“To Destroy the Stele”, “To Remain Faithful to the Stele”: Epigraphic Text as Guarantee of Political Decision

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"TO DESTROY THE STELE", "TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE STELE": EPIGRAPHIC TEXT AS GUARANTEE OF POLITICAL DECISION*

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Abstract
From an archaeological point of view, a stele can be described as a simple artefact, an object emerging from the ground with a surface naturally suited to writing. If we consider only public documents, we can, however, argue that the stele becomes one of the protagonists in the drama of politics. Given that the carrier of the writing is identifiable with the written text, the stele becomes the transposition on stone of the approved measures and of the directing political authority. The phrase καθαιρεῖν τὴν στήλην refers to the violent destruction of the stele, while its counterpart ἐµµένειν ἐν τῇ στήλῃ expresses the wish to be faithful to the stele. In both cases, the reference to the inscribed object rests on the same assumption, namely that the stele does not recall a political action, but is the political action. In conclusion, the stele is a guide for the political community and assumes a very powerful role in establishing and prescribing norms.

The stele, as an archaeological object, is quickly described: lapis ex terra extans.¹ The word "stele", while not without a certain semantic versatility, describes an artefact characterised mainly by its emergence from the ground and by its capacity to present itself to the attention of travellers as a surface that is suited to carry a written text and adaptable to a variety of epigraphic uses.

It is important, however, to emphasise not so much the archaeological or taxonomic aspect of the term, but more the semiotic identification between the writing surface and the inscribed text, which appears so significant and distinctive to the Greek world, but of which an echo is also discernible in the Roman world. Stelae id est tituli: the equivalence is confirmed as a matter of fact by the text of a bilingual epigraph from Palermo, where, in the transition from the Greek text to the Latin, alternately the stelai and the tituli are moulded and inscribed.² Above all, however, in the Greek world we can observe, recurring in specific cases, the phenomenon whereby the stele becomes the materialisation of the inscribed text, be it of a private or public, honorary or political nature. If we limit ourselves to the public sphere of a political nature, we can say that the stone stele represents the transposition onto stone of the political will which produced it, and embodies not only the resolution itself but also the authority of the institution responsible for its approval and subsequent inscription.³


¹ ThLGr, VIII, c. 751, s. v. στήλη.
² Cf. IG XIV 297 = CIL X 7296; on the meaning of the term “stele”, see Di Stefano Manzella 2004.
Before they are considered in relation to epigraphic inscription, the observations made here should be examined first of all in relation to the numerous cases of epigraphic re-inscription. In fact, stelae were frequently re-inscribed, whether wholly or partially, and such an act is evidence of an intention which is almost always political. Cases of erasure, re-inscription or overwriting sometimes indicate a simple intention to bring the past up to date, to modernise a document which is no longer deemed current. Much more frequently, however, the erasure, correction or even destruction of an epigraphic artefact serves political ends, which are sometimes professed and at other times clearly perceptible. What emerges, in essence, is the desire not so much to effectuate something in the present, as to impose the “frames of reference” of the present on the processes of selection and presentation of the past. Cultural memory, whose history has its own validity as a collectively remembered, rather than objective, truth, in fact promotes operations of intervention on the stele: the inscribed text is sometimes corrected or erased or even destroyed, providing for partial or total damnatio memoriae, which is a characteristic of the Greek world much earlier than of the Latin. In classical Athens, where democratic institutions enjoyed a long period of stability, interrupted only for brief intervals by the Thirty’s tyranny and Antipater’s oligarchy, we know that processes were undertaken that were highly significant: the documents of the democracy were in fact destroyed during the change of regime, and with the return of democracy were subsequently restored to affirm forcefully the return of the previous political state of affairs, represented in the stone document with monumental certainty.  

The formula, καθαιρεῖν τὴν στήλην, therefore, which is frequently found in epigraphic documentation, expresses the act of violent destruction, that, like the homologous and equivalent phrase expressing the restoration of the epigraphic artefact (τὰς καθαιρεθείσας ἀναγράψαι), rests on the same assumption: the stele does not recall a political action but is the political action itself.

This identification is clearly encapsulated in the decree for the foundation of the colony at Brea, where hereditary atimia and confiscation of property are imposed on those who speak παρὰ τὴν στήλην. Such a declaration is very significant, precisely because, represented thus in a form of ‘shorthand’, “to speak against the stele” means to speak against the edict inscribed thereon. From the opposite point of view we read, in a document from the beginning of the 4th century, that “the Thirty destroyed the proxeny”, thus signifying the achievement of a political objective through the destruction of the stele. But, in an effort to avoid the customary “Athenocentrism” and to emphasise the wide reach of this phenomenon, we also observe that, in Cretan epigraphy, the stele represents a normative resource as well as a visual and physical reminder of the agreement; here, indeed, requirements prescribing the erection of the stele or stelae in order to guarantee the treaties, are reiterated: στασίνων δὲ τὰς στάλας as we read time and again. The call to “erect the homologia”, preserved in a treaty between Gortyn and Knossos for the partitioning of the territory of Raukos (a little before the middle of the 3rd century) is, then,

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4 For the “frames of reference” of the present in the selection processes of the past see Assman 1992 = 1997; for the destruction of the stele and for epigraphic reinscription see the discussion of the documentation and the relevant bibliography in Culasso Gastaldi 2003.

5 See e.g. IG I1 229. 1-4; Agora XVI 37. 7-11; IG II2 52. 3-5; 448. 66-8.

6 IG I1 46. 24-29; Cf. also IlErythrai 1 (= Koerner 1993: 74). 18-20.

7 IG II2 52. 3-5.
especially concise and effective: in the expression στάσαι τὰν ὀμολογίαν ταύταν γράφαντας ἐστάλαν ὑπάνα, the verb stasai presents as its object complement not the stele, which would of course be feasible, but instead the term homologia, employing a condensed formula that is undeniably effective.\(^8\)

If until now I have focused on the destruction of the stele and on the obscuring of memory through intentional processes of damnatio memoriae, I would now like to investigate the role of the stele in the context of interstate relations which were aimed at establishing resolutions or agreements entered into by common consent; in other words, it is worth highlighting at this point the stele as a support of dogmata, psephismata, spondai, synthekai, homologiai, in relation to which the stone artefact adopts very articulate functions: that of guaranteeing the communication of its contents to the social milieu to which it refers, that of assuring its preservation over time and, that which interests us especially, of guaranteeing the certainty and unalterability of the agreement and of demanding the respect due to sworn texts. Our examination aims, therefore, to highlight how fidelity to the stele represents a powerful means of ensuring the future implementation of the treaties which are embodied therein or, at least, to demonise and distance the ever-lurking spectre of the treaty’s violation: rather than along the lines of καθαρεύειν τὴν στήλην, the line of reasoning will unfold, therefore, following the outline of ἐμμένειν ἐν τῇ στήλῃ.

I omit the infinite examples in which the stele simply appears as the favoured surface for the texts of variously expressed and named agreements and interstate treaties, such as sacred and civil laws (thesmoi, nomoi) and of agreements reached in each and every field of human coexistence. Much more significant are the cases in which the stele, a source of information and permanent archive, publicly displayed in the open air, authoritatively performs a normative role in relation to conduct in the political arena. In a speech of Andocides, we read: “the stele orders that” (ἡ δὲ στήλη κελεύει), confirming the capacity of epigraphical writing to ordain; a similar valence is assumed in the agreement between the Akarnanians and the city of Anaktorion (216 BC), where the epigraphical text commands that “the dispositions registered on the stele be considered valid” (τὰ κατακεχωρισμένα ἐν ταῖς στάλαις) and that the inscribed decisions may be dissolved neither by law nor by decree.\(^9\) A similar directive, effective in its concision, can be found in an Arcadian inscription where, in a treaty between Orchomenos and Achaea (around 234/3 BC), the pledge ensures the obligation to remain faithful, above all, to the stele, and only after that to the treaty and decree of ratification (ἐμμένειν ἐν ταῖς στάλαις καὶ ταῖς ὀμολογίαις καὶ ἐν τοῖς ψαφίσματι).\(^10\) It should, however, be noted that over and above these examples, the most plentiful documentation comes from Crete and this concentration does not seem coincidental.

Crete was already known to the Homeric tradition as the island of a hundred cities (Κρήτης ἑκατόμπολις); in reality it seems to have been fractured and polycentric.\(^11\) The Cretans indeed are described, in the classical literary tradition, as engaged in continual strife, bloodshed, internecine wars and with a turbulent state of enmity widespread among

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8 Chanioti 1996: nr. 44 = I.Cret. IV (Gortyn) 182. 17-18.
10 IG V 2, 344 = Staatsverträge 499. 9.
11 II. II 649; ninety cities according to Od. XIX 174 (ἐννήκοντα πόλεις).
the numerous communities of the island. This prevailing state of war, a condition of daily life in Crete, explains the weight of the very bad personal reputation that all Cretans, without exception, shared. Their reputed duplicity in domestic relations led to its immortality in popular sayings and proverbs, such as “act like a Cretan with a Cretan” which gives a suitable indication of the extent of their untrustworthiness in their dealings with one another. The severity of this judgement is only superficially mitigated by the contemporary saying, “act like an Aeginetan with a Cretan”, which also unambiguously signifies the actions of those who use deception in dealings with those who are similar to themselves.13

The Cretans, nevertheless, also knew how to hold their endemic and proverbial enmities in abeyance in order to unite federally in exceptional historical circumstances or when confronted with danger from an external enemy. This political reality was expressed clearly in the verb συνκρητίζειν, which describes a federal process that does not, however, seem to arise in any way from idealistic motives, but, on the contrary, is caused and provoked either by the exigency of external events or as a result of the unifying power exerted by the two principal cities, Gortyn and Knossos. Essentially, the Cretans, natural enemies among themselves, were able to form alliances out of necessity, building military leagues or confederate aggregations of short, or very short, duration and of varied composition.14

In the face of such endemic conflict, we find in the diplomatic language of the interstate treaties the expression ἐμμένειν ἐν ταῖς στάλαις, which seems peculiar to the island’s formulary. It is found in the treaty of isopoliteia between Hierapytna and Priansos, concluded a little after the year 205 in the final stages of the kretikos polemos fought against Rhodes, when Hierapytna was seeking to mend relations with several neighbouring towns. In this treaty, the two parties make reference to previous treaties, the first involving the cities of Gortyn and Hierapytna and the second the three communities of Gortyn, Hierapytna and Priansos.15 The latest treaties to be sworn reveal either the continuation or the refinement of the preceding ones, to which explicit reference is made and whose validity the parties continue to recognise: τάδε συνέθε•ντο καὶ συνεν•δόκησαν ἀλλάλοις ἡραπτύνιοι καὶ Πριάνσιοι ἐμμένοντες ἐν ταῖς προούπαρχοισαί στάλαις ἵνα τε ταῖς κειμέναις Γορτυνίοις καὶ ἡραπτύνιοις καὶ ταῖς κατὰ κοινόν [Γορτυνίοις] καὶ ἡραπτύνιοις καὶ Πριάνσιοις καὶ ἐν ταῖς φιλίαις [καὶ συμμαχίαις καὶ ὀρκοῖς τοῖς

12 Cf. Pol. IV 53-5; Plut. Mor. (De frat. amore) 490 B.
13 The ancient documentation on these and other pareaunographic extracts is available in Chaniotis 1996: 6-7; Perlman 1999: 159 n. 27. See also the chapter “Der Kreig als Alltag”, which describes the conditions of Hellenistic Crete, in Chaniotis 2004: 78-85. On the tradition of the Κρήτης ἄει ἑρίζεται, dating back to Cretan Epimenides, see FGrHist 457 F 2. For recent commentary on the proverbial use of verbs of ethnic origin (e.g. kretizein) see Raccuja 2004: 195-212, especially 197-199.
15 The texts may be consulted in, respectively, Chaniotis 1996: nr. 24 (Gortyn and Hierapytna, ca. 216/206), 27 (Gortyn, Hierapytna and Priansos, a little after 205) and 28 (Hierapytna and Priansos, a little later than nr. 27). For the chronology, see the discussion of Chaniotis, but note I.Cret. III iii 4, where Guarducci suggests a date between 200 and 197 for the treaty of isopoliteia between Hierapytna and Priansos, also supported by Rhodes-Lewis 1997: 303. See Guizzi 2001: 317-319, 359-366 on boundary demarcation and also for the choice of field exercised by Hierapytna in favour of Gortyn.
As becomes apparent, the pre-existing treaties are recognised via their respective stelae, effectuated and displayed separately by Gortyn and Hierapytna, and subsequently jointly, by all three cities. In essence, fidelity to the stelae seems to be the most direct and effective way to express respect, as described below, for philia, for symmachia and for the pledges which have previously been made between the parties.

The synonymous (so to speak) identification between treaties and stelae, already recognised in modern critical debate, may be observed repeatedly in Cretan epigraphical documentation, such as in the formula which calls for “inscription of the pledge and the stele”, where epigraphical writing and its subsequent exhibition constitute the final act of formalisation of the approved measures. This identification does not, however, indicate parity: for the magistrates turn to the stele and it is the stele which constitutes the reference point for the community. Due to its monumental presence and its capacity to instil moral obligation in the collective of the citizens, it is indeed in front of the stele, and starting with the text inscribed thereon, that the treaty is recited annually in a public ceremony aimed at reinforcing the common duty in respect of the agreements. The didactic function indeed appears to be the true objective of the spectacle, intended for the edification of the adult citizens. A parallel ritual, however, was also directed towards the adolescents who were entering adulthood: on the same celebratory occasion they were required by the kosmoi to swear an oath whereby they, as new citizens, undertook to observe the treaties entered into by their own city.

“Read the stele every year”: this is the order with which the city charged its kosmoi. Its intention was that, as the treaty inscribed on the stone surface was read aloud, the undertakings contained in the pledge would be simultaneously renewed. This procedure, which is also observed in epigraphical documents in the alternative formulation, “read the treaty”, appears common to many cities, above all in eastern Crete, and no comparable ritual has been observed outside of the island.

16 Chaniotis 1996: nr. 28, 5-10.
17 Klaffenbach 1960: 26-33; Chaniotis 1996: 78.
18 Cf. Chaniotis 1996: nr. 59 (treaty of alliance between Hierapytna and Lato, a. 111/10). 45: [Ὀρκον δὲ καὶ στάλας ἄν][αγγευσάντων καὶ στασάντων ἐκάτεροι].
19 On this topic, the references in Chaniotis 1996: 124-126 are to the point.
21 In addition to the instances mentioned in the previous note, see Chaniotis 1996: nr. 32 = I.Cret. IV 183, 1-5 (Gortyn). 1-3; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 50 = I.Cret. I viii 13 (Knossos), 12-13; less certain is the evidence of Chaniotis 1996: nr. 27 (alliance of Gortyn and Hierapytna with Priansos). 40-42,
formality due to the presence in each community of the ambassadors from the other cities who are party to the treaty and who are required to be advised in advance of the day scheduled for the public reading and the oath-swearing of the adolescents. Severe fines are even imposed on those noncompliant kosmoi who neglect this obligation to recite the text on the stele, or who do not pre-advice the allied cities so that ambassadors may be sent, or who fail to take the pledges of the youths.

In Cretan epigraphical documents, one clearly senses, moreover, how the acts of decision-making and of writing are closely linked in a perpetual continuity, thus imputing to the publicly displayed written word a ratifying function in relation to the decision-making itself. Such a relationship is clearly expressed in the phrase τὰ δὲ κριθέντα καὶ ἀναγραφέντα. This is found repeatedly and in varying forms in the three documents which relate to the complex boundary dispute which divided the cities of Lato and Olous at the end of the 2nd century and where an attempt was made at mediation by the city of Knossos. The situation described in them is dominated by conditions of διαφωρά (discord) between the two communities, of ὀμεξία (absence of relationships) and by repeated reference to quarrels (τὰ ἁμφιλλεγόμενα). The two fighting factions do, however, accept the invitation extended by the Knossians to cease hostilities and commit themselves to the process of arbitration (ἐπιτροπά) and the acceptance of its ruling: τὰ δὲ κριθέντα καὶ ἀναγραφέντα ὑπὸ τῶν Κνωσίων βέβαιοι καὶ κύρια ἤμεν ἐς τὸν ἀπαντά τὸν ἑρᾶνον καὶ μὴ κατε ὑπολείπεσθαι αὐτοὶ ἐγκλημα μηθεὶ [παρε]υρέσει μηδεμία καὶ ἀναγραφίτω τὰ εὐδοκήμενα καὶ [κριθ]έντα ... ἐν στάλαι (“The judgements, determined and drafted by the Knossians, are enforceable and valid for all eternity and they shall have no more cause for complaint, on any false pretext, and the approved and adjudicated resolutions are to be inscribed... upon a stele”). The efforts of the Knossians are, however, frustrated and the two litigants return once again, after a very short period of time, to commit to the decision-making authority of Knossian arbitration. In the second decree, it is possible to deduce an escalation in the affair, which is articulated by a strict and compulsory relationship between each decision and its respective inscription on the stele. This same initiative to accept the arbitration of the Knossians is closely correlated to the exhibition of the resolution on five steleae, four of which are to be displayed in Crete and the fifth to be kept at Delos (θέμεν στάλαν ἐς ἁμέρας τρίκοντα... ἀλλὰ δὲ κοινῆ ἐν Δάλαι ἐν τῶι ἱεροί τῷ Ἀπόλλωνος), the text for this latter copy to be sent to Delos via an ambassador ὃς τά στάξει στάλαν ἐς ἀν

where the command that the stele is to be read is not restored by Guarducci, I.Cret. IV (Gortyn) 174.

24 Chaniotis 1996: nr. 54 = I.Cret. I xvi (Lato) 3 = I.Délos. 1514. 7-8; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 55. 10 (October-November 118).
25 Chaniotis 1996: nr. 54. 13-16; the reference to the stele appears at line 18. Also elsewhere in the Greek world, the act of writing officially confers validity to the contents of the inscribed epigraphical text: see several examples, with a different chronological setting, in IG II² 111. 17-20; 120. 23 (the stele constitutes the official record from which copies are produced: ἀντίγραφα ἐκ τῶν στηλῶν); 1368. 21-23; IV 752. 15-18 = IV² 77. 20-25; XII² 142 B. 74-76; IoO 47. 19-22; SEG 28. 103. 43-47; Plut. Mor. (Xorat.vit.) 852 E.
27 Lines 11-15.
This provision is intended to prepare in advance a stele, upon which will be inscribed the resolutions made as a result of the new arbitration, in such a manner that they will become binding through the formalisation of the epigraphical writing at the privileged site of the Apollonian sanctuary. The Knossians, once the judgement had been issued within the non-negotiable term of six months, had the mandate to inscribe the text explicitly states that the terms of the agreement may be changed.\footnote{Chaniotis 1996: nr. 56 = I.Cret. I xvi (Lato) 4 Α. 43-61.} After this, the Knossian envoy to Delos adds a new resolution at the bottom of the second decree on the same stele (ποτανέγραψε τὸ ὑποτεταγμένον ψάφισμα.)\footnote{Lines 27-30: τὰ δὲ κριθέντα καὶ ἀγγραφόντα ὑπὸ τῶν Κνωσίων βέβαια καὶ κύρια ἦμεν ἐς τὸν πάντα χρόνον, καὶ μηκέτι ὑπολείπεσθαι αὐτοῖς περὶ μηθενὸς ἐνκλήμα μεθὲν παρευρέσει μηδεμία.} By the common consent of Lato and Olous, and with the approval of the Knossians, the litigants defer “the term previously written on the stele” (τὸν προγραμμένον χρόνον ἐν ταὶ στάλαι), accepting, essentially, to move the final deadline for the formulation of the arbitration and indicating a new one; in this regard, they order that it be “inscribed (on the stele), such that the Knossians may have every right to adjudicate in twelve months’ time” (ἐγγράψαι δὲ ὡστε κυρίος ἦμεν κρίνοντας Κνωσίος ἐν μησίν δέκα δυό).\footnote{Lines 39-40.} Once more, the normative function of epigraphical writing and, in particular, its recognised role even during the amendment phase, clearly emerges from this postponement of the term of the arbitration, as it is only from the moment of a new inscription on the stele, amending that which preceded it, that the terms of the agreement may be changed.

28 Lines 15-20.
29 Lines 22-25.
30 Lines 25-27.
31 Lines 27-30: τὰ δὲ κριθέντα καὶ ἀγγραφόντα ὑπὸ τῶν Κνωσίων βέβαια καὶ κύρια ἦμεν ἐς τὸν πάντα χρόνον, καὶ μηκέτι ὑπολείπεσθαι αὐτοῖς περὶ μηθενὸς ἐνκλήμα μεθὲν παρευρέσει μηδεμία.
32 Lines 39-40.
The prescriptive capacity of the epigraphical document, sufficiently proved by the preceding example, is also significantly illustrated in the dictum καθός γέγραται, or even καθός προγέγραται, which was widespread throughout the Greek world and occurs very frequently in reference to an epigraphical document. Another example may be noted, taken, once more, from fertile Cretan soil: Hierapytna and Priansos forged a treaty of isopoliteia at the end of the 3rd century, which also reconsidered all of the pending lawsuits that divided the citizens of the two communities. The coming into force of the treaty and the time frames for the tasks entrusted thereby to the kosmoi are established through a precise reference to the stele, i.e. “in the space of a month from the day on which the stele is put on public display” (ἀφ’ έκα κα’ ἁμέρας ά στάλα τεθῇ ἐν μνήμ), with pointed reference to the epigraphical writing which becomes enforceable from the moment of its exposition.

In order to make the stele more effective as a regulatory resource, it is evident that it should be both visible and ‘audible’. The text’s mnemonic and communicative potential (Ōτίως φανερὸν ἕ) is heightened by the stele’s capacity to be seen, repeatedly read and consulted and adopted and identified as a touchstone: it cannot therefore be separated from its place of exhibition and, as its valence extends throughout the Greek world, it must be located ἐν τοῖς ἐπιφανεστάτοις τόποις or even ἐν τοῖς ἐπισημοτάτοις τόποις.

The latter specification occurs frequently in relation to the city’s public spaces: the prytaneion, the agora, the gymnasium or whichever place has been selected by the political community; in Athens, the stelae were located in various privileged positions, for example, in the bouleuterion, the stoa basileios or the ekklesia; sometimes the place of display could be very elaborate, with an intention to edify those most affected, or those most needing to be affected, as in the case of the law against attempts at overthrowing the democracy that was to be inscribed on two stelae, the first in the ekklesia, the second “at the entrance to the Areopagos, as one goes into the council chamber”.

Locations for display are preferably, therefore, sacred areas, especially in the case of interstate treaties, and are associated with the principal shrines dedicated to polyadic deities, as well as with the major Panhellenic cultic centres: here, the stele is able to enjoy the


37 For a Cretan overview see Chaniotis 1996: 80-81 and n. 451; for Athenian examples see e.g. Aristoph. Acarn. 727-8 (agora); Aristot. Ath. Pol. 53, 4, 9 (in front of the bouleuterion); IG I 104. 7-8 (he stoa he basileia; a. 409/8); Agora XVI 73 = IG II² 1, 320. 26 (ekklesia; a. 336). For a detailed examination of places of exhibition see, with documentation, Liddel 2003: 79-93, with tables 1-6.

undisputed sanctity of an area subject to divine laws in such a manner that the text “as a sacred object may be protected and no one may be permitted to contravene it”. On this subject the very large number of epigraphical texts which were required to be displayed is itself very informative. The frequency with which parties order stelae to be erected seems indeed to be a phenomenon observable throughout the Greek world, though it is characteristically concentrated in Crete.

An enumeration of such cases, relating to domestic treaties of the island communities, has already been presented by Chaniotis, who suggests that the objectives of this activity may have been, by means of increased publicity, the desire to defend the text against subsequent interference and to renew its moral power. Case studies show that five different copies of the same document could be displayed, of which two, on occasion, could be in the same city which was party to the treaty, usually located in the principal shrines. Beyond their own borders, however, Cretan communities emphasise the necessity of erecting additional stelae jointly (ἄλλαν δὲ κοιναί), tending to favour, as well as Pan-Cretan, the major Panhellenic shrines, such as Delphi or Delos; in the case of the settlement of boundary disputes, a copy is usually displayed in the principal shrine at the frontier; provisions are made for other copies in the cities which have either participated in the arbitration or who have had judicial responsibilities.

It has already been noted that the phenomenon of multiple copies is also observable beyond Crete; apart from the stelae erected in the respective cities which are party to the treaty, an additional copy may also be displayed in the city which guarantees the fairness of a treaty, or, by common consent, in the principal Panhellenic temples, such as Olympia, Delphi, Dodona or Delos. To cite a major historical reference in Thucydides,

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39 TAM III (Termessos), 3, A. 11-17 (2nd cent. AD): ἄναγγραφηναι αὐτὰ ἐν στήλαις καὶ ταύτας σταθῆναι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τῷ τοῦ Διὸς ἱνα καὶ ὡς ἱερὰ φυλάττηται καὶ μὴ δεν ἐξεὶ παραβαίνειν αὐτὰ. Cf. also IG XII 6 (Samos) 1, 6. 15-17 (shortly after 167); στήλη λευκοῦ λίθου, εἰς ἣν ἀναγράφησεται τὸ τε ψῆφισμα καὶ ἢ συνθήκη, ὡς καθερωθῆ καὶ ύπάρχῃ ταύτα κύρια εἰς τὸν ἄξιον ρήμαν. On “inscribing performance” see Osborne 1999: 341-358, with reference to the acropolis as an exhibition place on pp. 346-347.

40 See, with summary references, Chaniotis 1996: 80-81. I would add to the list nr. 69 = I.Cret. IV (Gortyn) 184 C. 9, where the reference to “stèle” followed by the mention of Gortyn might suggest an inscribing provision. Cf. Staatsverträge 562. 16-18.


42 SEG 38.852 B. 2-4 (treaty between the Thasians and the Neapolitans; ca. 400); Staatsverträge 463 (league between Aetolia and Boeotia; a. 292?), fr. a 2-6; Staatsverträge 481 (treaty between Eumenes I of Pergamon and the troops in Philetairiea and Attaleia; between 263 and 241). 16-19; Staatsverträge 480 (agreement between Aetolia and the Akarnanian league; 263-262?), A. 13-16; Staatsverträge 492 (sympoliteia between Smyrna and Magnesia on the Sipylos; shortly after 243?). 83-85; Staatsverträge 523 (treaty between the Akarnanian league and Anaktorion; ca. 216?). 61-62. 66-67. Cf. Staatsverträge 489 (membership of Epidaurus in the Achaean league; a. 243). 12. In the sworn treaty for the Chremonidean war, however, (Staatsverträge 476. 95-97) it is simply said that “the cities shall inscribe the treaty on stelae and shall display them in the temple where they wish”.

43 Thuc. V 23.
let us recall the text of the Peace of Nikias which was ordered to be inscribed on two stelae for display in the most sacred spaces of the respective cities; additional text was later inserted in the winter of 419/8 on the Athenian stele, known as the Lakoniké stele, in which the Athenians, offended by Amphipolis’ failure to surrender, asserted that the Lakedaimonians did not respect the pledges sworn.44

This abundance of copies will have tended to prevent a discrepancy in the text of an agreement being recorded, especially if the contracting parties had exchanged manuscript texts before the drafting of the stone copies, as the illuminating example of the Cretan cities of Lato and Olous very aptly indicates.45 Nevertheless, such an eventuality was a far from remote possibility even outside Crete, which may be inferred from the agreement between Athens, Thebes and Mantinea in the year 378, whereby the Boule is made responsible for the reconciliation of discrepant copies.46

To ensure non-violation of sworn agreements between the two cities, the stele should also be neither physically falsified nor tampered with.47 Even in this instance, the formulae designed to control possible alterations being made to the text of a treaty show a significant concentration in Cretan documents.48 The chancery codex ensures that any decision be taken mutually by the two contracting cities (ταῖς πόλεσι κοιν助け) and only when this condition is satisfied are additions, erasures or even amendment, to be considered.49

Any addendum to the text, which is always conditional on the unanimity of the contracting parties, is considered possible, and its action definitive, ἐνορκον, in the legal sphere, just because bound by oath and therefore included in the treaty; it is, however, also

44 Thuc. V 56, 3. Cf. also Thuc. V 47, 11 (IG I3 83): in the agreements from shortly after, between Athens, Argos and Mantinea, it is envisaged that, in addition to the copies in the contracting cities, a fourth bronze stele be erected jointly at Olympia. On the survival of the stele of the treaty, see, with comparisons, Bolmarcich 2007: 477-489.

45 Chaniotis 1996: nr. 54. 20-22; nr. 55. 30-32; nr. 56. 60-61; cf. Ager 1996: nr. 164.

46 IG II2 40. 15-19; the difference perhaps relates to copies of the treaty which were renewed over the years. In I. Miletos 60. 92-94 an “authenticated” copy (τῶν συνθηκῶν ἀντίγραφον ἐσφραγισµένον) of the text of the agreement between Magnesia and Miletus about their respective borders is entrusted to the ambassadors of Rhodes, so that it is kept secure up until the moment of its inscription on the stele.

47 In the treaty of isopoliteia Chaniotis 1996: nr. 20 = I.Cret. III iv (Itanos) 6 = Staatsverträge 579, made by Hierapytna and Itanos in the late 3rd century, the formula relating to the possible variations in the text is found in lines 4-7, and the reference is specified as ἐς τάν συνθῆκας τάνδε, i.e. “in relation to this treaty”, with obvious reference to the text inscribed on the stele. On the clauses relating to the variations in the text of treaties see Fernandez Nieto 1983: 279-283: Thür-Taeuber 1994: nr. 17. 183-200; cf. p. 187); cf. also SEG 34.849. 1-4.

48 Chaniotis 1996: nr. 10. 5-7; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 20 = I.Cret. III iv (Itanos) 6 = Staatsverträge 579. 4-7; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 26 = I.Cret. III iii (Hierapytna) 3 B. 6-7; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 32 = I.Cret. IV (Gortyn) 183. 9-13; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 50 = I.Cret. I viii (Knossos) 13. 22-23; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 55 = I.Cret. I xvi (Lato) 4 A. 40-42; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 59 (Hierapytna-Lato; not in I.Cret.). 42-44; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 60 = IG II2 1135 = I.Cret. I xviii (Lyttos) 9 b. 15 (the restoration is by Chaniotis alone); Chaniotis 1996: nr. 61 = I.Cret. I xvi (Lato) 5. 45-46; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 69 C = I.Cret. IV 184. 3-6; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 74 = I.Cret. III iii (Hierapytna) 5. 8-11.

specified as ἐνθινον, and in one case ἐναφον, with reference to the religious and ritual domains, subject, that is, to the protection of the gods and defended through ritual curses. This last term is of great interest, a hapax for Crete, but also for the rest of the Greek world, where no similar usage in such a context is found.\footnote{Chaniotis 1996: nr. 20 = I.Cret. III iv (Itanos) 6 = Staatsverträge 579. 6. The state of being subject to arai, in our context, has a positive and guaranteeing value. With a negative valence see however IG XII Suppl. 150 = Sokolowski 1962: 83. 12. Cf. LSJ, p. 557 s. v. ἐναφος; Bile 1988: 352.} The opposite of an addendum, i.e. the cancellation of a part of the text, and therefore the removal of some of the constituent elements of the treaty along with it, is deemed, however, to be impracticable, because prohibited by the legal, divine or ritual code, as defined by the negation of the above-mentioned terms, μὴ ἐνορκον μὴ ἐνθινον and also μὴ ἐναφον.\footnote{IG XII 3 173 B (a. 105). 45-48; IG XII 2 510. 17-20 (restored). An absolute prohibition on the act of διακόψατι regarding the norms inscribed on the stone is expressed in Staatsverträge 523 (treaty between the Akamanian league and Anaktorion; a. 216?). 70-75.} Only in the case of the arbitration by Knossos between the cities of Lato and Olous is removal of text considered legitimate (lines 40-42) and represents a glaring exception on the Cretan scene, justified, nonetheless, by the presence of an arbiter who is able to protect the appellant cities from the dangers of improper alterations to the text of the treaty.\footnote{Thuc. V 23, 5-6; IG II\ I\ 687 = Staatsverträge 476. 92-95: εάν δὲ τι φαινεται ὑμετέρᾳ προσθειναι ἢ ἀφελαι, εὐχαριστοῦς, ἔρωσθε, where, in the context of an agreement between Paros and Allaria, the latter accepts any changes initiated by the first city; see Rhodes-Lewis 1997: 311.} This absolute prohibition on erasing text lends itself to either a political or an anthropological interpretation, leading one to hypothesise the existence of a collective awareness of endemic belligerence in the Cretan universe. This observation is even more compelling if one compares the available documentation from outside Crete, in which similarly formulated conditions are preserved. In the case of the alliance between the Spartans and the Athenians at the time of the peace of Nikias, and also later, in relation to the so-called Chremonidean war, the legitimacy of putting forward addenda or erasures (προσθειναι καὶ ἀφελεῖν) is authorised, if established by common agreement between the two contracting parties.\footnote{Thuc. V 47, 12; cf. IG I\ I\ 83. On the requirement of agreement between the contracting parties see also Fernandez Nieto 1983: 283-285.} Similarly in the alliance between Rome and the cities respectively of Astypalaia and Methymna, the preliminary condition for each amendment is that the decision should be taken κοινῇ βουλῇ, and within such parameters, each addition or erasure (προσθειναι ἢ ἀφελεῖν) is deemed legitimate.\footnote{Chaniotis 1996: nr. 55. 40-42; cf. Ager 1996: nr. 164. We observe an exception in the formulary of I.Cret. II i (Allaria) 2 B. 25-26 (εάν δὲ τι φαινεται ὑμετέρᾳ προσθειναι ἢ ἀφελαι, εὐχαριστοῦς, ἔρωσθε), where, in the context of an agreement between Paros and Allaria, the latter accepts any changes initiated by the first city; see Rhodes-Lewis 1997: 311.} In the example of the symmachia and philia of Rome with the city of Knidos, the formula is preserved in its entirety: “if both the contracting cities unanimously desire ([κοινῇ] γνώμῃ) to add anything to this treaty and to erase anything from this treaty, it shall be legitimate; that which is added, according
to these understandings, is included in this treaty, that which is erased is excluded from this treaty."

Customary Cretan law, however, conceded the possibility of amendments (διορθώσασθαι) or, rather, amendments at a later date (ἔπιδιορθῶσαι) to the text of the treaty, but with preliminary instructions that the modification should first be agreed between the parties. Evidently in such an operation no threat was perceived of improper changes to the treaty, to the detriment of either party, but rather the assumption was of a simple act of intervention, in its scope a formal remedy rather than a substantial one.

In conclusion, this discussion has shown that the stele, a simple artefact characterised by a form emerging from the ground and naturally suited to writing, entails and represents a variety of objectives and functions that go beyond the materiality of the object itself to reach into the political sphere. From a simple sema or mnemonic reminder of events belonging to the collective memory, the stele actually becomes the protagonist in the decision-making itself: the stele supplies the surface on which this decision-making is written, and, on the other hand, acquires from the deliberations of the political body, with its transitive properties, its prescriptive power. In the final analysis, the stele constitutes an object-guide, which has a strong normative and sanctioning power, and is in itself a catalyst of the expectations of the political community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


55 *IK* 41 (Knidos) 33 B. 6-10: πρὸς τοῦτο τὸ ὀρκίον ἐὰν τί βουλήσωτα κοινῆ τι γνώμῃ προσθέσωι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ ὀρκίου ἔξελόσθαι, ἔξεστοι· ὃ δὲ ἂν κατὰ ταύτα προσθόσαι· ὃ ἐν τούτωι τοῦ ὀρκίων, ἔνεστο· ὃ τε ἂν κατὰ ταύτα ἔξελωνται, ἕκτος τοῦ τούτου τοῦ ὀρκίου ἔστω. In the field of honorary decrees, there is obviously an absolute prohibition on changes or erasures of honours: see e.g. *I.Dél. 1520*. 59 (after 153/2).

56 *I.Cret.* III iii (Hierapytna) 3 A. 85-6; Chaniotis 1996: nr. 28 = *I.Cret.* III iii (Hierapytna) 4. 74-77. Cf. Chaniotis 1996: nr. 74 = *I.Cret.* III iii (Hierapytna) 5. 8-9. For a comparison from outside Crete see *Staatsverträge* 446 (α. 302). 131-133 (ἔπανορθῶσαι); *IG* IX 1, 98 (shortly after 196). 8-9 (διορθώσασθαι).
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