

ISic1177

Soldiers serving at Eryx honour their commander

Language

Ancient Greek

Type

honorific

Material

limestone

Object

block

Editor

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Autopsy

2011.06.15

Last Change

2019-05-24 - Jonathan Prag revised the file on the basis of the edition prepared for the 2017 catalogue

Place of origin (ancient)

Halaesa

Place of origin (modern)

near Castel di Tusa

Provenance

First recorded on the site by Antonio Agustín in 1559-1560

Coordinates

Current Location

Italy, Sicily, Halaesa, Antiquarium e sito archeologico di Halaesa, inventory ME 20218

Physical Description

A large rectangular limestone block, damaged around the edges of the face and with some material lost from both the top and bottom. The surface is badly weathered. The remains of a clamp-hole (vel sim) preserved front left of the top surface. The rear is very uneven with a large rounded protrusion.

Dimensions

Height 75 cm

Width 53 cm

Depth 45 cm

Layout

Greek text is visible over 10 lines, although much of the initial lines in particular is now lost

Execution

Engraved

Letter Forms

Where visible, the letters are plainly and regularly cut, without serifs. Epsilon has short middle bar, omicron is full size, omega is closed and slightly elliptical

Letter heights:

Line 1-10: 20-25 mm

Interlineation

Not measured: mm

Text

1. θεοῖς πᾶσι
2. οἱ στρατ[ευσ]άμενοι
3. ἐν Ἑ[ρυκ]ι
4. [---]
5. [---]
6. [---]
7. Ἡράκλεον Διοδώρου
8. Κα[---]

9. χιλιαρχήσαν[τα] ἐν Ἐρυκι

10. [εὐ]ν[οίας ἔν]εκεν

Apparatus

provisional text after Kaibel in IG 14 and Prestianni Giallombardo 2012,
pending processing of RTI imagery

Translation (en)

The men who served as soldiers in Eryx [-----] (dedicate) to all the gods (a statue of) Herakleios son of Diodorus Ka[---], who was military tribune in Eryx, on account of his goodwill.

Commentary

The text is badly damaged and was already very difficult to read when the first surviving transcription was made by Antonio Agustín in 1559-1560. The text of Agustín remains the closest to the best reconstruction which can now be made of the text, combining the conjectures and efforts of multiple scholars over the centuries (Prestianni Giallombardo 1993: tab.1 reproduces Agustín's transcription, preserved in codex Matritensis 5781 f.22; see further Prestianni Giallombardo 2012: 175-176). The text records honours set up by a group of soldiers for their military commander, one Herakleios son of Diodoros. Both names are well attested in Sicily, including at Halaesa (see LGPN). The incomplete word which follows the name could be the beginning of a demotic-type abbreviation, which is commonly found in Halaesan inscriptions, although none beginning KA- are currently known; it could also be a second name in the Sicilian Greek tradition (cf. Cordano 1997 and 1999: 152-154). Both the men serving as soldiers (presumably citizens of Halaesa) and the commander, described as a chiliarch, are recorded as serving at Eryx (modern Erice), where there was a major sanctuary of Astarte / Aphrodite / Venus. Diodorus Siculus (4.83.7) records that the Roman senate decreed "that the 17 most loyal cities in Sicily should wear gold in Aphrodite's honour and that 200 soldiers should watch over the sanctuary." Diodorus does not date this decree, but it is most likely to belong to the period immediately after the First Punic War (Prag 2011: 195-197). Two other inscriptions found at Eryx (ISic1101 [<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic1101>] and ISic0538 [<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0538>]) also record soldiers and commanders at Eryx, and it is a reasonable assumption that all three inscriptions relate to this special garrison, and that this text records soldiers from Halaesa serving in the garrison. ISic1101 [<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic1101>] records a Segestan also holding the position of chiliarch; the fact that our text was set up in Halaesa, makes it very likely that Herakleios was a Halaesan holding the same position. ISic0538 [<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0538>]

sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0538] describes the (unknown) commander of the same garrison as a tribunus militum and the Greek title chiliarch is the usual translation for this Roman position (it is interesting to see Greek citizens adopting a Roman military title). The presence of this text at Halaesa also implies that Halaesa was one of the 17 loyal cities mentioned by Diodorus and by Cicero (Verr.5.124), which fits with the city's privileged status under Rome (see Pais 1888: 173-194 for the fullest discussion of this group, and Prag 2007b: 82-83 on the garrison).

The inscription finds a local parallel in ISic0612 [<http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk/inscription/ISic0612>] , in which citizens of Halaesa and several other communities honour a Roman commander; a further parallel from Halaesa is offered by an as yet unpublished text in which cavalrymen from several cities including Halaesa honour an unknown individual.

The text cannot be closely dated, but belongs in the period between 241 and 49 BC.

Digital identifiers:

TM 492782

PHI 140660

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Cite as:

J. Prag et al. (2020-09-09): ISic1177. <http://sicily.classics.ox.ac.uk>. (Collection: TEI edition). <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4021541>



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