The Mysterious 3000 Talents of the First Kallias Decree

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For many people the orthodox dating of the two Kallias Decrees (434/3 B.C.) has become an article of faith. Geoffrey Woodhead lately deprecated attempts to shift what he regards as a central element in any sound reconstruction, to dislodge "so vital a piece of evidence." He was disturbed by my persistent efforts "to bring demolition tackle to bear" on the impressive building reared by the architects of The Athenian Tribute Lists. Above all he feared that such demolition, if it were allowed to succeed, could only leave us with "fallen and jumbled pieces of haphazard masonry." This reaction is entirely understandable. But what we badly need is solid argument. Donald Bradeen typically deployed this in a vigorous counterattack on such heretics as Fornara and myself. More recently Meigg's reasoned reply has also appeared. Bradeen showed conclusively that both decrees were inscribed by the same mason—a view already cautiously advocated by Pritchett, who provided some excellent new photographs of both sides of the stele. Were the decrees passed on the same day, as Wade-Gery insisted? Bradeen took this for granted, like most modern scholars, but Pritchett has usefully reminded us that it

1 For a good text, commentary and defence of the orthodox dating see R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis, A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions (Oxford 1969) [henceforth ML] 154-61, no.58 (IG I 91/92: ATL II D1, D2). My thanks are due to the editor and his two readers for some positive criticism, which has usefully improved the presentation of my thesis.


3 D.W. Bradeen, GRBS 12 (1971) 469-83 [henceforth BRADSEN]. In nn.4-5 he gave the main bibliography. Rereading his article lately I realised afresh how much we have lost through his untimely death. My attempt to meet his objections is in reality a sincere tribute to his memory. For Fornara's case (advocating Beloch's 418/7 B.C.) see GRBS 11 (1970) 185-96. In ΦΟΡΟΣ: Tribute to Benjamin Dean Meritt (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1974) 94-97 I adduced some more evidence (from the Golden Nikai records) supporting my 422/1 B.C. Kallias dating.

4 The Athenian Empire (Oxford 1972) 519-23 and 601.

5 Bradeen 469f; W. K. Pritchett, CalSciClAnt 4 (1971) 224f (see his pls. i and iv). H. T. Wade-Gery (JHS 51 [1931] 58) distinguished the hands and has been followed generally since.
is very far from certain. I do not want to argue this point here. Much more important issues are raised by Bradeen and Meiggs, and I shall concentrate on answering them on these.

Kallias was wholly concerned with the state of the Athenian treasuries. Firsthand evidence on part of Athena's holdings is supplied by the inventories of the three main divisions of the Parthenon. Some scholars have always insisted that these, which begin in 434/3 B.C., were specifically authorised by Kallias' second decree. That would clinch its date, and Bradeen and Meiggs both take this line. One small consideration should inspire caution. Kallias ordered all unweighed precious metal objects among the sacred treasures to be weighed. Yet the first Pronaos inventory opens with a gold ritual vessel noted as unweighed, and there are two further exceptions to Kallias' ruling at the head of the first Hekatompedon list. It would seem better to follow an old suggestion of Wade-Gery. Kallias had just stipulated that the moneys of Athena and the Other Gods should be banked on the right and left side of the Opisthodomos respectively. When he proceeded to order the complete weighing or counting of the separate objects, it was surely this particular accumulation that he had in mind. The other inventories may have formed the pattern for his. But this evidence in no way imposes 434/3 B.C. dating for Kallias.

Though Treasurers of the Other Gods can be traced back at least to 430/29 B.C., this again proves nothing for Kallias. Some years ago I deciphered in Mystoxides' transcript of a lost Attic financial record from ca. 430 B.C. the intriguing phrases -(t)at(h)ol. €(y) {:3o("A)ic and -tov -rov €y {:3o(A)ic. Bradeen accepted this with one proviso. He tried to keep open the possibility of reading -ται and -<τ>ον instead. Thus supplements such as [ἐπιμελεί]ται might be envisaged. But the crucial iota looks likelier, occurring in a line where Mystoxides made a single certain, venial mistake. And epimeletai—or epistatai?—seem
rather out of place in a document of this nature. Bradeen was therefore even prepared to accept my \(\tau \alpha \mu \iota \iota \alpha i\) and \(\tau \alpha \mu \iota \iota \alpha i \delta \nu\). But who were these treasurers from the Council, who served (if only once) as paymasters for the war alongside Athena’s treasurers? On Bradeen’s view they would be those elective officials from the Council known for the funds of the Mother and of Apollo from IG I² 79 lines 9–12. Now the date of that decree is quite uncertain, though it probably lies within the Peloponnesian War. But the funds of these deities will hardly have been very considerable. They would be doubtless adequate for the domestic needs of the Council and its cults. But how far could they help finance the war? If we once accept \(\tau \alpha \mu \iota \iota \alpha i \iota \epsilon \kappa \beta \omega \nu \lambda \varsigma\), I do not think that there is any escape this way. After all, we know that in 423/2 B.C. a board of Treasurers of the Other Gods was financing war operations together with Athena’s board, that such a board functioned in 430/29 and 429/8 B.C. also, and that the Other Gods had lent over 750 talents to the Athenian state by 426/5 B.C. Combining all the evidence we seem to find a pre-Kallias board of treasurers such as Beloch envisaged—different in origin, in mode of selection and in number. The variation in nomenclature may be a little baffling. At one moment they would be termed ‘tamiai from Council’, at another ‘tamiai of the Other Gods’. But there is similar variation in the title of Athena’s treasurers before the war—and that no longer misleads any reputable scholar.
The real stumbling-block against dating Kallias 422/1 B.C. remains, the 3000 talents which were taken up to Athena shortly before he proposed his decrees. Most people cannot believe that Athens could have found so much money for the goddess at that low financial point after an exhausting war. Wade-Gery's theory of a 'Sinking Fund' was an interesting expedient, but even its author had soon to abandon it as too modern and unrealistic. 16

The first point to note is that 'transfer' is a better translation of Kallias' verb ἀναφέρειν than either 'give' or 'repay'. Bradeen seized this excellently. 17 So also long ago did Gomme, who argued that in 434/3 B.C. 3000 talents was 'transferred' from the state treasury in the lower town to Athena on the Acropolis. 18 The ATL editors, who disagreed profoundly with Gomme, made their own valuable contribution to the debate by suggesting the idea of a steady annual accumulation of the 3000 talents rather than a single massive transaction. In their view 200 talents was regularly 'set aside' for Athena.
These two points can now be applied to the 420s rather than the 430s.

The main foreign revenue of Athens in the Archidamian War was still—and indeed increasingly—the allied tribute. Much of it was regularly remitted to Athena's treasurers for banking. But there were other revenues. The Samian war indemnity was still being paid off in 426/5 B.C. In that year Kleonymos specifically applied his strict financial regulations to that money, the indemnity now being paid by Thera and similar additional obligations of other allies. Samos paid no tribute, but Thera is thought to have been saddled with both indemnity and tribute. This would neatly illustrate Diodotos' point in the Mytilenean debate that, if the Athenians were sensible, they could recover allies after revolt in a fit state to pay back the costs of their suppression and meet demands for tribute. Gomme thought that the Samian indemnity might all have been paid back before war broke out. There is something in this idea, but unfortunately it will not square with Kleonymos' decree. If Samos were required to repay 80 talents a year, however—a not unreasonable figure—the indemnity could have been cleared within fifteen years. It amounted to some 1200 talents. Certainly by far the greater part, on any reckoning, should have been settled by 422/1 B.C. Byzantion had had to find a much smaller sum than Samos as its indemnity (ca 130 talents?) and had probably paid up well before Thera started. Thera was still neutral in spring 431 B.C. but must have been forced into the Athenian

19 ATL III 281 and 327f. The editors followed G. E. Stevenson (JHS 44 [1924] 1–9) in arguing that there were no sums worth mention in the public treasury after 449 B.C. Bannier had earlier argued that Kallias' perfect tense (ἀνέφευρεν) implied a process completed over a period of time (RhM 75 [1926] 186 n.1).

20 See ATL III 327–32 and Gomme, op.cit. (supra n.16) II 17–22 and III 687–89.

21 See ATL III D 8.20–24 (IG I 65+) as republished in ML 185 (no.68), with a new fragment promptly made known by Meritt (AJP 88 [1967] 29–32). I accept Meritt's [παράθεν ἔος] αἵρεσις [τῆς] τῶν ἀνδρῶν in lines 22f: Samos, Thera and others indebted to Athens would not have to elect collectors for these moneys, since they were not assimilated to tribute.

22 See ATL II List 26, col. iii 22 (?) with A 9 col. i 68 and ATL III 334f (Thera) and Thuc. 3.46.2. Thera was certainly assessed in 425/4 B.C., for 5 talents: the indemnity was, however, perhaps cleared by then.

23 See Gomme, op.cit. (supra n.16) II 17f and 33; Diod. 12.27.2 (Perikles' 80 talents from Samos in 441/0 B.C.) with E. Cavaignac, Études sur l'histoire financière d'Athènes (Paris 1908) 95; ATL III 327 n.7 and 334f (50 talents a year over 26 years). Later payments involving Samos (IG I 324 [ML no.72] 42 and 302, 18f with 297.16) should probably be divorced from the Samian indemnity: I agree with Gomme here. This is clearly true of those 'Samian' payments recorded in IG I 304 A (ML no.84) 18f and 34. See now on these the good treatment by Wesley Thompson in op.cit. (supra n.15) 229f.
alliance early in the war. Comparison with Byzantion suggests a very modest indemnity. The island was in 425/4 B.C. assessed for only five talents tribute. These indemnities do not seem to have gone into the same fund as the tribute itself. No 'banking charge' was levied on them for Athena, and Kleonymos' decree surely confirms that they were kept separate.

Nor were they the only extra Athenian revenue from the area of the Empire. Amphipolis probably sent valuable revenue to Athens, as well as ships-timber, in the period from 437/6 to 424 B.C. Even if we assume that bullion and money were physically retained at Amphipolis or Eion, they were presumably 'booked' in Athens and removed thither after Brasidas took Amphipolis and dangerously isolated its port. Just so, precious Athenian manpower was evacuated from Amphipolis under agreement with the enemy.

Gomme was perhaps wrong only in arguing that the 'transfer' of the 3000 talents was made in 434/3 B.C. On his view the public treasury of Athens was then left virtually empty. At least he recognised the continued existence of this treasury alongside Athena's central bank well after 449 B.C. The ATL editors came to deny it, but the mention of τὸ δημόσιον in relation to debts and fines in the first Methone Decree and Thoudippos' Reassessment arrangements is awkward for their view. They rather begged the question in glossing this as 'the profane funds stored on the Acropolis.' War indemnities and Amphipolis revenues, I submit, were paid in to the public treasury in the 420s and banked somewhere in the lower town.

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24 See Meritt, AFD 46 and ML 150f (no.55) for Byzantion; Thuc. 2.9.4 and ATL II A 9 col. i 68 for Thera.
25 Samos' name never appears in any Quota List, not even in a special category, nor in an Assessment. For Samos in D 8 see my n.21.
26 See Gomme's very good discussion of Thucydides' '600 talents of phoros' (2.13.3) in op.cit. (supra n.16) II 17-19.
27 See Thuc. 4.105-08; Gomme, op.cit. (supra n.16) III 578-88; ATL III 332-37.
28 op.cit. (supra n.16) II 31-33.
29 See ATL III 337f and II D 3.9ff (IG I* 57); ATL II A 9.28-31.
30 The Samian War was surely financed from a recognised confederate reserve fund held by Athena on the Acropolis, not from Athena's own money (as ATL III 327 and 334f). See on this point Gomme, op.cit. (supra n.16) II 21 and 31-33. The main evidence is IG I* 293 (ML 149ff, no.55), on which see Meritt, AFD 42-48. Athens surely felt committed to restoring the reserve, through the indemnity; but it was not a debt to Athens and so free of interest (unlike the loans from 433/2 B.C. on, as Gomme noted on p.26). The installments could either have been handed over to Athena piecemeal or banked until the total had been reached. I submit that the Athenians chose the second course and—unlike Gomme—believe that the total was not reached until some years after 431 B.C. (see supra n.23).
When peace with the Peloponnesians was being concluded in 422/1 B.C., almost all these accumulated funds will have been moved up to the Acropolis in a heroic effort to recreate the great central reserve protected by Athena. They can hardly have amounted to 3000 talents on the most optimistic estimate. Yet they would not have fallen short of 2000 talents. It is not difficult to envisage how the balance may have been found. Kallias defines the 3000 talents as being all Athenian currency. Now as late as 429/8 B.C. the consolidated treasury of the Other Gods contained precious metal and much foreign coinage. Athena’s treasury was presumably still similarly mixed. We need then assume only that in 422/1 B.C. the people decided to replace at least the foreign silver currency with good Athenian coin. This replacement could alone have entailed ‘taking up’ to the Acropolis a few hundred talents. Finally we should not rule out a further distinct possibility. The Athenians might have been able to spare as much as 1000 talents from their greatly increased tribute as a first installment towards repaying their debts to Athena. The ATL editors themselves suggested that this could have been done by the Panathenaia of 421 B.C., and I have elsewhere argued that their estimates of the funds available tended to be too low.

31 The Samian indemnity amounted to more than 1276 T, the Byzantine to over 128 T. See Meritt’s interpretation of IG I2 293.6–17 and 1–5 (AFD 42–48) and the good discussion in ML 151. They account alone for ca 1500 T. We must add the Amphipolis ‘balance’, miscellaneous allied indebtedness (ATL II D 3.9–16), rents from sacred temene and Athenian public land in the empire, etc.

32 On this and the mixed character of the Athenian funds ca 430 B.C. see my earlier treatment in BCH 92 (1968) 462f and Wesley Thompson’s acute study of IG I1 310 and 302 in op.cit. (supra n.15) 224–26. I accept his view (p.226) that “the accounting method employed in IG I1, 310 does not show whether or not the foreign silver was still acceptable as currency in 429/8.” I was too dogmatic in ProcAfrCA 7 (1964) 48. The vital point is that the treasuries still had considerable foreign coinage in the early 420s, whatever its legal status. See ATL III 354f and my argument in BCH 92 (1968) 463f and 470 (Kallias Decree voted close to the Dionysia of 421 B.C.?). If the Dionysia were imminent when the 3000 talents were ‘carried up’, the bulk of current tribute could have been earmarked to this end. Meiggs (op.cit. [supra n.4] 523) reasonably objected to my calculations in BCH that “There remains a considerable gap.” If my thesis on Samos (no more than an adaptation of Gomme’s, really) may be accepted, the gap is filled. I am glad that Bradeen (p.473 n.21) finally disposed of the chance “of the Athenians having either 1200 or 200 talents to pay to the Other Gods,” which Fornara canvassed in op.cit. (supra n.3) 193. I had tried the supplement [σε]ξ [τὶ τὸν χαλῇ] [α]γακότων το[ν]άδυτον in D 2.21f (ProcAfrCA 7 [1964] 41), though I abandoned it in BCH 92 (1968) 464. Bradeen rightly insisted that in the fifth century such composite numbers would be linked with καὶ, the smaller coming first. The total of 3200 talents is manageable in 422/1 B.C. and the 200 talents—as opposed to some 800 talents actual indebtedness—can be explained, as I have tried in BCH and elsewhere.
The stumbling block appears to have been removed. No other orthodox argument is as strong as this one. Indeed one argument on the other side looks to me stronger than ever. Since the second Kallias Decree demanded a vote of adeia before any considerable expenditure from Athena's funds, I had argued that we should expect to find it—on the orthodox dating—in the state accounts of 433/2 and 432/1 B.C. In fact it is not found in 433/2 B.C., and its apparent presence in IG I² 296.5 is solely due to restoration, which may here be mistaken. Now Wesley Thompson has claimed that the adeia formula was "the rule and not the exception" from 433/2 B.C. onwards, since it is definitely missing in only one of the early accounts. This has a certain persuasiveness, but I think that it is altogether safer to base oneself firmly on the known facts. The adeia formula first appears for certain in the accounts of 418/7 B.C. It may be surprising that it does not appear with the first payment that year and can be omitted hereafter. We must not hope to understand everything, however, and dating Kallias 422/1 B.C. creates no real problem.

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34 See my case in ProcAfrCA 7 (1964) 40 and BCH 92 (1968) 450f. Meritt also restored the adeia formula in his revised text of IG I² 296 (AFD 80).
35 See Thompson, op.cit. (supra n.15) 221-23.
36 For the odd incidence of adeia annotation in the accounts of 418/7 to 415/4 B.C. see ML 160 and 234; Thompson, op.cit. (supra n.15) 221-23; Meiggs, op.cit. (supra n.4) 519.