51-65 and T. Papanikolaou, "Μία επιγραφή από τα Ἀβδηρα" in D. Triandaphyllos and D. Terzopoulou (eds), *Αρχαία Θράκη. Πρακτικά 2ου Διεθνούς Συμποσίου Θρακικών Σπουδών, Κομοτηνή 20-27 Σεπτεμβρίου 1992* (Komotini 1997) vol. II, 841-47. All the epigraphic material will be included in the corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions of Aegean Thrace, currently studied for publication by the Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity of the National Hellenic Research Foundation in collaboration with the Greek Archaeological Service. Furthermore, all material relevant to the prosopography and the onomasticon of this entire region and deriving from inscriptions as well as from literary sources and coins has already been gathered and is currently prepared for publication by M.G. Parissaki.
6. J.M.F. May, *The Coinage of Abdera (540-345 BC)* (London 1966) 49-58.
7. J.M. Balcer, "The early silver coinage of Teos" *SchwNumRu* 47 (1968) 5-50, pl. 11-19.
8. K. Chryssanthaki, *L'histoire monétaire d'Abdère du VI^e avant J.-C. au II^e siècle après J.-C.* (Ph.D Diss., Paris 2000).
9. P. Herrmann, "Teos und Abdera im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Ein neues Fragment der *Teiorum Dirae*" *Chiron* 11 (1981) 1-30, pl. 1-3 (= *SEG* 31 [1981] 985). See also the remarks of R. Merkelbach, "Zu dem neuen Text aus Teos" *ZPE* 46 (1982) 212-13 and D.M. Lewis, "On the new text of Teos" *ZPE* 47 (1982) 71-72.
10. As clearly in side B; see Herrmann, *op.cit.* 5.
11. For a description of the most characteristic letterforms, see *ibid.*
12. Namely an inscription of Erythrai dated to "before 454", the Athenian Phaselis decree of the first half of the fifth century BC, the Athenian Erythrai decree dated to ca 460 and two slightly later inscriptions from Miletos: Herrmann, *op.cit.* (n. 9) 5-6 with basic bibliography.
13. For the ancient name *Χάραξ* of Herēke-Eraki-Araki, and the discovery in this area of materials from ancient Teos, see L. Robert in P. Devambez (ed.), *Bas-relief de Téos* (Paris 1962) 5; cf. L. and J. Robert, "Une inscription grecque de Téos en Ionie. L'union de Téos et Kyrbissos" *Journal des Savants* 1976, 172, n. 73 (= *Opera Minora Selecta* VII 316, n. 73).
14. For a detailed bibliography see Herrmann, *op.cit.* (n. 9) 1, n. 2-3. The document had disappeared by the middle of the nineteenth century AD.

15. For a critical presentation of all relevant bibliography see *ibid.* 1-2, with references.
16. Mention of Greeks and barbarians in Line B26.
17. For a detailed analysis of the text see K. Latte, *Heiliges Recht. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der sakralen Rechtsformen in Griechenland* (Tübingen 1920) 68.
18. See Herrmann, *op.cit.* (n. 9) 13, n. 32.
19. See, for example, the second law regarding the denouncement of a conspiracy, promulgated by Thasos but pertaining to Neapolis: J. Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l'histoire et les cultes de Thasos, I. De la fondation de la cité à 196 avant J.-C. (Études Thasiennes III)* (Paris 1954) 139-62, no. 18, pl. 13.1.
20. See *supra* n. 3. Cf. the interpretation suggested for the term *θετοί Τῆιοι*, tentatively restituted in the new inscription of imprecations in lines A6-7.
21. The use of the term *epanastasis* implies in our opinion a restoration of the pre-existing (thus the pre-persian) constitution rather than a revolt to overthrow the existing (pro-persian) government.
22. L. and J. Robert, "Une inscription grecque de Téos en Ionie. L'union de Téos et Kyrbissos" *Journal des Savants* 1976, 154-235 (= *Opera Minora Selecta* VII 297-379).
23. N. Ehrhardt, *Milet und seine Kolonien. Vergleichende Untersuchung der kultischen und politischen Einrichtungen* (Frankfurt am Main 1983) 252-53; but cf. Chr. Veligianni-Terzi, "Τέως και Ἀβδηρα" in Triandaphyllos and Terzopoulou, *op. cit.* (n.5) 700-703.
24. For the text see mainly SIG³ 656 with the remarks of P. Herrmann, "Zum Beschluss von Abdera aus Teos Syll. 656" *ZPE* 7 (1971) 72-77.
25. L. Robert, "Inscription hellénistique de Dalmatie. Appendice.- Sur un décret d'Abdère" *BCH* 59 (1935) 511-12 (= *Opera Minora Selecta* I 324-25). On the exceptional favours accorded to Kotys by Rome at the end of the war see Em. Condurachi, "Kotys, Rome et Abdère" *Latomus* 29 (1970) 581-94.
26. For a different dating at the very end of the second century BC or the beginning of the first see G. Chiranky, "Rome and Cotys, two problems: I. The diplomacy of 167 BC, II. The date of Sylloge³, 656" *Athenaeum* N.S. 60 (1982) 470-81.
27. It has been suggested that an inscription found at Paradeisos — in the northwest of Abdera and close to the Nestos river — and honouring Hadrian for the restoration of part of the *πάτριος χώρα* of Abdera might be somehow connected to the territorial dispute in the time of Cotys: L.D. Loukopoulou, "Provinciae Macedoniae finis orientalis: The establishment of the eastern frontier" in *Two Studies in ancient Macedonian Topography (ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ 3)* (Athens 1987) 66, n. 22.
28. Chr. Marek, "Teos und Abdera nach dem Dritten Makedonischen Krieg. Eine neue Ehreninschrift für den Demos von Teos" *Tyche* 12 (1997) 169-77, pl. 13 (= *SEG* 47 [1997] 1646; *BullEpigr* 1998, 352).
29. Livy 43.4.8-13; cf. Diod. 30.6.1.