

Lean On Me: Patrons and Refugees in Late Classical Greece

In fifth-century B.C. Greece the decision to accept war refugees was governed by political and practical considerations such as whether it was feasible to aid in the evacuation of refugees, what rights refugees should hold in their host *polis* and what repercussions might be expected from states antagonistic to the refugees. Once granted sanctuary refugees were largely responsible for their own maintenance and repatriation, when it occurred, was normally negotiated as part of the settlement which concluded hostilities. Relations between host *poleis* and refugees were normally handled at the group level rather than on an *ad hoc* basis for individual refugees, as evidenced by Sparta's resettlement of Aeginetan refugees at Thyrea and Athens' aid to the Plataeans. By the mid-fourth century, this model of refugee management was breaking down. Exhausted by decades of warfare, *poleis* were less likely to welcome large groups of refugees into their midst and, as a result, evacuation of refugees *en masse* to a single city rarely occurred. Instead, refugees generally fled in small groups to multiple different safe havens and accommodations for refugees were usually made to individuals in the form of proxeny decrees or grants of *isoteleis*, rather than to the refugee community as a whole.

The instability experienced by many *poleis* at the end of the fourth century further complicated refugees' attempts to secure asylum. Unable to negotiate directly, refugees became dependent on private patrons to provide monetary support and act as their representatives to government officials. In this paper I will be examining the role of private patronage in assisting refugees displaced by war in the second half of the fourth century B.C. I will focus specifically on Samian refugees ejected from their homes after that island was seized by Athens in 366/65. The primary sources for this investigation are a series of honorary inscriptions made by the Samians to their benefactors after the Samians reclaimed their home in 322. These inscriptions record, in varying degrees of detail, the efforts made by individuals on behalf of the Samians while they were in exile and the honors given the men by the Samians in return. Other examples of individuals acting as patrons for refugees can be found in Plutarch's *Alexander*, in which Aristotle and Callisthenes are both reported to have petitioned the Macedonian king on behalf of their respective countrymen and in an inscription from the *polis* of Myrina concerning Chalchidian refugees.

Bibliography

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