

The Taormina Financial Inscriptions

The project was initiated by Dr Filippo Battistoni (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa), in collaboration with Dr Alessia DiMartino and Dr Anna Magnetto (both also of the SNS); they were subsequently joined by Dr Jonathan Prag (Merton College, Oxford University) and Dr Lorenzo Campagna (Università degli studi di Messina). The participants have already undertaken a preliminary study of the 11 of the 13 financial inscriptions currently held in the antiquarium at the Greco-Roman theatre of Taormina in Sicily. This dossier of 13 large blocks, associated with a further two inscriptions (IG 14.421, the *fasti* of annual *strategoï* for the city; IG 14.422, accounts of the gymnasiarchs for the city) date to the final two centuries BC and record monthly movement of money and occasionally stores of e.g. beans, in the hands of city magistrates (*hieromnamoses*, *tamiai*, *sitophulakes*) and also held by several different *sitionia*. They also make reference to city markets, and to the sale of property, timber, and quarried stone. The inscriptions are marked by distinctive local Doricisms, the use of Sicilian metrology, and the anomalous Sicilian numerical system (so-called ‘pseudo-ascending’, with the numbers written out in full beginning with the units, through the tens, hundreds, etc.). Two of the inscriptions employ a different financial accounting system (linked in some fashion to the Roman monetary system, although precisely how is debated), and employ the Roman calendar (pre-Julian) rather than the local Taormina calendar. The inscriptions also contain a number of unresolved abbreviations, some possibly of magistracies, but most belonging to the realm of onomastics, possibly demotics *vel sim*.

The inscriptions are therefore of very considerable interest for the unusually detailed information they provide about local civic finances in Hellenistic / Roman Sicily; for Sicilian epigraphy and linguistics; for the local history of Taormina (and by implication the province of Sicily); for onomastics, etc. Texts of all of the inscriptions have been published at some point in the past: leaving aside initial publication, eight of the blocks were included in *Inscriptiones Graecae*, volume 14 (Berlin 1890), nos. 423-430 (by Bormann); and by Hoffman in *SGDI* 5220-5228; these eight and an additional ninth were republished in Arangio-Ruiz & Olivieri, *IGSI ad ius pertinentes* (Milan 1925), nos. 4-13; and a further four, more recently discovered texts, were published in a pair of articles by Manganaro (1964, 1988). But photographs of the majority are still not in the public domain, the texts have never been published together, and the texts of most have not been subjected to either recent or extended (or ‘scientific’) scrutiny. Discussion of their content is, partly as a direct result of scattered and early publication, therefore very limited.

To date, work has included some 2 weeks of direct study of the stones to control the existing editions of the texts (principally by Battistoni and DiMartino), as well as consideration of the physical setting of the inscriptions (Campagna). A first round of photography for study has also been undertaken, and the material has been briefly presented to a seminar in Oxford by Battistoni and Prag (30 November 2009). A larger seminar is envisaged early in 2010, and provisional agreement has been reached for publication of the dossier in the series *Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents*.

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