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An Eventful Tenure: Aristomenes, *Hierapolos* of Telos, and Aglokritos, Rhodian Priest of Halios in 223/2 BC

ABSTRACT: This paper provides a contextual analysis of a fragmentary honorific decree from Telos—a Rhodian deme by the last quarter of the 3rd c. BC—for Aristomenes, the local *hierapolos* (IG XII.3, 30). It is ascertained that the entirety of the preserved decree was issued in honour of Aristomenes’ outstanding conduct of the office. His tenure as *hierapolos* was quite challenging, since he faced unforeseen expenses (ll. 7–11) and embezzlement of sacred funds (ll. 12–17) in the aftermath of an earthquake that hit the island. Since Aristomenes’ office is dated after the eponym of the Rhodian State, Aglokritos, this inscription proves to be of paramount importance for Rhodian chronology. The identification of the earthquake has been an unresolved issue in scholarship, as two major, well-recorded earthquakes hit Rhodes and Karia within the span of a quarter of a century—in 223/2 BC and in 199/8 BC respectively. After a close analysis of the text and considering that the eponym of the earthquake of 199/8 BC was Theuphanes, this paper identifies the earthquake in question with the first earthquake (i.e. 223/2 BC). In doing so, Aglokritos, the priest of Halios, can now be identified with the eponym of the earthquake of 223/2 BC. Consequently, his priesthood should be moved from Period IIb (Finkielzstein, 216 BC) or Period IIc (Castelli, 206 BC) to Period IIa in the amphoric sequence.

KEYWORDS: Telos, Earthquake, Rhodian chronology, Aglokritos priest of Halios, Amphora stamps.

A fragmentary honorific decree for a *hierapolos* called Aristomenes from Telos (IG XII 3, 30 = *SGDI* 3486) bears witness to the response of the local community to a disastrous earthquake that hit this small island in the southeast Aegean.¹ Two major, well-recorded earthquakes hit Rhodes and Karia within the span of a quarter of a century—in 223/2 BC and in 199/8 BC respectively. As the inscription has been connected to one of these earthquakes, it is usually dated to the last quarter of the 3rd or the early 2nd c. BC.² Since the Rhodian eponym, the priest of Halios, is employed to date Aristomenes’ magistracy, the inscription provides concrete evidence for the incorporation of Telos in the Rhodian State by the time in

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¹ The whereabouts of the stele are currently unknown (pers. comm. from the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese and special thanks to E. Kaninia). It was considered missing already by 1959 (Maier 1959, 182). The stele was found reused in one of the steps that led to the *metochi* of the *Koimisis tes Theotokou* in the monastery of Aghios Panteleemon in Telos. The inscription was last seen by Hiller von Gaertringen around 1897; by that time the letters in the left top corner and the last 5 lines of the stele were no longer visible (and hence underlined in the *IG* edition). For the parts that were no longer visible Hiller relied on Ross’ and Bechtel’s editions. The inscription was first published by Ross in 1842 (*IGI* II no. 169) after a copy of a transcript he received from the Rear-Admiral Thomas Saumarez Brock (1800–1875), surveying the Mediterranean in HMS Magpie from 1836 to 1842 (Ross 1846, 63). After an autopsy during his visit in Telos in May 12th–13th, 1842 (Ross 1846, 59), Ross made improvements to the reading of the text (1846, 62 no. 2).

² The different views about the identification of the earthquake and the date of the decree are discussed further below in the sections ‘The Earthquake’ and ‘Conclusions’ respectively.

question.³

Despite the scholarly consensus that this decree dates from the time of Telos' incorporation in the Rhodian State in the late 3rd c. BC, its precise date has been a much-contested issue. Two pieces of information in particular allow us to narrow down the chronological framework: first, the reckoning of the *hierapolos*' tenure in relation to the priest of Halios, Aglokritos (l. 4–5); second, the mention of the earthquake (l. 6). Through a thorough analysis of the text, this paper aims to resolve the issue of which earthquake is mentioned by the decree and thus to identify the year of Aglokritos' priesthood. This decree is of paramount importance for Rhodian chronology, as it constitutes one of the few instances in which the chronology of a Rhodian eponym can be securely fixed in time. Before delving into problems of chronology, it is essential first to take a close look at the structure and content of the decree, the longest extant honorific decree from Telos, running to 17 lines before breaking up.⁴ I present here a critical edition of the text, followed by a translation into English.

Honorific Decree for Aristomenes from Telos

Bluish marble stele, slightly broken to left and right, and broken below. Actual measurement: H. 26 x W. 44 x Th. 20 cm. Height of letters: 0.9 cm to 1 cm. Reused in one of the steps that led to the *metochi* of the *Koimisis tes Theotokou* in the monastery of Aghios Panteleemon in Telos. Now presumed lost.

Ed. pr. Ross 1842, 56–58 no. 169; Ross 1846, 62 no. 2; Bechtel, *SGDI* 3486 (ll. 1–12); van Gelder 1896, 253 no. 35; Hiller von Gaertringen, *IG XII.3*, 30; Maier 1959, 180–182 no. 48; Meier 2012, 276–279 no. 27.

Cf. also Stavrianopoulou 1997, 82–83; Fröhlich 2004, 372–373; Badoud 2015, 166.

The edition presented here is based on *IG XII.3*, 30. It contains minor improvements to the readings on the basis of Hiller's squeeze (Fig. 1) which are not recorded in the apparatus criticus; the apparatus only contains major restorations to the text.

Date: shortly after 223/2 BC.

- [ἔδοξ]ε Τηλίους, ἱεραπόλου γνώμα· ἐπειδὴ Ἀριστομένης Ἀρισ[το]-
 [β]ούλου [Τ]ήλιος ἔν τε τῶι πρότερον χρόνῳ ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς [ἐὸν]
 [δι]ετέλει περὶ τὸν δᾶμον τὸν Τηλίων, πολλὰς καὶ μεγάλας [χρεί]-
 4 [α]ς τῶι κ[οι]νῶι παρεχόμενος, αἴρεθεὶς τε ἱεραπόλος ἐπ' ἱερ[έως]
 [Ἀγλ]οκρίτου [πάσ]ας τὰς ποθόδους καὶ τὰ τελέσματα ὀ[ρθῶς]
 [καὶ] δικαίως δ[ιωκ]ον[όμ]ησε, σεισμοῦ τε γενομένου καὶ τῶν [- ca. 4 -]
 [κ]αὶ τῶν τευχῶν καὶ τῶν πύργων διασεισθέντων πᾶσαν [σπου]-
 8 [δὰ]ν καὶ φιλοτιμίαν ἐποίησατο εἰς τὸ ἀνοικοδομηθῆμεν [πάντα]
 [τ]ὰ ποτιδεόμενα ἐπισκευᾶς καλῶς καὶ λυσιτελῶς, οὐ μό[νον τὰ]

³ Fraser and Bean 1954, 146 n. 6; Fraser 1977, 24 n. 112; Papachristodoulou 1989, 46–47. This is the only epigraphic evidence that sheds light on the incorporation of Telos into the Rhodian State by the late 3rd c. BC. The list of Pythaïstai (*SEG* 25: 853) dated by Stavrianopoulou (1997, 83 n. 20) to between 240–220 BC can no longer be considered compelling evidence for the Telian incorporation by that date, since the priest of Halios, Timodikos, should be identified with the well-attested priest of Period V (ca. 145 BC) and not with an unattested priest of the 3rd c. BC (see also Badoud 2015, 178 A 57). Furthermore, the letterforms of *SEG* 25: 853 conform well with a mid 2nd c. BC date and are completely different from those found in another list of Pythaïstai (*SEG* 25: 852) that dates to a century earlier (mid-3rd c. BC; both lists are now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Telos).

⁴ Telos has yielded five decrees in total including that under discussion: a proxeny decree dated to before the incorporation of Telos into the Rhodian state (*IG XII.3* 29); two honorific decrees for benefactors: *SEG* 3: 716; 25: 857 = *I.Dor.Inseln* 32; the date of the latter ranges from the first half of the 4th c. BC (Susini 1963–64, 280) to the early 2nd c. BC (Peek 1969, 19 n. 32); and an honorific decree for one Kleonyma, dating to Roman times (*SEG* 3: 715).

- [γε]νόμενα [ε]ἰς [τ]αῦτα τελέσματα διδοὺς ἀπροφασίστως, ἀλλ[ᾶ] vac
 [κα]ὶ καθ' αὐ[τὸ]ν χρεῖαν ἐν πάσιν ἐκτενῆ παρεχόμενος, κα[ὶ] vac
 12 [ὁ]πότε ἐβ[ού]λετό τις τὰν πόθοδον τὰς ἱεράς καταφθεῖρα[ι - ca. 4 -]
 [- - ca. 9 - - π]οησάμενος καὶ τόπων τινῶν, ΑΦΑΣΑΤΕ ΕΙ[- ca. 5 -]
 [- - - - -]ΙΤΟΙ[. ε]ἰς τὰλλα ἱερά τὰ ἐχθυόμεν[α - ca. 4 -]
 [- - - - -]Σ τὰ[ν] πόθοδον γίνεσθαι ἀπὸ το[ῦ - ca. 5 -]
 16 [- - - - -]ἀδικῆσαι, πᾶσαν σπου[δὰν - ca. 8 -]
 [- - - - -]ΟΝ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα Α[- - - - -]

6: [οἴκων] Bechtel, Maier; [οἴκων] vel [ναῶν] Hiller || 13: [ἔφοδον(?) τε π]οησάμενος Hiller; [--- ἀντι-π]οησάμενος Maier, [--- προσ/μεταπ]οησάμενος Skaltsa; *in fine* ἀφ' ἧς ἄτε ει..., Ross 1846, van Gelder; ἀφὰς ἄτε εἰ[δός(?)] Hiller; ἀφ' ἧς ἄ τε εἰ[-] Maier; ἀφ' ἧς ἄ τε εἰ[σφορά] Skaltsa; 14: ἰτο κ[αὶ ε]ἰς Maier

“Resolved by the Telians, on the motion of the hierapolos. Since Aristomenes son of Aristoboulos of Telos in earlier times has continuously been a noble man concerning the people of Telos, rendering many great services to the koinon, and since, having been appointed hierapolos in the priesthood of Aglokritos, he administered all the revenues and the expenses with fairness and justice, and when an earthquake occurred and the [...] and the walls and the towers were shattered violently, he made every effort and showed every kindness towards the reconstruction of all that was necessary in terms of repair in a good and lavish manner, not only by contributing unhesitatingly to the expenses incurred towards these (repairs), but also by providing unstinting assistance in all matters himself, and when someone was trying to misuse the revenue of the sacred (land?), having laid claim to some places, from which (i.e. the land) the contribution/tax (?) [...] towards the other sacrifices which are performed [... to?] the revenue to accrue from the [...] to have done wrong, great care [...] and the other [...].”

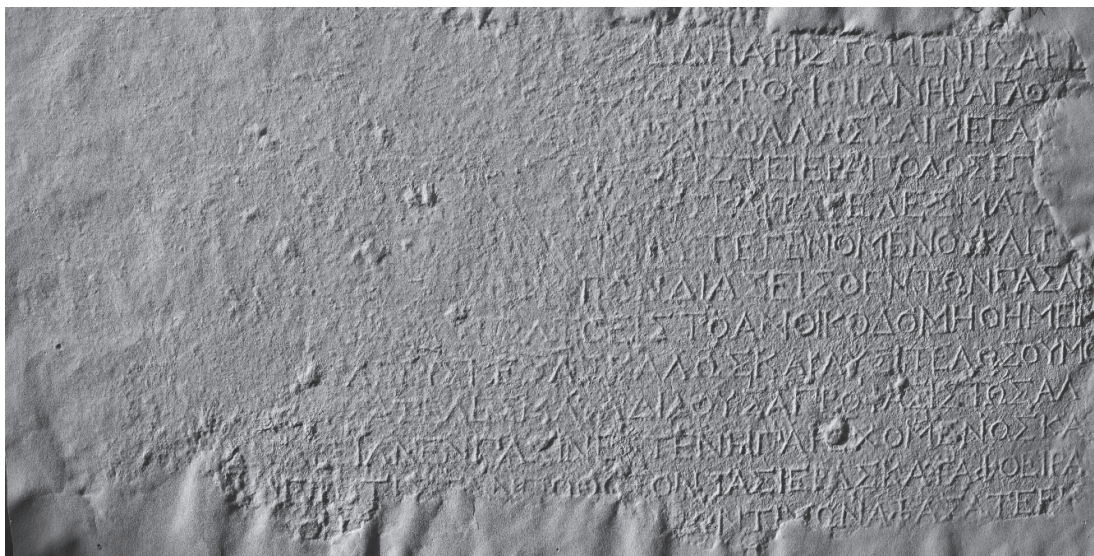


Fig. 1: Photo of the squeeze (IG XII.3, 30) © Inscriptiones Graecae, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften.

The honorific decree for Aristomenes, son of Aristoboulos, of Telos, was issued by the Telians (1. 1. Τηλίοις), who at this time constituted a Rhodian deme. Thus, the *damos* of the Telians in line 3 is none other than the local subdivision of the Rhodian State, and not an independent *polis*.⁵ The motion of this

⁵ It is common practice within the Rhodian state for decrees issued by the local demes to employ the term δᾶμος to refer to the local community, e.g. *I.Pérée rhod.* 4 = *I.Rhodische Peraia* 552 (Kedreai). The term *koinon* used to refer to the community of the Telians in line 4 further illustrates the fluidity and plurality of terminology for civic subdivisions within the Rhodian State; see also *I.Pérée rhod.* 6 = *I.Rhodische Peraia* 551 (Kedreai).

decree was proposed by the *hierapolos* currently in office, one of Aristomenes' unnamed successors with a view to conferring honours on his predecessor for that man's outstanding conduct.⁶ The exact honours that were passed for Aristomenes, besides the erection of the stele containing the decree, escape us, as the stele is broken at the bottom. Nevertheless, lines 1–17 illustrate the reasons for which the community of Telos honoured a local magistrate. From what we can judge, line 17 does not contain the resolution formula of the decree and therefore more lines would provide further justification of Aristomenes' services.

As is typical of Hellenistic decrees, lines 1–4 offer a standardized justification of the honours passed; as a model member of the community (*ἄνθρωπος ἀγαθός*), Aristomenes has provided services to his hometown and continues to do so.⁷ Line 4 then moves away from moral values and goes on to provide tangible examples of Aristomenes' merit. Introduced by a causal participle—*αἰρεθείς* accompanied by the particle *τε* as a linking conjunction—we hear that Aristomenes held the office of *hierapolos*, which as the word suggests seems to have been that of an annual “chief priest”.⁸ The handling of religious affairs would have been a major part of this office. This is illustrated by the famous reconciliation dossier of the late 4th c. BC.⁹ In this decree the *hierapoloι* together with the treasurers are the only Telian magistrates featuring in the text; the settlement of trials about sacred affairs apparently fell under the *hierapolos*' responsibilities.¹⁰ Our decree further confirms that the duties of the *hierapolos* were largely connected to the handling of sacred property (ll. 12–15). Yet his duties also encompassed the handling of finances in general as illustrated by the preceding lines (ll. 4–11).

In his capacity as a *hierapolos*, Aristomenes is praised specifically for his handling of public finances (ll. 5–6). Praise and acknowledgment of Aristomenes' fine managerial skills are not pure rhetoric. Aristomenes' term in office coincided with exceptional circumstances: extended damage to the physical infrastructure of this Rhodian deme, including the fortification walls and towers, occurred when an earthquake hit Telos (ll. 6–7); acting with zeal and *philotimia*, Aristomenes saw to the repair of all damaged buildings in a good and advantageous manner (*καλῶς καὶ λυσιτελῶς* l. 9), unhesitatingly (*ἀπροφασίστως* l. 10) providing money towards these expenses and personally rendering his services (l. 11: *καθ' αὐτὸν χρεῖαν ἐν πᾶσιν ἐκτενῆ παρεχόμενος*). Damage caused by a natural disaster necessitates prompt action and co-ordination by the authorities; otherwise, public disorder could ensue. Aristomenes ensured that cash would flow smoothly and that any assistance needed would be provided. It was apparently within Aristomenes' remit as a *hierapolos* to decide how money would be allocated towards these unforeseen expenses.

Despite the extra workload that the organization and co-ordination of repair works entailed, Aristomenes also had to deal with problems related to the administration of sacred property. Lines 13 to 17 are notoriously difficult to understand as only a few letters were preserved on the stone. Yet, references to

⁶ Fröhlich (2004, 372–373) is also of the view that the decree was passed after the end of Aristomenes' office.

⁷ On Aristomenes, Stavrianopoulou 1997, 120 no. 98; Stavrianopoulou (1997, 118 no. 64) considers Aristoboulos son of Aristomenes, a member of the Pythaistai, the son of the honorand of our decree.

⁸ This magistracy is primarily attested in Sicily; in Morgantina, the *hierapolos* is the eponym (*SEG* 39: 1008–1009, ca. 300–200 BC), while the attestation of this office in Gela (*IG* XIV 256 [1st c. BC], 257 [3rd c. BC]) has been considered a remnant of the Telian involvement to the foundation of the city together with the Lindians, see Simonton 2019, 192 n. 23. The office of *hierapolos* is also attested in Akarnanian cities (*IG* IX.I² 2, 434, 454, 455, 583), while in the 2nd c. BC, the eponymous official/priest of the Akarnanian League was a *hierapolos* of Apollo Aktios (*IG* IX.I² 2, 209b, 208, 588, cf. Freitag 2015, 81).

⁹ Internal unrest/civil discord had torn apart the *polis* of Telos and Telian society in the late 4th c.; it was thanks to Koan judges that a settlement was reached: *IG* XII 4.1 132. See Simonton 2019 for a discussion of this reconciliation dossier and how small communities are equally prone to civil disorder. The mention of ‘kings’ (i.e. Antigonos the One-Eyed and Demetrios the Besieger) in Face B, fr. b l. 108, narrows down the date of this dossier to 306–301 BC.

¹⁰ This office survived into Roman times in the island (*SEG* 3: 715).

sacrifices performed (l. 14), revenues accrued (l. 15) and wrongdoings (l. 16) indicate that this part of the text elaborates on the measures taken by Aristomenes to deal with an attempt to embezzle sacred funds or revenues accruing from sacred property (l. 12). The restoration of the participle in line 13 is key for our understanding of the circumstances that led to such an offence. Introduced in the nominative, the participle ought to refer to the subject of the previous clause, namely the offender. The participle should, thus, be restored as deriving from a compound verb such as ἀντι-, μετα-, or προσ-ποιῶμαι, followed by the genitive (τόπων τινῶν); if so, this participle conveys the meaning of seizing land unlawfully for personal gain. Apparently land disputes continued to endanger unity in Telian society, decades after the reconciliation decree of the late 4th c. BC was passed. In a small island, encompassing an area of ca. 63 km², scarcity of land would have regularly given rise to disputes. To appropriate sacred funds for personal use by laying claim to sacred land would have prompted the interference of the *hierapolos*, especially at a time when funds were required for relief measures.¹¹ From references to sacrifices duly performed (l. 14), to revenues accrued from an unknown source (l. 15) and to wrongdoings (l. 16), we may infer that the natural disaster may have caused tension and may have given rise to corruption in the local community; this climate of civil disorder could have brought about some sort of interruption or problems in the observance and/or performance of religious rites, all of which Aristomenes was able to remedy.¹²

This analysis demonstrates that lines 4–17 are tightly connected to services undertaken by Aristomenes in his capacity as *hierapolos*. It was during his term in office that an earthquake occurred. Due to the damage caused in Telos, Aristomenes had to channel extra money from the public chest towards unforeseen expenses, namely repairs to physical infrastructure. Participles in the aorist like αἰρεθείς are used to explain the reasons for which Aristomenes was honoured. Aorist participles—σεισμοῦ τε γενομένου, διασεισθέντων—are also employed to illuminate the conditions that necessitated skilled management and prompt handling of finances. The introduction of all these participles in the same tense underlines the temporal clustering of actions and events. If the earthquake had occurred earlier, before Aristomenes was appointed *hierapolos*, then a perfect participle would have been expected to describe the unforeseen circumstances, i.e. σεισμοῦ τε γεγονότος, instead of γενομένου. This is not the case in our decree. Therefore, the earthquake occurred when Aristomenes was *hierapolos* and when Aglokritos was the eponym of the Rhodian State. To argue, as has been recently done, that the earthquake happened after Aristomenes' tenure and the actions he took are therefore unrelated to his office can be sustained neither by the syntax nor by the content of the decree.¹³ A temporal adverb or temporal phrase would have been expected in this case to denote a change of time if the earthquake occurred at a later juncture—that is after Aristomenes' term in office came to an end.

Furthermore, the word τέλεσμαα that appears twice in the text is a technical term, amply used in inscriptions of the Doric Aegean to denote expenses incurred and paid by public or sacred funds.¹⁴ The

¹¹ On the administration and importance of sacred land in Athens, see Papazarkadas 2011.

¹² On the reconciliation dossier, see above n. 9.

¹³ The structure of the decree does not support Badoud's view that Aristomenes' benefactions post-date his office as *hierapolos* (Badoud 2015, 166). Badoud argues that the particle τε in line 4 introduced a temporal clause which should not be related to what precedes, i.e. Aristomenes's office as *hierapolos*. It should be noted, however, that in Rhodian epigraphy the particle τε is consistently used in conjunction with participles (e.g. *Tit. Camirenses* 110), often as a matter of emphasis.

¹⁴ The term τέλεσμαα is often encountered in the inscriptions of the Rhodian State to refer to money spent on a specific expenditure, usually the stele on which a decree is to be inscribed (e.g. honorific decree of Pamphylidas son of Hieron from Karpathos [*I. Lindos* p. 1007 fr. 2 l. 47, 155–153 BC]; honorific decree of Karpathos for the Samian doctor, Menokritos, son of Menodoros [*IG XII.1* 1032, 2nd c. BC]; honorific decree for a Rhodian proxenos in Amorgos [*IG XII.7*, 228 ll. 26–27]), but also for other types of expenditure (e.g. tiling of the roof in Syme, *IG XII.3* 1270 l. 6, 2nd c. BC). An inscription from Kos (*IG XII.4.1* 330 ll. 23–24) makes it clear that the *telesma* was paid by public or

mention of the word *τελέσματα* in line 10 can only be understood in the context of public finances; Aristomenes spent money for the repairs in his capacity as an official and not as an individual. Furthermore, the decree goes on to describe other acts that Aristomenes performed as *hierapolos*, such as countering an attempt at embezzlement and ensuring the due performance of sacrifices (lines 12–14). Any claim that Aristomenes' office pre-dates by a few years the earthquake that caused damage in Telos is therefore unsustainable. Likewise, it is difficult to argue that the earthquake occurred long before Aristomenes was appointed *hierapolos*, since the text presents a logical succession of events:

- Aristomenes was appointed *hierapolos* when the eponym of the Rhodian State was Aglokritos;
- it was during his term in office that an earthquake hit Telos causing considerable damage to its building infrastructure;
- the damage was of such an extent that restoration required the coordinating efforts of civic authorities. In his capacity as *hierapolos*, Aristomenes responded promptly to this disaster, providing money and assistance; the community had the full support of the authorities to overcome the damage caused by the earthquake.

This decree was clearly passed to praise Aristomenes' honorable conduct of the office, enumerating in a detailed manner what Aristomenes accomplished successfully and efficiently in this role: good handling of the finances and restoration works, administering religious affairs, and protecting sacred land and revenues. Aristomenes' services are indissolubly connected to his office.

As Aristomenes' magistracy is dated to Aglokritos' priesthood, it is reasonable to assume that Aglokritos' priesthood was likewise contemporaneous with the earthquake that caused the collapse of walls and towers in Telos. In establishing the interconnectedness of the magistracies with this event, it is time to look closely into the earthquakes that hit this part of the Aegean, and address issues related to Rhodian chronology.

The Earthquake

Lying halfway between Kos and Rhodes—a region prone to earthquakes still today—Telos could have been easily affected by earthquakes that would hit the two bigger islands and the Rhodian Peraia.¹⁵ The earthquake that hit Telos has been traditionally connected with one of the two well-recorded earthquakes that hit Rhodes and Karia in the late 3rd and early 2nd c. BC. The earlier of the pair is the famous earthquake that features in Polybius' account (5.88.1); traditionally dated to 227/6 BC, the date of this earthquake should now be placed in 223/2 BC.¹⁶ The other well-known earthquake is the one that hit Rhodes and Karia in 199/8 BC.¹⁷ The identification of the earthquake in Telos has divided scholars into

sacred funds. The same term is also employed by private associations within the Rhodian State to defray expenses, e.g. *ASatene* 17–18 (1939–1940), 156 no. 18; *I.Rhodische Peraia* 155.

¹⁵ Skaltsa 2021; see now, especially Adak and Ünver 2025. I extend my thanks to Mustafa Adak for making this paper available to me before publication.

¹⁶ Skaltsa 2025.

¹⁷ On the earthquake of 199/8 BC that hit Karia and Rhodes, see Habicht 2003, 556–557, with references to Justin 30.4 and *I.Stratonikeia* 4. The Rhodian inscriptions that mention this earthquake are the following: *TRI* 21 (*TC* 110 + *TC* Suppl. p. 27) and *IG* XII 1 9 (*Syll.*³ 1116). This earthquake is connected to the one that hit Thera and gave rise to the islet of Hiera, see Holleaux 1904, 359 n. 1. It is Justin who makes the connection explicit 30.4.1–3: “In the same year a concussion of the earth happened between the islands Thera and Therasia, in the midst of the sea at an equal distance from either shore, where, to the astonishment of those that were sailing past, an island rose suddenly from the deep, the water being at the same time hot. In Asia too, on the same day, the same earthquake shattered Rhodes, and many other cities, with a terrible ruin; some it swallowed up entire.”

two fields; those who identify the earthquake with that of 227/6 BC [revised date 223/2 BC] and those who support an identification with the earthquake of 199/8 BC.¹⁸

The earthquake of 199/8 BC occurred when the eponym of the Rhodian State was Theuphanes.¹⁹ More specifically, it occurred before the 7th of Xandikos in the 23rd regnal year of Philip V of Macedon (i.e. 199/8 BC), as an honorific decree from Panamara in Karia makes explicit (*I.Stratonikeia* 4); this decree—not unlike that for Aristomenes—attests to an earthquake that hit the area; in this case, the events reported in the aorist passive (συνσεισθέ[ν]των τῶν τειχέων ὑπὸ τοῦ σεισμοῦ) happened somewhat in the past.²⁰ Since Justin makes it explicitly clear that the earthquake happened “on the same day” in Thera and in the rest of the eastern Aegean, and Eusebius/Jerome date the earthquake of Thera to Olympiad 145.2 (199/8 BC) (Helm 136a), this earthquake must have happened sometime in autumn/early winter, between August 199 BC (after the Olympiad begins) and early March 198 BC.²¹ Further epigraphic evidence from Kos, Samos and Iasos in Karia confirms Justin’s account that many more cities were shattered by this very same earthquake.²²

An identification with the earthquake of 199/8 BC should be abandoned altogether, for the simple reason that when the earthquake hit Rhodes and Karia in 199/8 BC, the priesthood of Halios was held by Theuphanes. The date of this priesthood is firmly anchored in 199/8 BC, constituting one of the rarest instances in Rhodian chronology where amphoric evidence is unequivocally supported by epigraphic evidence.²³ As shown above, the Telian decree demonstrates that an earthquake hit Telos during Aristomenes’ office, which was concurrent with the priesthood of Aglokritos in Rhodes. If we do not wish to imagine a third earthquake in the late 3rd or early 2nd century BC—otherwise unattested in our sources—then the only option is to accept that the decree from Telos provides one more instance in Rhodian chronology in which the priesthood of Halios can be firmly fixed in historical time. The famous earthquake that caused the collapse of the Colossus and extensive damage to the walls and ship-sheds of Rhodes is therefore the very same earthquake that hit Telos. This earthquake is dated in Olympiad 139.2,

¹⁸ Van Gelder (1900, 5), Hiller von Gaertringen (1931, col. 785), Fiehn (1934, 428), Stavrianopoulou (1997, 83, 86, 90), Külzer (2002, 104), and Meier (2012, 278) are in favour of the earthquake of 227/6 BC, while Holleaux (1904, 358 n. 2), Maier (1959, 181–182), Badoud (2015, 166) connect the earthquake of the Telian decree to the earthquake of 199/8 BC. For Robert (1978, 403 n. 68) there was no conclusive evidence to associate this earthquake with that of 227/6 BC; nevertheless, he still believed that this was the most likely candidate: “La date du séisme n’est pas établie... Peut-être attendrait-t-on, comme ailleurs, τοῦ σεισμοῦ pour le fameux séisme de 227”. Papachristodoulou (1989, 46–47) entertained the possibility of both dates, though he admitted that the earthquake of the inscription was more likely that of 227/6 BC.

¹⁹ *IG* XII.1, 9: decree of an association passed in the month of Hyakinthios (May/June) for the repair of funerary monuments in the Rhodian necropolis damaged during the earthquake; *Tit. Camirenses* 110, ll. 19–21: honorific inscription of Kamiros mentioning the priesthood of Theuphanes as concomitant to an earthquake.

²⁰ *I.Stratonikeia* 4, ll. 16–19: καὶ συνσεισθέ[ν]των τῶν τειχέων ὑπὸ τοῦ σεισμοῦ, ἐκτενῆ παρέχων αὐτόν, ἐπεσκεύασεν πάντα / “since the walls had been shaken by an earthquake, he devoted himself unremittingly to the task of repairing them, and saw to it that the work was completed”.

²¹ Note that this is the date in Jerome’s translation (Helm 136a). In the Armenian translation it is misplaced two years earlier, in Olympiad 144.4 (Karst 202).

²² The earthquake is mentioned in an inscription from Kos about the sale of the priesthood of Aphrodite Pandemos in the year of the monarch Leukippos, dated in 199/8 BC (*IG* XII.4.1 302 A ll. 31–32); for the date of the *monarchoi* mentioned in the inscription see Habicht 2000, 314. An honorific decree for a doctor in Samos mentions seismic activity that wreaked havoc in the island, which has also been connected to the earthquake of 199/8 BC (*IG* XII.6.1, 12). In a letter sent by queen Laodike III, sister and wife of Antiochos III, to the city of Iasos around the mid 190s reference to a natural disaster is made, identified as the earthquake that hit both Rhodes and Karia before the spring of 198 BC (*I.Iasos* 4, ll. 6–8: καὶ ὡς τὴν ὑμετέραν πόλιν συμπτώμασιν περιπεσοῦσαν ἀπροσδοκῆτοῖς / “encountered unforeseen disasters”).

²³ Habicht 2003, 556–557; Badoud 2015, 174–175 A 40.

i.e. in 223/2 BC, in the Chronological Tables of Eusebius as they have been transmitted down to us by Jerome's Latin translation and an Armenian translation.²⁴ In other words, Aglokritos ought to have been the priest of Halios in that very same year, i.e. 223/2 BC.

Aglokritos and the Amphoric Evidence

How does a date in 223/2 BC for the priesthood of Aglokritos correspond to the relative chronology of amphoric studies for this eponym?

The chronology of the priests of Halios, the eponymous officials of the Rhodian State, is mostly established as a relative chronology and still subject to revision. Aglokritos—the eponymous priest of Halios mentioned in the decree from Telos—has been dated by Finkielsztejn (2001) to period IIb, that is between 219 and 210 BC (relative chronology), more specifically in 216 BC (Finkielsztejn's so-called "absolute chronology", though it does not rely on a historical fixed point, more on the relative sequence of amphora stamps and styles).²⁵ Although Badoud expressed some uneasiness with this date, considering it too high, it was Castelli who presented arguments for lowering the date of Aglokritos' priesthood from period IIb (ca. 219–210 BC) to period IIc (ca. 209–199 BC) and more specifically to 206 BC, that is to say around a decade later than Finkielsztejn.²⁶ Castelli noticed that Aglokritos' stamps are absent from two sites in the area of Kallatis in the Western Black Sea Region, Satu Nou and Albești respectively. Satu Nou was destroyed around 212 BC and Albești was abandoned around 210 BC on the evidence of Sinopian and Rhodian amphora stamped handles retrieved from these two sites.²⁷

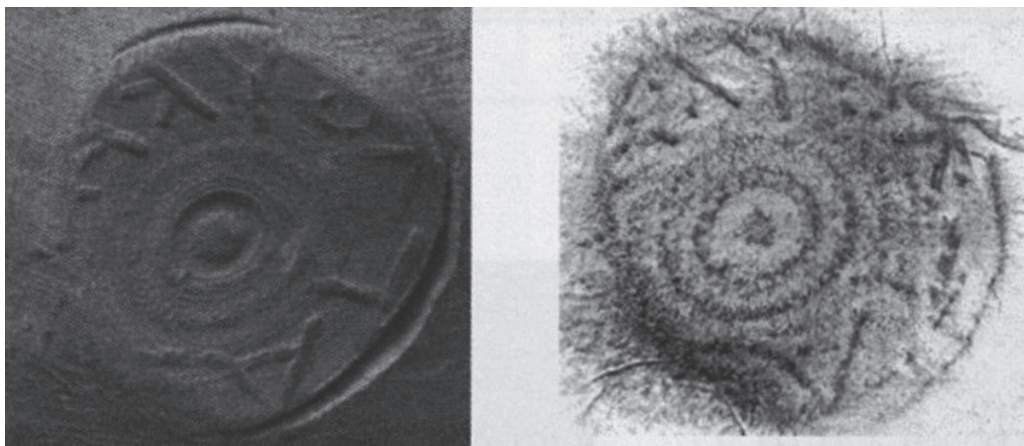


Fig. 2: Photo and rubbing of Aglokritos' button-shaped stamp (RE-ΑΓΛΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ-011), from Cankardeş-Şenol 2015, 83.

Although the absence of Aglokritos' stamped handles from these two sites has been considered by Castelli conclusive evidence for down-dating his priesthood to 206 BC, I retain some reservations concerning the way in which the absence of stamps from archaeological sites should be interpreted. Stamps of Nikasagoras the Elder, whose priesthood is placed in Period Ic (ca. 235–230 BC),²⁸ are similarly absent from these two sites, and if we accept Castelli's revised chronology, equally absent from both sites are stamps of Harmosilas, now dated in Period IIb. Likewise, four Sinopean officials of Period VI are not

²⁴ See n. 16 above.

²⁵ Finkielsztejn 2001, 112 Table 4. For Aglokritos' stamps, Cankardeş-Şenol 2015, 80–84.

²⁶ Badoud 2015, 165–166 A7; Castelli 2017, 22; Habicht (2003, 550) dated Aglokritos in the last quarter of the 3rd c. BC.

²⁷ Avram 2010.

²⁸ For the revised chronology see now Finkielsztejn 2021, 206 Table 11.1.

attested in these two sites.²⁹ Yet in all these instances evidence of absence did not lead to a revision of chronology for the aforementioned eponyms. Indeed, as the old adage goes: “absence of evidence, is not evidence of absence”.

Equally importantly, a date in 206 BC would appear too late in light of the style of Aglokritos’ stamps.³⁰ The following difficulties arise:

- A distinct type of rose, associated with the fabricant Zenon I, is attested in connection with Aglokritos’ stamps. This type of rose is only attested with eponyms dated in Periods Ic (ca. 235–230 BC) and IIa (ca. 229–220 BC), all pre-dating Aglokritos in Finkielsztein’s chronology.³¹ To lower Aglokritos’ priesthood as late as 206 BC (Period IIc) is not supported by the otherwise long-lasting career of Zenon I, extending from ca. 245 to 219–211 BC.³² It would also constitute a unique and otherwise inexplicable instance of the reuse of a style of stamp that had long gone out of use.
- Aglokritos is known to have used button-shaped stamps (Fig. 2).³³ This is a quite distinct and popular type, used for nearly two decades, throughout Period Ic and for most of Period IIb. In particular, Aglokritos’ stamps bear similarities to the stamps of eponyms who cluster towards the late years of Period IIa, that is between 224 and 220 BC, and with the stamps of eponyms, who cluster in the early years of Period IIb, that is ca. 219–215 BC, as Finkielsztein originally argued.³⁴
- The button-shaped stamps—well attested among Aglokritos’ stamped handles—seem to have gone out of fashion towards the later part of Period IIb (relative chronology),³⁵ having been replaced by the pseudo-button stamps. The latter is a rather short-lived type, introduced sometime towards the second half of Period IIb before becoming obsolete early in Period IIc. The pseudo-button type co-existed with another peculiar type of stamp, the heart-leaf stamp. Eponyms who used the pseudo-button type, usually also used the heart-leaf type. Aglokritos did not use either of these types.

Although stylistic evidence has its own limitations, it nevertheless proves to be an essential tool for groupings. The discussion above demonstrates that Aglokritos’ stamp types cluster with those of eponyms dated late in Period IIa (ca. 224–220 BC) and early in Period IIb (ca. 219–215 BC). Aglokritos’ stamps do not account for a date of his priesthood in Period IIc (ca. 209–200 BC).

Castelli’s lower chronology for Aglokritos would at first sight seem to conform with another type of evidence used to establish amphoric sequences: collaborations between eponyms and fabricants. On the grounds of Aglokritos’ collaboration with the fabricant Menon, who is also attested as collaborating with Theuphanes, the priest of Halios in 199/8 BC—one of the few fixed Rhodian priesthoods—, Badoud proposed that Aglokritos’ priesthood should be lowered to shortly before 199 BC.³⁶ The collaboration of

²⁹ Avram 2010, 170–1 Table I (Sinopean eponyms) and 172–3 Table II (Rhodian eponyms).

³⁰ It should be noted that Aglokritos’ stamps exhibit remarkable diversity, perhaps reflecting changing practices in the stamping of Rhodian amphoras around this time.

³¹ The type of this particular stamp is classified under Z-IIIr in Finkielsztein’s publication (Finkielsztein 2001, 104 Table 3). The eponyms collaborating with Zenon and connected to this type of stamp are the following (I follow the revised chronology, Finkielsztein 2021, 206 Table 11.1): Nikon (ca. 235 BC), Daemon (ca. 234 BC), Aristeus (ca. 233 BC), Philokrates (ca. 226 BC), Pausanias I (ca. 225 BC), Kallikratidas I (ca. 224 BC).

³² For Zenon I, see Cankardeş-Şenol 2023, 445 and Cankardeş-Şenol *et al.* 2024, 154.

³³ Cf. Amphoralex RE-AΓΛΩKPITOC-011, RE-AΓΛΩKPITOC-012.

³⁴ See Finkielsztein 2001, 104 Table 3.

³⁵ Eponyms dated late in Period IIa and in Period IIb for whom the button-shaped stamp is attested: Philokrates (ca. 226 BC), Aristeidas I (224–220 BC), Kallikratidas I (224–220 BC), Onasandros (219–213 BC), Sochares (219–213 BC), Aischylinos (219–213 BC), Aglokritos (219–213 BC), Thrasydamos (219–213 BC), Polykrates (219–213 BC), Charmokles (219–213 BC) (after Finkielsztein 2001).

³⁶ Note, however, that in the Table of the priests of Halios Badoud (2015, 255) retains Finkielsztein’s higher chronology placing Aglokritos in 216 BC.

Aglokritos with the fabricant Menon does not, however, pose any problem to the validity of a higher chronology. Since some fabricants had a long career in the production of amphoras, occasionally spanning more than three decades,³⁷ Menon could well have collaborated with Aglokritos at the beginning of his career and with Theuphanes nearly two decades later. At any rate, as already mentioned, Aglokritos collaborated with the fabricant Zenon, active in Period Ic, IIa and IIb.³⁸

Taking into consideration the Telian decree, which clearly provides evidence for Aglokritos as the eponym of the year of the earthquake in 223/2 BC, this priesthood should be moved a few years earlier in the amphoric sequence, namely from 216 BC to 223 BC. Aglokritos can now be securely placed among the eponyms in the later part of Period IIa and constitutes a fixed point in the chronology of this period. That may have further ramifications for the sequence of eponyms in the transition from Period IIa to Period IIb, but this is not the place to open that discussion.³⁹

Conclusions

The decree for Aristomenes, son of Aristoboulos, from Telos is a major document for the history of Telos as a deme of the Rhodian State, but its implications for Rhodian chronology had hitherto remained unexplored. This paper argues for the chronological correlation between the office of the *hierapolos* Aristomenes, the priest of Halios Aglokritos, and the earthquake of 223/2 BC.

By providing a close reading of the decree, the extant text outlines Aristomenes' service as *hierapolos*. This interpretation, supported by the structure and context of the decree, refutes earlier views in scholarship that saw the decree as an honorific inscription that enumerated Aristomenes' benefactions over the course of his life. Instead, the extant text recounts Aristomenes' scope of action during his annual magistracy, which coincided with the priesthood of Aglokritos in Rhodes and the earthquake that hit Rhodes in 223/2 BC. This remarkable inscription provides another fixed point for the chronology of the Rhodian eponyms.

A final question concerns the date when this honorific decree was passed, since a dating formula is conspicuously absent from the preamble (l. 1). On account of the letterforms, a date for the inscription in the late 3rd c. BC or early 2nd c. BC has looked quite plausible to its editors (Fig. 1).⁴⁰ For instance, the *omicron* is among the smallest letters in the inscription, the *alpha* has a straight bar, the right stroke of *pi* is short, *mu* is quite open with straight strokes, and the *sigma* is square and not oblique. A date in the late 3rd or early 2nd c. BC would suggest that the decree was passed either straight after Aristomenes' magistracy or after a number of years had elapsed. Given the honorific practices of Greek cities, the former scenario is more compelling. It is likely that a closely succeeding *hierapolos* made the proposal to pay tribute to Aristomenes and his outstanding contribution.⁴¹ The year 223/2 BC and its immediate aftermath was a time when the Telian community faced inconceivable distress (collapse of walls and buildings) and perhaps civil unrest (i.e. embezzlement of sacred funds) caused by a natural disaster. Aristomenes' expeditious response to the unforeseen circumstances that afflicted Telos was exemplary. He took concrete steps to pay for repair works and to assist the community in any possible way. The stele of the honorific decree is the physical manifestation of the gratitude of the local community towards one of its magistrates, whose tenure of the office was exceptionally eventful.

³⁷ A notable example is Hieroteles, active in the Rhodian Peraia for at least 36 years, if we count the names of eponyms with whom he collaborated (Badoud, *BullArch* 2007, no. 158).

³⁸ See note 32 above.

³⁹ Finkielsztein's forthcoming revised chronology is eagerly awaited.

⁴⁰ Cf. Bechtel (*SGDI* 3486) remarked that "der Schriftcharakter würde zum Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts passen"; Hiller (*IG* XII.3, 30) commented on the elegant letters, approximately of the 2nd c. BC.

⁴¹ See n. 6 above.

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⁴² Epigraphic abbreviations are those of the GrEpiAbbr list of AIEGL (<https://aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html>).

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Olaylı Bir Görev Süresi: MÖ 223/222'de Telos'un Hierapolis'u Aristomenes, Rodos'un Halios Rahibi Aglokritos

Öz: Makale, Rodos'a bağlı Telos *demos*'unun *hierapolis* görevini üstlenen Aristomenes için MÖ 3. yüzyılın son çeyreğinde aldığı, parçalı bir şekilde korunmuş onurlandırma kararnamesinin (IG XII.3, 30) bağlamsal analizini sunmaktadır. Kararnamenin korunmuş kısmından onurlandırmanın Aristomenes'in görevini üstün bir şekilde yerine getirmesinden dolayı çıkarıldığı anlaşılmaktadır. Aristomenes'in *hierapolis* olarak görev süresi oldukça zorlu geçmiştir, zira kendisi adayı vuran bir depremin ardından öngörülemeyen masraflarla (s. 7–11) ve kutsal fonların suistimal edilmesiyle (str. 12–17) karşı karşıya kalmıştır. *Hierapolos*luğu Rodos'ta *eponym* rahip Aglokritos'un görev yılına denk geldiği için, bu yazıt Rodos kronolojisi için büyük önem taşımaktadır. Depremin tarihlendirilmesi bilim dünyasında henüz çözülmemiş bir konudur, çünkü çeyrek asır içinde Rodos ve Karia'yı sırasıyla MÖ 223/2 ve MÖ 199/8 yıllarında iki büyük deprem vurmuştur. Onurlandırma metninin yakından incelenmesi ve 199/8 yılının *eponym* rahibi olarak Theuphanes'in belirlenmesiyle söz konusu deprem MÖ 223/2 yılında gerçekleşen felakete özdeş tutulmuştur. Böylelikle, Halios rahibi Aglokritos, MÖ 223/2 depremindeki *eponym* rahiple özdeşleştirilebilir. Sonuç olarak, onun rahipliği, amfora mühürleri diziliminde daha önce önerilen Iib (Finkielzstejn, MÖ 216) veya Iic (Castelli, MÖ 206) dönemlerinden Iia dönemine taşınmalıdır.

ANAHTAR SÖZCÜKLER: Telos, Deprem, Rodos kronolojisi, Halios rahibi Aglokritos, Amphora mühürleri.