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Chapter 6

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The Agonistic Festivals of Sikyon

Introduction

Sikyon lies in the north-east Peloponnese, overshadowed by Corinth and Argos, but still of the greatest strategic importance for any ancient army hoping to leave or to enter the Peloponnese or for any conqueror aiming to hold down the Peloponnesian hinterland. The city found itself in the spotlight of history twice, first under the tyrant Kleisthenes, in the early sixth century BC, and, much later, in the second half of third century BC, when under the guidance of Aratus it helped dictate the policy of the most important power bloc in the Peloponnese.

Sikyon's agonistic history, however, is not well known. Any account of the origins of the Sikyonian Pythia, undoubtedly the city's most important games, has to be plucked out of a cocoon of fourth-century propaganda. The Kaisareia, the sole set of games known to have been founded in Imperial times, appear once, in one not very long inscription. The Antigoneia and the Soteria appear once in the inscriptional record and in the same single inscription, although there are one or two imprecise literary references to them. The games in honor of Demetrios I do not appear in the inscriptional record at all. Still, the effort is worth it, as any account of the agonistic history of Sikyon may fill out our still sparse picture of agonistic life in second-rank states that bob along in the wake of their larger, more forceful neighbors or of passing dynasts. Nevertheless, the sporting activity and milieu of Sikyon is perhaps representative of the professional life of most athletes.

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The Games of Sikyon

The Rhapsode Contests of Sikyon

Kleisthenes, the second Orthagorid tyrant of Sikyon, probably ruled from ca. 600/590[1] BC to the early 560s BC,[2] although it is impossible to establish reliable dates for the various events associated with his reign.[3] According to Herodotus,[4] at some point, equally impossible to determine, "having made war on Argos",[5] Kleisthenes bans rhapsode competitions in Sikyon on the grounds that the *Homḗreia épea* performed in these contests involve the praise of Argos and the Argives. Since Homer himself does not talk of Argos in such terms, it is possible that the poems that so upset Kleisthenes were the *Thebais* and the *Epigoni*. These, which were still attributed to Homer as late as fifth century BC and even after,[6] narrated the expedition of the Seven against Thebes and of the Epigoni and did so probably in pro-Argive terms.[7] Before the reign of Kleisthenes, Adrastos was so deeply rooted in the mythological landscape of Sikyon,[8] that these rhapsode competitions, if they did involve the recitation of the *Thebais* and *Epigoni*, very probably predate Kleisthenes' tyranny or at least his anti-Argive policy. The local appeal of these poems suggests that the competitors may have come from Sikyon or from further afield, from the western Peloponnese, where the *Thebaid* and *Epigoni* were well known.[9] Beyond this we know nothing of these games.

The Pythia of Sikyon

The earliest set of athletic games recorded at Sikyon are the Pythia and, with a potential life span of more than 600 years, are undoubtedly the longest lived. All the sources but one[10] that deal with the matter unambiguously credit Kleisthenes with their foundation, while one source states that he financed the institution of the games from the spoils awarded him after the 'war of the Crisaeans', this being the ancient name, or at least, one ancient name for the narrative that modern scholars have labelled 'the First Sacred War'.[11]

1 Farrington 2013: 113–117, 114–116n23–36.
2 Farrington 2013: 115, 115n28–30.
3 See, e.g., Farrington 2013: 113–125 for survey of the problems involved.
4 Hdt. 5.67.1–5.
5 Cingano 1985: 32–33 on Argive claims on Argos as motive for war(s) of Kleisthenes against Argos.
6 Cingano 1985: 37–38.
7 Cingano 1985: 34–45; Torres-Guerra 2015, 241–242.
8 Cingano 1985: 34.
9 Cingano 1985: 38.
10 Schol. Pind. *Nem*. 9.25b (foundation of Pythia by Kleisthenes); Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 9. (foundation of Pythia by Kleisthenes with spoils from 'Krisaian War'); Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 9.20 (foundation attributed by others wrongfully to Adrastos, rather than rightfully to Kleisthenes); Farrington 2013: 110, 110n6–7.
11 Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 9.

Only Pindar, in 468 BC or soon after, attributes the foundation to Adrastos and his version is probably shaped by the reaction against the Orthagorids that is evident in Herodotus' hostile account of the tyrant.[12]

Along with the general nebulousness of the chronology of Kleisthenes' reign, the details of the accounts of the 'First Sacred War', in which Kleisthenes is depicted as coming to the aid of Delphi and the Amphiktyony, have been conclusively shown to be highly unreliable and mainly the product of the fourth century BC.[13] Yet some core of historical fact involving disturbances at the eastern end of the Corinthian Gulf and Delphi, perhaps an attempt by the Amphiktyony to remove Delphi from local hands,[14] combined with an attempt on the part of the Amphiktyony to gain access to the Gulf of Corinth,[15] probably lies behind the elaborate accounts of the war and it is easy to see how Sikyon under its ambitious tyrant could have got caught up in such events, particularly if they offered the chance of expansion and of striking blows against Corinth.

The founding of the Sikyonian Pythia cannot be seen in isolation from the instituting, or reorganizing, of the nearby Delphic Pythia, the Isthmia and the Nemea in the early sixth century BC, although because of the hazy chronology involved, the direction and dynamic of the relationship of the Sikyonian Pythia with these games of the nascent *períodos* is impossible to untangle. The chronographical tradition behind Eusebios and Jerome places the foundation of the Isthmia and the Delphic Pythia in the same year, 582 or 578 BC, depending on the manuscripts.[16] This date more or less coincides with those given in various Pindaric scholia and the *Marmor Parium* for the foundation of the Delphic Pythia,[17] which perhaps derive from Aristotle and Kallisthenes' *Anagraphe ton Pythionikon* ("List of Pythian Victors").[18] Eusebios/Jerome[19] place the foundation of the Nemea about eight or ten years later, depending on the manuscript, in the fourth year of the 51st Olympiad (573 BC),[20] the first year of the 52nd Olympiad (572 BC)[21] and the fourth year of the 52nd Olympiad (569 BC).[22] The archaeological record at the shrine at the Isthmus and at Nemea suggests that the dates given by the chronographers, if we take

12 Pind. *Nem.* 9. 9. (…ἅτε Φοίβῳ θῆκεν Ἄδραστος ἐπ' Ἀσωποῦ ῥεέθροις…).
13 See, e.g. Farrington 2013: 113n20. for a brief survey of the question.
14 Morgan 1990: 134–136, Scott 2014: 52–54.
15 Hall, J. 2007: 281.
16 Helm 1956: 101 b. M puts the event in Ol. 49/3 (= 582 BC), B in Ol. 50/3 (= 578 BC). On Eusebios' dating of the two sets of games to the same year, see Gebhard 2002: 222.
17 Schol. Pind. *P.,* hypothesis b, d; *Marmor Parium* F38 (Jacoby, 1904: 12–13 [F37, F38], 102–105).
18 Christesen 2007: 179–201 on Πυθιονῖκαι of Aristotle and Kallisthenes.
19 For an introduction to Eusebios and Jerome, see Christesen 2007: 232–276.
20 Helm 1956: 101b, N (Turonesis Berlin.) Euphorion (mid-third century BC [?]) (Powell, 1925: 45, frg. 84; cf. Morgan 1990: 216, 216n57) also places the Nemea slightly after the Isthmia.
21 Helm 1956: 101b, A (Amandinus Valentianus 495).
22 Helm 1956: 101b, B (Bernensis 219).

them to mean a point or period when the Isthmia and Nemea were enhanced, are fundamentally correct, with expansion at both sites occurring in the second quarter of the sixth century BC.[23] Things are less clear at Delphi, which may have been the scene of informal athletic contests as early as the eighth century BC,[24] although there are no archaeological remains at the site that can be definitely linked to agonistic activity until much later.[25] On the other hand, nothing so far disproves the possibility that the Pythia were re-founded or enhanced about this time.

Which states were behind this enhancement of sites and festivals? The shrine at the Isthmus was probably in the hands of the Corinthians from its inception[26] and they were clearly behind the building of the first temple (ca. 690–650 BC).[27] There was also a Corinthian presence at Delphi, along with an Argive one.[28] The Sikyonians may have displaced the Corinthians, but this is not evident from the archaeological record.[29] On the other hand, Kleisthenes is supposed to have won the first chariot race at the Delphic Pythia in 582 BC.[30] The tradition regarding Kleisthenes offered by Herodotus, who perhaps picked it up in Sikyon, is ferociously negative.[31] By contrast, in the fourth century phase of the Atheno-centric tradition about the 'First Sacred War', which was triggered by the presence of Philip in the events of the 340s BC,[32] Kleisthenes is this time on the side of good, but nothing in this mainly fourth century narrative, at least as

23 At the Isthmus, the first temple dates to the first half of the seventh century BC and is the product of Corinthian builders (see n. 27), but architecture relating to agonistic activity does not appear until the construction of the stadium. Around 575 BC or soon after, the presence of larger numbers of spectators at the Isthmus is suggested by the building of a ramp connecting altar and stadium (Gebhard 2002: 229, 229n72.). The stadium was rebuilt ca. 550–500 BC (Gebhard 2002: 228, 228n70.) and there is other building that suggests that the shrine had become more important (Gebhard 2002: 229, 229n72.). The presence of a dedication in the form of an ἀλτήρ, dated to ca. 550 BC, also indicates athletic activity (Gebhard 2002: 229, 229n74). Large quantities of mass–produced pottery from Corinth used for feasting at the shrine at the Isthmus dating to ca. 650–550 BC have also been found, suggesting increased activity, presumably associated with the expansion of the Isthmia (Rosser 2015: 83–108). At Nemea, the pattern is similar, with the construction of the 'Archaic' temple around about the turn of the sixth century BC (Morgan 199: 215.), followed in the mid sixth century BC by the reshaping of the mound on which the *heroon* of Opheltes stood, to produce the 'Early Stadium' (Miller 2002: 239–250, 246–248). The earliest inscription indicating agonistic activity at Nemea also dates to ca. 550 BC (Bradeen 1966: 320–330, 320–321).

24 Morgan 1990: 212.

25 The earliest known agonistic inscription, dating to 467/6 BC, refers to equestrian, rather than athletic, victories (*FD* III, 4, no. 452; Strasser 2001: 45, no. 34 for full bibliography) and the running track, located in the area occupied by the stadium, dates to the Classical period (Davies 2007: 47–65, 52).

26 Morgan 1990: 213, 213n46.

27 First temple at the Isthmus (690–650 BC) as the product of Corinthian technology: Hemans 2015: 39–63.

28 Scott 2014: 57. Oracles from Delphi to Eëtion (Hdt. 5.92.β.2), the Bacchiads (5.92.β.3) and Kypselos (5.92.ε. 2). Scott 2014: 66 (treasury at Delphi built by Kypselos). Scott 2014: 47–49 (Argive presence at Delphi).

29 Farrington 2013: 119–124 (on 'Tholos' and 'Monopteros').

30 Paus. 10.7.6.

31 Hdt. 5.67–68. Farrington 2013: 111–112 on various traditions regarding Kleisthenes. Cingano 1985: 39 for speculation on Herodotus' source.

32 Christesen 2007: 190; Hall 2007: 280.

preserved, makes it necessary for him in his capacity there as ally of the Amphiktyony to win the first Pythian chariot race. Thus, Kleisthenes probably did win the race or, to be more cautious, he was probably involved in the (re)foundation and expansion of the Delphic Pythia. Perhaps, too, it was Kleisthenes who introduced the worship of Pythian Apollo that was so important in the Sikyonian pantheon.[33] The Nemea were evidently initially in the hands of Kleonai, as is shown by the fact that one of the two foundation myths, Herakles' fight with the Nemean lion, is set in Nemea and the environs of Kleonai.[34] The Argive foundation myth,[35] in which the Seven against Thebes found the Nemea as funeral games for the baby Opheltes, makes clear Argos' claims to the games. Kleisthenes attacked Kleonai at some unknown point in time,[36] and this, combined with a definite Sikyonian presence at Nemea,[37] may have triggered the Argive myth or perhaps the myth appeared only later, when the Nemea, some 20 km from Argos had proved a success and Argos wanted to lay direct claim to them.

On the basis of the archaeological evidence alone, it is impossible to establish the order in which these sets of games were instituted and/or upgraded. It is possible that the Delphic Pythia were founded after the 'First Sacred War', as the tradition maintains, but such is the fog that envelops Kleisthenes' reign, it is impossible to say when that might have been.[38] Perhaps the Delphic Pythia were founded first, with significant diplomatic input from Kleisthenes, who then followed up with the Sikyonian Pythia. The displaced Corinthians, if displaced from Delphi they were, may have enhanced the Isthmia, partially in response to Kleisthenes. The Nemea may have come last (this is after all what the perhaps not completely unreliable tradition says),[39] the foundation of an insignificant polis on the border between Corinth and Argos.

The Sikyonian Pythia have no foundation myth to link them to the heroic, aristocratic past, as the Isthmia and Nemea do,[40] and so distance them from their aggressively ambitious founder. This close association with Kleisthenes and his ambitions may have been among the reasons, or was perhaps the main reason, why the Sikyonian games did not become one of the sets of games of the emerging *períodos*. When this cycle appeared and how, before it solidified around the four canonical events, has not yet been fully

33 Skalet 1928: 157–158 on cult of Apollo at Sikyon.
34 The earliest surviving occurrence of the myth of the victory of Herakles over the lion in relation to the foundation of the Nemea is in Bacchyl. 9.1–4, 13.46–55.
35 Survey of Argive foundation myths of Nemea at Doffrey 1992: 185–193. See also Farrington forthcoming.
36 Plut. *Mor*. 553 a–b.
37 Farrington: 439–460. Thessaloniki: 4, 4n15.
38 For summary on the reign of Kleisthenes and the chronological problems involved, see, e.g., Farrington 2013: 113–125.
39 See above, p 2–3 and n20–22.
40 Morgan 1990: 209.

explored, but the scheduling of the Isthmia and the Nemea show that the concept, if not the name, had crystallized by the early sixth century BC.[41] The interstate sanctuaries of the *períodos*, with their games, offered neutral ground for the elites of cities to demonstrate their supremacy amongst themselves at home and amongst aristocratic competitors from other states through athletic prowess and dedications within in their own cities. Interstate sanctuaries also offered an arena for cities themselves to compete with each other, both in terms of athletic victories and dedications.[42] Thus, a festival overshadowed by its mortal and still living founder, an ambitious tyrant of a polis, was not the most neutral of environments for such activity. This, in itself perhaps not of decisive importance, may have served to tip athletic traffic away from Sikyon during the crucial time, whenever that was – possibly the mid to late sixth century BC – during which the *períodos* was solidifying and the Sikyonian Pythia may never have recovered from this exclusion.

As for the length of the life of the Sikyonian Pythia, there are a few inscriptional references to the games,[43] the latest dating to ca. AD 45, but literary references are found only in Pindar, perhaps indicating that the fifth century BC was the heyday of the festival.[44] No mention of the Sikyonian Pythia occurs in the three letters of Hadrian regulating the conduct of various games, which may have been written in the second half of AD 134.[45] Their complete absence from the account of Pausanias, who visited Sikyon not many years later, in the mid or late second century AD,[46] and, as already noted, mentions several temples and cults of Apollo, suggests that the games had lapsed so long ago and so completely that they left no memory.

Our knowledge of the organization, curriculum and catchment area of the competitors in the Sikyonian Pythia is as sketchy as it is about everything else to do with the games. Among other matters, it is not known where they were held. In Pausanias' time, there were three sanctuaries in the agora associated with Apollo,[47] one of which, perhaps, goes back to the last third of sixth century BC. This may mean that the Pythia, at least initially, were held in the agora, the central space of the city, which would not be surprising, given Kleisthenes' evident desire to promote Sikyon as a great power. Nor would this

41 Morgan 1990: 212–213.
42 Morgan 1990: 204.
43 *SEG* 11.257 (=*IAG* 12); *SEG* 11.338 (= *IAG* 45. See n. 53 for full text); Blinkenberg 1941: no. 63 (= *IAG*. 35); (= *IAG* 45); Bourguet 1929, no. 534 (=*IAG* 65).
44 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.26; Pind. *Nem.* 9; Pind. *Nem.* 10.43; Pind. *Ol.*. 13.109.
45 Petzl and Schwertheim 2006: 22–23.
46 Summary of current views on dating of Pausanias at Pretzler 2007: 23–25. Pretzler thinks that Pausanias had probably completed his work by ca. AD 180.
47 Ἱερόν of Peitho (Paus. 2.7.7; Lolos 2011: 379), temple of Apollo (Paus. 2.7.8; Lolos 2011: 380–381), temple of Apollo Lykios (Paus. 2.9.7; Lolos 2011: 382). There was also the temple of Apollo Karneios (Paus. 2.14.2; Lolos 2011: 384).

have been unique, as sporting facilities, admittedly of later periods, have been found in the agora of Argos, Athens and Corinth,[48] although the theatre and the stadium at Sikyon, both of which were constructed after 303 BC, with the second phase of the theatre dating to second century BC, must have hosted at least part of the games.[49] There is a single, late (ca. AD 45) reference to an *agōnothétēs*[50] and there is a single reference to silver *phiálai* given as prizes in the early fifth century BC.[51] As for the curriculum, there were equestrian events in the time of Pindar and the early third century BC.[52] An inscription which we will refer to several times, because it is so important and rare a piece of evidence, a palmares[53] from Argos or its environs dating to ca. 200–180 BC[54] and presumably belonging to an athlete from the area, indicates that the *díaulos* and the *hoplítēs* were held at Sikyonian Pythia at the time, which probably means that the games involved the usual range of gymnic events.[55] On the other hand, oddly for a city with such a strong musical and artistic tradition, there are no certain references to victories in musical events.[56] Yet the Pythia managed to attract some far-flung international victors. Pindar mentions victors from Argos[57] and from Corinth,[58] from Thebes[59] and from Aitna.[60] Inscriptions refer to victors from Sikyon itself (ca. 475 BC),[61] from a city of the Achaia of the time, which may have been Argos itself or in the environs of Argos (210–

48 Argos: Pierart and Touchais 1966: 51–52 (Archaic, Classical); Athens (mid fifth century BC, if not earlier): Kyle 1987: 57–64, esp., 60–62; Corinth: Williams II and Russell 1981 (fifth century BC, later fifth century BC, third to second century BC).

49 Griffin 1982: 13, on date of theatre. The stadium may have been built to host the displaced Isthmia. See Farrington 2013: 127n105 for references.

50 Bourguet 1929: no. 534 b (= *IAG* 65), l. 11–12.

51 Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 9.121.

52 Equestrian events: τέθριππον: *Nem.* (473 BC [?]. See Bowra 1964: 409); ἅρμα πωλικόν, συνωρὶς τέλεια, κέλης: Blinkenberg 1941, no. 68 (= *IAG* 35) l. 5.

53 *SEG* 11.338 (= *IAG* 45), which, given its importance for the games of Sikyon, we give in full here:
Ἥραια δίαυλον δίς, ὁπλίταν δίς· Βασίλεια ἄν|[δ]ρας στάδι[ο]ν· Παναθήναια ἄνδρας δίαυλον· | [Ἐ]λευσίνια ὁπλίταν· Πτολε[μα]ῖα ἐν Ἀθήναι[ς | π]αῖδας δίαυλον· Λύκαια ἄνδρας δίαυλον δίς·| (l. 5) Ἀμφιαράϊα τὰ μεγ[άλ]α δίαυλον καὶ ὁπλίταν·|Ἐλευθέρια ὁπλίτ[α]ν τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου | πρᾶτος Ἀχαιῶν· Θερμικὰ στάδιον, ὁπλίταν· |Ἡράκλεια ἄνδρας δίαυλον· ἐν Σικυῶνι Πύθια | δίαυλον, ὁπλίταν· Σωτήρια παῖδας, δίαυλον· |(l. 10) Λύκαια τᾶι αὐτᾶι ἀμέραι στάδιον, δίαυλον, | ὁπλίταν· ἐν Σικυῶνι δίαυλον, οπλίταν· |[Ἀ]ντιγόνεια ἄνδρας δίαυλον·
To left: [Ν]έμεα παῖδας στα[διον, δία]υλ[ο]ν· Ὀλύμπια
ἄνδρας δίαυλ[ον….]ά[κ]ις
Four crowns
a. ὁπλίταν c. Πύθια | δίαυλον
b. *vacat* d. Ἴσθμια | δίαυλον | πεντάκις
Moretti (Moretti 1953: 120) conjectured that the ἐν Σικυῶνι δίαυλον ὁπλίταν at l. 11 is an error for ἐν Σικυῶνι Πύθια δίαυλον ὁπλίταν, since just previous to this (l. 8–9) the inscription mentions ἐν Σικυῶνι Πύθια| δίαυλον, ὁπλίταν.

54 Moretti 1958: 121, on dating of *SEG* 11.338 (= *IAG* 45).

55 *SEG* 11.338 (= *IAG* 45) l. 8–9. See n. 53.

56 Farrington 2013: 128–130.

57 Pind. *Nem.* 10.43.

58 Pind. *Ol.* 13.109.

59 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.16.

60 Pind. *Nem.* 9.

61 *SEG* 11.257 (= *IAG* 12).

180 BC),[62] but also from Lindos (300–290 BC)[63] and Tralleis (ca. AD 45).[64] The victor from Argos or thereabouts also obtained victories at all the games of the *períodos*, which suggests that the Sikyonian Pythia managed to attract top performers, at least in the third to second century BC.

Why did the Pythia come to an end when they apparently did, in the late first or early second century AD, particularly when games of no greater status and prestige survive long into the Imperial period, with their status apparently enhanced?[65] One suggestion that can be excluded immediately is that Sikyon in Imperial times was too impoverished to support agonistic activity. Apart from the fact that the city did have an agonistic life, at least in the first century AD (if not for longer), as manifested by the Kaisareia, the other indications are that the economy of Sikyon was no worse than that of any other polis at the time.[66] One might have expected the Pythia to acquire an epithet like Kaisareia or Sebasta, as happens with other games established in pre-Imperial times, and conceivably, like them, to survive into the third century AD.[67] Perhaps the chief reason for the demise of the Sikyonian Pythia lies in the lingering negative reputation of their founder. By Imperial times, thanks to the fact that games had become a fundamental part of the practices of Hellenistic ruler cults, perhaps the most important aspect of Greek agonistic life is as an activity associated with the Imperial cult, with the presence of the emperor benignly and inseparably presiding over sporting life throughout the empire. Unfortunately, the Sikyonian Pythia were established by a tyrant with a deeply negative historical reputation glaringly enshrined in, among other places, the pages of the first major work of Greek history. Perhaps no emperor would have risked being smeared by

62 *SEG* 11.338 (= *IAG* 45). See no. 53.
63 Blinkenberg 1941: no. 63 (= *IAG* 35).
64 Bourguet 1929: no. 534 (= *IAG* 65).
65 For example, the *Trophoneia* at Lebadeia and the *Herakleia* at Thebes (Spawforth 1989: 194, 194n13).
66 The city follows a demographic and developmental path similar to that of other cities in Hellenistic and early Imperial times, with a shift of population and of economic and social activity to the city from the countryside (Lolos 2011: 329–330, 367–368, 372). In the case of Sikyon, the destruction of Corinth in 146 BC seems definitely to have given a boost to the economy of Sikyon (Trainor 2015: 112), which may have survived the re-foundation of Corinth in 44 BC and perhaps continued into the first and second century AD (Trainor 2015: 112). The public finances of Sikyon in the mid first century BC were evidently desperate (failure on part of Sikyon to reply loan to Atticus: Cic. *Att*., 1.13.1.; 1.19.9.; 2.1.10.; 2.13.2. Lolos 2011: 78. Seizure of pictures from public collection of Sikyon for debt: Plin. *HN* 35.127 (44). Lolos 2011: 78). On the other hand, in the private sphere, the important olive oil trade seems to have continued unabated at exactly this time (Trainor 2015: 112). For literary references in Virgil, Ovid *et al.* to Sikyonian olive and oil trade, see Griffin 1982: 29), perhaps together with a flourishing perfume trade (Trainor 2015: 107). During the same period, there is evidence of the import of oil and wine from central and southern Italy (Trainor 2015: 109–110), replaced over the second to third century AD with imports from north Africa (Trainor 2015: 110). When the Roman Peace finally comes to Sikyon, the scale and type of building on the plateau on which the city stands indicates the existence of a community with significant resources (Lolos 201: 372).
67 Camia 2016: 262.

association with a previous ruler of such dubious repute and this may have been enough for the Pythia to drop into oblivion.

The Games in Honor of Demetrios I

Corinth, Sikyon and Argos are of perennial significance in Greek history, as possession of these cities, and of Corinth, above all, gives control of access to the Peloponnese from central Greece. The next set of games that we hear of at Sikyon, the festival in honor of Demetrios I, owes its existence to this geopolitical fact. In 308 BC, Sikyon and Corinth had passed into the hands of the Ptolemies.[68] Demetrios I had made previous attempts to capture Sikyon[69] and did so finally in 303 BC.[70] With a view to making the city a secure base, he moved it to the acropolis and "restored its freedom".[71] For this, he received *isótheoi timaí* ("honors equal to those given to the gods") from the inhabitants, who also renamed Sikyon 'Demetrias', voted to make sacrifice to him yearly and to hold annual *panēgýreis*[72] and *agṓnes*. Presumably the games, like other festivals in Demetrios' honor,[73] were named Demetria, although we have no reference to their title, official or otherwise. The king is also honored as *ktístēs*.[74] Two separate strands of honors are involved here. The first, the *isótheoi timaí*, indicate the direct and unambiguous deification of Demetrios. This is not the place to explore the details of the various beliefs that may lie behind the phrase *isótheoi timaí*, but it would seem to be an expression of genuine belief in the divinity of the honorand, irrespective of whether he is of mortal origin or not.[75] The second strand involves the use of the word *ktístēs*, since by this time, in addition to meaning 'city founder' in a material sense, the term also signifies somebody who has so

68 Griffin 1982: 78, 78n21 for references.
69 Plut. *Demetr.* 15.1–3.
70 Diod. Sic. 20.102.1–2.
71 If ἀνοχύρου (Diod. Sic. 20.102. 1–2, suggested by Dindorf) is right.
72 Πανηγύρεις as part of founders' cults: Leschhorn 1984: 343.
73 Other festivals in honor of Demetrios I: See above n.98, 99.
74 Diod. Sic. 20.102.2–3.; Kotsidu 2000: 136–137 (KNr.: 79 [L]).
75 See summary of current views on the divinity, or otherwise, of mortals who receive divine honors at Pfeiffer 2008: 31–45. Pfeiffer's position is that, since the same range of honors is used for both mortals and immortals, then those so honored are regarded as gods, although he notes that opinions varied over the different levels of Hellenistic and Imperial society as to whether a mortal could become a god. On this view, because whether one is immortal or not is irrelevant to whether one is a god, terms such as ἰσόθεοι τιμαί and ὥσπερ θεός are not oblique references to the honorand's mortality and so not implicitly an attempt tactfully to dodge the attribution of full divine status to the honorand (see Habicht 1970: 196–197 for this view). Price 1984: 50 notes that the latest known public vote of ἰσόθεοι τιμαί to an individual is that in honour of Artemidoros of Knidos (*I.Knidos* I.59, l. 17–18), which dates to Augustan times. Price remarks that in Imperial times, the continuation of public divine cults to individuals other than to the emperor would have been "politically undesirable". If so, then the honour was significant, perhaps because it sincerely asserted that the recipient was divine, with all that that implied about power and status in the local community and in relation to supra-civic authority.

strengthened the city politically, that he can be said to have 'refounded' it.[76] Demetrios earns the title twice over, in that he has expelled the garrison of the Ptolemies, thereby restoring democracy, or at least restoring things to what they were before the period of Ptolemaic control,[77] and has physically rebuilt Sikyon. The honors and all the rest of the paraphernalia of the cult are typical of the practices of ruler cults in the early Hellenistic period.[78] Likewise, the spontaneity with which they are offered in reply to a benefaction is characteristic of early Hellenistic times, before relations between cities and kings stabilized and became institutionalized.[79] As for the games themselves, however, we know nothing of their organization, prizes, their location or the origin of those who competed.

How long did Demetrios' games last? The likelihood is that it was not very long. The only hard evidence we have is given by Diodorus Siculus, who says they had fallen into disuse, the victim of the whirligig of time[80] ("…time, whose passage is broken by change, wiped all this out …"). This means that the games had disappeared by ca. 35–31 BC, the possible date of the publication of Diodorus' *Bibliotheke*,[81] and would explain why Pausanias does not mention them. As has already been noted elsewhere,[82] however, the thought in Diodorus' text, if not the expression, is very similar to a thought in Plutarch's *Aratus*, who offers it at the end of his treatment of the posthumous honors granted to Aratus at Sikyon, which very probably included the Sikyonian Soteria.

> Of these ceremonies [in honor of Aratus] they [the Sikyonians] retain traces, which they celebrate on the same days of the year, but most of the honors, thanks to the passage of time and to other matters, are now gone.[83]

Thus both writers seem to be drawing on a common source, perhaps at first hand, that dealt with at least some of the sets of games held at Sikyon and made the point that they had fallen into disuse.

The Soteria (if there were games of any sort associated with the memorial festivities in honor of Aratus. Plutarch does not actually mention any games)[84] were founded in honor of the hero of the Achaian League. This body, admittedly 70 years or so after the death of

76 Leschhorn 1984: 179–181, 335.
77 Lolos 2011: 71–72 on possible constitutional change at Sikyon under Demetrios I.
78 Habicht 1970: 195 on appurtenances of ruler cult. Demetrios gets a πανηγύρις, which are usual in ruler cults, rather than a ἑορτή (Chaniotis 2003: 438).
79 Kotsidu 2000: 560–561.
80 …ὁ χρόνος διαληφθεὶς πραγμάτων μεταβολαῖς ἠκύρωσεν,… (Diod. Sic. 20.102.3).
81 Green, 2006: 6.
82 As noted by Habicht 1970: 131, 131n4, who suggests that Diodorus and Plutarch used a common source.
83 Plut. *Arat.* 53.5(ὧν [i.e. "activities connected with the Soteria"] ἔτι δείγματα μικρὰ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξοσιούμενοι διαφυλάττουσιν αἱ δὲ πλεῖσται τῶν τιμῶν ὑπὸ χρόνου καὶ πραγμάτων ἄλλων ἐκλελοίπασιν.).
84 See p. 126–127.

Aratus, was utterly defeated by the Romans in the Achaian War of 146 BC. During this conflict, the Sikyonians seem to have maintained a pro-Roman stance, to judge from the favorable way in which the Romans treated them after the war.[85] Even the Achaian League survived in neutered form[86] resurfacing in the first quarter of first century BC[87] and continuing to exist down to at least 31–27 BC.[88] All the same, it seems unlikely that a festival in honor of the most important personality connected with the now defeated League would survive undiminished after 146 BC and perhaps the festivities at Sikyon began to dwindle after this date. And so, the source that Diodoros and Plutarch seem both to be drawing upon may date to between 146 and 31 BC. Who the writer was, we have no idea, as all the names that we know of who are likely to have written about Sikyon are dated too early.[89]

If we move back in time, we see, for what it is worth, that the palmares of our nameless victor probably from Argos or its environs (ca. 200–180 BC), despite mentioning other games at Sikyon, does not refer to any Demetria. Demetrios, of course, was an Antigonid and if we go back yet further, the first clear indication of anti-Antigonid activity that we can see at Sikyon dates to the late 240s BC, when Aratus captured the Akrocorinth, still held by the Antigonids, in 243 BC,[90] except for 250/249–245 BC, when it was in the hands of Alexander, the governor, who had revolted against Antigonos II.[91] Earlier, in the 270s BC, Sikyon had had diplomatic relations with the Delphic Amphiktyony, which since the Gaulish raid on Delphi, had been in Aitolian hands.[92] However, Antigonos II did not oppose Aitolian expansion[93] and diplomatic relations on the part of Sikyon with

85 The Romans seem to have been indulgent towards Sikyon even before 146 BC (Schwertfeger 1974: 42). After that date and the destruction of Corinth, the Romans probably wanted Sikyon to replace Corinth as the host of the prestigious Isthmia, for which the Romans clearly had a respect and presumably wanted to continue (Schwertfeger 1974: 48). They gave Sikyon the financial means that may have been used to do this, in the form of Corinthian territory (on which, however the Sikyonians paid rent [Lolos 2011: 77]). Whether the games did move to Sikyon for the period 146–44 BC remains unknown, but the archaeological evidence at the Isthmus suggests that they did (Lolos 2011: 77). How frequently they were held during this time is also very uncertain (Schwertfeger 1974: 42–48; Farrington 2012: 22).

86 Schwertfeger 1974: 19–26.

87 On the Achaian League post-146 BC, see Zoumbaki 2010: 116–118.

88 Schwertfeger 1974: 26.

89 Menaichmos, who wrote the Sikyonika, dates to the fourth century BC (Christesen 2007: 514–516.), as probably does the author of the Ἀναγραφή (Christesen 2007: 517–518). Polemon of Ilion (ca. 220–160 BC) (Deichgräber 1984: 1288–1320), who wrote a Περὶ τῆς ἐν Σικυῶνι ποικίλης στοᾶς and a Περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικυῶνι πινάκων (*FGrH* III, B., 536.) is too early. This leaves only the possibility of Diogenes of Sikyon, ὁ γράψας περὶ τὸν Πελοπόνησσον (*FGrH* III, B., 481, no. 503 [Diog. Laert. 6.81].), of whom the most we can say is that he may have been active in Hellenistic times (Wellmann 1918: 737 ["Diogenes aus Sikyon"]).

90 Plut. *Arat*. 16. 1–2; for date (243 BC) of Aratus' second στρατηγία of the Achaian League during which these attacks against Corinth took place, see Manfredini, 1987: 205, on Plut. *Arat.* 16.1–7.

91 Walbank 1957: 236, on Polyb. 2.43.4.

92 Grainger 1999: 108; Lolos 2011: 74, 74n76.

93 Grainger 1999: 147.

the Aitolians do not imply open hostility to the Antigonids. In fact, Antigonos II may even have supported Aratus' preparations against Nikokles, the Sikyonian tyrant, who held power for a short time before being expelled by Aratus.[94] On the other hand, it seems very unlikely that any pro-Antigonid foundations in Sikyon could have survived the events of the late 240s BC.

However, if one goes still further back, to the end of the fourth century BC, there are two inscriptions, one dated slightly before the other, which, when taken together, have been thought to suggest that the name 'Demetrias' had dropped out of use as early as 302 BC,[95] thus implying that Demetrios' standing in Sikyon had slipped radically, with the implication that any games founded in his honor would therefore probably have been abandoned. Whether this difference between the two inscriptions is a sign that Demetrios' prestige had already started to wither is doubtful, however. His influence in 302 BC in the Peloponnese was then at its peak, as he laid the foundation for his alliance of Greek states, while one of these inscriptions records a treaty of alliance with Athens, which was firmly in the grip of Demetrios at the time.[96]

How long lived are the scatter of other festivals in honor of Demetrios in other parts of the Greek world, some of them not too distant from Sikyon and firmly in the Antigonid sphere of influence? None of them would seem to last very long, with the exception of the cult of the *Sōtḗres* at Athens, in honor of Antigonos I and Demetrios,[97] which continued into the late third century BC,[98] and the possible exception of the founder's cult at Demetrias in honor of Demetrios.[99] Founders' cults, understandably, could be tenacious, some surviving deep into the Imperial period[100] and the cult of Demetrios at Demetrias may have ridden out the fall of the Antigonids. All the other cults in honor of Demetrios that we know of would, however, seem to have died out speedily. The Dionysia kai Demetria, apparently one festival, were held in each of the cities of Euboian *tetrápolis*.[101] Their honorand can only be Demetrios, as no other Antigonid (or Demetrios) is so closely associated with Euboia. Since there is no mention in the inscription of Antigonos, it is usually assumed that the festival was founded after Ipsos and reference to

94 Griffin 1982: 79.
95 *IG* V 2.351–357 (autumn 302–autumn 301 BC?), Lolos 2011: 73, 73n67; *SEG* 41.50 (303–302 BC), Lolos 2011: 72, 72n65.
96 For a detailed narrative of the period 304–301 BC: Billows 1990: 169–175.
97 Habicht 1970: 45–48; Kotsidu 2000: 33–46 (KNr 9).
98 Kotsidu 2000: 38. Other cults of Demetrios I at Athens: Δημήτριος Καταιβάτης, not heard of after 304 BC (Plut. *Demetr.* 10.5., Plut. *Mor.* 338a, Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.54.6., Kotsidu 2000: 46, KNr 10 [L]); Δημήτρια, 294 BC, 289/288 BC (Plut. *Demetr.* 46.1, Paus. 1.26. 1–2, Kotsidu 2000: 49, KNr 12).
99 Kotsidu 2000: 177–181 (KNr 110).
100 Leschhorn 1984: 334.
101 *IG* XII 9.207, l. 21. Kotsidu 2000: 275–280 (KNr 189 [E]).

it appears only once. Further afield, the Delians founded the Demetria,[102] which alternated annually with the already existing Antigoneia.[103] The Antigoneia were celebrated in 296 BC[104] and 294 BC,[105] after which both festivals disappear, perhaps extinguished when the Cyclades passed into Ptolemaic hands.[106] On Samos, the Antigoneia kai Demetria, which probably predate Ipsos, because they also honor Antigonos, appear only once[107] and probably did not survive Lysimachos' attack on Demetrios' possessions in the south-eastern Aegean sometime in or after 294 BC.[108]

Yet it would probably be wrong to assume that the games at Sikyon were quite as short lived as these others seem to have been. Even after the disaster of Ipsos, Demetrios maintained a hold, albeit much diminished, on the Saronic Gulf as far as Megara, on Corinth and on parts of the north east Peloponnese, possibly including Argos.[109] Demetrios was not a spent force, not at least for Sikyon, next to the Antigonid bulwark of Corinth and not far from Argos, which seems to have remained loyal to Demetrios.[110] Demetrios, moreover, clawed his way back to power over the next few years, aided by an alliance with Seleukos (299 BC) and by the opportune death of Cassander (297 BC). Having successfully besieged Athens, he installed three garrisons there (295 BC). In 294 or thereabouts, he ascended the throne of Macedonia and even after his rule collapsed there (288 BC), under the pressure of invasion by Lysimachos and Pyrrhus, he still managed to besiege Athens (287 BC) and impose a garrison there again. Under such circumstances, the Sikyonians may well have held on to their festival of Demetrios, at least until Demetrios' defeat and imprisonment in distant Asia in 284 BC,[111] always assuming, of course, that they felt hostility towards him. Perhaps they did not.

The Antigoneia

Plutarch mentions Antigoneia in honor of Antigonos III twice (although he does not specifically mention gymnic *agṓnes*).[112] The inscription from Argos or its surroundings that we have already looked at[113] refers to a victory in some set of Antigoneia in the men's

102 Kotsidu 2000: 195–196 (KNr 121 [E]).
103 Habicht 1970: 59.
104 Bruneau 1970: 565.
105 Habicht 1970: 58n2.
106 Habicht 1970: 59; Bruneau 1970: 566; Kotsidu 2000: 193, KNr 120 [E].
107 Schede 1919, No 7, *SEG* 1.362, *Samos Inv.* 190, l. 7–8; Kotsidu 2000: 256–257 (KNr 175 [E]).
108 Shipley 1987: 174–175.
109 Manni 1951: 47.
110 Manni 1951: 118.
111 For the historical narrative of the period between 301 and 282 BC, see, e.g., Shipley, 2000: 122–124.
112 Plut. *Arat.* 45.2; Plut. *Cleom.* 16.5.
113 See n. 53.

díaulos.[114] As Moretti thought, the games involved are probably the Sikyonian Antigoneia, as they are preceded by a mention of victories in the *díaulos* and *hoplítēs* contest in some set of games termed only ἐν Σικυῶνι ("in Sikyon"), but which, as already mentioned, Moretti thought were the Sikyonian Pythia.[115]

Although only Plutarch associates their foundation with Aratus, the games are clearly connected with him. They were a result and celebration of the alliance sought by Aratus against Kleomenes and so were presumably founded during Antigonos III's presence in the Peloponnese, the king having been invited to intervene by Aratus and the Achaian League in the League's conflict with Kleomenes III. Antigonos was present in the Peloponnese from sometime in or after April 224, when the decision was taken by the League to surrender the Akrocorinth to Antigonos was probably taken,[116] and remained there until the summer of 222 BC, when he defeated Kleomenes at Sellasia.[117] Having then attended the Nemea, where he received "everything that contributed to his eternal glory and honor from the Achaian League and from each of the cities", he hurriedly left to deal with Illyrian invaders in Macedon.[118] The Antigoneia were thus founded between April 224 and mid 222 BC at the broadest. The wording of Plut. *Cleomenes* 16.5[119] suggests that the festival was instituted before Kleomenes' defeat at Sellasia and the most likely time is the winter of 224–223 BC, when Antigonos was in or around Sikyon.[120] Antigonos III left behind him a sprinkling of other honors in the eastern Peloponnese,[121] but nothing as weighty as the Sikyonian festival. In Euboea, however, much more firmly in the sphere of Antigonid influence there are indications of greater honors, in the form of Antigoneia at Chalkis[122] and at Histiaia,[123] whose honorand may on balance be Antigonos III.

114 *IAG* 45, l. 12.

115 See n. 53.

116 Walbank 1957: 255.

117 Polyb. 2.66.1–2, 69.11.

118 Polyb. 2.70.4–5: εἰς Ἄργος ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἦλθε τὴν τῶν Νεμέων πανήγυριν (5) ἐν ᾗ τυχὼν πάντων τῶν πρὸς ἀθάνατον δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἀνηκόντων ὑπό τε τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἀχαιῶν καὶ κατ᾽ ἰδίαν ἑκάστης τῶν πόλεων ὥρμησε κατὰ σπουδὴν εἰς Μακεδονίαν. The Nemea were held in about July, but in odd–numbered years. Walbank 1957: 289 *ad* Polyb. 2.70.4 suggests that the games that Doson attended were the games scheduled for 223 BC but postponed to 222 BC.

119 Plut. *Arat.* 16.5 μὴ Κλεομένει ποιεῖν δοκῇ τὸ προσταττόμενον. – "[Aratus offered sacrifices to Antigonos] so that he might not be thought to be following the orders of Kleomenes".

120 Polyb. 2.54.5.

121 Mantineia, bases of statues possibly dedicated to Antigonos III: *IG* V 2.229; Kotsidou 2000: 117, KNr. 60 [E], *IG* V 2.330, inscribed [βασιλεὺς Ἀντί]γονος | [βασιλέως Δημητρ]ίου. Leschhorn 1984: 326n1; Geronthrai, statue: *IG* V 1.1122; Kotsidu 2000: 429, KNr. 304 [E]; Epidauros, statue: *IG* VI² 1, 589; Kotsidu 2000: KNr. 56 [E]; Sparta, honours: Polyb. 5.9.8–10. Kotsidu 2000: 120, KNr. 63.

122 Vollgraf, 1919: no. 15; Kotsidu 2000: 280–281 KNr. 190.

123 *IG* XI 4.1044, l. 23; Kotsidu 2000: 282, 190.

The Antigoneia appear twice more, both times in Polybios. He states that in the period during the Sixth Syrian War immediately after the fall of the councilors of Ptolemy VI, Eulaios and Lenaios, in 169 BC,[124] when they were being replaced by Komanos and Kineas,[125] an embassy happened to be present in Alexandria "regarding the Antigoneia games",[126] which suggests that the games were important enough, or had pretensions to being important enough, to require the dispatch of *theōroí* and so perhaps may also imply the participation of international athletes. They did, after all, attract at least one top-class athlete in the early second century BC, albeit of local origin.[127] The latest reference to the Antigoneia appears in an account of the events of 166–165 BC at Sikyon,[128] which means that the games evidently survived the breach with Philip V,[129] perhaps because the memory of Antigonos Doson was still alive and positively regarded, and, perhaps even more notably, they lasted at least a year or two beyond the end of the Antigonid dynasty, perhaps kept afloat by the extreme anti-Roman sentiment prevalent at Sikyon at the time. On the other hand, although the Roman treatment of Sikyon seems to have been favorable,[130] it is hard to imagine a festival that is not part of a founder's cult in honor of a member of a dynasty hostile to the Romans surviving for very long after a decisive military defeat at their hands.[131]

The Soteria

Plutarch, in his description of the posthumous honors granted to Aratus, mentions a *sōtēría thysía* ("sacrifice in thankfulness for deliverance") made to Aratus,[132] but no set of games as such. However, the inscription from Argos or thereabouts[133] mentions a set of Soteria directly after an almost certain reference to the Sikyonian Pythia. Thus, it seems more than highly likely that Sikyon had a set of games named Soteria, that they had a gymnic element and that they were part of the honors bestowed on Aratus.

Plutarch gives the background to the foundation of the festival, or, rather, of two festivals.[134] Aratus died at Aigion[135] and her citizens wanted to bury him there, while the

124 Walbank 1979: 352.
125 Walbank 1979: 353–354.
126 Polyb. 28.19.3. (…περὶ τοῦ Ἀντιγονείων ἀγῶνος…).
127 See n. 53.
128 Polyb. 30.29.3; Walbank 1979: 354.
129 Griffin 1982: 83–84.
130 See n. 85.
131 Founder cults of Hellenistic monarchs survive in several places in the Imperial period (see above, n [9]), but the Sikyonian Antigoneia were not connected with such a cult and so were probably nothing like as tenacious.
132 Plut. *Arat.* 53.4.
133 See n. 53.
134 Plut. *Arat.* 53.

Sikyonians naturally wanted to inter him at Sikyon, although there was a prohibition on burial within in the walls. This was solved by an oracle[136] and the body was taken in procession to Sikyon, where it was buried in the Arateion, as Aratus' *hērṓon* was called, "where they conducted his funeral, just as if he were founder and savior of the city".[137] There were also two annual *thysíai* ("sacrifices") to Aratus, one on the anniversary of the day on which he liberated Sikyon from tyranny and known as the *sōtēría thysía* and performed by the *thyēpólos* ("priest") of Zeus Soter,[138] and one on the anniversary of Aratus' birthday and performed by the priest of Aratus. Polybios tells us directly that the Sikyonians and the Achaian League voted the deceased Aratus *hērōikaí timaí* ("heroic honors").[139] Plutarch states that songs were performed, it would seem, at the second sacrifice by *hoi perí toú Dionýsou technítai* ("the Artists of Dionysos"). There was also a procession, apparently performed on the day of the second sacrifice, in which the *gymnasíarchos* joined, at the head of the *paídes* and *éphēboi*, followed by members of the Council wearing crowns and any other citizen who wanted to join in.

The term *Sōtḗr* and hence the related festival, the Soteria,[140] when used of men, does not imply that the honorand was godlike.[141] Rather, divine or mortal, the *sōtḗr* has ensured the survival of the community in an hour of desperate need. Aratus is so honored, because he saved Sikyon from the tyranny of Nikokles[142] and restored order to the polity of Sikyon,[143] which is also why the Arateion is set squarely in front of the former residence of another tyrant.[144] It is also why the priest of Zeus Soter performs the sacrifice to the heroized Aratus (not because Aratus is now assimilated to Zeus Soter).[145] Indeed, the changes wrought by Aratus are so radical and so to be welcomed, that he has in effect refounded Sikyon and so receives the title of *oikistḗs*, just as Demetrios was hailed as *ktístēs.*[146]

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135 In 213 BC.

136 Euphron was buried in the agora at Sikyon, probably in 365/4 BC (Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.12; Leschhorn 1984: 179), apparently without the approval of the gods. He was clearly a controversial figure and many Sikyonians may have disagreed with the decision to bury him in the *agora*, which is perhaps why the approval of Delphi was sought before the burial of Aratus, as Leschhorn suggests.

137 Plut. *Arat.* 53.3 (ὥσπερ οἰκιστὴν καὶ σωτῆρα τῆς πόλεως ἐκήδευσαν).

138 Plut. *Arat*. 53.4.

139 Polyb. 8.12.7–8.

140 List of Σωτήρια at Pfister, 1967: 1223–1231.

141 Nock 1972: 720–721.

142 Griffin 1982: 79–80.

143 Leschhorn 1984: 328–329.

144 Leschhorn 1984: 328.

145 Leschhorn 1984: 329. Perhaps this sacrifice inaugurated the Σωτηρία.

146 See n. 74. In Hellenistic times, κτίστης replaces οἰκιστής, so Aratus was probably termed κτίστης, although οἰκιστής seems to return in Imperial times, at least in literary sources (Leschhorn 1988: 332–335), where perhaps it is a conscious archaism.

Although gods and heroes are clearly not the same,[147] both are powerful supernatural entities, to be placated and to be approached for the granting of requests. Thus, although practices employed in the worship of heroes do display some differences from those used in the worship of gods, there is inevitably a great overlap between the two.[148] As for the public heroization of Aratus, it is firmly in the tradition, evident from the seventh century BC, of publicly awarding leading members of the local community heroic honors.[149] In the post-Classical polis, heroization, public or private, is one of the main tools for managing the acceptance and recognition of the unprecedently high status of member of the local elite[150] and this can only have strengthened the impulse that the Sikyonians felt towards proclaiming Aratus a *hḗrōs*.

And so, it is not surprising that the activities associated with the Soteria of Sikyon are part of the common currency of civic religious activity of their age. The birthday of the divinity in question had always been the occasion and day for the festival of the divinity and so it naturally was with Hellenistic ruler cults,[151] while 'commemorative days', on which events of political significance occurred, are the trigger for other festivals.[152] The performance of songs is also a feature of Hellenistic religious festivals, which accounts the presence of the artists of Dionysos at the festivities at Sikyon.[153] The hierarchically ordered procession, however, is the most important element in Hellenistic festivals,[154] in which the youth of the city, who represent the future of the community, play a prominent part.[155] Athletic games as part of the cult of heroes go back to at least the last quarter of the fifth century BC, with the institution of annual games in honor of Brasidas.[156]

We have already noted the striking similarity of thought between Diodorus Siculus' account of the games dedicated to Demetrios and Plutarch's reflections on the Soteria.[157] As we have already pointed out,[158] if indeed Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch are drawing

147 Price 1984: 32–40.
148 Ekroth 2010: 106–108.
149 Hughes 1995: 171–172.
150 Hughes 1995: 68–171, for summary of development of hero cults in Hellenistic times.
151 Chaniotis 2003: 435. Οἰκισταί cults do not often involve sacrifices on the birthday of the οἰκιστής. See Leschhorn 1984: 329.
152 Chaniotis 1995: 151.
153 Chaniotis 2003: 438.
154 Chaniotis 1995: 154–155. Processions as fundamental element of Hellenistic festivals: Chaniotis 1995: 155–157; wearing of crowns: Chaniotis 1995: 158; type of costume prescribed for officials: Chaniotis 1995: 158; festival on day of historical significance: Chaniotis 1995: 151, 151n33.
155 Chaniotis 1995: 161.
156 Thuc. 5.11.1.
157 See p. 121.
158 See p. 121.

on a common source, then the Soteria, too, continued to the time at which the common source was written, which was before 31 BC. They did so, however, as already noted, apparently on a greatly diminished scale, which perhaps occurred when the Achaian League lost its importance after 146 BC.[159]

As for the lifespan of the Soteria, the games do not appear in any agonistic inscription dating to the Imperial period. This may be just chance, but the fact that Pausanias, although he mentions the Arateion,[160] does not mention the ceremonies associated with it, strongly suggests that they were gone by the mid or late second century AD. We have already explored the possibility that the festival went into decline after 146 BC.[161] In fact, if Plutarch really is drawing on a source dating to before 31 BC[162] for his description, then, despite the impression conveyed by his words that the Soteria still existed in his time, in the late first century AD, it is possible that they had disappeared before he wrote.

We know nothing about the curriculum of the games nor anything about the origin of competitors at the festival, except for the possible origin of the victor from Argos or the surrounding area commemorated in the sole inscription (probably) referring to the games.[163] It is, however, highly likely that the Soteria involved the boys' *díaulos* and therefore presumably the men's *díaulos* and perhaps therefore the whole package of gymnic events, associated with stadium, wrestling and boxing.[164] And, like the Sikyonian Pythia and Antigoneia, the Soteria managed to attract at least one top athlete.[165]

The Kaisareia

The Kaisareia of Sikyon are known only from one inscription,[166] which appears on a statue base found in the peristyle court of the theatre at Corinth. The statue was erected by the father of Λ. Βείβιος Φλῶρος (L. Vibius Florus), in honour of this son, citizen of Patrai and Corinth[167] and a *país kōmōdós* ("boy comedian"). The son was victorious at the Heraia at Argos both in the contest for *paídes kōmōdoí* ("boy comedians") and in the *diá pántōn*, at the Kaisareia at Corinth, where he was victorious twice as well as being

159 See above n. 87.
160 Paus. 2.8.1.
161 See p. 121.
162 See p. 121.
163 See n. 53.
164 Perhaps the presence of the οἱ περὶ τοῦ Διονύσου τεχνῖται meant that there were also some musical and scenic events, although they performed on the day of the second festival, and the games may have taken place on the first. See n. 145.
165 See n. 53.
166 Kent 1966: no. 272.
167 On multiple citizenships for competitors in games, see n. 180.

victorious an unspecified number of times in the *diá pántōn*, at the *en Sikyṓni Kaisáreia* ("Kaisareia in Sikyon"), where again he also won the *diá pántōn*, and at the Asklepeia at Epidauros, where again he also won the *diá pántōn*.

The date of the inscription lies somewhere between the late first century BC and ca. AD 70–80. Kaisareia is an epithet that is attached in the Imperial period to existing games, although it is also used of new foundations.[168] The earliest known such set of games are the Kaisareia of Corinth, held alongside the Isthmia and instituted certainly after, but perhaps not long after, the victory of Octavian at Actium.[169] A lower limit for the inscription is given by the reference to the Heraia which around AD 70–80 become the ἡ ἐξ Ἄργους ἀσπίς ("the Shield from Argos").[170] Thus, unless by some chance they are the Pythia with a new, additional title, which seems unlikely,[171] the Kaisareia are a new foundation.

The Kaisareia of Sikyon evidently contained *mousikoí agṓnes,* contests involving musical and theatrical events, as is shown, obviously, by the specialty of our victor, but also by the appearance of the *diá pántōn*. Many details of this contest[172] are obscure, including the details of performance,[173] but it seems to have been a contest among the winners in a range, not yet fully clarified,[174] of interrelated musical and theatrical disciplines held as the concluding event of the games. It seems to have enjoyed a lower status than victory in the specialist competition. Significantly, perhaps, Florus does not bother to record whether he also won twice at Corinth in the *diá pántōn*.[175] The earliest indisputable reference to the institution dates to second century AD[176] and its appearance here does not necessarily mean that the Sikyonian Kaisareia were exclusively *mousikoí agṓnes*, as the contest also appears in the Korinthian Kaisareia, which also had gymnic and hippic sections.[177] In fact, there is a hint that the Kaisareia did involve gymnic contests. The victor list of the Kaisareia of AD 127 has as victor in the [ἄνδρας] στάδιον ("men's *stádion* race") a certain [---]ράτου Πελλη|ν[εύς] ὁ καὶ Σικυώνιος ("[…]ratos, citizen of Pellene and Sikyon"),[178] who seems to be the same as the […ρ]άτου Πελληνεὺς καὶ ὁ Σικυώνιος, victor in the

168 Camia 2016: 261–264.
169 Camia 2016: 261, 261n30.
170 Moretti 1991: 179–189. Strasser 2006: 305, while taking account of Moretti's point, puts the inscription in the mid first century AD, without giving reasons.
171 See p. 119–120.
172 Its title may be an abbreviated form of ὁ διὰ πάντων ἀθλημάτων ἀγών. See Strasser 2006: 310–311.
173 Strasser 2006: 312–319.
174 Strasser 2006: 299–305.
175 Jory 1967: 86. Strasser 2006: 320–321.
176 Strasser 2007: 307. Strasser 2006: 305–306 would like to see a reference to the διὰ πάντων in *TAM* II 261c, from Xanthos and dating to the first century BC.
177 Biers, Geagen 1970: 81, l. 58–62.
178 Biers, Geagan 1970: 83, l. 104–105.

[ὀπλείτη]ν ("[…] ratos, citizen of Pellene and Sikyon, victor in the *hoplítēs*").[179] Cities, eager to secure the prestige and possible services of notable athletes, awarded them citizenships.[180] Since the indications are that the Pythia were probably defunct before this iteration of the Kaisareia in AD 127,[181] perhaps this athlete from Pellene was awarded the citizenship by Sikyon on the basis of his performance in the city's Kaisareia.

The majority of surviving palmares record the careers of athletes, rather than of performers. If the Kaisareia did also include gymnic events, the absence in palmares of references to victories at these games may mean that they were short lived, perhaps dying sometime in the second century AD at the latest. If, on the other hand, the Kaisareia were exclusively *mousikoí agṓnes,* then it is less surprising that mention of them is absent from palmares and they may have lasted longer.

Whether or not the Sikyonian Kaisareia included non-*mousikoí agṓnes,* the program of the *mousikoí agṓnes* themselves very probably followed the pattern evident in other games of the Imperial period, a schema whose origins go back to Hellenistic times.[182] In general, the program opens with contests for trumpeters and heralds, followed by an epideictic session, involving the recitation of literary works and very often including verse or prose encomia of the Imperial family, by a musical section and by a theatrical section, for *tragōdoí* and *kōmōdoí*. The program usually terminated with a *kitharōdós* contest, this specialty evidently being the most prestigious of all disciplines, because the most difficult,[183] followed by the *diá pántōn*, which, because it gathered all the stars of the games together for one (hopefully) tense and exciting final play-off, must have been a tremendous crowd pleaser.[184]

Presumably the *paídes kōmōdoí* contest in which Florus was victorious at Sikyon was a subsection of the theatrical section of the program of the games and there may also have been a contest for *paídes tragōdoí*, to complement the contests for (adult) *tragōdoí* and *kōmōdoí*.[185] Such contests for *paídes* must have something of a rarity. We hear of only one

179 Biers, Geagan 1970: 83, l. 135–136.
180 Van Nijf 2002: 184–194.
181 See p. 118–119.
182 Wörrle 1988: 229–232 analyses the program of the Λυσιμάχεια at Aphrodisias, first celebrated between 180–181 (Roueché 1993: 168) and of other festivals of Imperial times held there and of the Δημοσθένεια at Oenoanda, approved by Hadrian in AD 124 (Wörrle 1988: 33).
183 Strasser 2006: 325.
184 Strasser 2006: 327.
185 No contest for *paídes tragōdoí* appears in the Corinthian Kaisareia victor list for AD 127, however, (Biers and Geagan 1970: 81–82), which is the fullest surviving list of victors at the Kaisareia.

other securely attested *país kōmōdós*[186] and one *país tragōdós*,[187] both dating to second to third century AD, which means that ours may be the earliest reference to the discipline, although our inscription tells us that there were contests in the specialty at Corinth (perhaps the Kaisareia) and Epidaurus. That the Sikyonian Kaisareia, which were perhaps inspired by (envy of?) the Corinthian Kaisareia, had such a specialty, suggests that the program might have been fairly extensive, perhaps with other contests in other specialities for *paídes*.

What did a *país kōmōdós* do? By Imperial times, the words *tragōdós* and *kōmōdós* have two main meanings. First, they denote actors in 'old' dramas, that is, of fifth-early fourth century BC, whose repeated performance became a feature of theatrical *agṓnes* from fourth century BC,[188] and in particular they refer to actors who competed for prizes as directors and protagonists of their own productions,[189] supported by non-competing *synagōnistaí.*[190] Secondly, the words can refer to a vocal performer. A *tragōdós* in this sense was a type of performer who appears from third century BC onwards[191] and specializes in the singing of highlights, lyric or otherwise, mostly, it would seem, drawn from Classical tragedy,[192] to music that was attributed to the playwrights of this period.[193] Likewise, a *kōmōdós* was a vocal performer,[194] whose repertoire probably drew mainly on songs in pre-Menandrine comedy, which was richer in solo pieces.[195] It has been suggested that *paídes tragōdoí* played children's roles in tragedy, but this is unlikely, given how rare and brief such roles are.[196] Instead, particularly since there are other classes of *paídes* vocalists,[197] it seems likely that *paídes tragōdoí* performed (adult) solo pieces excerpted from Classical tragedy, while *paídes kōmōdoí* performed vocal extracts from Classical comedy.

186 Τ. Φλ. Σαρπήδων, of Akmonia in Phrygia and of Ephesos: *I.Ephesos* V 1606, second to third century AD. Biers and Geagan 1970: 80, restore l. 42 of the victor list from the Kaisareia of AD 127 as π[αῖδας κ]ωμῳδούς, so the contest may also have existed at the Kaisareia at the time.
187 Μᾶρκος Αὐρήλιος Νεικηφόρος, of Kyzikos, at Hypaipa: Keil and Premerstein 1914: no. 93.
188 Aneziri 2003: 212.
189 Wörrle 1988: 250, 250n137.
190 Sifakis 1979: 204–205. The child actors whom Sifakis sees in the mosaics of Dioskourides and on Mytilene that show scenes from Menandrine comedy play such minor roles, that they are unlikely to be candidates for prizes for παῖδες κωμῳδοί.
191 Hall 2012: 12.
192 Hall 2012: 15–17.
193 Hall 2012: 14–17.
194 Ghiron-Bistagne 1976: 124.
195 Hall 2012: 131.
196 Jory 1967: 84.
197 E.g., πα[ῖδας κι]θαρωδούς at the Καισάρεια at the Isthmus (Biers and Geagan 1970: 80, l. 42).

Conclusions

The information that we have on the various games of Sikyon is disappointingly lacking in the nitty-gritty that we (historians of ancient sport, that is) would like to know, that is say, what contests the games involved, the origin of competitors and so on. What seems to emerge, however, from our very fragmentary information is that the Pythia until their demise in the first or second century AD were Sikyon's most important games, attracting an international clientele, while the others perhaps drew mainly on competitors, local or at most from within the Peloponnese.

However, the agonistic history of Sikyon does very clearly illustrate the changing aspects and meaning of Greek agonistic activity. Starting with a flourish under Kleisthenes, it provides a platform for the acquisition of personal prestige at home and abroad and is probably connected at Sikyon, as it is definitely elsewhere, with the emerging statehood of the polis, in this case under Kleisthenes. Later, Sikyon happened to be on the fringes of Antigonid sphere of influence and contact with this dynasty led to the foundation of ruler cults, of which *agṓnes* were an integral part. Heroization, and its accompanying rituals, of which *agṓnes* were an integral part were used in Hellenistic times to honor leading personalities in the polis. Thus (probably) the Soteria at Sikyon were founded as part of the posthumous honors awarded Aratus.

All this faded away, abruptly or otherwise, when the political scene changed utterly, if obscurely, after 146 BC. The next, and last, set of games that we hear of, the Kaisareia, show, from their name alone, that athletic activity is above all an appurtenance of the Imperial cult. Further work needs to be done on the history of the games of other smaller states of the Peloponnese, but it would not be surprising if such a study revealed profile similar to that of Sikyon.

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