

## A COMMON MARKET ON SYROS. TWO IMPERIAL LETTERS (IG XII.5 658)

A badly damaged inscription from the island of Syros records two imperial letters, one from Septimius Severus and Caracalla (IG XII.5 658.1–20), the other from Caracalla alone (20–42).<sup>1</sup> Both letters are in poor condition and their subjects difficult to discern. As to the second, Hiller von Gaertringen remarked (IG XII.5 p. 184), “Agitur περί τῆς κοινῆς ἀγορᾶς τῶν σιτίων (vs. 30 sq.). Cetera obscura.” Oliver amplified: “Perhaps Septimius Severus had deprived Athens of priority in respect to the importation of grain and established at Syros a common market ... for the Aegean area.”<sup>2</sup>

At 23 Hiller restored ὁ καλούμενος σιτίων [ἀγών(?)] as the opening words. It is unclear by what mechanism an emperor might have honored one harbor with priority over another, but “the so-called ‘contest of grains’” is a strange way to raise the question of such privileges. Emperors did intervene in local markets, ordering the sale of seed to ameliorate food-shortage, ending a bakers’ strike, halting sharp practices by bankers, clarifying export regulations,<sup>3</sup> but the creation of an imperially sanctioned regional market was something altogether different. Moreover, the word τὸ σιτίων almost never appears in inscriptions<sup>4</sup> and ὁ καλούμενος, which falls at the beginning of the body of the letter, ought rather to refer to a person, awkward as it may seem for his legal name not to have preceded. We can imagine the name Σ[ω]τίων, the common Rhodian name Σ[ι]μίων, or Σ[ι]γίων. Perhaps this man was a delegate with whom the emperor had met concerning matters on Syros (cf. 27, ἐπέσβεβεν).

Without the dubious σιτίων at 23, the restoration τοῦ σ[ε]ί[το]υ at 15 loses ground. So too the phrase restored at 30–31, which floats free of any clause and was the basis for Hiller and Oliver’s interpretations: τὴν [κ]οιν[ήν] ἀγορᾶν τ[ὸν] σιτίων.<sup>5</sup> Now, we know of specialized *agorai*, so that the existence of an ἀγορὰ τῶν σιτίων is not inherently impossible.<sup>6</sup> None, however, is attested and as we have noted τὸ σιτίων is not a fixture of epigraphic vocabulary.<sup>7</sup> The restoration stands without any apparent internal justification with the result that one can only posit influence from σιτίων at 23. But again the grain is a ghost. We are on the island of Syros where reason and efficiency suggest not τ[ὸν] σιτίων but simply τ[ὸν] Σ[ω]τίων.

- 1 J. H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* (Philadelphia 1989) nos. 257–258.
- 2 Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* (as in n. 1) p. 492, and on the first letter: “The text is so fragmentary and so uncertainly read that not much emerges. The first epistle mentions grain and the proconsul of Asia.”
- 3 Grain: *AE* (1925) 162b (Antioch in Pis., ca. A.D. 93); bakers: *I. Ephesos* II 214; bankers: *OGIS* 484 (Pergamum, under Hadrian); export: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1100 (under Hadrian); Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* (as in n. 1) 23.7–9 (A.D. 42).
- 4 *ArchEph* (1971) p. 139 line 6 (400–375); *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1672.i.a.6–7, 8 (329/8); restored at *OGIS* 194.13.
- 5 Oliver follows Hiller in printing τὴν [κ]οιν[ήν], but τὴν is absent from Hiller’s majuscule transcription, which he took from Le Bas, *Voyage archéologique* II.4 1892.30–31: . . . ΟΙΝ . . . ΑΓΟΡΑΝΤ . . . C . . . ΙΩ . . . ; it is difficult to know for certain at which stage the error crept in. (Cf. n. 30 below.)
- 6 Ἀγορὰ τῶν ὀνίων: *SEG* XXXII 1220.11–12 (Tetrapyrgia? A.D. 253/4?); *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 799.22–23 (Kyzikos, A.D. 37–41); τῶν ἱματωπῶν: *SB* XVIII 13654.5–7 (Hawara, Roman?); τῶν δικῶν: *TAM* V 943.7–11 (Thyateira, ca. A.D. 215). Against restoring 30–31, τὴν [κ]οιν[ήν] ἀγορᾶν, stand the facts that markets so-called are not in evidence and the word *oinikos* is almost absent from inscriptions: Rehm, *Miler* 1.3 149.40–41; *SEG* XXXI 122.20–22; for specialized sections of the Athenian *agora* see E. M. Harris, “Workshop, Marketplace and Household: The Nature of Technical Specialization in Classical Athens and its Influence on Economy and Society,” in P. Cartledge et al. (eds.) *Money, Labour and Land: Approaches to the Economies of Ancient Greece* (London and NY 2002) 67–99, at 75.
- 7 Cf. *SEG* XXXVII 1300.2 (Karahüyük, Cilicia, AD I/II) for a σειτική (sc. ἀγορᾶ).

Yet why mention that the agora was common and the property of the Syrians? A city’s agora was its own and *koinē* by default, so that neither descriptor was requisite, under normal circumstances anyway. Sometimes, however, qualification was necessary. In the mid-third century B.C. two cult associations disputed over access to the agora in the Attic deme of Koilē. Arbitrators ruled that the agora was to belong in common to both: τὴν ἀγορὰν τὴν ἐν Κοίλει κοινήν εἶναι ἀμφοτέρων τῶν γενῶν.<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere Attic demes might refer to their own *agorai* as τῶν δημοτῶν, perhaps to distinguish the deme’s ground from that of the polis.<sup>9</sup> In one instance – and perhaps only one – an agora was explicitly marked as belonging to a city. An undated decree of an unknown city in Achaian Phthiotis, discovered not far from Melitaia, refers to the agora of the Herakleotes and Melitaians (*IG* IX.2 103.8–10): ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ τῶν Ἡρακλεωτῶν καὶ Μελιταίων. The Greek is clear: one agora for two places.<sup>10</sup> Melitaia sat near the southern extent of Achaian Phthiotis,<sup>11</sup> but Herakleia is harder to place. One thinks first of Trachinian Herakleia.<sup>12</sup> But between it and Melitaia lay the city of Lamia, not to mention many hard miles and the Othrys range. A common market seems implausible.

Land around Melitaia was hotly contested in the Hellenistic period. In the first half of the third century B.C., perhaps ca. 260–250, a panel of judges adjudicated two territorial disputes between Peuma and two pairs of neighbors, Melitaians and Chalaian on the one hand, and Pêreians and Phylladonians on the other; Peuma lost on both occasions.<sup>13</sup> In the second case Melitaians had previously ruled against Peuma and then, along with Pêreians, led the judges on the inspection of boundaries.<sup>14</sup> In 214/13 Melitaia and Xyniai went to arbitration in a territorial dispute, whose victor is unknown.<sup>15</sup> One year later Melitaia and neighboring Pêreia united in sympolity, under which Melitaia appears to have had the advantage,<sup>16</sup> although, as an apparent concession, the door to future secession was left open to Pêreia.<sup>17</sup> Around 140 B.C. the Roman senate was called upon to arbitrate a boundary dispute between Melitaia

- 8 S. D. Lambert, “The Attic Genos Salaminioi and the Island of Salamis,” *ZPE* 119 (1997) 85–106, at 89, lines 36–38; the associations had quarreled previously (363/2 B.C.) over the same property: Lambert 86–88, lines 17–18. Presumably the entire community enjoyed the agora in Koilē under normal conditions, but when the associations were using it, it belonged to them in common: W. S. Ferguson, “The Salaminioi of Heptaphylai and Sounion,” *Hesperia* 7 (1938) 1–74, at 55.
- 9 *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1176.b.20 (ca. 360 B.C.); *SEG* XXVIII 103.23 (Eleusis, 332/1 B.C.); also *SEG* XXI 541.v.51–52 (375–350 B.C.): ἐν ἀγορᾷ Ἐρχιδῶν; for the creation of a new deme agora: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1180 (mid IV B.C.).
- 10 F. Stählin, “Μελίταια,” *RE* XV 536, and Idem, *Das hellenische Thessalien. Landeskundliche und geschichtliche Beschreibung Thessaliens in der hellenischen und römischen Zeit* (repr. Amsterdam 1967; orig. 1924) 163 n. 4, cites *IG* IX.2 103.9 as evidence for the agora at Melitaia, and also as evidence for the agora at Herakleia (idem, *RE* VIII 425); the Greek cannot indicate both places.
- 11 On Melitaia: F. Stählin, *RE* XV 534–540; idem, *Das hellenische Thessalien* (as in n. 10) 161–165.
- 12 On Trachinian Herakleia F. Stählin, *RE* VIII 424–429 remains most useful; also I. Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge and NY 1994) 219–235.
- 13 Melitaia and Chalai against Peuma: Pouilloux, *Fouilles de Delphes* III.4 351.1–16 (A. Magnetto, *Gli arbitrati interstatali greci* [Pisa 1997] II 29; S. L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337–90 B.C.* [Berkeley/Los Angeles 1996] 30), winners at 8–10; Pêreia and Phyladon against Peuma: III.4 351.16–37 (Magnetto 30; Ager 31), winners at 18–20; date: Magnetto pp. 181, 184–185 n. 10, 189; cf. Ager 30, p. 101.
- 14 *Fouilles de Delphes* III.4 351.16–20: περί δὲ τῆς χώρας ἧς ἔκρι[ναν οἱ] Μελιταῖες πρὸς Πευματίους ὑπὲρ Πηρέλων καὶ Φυλλαδωνίων ἔκριναν εἶναι τὴν χώραν [Πηρέλων καὶ Φυλλαδωνίων ἢν περιήγαγον ἡμᾶς Μελιταῖες καὶ Πηρεῖς].
- 15 *IG* IX<sup>2</sup>.1 177 (Magnetto, *Gli arbitrati* [as in n. 13] II 54; Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations* [as in n. 13] 55).
- 16 *IG* IX<sup>2</sup>.1 188 (Magnetto, *Gli arbitrati* [as in n. 13] II 55; Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations* [as in n. 13] 56); advantage: S. Ager, “Judicial Imperialism: The Case of Melitaia,” *AHB* 3 (1989) 107–114, at 111; Idem, *Interstate Arbitrations* (as in n. 13) 30–32, 55–56, 79, 154, 156. On dependent *poieis*, including those that persist after *sympoliteia* with others, see M. H. Hansen, “A Typology of Dependent *Poleis*,” in T. H. Nielsen (ed.), *Yet More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (= *Historia Einzelschriften* 117, Stuttgart 1997) 29–37.
- 17 *IG* IX<sup>2</sup>.1 188.16–17: εἰ δὲ καὶ ἀποπολιτεύοντι Πηρεῖς ἀπὸ Μελιταίων, περί μὲν τὰς χώρας ὅροις χρήσθων τοῖς γεγραμμένοις.

and Narthakion.<sup>18</sup> The two cities had quarreled previously, in the third century, again in the early second, and once again ca 143 B.C.<sup>19</sup> Whether or not Melitaia was accustomed to exploit third-party arbitration as a tool of territorial expansion,<sup>20</sup> it is clear that in the Hellenistic period the cities of Achaian Phthiotis fought hard to acquire and maintain territory.

The large swallowed the small. Melitaia absorbed Pêreia, which had subsumed two communities called Karandai and Phyliaidôn.<sup>21</sup> Stählin's notion that Phyliaidôn was home to the Phylladônians who allied with Pêreia against Peuma decades before may be correct; either way his suggestion that Karandai and Phyliaidôn were once-autonomous communities that were absorbed by Pêreia is attractive.<sup>22</sup> In adjudicating the boundary dispute between Melitaia and Chalai, and Peuma, the judges referred to a *topos* called Κυρσιλίδα,<sup>23</sup> no doubt a rural village that was to some degree subordinate to one of the larger local cities.<sup>24</sup> The numerous territorial settlements from Achaian Phthiotis refer to a great many named places,<sup>25</sup> any number of which are likely to have been small villages that were accorded varying degrees of autonomy by the larger *poleis*, such as Melitaia or Pêreia, whose territories encompassed them.<sup>26</sup> I suggest that the Herakleotes who shared an agora with Melitaia inhabited such a village on Melitaia's outskirts, and that this Herakleia, like other villages in the region, had been absorbed by the larger city.<sup>27</sup>

Events on Syros may have been analogous. It is clear that the circumstances were extraordinary: something prompted two imperial letters. If two communities on the island decided to forge a common market, boundaries would have to be drawn and imperial sanction might be sought. The text is in poor shape, but Caracalla does seem to have referred in at least two places to the drawing of boundaries (*IG* XII.5 658.31–32: – | ὀρίζεσθ[–]; 34–35: – | τὰ ὀρισμένα τούτου . μ .).<sup>28</sup> The emperor refers to what

- 18 Sherk, *Roman Documents* 9 (Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations* [as in n. 13] 156); see R. M. Kallet-Marx, *Hegemony to Empire: The Development of the Roman Imperium in the East from 148 to 62 B.C.* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1995) 174–175; P. Baker, "La cause du conflit entre Méliatèa et Narthakion: Une note à propos de *IG* IX 2, 89," in L. Dubois and E. Masson (eds.), *Philokypros: Mélanges de philologie et d'antiquités grecques et proche-orientales: dédiés à la mémoire d' Olivier Masson* (= *Minos* suppl. 16, Salamanca 2000) 33–47.
- 19 Third: Sherk, *Roman Documents* 9.25–30 (Magnetto, *Gli arbitrati* [as in n. 13] II 31; Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations* [as in n. 13] 32); second: Sherk, 9.48–54, 63–65 (Ager 79); *ca* 143: Sherk 9.54–59; *AE* (1927–28) 119–127 [Ager 154]. The senate found for Narthakion, invoking a prior ruling by T. Quinctius Flamininus: Sherk 9.59–65.
- 20 So Ager, *AHB* 3 (1989) (as in n. 16) 107–114.
- 21 *IG* IX 2.1 188.12–16: τὰν δὲ δαμοσίαν χώραν, τούς τε Καράνδας καὶ τὰν Φυλιαδόνα, μὴ ἀποδόσθων Μελιταίης ὥστε πατρίαν ἔχειν τὸν πριάμενον πολιτευόντων | Πηρέων μετὰ Μελιταίων, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἀνπαλον μισθούτω καθῶς καὶ τὸ πρότερον.
- 22 Stählin, *RE* XV 539, idem, *Hellenische Thessalien* 168–169.
- 23 *Fouilles de Delphes* III.4 351.10–13: ἀπὸ Γραιας Αὐλάς | [ἐπὶ τὸν] Κυρσιλίδα τόπον, ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρσιλίδα ἐπὶ τὸ | [πρὸς] θεν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄριον καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄριου ἐπὶ τὸ Βορ[ρ]α ἱερ[ρ]όν.
- 24 On *topos*: *I. Sardis* Buckler I. A. 16–18 (*ca* 200); *I. Iliion* 33.46–49 (*ca* 274 B.C.); *I. Didyma* 492.B.17–18, 23–25, 492.C.65; C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934) 55.2–6 (163–155): διὸ καὶ νῦν τὴν ταχίστην π[αρα]γνόμενος ἐπὶ τούς τόπους καὶ ἐπισκεψάμενος πάντα σαφῶς διασάφησάμ μοι πῶσων ἐτι χρεῖαν ἔξεις στρατιωτῶν, with p. 247: "By the *topoi* are meant, as often, the country districts;" *cf.* also idem 60.13–14; *I. Sultan Daği* I 393.6, with L. Jonnes and M. Riel, "A New Royal Inscription from Phrygian Paroreios: Eumenes II Grants Tyriaion the Status of a *Polis*," *EpigrAnat* 29 (1997) 1–30, at 13 (*SEG* XLVII 1745).
- 25 See esp. *Fouilles de Delphes* III.4 351.10–16, 20–25; *IG* IX 2.1 177.12–17, 188.5–11.
- 26 For a sensitive treatment of the process of sympolity see P. Gauthier, "Les Pidaséens entrent en sympolite avec les Milésiens: la procédure et les modalités institutionnelles," in A. Bresson and R. Descat (eds.), *Les cités d'Asie mineure occidentale au IIe siècle a.C.* (Bordeaux 2001) 117–127.
- 27 Positive evidence for such a village does not appear to exist elsewhere. One can only wonder at the significance of the three words (all that survives of the inscription) preserved in *IG* IX.2 128 (Halos, ?): [– Μελι?]ταεύς αὐτός Ἡρακλε[–].
- 28 ὀρισμέν- often refers to an appointed time or day; whether it does so here is uncertain. But ὀρίζεσθ[–] at 31–32 does seem to refer to boundaries, so that ὀρισμέν- may as well.

appears to be Septimius Severus' intervention on a prior occasion, letters that he himself wrote,<sup>29</sup> and perhaps a command (30, προσε[ταξε]ν --). This is followed by an accusative (30–31, τὴν κ[οιν]ήν) | ἄγοράν τ[ῶν] Σ[υρ]ιω[ῶν] and what appears to be an infinitive (31–32, – | ὀρίζεσθ[–]; restore: – ἀφ[ο]ρίζεσθ[αι] –?). While much is lost in the lacunas, a plausible syntax is apparent: "[Septimius Severus?] commanded that ... a common agora of the Syrians ... be demarcated." Perhaps "the common agora of the Syrians" was not a redundancy, but the very subject of the correspondence.<sup>30</sup>

Who then enjoyed the common market? *Syrioi* alone issued coins<sup>31</sup> and paid tribute to imperial Athens,<sup>32</sup> but more than one community is attested on the island of Syros. In the fourth century B.C. Athenians and Delians knew of at least one man from Syrian Galéssos (modern Galéssas), a town on the west coast of the island, just a few kilometers as the crow flies from the city of Syros (modern Hermoupolis).<sup>33</sup> We lack incontrovertible evidence that Galéssos was a *polis*, i.e. that the island was *dipolis*,<sup>34</sup> but the site is unexcavated and Syrian inscriptions are few.<sup>35</sup> Without descending into the quagmire of Odyssean geography we might note that in antiquity Eumaios was thought to hold Syros in mind when he spoke of a certain island called Syriê (*Od.* XV 404, νῆσός τις Συρία κικλήσκειται), saying (*Od.* XV 412–414), ἔνθα δῶα πόλιες, δίχα δὲ σφισι πάντα δέδασται / τῆσιν δ' ἄμφοτέρησι πατῆρ ἑμός ἐμβασιλευε, / Κτήσιος Ὀρμενίδης, ἐπιείκελος ἀθανάτοισιν.<sup>36</sup> One island, one king, two

- 29 *IG* XII.5 658.24–25: -- -- τοῦ | θεοῦ μου πατρός ε[ἰσε]νηνε[γμένην] (?) -- --; 29: ὅσα γρά[φομεν] πρὸς τὰς πόλεις(?); or, should the first-person plural be taken to indicate the letter from him and his father?
- 30 It is unclear how best to construe the letters preceding: Le Bas, *Voyage archéologique* II.4 1892.30–31: N . . . ANT . . . OIN . . . ΑΓΟΠΑΝΤ . . . C . . . ΙΩ . . . ; should we restore something like <π>[ο]ρήσαν[τα] τὴν κ[οιν]ήν | ἄγοράν τ[ῶν] Σ[υρ]ιω[ῶν], in which case ἀφ[ο]ρίζεσθ[αι] would be construed as a middle?
- 31 Also Καβίρων Συρίων: *BMC Crete and Aegean* pp. 123–126; *cf.* Kern, "Kabeiros und Kabeiroi," *RE* 1399–1450, at 1411–1412. Other island issues; Kos: Wroth, *BMC Troas* 151 nos.13–14, 152 no.21; Head, *HN*<sup>2</sup> 632–634; Lesbos: Head, *BMC Caria* 194–220 *passim*.
- 32 *E.g.* *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 261.A.iv.31; 266.C.iv.22; 270.C.v.33; 282.A.iii.22; it was not uncommon, however, for islands with multiple cities to pay tribute as a group: *cf.* *Amorgioi* (*e.g.* *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 279.C.ii.80; 281.iii.58), *Keioi* (*e.g.* *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 71.i.69; 263.A.iv.21; 270.C.iv.23); and *Koioi* (*e.g.* *IG*<sup>3</sup> 262.A.iv.15; 263.A.i.7; 265.B.ii.37); *Amorgioi* joined the second Athenian naval confederacy: *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 43.B.ii.28; these islands stood, it is assumed, for their constituent cities, but non-*poleis* were signatory: M. Dreher, "Poleis and Nicht-Poleis im Zweiten Athenischen Seebund," in M. H. Hansen (ed.), *Sources for the Ancient Greek City-State* (Copenhagen 1995) 171–200; see also in the same volume, W. Schuller, "Poleis im Ersten Attischen Seebund," 165–170.
- 33 *I. Délos* 98.B.a.18–19 (374/4): Πριτανεύς Σύριος Γαλήσσιος ΔΔΔΔΓΓ | *I. Délos* 104(9).11 (355/4): Πριτηνεύς Σύριος [Γαλήσσιος -- --]. Galéssos need not have been what we might call a *polis*, though it bears remembering that if not for a passage in Ps.-Skylax and a single inscription we might think that Mykonos had only one *polis*: Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 58 (Müller, *GGM* I pp. 46–47): ΝΗΣΟΙ ΚΥΚΛΑΔΕΣ. Κατὰ δὲ τὴν Ἀττικὴν εἰσι νῆσοι αἱ Κυκλάδες καλούμεναι, καὶ πόλιες αἶδε ἐν ταῖς νήσοις ... Μύκονος (αὕτη δίπολις); *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 1024.2–5 (Mykonos *ca* 200): ἐπ' ἀρχόντων Κρατινοῦ, Πολυζήλου, Φιλόφρονος, ὅτε ἰ συνώκισθησαν αἱ πόλιες, τότε ἔδοξεν Μυκονίοις ἱερ[ρ]ᾶ | θῆναι πρὸς τοῖς πρότερον καὶ ἐπνορθῶθαι περὶ τῶν προτέρων. *Mykonioi* also paid tribute (*e.g.* *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 71.i.75; 262.A.1.11; 264.A.iv.8) and joined the second confederacy (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 43.B.ii.19). See G. Reger, "The Mykonian *Synokismos*," *REA* 103 (2001) 157–181; on islands with multiple *poleis*, including Mykonos, see Idem, "Islands with One *Polis* versus Islands with Several *Poleis*," in M. H. Hansen (ed.), *The Polis as an Urban Centre and as a Political Community* (Copenhagen 1997) 450–492.
- 34 Ps.-Skylax, *Peripl.* 58 (Müller, *GGM* I pp. 46–47), does not call Syros *dipolis*; where he errs as to the number of cities on an island he overestimates: P. Flensted-Jensen and M. H. Hansen, "Pseudo-Skylax' Use of the Term *Polis*," in M. H. Hansen and K. Raaflaub (eds.), *More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (= *Historia Einzelschriften* 108, Stuttgart 1996) 137–167, esp. 147–148.
- 35 *Cf.* A. Manthos, "Εὐρήματα ἐπιφανεῖα ἀπὸ τὸν Γαλησσᾶ πῆς Σύρου," *AAA* 12 (1979) 39–45, esp. p. 40 fig. 1 for a picture of the bay.
- 36 *Σ* XV 403 (Dindorf): Συρία ἡ μία τῶν Κυκλάδων ἢ Συρία. εἰρηται δὲ Συρία ὡς τὰ Ψύρα Ψυρία, νήσου ἐπὶ Ψυρίας (*Od.* γ. 171.) [H]; μία τῶν Κυκλάδων ἢ Συρία, ἡ παρ' ἡμῖν λεγομένη Σύρα

cities. Whatever Homer meant,<sup>37</sup> Galéssos, along with its harbor, stood in classical antiquity, and stands today, in the shadow of its larger neighbor to the east. I suggest that the Syrian story was not unlike the Melitaian, that the city Syros absorbed the smaller community. Perhaps this was an amicable merger, the one granting the other joint ownership of its agora. While the walk across the saddle in the hills between the two places is not very strenuous, the creation of a common market may have been attractive to both parties.<sup>38</sup> It would have conferred prestige on Syros as the principal partner and allowed Galéssos a greater measure of economic freedom. The island is small and the gesture would be understandable.

On the other hand, the process prompted not one but two imperial letters, which suggests rather more than simple imperial ratification of local redistricting. Thus, we might conjecture that this union grew from a dispute,<sup>39</sup> as may have been the case with the *sympoliteia* of Melitaia and Pêreia. Perhaps Galéssos launched an independent bid for market rights, circumventing Syros and going directly to the emperor. Dependent communities are known to have done so, but only very rarely, for such maneuvers risked provoking the anger of the neighboring *polis*.<sup>40</sup> Is this the sort of instigation that might have prompted a dispute on Syros? Boundaries had to be drawn, so that Syros may not simply have admitted Galéssos to its existing agora. Instead, both seem to have submitted to the demarcation of new, common, ground. If this interpretation is warranted then Caracalla's mention of the common agora of the Syrians was not a simple passing reference, but a declaration, affirmation, or enforcement of status.

If these suggestions are correct then *IG XII.5 658* gives no cause to think that Syros was attempting to set grain prices;<sup>41</sup> still less to think that in diverting trade in grain from the wide, deep, protected harbor at Peiraeus and re-directing it to a smaller, more exposed harbor in the middle of the Aegean, the emperor sought simultaneously to punish Athens and create a new common grain market for the entire Aegean basin.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the stone said, there is no evidence to suggest that Syros' port was able at any point in antiquity to bear such a burden. Anyway, to understand the episode we need not resort to the politics of revenge or pan-Aegean markets. This looks like a familiar story: a local quarrel that made its way to the top.

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[B.Q.] Suda, s.v. Pherekýdēs (214), would appear to concur that Syra is Syros: Φερεκύδης, Βάβυος, Σύριος· ἔστι δὲ νῆσος μία τῶν Κυκλάδων ἢ Σύρα, πλησίον Δήλου.

- 37 It has been suggested that Homer's Syriē was not Syros, but Syria, which some early traveler is alleged to have mistaken for an island; on this view: H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London 1950) 80–84. S. Reinach, *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure* (Paris 1888) 14–17, esp. 14 n. 10, followed I. N. Βαλέττα, *Γεωγραφία τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἀρχαίας καὶ νεωτέρας* (1841) 108–109 [non vidi] and L. Ross, *Reisen auf den griechischen Inseln des Ägäischen Meeres* (Stuttgart 1843) II 25–27, in conjecturing that Syros' second city lay south of Galéssos, near modern Phoinikas or Dellagrázia; this is also a possibility, although no inhabitants are attested from this place in antiquity, as they are from Galéssos.
- 38 For a somewhat later imperial grant of market rights to what may have been a dependent village in the territory of Philadelphia: J. Nollé, *Nundinas instituere et habere: epigraphische Zeugnisse zur Einrichtung und Gestaltung von ländlichen Märkten in Afrika und in der Provinz Asia* (New York 1982) 59–86 (*SEG XXXII 1220*).
- 39 Emperors were called upon to settle territorial disputes: A. Aichinger, "Grenzziehung durch kaiserliche Sonderbeauftragte in den römischen Provinzen," *ZPE* 48 (1982) 193–204; G. Burton, "The Resolution of Territorial Disputes in the Provinces of the Roman Empire," *Chiron* 30 (2000) 195–215. Hadrian commissioned an enquiry into competing claims of ownership of the harbor and pasturage at Delphi: Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* (as in n. 1) 75.II.31–40.
- 40 J. Nollé, "Marktrechte außerhalb der Stadt: Lokale Autonomie zwischen Statthalter und Zentralort," in W. Eck (ed.), *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1999) 93–113, esp. 99–101.
- 41 G. Reger, *Regionalism and Change in the Economy of Independent Delos* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1994) 114 n. 86, includes *IG XII.5 658.30–31* in a list of various interventions by the state in grain markets, including public purchase and price-setting.
- 42 Oliver, *Greek Constitutions* (as in n. 1) p. 492.