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Beyond the Big Four

Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture

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Preface

In the course of the sixth century BC, the festivals of Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea canonically emerged as the four most important Greek athletic contests. Beyond these games, however, there was a large number of local contests that shaped the agonistic world of Greek city-states. Focusing on local, small-scale contests and the significance these festivals had for their organizing communities, this volume explores the aspect of competitions in the shadow of the big four. Most eminently, the book explains how the contests served as occasions on which a local identity was articulated; in this vein of inquiry, the assembled papers intersect with recent research on localism in ancient Greece. The authors shed light on all aspects of local athletic festivals, including the analysis of local disciplines, prizes, and rules. They also consider local catchment areas and ask what the games meant for each community: why and when the games were founded, how many athletes participated, and what role local sports heroes played in the political communities that put on the show.

Beyond the Big Four invited specialists of ancient athletics and/or experts in local/regional Greek studies to explore different athletic festivals by starting from the same set of guiding questions. The volume is a shared attempt at revealing local worlds of Greek contests by investigating the various contexts in which Greek games acquired a particular local meaning. In doing so, it goes beyond the question of ascribed status (e.g., 'sacred crown games') and asks whether local games can be understood as an expression of different local approaches to athletics. Behind this question is the idea that, despite the existence of a similar set of disciplines and events throughout the Greek world, there were also important idiosyncracies, or in other words: 'agonistic cultures' that differed from place to place. In order to reveal those differences, the volume starts from the assumption that games have a history and that their status changed over time. Thus it adapts a flexible approach and includes games which sometimes exceeded a strictly local catchment area in some periods of their history.

My heartfelt thanks go to Hans Beck (Münster) who saw the genesis of this volume through with great interest and a very positive spirit since the beginnings of the project in Montreal. Emilia Bachmann and Marvin Prüfig (Münster) helped with the editorial layout.

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Chapter 1

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Introduction

The history of Greek athletic and musical contests is a very dynamic field of research, with studies looking on the topic from different perspectives and applying different methods. When we try to group recent publications into categories, three starting points seem to prevail: 1) a certain group of sources, 2) the athletes/artists, 3) the *agṓnes* and their structure and development.[1] Examples for the first category include studies on authors like Pindar or Herodotus,[2] on victor lists,[3] on statues,[4] on the so-called palmares,[5] on the iconography[6] and other genres. Scholars who have taken the athletes and/or artists as their starting point have written studies on great champions,[7] on their self-presentation and status,[8] or on the associations,[9] to name just a few examples.

In the books and articles of the third group, the big crown contests are dominant: Every handbook on ancient athletics contains an overview of the development and the program of the Olympics, mostly followed by some remarks on the Pythia, the Nemeia and the Isthmia. This focus is well justified; it was not modern scholarship that marked these contests as the "Big Four", but the Greeks themselves. Only those artists and athletes who had triumphed at these competitions were considered great champions of their discipline.

1 Obviously these aspects do not exclude each other mutually. Athletic and musical competitions, which are so characteristic for the ancient Greeks, need a combined analysis of the specific characteristics of the sources, of the athletes and artists (as the most important people) and the *agṓnes* (as the most important institutions for competitions).
2 Lattmann 2010; Kyle 2009.
3 Christesen 2007.
4 Spahlinger 2020.
5 Strasser 2021.
6 Bohne 2011; Strasser 2014.
7 Roubineau 2016.
8 Mann 2001; Papakonstantinou 2019; Scharff 2024.
9 Aneziri 2003; Fauconnier 2023.

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 10-18.

It is no wonder, then, that the sources are much richer for the "Big Four" than for the many other *agṓnes*, Pindar's epinician odes are only one example. But the "Big Four" are only one part of the story, and this volume takes a different approach in analyzing Greek *agṓnes*. Besides the famous Panhellenic festivals, there were many other competitions. Thomas Heine Nielsen has convincingly shown how high the number already was before Alexander the Great started his campaigns,[10] and the "explosion agonistique"[11] of the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods let the amount of agonistic festivals raise to many hundreds.[12] Some of these have been the object of case studies,[13] but since Ringwood Arnold's book nearly a century ago,[14] no systematic approach has been undertaken to get insights into Greek competitions by focusing on minor festivals. The chapters collected in this volume demonstrate in a very instructive way how useful it is to have a close look on the 'small' *agṓnes* (the readers will recognize that they were not this small at all). In so doing it is possible to detect certain phenomena that remain hidden if one looks on the "Big Four" only. In the following remarks I will group the research questions in three (overlapping) complexes: 1) the question of unity and variety within the Greek agonistic system, 2) interactions between the local, the regional and the Panhellenic dimensions of contests, 3) interdependencies between developments in the agonistic world on the one side and political, economic and social developments on the other.

The Greek Agonistic World: Unity and Diversity

The Greek agonistic festivals formed a system: not in the sense of a Luhmannian autopoietic system, but understood as a stable complex of actors and institutions. Even if supra-regional associations of artists and athletes, i.e. institutions that organized the connection of competitors and competitions, were a Hellenistic respectively Late-Hellenistic development,[15] the contests had been interrelated long before, i.e. since the Archaic period. Best evidence for this is the emergence of the "Big Four": The term *períodos* is not attested before the Hellenistic period,[16] while the historical phenomenon, i.e. the hierarchization of competitions with a group of four at the top, dates back to the sixth century BC.[17] Many sources refer to this hierarchy, for example victory monuments:

10 Nielsen 2016; id. 2018.
11 Robert 1984: 38.
12 About 500 contests are attested by coins and inscriptions of the Roman Empire (Leschhorn 1998: 31).
13 E.g., the Pythia of Sikyon (Farrington 2013).
14 Ringwood Arnold 1927.
15 Fauconnier 2023.
16 Remijsen 2011: 99.
17 Funke 2005.

an epigram on a statue base in Delphi tells us that Theogenes of Thasos, a famous boxer and *pankratiastḗs* of the fifth century BC, had won 1,300 victories altogether. But on the list below the epigram only those in Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea (and one triumph in the *dólichos* at the Hekatombeia at Argos) are specified.[18]

Hierarchies are built on the notion of similarity, so the hierarchy of *agṓnes* is built on the idea that they were somehow similar, but different in rank. And they were similar indeed: Greeks from all poleis and tribes knew what *pýx*, *dólichos* or *kitharōdía* was about, and competitors could travel from competition to competition finding everywhere similar structures of organization and similar rules. The existence of *iso*-games (isolympic, isonemean etc.) that came into being in the early third century BC also points to a system of interconnected, hierarchized competitions. The "*iso*" declares that an *agṓn* should be regarded equal in rank to an important festival, the victors should therefore get the same rewards as *olympioníkai*, *nemeoníkai* etc.

Nevertheless, there were differences, and not only those in rank. Some contests included all three groups of disciplines – gymnic, hippic, thymelic –, while others did not. The program of the Olympics, to name the most famous example, did not list thymelic contests except those for heralds and trumpeters. Age-classes were different, ranging from the two-part division in boys and men in Olympia to more complex schemes; for example, we find boys, men and three different age-classes of ephebes in an inscription from Chios.[19] And there were also regional peculiarities concerning the disciplines: in Thessaly, a region famous for its horses, disciplines like *aphippodromás*, *aphippolampás* and *taurothēría* – almost unknown in the rest of Greece – were quite popular (**Graninger**). And, finally, at some places we find very peculiar rules: according to Philostratos, runners who had won the *hoplítes* of the Eleutheria at Plataiai and competed again, were killed if they missed the victory (**Jung**).

Considering the similarities and the varieties, it is an important question, raised by **Graninger** in this volume, how the organizers of contests observed each other, whether they took over innovations or aimed at keeping their own, distinctive character.[20] It is quite important not to limit this question to the "big" *agṓnes*, but to include the many competitions that had to struggle for their place in the agonistic system. An exciting example of innovation and imitation is the appointment of the victor of victors in the thymelic contests, i.e. a contest at the end of the festival in which the champions of every

18 *Syll.*³ 36A.
19 *Syll.*³ 959 (third / second century BC).
20 Technical innovations spread quite rapidly; cf. Dimde 2016 for the *hýsplēx*.

single discipline competed.[21] In Hellenistic Boiotia, we find evidence for this final contest, it is called *epiníkios*. In the charter of the Sebasta of Naples (AD 2), an *agṓn* founded and promoted by Roman emperors, the same contest is called *diá pántōn*, and under this name it found entrance in many *agṓnes* in Italy, in Greece and in Asia Minor, eiselastic *agṓnes* as well as thematic ones. But some very important contests went on without the *diá pántōn*. It is no wonder that the Olympic Games did not include it as they did not set great value on thymelic contests, but what is striking is that the Pythia in Delphi and *agṓnes* at Athens withstood the new trend. In short, we have a discipline that remained limited to one region for some time, while later on it spread in the Greek world under a different name, but did not enter some of the most important contests.

Local, Regional, Panhellenic: Spheres of Influence

It is a truism that 'local' and 'global' developments are interconnected, and currently historians and social scientists put much effort in understanding these interactions. "Glocalization" has become a common term to describe "the simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems."[22] The contributions in this volume demonstrate that festivals and competitions form an appropriate starting point for considerations about universalizing and particularizing tendencies in ancient Greece. In **Ganter**'s analysis of the Theban Herakleia "the interrelations between local, regional, and Panhellenic expressions of belonging come into play", and this is the case also in the other chapters.

The term "Panhellenic" needs some discussion. It is common in publications on ancient athletics, but has recently been critically discussed by Sofie Remijsen, who has argued against the idea that only Greeks were accepted as participants in the Olympic Games.[23] In contrast, "Panhellenic" is used – without inverted commas! – in many of the following papers (**Ganter**, **Tufano**, **Jung**, **McAuley**, **Graninger**), and in my view the term seems appropriate. When we look at current and previous publications, it becomes clear that scholars have (almost) always laid more emphasis on the inclusive dimension of "Panhellenic" than on the exclusive one: What is underlined is that all Greeks were allowed to participate, while the other side of the medal, the exclusion of barbarians, gets

21 Cf. the convincing analysis by Strasser 2006.
22 J. Blatter, s.v. Glocalization, Encyclopaedia Britannica Online (https://www.britannica.com/topic/glocalization; 29.5. 2020).
23 Remijsen 2019.

less emphasis in publications to the topic.[24] And that is what the ancient authors do. Moreover, it is well-known long since that there were participants whose Greekness was at least questionable: the Macedonian king Alexander I was allowed to participate in the early fifth century,[25] a Persian prince competed in Olympia, probably in 388 BC,[26] the Romans were admitted to the Isthmia in 212 BC[27] and to the Olympics at an unknown date. According to the *communis opinio*, there was a rule that only Greeks could participate, but the Eleian officials "seem to have admitted whomever they pleased for their own considerations",[28] and Nielsen has pointed out that "there is no known instance of an athlete denied admission on account of his ethnic identity."[29]

Based on the well-established insights into the flexible character of Greek ethnicity, Remijsen goes one step further: in her opinion, there was no rule at all that excluded non-Greeks from participation in the Olympics. Her main argument is that it would not have been possible to control the 'Greekness': "Greece did not have lists of citizens, as it was not politically united, nor did it levy taxes. This means that it would have been extremely difficult to control at Olympia or other sanctuaries who was 'Greek' and who was not."[30] This argument, however, only holds with static models of ethnicity, according to which there are clear divisions between one ethnic group and the other. Such models are very popular in political debates, but they do not reflect the discursive character of ethnicity. Ethnicity is not a fact one can "control", but an attribution that is volatile and open to discussion.

In addition to this, it is widely acknowledged among ancient historians that Greeks saw 'Greekness' more as a cultural than as a biological category.[31] The existence of the "only-Greeks-rule" is thus completely consistent with the low level of bureaucratization in ancient Greece; the task of the Eleian officials was not to find out who was Greek and who was not, but to decide who was worthy of competing and who was not (if the latter ever happened). To add another argument, even if we will never know what really happened when Alexander I came to Olympia, we can take it for granted that Herodotus' audience would have had difficulties to understand the episode if there had been no rule at all that excluded "barbarians". Thus it appears that the term "Panhellenic", with the

24 E.g., Krause 1838: 51–52; Nielsen 2007: 18. Cf. the first verses of Friedrich Schiller's *Die Kraniche des Ibycus* (1798): "Zum Kampf der Wagen und Gesänge, / Der auf Corinthus Landesenge / *Der Griechen Stämme froh vereint* …" (my italics).
25 Hdt. 5.22.
26 Xen. *Hell*. 4.1.39-40; cf. Bresson 2002 and Roy 2020.
27 Polyb. 2.12.8.
28 Crowther 2004: 13n11.
29 Nielsen 2014: 136.
30 Remijsen 2019: 4.
31 See, e.g. the contributions in Malkin 2001.

stress of its inclusive dimension, describes very well the character of the Olympics and other 'big' festivals. If there was anything common to all Greeks, it was athletics.

But the Panhellenic dimension does not tell us the whole story. The Olympics, despite being open to all Greeks, also had a strong affiliation to one single polis, Elis. It was Elis that organized the most famous competitions in the Greek world, and this polis drew capital out of this role, economic as well as symbolic. No wonder, then, that Elis tried to defend their control of the games. Such a connection to one polis was a defining feature not only of the Olympics, but the same is true for the other *agṓnes* as well. Yet there are many nuances to discover when we take a closer look. **McAuley** demonstrates how the Heraia in the Argolid developed from a festival connected to a region to a festival connected to a polis. His results are highly important for our understanding of the impact extramural sanctuaries had on political developments. Plataiai, according to Poseidippos, could claim the status of a polis only when the Eleutheria took place (**Jung**).

In addition to the Panhellenic and the polis dimension, we have to take into account the ethne and koina. The relationship between *agṓnes* and the federal states is often neglected because scholars have normally paid more attention to Egypt and Asia Minor when they discussed Hellenistic athletics. This volume, in contrast, with its focus on mainland Greece, shows the nexus of poleis and federal institutions in the context of agonistic festivals. A treaty dated to 216 BC shows detailed regulations concerning the competences and duties of the polis Anaktorion and the Akarnanian koinon with regard to the Aktian Games.[32] The Pamboiotia carry the reference to a significant Greek region in their name and were important for the ethnogenesis of Boiotia (**Tufano**), and the chapters collected in this volume show a fascinating variety of interactions between the local and the regional levels.

Interdependencies between Agonistic and Political / Social / Economic Developments

It is no matter of dispute that agonistic festivals were influenced by political developments. The Ptolemies' hippic dominance in the third century BC and their diplomatic efforts in favor of the Ptolemaia in Alexandria revealed how much the power structure of the Greek world had changed since Alexander's campaigns. The category of isolympic festivals came into being in this context; it was a new approach in order to lift the status of an *agṓn*.

32 *IG* IX 1², 2, 583.

The festivals examined in this volume offer many insights into political and socio-economic developments, but in a different way than the "Big Four" do. The difference becomes clear when we look at the Romans and their participation in Greek festivals. Victor lists of the "Big Four" show that some Roman emperors and members of their family used Greek *agṓnes* to present their power to the Greek world like Hellenistic kings: Tiberius and Germanicus are among the Olympic victors, and Nero's agonistic tour of AD 66/67 is very well-known. But in general, Roman participation in the big festivals was rare, especially in the gymnic disciplines. The situation is different for local *agṓnes*, as Sophia Zoumbaki has shown.[33] There are some victors with Roman names in the Republican period, and Zoumbaki plausibly argues that these were not athletes who had travelled from Italy to compete in the competitions, but residents of the respective polis. These residents, mostly merchants, visited the gymnasia and competed in the *agṓnes* with the aim to integrate themselves into the local Greek communities. In this way victor lists, combined with other evidence, show processes that lie below the big politics reported in the historiographical tradition. Furthermore, the names of the festivals indicate the symbolic penetration of Greece by the Romans. To name only one example, the name of the Erotideia of Thespiai was supplemented by kai Rhomaia or kai Kaisareia (**Schachter**).

The reasons for the foundation and the success/failure of *agṓnes* were manifold. The Basileia at Lebadeia were brought into being by Epameinondas after the victory at Leuktra; the new festival in honor of Zeus Basileus was intended to represent the rise of power of Boiotia (**Tufano**). An important point is the competitions' competition. It is well known that there was a lot of stability in the ranking of Greek contests – the Olympics kept their position at the top for nearly one millennium. But on the other hand, we can also observe *agṓnes* shrinking or gaining in importance, with the latter case occurring most often when Hellenistic kings or Roman Emperors entered the scene and pushed their favorite competition. The efforts of the Ptolemies in support of the Alexandrian Ptolemaia have been mentioned above; a striking fact is that the monarchs' power did not suffice to push this festival in the top group. Despite their isolympic status, the Ptolemaia never got the importance of the traditional Panhellenic festivals in Delphi and the Peloponnese. Much more successful was Augustus in his support of the Aktia of Nikopolis or Domitian with his foundation of the Kapitoleia in Rome.

The poleis did not have the monarchs' power to promote an *agṓn*, but they tried their best to make their festivals successful and prestigious; a famous example is the diplomatic

33 Zoumbaki 2014.

initiative of the Magnesians in support of the festival of Artemis Leukophryene.[34] **Farrington** discusses why the Pythia of Sikyon, which are said to have been founded by the tyrant Kleisthenes in the sixth century, fell behind two other festivals in the northeastern Peloponnese, the Isthmia and the Nemeia, established in roughly the same time; he rejects with good arguments economic reasons and refers instead to the bad reputation of the founder.

A kind of 'track record' not only of athletes and artists, but also of competitions would be a breakthrough in the study of Greek festivals. It is not impossible at all to achieve such a picture, since there are criteria to evaluate the success of competitions: the larger the catchment area of an *agṓn*, the higher its prestige; the bigger the honors and rewards a victor got in its hometown, and the higher the *agṓn* was placed in monuments of multiple victors, the higher was its rank. Due to the fragmentary tradition, it will not be possible to write a history of all the ups and downs of every single *agṓn*, but this volume with its "micro-history" of *agṓnes* leads the way to a better understanding of the developments, as many contributions present the data concerning catchment areas of single festivals. That is very important for understanding the choices athletes and artists made; and as the significance of the Olympics and other festivals of the *períodos* were beyond doubt, the local festivals seem to be a better key in search of festival hierarchies below the "Big Four". Databases[35] are helpful to make clusters visible, one example is **Graninger**'s observation on three different groups of victors at the Eleutheria at Larisa, the first being connected to the Olympics, the second tied to klerouchs in Egypt, the third related to central Greece.

In sum, this volume offers fresh insights into the fascinating world of festivals and competitions in ancient Greece, and at the same time it reveals how much work there is still to do!

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34 Van Nijf and Williamson 2016: 46–48.

35 *Database of Hellenistic Athletes* (http://mafas.geschichte.uni-mannheim.de/athletes/); *Connected Contests Database* (http://www.connectedcontests.org/database/).

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Chapter 2

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The Universe in a Nutshell: The Theban Herakleia

Festivals and Identity: An Introduction*

"This Ancient Greece related article is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it", is what we find on Wikipedia for "Heracleia festival".[1] This is far from astonishing because the evidence on the Herakleia requires a decipherment that combines fragmentary information with debates on historical circumstances. When the editor of this volume asked me to contribute a chapter on the Theban Herakleia, my spontaneous answer was that I did not believe there was enough material to write a substantial chapter on the subject, even less so when attempting to create a picture "In the Shadow of the 'Big Four'". The ancient sources are far from being abundant. Yet, this is everyday reality for ancient historians. Historiography begins when relating evidence to information stemming from other contexts, and when framing it within the wider context of questions concerning the subject. From this point of view, the Theban Herakleia evoke the universe in a nutshell. Their evolution over the centuries invites us to discuss the importance of local festivals for the expression and development of identity on several levels. First, there is the question of elite interaction and their relation to the institutions of poleis and koina. Second, the interrelations between local, regional, and Panhellenic expressions of belonging come into play.

* The manuscript was written in 2018 and could only moderately be updated in 2023. I am grateful to Paul Ganter and to Sebastian Scharff for instructive comments.
1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heracleia_(festival), 18.04.2018.

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The discussion of Boiotian cults and festivals will always rely on the work of Albert Schachter.[2] However, a lot of work remains to be done to relate the information provided by his corpus to various questions arising when discussing Boiotian cults. Only recently, a much needed monograph on Boiotian *agṓnes* as carriers of identity and creators of community from the Archaic period to the fourth century AD was written by Paul Grigsby.[3] He is certainly right that the games provided a "more nuanced and complex picture than the rather one-sided accounts which stress the commonality of cults and rituals which led to the creation of a unified *ethnos*."[4] Clearly, ethnogenesis in the sense of steadily changing identities that define an ethnos should not be told as a teleological tale.[5] We cannot understand the characteristics of regional belonging without elucidating the contribution of all the involved local entities. Grigsby is right that festivals "offer a window onto aspects of the complex amalgam that was Boiotian identity which would otherwise remain invisible."[6] Yet, this is also true for the rich mythical tales related to Boiotia and to Thebes especially. Though inscriptions provide information on cult and agency in practice, they do not explain the wider cultural meaning of the details mentioned there. If an honorary inscription mentions a victory at the Theban Herakleia and some further details of this success, we can infer that a festival named Herakleia existed at this time. The origin of the victor tells us something about the catchment area of the games, and we might get some information on the cult personal involved, on the periodicity of the games, and on the time of the year the *agṓnes* took place. But why were the games called 'Herakleia'? What did Herakles mean to the community hosting the festival? This is where myth comes into play. Although it is quite difficult to link the versions of mythical tales to concrete places and situations, myths also have a history that opens a window to examine cultural meaning in the flow of time. In conjunction with cults, myths offer insights into ancient identity.

This chapter cannot describe the Theban or the Boiotian universe. By revisiting the evidence of the Theban Herakleia across the centuries, it is meant as a contribution to the vivid debates on the "uneasy amalgam"[7] of Boiotian identity hovering between affiliations to the ethnos and local entities, usually poleis. It was an "uneasy amalgam", because the poleis of Boiotia never commonly subscribed to a long-lasting political unit that would have ended the quarrels among them. In the Archaic and Classical periods, Thebes was the driving force behind the construction of a Boiotian koinon dominated by

2 His seminal contribution is *Cults of Boeotia, I-IV*. London 1981–1994.
3 Grigsby 2017.
4 Grigsby 2017: 11.
5 Recent research is far from doing so, cf. only Kühr 2006: 259–308, especially 258; Ganter 2013.
6 Grigsby 2017: 9.
7 Grigsby 2017: 11, 18, 20, 27, 36, 38, 200, 239–240, 244–245, 261, 263, 269.

the Thebans. This claim was embodied by the Theban hero par excellence, Herakles *prómachos*. Accordingly, the Theban Herakleia should be read under this premise. In contrast to the Theban hegemony over Boiotia, however, the Herakleia survived the struggles resulting from the battle of Chaironeia in 338 BC and the destruction of the Theban citadel by Alexander in 335 BC for centuries to come. What did the festival stand for, when Theban glory belonged to a foregone past?

The Wikipedia article quoted above refers to Thebes by commenting:

> In Thebes, the center of the cult of Herakles, the festivities lasted a number of days, and consisted of various athletic and musical contests (*agṓnes*), as well as sacrifices. They were celebrated in the gymnasium of Iolaos, the nephew and *erómenos* of Herakles, and were known as the Iolaeia. The winners were awarded brass tripods.[8]

Where does this information stem from and to which epochs does it refer? Let us have a closer look at the ancient sources mentioning the festival by exploring them in chronological order. That way it might become possible to get a glimpse into the festival's profile and to lighten its contours beyond a shadowy dark grey.

Herakleia or Iolaeia? Myth and Cult

The games at Thebes took place in early winter[9] and were called 'Herakleia' or 'Iolaeia' respectively. What's in a name? The double assignation is revealing because it refers to Herakles and Iolaos, two heroes who were closely interconnected at Thebes. What did the heroes stand for, and how can we describe their relation? Did the denomination of the festival change over the centuries, and does it hint at a changing significance for the Thebans over the intervening years?

The earliest sources alluding to *agṓnes* at Thebes do not denominate them.[10] This is partly due to the poetic character of the texts mentioning them, but should also be read as a sign for the fact that there was only one sort of *agṓnes* at Thebes and that these *agṓnes* were

8 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heracleia_(festival), 18.04.2018.

9 Plut. *Mor*. 587d is the only evidence for the time of the year when the Herakleia took place: at the turning of the Boiotian year, that is to say in early winter; cf. Schachter 1986: 30.

10 Cf. the following verses: καὶ δεύτερον ἄμαρ ἐτείων τέρμ᾽ ἀέθλων γίνεται, ἰσχύος ἔργον; "And on the second day is the conclusion of the annual games, the labor of strength" (Pind. *Isthm*. 4.68–69; transl. W. H. Race). In *Ol*. 7.83–84, the prizes metonymically stand for the games: ὅ τ᾽ ἐν Ἄργει χαλκὸς ἔγνω νιν, τά τ᾽ ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ ἔργα καὶ Θήβαις; "The bronze in Argos came to know him, as did the works of art in Arcadia and Thebes" (transl. W. H. Race). Cf. also Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99; *Pyth*. 9.79–80; *Isthm*. 5.32–33; Bacchyl. 10.30. The earliest epigraphic attestation also refers only to Thebes: *IG* IV 801.

well-known to Pindar's audience. Our first firm evidence for 'Herakleia' properly designated as such is provided by an inscription from the second half of the fourth century BC.[11] Plutarch, the earliest literary source that calls them 'Herakleia', also refers to games taking place in the fourth century BC, more precisely: the games of 380/79 BC.[12] This might lead to the assumption that the name 'Herakleia' was introduced and promoted in the fourth century when Thebes was at the height of her hegemonic aspirations within and beyond Boiotia. Did the games have a name at all before that, or were they called 'Iolaeia'? Pindar speaks of games taking place at "Iolaos' tomb" (Ἰολάου τύμβος).[13] Were the 'Iolaeia' the pre-runner of the 'Herakleia'?[14] Scholiasts commenting on the problem apparently did not know.[15] As Pindar's *Fourth Isthmian* undoubtedly puts the games into the context of Herakles' cult, it is unlikely that Iolaos played a predominant role for the festival at this time. In sum, the evidence gives no direct solution to the question, perhaps the general significance of the eponymic heroes for the Thebans does.[16]

Thebes is mentioned as the birthplace of Herakles already in the *Iliad*.[17] But Herakles did not belong to one city alone. This is why we find him commenting on his own origins with the words: "Am I Argive or Theban? I don't pride myself on only one city. In every fortress of the Greeks I am at home."[18] From a Panhellenic point of view, especially his youth was linked to Thebes,[19] but his mother Alkmene and his stepfather Amphitryon came from Argos.[20] The Thebans integrated the two into their own cultic world by

11 *IG* VII 2532: Schachter 1986: 28n1 dates the epigram to 338–335 BC.
12 Plut. *Mor*. 587d with Schachter 1986: 26.
13 Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99.
14 This is the assumption by West 2009: 569.
15 Polemon *FHG* 3 p. 123 F 26 and Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 7.153e: "Herakleia" also called "Iolaeia;" Didymos F 47 (= Schol. Pind. *Nem*. 4.32 and Schol. Pind. *Ol*. 9.148d): "Herakleia" only; Schol. Pind. *Ol*. 9.148e and i: "Iolaeia." – Ziehen 1934: 1518–1520 and Symeonoglou 1985: 109. 137 think that the names were used alternatively. Schachter 1986: 26–27; cf. 1981: 30 implicitly states that the confusion was produced by the fact that the *agṓnes* were first celebrated at the Herakleion and later at the Iolaeion north of the Kadmeia (cf. Didymos F 47 = Schol. Pind. *Nem*. 4.32).
16 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.55–68.
17 Hom. *Il*. 19.98–119. Cf. Hom. *Il*. 5.392; 14.323–324; *Od*. 11.266–268; *Hymn Dem*. 15.2–3; Hes. *Theog*. 314–318. 526–531. 950–951. F 193,19–20 M.–W.; *[Sc.]* 11–13. 35–56. 48–56. 416. 433. 459; Pind. *Pyth*. 9.84–86; *Isthm*. 4.55; Eur. Heracl. 1–3; Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 13c; Herodoros *FGrH* 31 F 16 *et passim*.
18 Ἀργεῖος ἢ Θηβαῖος· οὐ γὰρ εὔχομαι μιᾶς· ἅπας μοι πύργος Ἑλλήνων πατρίς (*TrGF* II, adesp. 392 = Plut. *Mor*. 600F). Angeli Bernardini 2010: 397 is of the opinion that the local traditions including Herakles developed with the rise of the polis. Herakles was rooted almost everywhere in Boiotia, see Schachter 1986: 1–37.
19 Theban coinage celebrates baby Herakles suffocating the snakes or has him beardless: Head 1891/1974: 30–42 and pl. II. 11–12; III. 10–11. 14–15; Babelon II.3: 227–230. 245–246, no. 229–231. 259–264; BMC Central Greece, 70–72, no. 29–30. 33–34. 36–39, pl. XII. 1–2. 4–8.
20 Herakles is the son by Zeus and Alkmene (Hom. *Il*. 14.323–324; *Od*. 11.266–268), or Amphitryon's son, read: stepson (Hom. *Il*. 5.392). Alkmene, Perseus' granddaughter, is said to have fled from Argos to Thebes (Hes. F 193,19–20 M.–W.; Hes. *[Sc.]* 1–3. 11–13. 80–85; Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 13c; the genealogy is discussed by Gantz 1993: 374; Dale Trendall 1981: 552; cf. also Prinz 1974). She is accompanied by Amphitryon, who mostly is considered to be of

honoring Amphitryon at a hero grave, by designating the place of his house, and by remembering Alkmene's chamber where she had given birth to her famous son.[21] Accordingly, Pindar celebrates Alkmene among the most prominent Theban heroines and calls Amphitryon a guest of the Spartoi, the earthgrown first citizens of Thebes (Σπαρτῶν ξένος).[22] What is more, Amphitryon was said to have dedicated a tripod at the most famous Theban temple, the precinct of Apollo Ismenios southeast of the Kadmeia in the neighborhood of the Herakleion.[23] Nevertheless, Herakles' pedigree makes it clear that his birth at Thebes was not enough to transform him, whose deeds were spread all over the Greek world, into an exclusively Theban hero.[24] His qualities as a local hero depended heavily on the loyal comrade at his side, a typically Theban figure.[25]

Iolaos was his name. He also was a young man.[26] From the earliest written sources[27] and images, he helps Herakles in the fulfillment of his deeds, especially in the killing of the Hydra. Already on a bronze fibula from Boiotia of about 700 BC, Herakles is supported by Iolaos who seizes all Hydra's heads,[28] a motif that should become prominent all over the Greek world in the early sixth century.[29] At this time, Iolaos reached the peak of his

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Argive origin also (Eur. *Heracl*. 2–3. 17–21; Apollod. 2.4.6). Hdt. 2.43, in contrast, places Alkmene and Amphitryon in Egypt.

21 Hero grave: Pind. *Pyth*. 9.0–83; *Nem*. 4.20; – house of Amphitryon and Alkmene's chamber: Paus. 9.11.1.

22 Pind. *Pyth*. 11.3; 9.82; *Isthm*. 7.5–8.

23 In Hdt. 5.59, Amphitryon is meant to have dedicated the tripod after having defeated the Teleboans. In Paus. 9.10.4, in contrast, the dedication is linked to the honor for young boys of noble families to serve Apollon as a *daphnēphóros* for a year. Accordingly, the tripod was given by Amphitryon when the boy Herakles had been chosen to be *daphnēphóros* at the Ismenion. – Amphitryon is also said to have dedicated two stone images of Athena Zosteria in the precint of Artemis Eukleia at Thebes (Paus. 9.17.3).

24 This is stressed e.g. by Friedländer 1914: 341n1; Kirk 1974: 183; Schachter 1986: 16; López Saco 1997.

25 Apart from Thebes, her smaller Boiotian neighboring polis Thespiai is the place where the veneration of Herakles is attested best in Boiotia. Inscriptions prove that a cult for Herakles existed from the first half of the fifth century onwards (*SEG* 30.541; for further details Schachter 1986: 34–35), and artefacts demonstrate that Herakles was important for Thespiai indeed. Cf. for example a black-figure column crater from Thespiai dating to 550–540 BC showing Herakles who fights the lion (*LIMC* s.v. Heracles 1787*. Cf. *LIMC* s.v. Heracles 3178; 3202; 3459a). In Pausanias' time, the deflowering of king Thespius' daughters by Herakles had been explicitly linked with Thespian cult: the myth served as a cult *aition* to explain the virginity of Herakles' Thespian priestess (Paus. 9.27.6). Iolaos was said to have led the Thespiadai, the children by Herakles and the kings' daughters, to Sardinia to found a colony later (Diod. Sic. 4.29.2–4; for a detailed discussion of the topic see Kühr 2011). However, there is no evidence for a cult of Iolaos in Thespiai, cf. Schachter 1986: 65.

26 Cf. only the depiction of Iolaos as a beardless youngster in a short chiton on a Corinthian aryballos from 610–600 BC (*LIMC* Iolaos 24*).

27 Hes. *theog.* 314–318; *[Sc.]* 74–114. 323–324. 340–342. 467–470; F 230 M.–W.

28 *LIMC* Heracles 2019*.

29 A Corinthian black-figure aryballos from 610–600 BC, for instance, depicts a beardless Iolaos in short chiton (inscribed ΓΙΟΛΑΓΟΣ) attacking the Hydra with a harpe from the right (*LIMC* Iolaos 24*). Produced about 560, a Laconian black-figure cup from Samos has Herakles on the left (only his left arm is preserved) grasping the snake body; the beardless Iolaos, inscribed ΓΙΟΛΑΣ, is seen on the right (*LIMC* Iolaos 27*). Stemming from 560–550, an Attic black-figure neck-amphora shows Herakles and Iolaos (helmet, corselet) attacking the Hydra with sword and torch respectively (*LIMC* Iolaos 20 = Heracles 1998*). Iolaos gets especially famous for being Herakles' charioteer as depicted on a hydria from 560–500 (*LIMC* Heracles 2878*). See the overview by Pipili 1990.

prominence, but in contrast to the myriad versions of Herakles' myth, dynamic tales flourishing in the Mediterranean world for more than a millennium, Iolaos remains a pale, ultimately locally rooted figure. The Pindaric odes convey an idea of his local importance, as their Theban creator holds Iolaos in high esteem, avoids portraying him as an appendage of Herakles and emphasizes deeds that Iolaos alone accomplished, for instance the protection of the Herakleidai and the killing of Eurystheus.[30]

Compared to Iolaos' quickly told story, Herakles' Theban career accelerated in the sixth century BC and needs more exemplification. The pseudo-Hesiodic *Aspis* characterizes Herakles as the prototype of the Theban *prómachos*.[31] He is applauded by people from Arne, the mythical homeland of the Boiotians, thus by the Boiotians themselves.[32] What is more, his stepfather Amphitryon is said to have fought with the Boiotians, and Herakles is protected by Poseidon, the god residing at the *témenos* of Onchestos, which was to become one of the most important pan-Boiotian sanctuaries.[33] Though the authorship of the *Aspis* is much debated,[34] the poem undoubtedly promotes an image of Thebes the polis must have welcomed in the sixth century BC. Janko reckoned that the poem was presented at the creation of a new festival at Thebes commemorating the victory at the battle of Keressos, a new festival which was named 'Herakleia'.[35] This hypothesis could be rejected due to the fact that the Herakleia probably did not include musical contests before 315 BC.[36] Nevertheless, the Archaic games might have provided the setting for bards singing their songs, and the *Aspis* might have been one of these songs.[37] However, whether the games were installed as an answer to the victory at the ominous battle of Keressos against the Thessalians, usually dated to 571 BC and considered to be an important incident that tied the Boiotians together in reaction to enemies from abroad, we do not know.[38]

Equally uncertain is the assumption that the *Aspis* emblematizing the shield of Herakles was symbolically repeated on the very first coins the Boiotians minted. These coins were

30 Pind. *Isthm*. 1.15–32. 5.32–33. 7.9; *Ol*. 9.98–99; *Pyth*. 9.79–82 with commentaries by Angeli Bernardini 1990; West 2009. Cf. Eur. *Heracl*. 793–796; Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 84; Strab. 5.2.7 (C225). 8.6.19 (C377); Diod. Sic. 4.57; Apollod. 2.8.1; Paus. 1.32.6.; 44.8.

31 According to Paus. 9.11.4, the the cult image of Herakles in the Herakleion was adorned by the epithet *prómachos*.

32 Hes. *[Sc.]* 380–382; 474–475.

33 Hes. *[Sc.]* 23–26; 103–105.

34 For the possible authorship and the political implications of the poem, see Janko 1986: 38n1; Kühr 2006: 174–183.

35 Janko 1986: 48n62, who stresses though that this is a hypothesis he hardly dares to utter. Cf. Mackil 2013: 24 and Grigsby 2017: 67. 86, who both find the hypothesis attractive.

36 Strictly speaking, there were no musical contests at Thebes before 315 BC, cf. Manieri 2009: 284.

37 Cf. Farnell 1961 comm. *ad* Pind. *Isthm*. 4.61–68 and Olivieri 2011, 114, who reckon that Pindar's *Fourth Isthmian* was performed at the Herakleia.

38 Kühr 2006: 300n1 with further references and Mackil 2013: 24.

recognizable by the shield on the reverse that stood for the Boiotians.[39] Was there a direct connection to the shield of Herakles? If so, the first economic association of Boiotian poleis institutionalized by a common coinage was clearly dominated by the Thebans who presented themselves as the leading military force to drive out the enemy. The *Aspis* expresses a Theban-friendly position that Boiotian concerns were considered to be Theban ones – or vice versa. From the sixth century onwards at the latest, Thebes defined her claims via Herakles: he was the Theban *prómachos*. Expansion was his message.

Significantly, his *témenos* lay just outside the city walls. Topography further enhances the meaning Herakles had for Thebes. He was the *prómachos* protecting the wall that at least in the eighth and seventh centuries BC metonymically stood for the polis itself.[40] From there, he could easily start his engagement to expand Theban influence.[41] Accordingly, the cult history of the place presumably goes back to the veneration of hero graves attributed to warriors called Alkaidai, who were still honored in the Classical age when they had been integrated into the cult of Theban Herakles.[42]

The recently excavated sanctuary south of the Theban citadel in vicinity of the Elektran Gate and of the important precinct of Apollon Ismenios proves that Herakles' cult at Thebes goes back at least to the Geometric period.[43] But the increase in votive dedications during the sixth century[44] suggests that the importance of the cult rose during this period. Among the sherds found at the site, we have the very first evidence for the term boiotarch.[45] Whoever dedicated the object, the dedication illustrates that the Boiotians were present as an active ethnos at the Theban sanctuary,[46] or that the Thebans used the sanctuary of Herakles *prómachos* on their behalf to provide a cultic background

39 For the discussion of the coin emissions that bear the Boiotian shield on the obverse and monograms with the initial of the minting polis on the reverse, see Head 1887/1963: 295–296; Kraay 1976: 109–10; Ducat 1973: 61–62; and now the detailed analysis by Mackil and van Alfen 2006: 226–231; Larson 2007: 67–109. – In the *Aspis*, the Kadmeioi (Hes. *[Sc.]* 13: φερεσσακέας Καδμείους) and Boiotoi (Hes. *[Sc.]* 24: Βοιωτοὶ πλήξιπποι, ὑπὲρ σακέων πνείοντες) are characterized as shield-bearers. For the equation of the Boiotian shield with the shield of Herakles, see e.g. Head 1891/1974: 10; Grigsby 2017: 64–65 with further references.

40 For a detailed discussion of the interrelation between topography and myth, topography and cult at Thebes, see Kühr 2006: 199–256.

41 Cf. also stories of Herakles the ephebe, who freed his hometown from the tributes the Orchomenians had imposed on the Thebans: Diod. Sic. 4.10.3–5; Apollod. 2.4.11.

42 See the discussion below.

43 Aravantinos 2014 gives an overview on the inscriptions found at the place, accompanied by nice photographs. Cf. also *SEG* 60.512, that enlists the graffiti and dipinti on vases referring to Herakles found at the Herakleion (seventh to sixth century BC); in addition, Aravantinos 2017. Bonanno Aravantinos 2012 discusses the sculptures.

44 Aravantinos 2014.

45 Museum of Thebes inv. no. 41063 (= Aravantinos 2014: 199–202 = *SEG* 60.509): dating to the first half of the fifth century BC, the boiotarch is mentioned in l. 8. The content, a grant of privileges, hints at the fact that the Theban Herakleion was the place to store such documents at the time.

46 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 86, who classifies the dedication as "a nod to the pan-Boiotian nature of the shrine and its associated festival."

for their leadership. Thus the archaeological evidence is consistent with the picture we have gained from the literary sources.

According to Pindar, the Theban festival including the *agṓnes* took place at the Herakleion:

> In his honor, above the Elektran Gates
> We citizens prepare a feast
> And a newly built circle of altars and multiply
> Burnt offerings for the eight bronze-clad men who died,
> The sons that Megara, Kreon's daughter, bore to him.
> For them at sunset the flame rises
> And burns all night long,
> Kicking heaven with its savor of smoke.
> And on the second day is the conclusion
> Of the annual games, the labor of strength.[47]

The altars and burnt offerings for the Alkaidai, the sons by Herakles and king Kreon's daughter Megara, form part of a Theban-bound cult of Herakles. The heroes linked Herakles to the Theban royal dynasty.[48] When Pausanias visited the place in the second century AD, his local informants told him that the ruins near the Elektran Gate, the site where recent excavations have uncovered the Herakleion, were the remains of Amphitryon's house. They even read out an inscription designating the ruins as such and stressed that Alkmene's chamber could still be recognized in the ruins. What is more, the tomb of the Alkaidai was located there. Herakles in his madness was said to have attacked them as well as Amphitryon. The latter, however, was saved by Athena, who made

47 τῷ μὲν Ἀλεκτρᾶν ὕπερθεν δαῖτα πορσύνοντες ἀστοὶ
καὶ νεόδματα στεφανώματα βωμῶν αὔξομεν
ἔμπυρα χαλκοαρᾶν ὀκτὼ θανόντων,
τοὺς Μεγάρα τέκε οἱ Κρειοντὶς υἱούς:
τοῖσιν ἐν δυθμαῖσιν αὐγᾶν φλὸξ ἀνατελλομένα συνεχὲς παννυχίζει
αἰθέρα κνισάεντι λακτίζοισα καπνῷ,
καὶ δεύτερον ἄμαρ ἐτείων τέρμ᾽ ἀέθλων
γίνεται, ἰσχύος ἔργον.
(Pind. *Isthm.* 4.61–68, transl. W. H. Race).
Farnell 1961 comm. *ad loc*. thinks that the emphasis on the cult is due to the fact that the ode was sung at the proper festival of the Herakleia.

48 The wedding between Herakles and Megara is attested in Hom. *Od*. 11.269–270; Diod. Sic. 4.10.6; Apollod. 2.4.11, the slaying of the offspring in Stesichoros F 230 *PMG* and Panyasis F 1 *PEG* = Paus. 9.11.2; Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 14; Eur. *Heracl*. 977–1008; Asklepiades *FGrH* 12 F 27. Assumingly, the story of Herakles Mainomenos was of younger origin than that of the Alkaidai in order to integrate the Alkaidai and their heroon into the widening web of myth on Theban Herakles; cf. Schachter 1986: 16n1 and Kühr 2006: 170–172 with a more detailed discussion and further references. – Schachter 1986: 11; 19–20; 32–33 is convinced that the relation between Herakles and the Alkaidai is analogue to similar cults in Boiotia that were centered around a group of warriors worshipped at a hero grave. Like him, Ziehen 1934: 1494–1495 was equally sure that this cult was of very old origins.

Herakles unconscious by throwing a stone at him that was still seen in Pausanias' time.[49] Then, the Herakleion had partly fallen to ruins, but his Theban contemporaries remembered the place as the one to venerate Herakles' Theban family. Places of memory and veneration had twice emerged from the ruins of an unknown past. In the Archaic age, graves stemming from the Mycenaean period seem to have been the focal point of a hero cult dedicated to eight warriors later identified with the Alkaidai, the heroes who were worshipped at the site in Pindar's time and declared to be the sons by Herakles and Megara.[50] Centuries later, when Pausanias visited the place, the Herakleion had partly turned into a museum inviting visitors to think about Theban identity by remembering stories attached to landmarks, or to refine old stories and invent new ones when trying to explain otherwise unexplainable objects.[51]

As elsewhere in the city, the Thebans used the graves remaining from an unknown period to venerate the forefathers of a seemingly glorious past. By giving the inhabitants of the graves a name, the past was given a face. The heroes venerated there were the founding fathers of Theban identity. Through Iolaos and the Alkaidai, Herakles became a specifically Theban hero.

But what was the relation between Herakles and his comrade? Scholars assume that Iolaos was a long-established hero in the region, who was firstly doubled, finally overtaken, but never fully substituted by Herakles.[52] As it is evident in Pindar, the Thebans were celebrating a much older hero cult at his tomb in the fifth century, and the games were held at his grave (Ἰολάου τύμβος)[53] that was the joint tomb of Iolaos and Amphitryon.[54] Later, members of the Theban Sacred Band, the elite force of the Theban army in the fourth century that consisted of male lovers, used to pledge loyalty at Iolaos' grave, and lovers met there to affirm their eternal bonds.[55] In sum, Iolaos, Herakles' comrade and *erómenos*, seems to have developed into a role model for young men standing loyally at

49 Paus. 9.11.1–2.

50 Cf. Keramopoullos 1917: 127. 133. 325–326; Ziehen 1934: 1494–1495; Schachter 1981: 11; Kühr 2006: 192; Aravantinos 2014: 152 with further references.

51 Cf. the full description of the Herakleion in Paus. 9.11.1–6 with Schachter 1986: 22–25.

52 Kroll 1916: 1843; Schachter 1986: 16–20; 31–36. – Genealogically, Iolaos was linked to Herakles by designating him to be the latter's nephew: Hes. *[Sc.]* 86–88. 111; Pind. *Pyth*. 11.59–60; *Isthm*. 1,30; Apollod. 2.4.11; Diod. Sic. 5.15.2; Paus. 8.14.9.

53 Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99.

54 The tomb where the *agṓnes* took place is designated as a joint tomb (Pind. *Pyth*. 9.80–83). Alternatively, it refers to Iolaos (Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99; cf. F 169a,47–48 Maehler) or to Amphitryon (Pind. *Nem*. 4.20) respectively.
Schachter 1986: 18 is convinced that Iolaos as the local predecessor of Herakles originally was the head of a warrior group, the later Alkaidai, venerated southeast of the Kadmeia. Symeonoglou 1985: 136–137 (site 24 – H 13–H 16) is convinced that the two heroes first shared a tomb and a common cult close to the Herakleion on the Kolonaki hill, before Iolaos got his own *témenos* probably after 446 BC when the new stadion and gymnasium were erected.

55 Lovers: Arist. F 83 Rose = Plut. *Mor*. 761d–e; – the Theban Sacred Band: Arist. F 82 Rose = Plut. *Pel*. 18.5 (287d); – cf. Ar. *Ach*. 867 (a Theban swears on Iolaos' name).

the side of their older comrades. Iolaos appears as an ephebic icon[56] presiding over the games which were held partly in his honor.

Probably during the time of Thebes' prosperity in the fourth century BC,[57] a gymnasium with a stadium and a racecourse for horses called the Iolaeion was erected north of the Theban citadel, close to the Proitidan Gate.[58] Pausanias also mentions a hero shrine (ἡρῷον) of Iolaos at the site. Schachter proposed that the Thebans built the new sanctuary because the area southeast of the Kadmeia where the Herakleion with its proper gymnasion and stadion was situated had become too small to host the games.[59] In order to distinguish the new sanctuary from the old one, it was called Iolaeion, and scholars of later times got confused by speaking of Iolaeia accordingly, although there is no *agṓn* of this name attested epigraphically.[60] This is a reasonable explanation, but of course not a compelling one. What about the doubling of Iolaos' heroon? Thebes hosted enough cemeteries along the arterial roads used by Pausanias since the Bronze Age. When the gymnasion and the stadion moved, another place of veneration could be found easily. Taking tradition literally, Iolaos finally left Thebes to lead the Thespiadai to Sardinia and died there.[61] Strictly speaking, the grave must have been a cenotaph anyway. But this is not how myths work. What really mattered was to have a place of commemoration.

Is there a solution to the problem of the two names? In my opinion, there is not enough evidence to get a clear answer. In order to understand what significance the festival had against the mythical background, the answer is perhaps not so important. Herakles and Iolaos stood side by side as protectors of the games, both alluding to youth and military strength. From the sixth century onwards, Herakles was the incarnation of the Theban *prómachos*, and he was a Theban one because he had a local hero at his side. At the games, the two merged into one representing a military potent polis with ambitions in and outside Boiotia. If one assumes that the Theban games were intended to promote the self-

56 West 2009: 574.

57 This is the convincing assumption of Schachter 1981: 30–31; 1986: 66. It is confirmed by the description in Arr. *An.* 1.7.7, where Alexander reaches Thebes in 335 BC coming from Onchestos, thus from the north, and encamps close to the *témenos* of Iolaos. From the description in Arr. *An.* 1.8.3 it is clear that the Herakleion was somewhere else than this *témenos*. – Another document testifying to the thesis that the games took place north of the Kadmeia in later times is a now lost stele with the beginning of a victors' list that Karouzos compiled for the Museum of Thebes between 1936 and 1938. Only the first three lines of the inscription mentioning the agonothete were still visible (Roesch 1975: 3 no. 1 with the comments *ad loc.*). The interesting thing here is that none of the inscriptions mentioning the Theban Herakleia have been found at Thebes apart from the stele in question here, dated by Roesch 1975: 3 to 172 BC as a *terminus post quem*, and another fragment at the Museum roughly dating to the same period (Roesch 1975: 3 no. 2 with the comments *ad loc.*). The first inscription is of interest here because it was found in 1935 in the Theban suburb Pyri, thus in the vicinity of the place where the Iolaeion was located.

58 Paus. 9.23.1.

59 Paus. 9.11.7.

60 Schachter 1986: 27; 65.

61 Diod. Sic. 4.29–30; Paus. 9.23.1; 10.17.5 with Schachter 1981: 30; 1994: 56–58; Kühr 2011.

image of the Thebans in the Greek world, the name "Herakleia" was better suited for this, because Herakles was much more prominent than Iolaos was ever to become. After all, the alternative name did not matter that much. The games at Thebes were the games taking place at the Herakleion, close to the tomb of Iolaos. They were celebrated in the name of a hero who, by myth and cult, was locally rooted but became the most famous Greek hero of all at the same time. We will see how this changed over the centuries when we take a closer look at the material that directly concerns the games.

The Theban Herakleia: A Chronological Survey

Games at Thebes, which attracted competitors from far and wide, are epigraphically attested as early as the third quarter of the sixth century BC. Their establishment thus fits in perfectly with the first wave of the foundation of athletic festivals, which also included the 'Big Four'.[62] A funerary inscription from Troizen mentions a tripod that the young athlete Damotimos had won in Thebes and which now commemorates the prematurely deceased.[63] The epigram itself was probably inscribed on the tripod-base.[64] Although the games are not named, the Herakleia are the likely candidate.[65] In accordance with the evidence we have from myth, the cult complex and the historical context, we can agree with the assumption that the Herakleia were the best established games in Boiotia at the time, attracting participants from beyond the region as early as 550 BC. Regardless of whether we believe that the *agṓnes* were introduced after the battle of Keressos in 571 BC, when the Thessalians were supposedly defeated by a Theban-led Boiotian coalition, the festival certainly served the Thebans to present themselves to the wider world and

62 Scharff 2024: 29.

63 *IG* IV 801:

> Δαμοτίμοι : τόδε σᾶμα : φίλα ϝεργάσ(σ)ατο μάτ̣ερ
> Ἀμφιδάμα : οὐ γὰρ παῖδες ἐνὶ μεγάροις ἐγένοντο.
> καὶ τρίπος, *h*ὸν Θέβασοι θέον ἔνικε[ν ὅδ' ἐστι]·
> [νῦν μὲν τι]μᾶ[ν] ἐστ' ἀπαθές : ἐπέθεκε δὲ παιδί.
> "(His) dear mother, Amphidama, made this tomb for Damotimos because no children were born in his megaron. And the tripod that he won running at Thebes … unharmed, she set up over (her) son."
> (transl. McGowan 1995: 621; cf. Thomas 2007: 162).

Jeffery 1990: 176 dates the inscription to 550–525 BC; cf. Janko 1986: 48 and Grigsby 2017: 67, who stresses that this inscription is the oldest inscriptional attestation for any *agṓn* within Boiotia. Jeffery 1990: 176, however, attributes it to a festival at the Theban Ismenion. Did she believe so due to the tripod given as a prize at the festival? Though the Ismenion was well-known as a treasury of tripods that also played an important cultic role at the site, it is unlikely that Thebes hosted two *agṓnes* attachted to sanctuaries in close vicinity to each other that attracted participants from far away. After all, the earliest sources do not mention the name of the festival, and we may deduce that there was only one.

64 Janko 1986: 48.

65 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 67–68, who identifies the oldest festival at Thebes with the Herakleia.

within Boiotia as the *prómachoi* of the Boiotians, led and legitimized by Herakles himself, the locally rooted Panhellenic hero.[66]

Epinician odes from Bacchylides and Pindar present victories in Thebes in close connection with the famous Big Four. In his tenth victory ode, Bacchylides praises an unknown Athenian athlete by celebrating two successes in footraces at Isthmia and two at Nemea, before mentioning similar victories in Thebes, Argos and Sikyon, Pellene, Euboia, and Aigina.[67] If order matters, the games at Thebes might be seen next in importance to the *agṓnes* at the Isthmos and at Nemea, immediately followed by Argos, before other local festivals are referred to.

As discussed above, in *Isthmian Four* (ca. 470 BC), Pindar gives details on the cultic framework of the games by describing the burnt offerings for the eight Alkaidai taking place at the Herakleion close to the Elektran Gate at sunset.[68] Pindar may have stressed the importance of Herakles for his hometown because, after the Persian Wars, Thebes was struggling with the image of having committed *mēdismós*. Again, Herakles in his capacity as an ambiguous hero was the right figure for the Thebans to identify with. The seemingly weak child who defeated the snakes represented someone who is underestimated by others, and the hero who in his confusion slew his own children with Megara made just as much of a mistake as the Thebans had done. Like them, he had to atone for a mistake for which he did not really feel responsible.[69]

We learn that the games ended on the second day of the Herakleia, i.e. they lasted at least two days, and that they were celebrated annually.[70] Melissos of Thebes, to whom the ode is dedicated, won the "labor of strength" (ἰσχύος ἔργον).[71] According to the headline of the ode, which designates Melissos as a victor *pankratíō*, we can understand this expression as a description of the *pankrátion*.[72] He won the event twice, and a third time previously in a competition for boys.[73] As his head was "white with myrtle" (λευκωθεὶς κάρα μύρτοις), the *agṓn* was a 'crown game.'[74] Evidence from the Archaic period suggests

66 Agreed, e.g., by Mackil 2013: 24. Cf. Grigsby 2017: 68: "If correct, this would be the first example of the use of an agonistic festival as a promotion of a collective Boiotian identity into the wider world." That agonistic festivals do promote collective identity is one of the main arguments of his thesis, cf. Grigsby 2017: 9 *passim*. The argument is as convincing in the sense of a shared conviction in research as ultimately hypothetical because there are no hard facts to prove it.
67 Bacchyl. 10.19–30; 32; 34–35.
68 Pind. *Isthm.* 4.61–70.
69 Cf. Demand 1982: 2–3; Schachter 1986: 18; Kühr 2006: 187–188.
70 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.68.
71 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.69.
72 As do e.g. Roesch 1975: 6; Grigsby 2017: 85.
73 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.70–72.
74 Cf. also Pind. *Isthm*. 4.21.

that tripods were used as prizes in the earliest days of the festival.[75] In the first half of the fifth century BC, both types of prizes seem to be attested.[76] Be that as it may, the Herakleia apparently stood out among the mass of local festivals and closely followed the Big Four in prestige and importance.

This is also evident from the joint reading of the data provided by the Pindaric odes. Among the disciplines victors were praised for, appear wrestling for men (πάλη)[77] and probably also for boys[78], boxing (πυγμή)[79], the *pankrátion* (παγκράτιον)[80] and the boys' *pankrátion*[81], unspecified footraces (δρόμοι)[82], the stade race (σταδιοδρόμος) and the *péntathlon* (πένταθλον)[83], the race in armor (ὁπλιτοδρόμος)[84] and chariot races (ἁρματοδρομία)[85].

We also learn that the victors came from Thebes[86], Opous[87], Corinth[88], Kyrene[89], Aigina[90], and Rhodes[91]. They included Diagoras of Rhodes, a *periodoníkēs* and clearly one of the most distinguished boxers of Antiquity. Three of his sons and two of his grandsons were Olympic champions, whose statues were erected in Olympia.[92] Another *periodoníkēs* is attested as a winner at Thebes.[93] What is more, the victories at Thebes usually closely

75 Cf. *IG* IV 801, l. 3, cited and discussed above.
76 Cf. Pind. *Ol*. 7.84, where ἔργα are mentioned.
77 Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99.
78 Pind. *Nem*. 4.19–22. It is not clear from the context, whether the victory at the Herakleia refers to the youths' victories alluded to in the poem or to the men's contests.
79 Pind. *Ol*. 7.84.
80 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.70–71.
81 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.71.
82 Bacchyl. 10.30.
83 Pind. *Ol*. 13.106–107.
84 Pind. *Pyth*. 9.79–80.
85 Pind. *Isthm*. 1 praises the charioteer Herodotos of Thebes by comparing him to one of the most well–known charioteers of all, Iolaos (*Isthm*. 1.16–32). The "sons of Amphitryon" in *Isthm*. 1.55 designate Herakles and Iolaos, cf. Schol. *Isthm*. 1,79a; Roesch 1975: 6.
86 Pind. *Isthm*. 4.61–70; 1.55. – Melissos of Thebes praised in *Isthm*. 3 for his victories in chariot races, in *Isthm*. 4 for his victories in the *pankrátion*, is said to have inherited his ability from famous ancestors on both sides, the Kleonymidai and the Labdakidai, who were devoted to chariot racing (*Isthm*. 3.13–17b) and had been successful at Athens and Sikyon (*Isthm*. 4.18–27) but were unsuccessful at the crown games (*Isthm*. 4.28–33).
87 Pind. *Ol*. 9.98–99.
88 Pind. *Ol*. 13.106–107.
89 Pind. *Pyth*. 9.79–80.
90 Pind. *Nem*. 4.19–22; Pind. *Isthm*. 5.32–33.
91 Pind. *Ol*. 7.84.
92 Paus. 6.7.1–2.
93 Epharmostos of Opous, a wrestler (*Ol*. 9). Cf. also Xenophon of Corinth with his unprecedented double victory at Olympia in the *stádion* race and the *péntathlon* (*Ol*. 13.24–31), whose victories are as numerous as the ones of his family that Pindar refrains from naming all of them (*Ol*. 13.46. 113).

follow the ones at the Big Four.[94]

In sum, at the end of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth century BC, the games consisted of many disciplines comparable to those at Olympia and Nemea because, in contrast to the Pythian and Isthmian Games, there were no musical *agṓnes*. The games constituted the only Boiotian festival with a Panhellenic scope[95] attracting competitors from all over the western Greek world, including the African coast and the islands of Asia Minor. Obviously, the Herakleia directly followed the Big Four in prestige and importance. With games such as those in Athens and Argos, they form the "second league" of Greek *agṓnes*.

After the late Archaic and early Classical periods, there is a gap of around 150 years that provides no information on the Theban Herakleia at all. The next testimony that sheds light on them are two joint inscriptions probably dating to 338–335 BC.[96] The first inscription is an honorific epigram that was placed below a statue of the prematurely deceased athlete Timokles of Thebes who had been victorious three times in equestrian events at the Basileia of Zeus and at the Herakleia.[97] On the right side of the same base, we find another inscription for the athlete Korbeidas that celebrates his victory in the boys' *pankrátion* at Delphi. As in the first case, the inscription accompanied a statue of the athlete.[98] Composed in Boiotian dialect,[99] the inscription emphasized local identity, as did the whole ensemble. Albert Schachter may be right that the two young athletes were members of the Theban Sacred Band.[100] Standing side by side, they may have been reminiscent of their mythical role models Herakles and Iolaos.

94 Cf. the sequence in e.g. *Nem.* 4.17–24: Nemea, Athens, Thebes. – *Ol.* 7: Olympia and Delphi (l. 10 *passim*), Tiryns (l. 77–81), Corinth (l. 82), Nemea and Athens (l. 82), Argos and Arkadia (l. 83), Thebes (l. 84), *agṓnes* ordered by the Boiotians (l. 84–85), Pellana (l. 86), Aigina (l. 86), Megara (l. 86). – *Ol.* 9, however, celebrates victories at Olympia and Delphi (l. 1–20), followed by Corinth (l. 83–87), Nemea (l. 88), Argos and Athens (l. 89), and Marathon (l. 89–94), while Thebes (l. 98–99) is hidden between Parrhasia in Arkadia (l. 96–97), Pellana in Achaia (l. 98), and Eleusis (l. 99). – *Ol.* 13 (Xenophon of Corinth, winner of the *stádion* race and the *péntathlon*; not all the victories are listed, cf. *Ol.* 13,46. 113): Olympia (l. 1 *passim*), Corinth (l. 33), Nemea (l. 34), Delphi (l. 37), Athens (l. 38), the Hellotian games at Corinth (l. 40), Delphi (l. 43), Nemea (l. 44), Delphi (l. 106b–107), Argos (l. 107), Thebes (l. 108), Arkadia (l. 108–109), Pellana and Sikyon (l. 109a), Megara and Aigina (l. 109b), Eleusis and Marathon (l. 110), Aitna and Syracuse (l. 111), Euboia (l. 112). – *Pyth.* 9 (Telesikrates of Kyrene, race in armor): Delphi (l. 1 *passim*), Thebes (l. 79–89), Aigina (l. 90), Megara (l. 91), Kyrene (l. 97–103). – I. 1 (Herodotos of Thebes, chariot race): Corinth (*passim*), Onchestos (l. 52 –54), Thebes (l. 55), Orchomenos (l. 56), Eleusis (l. 57), Euboia (l. 57b), Phylaka in Achaia (l. 58–59), and others not named here (l. 60–63). – I. 4 (Melissos of Thebes, *pankrátion*): Onchestos (l. 19), Corinth (l. 20), Thebes (l. 61–72b).

95 Grigsby 2017: 83.

96 *IG* VII 2532 and 2533. – Arguments for the dating are convincingly provided by Schachter 1986: 28n1.

97 ὃς Βασίλεια Διὸς καὶ ἐν Ἡρακλέους τρισ[ὶ]ν ἄθλοις
ἵπποις νικήσας δώματ' ἐπηγλάϊσεν (*IG* VII 2523, l. 5–6).

98 *IG* VII 2533.

99 Cf. the comments *IG* VII 2533, l. 1–2 *ad loc.*

100 Schachter 1986: 28n1.

Thebes was undoubtedly the Boiotian superpower at the time, before Alexander razed her walls to the ground in 335 BC and initiated a new phase of Boiotian history in which Thebes interacted with the other Boiotian poleis on a more or less equal footing.[101] Significantly, there was only one other festival in Boiotia at the time in question: the Basileia for Zeus at Lebadeia, which had been established by the Thebans after their epoch-making victory over the Spartans at Leuktra in 371 BC.[102] Legend has it that Herakles himself led the Thebans into the battle. The Herakleion housed weapons that were supposedly Herakles' own and which are said to have disappeared before the battle of Leuktra. Epaminondas might have had the sacred weapons disappear in order to overcome the reluctance of his soldiers and to encourage them at the thought of Herakles as their leader.[103]

While at Lebadeia, the Thebans used the integrative force of the ethnos-god Zeus for celebrating Boiotian supremacy under Theban leadership,[104] at home they continued to venerate Herakles *prómachos*, the locally bound Panhellenic hero who embodied Theban expansion, predominance, and hegemony.

Although the dictum of the agonistic explosion of the third century BC needs to be put into perspective,[105] Boiotia undoubtedly witnessed the emergence of several *agṓnes* in the Hellenistic age that are not attested before.[106] In contrast to this general development, one festival is absent from the epigraphic record in the third century BC: the Theban Herakleia. They only reappear in the sources towards the end of the second century BC. This might be due to coincidence. Given the epigraphic evidence in other fields, however, another explanation is more probable. Just as Thebes, which had recently been destroyed by Alexander's army, had to find a new position among the other Boiotian poleis that had previously been dominated or even subjugated by Thebes, the old *agṓnes* in honor of Herakles *prómachos* ceased to exist, and with them the Theban hegemonic aspirations. As can be seen from several agonistic epigrams on successful young athletes of the time,[107] athletics played a central role in the external representation and internal self-assurance of the Thebans shortly after the reconstruction of the city. This is indeed

101 A recent overview on the political background is provided by Beck and Ganter 2015: 151–156; for the wider context Mackil 2013: 85–156.
102 See the contribution by Salvatore Tufano in this volume.
103 Cf. Xen. *Hell*. 6.4.7; Kallisthenes *FGrH* 124 F 22a; Diod. Sic. 15.53.4; Polyaenus, *Strat*. 2.3.8 with Stafford 2012: 183.
104 Cf. Ganter 2013: 94.
105 Nielsen 2016 with Mann 2016: 20; Scharff 2024: 18–29. Cf. Grigsby 2017: 107, who speculates that a change in the epigraphic habit may be responsible for the "suddenness of this explosion."
106 See the discussion in Feyel 1942: 251–261; Grigsby 2017: 107–159.
107 *IG* VII 2470 = Ebert 1972: no. 56; *IG* VII 2538 = Ebert 1972: no. 57.

striking, because we miss any reference to Herakles as the prototype of the Theban youngster, the Theban athlete and *prómachos*.[108]

Instead, Thebes focused on the Agrionia, a trieteric musical *agṓn* in honor of Dionysos Kadmeios that is attested from the third century BC onwards and that might have been inaugurated to commemorate the re-foundation of Thebes by Kassandros in 315 BC. By the end of the second century BC, the festival was of pan-Boiotian or even Panhellenic importance and was organized jointly by the polis of Thebes and the Dionysian *technítai*.[109] Like other Boiotian sanctuaries, the Theban precinct of Dionysos was granted *asylía* in the first half of the 220s BC, and the competitions associated with it may have been reorganized at this time.[110] Boiotian inter-polis rivalry stimulated attempts to enhance the status of their local festivals to make them formally equal to the games of the *períodos*.[111]

Interestingly, there were close links between Dionysos Kadmeios and the Theban Herakles: both were said to have been born in Thebes, and their cults were associated with the chambers of their human mothers Semele, the daughter of Kadmos and mother of Dionysos, and Alkmene.[112] By shifting attention from Herakles to Kadmos, the Thebans continued to present their identity to the Boiotian and wider Greek world. By focusing on Kadmos, however, the emphasis was not on the Theban *prómachos* anymore but on the *ktístēs* instead, the founding father of the Theban polity and of Greek civilization at the same time.[113] Obviously, the Theban strategy was successful. Perhaps we can even grasp a spatially distant reflex to these attempts in our sources: in the 240s BC, the athlete Diotimos of Sidon was celebrated in an epigram that referred to Kadmeian Thebes.[114] Of course, Sidon was one of the Phoenician cities Kadmos was said to have stemmed from. However, the evidence could also confirm the idea formulated

108 Cf. Scharff 2024: 98–112, especially 107–109. 111.

109 On the Agrionia see Schachter 1981: 189–191; Manieri 2009: 283–289; Grigsby 2017: 110–111. 122–124. Manieri 2009: 141 enlists the Dionysia Kadmeia among other festivals that were organized by the koinon. As far as I can see, there is no direct evidence for this.

110 *FD* III 1.351 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 5 with comments on this Amphiktyonic decree by Manieri 2009 *ad loc*. and Grigsby 2017: 123. The first sanctuary in Boiotia that was granted *asylía* was the sanctuary of Athena Itonia that hosted the Pamboiotia: If an inscription set up in the 260s BC refers to the sanctuary of Athena at Koroneia, as many scholars assume, the Itoneion was declared *ásylon* by an Amphictyonic decree already at this point of time, thus thirty years earlier than the Ptoion and the sanctuary of Zeus Basileus at Lebadeia, see *SEG* 18.240 with Schachter 1980: 81; 1981: 123–124; Rigsby 1996: 55; Mackil 2013: 224; Grigsby 2017: 132.

111 Grigsby 2017: 132.

112 Eur. *Bacchyl*. 1–12 and Paus. 9.12.3–4 with Schachter 1981: 187–188; Kühr 2006: 194. 220–223.

113 On Kadmos see Kühr 2006: 83–133.

114 *IAG* 41 = *SGO* IV 20/14/01 = Ebert 1972: no. 64, l. 7. I am grateful to Sebastian Scharff for drawing my attention to the passage.

above that Kadmos stood at the center of the interest in Theban self-presentation, which extended far beyond the city, and that Heracles was pushed into the background.

The Herakleia only reappear in our sources in the second century BC. The few surviving inscriptions indicate that the *agṓnes* continued to include established disciplines reaching from running events over combat sports to equestrian competitions.[115] What is more, herald and trumpet contests are attested for the first time.[116] In this way, an element was added to the festival that had been introduced in Olympia in 396 BC, which was soon followed by the other three major festivals. By imitating these festivals, the Thebans signaled to the Greek world that they wanted their games to be at the level of the Big Four. Accordingly, the trieteric or penteteric festival[117] was elevated to the staus of an *agṓn stephanítēs* in the middle of the second century BC, perhaps even earlier.[118] Obviously, the Theban games became attractive again, even for the most successful athletes of the time. The catalogue of victories of the Athenian *periodoníkēs* Menodoros, for instance, mentions no less than six victories at the Herakleia for his career, four in the *pankrátion* and two in wrestling, thus in at least four separate celebrations of the Herakleia.[119] Apart from the Herakleia, the designated *periodoníkēs* was victorious at Olympia, at the Nemea and the Heraia in Argos, at the Eleusinia, the Panathenaia, at the Soteria in Delphi, at the Delia in Delos, the Rhomaia of Chalkis, the Lykaia of Megalopolis, the Nymphaia of Apollonia, the Naia of Dodona, and the Trophonia of Lebadeia, usually several times at each of them.[120] The foucus of this festival landscape is on Central Greece including old religious centers such as Dodona and Delos. Although

115 Attested are the men's δίαυλος (*SEG* 11.338, 200–180 BC), the men's παγκράτιον (Moretti 51: *IG* II/III² 3149a and *Hesperia* 4 [1935] 81.38 = *I.Delos* 1957 no. 51 = *SEG* 19.199, 150–130 BC), the men's wrestling (πάλη: Moretti 51: *Hesperia* 4 [1935] 81.38 = *I.Delos* 1957 no. 51 = *SEG* 19.199, 150–130 BC; VII. Bericht Olympia [1961] p. 218, l. 45 = *SEG* 22.350 = 25.467, 189/8 –146 BC), boxing (πυγμή: *IG* VII 48, end of the second, beginnings of first century BC), and a hippic *agṓn* (κέλητι πωλικῶι, Heberdey and Wilhelm, Reisen in Kilikien, p. 81 no. 17 [*non vidi*] = Roesch 1975: 1 no. 5, second or first century BC). Roesch 1975 enlists all the inscriptions dating from the Hellenistic period down to the third century AD in chronological order and discusses two inscriptions from the Museum of Thebes relating to the Herakleia not registered elsewhere before. Cf. also *IG* VII 1765 with the comments by Schachter 1981: 219n1 and 1986: 29n2, a victors' list found at Thebes that might refer to the Herakleia or to the Thespian Erotideia.

116 Roesch 1975: 3 no. 1, dated by Roesch *ad loc*. to 172 BC as *terminus post quem*, and ibid. 5 no. 2, dated by Roesch *ad loc*. to 170–150 BC.

117 *SEG* 11.338 (200–180 BC): The mentioned victory at the Herakleia belongs to a list of games that Robert 1977 (1979): 201n1 qualifies as trieteric or penteteric; cf. Schachter 1986: 29n1; Grigsby 2017: 143.

118 Cf. *IG* II² 971 (dating to 140/39 BC) with Robert 1935: 194n4; Schachter 1986: 29; Grigsby 2017: 143. Cf. also, e.g., *I.Delos* 1937 no. 2552B l. 13, dating to the second century AD (Roesch 1975: 2n13; cf. Knoepfler 2008: 1456). According to Roesch 1975: 6 and Grigsby 2017: 110, this seems to have lasted until the very end of the Herakleia. For a resumé on the conditions of how to get stephanitic status in the Hellenistic era, see Grigsby 2017: 109.

119 *IG* II/III² 3147 and 3150 with the later added fragments *IG* II/III² 3149a and Hesperia 4 (1935) 81.38 = *I.Delos* 1957 no. 51 = *Hesperia* 29 (1960) 56.81 = *SEG* 19.199, cf. the comments by Moretti no. 51; Badoud et al. 2016; see also Roesch 1975: 1 no. 3 and 4. Cf. Schachter 1986: 29.

120 Apart from the cited inscriptions (note above), see http://mafas.geschichte.uni–mannheim.de/athletes/index.php?page=list&action=search, 25.05.2018.

we must be cautious about taking one victor as an example for an entire era, other inscriptions confirm that the Herakleia were attended in the second century BC by participants who came from the adjacent areas of Central Greece and the Peloponnese.[121] But there are also other examples that contradict this generalization: Kallikles' victory at the Herakleia is commemorated in an inscription from Antiochia on the Pyramus in Cilicia.[122] Due to his home region, the *periodoníkēs* Leon Myonides, a boxer from Rhodes, has Tralleis in Caria, Knidos, Chios, and Lykia among victories at Argos and Thebes.[123] We may conclude that the Herakleia were integrated into a primarily pan-regional festival circuit, but also attracted competitors from Asia Minor. Apparently, they were considered attractive games for gaining honor and prestige. This is not only true for the athletes themselves, but also for officials such as *agṓnothétai* or *architheōroi* who took part in the festival. In the second century BC, they began to display their participation, a merit worth to be fixed in stone for eternity.[124]

Given the fact that literary works such as Polemon's Περὶ τῶν Θήβησιν Ἡρακλείων[125] were written about the festival, Schachter may be right that there was "a conscious effort to re-organize both the religious and the secular parts of the Herakleia."[126] In view of the political situation in Boiotia at the time, the dissolution of the koinon in 172 BC obviously paved the way for the re-emergence for the Herakleia that joined the musical *agṓn* of the Agrionia. We do not know whether the Herakleia were as strongly linked to Theban preeminence in Boiotia as before, but the leading families were certainly very interested in promoting these games, as a prosopographical detail illustrates: an inscription dating to 170–150 BC mentions a certain Brakchyles as *agōnothétēs*, whom Roesch connects with the famous man of the same name. In his position as boiotarch, the highest official of the Boiotian koinon, the latter had opposed the Romans, who wanted

121 *SEG* 11.338 (200–180 BC): a victor from Argos with victories spreading from the Peloponnese to Boiotia, Attica, and Aitolia; *IG* II² 971 (140/39 BC): an inscription at Athens honours Telesias from Troizen, who was *architheōros* at the Herakleia; *IG* II² 3154: a victor from Athens. *IG* VII 48: a boxer from Megara, whose victories spread from the Peloponnese over Boiotia to Thessaly.

122 Heberdey and Wilhelm, Reisen in Kilikien, p. 81 no. 17 [*non vidi*] = Roesch 1975: 1 no. 5: second or first century BC.

123 VII. *Bericht Olympia* [1961] p. 218, l. 45 = *SEG* 22.350 = 25.467, 189/88–146 BC; cf. http://mafas.geschichte.uni–mannheim.de/athletes/index.php?page=detailsperson&id=635.

124 *IG* II² 971, l. 29–30 from Athens, dating to 140/139 BC, honours Telesias from Troizen, who had been sent to the Herakleia as ἀρχεθέωρος; cf. Roesch 1975, 1 no. 2.– *Agṓnothétai*: Roesch 1975: 3 no. 1, dating to 172 BC as *terminus post quem*; ibid. 5, no. II, dating to 170–150 BC.

125 *FHG* 3 p. 123 F 26 = Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 8,153.

126 Cf. especially Matris of Thebes *FGrH* 39 F 1 = *BNJ* 39 F 1 = Athen. 10.412B, who wrote an *enkṓmion* on Herakles. Schachter 1986: 28 with further references. The sacrifice of Galinthias, a friend of Alkmene's said to have helped her to give birth to Herakles, before the festival may also have been instituted at this time, cf. von Gaertringen 1910; Schachter 1981: 225; 1986: 28n5; Heinze 1998; Rocchi 2000.

to make the Boiotians their *socii* in 197 BC.[127] This Brakchyles was killed, but his family will have survived the struggles leading to the dissolution of the koinon in 172 BC.[128] Thereafter, the aristocrats behaved as they always had: they promoted themselves and the community they represented at the games, which provided the forum for this display of prestige and identity, and merely adapted their forms of competition to the changing political circumstances. The Herakleia could have been a suitable setting for the Thebans to re-invent themselves, when the koinon had lost its political significance.

As Thebes suffered greatly from the Mithridatic Wars, the festivals of the polis appear to have ceased or at least to have been reduced to a minimum of activities in the post-war period.[129] A last revival and re-organization of the Theban Herakleia can be observed in the second and third centuries AD. In contrast to former times, the once strictly athletic and hippic *agṓn* was now combined with musical and dramatic components.[130] Called "Dionyseia Herakleia", or simply: "Herakleia", the festival was a fusion of two formerly separate *agṓnes*, the Herakleia and the Agrionia.[131]

After the end of federalism in the true sense of the word, the elites did what they had always done: they competed in order to promote themselves. A victory at the Herakleia did matter as ever, and victors are attested from as far away as from Nikomedeia in Asia Minor.[132] Perhaps we may say that the geographical scope of the festival landscape was wider than it had ever been.[133]

127 Roesch 1975: 4–6, followed by Grigsby 2017: 144: "The interest of this important family, so prominent in the funding of the Basileia, may suggest a similar role at Thebes with the organization of the Herakleia."
128 For the historical background, see the short overview in Beck and Ganter 2015: 156 with further references.
129 Thebes suffered to „a greater degree than any other Boiotian poleis under Sulla (…). Such a poor epigraphic record, in contrast to the evidence at Thespiai and Oropos, suggests a dramatic and negative effect on Theban agonistic expression in this post–war period" (Grigsby 2017: 183). In contrast to Roesch 1975: 1 no. 6, who dates *IG* VII 48 to the end of the second or the beginnings of the first century BC, Knoepfler 1997: 35–36 (*non vidi*, reference by Grigsby 2017: 166) places it to the period after the Mithridatic Wars. If he was right, this would be our sole piece of evidence for the Herakleia at this period, as Grigsby 2017: 183 states.
130 Overviews are provided by Schachter 1986: 29, and Grigsby 2017: 235–236.
131 Sometimes, epithets referring to an emperor like "Dionyseia Herakleia Antoneineia" (Robert 1970: 20, l. 10–11 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 16) or "Kommodeia" (*I.Eph* 2071 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 14 B) were added. According to Schachter 1986: 30n1, the epithet Olympia ("Herakleia Olympia": *FD* III 1.555) was used to elevate the status of the *agṓn*. "Herakleia" only: e.g. *IG* II² 3162; *IG* II/III² 3169/3170 = Manieri 2009, *Leb*. 16 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 17; *IG* VII 49.
132 *IG* VII 2518: If the inscription mentioning an *agṓnothete* does not refer to Dionyseia at Thespiai, as Schachter 1981: 195 suggests, but to the Theban Dionyseia, as Grigsby 2017: 222–223. 236 argues, this would be the earliest evidence for the *agṓnes* usually thought to have existed only in the second and third centuries AD – *IG* II/III² 3158: an epigram dedicated by Onetor from Athens records his victory at Plataiai and at Thebes, the *agṓn* is not specified; first century AD, cf. Roesch 1975: 2 no. 9. – *I.Delos* 1937 no. 2552B l. 13: the victory of a herald at the Herakleia, second century AD (Roesch 1975: 2 no. 13). The victories to be recognized in the inscription are the Eleutheria of Plataiai, the Lykaia, probably the Pythia at Delphi, the Olympic Games, probably the Trophoneia at Lebadeia, the Herakleia, three victories in Attika, the Eleusinia, festivals of Dionysos and the Muses, probably of the Helikon, and also at Tanagra, perhaps games at Delos, and the Panathenaia. The festival landscape thus concentrates on Central Greece. – *IG* VII 1856–1857 =

Now Herakles was less a Theban *prómachos* than a pan-Boiotian hero who became a reminder of a shared glorious past, and interest in a shared past was certainly more than antiquarian in this era.[134] On the contrary, *agṓnes* such as the Dionyseia Herakleia showed that the connection to the past was a living need for contemporaries, not least for the elites who took part in these festivals. When festivals that promoted regional identity such as the Basileia and the Pamboiotia had ceased to exist, the Herakleia reemerged as one of the most important *agṓnes* in Boiotia.[135] The polis was once again the central point of reference for expressing local and regional identity. By combining two formerly separate contests, the Thebans may have escaped financial problems because it was easier to maintain one *agṓn* instead of two.[136] But this is not the only reason for the success of the

I.Thesp 210–211: perhaps dating to the first (Strasser 2003: 270) or second century AD (cf. Grigsby 2017: 235), the monument for a Thespian having celebrated victories at the Isthmos and at Nemeia, at several festivals in Boiotia like the Eleuthereia of Plataiai, the Kaisareia of Tanagra, at Lebadeia and four times at the Herakleia at Thebes, but also e.g. at the Kaisareia of Korinth, at Thessaloniki, Larisa and Chalkis. The festival circuit the athlete was involved in concentrates on Boiotia and Central Greece. – Robert 1966: 102, l. 13–14: the Cilician P. Aelius Heliodorus is prized as a winner of the wrestling and the *pankrátion* at Thebes. The victory list has a clear focus on Asia Minor. In Central Greece, the *agṓnes* of the Lakedaimonians, followed by the Olympieia at Athens, are mentioned in the first place. After various victories in Asia Minor, the Aspida of Argos, the Kaisareia at the Isthmos, again games of the Lakedaimonians, Thebes, the Isthmia and the Nemeia are mentioned. The inscription dates to ca. AD 140 (cf. Roesch 1975: 2 no. 11; Grigsby 2017: 236). – *IG* II² 3162: an inscription from Athens commemorating a victory at the Herakleia; name and speciality of the contest are unknown, dated to the end of the second century AD (Roesch 1975: 2 no. 12). Apart from Thebes, Plataiai, Athens and Argos, Smyrna and Ephesos are among the poleis where the athlete went for games. – *I.Eph* 2070–2071 and *FD* III 1.551 = *SEG* 45.1578: honorary inscription from Ephesos for a victory of Tiberius Iulius Apolaustus, a pantomime and actor, at the Theban Herakleia, AD 180–192. The *periodoníkēs* looks back at victories in various poleis of Asia Minor, but also at Cumae. The games in Central Greece include the ones of "Seven–gated Thebes" (*l.* 17–18), Chaironeia, Plataiai, and Messene; later, Corinth and Patras (*l.* 22–23) are mentioned. According to Grigsby 2017, 236, the refashioning of the games under Commodus by including pantomimes may be interpreted as Romanization. – Robert 1970: 18–27 no. 2 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 16, found at Delphi: a catalogue of the victories by the herald or trumpet player Septimios Aurelianos from Nikomedeia, who also was citizen at Athens, ca. AD 220. The games listed according to "ordre de dignité" (Robert 1970, 20), spread from the *períodos* to various festivals in Italy, Central Greece, and Asia Minor. After the 'Big Four,' games in Rome, Potioli and Naples are mentioned, directly followed by several festivals at Athens; next come the Theban Herakleia, last the various games in Asia Minor. *FD* III 1.550 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 15 = Manieri 2009, *Leb*. 15: an impressive catalogue of the victories by an *aulētḗs* from the end of the second or the beginnings of the third century AD, beginning with the *períodos* and registering games from Central Greece, among them the Herakleia of Thebes, over Asia Minor to Rome and Naples (cf. Robert 1935: 195n4; Roesch 1975: 2 no. 15). – *IG* II/III² 3169/3170 = Manieri 2009, *Leb*. 16 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 17: honorary inscription from Athens for the various victories of Valerius Eklektos of Sinope, including three victories as a herald at the Herakleia, dating to AD 235–257. The games he attended spread from Asia Minor over Central Greece to Italy, cf. Roesch 1975: 2 no. 17; Manieri 2009: 160–171; Grigsby 2017: 236n1065. *IG* VII 49: Victories of an unnamed athlete from Megara from the middle of the third century AD, speciality unknown. Again, the games the *periodoníkēs* attended include cities from Central Greece over Asia Minor to Italy. Also from the middle of the third century mentioning three successive victories at the Theban Herakleia: *FD* III 1.555 (Robert 1935: 195n4; Roesch 1975: 3 no. 18). – The Rendel Harris Papyri, ed. J. E. Powell, Cambridge 1936, 35 no. 49 = Manieri 2009, *Theb*. 18: dated to the third or fourth century AD, with a reference to Dionysia Herakleia, though no city is named. Cf. Schachter 1986: 30n1 with further possible references to the Herakleia although they are not named as such.

133 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 236 and also Mann 2016: 21, who stresses that, in contrast to athletes in the Roman Empire, so far, no Hellenistic athlete is known who had been victorious equally at games in the West and in the East.

134 Cf. Schachter 1981: 29, who speaks of "a renewal of interest, largely antiquarian, in the customs of the past."

135 For the context in Boiotia see Grigsby 2017: 237. 247–249.

136 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 236.

festival. The merger also promoted a milder form of Theban identity that was more readily accepted than the Theban identity centered on Herakles *prómachos*. "Dionysos joining – Herakleia beyond local rivalries" we might call this last phase of the Herakleia which had integrated the Agrionia as the festival that emphasized the connections to Kadmos, the Theban *ktístēs* and civilization hero, who was ultimately as well-known in the wider Greek world as Herakles.

Generally speaking, regional cohesion was expressed in common festivals and cults in this period. Although the local and the regional had always been an "uneasy amalgam" in Boiotia, the military and cultural success of the Thebans centuries after the heavy quarrels of the Archaic and Classical periods was the outstanding phenomenon remembered when thinking about the history of Boiotia, at least when facing the Roman superpower. The koinon in the political sense of the word had gone, but the poleis were still there. If Boiotia was to be more than a country where to raise flocks, if Thebes was to be more than a settlement that looked less like a town than a village,[137] then a glorious past had to be remembered. Herakles was known everywhere. In his capacity as a Theban hero, he had once pervaded Boiotia. Now the hegemonic aspirations of the Thebans were over forever, but the successful hero was a reminder of a glorious past that other Boiotians could join in. As can be seen from Pausanias' description of the region in his book on Boiotia, Boiotia was pervaded by Thebes, by her famous heroes and histories in the eyes of foreign visitors. From the outside, the history of Boiotia was equated with Theban history.[138] Within Boiotia, local rivalries no longer played as great a role as before.

"Am I Argive or Theban? I don't pride myself on only one city. In every fortress of the Greeks I am at home,"[139] Herakles himself is said to have responded to Greek localism. This is not only true with regard to different poleis claiming the hero, but also for a region like Boiotia, which identified with Theban glory when the glory of the region's most prominent polis had died out in the political sphere. The festivals, however, survived. Although their character had changed over the ages, religion and religious institutions proved to be the most stable phenomena that survived the political upheavals before the Herakleia in Thebes disappeared at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century AD, along with other games throughout the Greek world.[140]

137 Cf. Strab. 9.2.5 (C403).
138 Kühr 2006: 75–82.
139 Ἀργεῖος ἢ Θηβαῖος· οὐ γὰρ εὔχομαι μιᾶς· ἅπας μοι πύργος Ἑλλήνων πατρίς (*TrGF* II, adesp. 392 = Plut. *Mor.* 600f).
140 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 249.

Conclusion

The Theban Herakleia can evoke the universe in a nutshell. Spanning almost a millennium between the earliest evidence around 550 BC and the last in the third century AD, their history is closely linked to the history of Thebes as the most prominent polis in Boiotia. In the Archaic and Classical periods, the Herakleia were closely associated with the cult of Herakles *prómachos* and his predecessor or comrade Iolaos, both of whom stood for young men fighting side by side. This is why the games were called "Herakleia" or "Iolaeia".

Military strength embodied by the heroes was at the same time a Theban military strength that was geared towards a hegemonic position within Boiotia and even transcended the borders of the region in the fourth century. Consequently, the games ceased to exist when the Theban empire collapsed after the invasion of Alexander in 335 BC. As Thebes had to find a new role in Boiotia, the city initially focused on the Agrionia with its musical *agṓnes* dedicated to Dionysos and Kadmos, the founder of Thebes and civilizing hero, who was also important on a Panhellenic level but was not associated with Theban expansionism. It was only in the second century BC that the Herakleia reappeared; the dissolution of the Hellenistic koinon in 172 BC might have paved the way for a renewed focus on the polis' own identity. After another phase of decline provoked by the Mithridatic Wars, a last revival can be observed in the second and third centuries AD. Musical and dramatic elements were added to the once strictly athletic and equestrian events. In fact, the "Dionyseia Herakleia" became a merger of two formerly separated festivals: the Herakleia and the Agrionia. By evoking the glorious past shaped equally by Kadmos and Herakles, the mythic and cultic background of the games offered a milder form of Theban identity that could be accepted or even shared more easily by her neighbors. The festival demonstrated that in the long run Theban and Boiotian identity converged. From the outside and during the games, this amalgamation was a response to the "uneasy amalgam" that the Boiotian identity had been for many centuries.

From their beginning in the sixth century BC to their end in the third century AD, the games attracted competitors from all over the Greek world, and they were undoubtedly in the "second league" of games after the Big Four. Their official status as crown games from at least the middle of the second century BC as well as the fact that the Thebans were keen to incorporate innovations from the Olympic Games such as herald and trumpet competitions into their own games, shows that they were trying to get as close as possible to the Big Four. Although the character of the Herakleia changed over the centuries, they were one of the most stable institutions in Boiotia surviving the political

upheavals in this "orchestra of war."[141] When a new religious world spread in the fourth century AD and, after almost a millennium, games such as the Herakleia became part of history forever, they shared their fate with that of the Big Four.[142]

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141 Plut. *Mor.* 193e: πολέμου ὀρχήστρα; Plut. *Marcellus* 21 (310): Ἄρεως ὀρχήστρα.

142 Cf. Remijsen 2015.

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Chapter 3

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Local Games of Thespiai

Evidence exists for two athletic *agṓnes*, the Erotideia and the Herakleia, in Thespiai.

There are tantalizing, albeit heavily restored, references in an honorary decree not only to τοῖς ἐπιτελε[σθησομένοις | Ἐρωτιδείο]ις τε καὶ Μουσείοις but also to [τοῖς νῦν ἀγω|νιζομένοις ἀγῶ]σιν,[1] but there is nothing further to be gained from this. Nor is there much to be deduced from the manumission record *I.Thespiai* 215, which, in addition to mentioning the Herakleia, refers also to Panamia and Thyia (lines 11–13), both of which rites are named after the months in which they took place. It is at most a reminder of how little we know.

The Erotideia

Introduction

Thespiai was best known for its cults of the Muses and Eros. The worship of both may be said to have been fostered by their connection with two famous artists. For the Muses, it was the poet Hesiod, whose works identified Mount Helikon as the center of their worship. Poetic fancy had become cultic reality by the early years of the fourth century BC, when the first evidence of public cult emerged. With Eros, the incentive was the statue of Eros created by Praxiteles, and allegedly given by him to his paramour Phryne, a native of Thespiai, to which she retired presumably in the third quarter of the fourth century after an active life in Athens. To be sure, both the Muses and Eros may have been

1 *I.Thespiai* 34, l. 6–8.

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 46-57.

worshipped locally before these dates, but their fame beyond the borders of Thespiai would have been enhanced by their connection with the works of Hesiod and Praxiteles.

While the principal sanctuary of the Muses was situated in what we call The Vale of the Muses, in the valley below the principal peaks of Mount Helikon, to the west of the city of Thespiai, that of Eros seems to have been in the city itself.[2] The people of Thespiai took advantage of the fame of their local deities by organizing and celebrating competitions in their honor, which brought them not only entertainment by artistes and athletes of high calibre, but also no doubt a satisfactory amount of income from visitors. The *agṓn* for the Muses –the Mouseia – was celebrated in the Valley of the Muses, and in its most highly developed form, consisted of competitions by both soloists and troupes of artistes. It is not certain when the Mouseia were instituted, but by the end of the third century BC they were widely recognized (it helped that for a time at least one of the branches of the Isthmian and Nemean Guild of Technitai – Artists of Dionysos – was based nearby at Thebes). Thanks to the survival of a reasonably large amount of evidence –almost all of it in inscriptions – it is possible to trace, within limits, the history of this *agṓn*.[3] In the case of Eros, the *agṓn* which the Thespians celebrated in his honour – the Erotideia – is both less well known and less well attested. When it began and how it developed are shrouded in uncertainty and scholarly controversy.[4]

Whereas the Mouseia were entirely musical and/or dramatic, the Erotideia were primarily athletic and equestrian, although from time to time, as we shall see, there was an admixture of musical elements. And for a time, during the first century BC at least, when times were generally hard in Boiotia, the two *agṓnes* somehow combined.

Both the Mouseia and the Erotideia owed their survival and continuation to the generosity not only of the state, but also of rich individuals – both local and foreign – and families.

2 The best description of the monuments in the Vale of the Muses is by Robinson 2012. The sanctuary of Eros: Paus. 9.27.1–5. It had been restored, early in the first century AD, with the addition of an image of Eros and doorway in the pronaos, by Phileinos, son of Mondon and Archela, at his own expense: *I.Thespiai* 269. For the stemma of his family see Roesch 1982: 180. Phileinos was a friend of Plutarch's: see Puech 1992: 4869.
3 See Schachter 2016: 344–371.
4 See Appendix 1.

Evolution of the *Agṓn*

The earliest published document to mention the *agṓn* calls it the Erotideia & Romaia.[5] This is the Athenian decree *IG* II^2 1054, which Stephen V. Tracy dated towards the end of the second century BC (on the basis of its similarity to the work of his "cutter of *IG* II^2 1008").[6] This decree honors a delegation of *theōroí* – consisting of an *architheōros* and three *theōroí* – who had represented the polis of Athens at a celebration of the Erotideia and Romaia.[7] The *agṓn* was celebrated until the end of the second century AD at least.[8]

In official documents the name, and presumably the program as well, varied over time, but in private documents and literary sources it was called simply Erotideia.[9] The extended titles of the *agṓn* reflect the desire of the organizers of the festival to publicize their devotion to the Romans, to begin with, and, in due course, (together with the Mouseia) to the imperial household. In the case of the Erotideia, this was demonstrated by the addition of, first, the title Romaia, and later on the title Kaisareia, which occasionally supplanted Romaia. The titles are usually, but not always, linked by καί: it is not clear whether the variations are significant or not. The known names of *agōnothétēs* of the Erotideia-Romaia-Kaisareia show that until the early years of the second century AD at least, many of them were drawn from the extended Thespian family of whom T. Statilius Taurus and his descendants were patrons.[10]

5 There exists a new inscription from Phrygia (Meier 2019, no. 9) which refers to a victory at the Erotideia (no polis is specified) and which can be dated 197–179 BC. The Erotideia are not mentioned in the list of Thespian magistrates of late in the third century BC – *I.Thespiai* 84 (which see for the date) – but this need not be decisive for its existence, since, if the *agṓn* was pentaeteric, the officials (agonothete, athlothete) would only have been listed in the year before and the year of its celebration. In that case, the absence of any mention of the Erotideia from the list would mean that, at this period, the Mouseia and Erotideia were not celebrated in the same year. Later, of course, there would be occasions when both *agṓnes* were celebrated together: see below.

6 Tracy 1990: 194–196, esp. 196. Habicht 1997: 287 and 2006: 316 dates it towards the end of the second century BC. Sean Byrne, following Tracy's dating, had suggested restoring the name of Medeios son of Medeios in l. 24, where the name of the *architheōros* had been erased: Byrne 1995: 59 (= *SEG* 45.116 bis). Denis Knoepfler dates it and all the other inscriptions attributed to the Erotideia to after 86 BC: see Appendix 1. Christel Mueller accepts Knoepfler's date for this inscription, although she is sceptical about his reconstruction of events: Mueller 2017: 233 and 238n3 respectively.

7 And perhaps the Mouseia as well. In l. 6, where Paul Roesch (*SEG* 32.138) read ΙΑ καὶ τὰ Ἐρωτίδε[ια] κα[ὶ Ῥ]ωμα[ῖα –] I had previously suggested reading Μουσε]ῖα before the first καί (*SEG* 31.106). If this is correct, then we might also restore Μουσείων in line 11.

8 The latest reference is Ath. 13.561E (Θεσπιεῖς τε τὰ Ἐρωτίδεια τιμῶσιν), who is almost certainly citing an earlier source.

9 This is the form in the unpublished inscription referred to in note 5; *IG* V 1.656; 659; *IG* VII 48; *I.Sardis* 79; *I.Thespiai* 211 (on which see below); Aristonikos, in Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 7.154a; Plut. *Amat.* 1 (748f); Ath. 13.561e.

10 The names Polykratides, Phileinos, Ariston, Mondon recur. These are all members of this family: for the family tree see Jones 1970, Roesch 1982: 1980. For the relationship of the family with the Statilii Tauri the fullest and best treatment is Marchand 2013.

The *agōnothétēs*

I.Thespiai 188 (end first century BC)

The inscriptions which refer to victories in the Erotideia do not mention the *agṓn*'s location: clearly everybody knew that it took place at Thespiai. The official variants of the title are the following (in rough chronological order):

IG II^2 1054 (ca. 100 BC): Erotideia & Ro[ma]ia

I.Thespiai 34 (87 or 86 BC): [Erotide]ia[11]

I.Thespiai 188 (6 BC – AD 2): [Erotideia] & Romaia

I.Thespiai 405 (first century AD): Erotidei[a & Kaisareia] OR Erotidei[a & Romaia][12]

I.Thespiai 175 (first century AD, ca. AD 20): [Erotideia?] & Kaisareia Sebas[teia (or tõn) Mouseia] (includes an *enkṓmion* to Eros and Romans) – a combined celebration

I.Thespiai 376 (first century AD, first half): Erotideia & Kaisareia & Mouseia & Sebastes Ioulias – a combined celebration

I.Thespiai 377 (first century AD, first half): Erotideia & Kais[a]reia & Mouseia & Se[ba]stes Ioulias – a combined celebration

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The name of Polykratides –or his son– can be restored as one of the officials, possibly the agonothete, in line 3.

I.Thespiai 175 (ca. AD 20)
Gorgos s. of Chrysogonos – Agonothete, Joint with Mouseia
Chrysogonos s. of Gorgos – Hierarch
Phileinos s. of Aphrodisios – Priest

I.Thespiai 376 (first part first century AD)
Ariston s. of Phileinos – Agonothete, Joint with Mouseia and in honor of Julia Augusta

I.Thespiai 377 (first part first century AD)
Ariston s. of Phileinos – Agonothete for the second time of the joint celebration

I.Thespiai 405 (first century AD)
Lucius Fufius Protarchi f. (Rufus) – Agonothete
Cf. *I.Thespiai* 149: Lucius Fufius Rufus in a catalogue of names

I.Thespiai 374 (? M. first century AD)
Lysandros s. of Polykratides – Agonothete

I.Thespiai 358 (first century AD)
Athanias s. of Euxenos – Agonothete, Joint with Mouseia

I.Thespiai 359 (first century AD)
Agonothete, joint with Mouseia

I.Thespiai 269 (early second century AD)
Phileinos s. of Mondon&Archela – Agonothete (dedication & rebuilding – Eros)

I.Thespiai 360 bis (? M second century AD)
– s. of Diodoros – Agonothete, joint with Diony[sia]

11 This is a decree of the Thespians in honor of Q. Bruttius Sura, who, while serving under C. Sentius in Macedonia, led the campaign against Mithridates in Boiotia until the arrival of Sulla, who sent him back to Macedonia and took over the command himself. L. 5–8 have been restored – on the analogy of *IG* VII 2712 and 4148 – as follows: [τοὺς δ'ἀγωνοθέτας | ἀναγορεῦσαι ἔν] τε τοῖς ἐπιτελε[σθησομένοις | Ἐρωτιδείο]ις τε καὶ Μουσείο[ις καὶ ἐν τοῖς νῦν ἀγω|νιζομένοις ἀγῶ]σιν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ [τὴν ἀνάρρησιν | τήνδε]. It is certainly tempting to restore Ἐρωτιδείο]ις in line 7, but this is not the only option; also possible is [Ἡρακλείο]ις : see below.

12 The honorand here. Lucius Fufius Protarchi f., Rufus (on whom see above, n. 10), was agonothete of the Erotideia and Kaisareia (or Romaia) once, and of the Mouseia twice: ἀγωνοθετήσαντα Ἐρωτιδή|[ων καὶ Καισαρήω]ν – or Ῥωμαίω]ν – , Μουσείων δὲ δίς. The δέ makes it clear that at this time the *agṓnes* were separate.

I.Thespiai 358 (first century AD, perhaps mid–century): Mouseia Sebasteia & Erotideia Kai[sare]ia – a combined celebration

I.Thespiai 359 (first century AD): [Mouseia Sebastõn] & Kais[areia & [Erotideia] & Ro[maia] – a combined celebration

I.Thespiai 374 (first to second century AD): Kaisareia Erotideia Romaia

I.Thespiai 360 bis (second century AD, perhaps mid-century): Dion[ysia] [Kaisarei]a Erotidei[a Romaia] – possibly linked here with Dionysia.

I.Thespiai 188 and 175 are victors' lists; *I.Thespiai* 405, 376, 377, 358, 359, 374, 360 bis honor former *agōnothétēs*, and 34 honors a Roman general. To these may be added *I.Thespiai* 269, a dedication by the agonothete Phileinos son of Mondon and Archela, of a statue of Eros, the doorway in the pronaos, and the repair of the sanctuary, all at his own expense.

It has been argued that at Thebes and Chalkis, *agṓnes* called simply Romaia were instituted after the Achaean War.[13] At about the same time, with commendable economy, the people of Oropos took an already existing festival and added the title '(and) Romaia', as well as items to the program appropriate to its new guise.[14] Something similar may have happened at Thespiai.

During the first century AD, the Erotideia and Mouseia were on occasion celebrated jointly, perhaps reflecting the shrinkage of the public purse evident elsewhere in Boiotia, most notably at Akraiphia, where celebration of the Ptoia lapsed for thirty years, to be revived only thanks to the munificence of a local potentate, Epameinondas.[15] Later still, in the second century AD, the Erotideia appear to have been combined with the Dionysia (*I.Thespiai* 360bis): this also happened with the Herakleia and Dionyseia at Thebes.[16]

Victors' Lists

With the exception of *I.Thespiai* 188 and 175, the victors' lists which have been attributed to the Erotideia are fragmentary and lack superscriptions, so while it is very possible that they do belong to the Erotideia, it is not entirely certain that they do (some of them might, for example, belong to the Herakleia). However, since the only athletic *agṓn* of

13 See Knoepfler 2015: 177.

14 See Kalliontzis 2016.

15 See Oliver 1971.

16 At Thebes: Dionyseia Herakleia *Ephesos* 2.179.71 and *The Rendel Harris Papyri* 35.49; Dionyseia Herakleia Antoneineia: *CRAI* (1970) 18. II. See Schachter 1981–1994: 1.191 and n2; 2.29–30 and 30n1. On the joint titulatures at Thebes, see also Strasser 2002: 108.

Thespiai known to the outside world was the Erotideia, I shall assume that these are victors' lists of that *agṓn*.

The lists range in date from ca. 70 BC to late in the second century AD, and, taken as a whole, show that the *agṓn* contained competitions for individual athletes (boxing, wrestling, *pankrátion*, *péntathlon*, racing) on the one hand, and for equestrians and charioteers on the other.

The victors in the last two categories would have been the owners of the horses and/or equipage, rather than the actual riders or drivers.

The earliest of these lists – *I.Thespiai* 186 – can be dated with reasonable certainty to about 70 BC.[17] The surviving victors' names show that they came from Thebes, Athens, Kerkyra, Epidamnos, and Kyme (probably Aiolian).[18]

I.Thespiai 187, of which a part of the athletic list survives, is dated by Roesch 'II–I', by Gossage (followed by *LGPN*) ca. 50 BC. The victors here come from Thespiai (2), Thebes, Tanagra, Plataia, Larymna, Opous (the same person twice), Demetrias, Athens, Velia, Kos, Smyrna, Caria (2), Kyzikos, Bithynia. It is clear from this that the *agṓn* attracted competitors from near and far, drawn no doubt by the promise of valuable prizes, either in the form of gold wreaths or of hard cash.[19]

The first of two victors' lists which actually names the *agṓn* – the restoration [Erotideia] & Romaia in line one is surely correct – is *I.Thespiai* 188, which, by a happy chance, can be securely dated to between 6 BC and AD 2: the owner of a victorious chariot was the future emperor Tiberius, during his sojourn at Rhodes.[20] Although the list is very fragmentary, it is possible to deduce that the victors included those from Tanagra, Tyre, and Salamis, and that one of the officials of the *agṓn*, possibly the agonothete, was one Polykratides, or his son.

The next datable victors' list is *I.Thespiai* 175, which gives the victors of a combined musical and athletic *agṓn* called the [Erotideia?] & Kaisareia Sebas[teia (or tōn) Mouseia],

17 See Appendix 2.

18 There are four of these, all equestrian. Perhaps they clubbed together to send out an entire stable?

19 For gold wreaths, see the *apología* of the agonothete of the Delia, who accounted for the cost of thirty–eight gold wreaths – Brélaz et al. 2007: 253–254 (as re-read by Doyen 2011: 257–258) l. 12 [....]σ[τεφά]νων χρυσῶν ΛΗ. And compare the wreaths within which the names of the *agṓnes* (including the Erotideia) are encircled in *IG* V 1.656 from Sparta, and *IG* VII 48 from Megara. Later, a victory at the Erotideia appears to be grouped among so–called 'thematic' victories (as opposed to 'sacred', in the jargon of the day). This is taken to mean that the status of the Erotideia on the circuit fluctuated from first category to second: Strasser 2003: 271–273 and 262, on *I.Sardis* 79 B3 (although the reading is not certain).

20 See the commentary to *I.Thespiai* 188.

and probably belongs to the first half, if not the first quarter, of the first century AD. The surviving text lists the agonothete (Gorgos son of Chrysogonos), the hierarch (his son Chrysogonos), and a priest (Phileinos son of Aphrodeisios), probably of the Muses. These are followed by the victors in the thymelic *agṓn*, mostly from Thespiai (except for one from Kalymnos and another who appears to come from Herakleia), who include the author of an encomium to Eros and the Romans. This is followed by athletic victors: the surviving ethnics show that they came from Thespiai, Kalynda in Asia Minor, and Kydonia in Crete (2). The stone then breaks off, so we do not know whether or not there was an equestrian component: perhaps not, because the musical part is much reduced, to competitions for solo artistes only. This possibly reflects the generally depressed state of the region at the time.

Unidentified victors' lists attributed to the Erotideia have been dated to the first (*I.Thespiai* 189, 190) and second (191, 192, 193) centuries AD. All are of course fragmentary, but enough survives to show that the range of athletic and equestrian competitions was maintained. The geographical distribution of the victors is as follows:

I.Thespiai 189: Koroneia, Corinth (2), Lakedaimon, Ambryssos, Alexandria (8), Prousa and Nikaia in Bithynia, Andramyttion.

I.Thespiai 190: Thebes, Delphi, Corinth, Philadelphia.

I.Thespiai 191: Thespiai (at least five, one of whom was a choral poet)[21], Chalkis, Philadelphia.

I.Thespiai 192: Thespiai, Thebes, Corinth (at least three).

I.Thespiai 193: Athens, Alexandria (two).

None of the Thespians who appear as victors on the surviving lists is known to have been victorious elsewhere. On the other hand, one Thespian, Neikogenes son of Pharadas, a former gymnasiarch of the polis, was honoured by his fellow-citizens for having won a series of victories at the Isthmia, Nemea, Kaisareia in Corinth, Eleutheria in Plataiai and Thessalonike, as well as the *agṓn* celebrated by the koinon of the Magnetes in Demetrias, the Herakleia in Thebes, the Lividia in Chalkis, Kaisareia in Tanagra, the *agṓn* celebrated by the koinon of the Thessalians in Larisa, as well as the Erotideia. We do not know what field he competed in, but he was certainly a prodigious athlete, having won multiple victories in at least nine *agṓnes* (with three victories at the Erotideia). A fairly wide range

21 For musical components see: Plut. *Amat.* 1.2 (749C): Plutarch and his friends, who had come to Thespiai for the Erotideia, were driven out of the city by the racket from the competition of kitharodes. Paus. 9.31.3: The people of Thespiai celebrate an *agṓn* in honor of Eros, ἆθλα οὐ μουσικῆς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀθληταῖς τιθέντες.

of dates has been assigned to him, from late in the first century BC to the second century AD.[22]

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Appendix 1: on the Institution of the Erotideia & Romaia

In an article published in 1997, Denis Knoepfler argued that the *agṓn* was founded after 86 BC, as a mark of gratitude by the polis of Thespiai to Sulla for having returned to them the statue of Eros of Praxiteles (given by him to his sometime mistress Phryne of Thespiai), which had been removed from Thespiai by Mummius and given to the Athenians.[23] His argument runs, I believe, as follows:

When Strabo wrote that "Thespiai was formerly known for the Eros of Praxiteles (...) in the past people used to go to Thespiai in order to see the Eros",[24] he was not referring to his own times, but was actually quoting from one of his two principal sources, Apollodoros of Athens, the other being Artemidoros of Ephesos, both of whom were active between 150–100 BC; accordingly, the Eros of Praxiteles was not in Thespiai during the second half of the second century BC. It is therefore likely, according to Knoepfler, that the statue was removed by L. Mummius in 146, and given by him to the Athenians. The evidence for the latter is to be found in Athenaios, where Praxiteles is said to have inscribed an epigram on the base of this statue below the skene of the theatre at Athens.[25] There it stayed until 87/86 BC, when Sulla removed it, and returned it to the Thespians. In 86 or 85, the Thespians inaugurated the Erotideia and Romaia to mark the occasion and the victory of the Romans under Sulla, and all inscriptions referring to this *agṓn* are to be redated to after 85 BC. At about the same time, the Amphiareia at Oropos were renamed the Amphiareia and Romaia.

This ingenious reconstruction of events fails on a number of points. In the first place, Knoepfler's suggestion that Mummius stole the statue directly contradicts Cicero, who

22 *I.Thespiai* 210–211. The honorand's name – given as Neikophanes – in Lolling's transcription, was read by Holleaux 1892: 461n3 as Νεικογένην. To the dates assigned there, add Nigdelis 2006: 456–457 T35 (ca. second century AD) and Strasser 2003: 270 (possibly first century AD).

23 Knoepfler 1997: 17–19; summarized in Knoepfler 2008: 620–622; accepted by Manieri 2009: 425–427 *ad Thes*. 52 (= *SEG* 60.160); cited by Moggi and Osanna 2010: 370 and 372. As noted above in n. 6, Mueller 2017 is sceptical about this, although she accepts the redating of *IG* II² 1054.

24 Strab. 9.2.25: αἱ δὲ Θεσπιαὶ πρότερον μὲν ἐγνωρίζοντο διὰ τὸν Ἔρωτα τὸν Πραξιτέλους, ὃν ἔγλυψε μὲν ἐκεῖνος, ἀνέθηκε δὲ Γλυκέρα ἡ ἑταίρα Θεσπιεῦσιν, ἐκεῖθεν οὖσα τὸ γένος, λαβοῦσα δῶρον παρὰ τοῦ τεχνίτου. πρότερον μὲν οὖν ὀψόμενοι τὸν Ἔρωτά τινες ἀνέβαινον ἐπὶ τὴν Θέσπειαν, ἄλλως οὐκ οὖσαν ἀξιοθέατον, νυνὶ δὲ μόνη συνέστηκε τῶν Βοιωτιακῶν πόλεων καὶ Τάναγρα.

25 13.591A = *Anth. Plan.* 204: ἐν τῇ τοῦ Ἔρωτος βάσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ θεάτρου.

went out of his way to state that Mummius did *not* steal the Eros;[26] and indeed the context in which Cicero makes this remark – not to praise Mummius, but to blame Verres – strongly suggests that it deserves to be taken at face value. He also ignores the testimony of Pausanias (who would presumably have received his information from his local hosts) that the statue of Eros by Praxiteles was first removed from Thespiai by Caligula, then sent back by Claudius, and removed again by Nero, to Rome, where it was destroyed by fire: the statue at Thespiai in Pausanias' day was a copy of the original by Menodoros of Athens.[27]

Secondly, there is another way to interpret what Strabo wrote, and that is to take it as in part an extended paraphrase of Cicero's note that the Eros of Praxiteles was in his day in Thespiai, and that this was the only reason Thespiai attracted visitors.[28] There is, in fact, good reason to believe that Strabo was familiar with Cicero's work – see his references at 14.2.25 (660) and 17.1.13 (798) – and he might well have read the passage himself.

Third, the passage in Ath. 13.591A to the effect that Praxiteles' Eros was set up in Athens as part of the theatre refers, not to any supposed gift of it by Sulla to the Athenians, but rather to the time *before* Praxiteles gave it to Phryne: the story goes that he offered her the choice between the Satyr which stood in the Street of the Tripods, and the Eros which stood in the theatre, and she chose the Eros (13.591B). The story is probably not true: is it likely that the Athenians would have permitted the removal of a statue from their theatre?

Finally, it is no longer possible to cite the institution of the Amphiareia and Romaia as a comparable and roughly contemporary event, thanks to its redating by Yannis Kalliontzis to the middle of the second century BC.[29] The wholesale redating of unrelated inscriptions on the basis of flimsy supposition cannot be justified. When the *agṓn* was given the additional title of Romaia is unknown: it could have happened at any time after the Achaean War.

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26 Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.4: *Atque ille L. Mummius, cum Thespiadas, quae ad aedem Felicitatis sunt, ceteraque profana ex illo oppido* (sc. *Thespiis*) *signa tolleret, hunc marmoreum Cupidinem, quod erat consecratus, non attigit*.

27 Paus. 9.27.3.

28 Cic. *Verr*. 2.4: *Idem, opinor. artifex eiusdem modi Cupidinem fecit illum qui est Thespiis, propter quem Thespiae visuntur; nam alia visendi causa nulla est. In fact, the similarities between the passages are so striking as to preclude any other conclusion: compare Cicero with Strabo: Cicero: Cupidinem fecit illum qui est Thespiis, propter quem Thespiae visuntur; nam alia visendi causa nulla est. Strabo*: αἱ δὲ Θεσπιαὶ πρότερον μὲν ἐγνωρίζοντο διὰ τὸν Ἔρωτα τὸν Πραξιτέλους (...) πρότερον μὲν οὖν ὀψόμενοι τὸν Ἔρωτά τινες ἀνέβαινον ἐπὶ τὴν Θέσπειαν, ἄλλως οὐκ οὖσαν ἀξιοθέατον.

29 Kalliontzis 2016.

Appendix 2: the date of *I.Thespiai* 186

Noumenios son of Chrysippos of Thebes, victorious pankratiast in *I.Thespiai* 186, won in the same competition as a boy at the Amphiareia & Romaia: *I.Oropos* 529. In the latter list, one of the other victors – probably an adult boxer – was a son of Sosikrates of Megara, who was identified by B. Leonardos with the victorious boy boxer Sosikrates son of Sosikrates, an identification accepted generally[30] at (probably) the Eleutheria at Larisa.[31] In this list, the victor in the men's *díaulos* was Kallon son of Xenophilos of Opous, while the victor in the men's *stádion* was Nikokles son of Nikatas of Lakedaimon. Kallon won the boys' *stádion* at the Amphiareia & Romaia, at the same time as Nikokles won the men's version of the same event: *I.Oropos* 525. Gossage 1975: 120 (cited by Helly 2010: 95n6) had already proposed the relative chronology of these lists as follows: *I.Oropos* 525 Graninger 2011: 172–175 no. 5 *SEG* 60.592 – *I.Oropos* 529.

Nikokles was a well (Graninger 2011: 172–175 no. 5) known athlete, an Olympionikes, whom Luigi Moretti (Moretti 1957 nos. 655–657 and 660–661) dated in the 170th Olympiad = 100 BC. He based this date on the appearance in *I.Oropos* 525 of Parmeniskos son of Philiskos of Kerkyra as victor of the boys' *dólichos*: he identified this Parmeniskos with the Parmeniskos of Kerkyra who won the men's *stádion* race in both 96 and 88 BC (Moretti 1957: nos. 658–659). Moretti's dating has been generally dismissed, but it can now be resuscitated in the light of Yannis Kalliontzis' re-dating (to the middle of the second century BC) of the institution of the Amphiareia & Romaia of Oropos (Kalliontzis 2016) in which case *I.Oropos* 525 would be well before 96 BC. This would yield a sequence something like this:

100 BC +/–: *I.Oropos* 525
Ca. 90 BC: *SEG* 60.592
Ca. 80 BC: *I.Oropos* 529
Ca. 70 BC: *I.Thespiai* 186

One of the victors in *I.Thespiai* 186 is a Parmeniskos son of Parmeniskos of Kerkyra, a runner who won no fewer than three victories. He could have been related to Parmeniskos son of Philiskos, perhaps even his son. And a victor in an equestrian competition in *I.Oropos* 529 – Philokrates son of Antigonos – appears also in Graninger (2011: 169–172 no. 4, esp. 172 and n61).

⋆

30 See Helly 2010: 95 and n6 (= *SEG* 60.592).
31 Graninger 2011: 172–175n5.

The Herakleia[32]

This *agṓn* is attested only in three or perhaps four inscriptions, widely spaced in time and with no particular context.

The earliest is on fragments of bronze hydria, now in the Archaeological Museum of Iannina. It has been restored to read [h]ερακλέος ἐς Θεσπίας, and belongs to the fifth century BC.[33] The vase was part of a hoard of similar objects found at Votonisi in Epeiros, and was, in all likelihood, looted from its place of origin. The text identifies the vase as a prize won at Thespiai at an *agṓn* in honor of Herakles.[34]

The next surviving mention of the *agṓn* is in a manumission record of the third or second century BC (*I.Thespiai* 215), in which the slave – manumitted before Asklepios – is required to decorate the tombs of his late owner and, upon her death, of his owner's mother, at the Panamia, Thouyia, and Herakleia.

The third reference to the *agṓn* records the dedication of a temple to Demeter Eleusinia and Kore of a former *agoranómos* and epimelete of the Herakleia, from the proceeds of the latter (*I.Thespiai* 259). The editors of *LGPN* suggest a possible date of the first century BC or AD.

One final possible reference to the Herakleia is in the decree honoring Q. Bruttius Sura, in 87 or 86 BC (*I.Thespiai* 34): see above, note 11.

Except for the occasion on which the prize vase was won, these Herakleia were almost certainly a gymnasium festival, of purely local interest.[35]

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32 For the cult of Herakles at Thespiai, see Schachter 1981–1994, II: 31–36.
33 *I.Thespiai* 276bis, which see for the date. The original editor, Julie Vocotopoulou dated it 475–450 BC; Paul Roesch dated it towards the end of the fifth century; Guy Vottéro dates it in the first half of the fifth century.
34 ἐς in the Boiotian dialect = ἐκ. The vase, its context, and the meaning of the text are well explained by Amandry 1980: 211–212n4 (*SEG* 30.541).
35 I am grateful to William Slater for his helpful comments and pertinent criticism.

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Chapter 4

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Die Eleutherien von Plataiai

Es war ein etwas trostloses, wenn auch sicher gattungsspezifisch überspitztes Bild, das der Komödiendichter Poseidippos in der ersten Hälfte des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. von der boiotischen Stadt Plataiai zeichnete: Die meiste Zeit sei die Stadt nur eine Erhebung in der Landschaft, nur an den Eleutherien werde der Ort zu einer Polis.[1] Der Agon der Eleutherien, der sich auf den großen Sieg des Hellenenbundes gegen die Perser 479 v. Chr. zurückführte, soll also die einzige Gelegenheit gewesen sein, bei der wieder Leben einkehrte in die kleine boiotische Stadt. In diesem Fragment dürfte sich viel von dem spiegeln, was für die Geschichte Plataiais prägend war – nämlich der Kampf um die Existenz zwischen den mächtigen Nachbarn Theben und Athen. Zweimal wurde die Stadt von Theben völlig zerstört und politisch ausgelöscht, und diese Diskontinuität war es, die auch für das von Poseidippos angesprochene Fest der Eleutherien charakteristisch war und die seine Rekonstruktion so schwierig macht. Wenden wir uns zunächst den schwierigen Anfängen der Feste von Plataiai zu.

Anfänge – Legenden und Rekonstruktionen

In der römischen Kaiserzeit wurde die Etablierung des Agons der Eleutherien direkt nach dem Abschluss der Schlacht selbst verortet, wie aus einem Bericht des Plutarch hervorgeht. Auf Antrag des Aristeides soll ein „Synhedrion der Hellenen“ beschlossen haben, aus den Poleis Delegierte und Festgesandte jährlich in Plataiai zu versammeln, außerdem sollte alle vier Jahre ein Agon der Eleutherien durchgeführt werden, und die Polis Plataiai sollte für unverletzlich erklärt werden, mithin also eine Garantie gegen den Nachbarn Theben erhalten. Im Gegenzug hätten, so Plutarch, es die Plataier dann

1 Poseidippos *frg*. 31 Kassel.

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 59-77.

übernommen, den Totenkult auszurichten.[2] Dieser Bericht des Plutarch wirft viele Fragen auf – vor allem aber diejenige nach der Kontinuität: Können diese Rituale wirklich über ein halbes Jahrtausend bestanden haben, wenn doch die Polis Plataiai zweimal komplett vernichtet wurde? Oder handelt es sich um ein späteres Ritual, dem eine Gründung direkt nach der Schlacht erst später zugeschrieben wurde? Kann es tatsächlich einen Agon der Eleutherien gegeben haben, der über so lange Zeit bestanden hat? Die Quellen des fünften Jahrhunderts schweigen zu derartig weitreichenden Beschlüssen des Hellenenbundes, aber ist das Schweigen von Herodot und Thukydides schon Beweis genug für die spätere Fabrikation einer „falschen" Gründungslegende?

Immerhin lässt sich doch einiges mit Sicherheit sagen über die Rituale von Plataiai im fünften Jahrhundert v. Chr. Auch wenn Plutarch den Eindruck zu vermitteln sucht, die in seiner Zeit stattfindenden Rituale stünden in direkter Kontinuität zu den direkt nach der Schlacht eingerichteten Feierlichkeiten,[3] muss das nicht der Fall sein. Sicher belegt durch ein Zeugnis des Thukydides ist nämlich nur ein Opfer des Bundesfeldherrn Pausanias, das direkt nach der Schlacht auf der Agora von Plataiai stattgefunden haben soll.[4] Die von Plutarch für einen Ort außerhalb der Stadt beschriebenen Rituale aber können sich nicht auf dieses Opfer beziehen. Ein Totenopfer für die Gefallenen der Schlacht aber lässt sich auch für das fünfte Jahrhundert v. Chr., wiederum mit Hilfe von Thukydides, sicher nachweisen. Diese Ehrungen für die Gefallenen an deren Gräbern entwickelten sich nicht an demselben Ort wie das Opfer des Pausanias. Nach der Schlacht waren die Toten nicht in ihre Heimatstädte überführt worden, sondern in nach Poleis differenzierten Grabhügeln beigesetzt worden.[5] Schon früh galten die Soroi als Belege für die eigene Aristie in der Schlacht von Plataiai, was möglicherweise zu dem Phänomen von Scheingräbern führte, das eine fehlende Präsenz quasi nachträglich ausgleichen sollte.[6] An diesen Grabmälern muss ein Ritual stattgefunden haben, und durch die Rituale und Opfer wurden die Gefallenen in die Gemeinschaft der Lebenden miteinbezogen. In ihrer frühesten Form, so wie von Thukydides beschrieben, muss es sich mindestens um Libationen und Speiseopfer für die Gefallenen gehandelt haben, die Rede ist auch von Gewandopfern.[7] Administriert wurden diese Opfer von Magistraten der Polis Plataiai –

2 Plut. *Arist.* 21.1–3.

3 Der gesamte Bericht Plut. *Arist.* 21.3–6 mit dem Hinweis am Schluss auf die auch noch in eigener Zeit so stattfindenden Kulte.

4 Thuc. 2.71.2. Zu beachten ist, dass dieses Ritual von der Lokalität her nicht identisch ist mit dem Kultplatz der späteren Feierlichkeiten, die ausdrücklich außerhalb der Stadt stattfanden.

5 Hdt. 9.85.

6 Hdt. 9.85.3 erwähnt ausdrücklich ein leeres Scheingrab der Aigineten, aber es wird klar, dass das kein Einzelfall war. Paus. 9.2.4 berichtete dagegen von einem Grab der Athener, einem der Spartaner, und einem gemeinsamen Grab für die Gefallenen aller anderen Poleis. Plut. *Herod. Malign.* 42 (= *Mor.* 872 F–873 D) bestreitet den Bericht über Scheingräber explizit. Vgl. zu dieser Problematik Huxley 1963.

7 Vgl. zu diesen Ritualen Chaniotis 1991: 129f.

denn noch kurz vor der erstmaligen Zerstörung der Stadt zu Beginn des Peloponnesischen Krieges lässt Thukydides die Plataier genau das den Spartanern gegenüber zu ihrer Verteidigung vorbringen.[8] Dieses von der Polis administrierte Totenritual muss im Spätherbst des Jahres stattgefunden haben,[9] und es besitzt entsprechend zahlreiche chthonische Bezüge.[10] Es spricht viel dafür, dass der Termin für dieses Ritual am Ende des Jahres auf ältere Totenrituale der Polisgemeinschaft rekurriert und nicht mit dem Jahrestag der Schlacht identisch ist, an dem in einigen Poleis wohl eigene Gedenktage für den Sieg eingeführt worden waren.[11] Insofern vollzog die Polis Plataiai mit ihren Magistraten wohl (nur) dieses Totenopfer an den Gräbern aller Gefallenen,[12] dem Ritual wuchs allerdings eine weit über den Polisrahmen hinauswachsende Bedeutung zu.[13] Dazu passt, dass auch in Bauwerken eine ähnliche Strategie sich manifestierte: Ein wohl älterer Tempel der Athena Areia[14] soll – angeblich aus ihrem Aristeion, das die Plataier nach dem Sieg erhalten hatte – errichtet worden sein.[15] Inwieweit dieser archäologisch bisher nicht fassbare Ort[16] aber mit der Kultpraxis in Verbindung stand, bleibt unklar.[17]

Von großer Bedeutung ist allerdings, dass bereits das erste Opfer des Pausanias für Zeus nach der Schlacht den Gott mit der Epiklese „Eleutherios" anrief – und damit einen Begriff aufnahm, der für die Legitimationsstrategie des Hellenenbundes von entscheidender Bedeutung war.[18] Ein entsprechender Kult ist insgesamt erst mit dem Ende der Perserkriege nachweisbar (auch über Plataiai hinaus) und steht daher sicherlich in enger Verbindung mit dem Ereignis. Die „Freiheit" von Hellas manifestierte sich in dem Kult für Zeus Eleutherios. Unsicher ist allerdings, ob die in der antiken Tradition dem Simonides zugeschriebenen Distichen auf einem Altar für Zeus Eleutherios

8 Thuc. 3.58.3f.
9 Chaniotis 1991: 136; Welwei 1991: 58.
10 Zweifel an einem Totenritual bei Page 1981: 213. Allerdings schließen die in den einzelnen Poleis durchgeführten Rituale einen Kult am Schlachtort keinesfalls aus, zumal die Toten abweichend von der sonstigen Praxis dort bestattet worden waren.
11 Zu den Gedenktagen in den einzelnen Poleis Jung 2006: 260–262.
12 Von einer Heroisierung zu sprechen, ist dabei wohl zu weitgehend, anders aber Boedeker 2001: 150–153.
13 Zum Gesamtverständnis dieser Rituale und der in ihnen zum Ausdruck kommenden Geschichtsdeutung Beck 2009: 61–68.
14 Sehr weitgehende Interpretationen zur Deutung der Perserkriegsgeschichte durch die Polis Plataiai hat zuletzt Yates 2013 an diesen Tempel und seine bei Pausanias beschriebene Ausstattung geknüpft, vgl. insbes. 380–384.
15 Plut. *Arist*. 20.3 erwähnt die Finanzierung aus angeblich achtzig Talenten. Ob es sich um einen neuen Tempel oder die Umgestaltung eines bereits bestehenden handelt, ist unklar, vgl. Kirsten 1950: 2301; Gauer 1968: 98f. für einen Umbau, dagegen Park und Wormell 1956: 174f. für einen Neubau, Schachter 1981: 127f. lässt die Frage unentschieden.
16 Zur archäologischen Evidenz grundlegend Konecny 2013: 141–154.
17 Paus. 9.4.2 liefert eine Beschreibung auch des sehr thebenkritischen Bildprogramms des Tempels. Kultaktivitäten sind nicht belegt, nur in *IG* IX 1.170 begegnet Athena Areia als Schwurgottheit. Vgl. auch Schachter 1981: 127f.
18 Grundlegend hierzu Siewert 1972: 53–55; Karavites 1982: 146–153, 158–162; zur Bedeutung besonders in Sparta vgl. grundlegend Bernhardt 2014.

tatsächlich aus dieser Zeit stammen.[19] Ein solcher Kult könnte gleichwohl bereits im fünften Jahrhundert v. Chr. in das Ritual integriert worden sein, ohne dass sich dies mit Sicherheit zeigen lässt, und ohne dass dies bereits einen Hinweis auf den später nachweisbaren Agon darstellt.

Es war in jedem Fall die Polis Plataiai und keineswegs eine polisübergreifende Organisation oder ihre Organe, die an den Totenhügeln vor ihren Toren einen Kult etablierte, den sie allerdings stellvertretend und im Namen der Hellenen auszuführen angab. Hierin besteht also kein Widerspruch zwischen den Ritualen, die sich mit Hilfe der Zeugnisse des Thukydides rekonstruieren lassen, und dem Bericht des Plutarch. Für die Eleutherien oder ein Synhedrion der Hellenen allerdings findet sich in den Quellen des fünften Jahrhunderts v. Chr. kein Beleg.[20]

Es ist definitiv auszuschließen, dass die Eleutherien bereits vor der Zerstörung Plataiais durch Theben zu Beginn des Peloponnesischen Krieges bestanden haben. Von Bedeutung aber ist es, dass damals die Polis Plataiai ihre politische Existenz auf das Engste mit der Perserkriegstradition verknüpfte. Die übernommenen Pflichten des Totenkultes korrespondierten, das dürfte am sogenannten Aristeides-Dekret durchaus den historischen Kern treffen, auf das Engste mit der Erwartung, eine Existenzgarantie für die eigene Polis seitens der Vormacht des Hellenenbundes erhalten zu haben.[21] Wie sich aber zu Beginn des Peloponnesischen Krieges zeigte, war das nicht der Fall. Thukydides gestaltet ein dramatisches Rededuell zwischen den Plataiern und ihren thebanischen Widersachern nach der Einnahme der Stadt 427 v. Chr. Während die Thebaner den Plataiern vorwerfen, die damaligen Ideale der Freiheit verraten zu haben, indem sie sich den neuen Zwingherren aus Athen angeschlossen hätten,[22] verweisen die Plataier verzweifelt auf ihre Verdienste aus dem Perserkrieg.[23] Doch die spartanischen Richter, ganz Machtpolitiker, lassen die alten Traditionen und Rechte nicht gelten – und so wird die Polis Plataiai komplett ausgelöscht.

19 Sim. *frg*. 15 Page, überliefert bei Plut. *Herod. Malign.* 42 (= Mor. 873B) und Arist. 19.7 sowie Anth. 6.50. Page 1981: 212 verneint eine Autorschaft des Simonides, hält aber eine Entstehung im fünften oder vierten Jahrhundert v. Chr. für möglich, dagegen Erbse 1998: 227–230 für die Echtheit.

20 Zur Frage der Fortexistenz des Hellenenbundes in diesem Zusammenhang Kienast 2003, vgl. zur gesamten Diskussion bezogen auf Plataiai Jung 2006: 271–281.

21 Eine solche Garantie wird von den thukydideischen Spartanern nicht einmal in der Sache bestritten, allerdings von Archidamos (Thuc. 2.72.1) mit der Forderung nach Neutralität verbunden. Dagegen wenig überzeugend Kienast 2003: 73n157. Zur Asylie Plataiais Kalkavage 1988: 266–269.

22 Thuc. 2.72.1 lässt Archidamos bereits diesen Vorwurf erheben, vgl. für die Thebaner 3.64.3. Zu beiden Reden und den Vorwürfen Kalkavage 1988: 294–296.

23 Thuc. 3.54.3.

Es ist schwer vorstellbar, dass das Ende der Polis auch mit dem Ende des Totenkults gleichzusetzen ist, denn die Gräber lagen eindeutig außerhalb der Stadtmauern, noch dazu gab es einen Grabhügel der Spartaner. Es ist kaum anzunehmen, dass an dieser Stelle jede Tradition abbrach. Und ein häufig übersehenes Detail der Darstellung bei Thukydides liefert auch den Beweis, dass es nicht so war: Er berichtet nämlich abschließend, dass die Spartaner bei der Zerstörung der Stadt den Tempel der Hera stehengelassen, einen weiteren errichtet und zusätzlich eine Herberge errichtet hätten – mithin also ein Kultensemble mit Unterkunft schufen, das eindeutig für eine weitere rituelle Nutzung des Ortes spricht.[24] Es ist nicht völlig auszuschließen, dass bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt, vielleicht sogar unter spartanischer Ägide, eine Vorform des *Agṓns* zu Ehren der Toten eingerichtet worden sein könnte, dieser wird aber allein aus infrastrukturellen Gründen kaum mit den späteren Eleutherien identisch sein.[25] Der kurzzeitige Wiederaufbau der Polis nach dem Königsfrieden blieb nur Episode, schnell sorgte der Aufstieg Thebens für erneute Zerstörung. Erst der Untergang des großen Nachbarn brachte schließlich für die Polis einen dauerhaften Neuanfang – unter Philipp II. und Alexander konnte sich die Polis neu etablieren, und mit dem eingangs zitierten Zeugnis des Poseidippos existiert auch der früheste eindeutige Beleg für die Durchführung des *Agṓns* der Eleutherien – am Anfang des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. Die weiteren Zeugnisse der Existenz sprechen durchaus dafür, eine Gründung noch im vierten Jahrhundert v. Chr. anzunehmen, aber dies lässt sich plausibel machen nur durch einen Blick auf die Kultpraxis in hellenistischer Zeit, als Plataiai und seine Kulte wieder einmal in den Fokus der politischen Auseinandersetzung geraten.

Die Eleutherien als politscher Ort: Das dritte Jahrhundert v. Chr.

Neben dem knappen, eingangs zitierten Zeugnis des Poseidippos aus dem zweiten oder dritten Jahrzehnt des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. hat vor allem die Epigraphik einen Einblick in die in dieser Zeit bestehenden Kulte und Feste von Plataiai gebracht, zu denen in dieser Zeit nun auch der Agon der Eleutherien gehört. Außerhalb der Stadtmauern von Plataiai wurde 1971 eine Ehreninschrift entdeckt, die aus der Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. stammt und einen bemerkenswerten Überblick gibt über die damals praktizierten Rituale. Glaukon, Sohn des Eteokles aus Athen, wird dafür geehrt,

24 Thuc. 3.68.3.

25 Grundlage dafür ist die in der Forschung oft übersehene Nachricht bei Diod. Sic. 11.29.1, die mit größerer Wahrscheinlichkeit auf Ephoros zurückgeht. Dort wird davon berichtet, dass nach der Schlacht die Durchführung eines Agons in Plataiai beschlossen worden sei. Die Nachricht ist nicht komplementär zu dem kohärenten Bericht bei Plutarch und deswegen oft marginalisiert worden. Stimmt allerdings die Zuordnung zu Ephoros, dann handelt es sich um das früheste Zeugnis für den Agon – und zwar noch vor der Wiederherstellung der Stadt durch die Makedonen nach der Zerstörung Thebens. Vgl. dazu die ausführliche Diskussion Jung 2006: 332f., Anm. 122.

dass er den Bestand an Weihgeschenken und Einnahmen des Heiligtums erweitert, den Agon der Eleutherien vergrößert habe und auch das Opfer für Zeus Eleutherios und die Homonoia der Hellenen ausgeweitet habe. Dieses Ehrendekret wird vom Synhedrion der Hellenen unter der eponymen Priesterschaft eines Nikokleides erlassen.[26]

[ἐφ'] ἱερέως Νικοκλείδου τοῦ Χαιρέου,
ἀγωνοθετοῦντος Ἀρχελάου τοῦ
Ἀθηναίου, δόγμα τῶν Ἑλλήνων·
Εὔβουλος Παναρμόστου Βοιώτιος εἶπε·
ἐπειδὴ Γλαύκων Ἐτεοκλέους
Ἀθηναῖος πρότερόν τε διατρίβων
ἐν τῆι ἰδίαι πατρίδι καὶ κοινῆι διε-
[τ]έλει πᾶσι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εὔνους ὢν
[κ]αὶ ἰδίαι τοῖς παραγινομένοις εἰς
τὴμ πόλιν καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τεταγμέ-
νος παρὰ τῶι βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίωι
τὴν αὐτὴν εἶχεν προαίρεσιν φανε-
ρὸς εἶναι βουλόμενος ὡς διέκειτο
τῆι πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας εὐνοίαι
ἀναθήμασίν τε τὸ ἱερὸν ἐκόσμη-
σεν καὶ προσόδοις ἃ καθήκει διατη-
ρεῖσθαι τῶι Διὶ τῶι Ἐλευθερίωι [καὶ]
τῆι τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ὁμονοίαι, συνη[ύ]-
ξησεν δὲ καὶ τὴν θυσίαν τοῦ Διὸς τ[οῦ]
Ἐλε<υ>θερίου καὶ τῆς Ὁμονοίας καὶ τὸν
ἀγῶνα ὃ τιθέασιν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐπὶ
τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἀγω-
νισαμένοις πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους
ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐλευθερίας,
[ἵνα] οὖν εἴδωσιν ἅπαντες ὅτι τὸ κοι-
νὸν συνέδριον τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ ζῶ-
σιν καὶ μετηλλαχόσιν ἀποδίδωσιν
χάριτας καταξίας τῶν εὐεργετη-
μάτων τοῖς τιμῶσι τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ Δ[ι]-
ὸς τοῦ Ἐλευθερίου, δεδόχθαι τοῖς

26 Erstpublikation bei Spyropoulos 1973: 374, erste Verbesserungen der Edition bei Jones 1974: Anm. 179, ausführlicher Kommentar und Neufassung bei Étienne und Piérart 1975: 51, vgl. darüber hinaus Roesch 1979: 180–182. Die hier abgedruckte Form folgt Roesch. Übersetzung ins Deutsche vom Autor dieses Beitrags.

Ἕλλησιν ἐπαινέσαι Γλαύκωνα
καὶ καλεῖν εἰς προεδρίαν αὐτὸν
καὶ τοὺς ἐκγόνους αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἅπα[ν]-
τα χρόνον ὅταν οἱ ἀγῶνες οἱ γυμνικοὶ
[σ]υντελῶνται ἐμ Πλαταιαῖς καθάπε[ρ]
καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς εὐεργέτας, ἀναγρά-
ψαι δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα τὸν ἀγωνοθέ-
την εἰς στήλην λιθίνην καὶ ἀναθεῖναι
παρὰ τὸμ βωμὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἐλευθε-
ρίου καὶ τῆς Ὁμονοίας, τὸν δὲ ταμίαν
[τ]ὸν ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν χρημάτων δοῦναι τ[ὸ]
[ε]ἰς ταῦτα ἀνήλωμα.

Als Nikokleides, Sohn des Chaireos, Priester war, als Archelaos, Sohn des Athenaios, Agonothet war, erging folgender Beschluß der Hellenen:
Euboulos, Sohn des Panharmostos, Boioter, beantragte:
Glaukon, der Sohn des Eteokles, der Athener, hat sich schon früher um sein eigenes Vaterland verdient gemacht und war auch gegenüber allen Hellenen fortwährend wohlgesonnen, wenn er ein öffentliches Amt innehatte, aber auch wenn er Privatmann war, war er dies gegenüber allen, die in die Stadt kamen. Und danach, als er dem König Ptolemaios an die Seite gestellt war, behielt er seine Richtung bei und wollte sich öffentlich, so wie er in der Lage war, zeigen in seiner guten Gesinnung gegenüber den Hellenen. Und so schmückte er nicht nur das Heiligtum mit Weihgeschenken aus, sondern vergrößerte auch mit den Einnahmen, die für Zeus den Befreier und die Eintracht der Hellenen zu bewahren Pflicht ist, das Opfer für Zeus den Befreier und die Eintracht und den Wettkampf, den die Hellenen eingerichtet hatten zu Ehren der tapferen Männer und derer, die gekämpft hatten gegen die Barbaren für die Freiheit der Hellenen. Deshalb haben die Hellenen beschlossen: Es sollen nun alle wissen, daß der gemeinsame Rat der Hellenen sowohl denen, die jetzt leben, als auch denen, die bereits verstorben sind, Erkenntlichkeit erweist, die auch ihrer Wohltaten würdig ist, die dazu beitragen, das Heiligtum von Zeus dem Befreier in Ehre zu halten. Glaukon soll daher öffentlich ausgezeichnet werden, und er und seine Nachkommen sollen auf den Ehrenplatz berufen werden für alle Zeit, solange die gymnischen Wettkämpfe in Plataiai ausgeführt werden, so wie (es geschieht) auch im Hinblick auf die übrigen Wohltäter. (Und sie haben beschlossen,) daß der Agonothet diesen Beschluß auf einer Stele aus Stein aufzeichnen und sie

> aufstellen soll beim Altar von Zeus dem Befreier und der Eintracht, und daß der Schatzmeister der heiligen Güter die Kosten dafür erstatten soll.

Diese viel diskutierte Inschrift führt nicht nur den Vollbestand der in Plataiai etablierten Kulte und der Eleutherien vor, sondern sie führt auch ins Zentrum ihrer politischen Aktualisierung und Indienstnahme im dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. auf dem Höhepunkt der Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Ptolemaiern und Antigoniden. Der in der Inschrift geehrte Euerget ist wohlbekannt als einer der führenden Politiker Athens in der Phase des Chremonideischen Krieges,[27] als er und sein für den Krieg eponymer Bruder die Stadt an der Seite der Ptolemaier in den Krieg gegen Antigonos Gonatas führte.[28] Die Inschrift berührt mithin einen politischen Kontext, in dem die Vorstellung von Freiheit der Hellenen und der Perserkriegsvergangenheit programmatisch wieder aufgegriffen und gegen den Machtanspruch Makedoniens gewendet wurde. Das Dekret des Chremonides, ein athenisches Psephisma, das ein Kriegsmanifest darstellt, arbeitete diesen Kontext präzise heraus. Damals wie in der eigenen Gegenwart hätten Athener und Spartaner πρὸς τοὺς καταδουλοῦσθαι τὰς πόλεις ἐπιχειροῦντας gekämpft.[29] Hier wird also nicht auf den ethnischen Gegensatz zwischen Persern und Griechen bei der Aktualisierung rekurriert, sondern auf das Ziel der Feinde: Es sei um die Behauptung von Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung gegangen, Werte also, die Gonatas in der Gegenwart erneut bedrohe. Die neue athenisch-lakedaimonische Allianz erhält dadurch eine historische Verlängerung und Legitimation, die die vielfach kriegerischen Episoden der bilateralen Beziehungen ausblendet zugunsten einer historisch tiefen und engen Beziehung und einer gemeinsamen Verantwortung für den gesamthellenischen Bereich. In dem Kriegsmanifest taucht ergänzend derselbe Schlüsselbegriff auf wie in einem der Kulte von Plataiai, nämlich der Begriff der Homonoia. Interner Zusammenhalt der Poleis und deren Interessenkonvergenz spielt eine zentrale Rolle, die Auseinandersetzung mit Gonatas wird darüber zu einer Selbstbehauptung der eigenen Staatsform gegen einen monarchischen Tyrannen stilisiert. Dies ist der politische Kontext, in dem Glaukon in Plataiai aktiv gewesen sein muss – dies dürfte jene Epoche sein, die in dem Dekret als zurückliegend und abgeschlossen betrachtet wird. Die Inschrift muss aber ebenso wie eine weitere aus Megalopolis, die vor wenigen Jahren entdeckt wurde,[30] nicht in die Zeit

27 Zu Glaukon, seiner Karriere und seinen Aktivitäten in Plataiai Jung 2006: 302–306; Wallace 2011: 160–164, Rosamilia 2018.

28 Zu den Ereignissen vgl. zuletzt vor allem O'Neil 2008.

29 Das Chremonides-Dekret *Syll.*³ 434/5, vor allem 9–19, 32–35.

30 Stavrianopoulou 2002 (2004) mit der Edition und einem ausführlichen Kommentar zur Inschrift. Eine Destabilisierung der makedonischen Position wurde verursacht durch den Verlust von Sikyon an den Achäischen Bund und den Fall der Festung von Korinth. In diesem Zusammenhang dürfte im Rahmen einer Stasis der Seitenwechsel von Megalopolis erfolgt sein (Sturz des Tyrannen Aristodemos wohl 251 v. Chr.). Die Ehrung des Eudamos feierte diesen Seitenwechsel in Plataiai. Zu Eudamos vgl. Haake 2007: 303f.

des Chremonideischen Krieges gehören, sondern in eine spätere Phase, die in Mittelgriechenland wieder eine gegen die Antigoniden gerichtete Politik erlaubte. Vermutlich zu Beginn oder in der Mitte der 240er Jahre,[31] kurz vor dem Ende der Regierung Ptolemaios' II. muss unter dessen politischer Mitwirkung, aber in Verantwortung etlicher Poleis um Athen, Sparta, Megalopolis, des boiotischen Koinon, vielleicht auch des achäischen Koinon[32] sowie weiterer unbekannter Akteure eine Kultgemeinschaft in Plataiai gepflegt worden sein, die sich als Synhedrion der Hellenen definierte,[33] programmatisch an den Hellenenbund gegen die Perser anknüpfte und sich gegen den Machtanspruch des antigonidischen Makedonien in der Region wandte.

So klar die politische Aktualisierung von Kult und Agon in jener Zeit sind, so unklar ist, unter welchen Bedingungen sich das Kultensemble insgesamt ausformte. Aus dem Glaukon-Dekret wie aus der Eudamos-Inschrift aus Megalopolis geht klar hervor, dass es sich bei den Eleutherien um einen bereits fest etablierten Agon handelte, als beide Politiker in Plataiai auftraten. Sie konnten dort eine grundsätzlich Panhellenisch, aber konkret wohl vor allem Mittelgriechenland und die Peloponnes umfassende Öffentlichkeit griechischer Poleis erreichen. Dies konnte nur gelingen, wenn es sich spätestens in den 240er Jahren v. Chr. um ein bereits etabliertes Ereignis handelte. Eine Neugründung während des Chremonideischen Krieges erscheint recht unwahrscheinlich, zumal die Inschrift für Glaukon auch explizit von einer Erweiterung bestehender Kulte und Feste spricht. Die Forschung hat sich intensiv mit möglichen Hypothesen zur Gründung befasst, dabei lassen sich im Wesentlichen drei Ansätze unterscheiden. Die ersten Kommentatoren der Inschrift sind von einer Gründung in Zusammenhang mit der Wiederbegründung der Polis Plataiai durch Alexander ausgegangen,[34] was aber in vielerlei Hinsicht nicht überzeugend ist, insbesondere nicht im Hinblick auf die Gleichsetzung der „Hellenen" von Plataiai mit dem Korinthischen Bund, weil dies die überaus prominente Rolle und Präsenz Spartas in den Eleutherien

31 Verfehlt der Versuch von Buraselis 1982 (1984), die Inschrift in die 220er Jahre hinab zu datieren mit dem Argument, Glaukon sei bereits verstorben gewesen. Die neue Inschrift aus Megalopolis ermöglicht eine exaktere Datierung anhand der Politik von Megalopolis, das sich im Chremonideischen Krieg noch auf Seiten des Gonatas befand, und diesen wohl 251 v. Chr. verließ, aber schon nach der Schlacht von Chaironeia 245 v. Chr. bereits die Möglichkeiten zu einer antimakedonischen Politik wieder verlor. Vgl. dazu ausführlich Stavrianopoulou 2002 (2004): 138–143. Vor diesem Hintergrund die Neudatierung des Glaukon-Dekrets in dieselbe Zeit bei Jung 2006: 304f., entsprechend dann auch Wallace 2011: 160–164.

32 Aus dieser Zeit stammt eine Athleteninschrift, die einen Sieger aus dem Achäischen Koinon nennt, die oft übersehen wird bei der Rekonstruktion des Teilnehmerkreises: *SEG* 11.338, 6f.

33 Zur Mitgliedschaft vgl. Jung 2006: 306–311.

34 Robert 1969: 14–16 noch ohne Kenntnis der Inschrift, darauf aufbauend dann die Editoren Étienne und Piérart 1975: 68.

nicht erklären kann.[35] Nur hypothetischen Charakter besitzt die zweite Annahme, das Fest sei in Zusammenhang mit der Abwehr der Galater unter antigonidischen Auspizien eingeführt worden.[36] Sehr viel wahrscheinlicher ist ein dritter Ansatz, der auch erklären kann, wieso in der literarischen Überlieferung Plutarchs die Begründung der Kulte mit Aristeides in Verbindung gebracht wird. Demnach wären die Eleutherien nach der Wiederherstellung Plataiais eingerichtet worden, aber unter athenischer Ägide während des Lamischen Krieges.[37] Dies war genau die Zeit, in der in Athen die Vergangenheit der Perserkriege intensiv beschworen wurde und in die vermutlich auch die Erstellung so prominenter Urkunden wie der Stele von Archarnai („Eid von Plataiai") führte. Damals bemühte Athen eine Vergangenheitspolitik zur Kriegslegitimation,[38] die derjenigen im Chremonideischen Krieg zwei Generationen später sehr vergleichbar war. Es spricht viel dafür, die Anfänge der Eleutherien als Agon und die Konstituierung des Synhedrion der Hellenen in dieser Zeit anzunehmen, die sich deswegen auch für Glaukon, Ptolemaios II. und ihre politischen Mitstreiter als Referenzpunkt ebenso anboten wie für die Gegner der Antigoniden in den 240er Jahren v. Chr. Vor diesem Hintergrund konnte Glaukon in den 260er Jahren und dann erneut in den 240er Jahren v. Chr. in Plataiai als Euerget auftreten.[39] So boten sich die Eleutherien auch für einen Mann wie Eudamos an, um dort vor einem überregional strukturierten Publikum aufzutreten, um den Abfall der Stadt Megalopolis von den Antigoniden politisch in Szene zu setzen.

Die Eleutherien als Panhellenischer Agon der Erinnerung

Ab der Mitte des dritten Jahrhunderts liegen zahlreiche epigraphische Zeugnisse vor, welche die genaue Ausgestaltung des Agons der Eleutherien illustrieren. Dabei zeigen sie vor allem ein Bild, das stark agonistisch geprägt ist. Seit der zweiten Hälfte des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. sind Siegerinschriften überliefert, die bis in das dritte Jahrhundert n. Chr. die Relevanz des Agons belegen können. Während der Befund für die Zeit der Auseinandersetzung mit den Antigoniden im dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. einen auf Mittelgriechenland und die Peloponnes beschränkten Einzugsbereich nahelegt, scheint

35 Zuletzt mit Vehemenz wieder für diese These Wallace 2011: insbesondere 151–157. Die alte These wird aber nicht plausibler – denn das Problem bleibt weiter, wie erklärt werden soll, dass ein von Makedonien eingerichteter Kult und Agon in kürzerer Zeit eine komplette Neudeutung gegen diese Macht erfahren haben soll.

36 Dreyer 1999: 251–255.

37 Relativierend im Sinne der Makedonen-These dagegen Wallace 2011: 157–160. Der Ansatz der Etablierung im Lamischen Krieg erklärt immerhin anders als bei Wallace, warum den Kulten ein so deutlich antimakedonischer Affekt zukam und ordnet sich zugleich ein in die z.B. in der Publikation des „Eids von Plataiai" zum Ausdruck kommende Aktualisierung in Athen in dieser Phase.

38 Das Kriegsmanifest Athens bei Diod. Sic. 18.10.2–4. Es gab ein formalisiertes Synhedrion, das sich selbst als Hellenen bezeichnete, so Diod. Sic. 18.15.7. Dagegen hat sich Jehne 1994: 265 die Allianz als ein System bilateraler Verträge vorgestellt.

39 Zur Politik Glaukons in Plataiai zuletzt Wallace 2011: 160–164.

sich im Laufe der Zeit der Einzugsbereich ausgedehnt zu haben und in der Kaiserzeit schließlich auch die Inseln der Ägäis sowie das kleinasiatische Festland umfasst zu haben:[40] Aus dem dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. stammen die ersten Siegerinschriften aus Argos und dem mittelgriechischen Kernland.[41] Im folgenden Jahrhundert kommen zunächst die Inseln dazu, aber es gibt auch zahlreiche Belege aus den alten Kernzonen.[42] Im letzten vorchristlichen Jahrhundert schließlich kommt der erste Sieger aus Halikarnassos und damit vom kleinasiatischen Festland.[43] Dieses Bild wird dann im folgenden Jahrhundert abgerundet dadurch, dass zahlreiche Belge für die Teilnahme von Wettkämpfern aus kleinasiatischen Poleis vorliegen.[44] Deren Teilnahme scheint sich dann in antoninischer Zeit wieder reduziert zu haben, der Einzugsbereich schrumpfte im zweiten Jahrhundert wieder deutlich auf die alten Kernzonen Mittelgriechenlands und der Peloponnes.[45] Dies dürfte womöglich mit der Installation des neuen Panhellenions in hadrianischer Zeit zu tun haben, das in vielfältiger Hinsicht Bezüge aus Plataiai aufgriff, aber einen weit attraktiveren und kaiserlich geförderten Bezugspunkt darstellte.

Die Inschriften bieten auch einen Überblick über den Charakter der Wettkämpfe, die in Plataiai durchgeführt wurden. Aus dem ersten vorchristlichen Jahrhundert liegen Inschriften vor, die einen Katalog von Wettkämpfen aufführen, die in Plataiai durchgeführt wurden.[46] Demnach scheint im Mittelpunkt ein Waffenlauf gestanden zu haben, aber auch ein Pentathlon, ein Stadionlauf, Ring- und Faustkampf scheinen zum agonistischen Programm gehört zu haben. Alle Disziplinen wurden sowohl für Männer als auch für Jungen durchgeführt. Möglicherweise kam später noch ein Reiterwettkampf dazu.[47] Entscheidend ist aber, dass es neben dem eigentlich agonistischen Programm bei den Eleutherien auch einen rhetorischen Wettbewerb gab. Schon für das dritte Jahrhundert v. Chr. liegt möglicherweise der Beleg für einen Sieg eines Herolds aus

40 Schachter 1994: 138–141 mit einem Überblick über das erhaltene Inschriftenmaterial, der aber keineswegs vollständig ist, vgl. Jung 2006: 345f.
41 *SEG* 11.338 (Argos), *IG* VII 530 (Tanagra).
42 *SEG* 19.570 belegt einen Sieger aus Chios, *IG* XII 1.78 aus Rhodos. Außerdem aus derselben Zeit *IG* V 1.657 (Sparta), *IG* VII 1711 (Noiotien), *SEG* 21.458 (Athen), *SEG* 22.350 (Elis), *SEG* 36.252 = *IG* II² 3189 Addenda (Athen).
43 *SEG* 14.728.
44 *SEG* 6.727c (Perge), *I.Magnesia* 149b, *I.Didyma* 201, daneben aber auch aus den alten Kernzonen: *IG* II² 3158 (Athen), *IG* V 1.656 (Sparta), *IG* VII 1711 (Plataiai). Die Siegerliste *IG* VII 1765 belegt Sieger aus Tanagra, Thespiai, Theben. Elis, Athen, Keos, Kyzikos, Plataiai und Bithynien.
45 Athen: *IG* II² 2086, 2089, 2113, 2130, 2788, 3162; Sparta: *IG* V 1.305, 553, 554, 555b, 556, 655, *SEG* 11.802f.; Megara: *IG* V 49; Thespiai: *IG* VII 1856; Lebadeia: *IG* VII 3102; Boiotien ohne nähere Bestimmung: *IG* VII 2788; Phokis: *IG* IX 1.149; Delphi: *FdD* III 1.555; die einzige kleinasiatische Ausnahme aus dieser Zeit ist *I.Ephesos* VI 2070f.
46 *IG* VII 1666, möglicherweise auch *IG* VII 1765, vgl. dazu Gossage 1975: 125; Schachter 1994: 140, Anm. 2.
47 *IG* IV² 429.

Tanagra vor,[48] aus der Kaiserzeit gibt es dann mehrere Belege für die Durchführung rhetorischer und pantomimischer Wettbewerbe.[49]

Der Agon der Eleutherien scheint sich also in seinem Bild nicht grundlegend von dem anderer Wettkämpfe dieser Zeit zu unterscheiden, allerdings war er stets in besonderer Weise mit der Geschichte der Persersiege verknüpft. So tauchen die Eleutherien in den Siegerlisten häufiger in Verbindung mit den kleineren penteterischen Agonen der Periodos auf,[50] aber der Veranstaltungsort wird in einer Inschrift explizit programmatisch als μηδοφόνος bezeichnet.[51] Die Eleutherien war das Fest der Medertöter bzw. derer, die ihre Totenehrung begingen. Der Waffenlauf war deswegen der Kern und das prestigeträchtigste Element der Wettkämpfe von Plataiai. Die bei Plutarch überlieferte Erzählung vom Läufer Euchidas, der nach der Schlacht nach Delphi gelaufen sei,[52] ist ganz sicher die Gründungserzählung zu diesem Wettbewerb.[53] Besonders spektakulär war der Waffenlauf in Plataiai wohl auch deshalb, weil in Rüstungen der Perserkriegszeit oder in Rüstungen, die man für besonders altertümlich hielt, gelaufen wurde.[54] Zielpunkt war möglicherweise der Altar des Zeus Eleutherios, den man wohl mit dem ersten Opfer des Pausanias nach der Schlacht verband, obwohl dieses Opfer tatsächlich auf der Agora stattgefunden hatte. Im ersten Jahrhundert n. Chr. war wohl das Tropaion der Schlacht der Ausgangspunkt, aber völlig sicher ist das nicht zu belegen.[55] In diesem Zusammenhang gibt es die literarische Überlieferung einer Regel, dass derjenige, der nach einem Sieg noch ein zweites Mal antrat und verlor, mit dem Tode bestraft wurde.[56] Für eine Anwendung dieser Regel gibt es keinen Beleg, wohl aber dafür, dass Sieger mehrfach erfolgreich waren.[57] Dennoch dürfte die Überlieferung einer solchen Regel demonstrieren, dass der Agon in Plataiai als besonders altertümlich und rigoros gelten

48 *IG* VII 530.

49 *IG* II² 3158; *IG* VII 1667 (Datierung nach eponymen Siegern); *I.Ephesos* VI 2070f.

50 Zur genauen Stellung innerhalb der Agone vgl. ausführlich Jung 2005: 348, Anm. 19. Danach publiziert, aber als weiterer Beleg *SEG* 69.411, 13.

51 *IG* II² 3158.4.

52 Plut. *Arist*. 20.4–6.

53 Verfehlt Kienast 1995: 133f., der die Erzählung für historisch hält. Auch Schachter 1981: 102, der die Erzählung einem gar nicht belegten Fackellauf zuordnet, ist sicher unrichtig. Vielmehr ist die Erzählung parallel zu setzen mit den Gründungsgeschichten zahlreicher anderer Waffenläufe, vgl. hierzu ausführlich am Beispiel des Marathonläufers Jung 2006: 181–191.

54 Paus. 9.2.6; Philostr. *gymn*. 8; 24.

55 *I.Didyma* 201 A, 7, der Wettkämpfer soll den Waffenlauf vom Siegesmal aus gewonnen haben, entsprechend auch *SEG* 11.338, 6. Ein archäologischer Beleg für die Lokalisierung des Tropaions steht aus.

56 Philostr. *gymn*. 8.

57 *SEG* 36.258, interessanterweise zeitgenössisch zu Philostrat; *I.Didyma* 201 B. 1–6; *I.Magnesia* 149b. Im Detail ist anzumerken, dass aber nur die Inschrift aus Milet tatsächlich einen Doppelsieg im Waffenlauf beschreibt, während die übrigen Erfolge aus anderen Disziplinen rühmen. Natürlich ist der Doppelsieg des Milesiers kein Argument gegen die Gültigkeit der Regel, wie dies Harris ²1979: 127 angenommen hat.

sollte und wollte und so eine enge Verbindung zu der am Schlachtort gefeierten Haltung der Persersieger herstellte.

Besonders prestigeträchtig war auch der Titel, den der Sieger des Agons errang: ἄριστος τῶν Ἑλλήνων.[58] Auch wenn dies nicht mit letzter Sicherheit zu sagen ist, dürfte wohl nur der Waffenlauf als die Disziplin in Frage kommen, in der dieser Titel zu erringen war. Auffällig im epigraphischen Befund ist, dass es sich keinesfalls um bloße Athleten handelte, die diesen Titel errungen, sondern fast ausschließlich um Führungspersönlichkeiten der jeweiligen Poleis, um die soziale und politische Oberschicht.[59] Wenn sogar in einem Fall Vater und Sohn als Träger des Titels belegt sind,[60] zeigt das vielleicht weniger eine besondere sportliche Begabung als vielmehr, auf welch engen Personenkreis sich das Privileg beschränkte, an diesem exklusiven Ereignis teilnehmen zu dürfen. Vielleicht darf daraus auch abgeleitet werden, dass die sehr kostenträchtige Ausstattung der Teilnehmer mit den altertümlichen Rüstungen den Teilnehmerkreis auf Epheben aus den Poleis limitierte, die im Synhedrion der Hellenen vertreten waren. Zugleich zeigt die Exklusivität dieses Titels auch, dass die Inanspruchnahme der Perserkriegsvergangenheit eine exklusive Angelegenheit der lokalen und regionalen Führungseliten der jeweiligen Poleis bzw. Koina war und sicherlich ganz wesentlich deren Identitätsbestimmung beeinflusste. Auch die Vergabe des Titels deutet mit großer Sicherheit darauf hin, dass die oben erwähnte rigorose Regel eher die Exklusivität illustrieren sollte, als dass sie tatsächlich in Anwendung kam.

Dieses Moment wurde in einem weiteren, in Plataiai durchgeführten Wettbewerb noch deutlicher. Der Dialogos war ein rhetorischer Wettbewerb, welcher den lokalen Eliten ein prominentes Forum bot, sich ihrer Vergangenheit und ihrer historischen Identität mit den Persersiegern zu vergewissern. Beim Dialogos kam es zu einem rhetorischen Wettkampf der Ephebenmannschaften mindestens von Athen und Sparta, während wohl das Synhedrion der Hellenen das Schiedsrichterkollegium bildete.[61] In insgesamt vier Ephebenkatalogen aus antoninischer Zeit ist dieses Ereignis ausführlich belegt,[62] das

58 Robert 1969: 13–20; Robert 1937: 138–147 hat den Titel mit dem Waffenlauf verbunden, vgl. auch Schachter 1994: 141, Anm. 1.

59 Der prominenteste Fall ist Tib. Claudius Novius aus Athen in *IG* II² 1990. Die Prominenz spricht keinesfalls für eine Verleihung des Titels bloß ehrenhalber, wie Schachter 1994: 141, Anm. 1 vermutet hat. Weitere Führungspersönlichkeiten sind Mnasiboulos aus Elateia in *IG* IX 1.146, *SEG* 11.802f. für Damokratidas und Alkandridas aus Sparta, vgl. insgesamt auch Alcock 2002: 80f.

60 *SEG* 11.802f. Der Sohn ist auch in *IG* V 1.655 erwähnt, und zwar eindeutig als Sieger im Waffenlauf, eine Verleihung des Titels rein ehrenhalber ist also zumindest hier völlig ausgeschlossen. Diese Familie ist auch noch in den Inschriften *IG* V 1.305; 556; 655b belegt.

61 *SEG* 36.252 = *IG* II² 3189 Addenda, vgl. dazu Peek 1938: 14–18, der allerdings die Inschrift nicht mit Plataiai in Verbindung bringen konnte. Vgl. dann Robertson 1986: 99–101.

62 *IG* II² 2086 (163/4 n. Chr.); *IG* II² 2113 (187/8 n. Chr.); *IG* II² 2130 (195/6 n. Chr.). Für *IG* II² 2089 sind die Jahre 166/7, 167/8 und 168/9 erwogen worden. Vgl. ausführlich zum Dialogos Robertson 1986.

vermutlich nur alle vier Jahre stattfand.[63] Die ersten Quellen verweisen aber bereits in das zweite Jahrhundert v. Chr., sodass eine Durchführung über mehrere Jahrhunderte gesichert ist.[64] Eine Verbindung mit dem ebenfalls penteterischen Agon des Waffenlaufs ist nicht wahrscheinlich, vermutlich fand der Dialogos jeweils im Jahr davor statt. Mit dem Dialogos wurde nämlich über das Recht entschieden, die Festprozession der Eleutherien anzuführen, deswegen ist eine Durchführung im Spätherbst des den Eleutherien vorhergehenden Jahres absolut plausibel.[65] Jahreszeitlich lässt sich der Dialogos nicht mit dem jährlich durchgeführten Totenopfer der Magistrate von Plataiai in Verbindung bringen, sondern wohl eher mit der Sitzung des Synhedrion.[66]

Was beim Dialogos vorgetragen wurde, vermittelt eine Inschrift aus Athen, die den Erfolg der eigenen Epheben wohl im zweiten vorchristlichen Jahrhundert feiert.[67] Die dort wiedergegebene Rede wird einer Personifikation der Stadt Athen in den Mund gelegt, die zu Beginn den Streit mit Sparta um das Recht erwähnt, die Prozession bei den Eleutherien anführen zu dürfen. Zur Begründung wird das gesamte Repertoire historischer Leistungen Athens herangezogen – beginnend mit den Taten vor der Schlacht von 479 v. Chr.,[68] um dann schließlich auf die konkreten Ansprüche in Plataiai einzugehen. In beiden Fällen werden aber ausschließlich die Erfolge Athens gegen die Perser referenziert wie z.B. der Erfolg von Marathon.[69] Dann wird auf einen Eid eingegangen, bei dem es sich wohl (die Inschrift ist nur sehr fragmentarisch erhalten) um den „Eid von Plataiai" handelt, außerdem geht es um einen nicht näher zu bestimmenden Orakelspruch und eine Opfergabe, die nur der Initiative Athens entspringe. In einem weiteren Teil scheint es dann um die Gründung des Synhedrion in Plataiai zu gehen, an dem Athen sich einen wichtigen Anteil zuschreibt. Schließlich wird auf die Verpflichtungen der Hellenen gegenüber Plataiai eingegangen, worauf nicht mehr näher zu bestimmende Anklagen gegen Sparta folgen, die sich wohl auf die Zerstörung Plataiais im Peloponnesischen Krieg beziehen. Nicht völlig abwegig erscheint in diesem Zusammenhang die Vermutung, dass auch die von Plutarch in seiner Aristeides-Biographie überlieferten Details zur Gründung der Kulte von Plataiai aus dem Kontext des Dialogos von Plataiai stammen, aber das bleibt nicht mehr als eine Hypothese.

63 Robertson 1986: 91 hat für einen vierjährigen Zyklus plädiert, den er direkt von dem Jahr der Schlacht ableitete. Das ist sicher falsch, vgl. ausführlich zur Datierung Jung 2006: 353, Anm. 44.
64 *IG* II² 2788 und wohl auch *SEG* 36.252.
65 *IG* II² 2788, 1–8.
66 Vgl. ausführlich Jung 2006: 353.
67 *IG* II² 2788, vgl. dazu Robertson 1986: 97–99 und Day 1980: 175 f.; daneben zentral Chaniotis 1988: 45–48. Jung 2006: 354–358.
68 *IG* II² 2788, 9–21.
69 Zum Inhalt der Inschrift und ihrer Rekonstruktion Robertson 1986: 99f., Chaniotis 1988: 47f., Jung 2006: 357.

Die überlieferte Rede vermittelt trotz ihrer fragmentarischen Erhaltung einen deutlichen Eindruck davon, wie sich dieser Wettbewerb in Plataiai vollzog. Indem die Stadt Athen selbst, vertreten durch ihre Ephebenmannschaft, zu den Mitgliedern des Synhedrion der Hellenen sprach, erhielt die Geschichtsdarstellung den Charakter einer von der Polisgemeinschaft sanktionierten verbindlichen Form der eigenen Geschichte. Indem ein Kollegium aus anderen griechischen Poleis über den Sieger entschied, konnte der historische Gegensatz zwischen Athen und Sparta gewissermaßen in einem rhetorischen Wettstreit eingefangen werden, der nicht mehr mit Waffen, sondern nur noch mit Worten um einen Ehrenvorrang ausgefochten wurde, in dem aber weiter all das tradiert wurde, was spätestens im vierten Jahrhundert v. Chr. zur Begründung einer hegemonialen Stellung kanonischen Rang erlangt hatte. Die Poleis kämpften nun im rhetorischen Agon um den Vorrang und – vertreten durch ihr Spitzenpersonal – auch im Waffenlauf um die Ehre, der Beste der Hellenen zu sein. Das war eine den politischen Verhältnissen des späten Hellenismus und der römischen Kaiserzeit sicherlich angemessene Art, historischen Antagonismus politisch zu entschärfen und gleichzeitig das einst politisch Trennende weiter als kulturell Identitätsstiftendes zu tradieren. Was einst zur Legitimation in blutigen Konflikten gedient hatte, fand nun seinen Weg in den Agon, blieb weiter präsent und doch entschärft, weil in einem kultisch-agonistischen Rahmen von der aktuellen Tagespolitik segregiert. Nur am Rande sei erwähnt, dass die Parallele zum Charakter von Fußball-Länderspielen nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs in Westeuropa auf der Hand liegt: Auch hier wurden ältere nationalistische Traditionen, die zuvor politisch in Kriegen eingesetzt worden waren, in einem veränderten politischen Umfeld in einem neu geordneten Kontext hegemonialer Machtausübung in ein sportlich-agonistisches Umfeld abgedrängt und somit entschärft. Zugleich blieben sie dort aber weiter sagbar und tradierbar, ohne aber noch politische Konflikte befeuern zu können. Ähnlich muss man wohl den Agon des Dialogos und den Waffenlauf von Plataiai deuten. Vor allem für die lokalen Führungseliten war der Agon von Plataiai daher ein entscheidender Punkt ihrer Selbstvergewisserung und der politischen Identitätsbestimmung ihres Führungsnachwuchses.

Ein langsames Ende

Stärker in den Fokus der Reichspolitik gelangten die Kulte in Plataiai und der Agon der Eleutherien in der Zeit Neros. Als dieser Kaiser eine aktive Griechenlandpolitik einleitete und vor allem auch die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Partherreich politisch aktuell wurde, wirkte sich das auch auf Plataiai aus. Im Umfeld der Griechenlandreise des Kaisers muss in Plataiai das Ensemble der Kulte um den Kaiserkult ergänzt worden sein. Und erneut waren es die provinzialen Eliten, die diese Erweiterung aus eigener Initiative umsetzten.

Tiberius Claudius Novius, als Ephebe einst selbst Sieger im Waffenlauf von Plataiai und inzwischen die führende Persönlichkeit der athenischen Politik, war es, der den Kaiserkult in Plataiai etablierte.[70] Der ältere, mit der Perserkriegstradition eng verbundene Kult des Zeus Eleutherios wurde mit dem des Kaisers verknüpft.[71] Es ist ziemlich sicher, dass diese Verbindungen auch die Basis dafür bildeten, dass die Partherpolitik des Kaisers nun eine historische Verlängerung in die griechische Geschichte hinein erhielt, Novius war dabei einer der Hauptakteure auf regionaler Ebene.[72] Die Griechenlandreise des Kaisers griff vielfältig ältere Kulte auf, erneuerte diese und suchte insgesamt die Politik des Kaisers mit seiner Freiheitserklärung mit älteren Traditionen zu verknüpfen.[73] Was in Plataiai blieb, war die Verknüpfung des älteren Zeus Eleutherios-Kults mit dem des Kaisers, auch wenn in flavischer Zeit die neronischen Ansätze der Griechenlandpolitik abgebrochen wurden.

Mit Hadrian gab es zwei Generationen später erneut einen Kaiser, der Griechenland programmatisch und praktisch zu einem Kern seiner Politik erhob. Aus seiner Zeit findet sich der erste Beleg dafür, dass der Kultverband von Plataiai, vertreten durch sein Synhedrion auch außerhalb Plataiais tätig wurde, er weihte eine Statue für Hadrian in Delphi zu genau dem Zeitpunkt, als sich der Kaiser selbst dort aufhielt.[74] Der Kaiser verfolgte das ambitionierte Ziel, einen formalen Rahmen für die Repräsentanz griechischer Poleis und Koina in Athen zu schaffen. Mit dem Panhellenion begründete er ein solches Organ, das sowohl in seinem kultischen Kern als auch in seiner Organisation direkt auf das Vorbild in Plataiai Bezug nahm.[75] Offenbar hatte der Kaiser, nachdem seine ursprüngliche Idee, die delphische Amphiktyonie entsprechend umzugestalten, gescheitert war, nun in Plataiai einen geeigneten Referenzpunkt gefunden. Der Kult des Zeus Eleutherios, der (schwach belegten) Homonoia der Hellenen und der neue Agon nahmen direkten Bezug auf das Kultensemble von Plataiai.[76] In Athen entstand nun ein Ort Panhellenischer Repräsentation, der die gemeinsame Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

70 *IG* II² 1990, vor allem 3–6. Zur Person Geagan 1979: 180–185, zu seinen Priesterämtern vgl. auch Nafissi 1995: 130f., 130, Anm. 70 und Jung 2006: 361, Anm. 82.

71 Vielleicht war der Kult auch schon kurz vor Novius eingerichtet worden, etwa im Jahre 54 in Zusammenhang mit der Gründung ähnlicher Institutionen auf der Peloponnes, vgl. Spawforth 1994: 235f.

72 Spawforth 1994: 237–243 mit einer umfassenden Materialsammlung, vgl. weiter Bradley 1979: 154f.

73 Nafissi 1995: 131 sieht einen direkten Bezug zu den Kulten in Plataiai, zu der Tendenz Neros, ältere Traditionen aufzugreifen Alcock 1994: 100–102. Zu den Problemen vgl. aber auch Toulomakos 1971: 41n8.

74 *Syll.*³ 835A. – zu weiteren Inschriften des Synhedrions vgl. Jung 2006: 369, Anm. 112 mit wichtigen Korrekturen zu älteren Annahmen.

75 Zur Gründung des Panhellenions Spawforth und Walker 1985: 79–90; Willers 1990: 97–103; Jones 1996: 29–56.

76 In der neueren Forschung weitgehend übersehen, bis auf Jones 1996: 43–46. Dagegen in der älteren Forschung breiter Konsens, dass das Ensemble von Plataiai das Vorbild darstellte, vgl. etwa Mommsen 1898: 168–170; Graindor 1934: 108, Anm. 8. Die These von Neubauer 1869: 52f., dass Hadrian die Feste und Kulte einfach von Plataiai nach Athen verlagert hatte, ist durch die Evidenz späterer epigraphischer Belege widerlegt. – Zum Kult der Homonoia vgl. im Detail Jung 2006: 373, Anm. 129.

„hellenischer“ Identität artikulierte. Das Panhellenion schuf einen integrativen Rahmen, der die südliche Balkanhalbinsel, die Inseln, aber auch Kleinasien umfasste. Für Plataiai allerdings lässt sich zeigen, dass der ursprüngliche Ort damit für das kleinasiatische Publikum an Relevanz verlor. Man musste dort nicht mehr vertreten sein, um seine „hellenische“ Identität politisch abzusichern – das Panhellenion übernahm diese Funktion und schuf zudem eine größere Nähe zur kaiserlichen Macht. In Plataiai schrumpfte der Kreis der Teilnehmer im zweiten Jahrhundert n. Chr. wieder auf jenen Kernbestand an Poleis und Koina, der schon bei der Etablierung im dritten Jahrhundert v. Chr. den Kern der Gemeinschaft ausgemacht hatte – die Regionen Mittelgriechenlands und der Peloponnes. Dort war auch weiter die Tradition des Persersiegs von hoher Bedeutung, bis dann in der Spätantike die Kulte und Feste von Plataiai nicht mehr nachweisbar sind.

Die Eleutherien – der Agon der Medertöter

Es unterliegt kaum einem Zweifel, dass die Eleutherien in Plataiai im Hellenismus und in der frühen Kaiserzeit einen prominenten Agon mit besonderem Prestige darstellten, der vor allem im Vergleich zu anderen Agonen der Zeit einen eher exklusiven Charakter hatte. Es waren die Führungseliten der Poleis und Koina zunächst Mittelgriechenlands und der Peloponnes, die dort ihre Identität und gemeinsame Geschichte feierten, die mit dem Zusammenwirken gegen die Perser im fünften Jahrhundert v. Chr. ihre politische Identität maßgeblich fundiert sahen. Neben dem agonistischen, mimischen und musischen Programm, das so auch an anderen Orten für viele professionelle und semiprofessionelle Teilnehmer geboten wurde, hielten die Eleutherien mit dem Waffenlauf und dem Dialogos, der dem eigentlichen Fest vorausging, eine Besonderheit bereit, die eine direkte Verbindung zu dieser Vergangenheit herstellte und den Teilnehmerkreis auf den politischen Führungsnachwuchs genau jener politischen Verbände beschränkte, die in dem Persersieg von 479 v. Chr. ihre historische Leistung für die politische und kulturelle Identität als „Hellenen“ sahen. Die Eleutherien waren zu jedem Zeitpunkt seit ihrer Nachweisbarkeit ein eminent politischer Agon – das gilt offensichtlich für die Zeit des Kampfes gegen die Antigoniden, als die in Plataiai gepflegten Kulte programmatisch gegen Gonatas gewandt wurden. Dies gilt aber ebenso für die Phase, die scheinbar im Schatten römischer Herrschaft liegt: Damals wurde in Plataiai eine historische und politische Identität gepflegt, die eine besondere Stellung der Teilnehmer im Reichskontext begründen sollte, ausgehend von ihrer historischen Leistung. Die Eleutherien können weit über den unmittelbar agonistischen Kontext belegen, wie zentral die Identität als Polisbürger bzw. Bürger eines Koinons auch noch in Zeiten war, in denen nach Meinung weiter Teile der althistorischen Forschung die große Zeit der Poleis und Koina schon lange der Vergangenheit angehörte. Die Teilnehmer in

Plataiai erlebten als Athener oder als Spartaner ihre große Geschichte nach und konnten sie – in agonistischem Kontext durchaus entschärft, aber gleichwohl verfügbar gemacht – individuell biographisch verankern, wenn sie z.B. als Sieger im Waffenlauf oder als Teilnehmer des Dialogos sich mit den Epheben anderer Poleis messen konnten. Sie konnten die als unverändert wahrgenommene Identität der Polisgemeinschaft im Panhellenischen Rahmen erleben, und die Distanz von Jahrhunderten, die sie von den realen „Medertötern" trennte, wurde im Agon zu Ehren der Toten, im Kult für Zeus Eleutherios und der Homonoia der Hellenen aufgehoben. Athener oder Spartaner oder Plataier, das war man im Kult und Agon, und kraft dieser Polisidentität war man Teil einer über Jahrhunderte identisch vorgestellten Gemeinschaft. In Plataiai war die Polisidentität noch lebendig bei den sozialen und politischen Eliten, als sie dies nach den Meinungen vieler schon seit Jahrhunderten nicht mehr hätte sein dürfen. So waren die Eleutherien immer politisch, im eigentlichen Wortsinn und darüber hinaus.

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Chapter 5

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The Local Games of Lebadeia and Koroneia*

Prelude: The Games of Koroneia and Lebadeia and their Geographical Horizon

Festivals played an important role in Boiotia since the earliest perception of a regional identity. Between the sixth and the fifth century BC, Alkaios and Pindar hint at seasonal games at which people from the entire region met. Alkaios refers to the rule of a warlike Athena which was either that of Athena Itonia in Koroneia or that of the Alalkomenion in the western part of the territory of Koroneia.[1] Pindar's more obscure 'seasonal games of the Boiotians'[2] are less easy to identify, but surely imply a regional horizon.[3] Between the Late Archaic age and the early fifth century BC (i.e. in the decades of Alkaios and Pindar), a regional body was slowly developing in Boiotia: there was a boiotarch, a 'leader of the Boiotians', and people could on occasion meet at an assembly;[4] shared coin types and regional cults added to this picture of regional ethnogenesis.[5]

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1 F 325 Campbell, with Schachter 2016: 179–180.

2 Pind. *Ol.* 7.84.

3 See *infra* (1) on the ancient and the modern reading of this expression.

4 Boiotarchs in the first quarter of the fifth century BC: *SEG* 60.509 (Aravantinos 2014). Assembly: Hdt. 5.79.1. An eponymous *árchōn* and a council (βωλά) are mentioned in *SEG* 60.507 (Matthaiou 2014).

5 On Boiotian ethnicity, see Kühr 2007; Larson 2007; Prandi 2011; Ganter 2014; Beck and Ganter 2015. It now seems almost certain that a form of regional cooperation existed between the end of the sixth century BC and the first quarter of the fifth century: what it exactly entailed, however, is still debated. Cf. the recent overviews by Beck and Ganter

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 79-116.

In 447/46 BC, the victory of the Boiotians over the Athenians at Koroneia marked the definite start of a new era. After this battle, probably through a process of progressive implementation, a new regional federal body was born: the 'classical koinon'. We know the complex system of this body thanks to a long chapter of the *Hellenika of Oxyrhynchos* and to the indirect references in other contemporary sources.[6] Even in this period, it seems that the Boiotian League was still exploiting the shared festivals "as a way of consolidating its own identity". In the late fifth century BC, the ancient sanctuary of Athena Itonia at Koroneia saw the dedication of a trophy and of two cult-statues:[7] these acts officially made it a symbolic venue and this aura was shared by the festivals which probably took place here already in this century.

A few decades later, in 371 BC, the Boiotians decided to establish another regional festival in Lebadeia. Since the site had been badly sacked by the Spartans in 395/4 BC, the choice had a political implication.[8] As we will see, other implications can be drawn from the identification of Lebadeia as the scene of this new festival. In Lebadeia, the oracle of Trophonion had been known to offer valuable prophecies since at least the sixth century BC: according to Herodotus, even the Persians were aware of its reliability. The decision to increase the political value of the spot with the addition of an agonistic dimension testifies to the awareness of the complex implications raised by the administration and the delivery of these regional festivals.

This chapter reassesses the history and the main evidence for the Pamboiotia held in Koroneia from the fifth century BC and for the Basileia held in Lebadeia from the fourth century BC, with a focus on their links with the region and on their local nature. Despite the international catchment area of the Basileia, both games remained 'local' because we lack positive evidence that they were ever granted 'stephanitic' status. Only in one case there is the indirect possibility that the Boiotian koinon was trying to have Delphi declare the *agṓn* of Lebadeia 'sacred', but this single piece of evidence does not explicitly refer to the festival.[9] It is actually hard to agree on a criterion to define an *agṓn* as 'local' in the sense of 'not-Panhellenic': the Pamboiotia, for instance, were always restricted to Boiotian teams and athletes in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, but they might have

2015 and Schachter 2016: 51-64 (on "The early Boiotoi: from alliance to federation"; this book is a selection of papers, in many instances already published, but coherently revised and updated [Schachter 2016: xi]; for this reason, I will only quote from this updated state of Schachter's ideas on the matter).

6 *Hell. Oxy.* 19.2 Chambers. Further sources and references: Beck and Ganter 2015.

7 "[A]s a way of consolidating its own identity": Parker 2004: 15. Trophy: Plut. *Ages*. 19.2. Bronze statues: Paus. 9.34.1. The cult statues represented Athena and Zeus; Zeus probably replaced a theriomorphic entity, possibly a snake (Schachter 1981: 120).

8 Establishment of the festival: Diod. Sic. 15.53.2. Sack of Lebadeia: Plut. *Lys*. 28.2, with Nafissi 1995: 162.

9 *IG* VII 4136, on which see *infra* in text.

hosted foreign dancers and athletes in the decades of Bakchylides and Pindar. Conversely, the Basileia changed name between the second and the first centuries BC; the new name 'Trophonia' might depend on the decision not to stress unwanted dangerous links in the eyes of the Romans.[10]

In general, the Basileia and the Pamboiotia can be read in the light of recent studies on the history of Hellenistic athletics which revealed that this period was not marked by an 'agonistic explosion', as many of the new traditions actually predated the fourth and third centuries BC.[11] In the third century BC, the appearance of isolympic games and of stephanitic *agṓnes* added new labels and demands to pre-existing habits.[12] Initially, the central criterion underlying the request that a festival should be accepted as *isolýmpios* or stephanitic is "that the prize money and other awards were to be paid by the home city, not by the festival city".[13] The dispatch of delegates *(theōroí)* had often other priorities in mind than the mere or exclusive recognition of the 'Panhellenic' identity of a festival: in the first document attesting the word ἰσολύμπιος, Ptolemy II requests that the festival newly established in the memory of his father, the Ptolemaia (279/8 BC), should be 'isolympic', i.e. "that the same prizes (τὰ(?) ἴσ]α̣ ἆθλα) and honours be given to the winners of this festival as the ones given to those who won the Olympic games (ὅσ]απερ καὶ τοῖς τὰ Ὀλύμπια νενικ[η]κόσι)".[14] This practical dimension of the technical terms also emerges from the first document which attests to the word στεφανίτης: when the Aitolians founded their Soteria in order to commemorate the liberation of Greece from the Galatians, they sent ambassadors to have them declared stephanitic. The surviving response from the Chians stated that they accepted the

> crowned (στεφανίτην) festival established by the Aitolians in honour of the sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi and of the safety of the Greeks, such as it was voted by the koinon of the Aitolians, namely isopythian for the musical contests, and isonemean for the gymnic and hyppic contests as far as the classes of age and the honours are concerned. The citizens who will participate

10 See *infra* section 4.

11 Nielsen 2018: 11–118. "Agonistic explosion": Robert 1984. A summary of recent studies in Hellenistic festivals is offered by Mann 2016.

12 On the continuity of these habits, see Parker 2004. On the introduction of iso-games in this period and the role of Ptolemy II, see Mann 2018.

13 Slater 2012: 169.

14 *CID* 4.40, l. 18–21; see on this festival the short remarks of Remijsen 2014: 352–353. In the adjectives, the equality also applies to the frequency of the new contest, which has to be the same than that of the corresponding bigger one (cf. Musti 2002).

> in and win the Soteria will receive the same prizes as those of the winners of the Pythic and Nemean Games (ὅσαπερ καὶ τοῖς Πύθια καὶ Νέμεα νικήκασι).[15]

This geographical subjectivity explains how some cities accepted festivals as 'stephanitic' which did not receive the same status in other towns.[16] Not even the prize itself represents an unambiguous hint to the status of a festival: stephanitic games could grant crowns of gold and life-long pensions,[17] but the information on these prizes comes from contests in Asia Minor which do not necessarily reflect the Boiotian situation. As far as Boiotia is concerned, we only know of one contest which might have solicited the elevation of some of its *agṓnes* to a stephanitic status in the last quarter of the third century BC: the Mouseia of Thespiai.[18] The Ptoia of Akraiphia which are considered together with the Basileia in a dossier on which we will return later are only initially declared 'sacred', and sought recognition as 'stephanitic' no earlier than in the second half of the second century BC.[19] To sum up, it is legitimate to consider the Pamboiotia and the Basileia as 'local' festivals, despite the presence of international competitors (on which see *infra*), because we have no proof that the koinon actively sought an elevation of their status to a 'stephanitic' (Panhellenic) one.

In general, the main sources on the organization of Boiotian festivals date to the beginning of the first century BC and show that sanctuaries could rely on land rents and private funds.[20] Since only the Boiotians participated in the celebration of the Pamboiotia, the (possibly) annual festival held in Koroneia for Athena Itonia can be considered a local event on the basis of the catchment area of the victors.[21] Most of our epigraphic evidence on the origin of the winners of this contest dates to the third and to the first centuries BC:[22] we never read the names or ethnics of foreign victors. The only exception concerns

15 *Syll.*[3] 402, l. 13–18.

16 For this geographic subjectivity and for the weight of the financial considerations before accepting a new Panhellenic festival, see Slater 2012 and id. 2015. Remijsen 2011 argued for a stricter definition of these festivals.

17 *I.Milet* 1.3.147, l.18-21; *JÖAI* 8.161n1. Cf. Remijsen 2011: 99 and Pleket 2014.

18 *I.Thespiai* 155 = Manieri 2009, *Thes*. 12. On this festival, see Schachter this volume.

19 *IG* VII 4135-4138*;* on the evolution of the Ptoia, see Schachter 1981: 71 and Parker 2004: 19.

20 On the financial administration of Boiotian festivals, see Migeotte 2006; in general on the administration of festivals under Roman rule, see Camia 2011a.

21 The festival is often considered annual, but the existence of a month Pamboiotios in Hellenistic Boiotia does not necessarily mean that this was the case (Schachter 1981: 124n3), as we have no positive evidence on the frequency of the festival. Moreover, as will be argued in this chapter, different frequencies might have applied in the different stages of the festival: it would seem sounder, for instance, to consider the military Pamboiotia of the Hellenistic koinon (287–171 BC) annual.

22 Third century BC: *I.Thespiai* 201 (Thespiai, ca. 240 BC); *I.Thespiai* 202 (Thespiai, 225–220 BC); *IG* VII 3087 (Lebadeia, mid-third century BC); *SEG* 26.551 (Koroneia, Lebadeia, Thisbe; mid-third century BC); *SEG* 3.354 (*ágeima* from Koroneia); *SEG* 3.355 (team from Thisbe). Second / first century BC: *IG* VII 1764 (inscriptions of winners from Thespiai). First century BC: *SEG* 28.456 (Koroneia, single winners). The Itonion later became a regional meeting point and a point of reference for the college of the *naopoioí* (*IG* VII 2711, AD 37; *IG* VII 3426; *SEG* 38.380,

an Italian living in Boiotia.[23] On the other hand, the Basileia established in the fourth century BC were open to competitors from all the Mediterranean Sea during the third and the second centuries BC: they had attracted participants from Italy and Asia Minor.[24]

In light of the strong ties with the corresponding sanctuary and of the specific association between the history of the Pamboiotia and the Basileia and that of the Boiotian koinon, this chapter will follow a chronological order from the fifth century BC to the Roman period. On the basis of the evidence considered and with a specific theoretic framework, the final synopsis will draw on the historical evolution outlined in the previous sections and argue that the festivals remained the socio-political backbone of the koinon and a local phenomenon.

The Fifth Century BC

With the mention of a warlike (πολεμάδοκε) Athena, Alkaios testifies to the Panhellenic fame of a sanctuary not far from Koroneia between the seventh and sixth centuries BC:[25]

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possibly AD 100: Knoepfler 1988; on all these texts, see Müller 2014: 127–129 and cf. *infra* section 4); these documents cannot be used to claim that foreign or regional athletes joined the *panḗgyris*; this procession is still attested by the dossier of Epameinondas of Akraiphia (*IG* VII 2711, l. 56).

23 *IG* VII 2871, a list which presents single victors from different Boiotian cities (Thebes, Orchomenos, Thespiai), an Aulos Kastrikios, and a group (*télos*) from Thespiai (see Papazarkadas 2019: 209 and Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020: 166–167 on the secretary of the board of the *naopoioí* in this inscription). The document was dated by Gossage to around 75 BC, but Müller 2014: 128–129 argued for a collocation in the first decades of the first century AD. Her main arguments are the similarity between this text and two other texts which mention the Pamboiotia (the *apología* of Nikarchos, *SEG* 38.380, and the dossier of Epameinondas, *IG* VII 2711: see previous note), and the fact that the single non-Boiotian victor recorded by *IG* VII 2871, Aulos Kastrikios son of Aulos, belongs to a family that is well-attested in Thespiai in the early first century AD. As the only non-Boiotian winner ever attested at the Pamboiotia, this Aulos might be the same Aulos Kastrikios who appears in *CIL* III 7301 (AD 14). The family of the Castricii occurs in Thespiai at the end of the first century BC, and it seems they might have been *negotiatores* previously living in Delos (Müller 1996b: 162–163). The exceptional nature of this participation of the *Castricii* does not seem to betray a wider trend, in contrast with the four Roman winners at the Basileia (see *infra*): in general, the participation of Roman citizens to Greek local festivals seems to have been a strategy to adapt in the local society; a survey of the extant documents shows that these Roman and Italian competitors were already living in Greece and their presence in the victory lists does not imply a specific travel to Greece (Zoumbaki 2014: 206–207).

24 On the Italian and Roman participants and on the international status of the festival in general, there are good observations to be found in Turner 1996 and Papazarkadas 2019: 209 and 218. See *infra* in text on the institution of the festival and on these international athletes. Manieri 2009 lists 16 documents of literary and epigraphic nature related to the Basileia; Turner 1996 has a catalogue of 35 relatively certain documents connected with the Basileia. In the absence of relevant new material, we possess thirty-three texts which document the origin of the athletes from the middle of the fourth century BC (*IG* VII 552; *IG* VII 2532; *FD* III 1.510) to the middle of the third century AD (*IAG* 81; *IG* II² 3169–3170).

25 Alkaios might have written the hymn for the inauguration of the temple of Athena Itonia in Koroneia (Mackil 2013: 159), and it has been argued that the 'war-like' goddess has the same traits of the Thessalian Athena Itonia allegedly imported by the Boiotians during their migration southwards (Kowalzig 2007: 362 and n73). In light of the kinship relationships between Boiotians and Lesbians attested by Thucydides in the late fifth century BC (see Hornblower 2010: 131–132 and Fragoulaki 2013: 110–111), it might not be coincidental that a Lesbian would choose to dedicate a

"O lady Athena, warlike one, who rules [...] over Koroneia [...] before the temple [...] by the banks of the river Koralios".[26] The goddess mentioned could either be Athena of Alalkomenion situated between Haliartos and Koroneia in the western area of the chora of Koroneia or Athena of the Itonion where the Pamboiotia were celebrated. The latter sanctuary was possibly located inside the city and the vague reference to it by Alkaios would also seem to indicate this.[27] The ambiguity resurfaced on another occasion when an ancient scholiast on Lactantius also wondered whether Bacchylides in a fragment[28] on Athena Itonia "meant the same as that of the Alalkomenion".[29] The two sanctuaries were probably related at the beginning, and in the absence of clear positive evidence, we might prefer to understand it as a reference to Athena Itonia because of the absence of strong military associations with the parallel cult of Athena of Alalkomenai.

Finally, for reasons unclear to us, the rites in honour of Athena Itonia, which probably included competitions from the first quarter of the fifth century BC, had gained a "trans-regional importance": this fame added to the strong local resonances of Koroneia for the Boiotians. In fact, Koroneia, would only later become the focus of the Boiotian military identity after the magnificent victory over the Athenians in 446 BC.[30] The liberation of the region constitutes a *terminus post quem* in the history of Boiotia and in the history of the games held in Koroneia: the history of the *agṓnes* such as the Pamboiotia and the Basileia has a strong connection with the history of the koinon as a whole.[31] In Koroneia, the Boiotians placed a trophy[32] which would signal their national pride. Another aspect of the monumentalization of memory was the erection of two new bronze cult statues in the sanctuary realized by a pupil of Phidias: Agorakritos.[33] These statues represented Athena and Zeus and therefore identified the male *parhédros* of the goddess once and for all by replacing a theriomorphic mate probably represented by a snake.

Between Alkaios and the elevation of Koroneia and the Itonion to a momentous display of Boiotian identity, we have other indications that a number of regional activities took

hymn to a Boiotian goddess (see Schachter 2016: 180n12 for the observation that he deals with other Boiotian sites in his fragments). On the other hand, the later tradition on the Thessalian migration of the Boiotians (see *infra* in text) would seem an improper comparandum, as the few lines of Alkaios preserved by Strab. 9.2.29 [411C] actually focus on Koroneia alone and can hardly be connected with an early reflection on the Thessalian links of the Boiotians.

26 F 325 Campbell. Transl. A. Schachter.

27 On the confusion between these two Athenas who were both central to the nascent community of the Boiotoi, see Schachter 2016: 179–180 and id. 1981: 113.

28 F*15 Sn.

29 Σ Stat. *Th.* 2.721: *et Alalcomenam ipsam significavit*. Cf. Schachter 1981: 112 and n7.

30 "Trans-regional importance": Beck and Ganter 2015: 135. Battle of Koroneia: Thuc. 1.113.1; Diod.12.6; Hell. *BNJ* 4 F 81; Plut. *Per*. 18.2; *Ages*. 19.2; Paus.1.27.5, with Beck and Ganter 2015: 141.

31 See esp. Knoepfler 2008: 1462.

32 Plut. *Ages.* 19.1.

33 Paus. 9.34.1.

place on the spot. In the sixth century BC, there was a ritual procession for Athena and another god, who was later identified as Zeus:[34] the scene is represented on a *lekánē* of the middle of the sixth century BC.[35] The rites were part of a more complex organization, which also included games: we have reasons to believe that, after Alkaios, Pindar also helped enhance the international fame of the Itonion and of the activities which happened there.

The Theban bard offers an emic perspective on the *agṓn* and on the status of the competitions in his *daphnephorion* (F 94b S.-M.) for Agasikles of Thebes son of Pagondas.[36] In the surviving lines, the victories at the Pamboiotia are compared to those at Onchestos and at Pisa (l. 44–48):

> for their celebrated victories
> with swift-footed horses,
> for which on the shores of famous Onchestos
> and by the glorious temple of Itonia
> they adorned their hair with garlands
> and at Pisa [...].[37]

Maybe this song was written after the aforementioned battle of Koroneia, as it is often believed:[38] the dedicant Agasikles was probably the son of the Pagondas who led the Thebans at the Delion.[39] What matters the most here, is the mention of victories in agonistic games: these must probably be distinguished from the dance competitions which also formed part of the program of the Pamboiotia (see *infra*). Pindar refers to victories in horse races (43-44: ἵππων τ᾽ὠκυπόδων πολυ|γνώτοις ἐπὶ νίκαις) at Onchestos (46) and at the temple of Athena Itonia (47). At these sites the family was crowned with garlands (48-49: χαίταν στεφάνοις ἐκό/σμηθεν). Before this list of victories, Pindar recalls the proxenies obtained by Agasikles and his family (41): a combination of the references to agonistic victories and political career might have consequences for the reading of the previous reference to the honours received by "those

34 On the identity of Athena's *parhédros*, the current state of research is represented by Schachter's lemma on "Athena (Koroneia)" in his *Cults of Boiotia* (Schachter 1981: 119–121) and the most recent systematic study of the Pamboiotia (Olivieri 2010–2011).

35 *BM* B 80; see Ure 1929: 167–171 and Schachter 1981: 122–123. The presence of a crow on the *lekánē* (gr. κορώνη) has been considered as a reference to the city of Koroneia, but sometimes the bird is understood as a raven, gr. κόραξ: cf. Schmidt 2002: 51–62.

36 On this family, see Mackil 2013: 160–161; Schachter 2016: 259–260; Papazarkadas 2018.

37 Transl. E. Mackil.

38 See most recently Mackil 2013: 160–161 and Schachter 2016: 257. The main support to this family tree firstly reconstructed by Wilamowitz Moellendorff (1922: 435–436) is the fact that the *daphnēphória* "was led by a *pais amphithalēs*, a boy with both parents still living (Procl. *ap*. Phot. Bibl. 321b)" (Mackil 2013: 160n54).

39 424 BC: Thuc. 4.91–93.

who dwell around" (41–43: τίμαθεν γὰρ τὰ πάλαι τὰ νῦν τ᾽ἀμφικτιονέσσιν). These *Amphiktíones* might possibly impersonate an association or a regional body connected with the festival of the Pamboiotia and with the one held at Onchestos.[40] The regional character of the reference seems to depend on the Theban audience of the ode, which must have easily understood the allusion. Therefore, this could actually be an indirect indication of a political organization or even one of the earliest testimonies to the new Boiotian koinon, if we assume that the ode was written in the later forties. This hypothesis is probably more likely than what in Pindar is a mere reference to the Boiotian extension of the festivals of Athena Itonia and of Onchestos. One wonders what need there was to stress the Boiotian extension and inclusiveness to an audience joining in the celebration of a Boiotian victor. It needs to be emphasized that, from a syntactic point of view, Pindar is referring not only to the Pamboiotia but also to the festival of Poseidon.[41] Contrary to previous readings, I would therefore suggest that the Pamboiotia are presented by Pindar as part of the network of Boiotian regional festivals and not as a preeminent or focal meeting of the Boiotians. Moreover, their regional aura proves a prestige which did not prevent the author from listing this event together with the Olympic games. This is a curious elevation of a strictly local festival to an 'almost-Panhellenic' status through the lens of its regional impact.

We learn from Bacchylides' and Pindar's hyporchemata that, in addition to horse races, the Pamboiotia also included dance competitions.[42] The hunting komast dancers participated in a celebration of which we know less than we would like to with regard to the Archaic period. We already mentioned the possibility that this *panḗgyris* is depicted on a *lekánē* of the sixth century as the arrival of the devotees to the divine couple.

By the second half of the fifth century BC, the Pamboiotia also played a pivotal role in the ethnogenesis of the Boiotians. The celebration was connected with the memory of the alleged migration of the local inhabitants from Thessaly: Armenidas, a local historian who probably lived at the beginning of the fourth century BC, lingered on the etymology which explicitly states the origin of Itonian Athena from the Thessalian Iton.[43]

40 Mackil 2013: 162–163.

41 The last verse mentions Pisa (49: [...] ἔν τε Πισᾳ περι[…]), but the lacuna of between eight and ten characters according to Snell and Maehler might suggest to warn against a "juxtaposition of the Itonion with the renowned sites of Olympia and Onchestos" (Larsen 2007: 134). Maybe the final verse introduced a new verb, or a clearer distinction was made in the missing section.

42 See Bacchyl. F 15 and F 15a S. and Pind. FF 106 and 107ab S. –M.; cf. Kowalzig 2007: 363–364 and Mackil 2013: 160.

43 *BNJ* 378 F 1.

Moreover, the national hero Boiotos was sometimes believed to be the son of Itonos:[44] despite the usual conundrums caused by these mythical genealogies, it is clear that the Boiotians slowly assigned a focal place to Athena Itonia. Once we remember this, we can understand that their national games, despite being reserved to Boiotians, could be seen from the outside as a celebration worthy of recollection and memory. Just as Alkaios sung of Athena, so would the travelling Bacchylides and Pindar, and so would the battle finally glorify and give a sempiternal meaning to the competitions. Suffice it to recall here how, in the Boiotian political discourse,[45] the battle of Koroneia is the Boiotian version of a war of liberation in contrast to the less unifying memory in Boiotia of the Persian Wars.[46]

In the same century, Lebadeia was a much less significant city in terms of political power. It was very influential and well-known only for the oracle of Zeus Trophonios, which was also popular abroad and particularly famous among the Athenians.[47] Herodotus, for instance, recalls the visit of the Carian Mys sent by Mardonios,[48] but only mentions the descent of the man (καταβῆσαι). It is sure that the festival of the Basileia was a later creation by Epameinondas and the rites on the spot did not include games at this stage. However, it is interesting to note that, according to the Augustan grammarian Didymos, an obscure mention of 'Boiotia's seasonal games'[49] in Pindar could refer to "the Basileia and the Amphiareia and the Delian in the precinct of Delian [Apollo] and the Trophoneia in Lebadeia"[50] in the first century BC.

Pindar lists the other victories achieved by Diagoras of Rhodes, and this is the only occasion[51] where he does not specify the name of the city. Diagoras was a περιοδονίκης,[52] since he won at the Isthmus, at Nemea, at Delphi, and at Olympia. The *Seventh Olympian Ode,* which was probably performed at a symposium in Rhodes, was sent to him by Pindar. This epinician probably written ca. 464 BC is an important, further testimony to the fame of a Boiotian competition abroad, even if it is at all unlikely that this competition is among the ones listed by Didymos (who also ignores, as have other scholars in more recent times, that the Trophoneia in Lebadeia cannot have been a

44 On Boiotos and Itonos, see especially Ganter 2014: 237-238 (with further references). On the connection of the festival with the tradition of the origin from Thessaly, see Kowalzig 2007: 364. Maybe it was only after the battle of Koroneia of 446 BC that Athena Itonia was given "a more explicitly ethnic, pan-Boiotian role" (Mackil 2013: 193).
45 Imagined on the basis of a few political passages in the work of Thucydides (3.62.5; 3.67.3; 4.92.6).
46 Thuc. 3.62.5: μαχόμενοι ἐν Κορωνείᾳ καὶ νικήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἠλευθερώσαμεν τὴν Βοιωτίαν.
47 On the oracle of Trophonios, and in general on Zeus Trophonios in Lebadeia, see Schachter 1994: 66–89; 109–118 and Bonnechere 2003.
48 Hdt. 8.134.1.
49 *Ol.* 7.84: ἀγῶνες τ'ἔννομοι Βοιωτίων.
50 F 13 Branswell, transl. K. Branswell.
51 Cf. the less unclear mention of Thebes in l. 83.
52 Giannini in Gentili 2013: 167–173.

different and additional festival from the Basileia: see *infra*). The Pamboiotian trait[53] makes the identification of these ἀγῶνες ἔννομοι with the festival of Koroneia quite likely: it is no coincidence that the mention of the mere ethnicity Βοιωτίων is not accompanied by the significant prefix παν- which will be used for the name of the festival in the Hellenistic period.

We have no way of knowing how old the denomination of 'Παμβοιώτια' was,[54] but this prefix seems to mark an exclusion rather than an inclusion:[55] in other words, as it is the case with the history of the ethnic *Panhéllēnes*, the prefix παν- seems to confine the celebration to the Boiotians while excluding other ethne at the same time.[56] Moreover, its mere existence is a clear indication of the circulation of the simple ethnic *Boiṓt(i)oi*, since these forms with *pan-* can only be understood if the simple form pre-existed.

To sum up: in the Archaic period the Boiotians performed dance and gymnic contests in Koroneia which soon gained an international reputation. These contests involved boxing, chariot races, and maybe also performances of flute players, if we accept the classical interpretation of a series of black-figure vases found in Koroneia considered to be the output of a 'workshop of the Itonion' by Ure.[57] This external fame was further enhanced by the military victory of 446 BC which added an air of national pride to the city. Even if we ignore the name of the celebration at this stage, it was so well-known that a mere mention in the form of 'the *agṓn* of the Boiotoi' could make the association clear.

The Fourth Century BC

> Epameinondas, who saw that the soldiers were superstitious on account of the omens that had occurred, earnestly desired through his own ingenuity and strategy to reverse the scruples of the soldiery. [...] He placed before them another man as one who had recently ascended from the cave of Trophonios, who said that the god had directed them, when they won at Leuktra, to institute a contest with crowns for prizes in honour of Zeus the king.[58] This

53 On the ethnic value of this identification as proof of the ethnicity of the Boiotians in the fifth century BC, see Grigsby 2017: 9.

54 As such, it occurs for the first time in Polybius with reference to the *panḗgyris* (4.3.5; cf. Schachter 1981: 123).

55 The same is true for the well-known case of Homer's πανέλληνες (Hom. *Il.* 2.530).

56 On the existence of a "criterio di esclusione" behind the Homeric πανέλληνες, see esp. Antonetti 1996: 9–10. On the prefix *pan-* and its various meanings, see Hall 2002: 132.

57 Ure 1929: 167–170; Larsen 2007: 134 and n24, with further references.

58 ἀγῶνα τιθέναι Διὶ βασιλεῖ στεφανίτην. The adjective στεφανίτης is common in fourth-century BC prose to describe the games of the 'Big Four' (Xen. *Mem.* 3.7.1; Aeschin. *In Ctesiphontem* 179; Arist. *Rhet.* 1357a19–20; *IG* IV² 1.68; see Remijsen 2011: 99 and n3). As stated in the introduction, however, we do not have positive evidence that the

> indeed is the origin of this festival which the Boiotians now celebrate at Lebadeia.[59]

The Basileia were a creation designed by Epameinondas to commemorate the Theban victory at Leuktra: the *agṓn* is a concrete dedication to Zeus Basileus, "protecteur attitré de la nation béotienne".[60] The choice of Lebadeia marked a strategic stronghold on the road between Thebes and Delphi. On the one hand, the site occupied the chora of the then destroyed Orchomenos, which had once controlled Lebadeia. Since Lebadeia had always been in the "Einflußbereich von Orchomenos" at that time, it was more than a neutral place: Epameinondas' choice signalled even more than the battlefield itself the Theban lead of the Boiotian League in 371 BC.[61] On the other hand, the Spartans had plundered Lebadeia only twenty-five years before in 395/94 BC.[62] The re-semantization of the place also worked as a new beginning for a spot, which was to honour Zeus through a new festival. It is clear that the Thebans wanted to make the most of this new federal venture because they detached the name of the festival from the underground oracular god Trophonios who had ruled over the site until then. In the same context of activities at Lebadeia, a new cult statue of Trophonios was realized in the sanctuary by Praxiteles,[63] just like the battle of Koroneia (447 BC) had prompted a redefinition of the cult at the Itonion. However, the dedication of the festival to Zeus Basileus, not the most common epithet of Zeus in Boiotia,[64] aimed to give an international echo to the institution. The new term was immediately successful, and we have three mid-fourth century BC inscriptions which document the participation of athletes from Tanagra, Thebes and Delphi.[65] In the first two cases, the restitution of the name Βασιλεία is certain: the Theban victor Timokles raced with the horses at the Basileia and at the Herakleia of

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Boiotians ever actively sought an alignment of the Basileia to these Panhellenic venues. If Müller 2014: 129 is right in placing the recent reinstitution of the Basileia in Diodorus' time, the use of the adjective is telling in itself. It can be argued that Diodorus accepted the Boiotian version that the festival had never stopped, not even after the Roman dissolution of the Boiotian koinon in 171 BC, since it had only temporarily changed its status from regional to local (thence the new name Trophoneia). Since Diodorus only uses the expression 'crowned *agṓn*' at one other occasion (in 4.14.1 with regard to the Olympic games), we cannot exclude a general meaning of the adjective.

59 Diod. Sic. 15.53.4; transl. C. H. Oldfather = Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 1.

60 Knoepfler 2008: 1436.

61 "Einflußbereich von Orchomenos" (Kühr 2007: 284). The advantages of choosing Lebadeia over Leuktra for a festival indirectly confirm, then, the predominant role of Thebes in the post-378 koinon (Schachter 2016: 115n7 defines Lebadeia "a flagship for the Theban–led Boiotoi"). On the geopolitical value of Lebadeia, see Beck 1997: 191–192; Farinetti 2011: 89; Mackil 2013: 208–210; Schachter 2016: 117 and 187; Tufano 2023b: 113–115.

62 Plut. *Lys.* 28.1.

63 Paus. 9.39.4.

64 See Schachter 1994: 111 on the novelty of the choice of this epithet.

65 *IG* VII 2532; 552; *SEG* 23.332, a list of victories from Delphi: *FD* III 1.510 = Ebert 1972: no. 42 = *CEG* II 803; cf. *BE* 1970, 315 and Knoepfler 2008: 1426 and n17, where the scholar recalls Robert's support for the identification of the Zeus *skēptrophóros* of the inscription with Zeus Basileus. Cf. also *IG* VII 530 (from Tanagra, early third century BC: καλὸν ἀγῶνα Διός, with Knoepfler 2008: 1436n46 and Manieri 2009: 152).

Thebes.[66] His epitaph was written under a statue of Polykleitos and the city decided to restore the statue after the destruction of 335 BC:

οὐκ ἔστ' οὐδὲν τέρμα βίου θνητῶν ἐπινοίαις,
ἀλλὰ τύχη κρείσσων ἐλπίδος ἐξεφάνη,
ἣ καὶ Τιμοκλέην Ἀσωπίχου ἠφάνισ' υἱὸν
πρόσθε πρὶν ἐνδείξασθ' ἔργα πρέποντα φύσει,
ὃς Βασίλεια Διὸς καὶ ἐν Ἡρακλέους τρις<ὶ>ν ἄθλοις
ἵπποις νικήσας δώματ' ἐπηγλάϊσεν.
vacat
Πολύκλειτος ἐπόεισε.

There is no end in life to the cures of the mortals,
but Fate proved stronger than Hope:
It removed from our sight Timokles, son of Asopichos,
before he could show deeds worthy of his nature.
By winning with the horses at the Basileia of Zeus and three times
at the Herakleia, he honoured his home.
Made by Polykleitos.

This is one of the first examples of Theban tradition to focus on the pride of these young victors.[67] It is not clear whether these victories in horse racing were only won at the Herakleia or if they jointly refer to both competitions. In any case, it is an early sign of the fact that Thebes recognized the victory at the Basileia as a definitive glory to remark. We note that it is sufficient at this stage to refer to the contest by specifying the god. Despite the detail on the original stephanitic status, this indication seems to support the testimony of Diodorus about the creation of the festival by Epameinonda.

Zeus Trophonios had symbolically presided over the victory of the Boiotian army against Sparta and, despite the certain fictitious character of these *ex-post* tales, there is a number of specific traditions which developed around the battle of Leuktra and emphasised the pious devotion of Epameinondas towards this god. Diodorus connects the festival to the celebration of the victory: the god has directed Epameinondas, and he therefore institutes the contest. An opposite path was mentioned by Kallisthenes: in his *Histories*, Kallisthenes wrote about the singing of hens and cocks in Lebadeia,[68] which had foretold the Theban

66 *IG* VII 2532, l. 5–6; *CEG* II 630. For useful comments on this text, see Grigsby 2017: 95–97. I am not sure whether the restriction of the competition to horse races also applies to the Basileia, given only three direct documents from the fourth century BC, while it may remain true for other Boiotian games.
67 See on this tradition Scharff 2016.
68 *BNJ* 124 FF 22a–b: *gallos gallinaceos in eo loco sic adsidue canere.*

victory. Cicero, as the source of the fragment, claims that the Boiotian augurs had interpreted this as a sign of forthcoming victory but does not repeat the version of Diodorus on the institution of the *agōn*. This inauguration is also absent in the third source on Epameinondas and the *omina* of Lebadeia: Polyaenus.[69] Polyaenus lists fifteen stratagems performed by Epameinondas in his career among which we find the exhibition of a man with a crown and ribbons, who told the reluctant soldiers that he had been sent by Trophonios to tell the Thebans that the first to attack would win the battle.

Diodorus is thus isolated, but his very good knowledge of Boiotian history is a fact we should not ignore: not only is his fifteenth book indebted to Ephorus who had perused Daimachos of Plataiai a universal historian of the fourth century BC, well-versed in Boiotian history, Anaximenes and Kallisthenes. Diodorus also knew the work of two other universal historians of the fourth century BC: Dionysodoros and Anaxys.[70] The fact that Kallisthenes is quoted by Cicero in a list which aims at completion on the *omina* might confirm that Kallisthenes did not report the institution of the Basileia. If this were true, it is possible that another local source was behind Diodorus' information on the festival. Anaxys and Dionysodoros are only two names, which are not necessarily more likely, even if it is very tempting to associate these two Boiotian historians, who had written *Greek Histories* down to the battle of Mantinea, with the tradition.

Most of our information on the origin of the winners at the Basileia and at the later Trophonia dates to the second and to the first centuries BC. Until the third century BC, which represents a turning point in the organization of this festival, a growing number of athletes celebrating their victory at the Basileia often originated from other cities in Greece.[71] Zeus Basileus and Hera Basileia became two of the four representative Boiotian gods in the external self-presentation of the Boiotians,[72] and this will have raised the interest of the other Greeks for the context. In 281/80 BC, the Athenian taxiarch could claim that visiting the Basileia at Lebadeia equated a foreign embassy to the Boiotian League.[73] Among the surviving documents about the Basileia dated between the early

69 Polyaenus, *Strat*. 2.3.8.

70 On Ephorus' plagiarism of Daimachos, Kallisthenes, and Anaximenes, see *BNJ* 65 T 1. Dionysodoros and Anaxis: *BNJ* 67 and 68 (Diod. Sic. 15.95.4: τῶν δὲ συγγραφέων Διονυσόδωρος καὶ Ἄναξις οἱ Βοιωτοὶ [τὴν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἱστορίαν] εἰς τοῦτον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν κατεστρόφασι τὰς συντάξεις).

71 The reference for the epigraphic catalogues of the Basileia is Turner 1996. The additions to this dossier are limited and uncertain. A turning point was represented by Knoepfler 2008; further indications on the epigraphic dossier of the Basileia are to be found in Müller 2014.

72 In international treaties, the Boiotians swore by Zeus, Ge, Helios, Poseidon, Ares, Athena Areia, and all the gods and goddesses (*IG* IX 1², 1, 170, treaty of 302/1 BC concluded with the Aitolians and Phokians). Zeus Basileus, Hera Basileia, Athena and Poseidon are isolated in a treaty with Phokis of 228/7 BC (*IG* IX 1, 98); cf. Schachter 2016: 188 and n31.

73 *SEG* 25.90.

third century and the beginning of the second century BC, there are seven documents that confirm this limited catchment area of the Basileia, if one excludes for the time being the documents associated with the monumentalization of the sanctuary.[74] Apart from an isolated and chronologically slippery text by the people of Klazomenai,[75] three other victories are by Theban athletes and only two certain exceptions remain. Kallistratos of Sikyon[76] and Demetrios of Tegea[77] remember their victories at the Basileia of Lebadeia in a long record of victories at Panhellenic and local contests.[78] Like the Theban Athanichos[79] who died during a military campaign, both were extremely successful athletes. Yet, despite the paucity of the extant lists, the impression remains that the Basileia had the same limitations up to the middle of the second century BC (see *infra*) as those identified in a recent study of the Amphiaraia of Oropos, namely a noticeable expansion of the catchment area only under Roman influence.[80]

This predominantly local character of the festival also included a religious dimension, which until recently could only be appreciated thanks to a later text. The procession for Zeus Basileus is mentioned in an Imperial text which might describe a Hellenistic setting. The first *Love Story* ascribed to Plutarch[81] concerns a girl who is contended by two men and finally dies in the quarrel which occurs between the suitors. In the narrative, the maiden is presented as a future *kanēphóros* (basket carrier) for Zeus Basileus in Lebadeia.[82] The entire plot has a prenuptial character. But why would this girl from Haliartos, Aristoklea, go to Lebadeia to perform these rites where she was seen by one of the two pretenders (Straton of Orchomenos) while the other suitor Kallisthenes came from Haliartos? Folklore aside, the further mention of the oracle of Trophonios confirms the possibility that the procession for Zeus which lay behind the *kanēphoría* of the girl was part of the program of the contest, and not an isolated nuptial rite. The publication of a

74 *IG* VII 1711 (= Manieri 2009, *Leb*. 4: early third century BC; Schachter 1994: second century BC); *IG* IV 428 (260–220 BC); *IG* V 2, 142 (late third century BC); *IG* VII 2487 (late third/early second century BC); *IG* VII 4247 (late third/early second century BC); *SEG* 9.338 (200-180 BC); *IG* VII 3102 (unknown date, probably 'Hellenistic': Turner 1996); *IG* VII 3079 ('Hellenistic': Turner 1996).
75 *IG* VII 3079.
76 *IG* IV 428; *MAFAS* 578.
77 *IG* V 2.142.
78 For a general overview of these victors, see Knoepfler 2008: 1440–1441.
79 *IG* VII 4247; *MAFAS* 223.
80 Van Nijf and Williamson 2016.
81 Linguistic reasons prevented Ziegler from ascribing the essay to Plutarch, even if the peculiarities of style might depend on the genre of the short stories, as outlined by Giangrande 1991. For a recent overview of the state of the art, and a short commentary, see de Jesus 2009; Tufano in Lelli 2017; Tufano 2019. The prenuptial character is underlined by Bonnechere 2003: 310.
82 Plut. *Mor*. 770F: ἔμελλε γὰρ τῷ Διὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ κανηφορεῖν.

new *apología* from the first century BC now confirmed the practice of a πομπή during the festival.[83]

Our evidence allows us to confirm that the Basileia included gymnic and equestrian competitions.[84] We lack a specific program of the contest, but victories are attested in running contests including the race-in-armor (ὁπλίτης [δρόμος]), in the *péntathlon*, in wrestling (πάλη), boxing and in the *pankrátion*.[85] Since the festival was never interrupted, apart from a few decades in the second century BC (see *infra*), it can be assumed that the competitions recorded in the first-century BC inscriptions can be traced back to the first years.

It was a festival for individual athletes and not for groups.[86] The almost complete absence of a military trait marks another difference from the Pamboiotia.[87] The festival was celebrated during the month of Panamos, the ninth Boiotian month, between August and September. On the basis of the accounts delivered and published in the first century BC, the account rendering occurred in Panboiotos, the tenth month.[88]

83 Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020, A 32-33.

84 For a comprehensive introduction to the Basileia, see Schachter 1994: 85-86 and 116-118; Turner 1996; Knoepfler 2008.

85 Running contests: e.g., in the *stádion* (ca. 600 m: *IAG* 45.2–3: 200–180 BC; *SEG* 14.478a,3: 100 BC); *díaulos* (equivalent to two stadia: *SEG* 14.478a,3: 100 BC); *dólichos* (long course on a distance between 7 and 20 stadia: *IG* V 2.142, l. 40: third century BC). Wrestling: *IG* IV 428, l. 2: 240–220 BC; Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020 (first half of the first century BC). *Pankrátion*: e.g. *SEG* 3.367 (= Manieri 2009, *Leb*. 12, 40-30 BC [see Müller 2014: 129 on the date]) and Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020. Boxing: e.g. *IG* VII 47 (early first century BC? [cf. Knoepfler 2008: 1455–1456n119]) and Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020. *Péntathlon*: e.g. *SEG* 3.367. The race-in-armor probably had different origins in the different places where it was disputed (Patrucco 1972): in Boiotia, the *hoplítēs* was also part of the Eleutheria of Plataiai (Philostr. *gymn*. 8). For the Basileia, we have proof that the *hoplítēs* was part of the contest in the first century BC (*SEG* 3.367 and *SEG* 14.478a, from Poteidaia: I assume that the indication of the Basileia forces us to postdate the inscription after the institution of the Boiotian koinon and the change of name, but that this happened immediately after 86 BC is uncertain to date. See, however, Grigsby 2017: 192–193 for the possibility that Sulla awarded Lebadeia for the good omens which he had received from the oracle). This proof is the only one with a more explicitly military reminiscence, even if the late attestation does not allow us to assume that it was necessarily present from the beginning. For the horse races, see a convenient list of documents in Turner 1996: 122, 19–24. From the lists in *SEG* 3.367 and in the new *apología* (Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020), we learn that the contests included the *apóbasis*, a race on a chariot where one of the two men on it had to complete the distance on foot, the horseback race (*kélēs*) and the two-horse chariot race (*synōrís*).

86 The previous list draws extensively on Turner 1996: 109 and 121–122, even if I would disagree on the frequency of the musical contests. For the dates of most of the inscriptions, a good update is offered by Grigsby 2017: 287–288.

87 Note also that, whereas the Pamboiotia were certainly a yearly festival, the frequency of the Basileia is still uncertain (Knoepfler 2008: 1440-1441 and id. 2020: 222).

88 On the month, see Roesch 1982: 37-41 and Turner 1996: 109. We are well informed on the administrative aspects of the festival during the first century BC: see Knoepfler 1988; Turner 1996: 107; Fröhlich 2004: 469; Müller 2014: 126–127; Schachter 2016: 189–190; Knoepfler 2020.

The Third and the Second Century BC

If you wanted to attack the Boiotians between the third and the second centuries BC, you needed to move against Koroneia. This is the lesson to be learned from the fierce reproaches of the Boiotians against the Aitolians at the meeting of the Hellenic League in 220 BC.[89] The Aitolians had attacked the Itonion, probably between 224 and 227 BC,[90] and this εἰρήνης ὑπαρχούσης (despite the peace, probably a sacred truce). In 196 BC during the First Macedonian War, Flamininus had to move against Akraiphia and Koroneia,[91] where in a tense and violent moment most of the previous attacks on Roman soldiers had concentrated. In 191 BC, the consul M. Acilius Glabrio violently attacked the city when he saw a statue of Antiochos III there.[92] He then stopped the pillaging, since such a decision could not depend on the sole inhabitants of Koroneia: the erection of the statue had been a common decision of the Boiotians (*cum communi decreto Boeotorum posita esset statua, indignum esse in unum Coronensem agrum saeuire*).[93] These few anecdotes help explain how important the festival might have looked from the outside, since it occurred in a city which remained momentous, despite the Roman knowledge that the actual 'capital' of the koinon was Thebes.[94]

The episodes reveal how important the Pamboiotia could be in the region. This was the festival held in the spot where most of the federal decisions were made in the third century BC. This situation might explain why the temple of Athena Koroneia might have sought *asylía* in the sixties of the third century BC:[95] the location of the Itonion mentioned in the inscription ([ἐγ Κορωνείαι], l. 14) is actually a restoration and Pouilloux *ad loc.* wondered whether the Thessalian namesake sanctuary could not be a valid alternative. However, the aforementioned passages in Polybius and Livy are good indications that the sanctuary enjoyed this inviolability between the third and the second centuries BC and that this status was not perceived to be particularly old by the

89 Polyb. 4.25.2.
90 Walbank *ad* 4.3.5.
91 Liv. 33.29.9.
92 Liv. 36.20.
93 On this episode, see Müller 1996a: 134 and Thornton 2014: 112–113.
94 Liv. 33.1.
95 *SEG* 18.240 = *FD* IV 358, 266/62 BC. Cf. on this document Schachter 1981: 123 and n6. It is sometimes assumed (Kowalzig 2007: 362n70) that the status of *asylía* preexisted in the third century BC, since a series of sources claim that a few Boiotians took refuge in the temple in 394 BC (Xen. *Hell*. 4.3.20; Plut. *Ages*. 19.2; Polyaenus, *Strat*. 2.1.5; Paus. 3.9.13). Only Pausanias, however, calls these defeated Boiotians ἱκέτας in this context; all the other sources report that Agesilaos allowed to let them go and leave the temple without force, and record his piety. Thus it was rather a royal decision than the actual technical status of *asylía* at this stage.

Boiotians.[96] Only in the third century BC, one sees a renewed interest in this sanctuary and, apparently, in the festival.

There is a significant gap in our documentation on the Pamboiotia between the Classical period and this floruit, which coincides with the recognition of *asylía* to the sanctuary. A possible late and so far neglected echo of the Classical *agṓnes* is represented by a curious anecdote reported by Diodorus.[97] From his retelling of the events of 404 BC, we learn that in the same year Lasthenes, an Olympic champion from Thebes, also defeated a race horse (πρὸς ἵππον ἀθλητὴν δραμόντα νικῆσαι) on the route from Koroneia to Thebes. The distance of roughly thirty miles does not correspond to any of the known race competitions, and the anecdote has no parallel among the extant sources. I would nevertheless suggest that the city of Koroneia might still have been the scene of national games in the final years of the Peloponnesian War.[98]

After this episode, Polybius refers to the *panḗgyris* of the Boiotians, and the documents of this century clearly show that the entire Hellenistic koinon saw in these competitions with their strong military character a performance of the military prowess and skills of the Boiotians. As we will see, the competitions served as a way to check the military training of the subunits of the federal army.[99]

The long period of silence approximately coincides with the fourth century BC, i.e. the time after the new statues in the Itonion had been erected by the end of the fifth century BC.[100] At the dawn of the Hellenistic koinon, which emerged in 287 BC, a fundamental treaty was concluded between the Boiotians and the Aitolians in 301 BC in which Athena (probably Itonia) served as one of the oath deities.[101] A possible *argumentum ex silentio* might be Epameinondas' decision itself to establish the Basileia as a festival of national pride, with all the aforementioned strategic advantages, in the apparent oblivion of an eventually pre-existing festival of the Boiotians in Koroneia. For these reasons, it is possible that a first organization of the festival of the Pamboiotia only occurred in the second quarter of the third century BC.[102] However, it seems more prudent to think of a re-organization in connection with the new needs of the Boiotian League.

96 See Rigsby 1996: 55–9 and Mackil 2013: 224.
97 Diod. Sic. 14.11.5.
98 Alternatively, Sebastian Scharff suggests that this may be read as a foundation myth for the *híppios* event. The complexity of Diodorus' sources makes this hypothesis quite interesting.
99 Polyb. 4.3.5 and 25.2; 9.34.11. Documents: cf., e.g., *IG* VII 3087 and *SEG* 3.354–355, on which see *infra* in text. Military character of the Pamboiotia: cf. Olivieri 2010–2011 and Mackil 2013: 224–225.
100 Paus. 9.33.1.
101 *IG* IX² 1.170.
102 So Schachter 1981: 124 and n1.

We anticipated in the introduction that only Boiotians participated in the Pamboiotia whose lists of victors are preserved. We can now add that these lists are in fact lists of teams and that their composition parallels that of the military subunits trained during these decades. There was a "unified system of military organization and training for the poleis of the Boiotian League".[103] The participation of teams was a means of displaying their effective capacity, and we can find an interesting case in the parallel disposition of these units in the texts.

In the middle of the third century BC, the victorious team of the Koroneians made a dedication.[104] This group was probably led by the first mentioned subunit, the *ágeima*. The noun ἄγειμα is usually used to define an infantry formation of attack, especially in reference to the Macedonian ἄγημα. However, it could also describe a specific elite force, similar to the Theban *hierós lóchos,* the "Sacred Band".[105] In a way, both readings might be kept: the undeniable Macedonian derivation of the corps could coexist with the commemoration of other local elite groups now renamed after the Macedonian model. The other Koroneian victorious subunits were the πελτοφόροι (l. 1), a group of light infantry, the ἐπίλεκτοι (l. 1) whose vague denomination might indicate another elite formation, possibly on constant call, and two specific subunits: the archers (φαρετρῖται, l. 2) and the slingers (σφενδονῆται, l. 2). In a similar way, the so-called 'Great Stele of Thespiai,[106] a magistrate list, lists, in l. 20–9, the following infantry regiments: the *ágeima* (l. 20: λοχαγός τῶ ἀγείματος), the leaders of the light infantry (l. 21, ἀγεμόνες πελτοφόρης), the leader of the mandatory military education (l. 23: ἐφείβαρχος), the ἐπίλεκτοι (l. 23–4), a φαρετρίτης (l. 25), a σφενδονάτης (l. 26), a chief-huntsman (l. 26: ἀρχικούναγος), and a leader of the hoplites (l. 28–9). Among the extant inscriptions of this period, we find the same pattern *ágeima* – *epílektoi* – *peltophórai* – *pharetrítai* in another dedication of a victorious team at the Pamboiotia from Thespiai,[107] which lists the single leaders of these subunits: in this case, however, the slingers are substituted by simple soldiers (l. 13: τὺ πεδδύ).

The few surviving dedications confirm a participation of teams and a close connection between these and the different *télē* of the Boiotian army, whose composition reflected

103 Grigsby 2017: 121, to whom I owe also the comparison between *IThesp* 84 and *SEG* 3.354.
104 *SEG* 3.354, l. 2–3: Κορωνείων | τῶ τέλεος.
105 Relationship with the homonymous Macedonian unit: Feyel 1942: 201–202. Connection with the Theban Sacred Band: Schachter 2016: 208. On the long term, however, in view of the foreign policy perpetuated by the Boiotians, a Macedonian origin would seem more likely (cf. *BE* 2008, 223 on Polyb. 5.25.1. Liv. 13.51.4 probably derives here from Polybius).
106 *IThesp* 84, 210 BC.
107 *IThesp* 201, ca. 240 BC.

the seven *télē* of the Hellenistic koinon.[108] The relationship between these teams and their single place of origin is always remarked: sometimes, as in the aforementioned inscription from Koroneia,[109] the entire *télos* takes pride in the victory; on other occasion, for reasons unclear to us, the single poleis of this specific *télos* (Lebadeia, Koroneia, and Thisbe) chose to make explicit the different contributions of these subunits of the geographical *télos*.[110] Finally, a single polis could also participate, perhaps independently of its *télos*, as in the case of Lebadeia whose horsemen made their own dedication after having won the horse race at the Pamboiotia.[111]

These new Pamboiotia are characterized by this collective organization, in contrast to the individual participation in the fifth century BC. In the third century, the military character of the games was probably a novelty that allowed them to linger in the national memory of the Boiotians: Koroneia had persisted as a federal sanctuary, and as we mentioned before, it was where the Boiotians had expelled the Athenians and where they had fought a local war of liberation. The local teams of military units had to demonstrate their training. The aforementioned horsemen of Lebadeia, for instance, won the ἱππασίη[112] during the Pamboiotia. This race could consist of a sort of scenographic exhibition of horses, a fake tournament and performance of complicated moves, not very different from the ἐπίδειξις described by Xenophon.[113] It might not be excluded that there was a form of historical performance in such a competition, if we think of the contemporary historical carousel of the *carabinieri* in Italy: this exhibition of grandiose manoeuvres of horses was established during Fascism (1933) to celebrate the army, and each of the units which repeat the carousel every year wears a specific uniform, which is the one of the victorious unit of specific moments of the past. Would it be too bold to assume that in a region like Boiotia, which was well-known for the quality of its horses, and in a city like Koroneia, which was at the center of the national historical memory, the *hippasíē* had the task of combining sport with history – in other words, that it was an agonistic form of thinking about the past?

108 On the seven *télē* of the Hellenistic koinon, see Knoepfler 2001 and Müller 2011.
109 *SEG* 3.354.
110 *SEG* 26.551, a dedication from Koroneia, where we find these three ethnics in l. 14–6.
111 *IG* VII 3087 (mid-third century BC).
112 *IG* VII 3087.
113 Xen. *Hipp.* 3.10–3; for this interpretation, see Olivieri 2010–2011: 89–90. Needless to say that the parallel is a good one and helps the understanding of the *agōnes*, but we should always remember Robert's remark on the seriousness of Greek festivals: "On ne s'amuse pas; on combat pour vaincre, pour être déclaré et proclamé le premier et, plus souvent, il n'y a même pas du second. [...] Cet effort agonistique est le contraire d'une activité ludique. L'agôn, le concours, se distingue radicalement aussi de l'épideixis, récital, représentation, sans concurrent" (Robert 1984: 36 = Id. 2007: 268).

Even simple soldiers could participate in the Pamboiotia,[114] which also included a specific competition for armed men: the εὐοπλίη.[115] It is generally accepted that this military performance was similar to the military *agṓnes* of the Athenian Theseia.

It is not hard to see how the Pamboiotia, with their "replication of the socio-political structures that defined the Boiotian koinon",[116] might seem more dangerous from the outside than the Basileia. Moreover, together with Haliartos and Thisbe, Koroneia was one of the Boiotian cities which were more constantly and vehemently aligned with the Macedonians during the Macedonian Wars.[117] After 171 BC, there were no more federal archons, and the survival of games could only apply to specific games where "a sublimation of the militaristic self-expression denied them [*sc.* to the Greeks] under Rome" would be limited to specific cases: the Basileia included an armed race, but it was nothing like the open field competition among teams of soldiers at the heart of the Hellenistic Pamboiotia. It could be argued that the Boiotians were able to maintain and preserve a sense of regional identity through the festivals, which could be seen as a means of politics in Boiotia in the period between the end of the Third Macedonian War and the re-emergence of the koinon.[118] Even the Basileia, which had been established to commemorate the victory against Sparta and which had seemingly superseded the Pamboiotia in terms of collective success and regional relevance in the fourth century BC, survived in a local form and with a new name. The exception of the Pamboiotia in this period could depend on the strong military connotations of the festival, as it had been reorganised in the third century BC. Boiotia had displayed an ambiguous position during the Macedonian Wars, and the energies of the cities (and a Roman prohibition?) might have warned against a continuation of a festival where military units showed how good their training was.

While the Pamboiotia were a festival open to teams, the Basileia remained individual competitions: despite isolated mentions, there was probably no fixed musical section in either contest.[119] Poetic performances of *poeti vaganti* could, however, occur and place our

114 *SEG* 3.355,13: τὺ πεδδύ.
115 Moretti 1953: 102–103.
116 Mackil 2013: 225.
117 See esp. Müller 1996a and 2007.
118 "A sublimation ... under Rome": Grigsby 2017: 137. See Müller 2014: 122 and 136, and Grigsby 2017.
119 In the case of the Basileia, a musical competition taking place in the third century BC might be inferred from *IG* II² 3779: this is a list of victories of the *kitharōdós* Nikokles of Tarentum, but it has only a value for this period (Knoepfler 2008: 1439). The presence of heralds in this period (*IG* VII 530, ca. 250 BC), later in time (*IG* II² 3158a, I AD) and in the Imperial celebrations, when the festival was called Trophonia (*IG* II² 3169–70 = *IAG* 90, AD 253–257; see Manieri 2009: 169-171), does not imply that the Basileia were an *agṓn mousikós*, as correctly empasized by Knoepfler (2008: 1456n120). An auletic part was probably introduced only in the Imperial period (*FD* III 1.550; Manieri 2009: 167-169, but see *infra* in text).

festivals in the Mediterranean climate of the second century BC: Zotion of Ephesos, an otherwise unknown tragedian, performed several plays in Koroneia sometime in the middle of the second century BC. The proxeny decree issued for him by the city[120] suggests that the koinon had already been dissolved by the time this text had been produced, although the use of the dialect does not allow to establish a low dating in the century.[121] I doubt that the Pamboiotia in their entirety continued in different forms after 171 BC, despite the loss of any political resonance: they were now probably administered by a group of *naopoioí*, as two victors' lists of the first century BC seem to confirm.[122] The possibility that Zotion performed at the Pamboiotia can be considered only if we assume (see *infra*) that a celebration *a minori* was taking place, and in any case the rites for Athena Itonia could also be an alternative performative arena. In other words, the proxeny decree for Zotion does not explicitly allow us to argue for a continuity of the festival, unless we presuppose a reduction of the agonistic element.

The situation can be better understood if we now turn to what had happened in Lebadeia in the second half of the third century BC, when a new sanctuary was to be built for Zeus Basileus. We have eight work contracts (*syngraphaî*) pertaining to the construction of this temple, which was never completed.[123] One of these contracts preserved on a plinth indicates the names of two archons of the Boiotian League: Andronikos (220 BC) and, probably, Potidaios (221 BC).[124] These names appear in a context which refers to an advanced stage of the project and therefore represents a *terminus ante quem* for the decision to start the construction of this new temple located on the hill of Prophitis Ilias near modern Livadeia. The complex organization of the project was described by a ναοποικὸς νόμος.[125] The architects, the boiotarchs and the financial board of the *katóptai* had to work with the newly established college of the *naopoioí.* This college was established to oversee the erection of the new sanctuary of Zeus Basileus as a federal venture. It would remain the only federal institution after the dissolution of the koinon in 171 BC, despite the abrupt end of works on the temple, which remained unfinished.

The intervention of the Boiotian League in Lebadeia concerned also other aspects, such as the request of *asylía* for the new project of the temple. The proof of this is a document

120 *SEG* 57.443.
121 On this text, see Schachter and Slater 2007.
122 *IG* VII 1764 (ca. 60 BC: see Schachter 1981: 125–126 and Müller 2014: 128) and *IG* VII 2871 (late first century BC: see Müller 2014: 128–129 and Grigsby 2017: 196–197). On both texts and their value for the theory of a reorganization of the Pamboiotia in the first century BC, see Knoepfler 2020: 202-206.
123 *IG* VII 3073–3076; *AM* 22 (1897), 179; *BCH* 20 (1896), 318; *BCH* 64/65 (1940/41), 37 n. 23; and *JHS* 15 (1895), 92.
124 Wilhelm 1897. I refer to the new edition of the text, republished and commented by Pitt 2014.
125 *IG* VII 3073, l. 87–89; for the general meaning of these lines, see Schachter 2016: 389 and n39.

describing a consultation of the oracle of Trophonios and found in a dossier with two other texts concerning the Ptoia of Akraiphia:[126]

> Kalliklidas, a Lokrian from Opous, having gone down to Trephonios, has reported that you are to consecrate Lebadeia to Zeus Basileus and Trephonios and Akraiphia to Apollo Ptoios, and that none should do them wrong. They are to solicit the sacred funds together, for the common well-being, throughout every land, and are to proclaim the sacred *agṓn*. Whosoever has been in charge of the temple of Zeus Basileus, will win the crown.[127]

This text raises a number of questions which cannot be fully addressed here. For our understanding of the historical evolution of the Basileia of Lebadeia, however, it is important to stick to the letter of this document. The man, who according to Schachter (1984) was probably paid by the Boiotian League, descended into the cave on matters related to the Ptoia of Akraiphia and the temple of Zeus in Lebadeia. The sacred funds are to be solicited 'throughout every land' (κατὰ πᾶσαν χώραν) and the cities – in the infinitive order, the common subject is οὕτως – have to proclaim 'the sacred *agṓn*'. The singular form of this expression and the fact that the text was found in a dossier with the decree of the amphictyony confirming this καταγγελία[128] are a sure indication that the *agṓnes* alluded to here are the Ptoia. The ambiguity of the adjective is another historical problem, because it is not certain that it already has a Panhellenic meaning.[129] It is important to note, however, that the descent of Kallikleidas was not connected with a reform or a change in the festival of the Basileia: it was about spreading the news of the *asylía* of the temple of Zeus Basileus.

We anticipated in the previous section that other Greek communities were already aware of the existence of the Basileia during the third century BC, before the new work on the sanctuary was carried out. The eight documents which can be dated between the late third century BC and the floruit of inscriptions during the first century BC do not challenge this relatively narrow catchment area of the winners.[130] The known victors

126 *IG* VII 4135 and 4137.

127 *IG* VII 4136 transl. by A. Schachter; on *IG* VII 4136, see most recently Schachter 2016: 381–396 (with previous scholarship). The building contracts of the temple represent a rich dossier, on which Pitt 2014 offers a good starting point. The area of the temple of Zeus Basileus is unfortunately poorly known and published: see Gadolou 2009 (with Knoepfler 2008: 1441n46 and *BE* 2010, 283) and Pitt 2014: 383–384.

128 *IG* VII 4135.

129 If this was the case, it would indeed be the first instance: Schachter 2016: 287.

130 *SGDI* II 2961 (170–30 BC); *IG* XII 1.78 (second century BC); *IG* IX² 614a (second-first centuries BC); *SEG* 14.478a (100 BC); Dow 1935: 81n38 (150–30 BC); *ID* 1957 (150–30 BC); *IG* VII 47 (196–86 BC); *SEG* 3.368 (second century BC). The documents *ID* 1957 and *IG* VII 47 are actually listed among the 'Trophonia Monuments' by Turner 1996, because they refer to the Trophonia. In light of the interpretation followed in the text, however, whereby the transition between the Basileia and the Trophonia did not imply an overlap, it is legitimate to consider these texts in the

came from Athens, Delphi, Rhodes, Larisa, Poteidaia, and Megara. Only in a very fragmentary inscription from Chaironeia,[131] there is a victor from Antiochia ad Pyramum (l. 6) and a Χρυσαορεύς (l. 13), but the relevance of this victor list for the Basileia is uncertain.

From what we read, the variety of the contests did not change.[132] It is possible that the only concrete innovation was the choice of an *agōnothétēs* from any city of the confederation. This figure is better known for his duties thanks to documents of the first century BC. The task of managing the festival with the sacred funds may also have implied personal intervention.[133] Before the end of the third century BC, there is a document[134] that records the *agōnothesía* of the Theban Neon son of Askondas.[135]

Since a series of documents dating from the late second and early first centuries BC to the full third century AD report the existence of Trophonia in Lebadeia, it was once believed that the Basileia and the Trophonia were two different, and possibly coterminous, festivals. Since the detailed and welcome studies of the inscriptions concerning the festival of Lebadeia of the second and the first century BC, the issue has now lost most of its urgency. A reappraisal of a series of notes by Louis Robert allowed Denis Knoepfler in 2008 to link the evolution of the Basileia with the history of the koinon, which was dissolved by the Romans in 171 BC and only slowly re-emerged in the eighties of the first century BC after the battle of Chaironeia (86 BC). This continuity which will be reassessed in the next section is in line with the re-dating of the Amphiareia Rhomaia suggested by Kalliontzis in 2016. By antedating *I.Oropos* 521 to the years 149–46 BC, Kalliontzis was able to show the continuity of this festival and the precocious 'Romanization' of it. In the case of the Amphiareia, the likely establishment of the festival in honour of Rome in 148 BC was the way in which Oropos reacted to the historical events. In the same decades, the inhabitants of Lebadeia simply opted for an alternative by renaming their previous contest.

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same context here. I doubt whether the casual increase in our evidence means an actual implementation in the program (Grigsby 2017: 118).

131 *SEG* 3.368.

132 See the notes by Robert 1936: 22. The three categories of age-classes attested for the winners of the Basileia are παῖδες ("boys"), ἀγένειοι ("bearded youths"), and ἄνδρες ("men"). They probably ran different distances in the running events, but it is not certain whether Plato's description of these distances (*Leg*. 8.833C) applied to all the festivals. Among the festivals of the *períodos*, the Olympic and the Delphic games did not have a category for the *agéneioi* (see the short overview by Schöpsdau 2011 *ad* Pl. lc.).

133 On these aspects, see *infra* and Migeotte 2006.

134 *IG* VII 3079.

135 See Knoepfler 2008: 1441 on this figure.

The First Century BC and the Roman Koinon

From the end of the second century BC, the Basileia of Lebadeia are mentioned under the name of "Trophonia". An important document of this stage is the victory catalogue of Menodoros of Athens,[136] who won the wrestling and *pankrátion* competitions at the Τροφώνια τὰ ἐν Λεβαδείᾳ around 120 BC.[137] Only in the first century BC did they reappear as Basileia, before a second wave of "Trophonia" inscriptions emerged in the third century AD. While the Pamboiotia with their strong political semantics had not been celebrated in full in the years between 171 BC and the birth of the new koinon, we can posit a different behaviour for the Basileia, which continued under a different, i.e. more local, leadership. It was only with the definite creation of the Roman koinon in the first century BC that the Basileia could be positively and systematically reorganised by a *federal* board. This means that scholars of Boiotian history had to reconsider the *idées reçues* on the early re-appearance of the koinon after 146 BC. At the same time, the political motivation explains the fact that the festival appears under a different name for a while. It is indeed possible, though by no means certain, that the Boiotians reorganised the Basileia only a few decades or little more after Sulla's presence in Boiotia, a hypothesis which is in line with a recent reconsideration of the dossier of inscriptions of the first century BC.[138]

To an external observer, nothing had really changed in the daily life of the Basileia. Writing in the forties of the first century BC, Diodorus can claim that the festival introduced by Epameinondas is the one now carried out in his time.[139] As a historian, Diodorus connects the information found in his source (the invention of the games) with the present celebration of the Basileia. The scholar Didymos, a contemporary of Diodorus, ignores the distinction in his comments on Pindar's ἀγῶνες ἔννομοι and seems to place *Basileia* and *Trophonia* side by side.[140] The juxtaposition, however, can only emerge from the point of view of a scholar who is aware of the existence of the two names (no variation is attested by Diodorus). Denis Knoepfler observed that the two games were never celebrated together,[141] and Didymos, an erudite scholar, does not contradict that view. One could say that Didymos is wrong and right at the same time, just like a modern scholar who claimed that the Basileia and the Trophonia were "due

136 *ID* 695.
137 On the date, see Knoepfler 2008: 1430–1432. The victory catalogue is preserved on two copies, one from Delos (*ID* 1957 = *IAG* 51), the other from Athens (*IG* II/III² 3147).
138 *IG* VII 3078 (= Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 11, 80–51 BC); *SEG* 3.367 (= Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 12, middle of the first century BC); *BE* 1973 n.213 (first century BC); *IG* VII 3095 (first half of the first century BC); *IG* VII 1764 and 2871 (first century BC). This further low-dating by Müller 2014 is, however, doubted by Knoepfler (*BE* 2015 n. 249).
139 Diod. Sic. 15.53.4: ταύτην ποιοῦσι τὴν πανήγυριν.
140 F 13 Braswell, on which see *supra*.
141 Knoepfler 2008: 1462.

festività nettamente distinte":[142] this is only correct if it means that they were celebrated at different times.

Given the opacity of our literary sources, one can only speculate on the rationale of the change of name of this festival in contrast to the stability of the term 'Pamboiotia': a possible indication might come from the Imperial inscriptions in which the Basileia once again seem to have been replaced by the Trophonia. It might be that, after the dissolution of the koinon and the harsh treatment of the Macedonian supporters Haliartos, Koroneia and Thisbe, the Basileia sounded too 'royal' and monarchic under the Roman government of Greece.[143] We can recall here the case of one of the last victors among the *paídes*: the Delphian Eudokos, grandson of Praxo.[144] This woman had granted hospitality to Euandros of Crete and to three Macedonians vested by Perseus with the mission to kill Eumenes of Pergamon. Livy reports the failed plan[145] and comments on the close relationship between the woman and Perseus.[146] One of the consequences of the failure of the plan would be the ruin of the Boiotians, and Gaius Valerius brought the woman from Delphi back to Rome after finding out that her house had been the *receptaculum latronum* (17.2).

A nephew of such a compromised figure had primed in the Basileia and the ambiguous echoes of the name of the festival made it an uneasy cultural thorn for the Romans. These small hints might help explain why, if slowly, a possible survival or re-appearance of the contest could only happen under a new, less compromised term. The exact relationship between Trophonios and Zeus (Basileus)[147] remains unexplained, but the sudden decision of Epameinondas in 371 to call this *agṓn* the 'Basileia' must not have sounded irrational or strange to the attendants of Trophonios. Conversely, the original name could explain the choice of the local organizers to adopt a more locally coloured name in the period between about 146 BC and the first quarter of the later century. The focus on the local seer in contrast to a broader characterisation might have been an idea of the *naopoioí*, the federal board which survived the dissolution of the koinon. In other words, the change of

142 Moretti 1953: 107. The list of Didymos, with the inclusion of Basileia and Trophonia, is not in itself 'valid' for the Augustan period (Knoepfler 2008: 1435) but can be seen as the result of a scholarly research, deprived of the historical sensibility of Diodorus.

143 Müller 1996a and ead. 2002.

144 *SGDI* II 2961, late seventies of the second century BC; For the date and a discussion of this document, see Knoepfler 2008: 1443–1445. Two other possibly coterminous documents, which attest how, until the dissolution of the festival, it was extremely popular, are a stele for Agasias of Chalkis (*BE* 1979 n.116) and a dedication of a Messenian boxer, winner at the Pythia and at the Basileia, considered earlier by Knoepfler (2008: 1445n80) and later by the editors of the *SEG* (59.417).

145 Liv. 42.15–17; On the entire plan, see Thornton 2014: 145–146.

146 Liv. 42.15.3: *hospitam principem auctoritate et opibus Delphorum*.

147 See esp. Schachter 1994: 88–89 and Bonnechère 2003.

administration coincided with the decision to return to focus on a strong, regional deity such as Zeus whose impact on the Boiotians was certainly stronger than a reduction to the oracular numen. It was always the same festival, but the different divine patron gave it a new allure and reinforced its political implications.

Only after the resurrection of the political federation could the Basileia regain their name of a "fête viscéralement fédérale"[148] and a regional administration. The *apologíai* of the first century BC document the activity of *agōnothétai*, who declare their expenses and organize a festival which is now a regional and no longer local event.[149] The Basileia were organised on behalf of the college of the *naopoioí* by an *agōnothétēs,* who was presumably chosen by a body representing all the Boiotian cities and elected at a local level. The *agōnothétēs* remained in office from the end of the previous edition of the Basileia during the month of Panamos to the month Pamboiotios of the next year, when he had to present his expenses (*apología*).[150] We have three long *apologíai* of *agōnothétai* of the first century BC: one by Xenarchos of Lebadeia,[151] the second by Prokles held in front of the archons of Thespiai,[152] and the third by Sostratos of Tanagra.[153]

These documents probably represent an abridged version of the actual sums involved in the organization of the festival as far as the mere list of incomes and outcomes is concerned. Moreover, the *apología* of Xenarchos[154] is actually preceded by a catalogue of agonistic victors and followed by a list of delegates sent by the Boiotian cities and by an account of the procedure raised by Xenarchos against his predecessor Platon.[155] On the other hand, the *apología* of Prokles[156] is also preceded by an analogous catalogue and followed by the transcript of a trial against his predecessor, which follows a different procedure from the direct accusation levied by Xenarchos against Platon since Prokles entrusts a board of three jurors. These jurors were the *enkritaí*, another group of locally appointed judges who came to Lebadeia acting in their legal capacity and representing

148 Knoepfler 2020: 259.
149 See on these texts Müller 2014; on the role of these and other *apologíai* for our understanding of the financing of Boiotian festivals, see Migeotte 2006.
150 The term ἀπολογία is common in Boiotia to indicate the list of expenses of a magistrate at the end of his mandate. The corresponding Attic word is ἀπολογισμός (Rougemont and Rousset 2005: 123).
151 *IG* VII 3078 = Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 11. This was the first inscription on the finances of a Boiotian festival to be published (see Knoepfler 2020: 194–195).
152 *SEG* 3.367 = Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 12. A new fragment belonging to this *apología* was recently published by Knoepfler 2020.
153 Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020.
154 Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 11.
155 See Manieri 2009 *ad loc.* and Rougemont and Rousset 2005 n.22 for a commentary on this text.
156 Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 12.

their own hometown.[157] The presence of these judges is confirmed by the last published *apología*, where the provenance of the *enkritaí* attests to a "pattern of widespread representation".[158]

We learn from these documents that the financial administration mostly rested on the rental of sanctuary lands and on the *eisphoraí* of the Boiotian cities which decided to participate. In particular, Xenarchos recalls renting the hippodrome and the stadion (l. 21) and managing the sums for games that did not take place (l. 22). Moreover, he took care that all the Boiotian cities delivered their own εἰσφορά (l. 23) and 'personally', probably as an act of euergetism, paid for the sacrifices and the *agṓn* (l. 25). The same document also shows that the people who rented these spaces were from Lebadeia.

It is interesting to note, however, that despite the wealth of details about the festival, these *apologíai* contain no hint of an attempt to commemorate previous victors or to claim an alignment with the great games of the *períodos*. At the same time, the agonistic catalogues of the first century BC and the other contemporary documents shed light on a much larger catchment area. The athletes who now won at the Basileia came from Rome,[159] from the new parts of Greece and Boiotia (Epidamnos, Anthedon, Opous), from Asia Minor (Nikaia of Bithynia, Bargylia) and from the Near East, since we know athletes from Tyre, from Seleukeia on the Tigris and from Egypt.[160]

The presence of a Ptolemy who must be identified with Ptolemy XII Theos Philopator Neos Dionysos (80–51 BC)[161] is an interesting chapter in the history of a local festival which had long been attended mainly by Boiotians and other Greeks. According to a recent hypothesis, this wide international catchment area may depend on kinship ties sought by the Boiotians, since every city or region outside Greece may be likely linked to the mythical history of Boiotia.[162] If this interesting scenario were true, one could recognize a further aspect of the political implications of the Basileia here. The Boiotians were probably trying to rebuild those ties which had formed the core of their internal

157 On this board of judges, see Papazarkadas 2019: 208–209; Knoepfler 2020: 227–228; Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020: 181–182.
158 Papazarkadas 2019: 209.
159 Victors from Rome are attested in both the surviving *apologíai*. The presence of Publius Licinius son of Publius in the *apología* of Prokles may help postdate this inscription to the last third of the first century BC (Müller 2014: 127). However, the expansion of the community of the Romans living in Boiotia in this period (cf. Müller 2002) may suggest that the presence of these athletes is not a strong indication of the international appeal of the Basileia.
160 Epidamnos: *IG* VII 3078A, l. 1. Anthedon: *IG* VII 3078A, l. 11. Opous: *AD* 1971 no. 34–40, l. 7. Nikaia of Bithynia: *IG* VII 3078A, l. 3; *AD* 1971 no. 34–40, l. 19. Bargylia: *SEG* 3.367, l. 11. Tyre: *IG* VII 3078A, l. 23.27; *AD* 1971 no. 34–40, l. 5. Seleukeia on the Tigris: *AD* 1971 no .34-40, 9.11.13.15. Cf. also the chart by Papazarkadas 2019: 211. The new *apología* of Sostratos of Tanagra (Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020) only includes winners from Boiotia.
161 See Manieri 2009 *ad Leb.* 11.
162 Papazarkadas 2019.

mythical history, and the instrumental use of such a festival, in which two federal boards, the *naopoioí* and the *enkritaí*, coexisted,[163] aimed at looking for external confirmation of this antiquarian revival. On the basis of the three surviving *apologíai* of the first century BC, it is hard to claim when exactly the new koinon was established. It is currently certain that this must have been after the Mithridatic Wars (86 BC) and before the erection of a honorific statue for Marcus Iunius Silanus in the context of which the koinon is properly addressed as such (34/3 BC).[164]

The type of competitions performed at the Basileia did not change significantly, and even now there were no musical events. In the first century BC, the Pamboiotia underwent a new change. They lost their "raison d'être" (Schachter), namely the participation of the military *télē*, and involved athletic and equestrian *agṓnes*. This third phase of the Pamboiotia also coincided with the recovery of their previous political perspective, as it had developed in contrast with the less politicised status of the Basileia which were maybe not coincidentally, open to foreigners.

The first century BC is also the last period when the Pamboiotia reappear in our epigraphic evidence. By now, the reorganization, probably under the reborn Boiotian koinon, was part of a more general "antiquarian revival".[165] The same body of *naopoioí*, which had been created at a federal level in the late third century BC to oversee the construction of the temple of Zeus Basileus, now organised both the Basileia and the Pamboiotia.[166] While the Basileia had survived the shock of the Roman dissolution of the koinon through a period of local management under a different name (the Trophonia), the Pamboiotia are not attested between the end of the Third Macedonian War and the years of Sulla and Lucullus. It is quite unlikely that this is a matter of pure lack of evidence, despite the general inferiority of inscriptions related to the Pamboiotia in contrast with those on the Basileia/Trophonia. The Hellenistic Pamboiotia had been a political *agṓn* in a stronger and more piquant way than the parallel and more international contest of the Basileia.

We have seen how the Basileia had been able to survive the Roman intervention in Greece through a slow, but not necessarily early reorganization of the games in a local

163 The two bodies possibly performed different tasks (Knoepfler 2020: 230).

164 *IG* II² 4114. The opinion is still divided between those who prefer a relatively higher date in the middle of the century, especially after the publication of the new *apología* (Knoepfler 2020; Matthaiou and Papazarkadas 2020: 168–169), and the low estimate of 40-30 BC suggested by Müller 2014 who claimed that the koinon was not properly reborn until a clear self-definition was used in the public transcript.

165 Schachter 2016: 189.

166 See Müller 2014: 125–126. For the idea that the group had never ceased its existence, probably just 'rescheduling their activity' in the period of the organization of the Pamboiotia, see *supra*.

form, before being re-established in their original federal form in the eighties of the first century BC. The Pamboiotia had experienced a first moment of celebration as a contest for individual competitions in the Archaic and Classical periods (until the middle of the fifth century BC, possibly a little later). In a second stage, the Hellenistic koinon had reorganised the games to celebrate its military power in the third century BC.

The Roman Imperial koinon was indeed "an institution with religious overtones".[167] The Itonion became the heart of such an institution, and the presence of an ἐπιμελετὴς τῆς πανηγύρεως[168] later distinguished the Pamboiotia from the analogous *agōnothétēs* of the Basileia. A possible precedence of the reorganization of the Basileia over the Pamboiotia might be posited. On the one hand, despite the risks of any argument based on documents preserved or not preserved, the epigraphic documents related to the Pamboiotia are slightly later than the documents in support of the Basileia;[169] on the other hand, it is interesting to note that Diodorus writing in the forties of the first century BC knows that the Basileia were still carried out. In contrast, Strabo[170] curiously places the celebration of the Pamboiotia in the past (συνετέλουν). He seems to have lived some time after Diodorus, and perhaps he only copied a source, as Schachter remarked.[171] However, it cannot be ruled out that Strabo was not yet familiar with the new Pamboiotia when he wrote his ninth book, or that the festival was still being restructured.

The name of the new Boiotian body (τὸ κοινόν) is reflected in those sources which allow us to know how it was seen from an emic perspective. Its first occurrence ca. 33/32 BC[172] is strikingly in line with all those documents in which τὸ κοινόν is linked with the administration of the Roman Pamboiotia. Expressions such as τὸ συνέδριον Βοιωτῶν[173] or τὸ κοινὸν Παμβοιωτῶν συνέδριον[174] confirm how the Boiotian body viewed the agonistic dimension as an indissoluble part of the rediscovered unity.[175] In particular, the dossier of Epameinondas of Akraiphia (AD 37) allows us to date the decision to collocate the record of a collective decision in the sanctuary of Athena Itonia to the early Imperial period, which is also firm evidence for the flourishing of this festival (and of the revival of the Ptoia).[176] The Boiotians still met there in Pausanias' time.[177] One wonders whether the

167 Müller 2014: 129.
168 *IG* VII 2781.
169 Müller 2014: 129–130.
170 Strab. 9.2.29.
171 Schachter 1981: 124n3.
172 *IG* II² 4114.
173 *IG* VII 2711.
174 *IG* VII 2712.
175 See also *IG* VII 2878 with the commentary by Knoepfler 2012: 240–246.
176 On this dossier, see Oliver 1971; Chaniotis 2008: 67–87; Grigsby 2017: 207–213.
177 Paus. 9.34.1–2.

historical scenario of another *Love Story* by Plutarch also refers to the Hellenistic period.[178] In this short story, a girl joins the celebration of the Pamboiotia[179] because she is looking for justice against thirty violent pretenders: the Boiotians present on the spot listen to her and are furious with the men. Despite the undeniable fictitious character of the story, the idea that the Itonion could act as a central spot where a girl would present her allegations against men of different Boiotian origin is in line with the notion that Boiotians routinely met at Koroneia in the second century AD. The fact that she introduces herself as ἱκέτις might support the idea that the sanctuary still enjoyed *asylía* at this stage, but we lack further evidence on this.

The Pamboiotia had then lost their military dimension, but regained political meaning, insofar as this was possible under Roman administration. It is likely, however, that even the board of boiotarchs reappeared in a new form probably in the first century BC. Hadrian's letter to Naryka of AD 138 is good evidence of the existence of more than one boiotarch (probably eight) in Imperial times.[180]

While the Pamboiotia had become a fossil of the ethnic imaginary of the Boiotians, the Basileia were still celebrated. The documents of the first century AD provide no evidence in this regard, but only confirm that the festival was still held and had a good reputation. At about his time, the herald Onetor dedicated golden apples to Apollo in Delphi to commemorate his victories.[181] He first lists his victory at the εὐεπίη contest in Delphi (l. 1–2), but then focuses on the crowns he had won at Nemea, Thebes and εὐρύχορος Λε[βάδεια] (l. 3). If there were firm evidence that the Pamboiotia ever included a contest for heralds, we might expect to find this in the record.[182] However, it is not sure that the victory of the herald at the '*agṓn* of Zeus' mentioned in an earlier inscription refers to the Basileia.[183] All we can say is that Onetor was proud of a victory at Lebadeia and that the mere mention of the name of the city, just like that of Nemea, sufficed to refer to a prestigious contest.

Between the second and third centuries AD, the Basileia are called Trophonia once again.[184] Perhaps there had been a previous transitional phase in which both names were

178 Schachter 1981: 124n3.

179 Plut. *Mor.* 774E: τὴν τῶν Παμβοιωτίων ἑορτήν.

180 The letter was written in the last months of Hadrian's life and is a pivotal document for the history of Central Greece in the first half of the second century AD. The occasion of its publication caused a debate among scholars; see Knoepfler 2005: 66–73; *SEG* 51.641; *BE* 2005, 249; Knoepfler 2006; Jones 2006; Knoepfler 2012: 224–228. On the Imperial boiotarchy, see Knoepfler 2012 and Tufano 2023a.

181 *IG* II² 3158.

182 So Manieri 2009, *ad Leb.* 14.

183 *IG* VII 530, mid-third century BC. For the view that this expression refers to the Olympic games, see *IAG* 38.

184 Cf. *SEG* 26.258 and 263, both from Athens and dated to the second century AD.

used, although the story of the *agṓn* does not testify to the likelihood of this possibility. The board of the *naopoioí* and the activity of the koinon are certain facts for the second century, and it is therefore unlikely that the conditions for the existence of the Basileia were not met: in fact, a herald was crowned probably in this period.[185] Pollux's indication on the name Trophonia might not be necessarily unreliable, as it was the output of an erudite scholar.[186]

A new dissolution of the koinon in the thirties of the third century apparently had to put an end to both the Basileia and the Pamboiotia. Until the beginning of this century, the Boiotians were still involved in a number of local *agṓnes* including the ephebic contests in Tanagra.[187] The Eleutheria of Plataiai and the Herakleia of Thebes were also still practiced at this time.[188] Possibly at the beginning of the third century, Flavia Laneika is defined ἀρχιερεία κοινοῦ Βοιωτῶν τῆς Ἰτωνίας Ἀθηνᾶς.[189] Around the middle of the century there is again epigraphic evidence of victories at the Trophonia.[190] What can we make of this new change of name? We have tried so far to link the history of the Basileia and of the Pamboiotia with the history of the Boiotian koinon. Is it therefore possible that the koinon was dissolved once again in the thirties of the century and that Lebadeia decided to continue the old festival under a more parochial name, as argued by Knoepfler?

We lack positive evidence that the koinon was dissolved in the thirties, whereas the myth of a Gordianus III *philhéllène,* while based on good grounds, is not in itself sufficient to claim that this emperor deliberately allowed or encouraged the reintroduction of a festival.[191] On the whole, the idea of a shift of the festival from the exhibition of regional identity to a return to local celebrations might hold true.[192] Good hints in this direction are the composition of the Panhellenion created by Hadrian and the success of the civic identities in the second century AD.[193] The particularism of the third century AD might be part of the explanation, while Boiotianness continued in other forms, e.g. through the institution of *ephēbeía*.

The situation is maybe less clear and more complex than what a single, however likely, explanation can offer: the *naopoioí* disappear together with the festivals, but it is possible

185 *ID* 2552.
186 Poll. 1.37.
187 *IG* XII Suppl. 646; *IG* VII 2450; Charami 2011.
188 See *IG* VII 49 and *FD* III 1.155, with Grigsby 2017: 231.
189 *IG* VII 3426; on this important document, see Knoepfler 2012: 237–240.
190 *FD* III 1.550; *IG* VII 49 (*post* AD 242), *IG* II² 3169/3170 (*ca*. AD 253–257); *FD* III 1.555 (*ca*. AD 250). See Grigsby 2017: 239.
191 On the paradigm of Gordian III's philhellenism, see Robert 1970: 16.
192 Cf. Grigsby 2017: 238–239.
193 Cf. Gordillo 2012.

that their original function was inherited by the boiotarchs.[194] A document often mentioned in connection with the Basileia does not record the name of the festival, but has often been included in their dossier. This text refers to Drusus the son of Tiberius and has been dated between AD 14 and 23. The *agōnothétēs* of the text cared about the Kaisareia and another festival, which is not preserved (Καισάρεια καὶ [...]). At this time, the name of the festival most likely still had to be Basileia, as Knoepfler rightly observed.[195] The cult of the emperors was quite popular in Boiotia and, in the case of the Ptoia, the noun Καισάρεια even substituted the original name of the festival. The re-foundation by Epameinondas of Akraiphia of τὰ μεγάλα Πτώϊα καὶ Καισάρηα[196] was a renovation of a festival no longer held for economic problems.

We have evidence for the imperial cult in Lebadeia and of the fact that also in other parts of Boiotia more than one festival was rebranded in favour of the emperors during the first century AD.[197] Perhaps we should wonder why the Trophonia still bear this name in the third century AD, while the Basileia had been subsumed under Kaisareia – perhaps also because the names of these two festivals (?) display a strong affinity in meaning. In the absence of explicit indication of the name of the festival for the period of the first two centuries AD, I would suggest that the Basileia had been absorbed into the imperial cult and that the festival could only reappear as Trophonia in the third century AD: the Lebadeian Kaisareia are attested in the first century AD and between the second and the third century AD.[198] Albeit unusual, it could be that the imperial denomination had elicited obliteration or that the double name (Kaisareia [kai] Basileia) was simply shortened or not recorded. This seems to be a specific strategy to grant the survival of an agonistic tradition, while realizing that history demands a change, in other words: "the horizontal action of these festivals, in bringing these cities together, was combined with the vertical action of positioning them in relation to their new rulers".[199]

A further indication of this overlapping of the Basileia and of the Kaisareia might lie in the ambiguity of the status of Cn. Curtius Dexippos, the son of Flavia Laneike who had dedicated a statue to his mother famously called "lifetime *archiéreia* of Athena Ithonia on behalf of the Boiotian koinon and of the Phokian koinon and of the Homonoia of the

194 Disappearance of the *naopoioí* in connection with the loss of documentation for the festivals: Schachter 2016: 145n25.
195 Knoepfler 2008: 1457–1458.
196 *IG* VII 2712, l. 56–59.
197 On Epameinondas of Akraiphia, see *supra*; on the imperial cults in Boiotia, cf. Camia 2011b: 125–128 and Grigsby 2017: *passim*.
198 *IG* VII 3103, *IG* VII 3106; on the date of *IG* VII 3106, and on the imperial festivals in Lebadeia, see Camia 2011b: 127 and n527.
199 Van Nijf and Williamson 2015: 108.

Greeks at the Trophonion".[200] Her son Dexippos was a boiotarch (9), a *logistés* of Chaironeia (11), and ἀρχιερεὺς διὰ βίου τῶν Σεβαστῶν (9–10). *Archiereís* could work at the same time for the imperial cult and for local demands (here the nexus with Athena Itonia is quite clear).[201] Even if the current example only explicitly refers to the imperial cult of Chaironeia, it remains likely that it was this overlap between local and imperial festivals that caused the apparent oblivion of the local festivals in our documentation.

Synopsis

Research into the Pamboiotia and the Basileia still suffers from a limited number of documents, which often only allow for hypotheses. As Albert Schachter once wrote, "we are very much at the mercy, not only of what has or has not survived, but also of what may or may not have been inscribed in the first place".[202] These two festivals were able to unify and represent the Boiotian region to a point that Didymos' confusion over the identification of Pindar's ἀγῶνες ἔννομοι Βοιωτίων as either the Basileia or the Pamboiotia does not seem entirely far-fetched.

The Pamboiotia were the show of Boiotia's military nature, the perfect stage to exemplify why Epameinondas would call his land 'the dancing floor of Ares'.[203] Their location at Koroneia in the fifth century BC, even if under a different, unknown name, forever linked the festival with a capital victory of Boiotian history. No wonder that the later redesigning of the Hellenistic period could transform the religious meeting into a military venue and that from then on the athletes marched under a national agenda. It was not a celebration which the Romans could accept or like. The dissolution of 171 BC made their survival completely impossible, in light of the strong federal administration of the event. Only under the new koinon of the Late Republic could the Boiotians recover and regain this regional manifestation and place of public decision making. Maybe the games were still held in the first three centuries of the empire, but now the meeting had a more social aspect, while the individual competitions made it similar to many other contests of mainland Greece.

Initially, the Basileia were the festival of the golden years of the Theban hegemony, a Theban project to mark forever the military glory and show it to anyone. For this reason,

200 *IG* VII 3426, l. 2–6.
201 On these *archiereís*, and especially on Dexippos, see Camia 2011b: 165–166 and 166n746–747; Knoepfler 2012: 237–240.
202 Schachter 2016: 350n17.
203 Plut. *Marc*. 21.3 and *Mor*. 193A. On the Boiotian military culture of the third century BC, cf. Ma 2005.

there were probably no official rules that impeded the participation of foreigners. In fact, the catchment area of the victors sensibly expanded only in the first century BC. Under the Hellenistic koinon the recollection of that great time of effective power, however short lived, probably inspired the realization of the complex with the start of the construction of that never completed Temple of Zeus Basileus. Trophonios with his oracle and his sacred shadow over the competition had always been there and the fame of the oracle would certainly have helped the contextual success of the festival. Besides, the federal body which was initially designed to oversee the constructions became an ideological weapon in the hands of the Boiotians, when the new koinon of the first century BC was born. Had such a plan remained in their hearts? The short season of the Trophonia in the last two centuries BC suggests that Lebadeia had organised the festival alone in the first decades after the Roman expansion in Greece; but now, after Sulla's arrival and Trophonios' good *omina* for the dictator,[204] the *naopoioí* could certainly be seen as a adequate body of Boiotians who could also care for the reorganization of the Basileia.

From the age of Augustus, the story of the Basileia and of the Pamboiotia, which had been combined for a few years, diverged again. The Pamboiotia probably remained popular thanks to the connection with the Itonion, while the Basileia may have been overshadowed by the cult and festival for the emperor. What happened between the first and third centuries AD can only remain in the realm of hypothesis, but no one will doubt that the strength of the koinon was based on other reasons in the meantime.

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204 Plut. *Sull.* 17, with Grigsby 2017: 192–193. Sulla might have assigned the tax revenues to the temple of Zeus and this could be a sign of a special treatment, but the religious and the fiscal plan should probably be distinguished, and this has not necessarily in itself consequences on the festival (on the possible assignment of tax revenues, see Larsen in Frank 1938: 307–308 and Rigsby 1996: 83).

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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.

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 118-141.

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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TSO
TEIRESIAS
SUPPLEMENTS ONLINE

Chapter 7

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Following the Local Traces of the (Argive?) Games in Honor of Hera

The sanctuary of Hera that lies on the slopes of Mount Euboia roughly ten kilometres to the south of Mycenae is so commonly associated with the city of Argos that it seems almost maladroit to write of it as anything other than the *Argive* Heraion. The association between Hera and Argos figures prominently in the ancient tradition: Homer uses the epithet Argive Hera in the *Iliad,*[1] the famed Kleobis and Biton are, according to Herodotus, 'of Argive stock',[2] as was their mother who needed to travel to the festival of Hera in Argos, Argive coinage depicts the head of the goddess prominently, and the list could go on.[3] This ancient link between Hera and Argos has been readily adopted by modern scholars as well, who almost unanimously refer to the temple as the Argive Heraion, and indeed François de Polignac's landmark 1984 study *La naissance de la cité grecque* uses it as 'le cas le plus éclairant' of the fundamental role played by extramural sanctuaries in the creation of a polis community – and vice versa.[4] Argos and the Heraion

1 Hom. *Il.* 4.8: Ἥρη τ' Ἀργείη, also 5.908; This being noted, the fact that both uses are in the same metrical position suggests this recurrent use of the epithet is perhaps compositional convenience rather than an explicit effort on the part of the poet to link Hera to Argos. The ambiguity of the term 'Argive' in Homer also needs to be highlighted. In Homer, Argos refers to everything ranging from the home of Diomedes, the territory of Agamemnon, or the favorite city of Hera, thus it can mean either the city itself, the geographical zone of the Argive plain, or the kingdom of Agamemnon stretching from Nafplion to Corinth. To complicate the matter, the Greeks in general are described by Homer as the Argives. On this ambiguity, see Allen 1909.

2 Hdt. 1.31: γένος Ἀργείοισι.

3 Argive coins at the end of the fourth century and into the third featuring Hera are, for instance, *BCD* Peloponnesos (Leu) 1066, 1101, and *BMC* 52. The type also appears in the Imperial Period during the reign of Antoninus Pius, *BCD* 1190 and *BMC* 155–156.

4 With the notable exception of Hall 1995 and his 2012 entry to the *EAH* s.v. 'Heraion'. Hall 1995: 577–579 discusses the Heraion in the context of de Polignac's analytical framework. de Polignac 1984: 52 for the quotation taken above, and his discussion of the Heraion in the same chapter. The analysis proposed by this chapter aligns much more with the construct of Kindt 2012 than the old *polis*-centric model of Greek religion.

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created what he describes as a cultic axis linking the city to its chora through this rural sanctuary, and the claim of Argos to this territory was reinforced with the annual procession on the Sacred Way leading form the city to its temple.[5] The Heraion, in other words, was thus placed very much in the local cultic, political, and spatial orbit of the city of Argos. If the sanctuary has been viewed as fundamentally 'Argive', then it follows logically that the competitions held there would similarly fall under the same city-ethnic.

But in the context of a volume on local athletic contests in the Greek world, the curious case of the Argive Heraion prompts us to reconsider exactly what was 'local' about the festivals of the Hekatomboia and the Heraia that are attested at the site over nearly six centuries. Are these competitions simply 'local' in the sense that they are part and parcel of the local traditions of the city of Argos, or is there a rather more complicated dynamic at work? In this chapter I argue the latter: although by the close of the fifth century onwards Argos had come to dominate the administration of the games of the Hekatomboia and later the Heraia, these competitions are not simply Argive, but rather represent an agglomeration of various communities' local traditions that were subsequently brought under the Argive banner. Much as the Heraion itself has been convincingly described by Jonathan Hall in 1995 'a confederate sanctuary for all of the Argive plain', the same can be said of its festivals and their associated athletic competitions.[6] I shall argue that the competitions of the Hekatomboia were originally part of the local cultic traditions of other communities in the Argive plain, namely Mycenae and Tiryns, but were later appropriated by the Argives as part of their consolidation of regional hegemony in the fifth century. The games of the Heraia and the Hekatomboia thus become not an illustrative case study in the idiosyncratic dynamics of local civic festivals, but rather in how traditions of cult and competition can shift from one localism to another over time and in response to various formative pressures. This chapter does not try to describe what Argive local competitions were like, but instead how and why the Hekatomboia and Heraia *became* Argive local competitions.

In order to do so, we shall begin with an overview of the explicit and implicit attestations of the earliest athletic competitions held at the Heraion and later the festival of the Hekatomboia, and then reconstruct in detail how these competitions were administered and financed in light of recent epigraphic discoveries. Following Amandry's chronology,

5 On the cultic axis, see de Polignac 1984: 48–60, with Hall 1995: 578n3–5 for further commentary. The first certain attestation of the procession from Argos to the sanctuary comes from Herodotus in the context of the tale of Kleobis and Biton, 1.31, as told by the lawgiver Solon to Croesus of Lydia. There is, however, as Hall 1995: 594–595 notes, no reason to assume that this was a local custom dating from the Archaic Period, but could well by a fifth-century innovation.

6 Hall 1995: 613.

we shall then consider the relocation of the games to Argos itself, their new identification as the *Heraia ta en Argei* (Ἥραια τὰ ἐν Ἄργει), and the international dynamics of this festival's Hellenistic *floruit*. By means of conclusion we shall consider the evolving local dynamics of cultic competitions in the Argive plain over the *longue durée*, tracking the origins of what would come to be known as the Hekatomboia and Heraia into the Archaic and Mycenaean past, and arguing for their pre-Argive origins. Localism, of course, does not imply isolation or myopia, and throughout we shall consider how these competitions respond to political and social developments in the Argive plain and beyond.

Reconstructing the Games in Honor of Hera

The literary *testimonia* for athletic competitions taking place at the Heraion have been compiled by several German, British, and American scholars since the late nineteenth century, and the site of the Heraion itself has been excavated several times since its discovery by Major-General Thomas Gordon in 1831, with minor expeditions in 1836, 1854, 1874, 1878, and 1949, and major excavations by the American School of Classical Studies under Waldstein from 1892–1895, and Blegen in 1925–1928.[7] Despite this long and extensive history of archaeological and literary enquiry into the site, prominent gaps in our understanding of its chronology and development remain, and this is especially true when it comes to attestations of athletic competitions at the site. As is generally the case with Argive history, these competitions are only well-attested for brief periods, with a cluster of *testimonia* appearing for brief periods here and there followed by decades of silence; by nature, then, any attempt at reconstructing the longer history of the games is hindered by the limits of extrapolation and inference.[8] The region's history always necessitates some measure of educated guesswork. This *caveat lector* is compounded by the fact that the large *corpus* of inscriptions found on bronze plaques in Argos remains a work-in-progress, with only a few samples having been published to date by Charalambos Kritzas over the past two decades. In a seminal article for the field published in 1980, Pierre Amandry added epigraphic attestations of Argive games to the literary evidence and advanced a reconstruction of their chronology which will figure prominently below. To this, we shall add further inscriptions which have since been

7 The excavation history of the site is taken from Pfaff 2003: ix–xi. See Amandry 1980: 1n2 for previous scholarly efforts to compile the literary attestations of the game, especially by *RE* s.v 'Heraia', Farnell 1896: 18 and 249–250, and Nilsson 1906: 42–45. The principal publications concerning the site itself are Waldstein (ed.) 1902–1905, Antonaccio 1992, Hall 1995, and Pfaff 2003.

8 A methodological problem noted and discussed by Amandry 1980 throughout.

published, along with more recent work on the Argive *theōría* and Argive political history.[9]

Beginning with the early epigraphic evidence, the first mention of athletic competitions taking place at the Heraion dates to a funerary epigram found on a Doric capital discovered that was found near the Argive Heraion and currently held in the Argos Museum.[10] As discussed most recently by McGowan in 1995 (pp. 628–631) and Morgan in 2007, the column commemorated the death in battle of a young man named Hyssematas, and also attested to his athletic prowess while alive. The epitaph, written in elegiac couplets, recounts how a woman named Kossina sought to provide a memorial to the young man's virtue in battle, his prudence, his wisdom, and his athletic victories. The epitaph demonstrates a very Homeric tone, and it is clear that Kossina seeks to perpetuate the heroic memory of the young Hyssematas for subsequent generations by creating this highly visible memorial.[11] The column itself, as McGowan notes,[12] is also meant to resemble a turning post on an equestrian racetrack, and Kossina explicitly mentions that she buried him near the hippodrome. In the context of our current discussion, the monument sheds a great deal of light on the early character of these competitions. The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that by 500 BC equestrian competitions were being held at the Heraion, and presumably these had been established for some time. These competitions must also have been fairly well known, as the first couplet of the epitaph indicates a present and future audience for the monument, and Hyssematas certainly must not have been the first *aethlophóros* at the site. We shall later turn to the Archaic connection between such funerary monuments as these and athletic competitions when we recreate the longer history of games at the Heraia, but for the moment the salient observation to be made is that athletic competitions at the Heraion pre-date Argive control of the sanctuary. In 500 BC the Heraion was still very much a regional sanctuary, and these games were already being held by the time Argos destroyed Mycenae, Tiryns, and Midea in the 460s BC.[13] Although they, along with the sanctuary, would later be brought under the control of Argos as it consolidated its hold on the Argive plain in the 460s, these local competitions began independent of Argive auspices.

9 On the Argive *theōría*, see the definitive work of Perlman 2000 and, more recently, McAuley 2018. On the Argive calendar, Garbit 2009. On the political history of the plain in the fifth century, see Kritzas 1992 and Hall 1997. See also Piérart 2004 and his discussion of each city in the region.

10 Inventory E 210, text of the inscription *CEG* 136, with discussion by McGowan 1995 and most recently Morgan 2007.

11 McGowan 1995: 628n74, which highlights similarities between the inscription and Homer in both theme and language, echoed by Morgan 2007: 250.

12 McGowan 1995: 629.

13 Agreeing with Hall 1995's reconstruction of the longer history of the sanctuary, *pace* Auffarth 2006. Hdt. 7.137; Ephorus 70 *FGrH* 56; Diod. Sic. 11.65.1–11; Strab. 8.6.11, 19; Paus. 2.17.5, 25.8; 7.25.5–6; 8.46.3 for the destruction of these sites. See also the discussions of Robinson 1997: 85, Kritzas 1992: 232.

The next set of epigraphic attestations dates to a period in which the Heraion had come under Argive control, and it is clear that efforts were being made to link athletic competitions at the sanctuary with Argos itself. A description of games held in honor of Argive Hera is found on five bronze objects (three hydriai, one lebes, and a tripod) that were inscribed with a common formula identifying them as prizes given from Argive Hera (παρ Ἥρας Ἀργείας).[14] Two of the hydriai – one held in New York, the other in Ankara – appear to be contemporaneous with each other based on stylistic grounds (perhaps even inscribed by the same hand), and have been dated to c.460–450.[15] The other artefacts have been dated to the following two or three decades, thus all of these attest to competitions being held at the Heraion between c. 460–430. As is the case with other contemporary prize inscriptions, only the name of the deity in whose honor the competition was held is provided, not the specific name of the festival or competition. Nevertheless, the consistent mention of Hera Argeia by all five of these artefacts reveals that by the mid-fifth century the sanctuary of the Heraion had been re-branded as 'Argive', and was advertising itself as such.[16] Unfortunately, these objects do not provide any specific information on the competitors who won them, or even in which events they competed.

As we shall shortly discuss in greater detail, this is part and parcel of Argive consolidation of its new control over the communities of the Argive plain which was initially gained by military conquest, but was being secured through softer diplomacy.[17] We find further evidence of the appropriation of athletic competitions at the Heraion in the roughly contemporary epinikian poetry of Pindar, which also provides further details regarding the competitions themselves.[18] As with the epigraphic evidence above, the exact name of the competition is not mentioned, only the fact that the athletes in question competed at Argos. Following Catherine Morgan's analysis in 2007, though, it is clear that these

14 Amandry 1980: 213–220.

15 Amandry 1980: 213–216 with notes and figure. The hydria from Ankara is inventory number 11047 first published in 1956. The other vessels are, according to Amandry's catalogue of objects related to competitions published in 1971: Hydriaia, nos. III A, III B, IV, the lebes III C, and the tripod had not yet been discovered at the time of publication. The tripod was found in 1977 in the great tomb of Vergina, and first published by Andronikos in 1979. See Amandry for the full publication and commentary history of each.

16 Again, agreeing with the analysis of Hall 1995 and Morgan 2007: 250–258.

17 An observation of Amandry in 1980: 216–217 regarding these objects is noteworthy: the habit of inscribing objects such as these with this kind of inscription is also found throughout the Greek world during the period stretching from the Persian Wars to the Peloponnesian War that subsequently went out of style fairly quickly. But, Amandry notes, this method of inscribing prize objects is in and of itself a custom that dates father back into the Archaic Period. It is thus highly likely that these objects came from the same competitions at the Heraion attested by the epitaph above, though now they had been re–branded as the games of Argive Hera. At any rate, this method of honoring the victors, and also the competition in which they were victorious, were likely much older. On the soft diplomacy of the plain in the years following Argive conquest, see Kritzas 1992, Hall 1997: 96–99f, and Piérart 1997.

18 On Pindar and his social and political milieu, see Hornblower and Morgan (eds.) 2007, especially the contributions by Davies, Smith, and Carey.

poems allude to games at the Heraion rather than in the city itself.[19] Pindar's *Ninth Olympian Ode* (dated to 466 BC) celebrates the wrestler Epharmostos of Opus, who had previously won victories in Nemea, Argos, and Athens (85–88).[20] Another athlete, Xenophon of Corinth, is praised by Pindar's *Olympian* 13 (464 BC) for being a victor at Olympia three times in the *stádion* race and the *péntathlon*; again, among the other glories won by his clan are again victories at Argos (l. 108: ἔξ· Ἄργεί θ' ὅσσα καὶ ἐν). Another anonymous Athenian runner is praised by *Bacchylides 10* for his victory in spacious Argos.

But it is Pindar's *Tenth Nemean* which most explicitly emphasizes this link between Argos and Hera. This poem in honor of the wrestler Theaios of Argos dated to around 444 BC praises the city of Danaios as 'Hera's home, worthy of a goddess' Ἄργος Ἥρας δῶμα θεοπρεπὲς l.3, and the poet later laments his inability to capture fully the glories of the city. (18–19). The second strophe (20–24) describes in detail the cultic background to the games, imploring the reader in the imperative:

> ἀλλ' ὅμως εὔχορδον ἔγειρε λύραν,
> καὶ παλαισμάτων λάβε φροντίδ'· ἀγών τοι χάλκεος
> δᾶμον ὀτρύνει ποτὶ βουθυσίαν Ἥ-
> ρας ἀέθλων τε κρίσιν·
> Οὐλία παῖς ἔνθα νικάσαις δὶς ἔ-
> σχεν Θεαῖος εὐφόρων λάθαν πόνω
>
> Nevertheless, wake the well strung lyre
> and take thought of wrestling, since the contest for
> bronze calls forth the people to the sacrifice of oxen
> for Hera and to the judging of the games,
> in which Ulias' son, Theaeus, was twice victorious
> and won forgetfulness of his bravely borne labors.
> (transl. Race 1997).

The victories of Theaios take place in the context of a festival in honor of Hera at which oxen are sacrificed to the goddess and then wrestlers compete with one another for the prize of a bronze trophy – we can even assume that this would have been similar to the inscribed bronze trophies we have encountered above. The fact that oxen are specifically mentioned as the sacrifice to the goddess make it appear that the festival described here by

19 Morgan 2007: 250–262.

20 Following the Loeb Greek text edited and translated by Race 1997:
ἄλλαι δὲ δύ' ἐν Κορίνθου πύλαις ἐγένοντ' ἔπειτα χάρμαι,
ταὶ δὲ καὶ Νεμέας Ἐφαρμόστῳ κατὰ κόλπον:
Ἄργει τ' ἔσχεθε κῦδος ἀνδρῶν, παῖς δ' ἐν Ἀθάναις,
οἷον δ' ἐν Μαραθῶνι συλαθεὶς ἀγενείων

Pindar is the same that we will later find attested as the Hekatomboia, which is a reasonable conclusion given the long-standing connection between ox-eyed Hera and these animals.[21] The manner in which Pindar emphatically links Argos to Hera and her sanctuary is by no means accidental: according to the arguments of Jonathan Hall[22] and Morgan,[23] Argos commissioned this poem at the same time as a 'positive explosion of public and religious construction in the city center and at the Heraion between c.460 and 440, coincident with the installation of democracy'.[24] Such a public commemoration of the city's ties to the Heraion through poetry which would have performed elsewhere served several ideological functions: it emphasized Argos' claim to the Heraion over Mycenae, it linked to its recent acquisitions in the Argive plain, it touted the recovery of the Argive citizen body after the disaster at Sepeia, all the while calling to mind an older sense of elite values in aristocratic competition.

Taking all of this evidence together, a clearer picture of the fifth-century competitions at the Heraion can be reconstructed. At the very least, equestrian competitions had been taking place near the site since the late sixth century, and these were at least obliquely situated in the funerary landscape of the region. As the Heraion fell into Argive hands after the city's expansion throughout the plain in the 460s and 450s, so too did its athletic competitions come under Argive jurisdiction. It is clear that the Argive state invested heavily in associating itself with these games, and perhaps this investment led to their expansion as well. At any rate, by the 450s we find further attestation of running competitions, wrestling, and a *péntathlon* associated with a festival honoring Hera being held at 'Argos' – and thus metonymically at the Heraion – involving competitors from throughout the Greek world. Presumably, equestrian events continued. The fact that this epinician poetry easily lists these competitions along with the 'big four' Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian, and Olympic games indicates the high standing of the games in the fifth century.[25] But this fifth-century repute in turn suggests a longer history for the Heraion's games, as such competitions derived their contemporary repute in no small measure from their (perceived) archaic antiquity. It is possible that the sacrifice of oxen and cattle in honor of Hera was expanded by the Argives at the same time as the competition itself and the entire festival was re-named the Hekatomboia (mandating a sacrifice of 100 animals), but this is highly speculative.

21 Hera described as *boōpis* (βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη" *Il.*1.551), analysed by O'Brien 1993: 128–138. For the association of Hera with cows and bulls, see McInerney 2010, 3–8 and 119–122. For Hera being described as a goddess of fertility, see Hom. *Il.* 14–346–51, Calame 1996: 173–185, and Motte 1973.

22 Hall 1995: 594–595.

23 Morgan 2007: 250–252.

24 Morgan 2007: 251.

25 See Amandry 1980: 229–230n33–38 for the full list of victor inscriptions and the relation of the Hekatomboia to other competitions.

The Machinery of the Hekatomboia

At some point in the second half of the fifth century, the games held in honor of Hera at the Heraion begin to be referred to publicly as the Hekatomboia. Given the propensity of earlier material to only mention the deity in whose honor games were held, or the region in which they were held, it is equally possible that the festival itself had always been called the Hekatomboia and that the appearance of the name in various documents only indicates a shift in administrative habit, not a complete overhaul of the festival. Two victory monuments set up at Delphi provide our first documents which explicitly mention the Hekatomboia by name, which allegedly detail victories won between c.490–460 in the first instance and 440–420 in the second.[26] These monuments, however, were erected at Delphi at some point in the first half of the fourth century and record much older victories of both athletes, so it is likely that the use of Hekatomboia reflects a contemporary habit of the inscription rather than the historical name of the competition in the fifth century. At any rate, the pattern we have seen above continues: these games in honor of Hera attract athletes from far-flung corners of the Greek world, in the case of these monuments we find none other than Theogenes of Thasos attested as having won the *dólichos* (long race) at the Hekatomboia, which figures prominently in the 1300 victories claimed by the inscription including his various exploits at the Big Four. It is noteworthy, as Amandry remarked,[27] that besides them the only competition mentioned by name is the Hekatomboia. Due to a fragmentary first line, the identity of the athlete whose victories are detailed by the second inscription remains mysterious, though perhaps he is the famed boxer Dorieus at Rhodes. At any rate, this monument details the anonymous pankratiast's successes at the Big Four as well as his four victories at the Panathenaia, four at the Asklepieia, three at the Lykaia, and three at the Hekatomboia. Again, the reputation and standing of the Hekatomboia are clear, given that it is easily included in such eminent agonistic company, and that it attracts the best athletes of the day to its events. It is quite likely that both of these athletes were competing in the games in honor of Hera that we encountered above rather than the Hekatomboia *proprement dit*, however the early fourth century repute of the competition is still great regardless of its specific title.

26 The two monuments are discussed by Amandry 1980: 220–223, Perlman 2000: 96, Morgan 2007: 250–251. The original inscriptions are *Syll.*[3] 36, in honor of Theogenes of Thasos (see also Pouilloux 1994) and *Syll.*[3] 82, potentially in honour of the fame of Dorieus of Rhodes. On Theogenes and Dorieus see their entries in Moretti 1957: no. 201, 215 (Theogenes), and 322, 326, 330 (Dorieus).

27 Amandry 1984: 220.

As have been collected by Amandry and Moretti, the agonistic program of the Hekatomboia was rich and varied, perhaps more so than previous competitions at the Heraion. The equestrian competitions attested at the site since the sixth century continue to be held into the beginning of the third century, when Nikagoras of Lindos won victories in mounted and drawn horse races at the Hekatomboia among the other major competitions of the period.[28] The athletic contests celebrated by Pindar and Bacchylides continued throughout the fifth century through to the end of the third, when the runner Dematrios of Tegea is celebrated for having twice won a double victory at the Hekatomboia in the *dólichos* and the *híppios* footraces[29] As occurred elsewhere in the Greek Mainland during the third century, in addition to these typical competitive events we also find musical contests attested for the first time as part of an agonistic festival. It is possible, as was the case in other locales, that the competitive program was expanded in the early Hellenistic Period to include artistic events as well as athletic. The Athenian *kitharōidós* Nikokles won many victories in the years leading up to the middle of the third century, among them victories at the Pythia, Panathenaia, and the Hekatomboia.[30]

From the perspective of localism, the manner in which the Hekatomboia were administered and financed by Argos sheds further fascinating light on how the city re-appropriated a much older competition and brought it into its institutional structure. While it may have fallen under the auspices of Argive civic magistrates, the Hekatomboia sit rather distinctly in the administrative structure of Argos, which in turn reveals the delicate politics behind its integration. The gradual expansion and consolidation of Argive power during the 460s and 450s has been well discussed elsewhere, and we need not recapitulate the entire process save for a brief summation.[31] Argive expansion in the region began with the siege and later destruction of the ancient cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, but after their victory over the other communities of the plain the military efforts of the Argives gave way to a policy of regional integration. The Argives sought to bolster their military hegemony over the region with some level of ethnic amalgamation, which was accomplished by incorporating the traditions of their subject peoples into a new 'Argive' regional identity. As Jonathan Hall described in detail in 1997, this involved

28 Notably the 'Big Four', as well as the Panathenaia, the Hekatomboia, the Lykaia, and the Pythian games at Sikyon. Moretti Cat 35, pp 85–91 and Amandry 1980: 223. *IG* XI 4.1164 and 1165 from Delos also mention victories in chariot races at the Hekatomboia. See Amandry 1980: 223n24 resolving the question of whether the Hekatomboia referred to in this inscription were the same as those held in the Argive plain or another festival of the same name. See also Amandry *ad loc.* for the publication history of each victor's list.

29 Moretti no 44, p. 115–116. Amandry 1980: 223.

30 *IG* II² 3779, which is poorly preserved.

31 See the full account of Hall 1997 for this expansion into the plane, along with the more specific studies of Kritzas 1992, Pierart 1997 and 2004, Robinson 1997: 82–86, des Courtils 1992. A general narrative of the period can be found at Kelly 1972: 87–116, and see the introduction to McAuley 2018.

combining elements of the region's diverse (and disparate) mytho-historical traditions into a new coherent 'Argive' tradition; in the process, what was once local was now fused into the regional.[32] In this context, it is unsurprising that Hera figures prominently as a unifying figure in this new regional tradition, given her ancient importance to Mycenae, Tiryns, and other groups of Herakleidai.[33] Bringing Hera into the Argive fold served to provide some measure of continuity to the groups that found themselves newly subject to the Argives. If their religious traditions were at least superficially unchanged, then the Argive yoke would be rather easier to bear and they would not have the desire to rebel against Argos on account of their 'ancestral repute' as they had in the 460s.

In the process of Argive territorial consolidation, Hera and her sanctuary were elevated from local to regional prominence. Hera suddenly appeared on Argive coinage of the fifth century, she simultaneously appeared as a pivotal character in the heroic genealogy of the Argives themselves, and to provide a concrete manifestation of these trends, the Argives lavished the Heraion and its competitions with money and institutional support.[34] Excavations over the course of the 1990s and 2000s undertaken by the 4th Ephorate of Antiquities have uncovered dozens upon dozens of bronze plaques in Argos containing inscriptions which date to the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC, only some of which have been published to date.[35] Even a small sampling of this body of evidence, however, allows us to reconstruct the institutional fineries of Argos at the time, and in the process we learn how the sanctuary of the Heraia and its games were administered and financed. The habit of inscribing public documents on bronze plaques (*pínakes*) is an ancient Argive habit whose popularity at least partially explains the rarity of stone inscriptions in the city.[36] The administrative texts included on these plaques have permitted the reconstruction of not only Argos' institutional structures, but also its dialect, vocabulary, numbering system, and calendar.

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32 Hall 1997: 77–106 for his full account of the mytho-engineering of the region's communities. See also Scheer 1993, 2005 and the edited volume of Bernardini 2004 on Argive mythology more generally. Kelly 1972: 200–220 for the religious development of the region.

33 McInerney 1999: 4–8, Hall 1997: 69–70, Kritzas 1992: 239. On the Herakleidai in the plain and their association with Hera. The other communities of the plain include small groups of Achaians, Pelasgids, and Dryopes, along with a few Ionians in Hermione and Epidauros, mentioned by Hdt. 6.77–78 and 127. Arist. *Pol*. 1302b33, Paus. 2.20.8–10, Diod. Sic. fr. 7.13.2; Plut. *Lyc*. 7. On the ancestral attachments of each group, see Hall 1997: 99–106.

34 See notes above, as well as Amandry 1980: 233–239 and Hall 1995: 613 discussing this as a symbolic end to the rivalry between Argos and Mycenae. See also the discussion of Morgan 2007: 250f on how poetry factored in to this outreach process.

35 Kritzas 1992 contains a publication of three plaques detailing revenue from scared lands in the Argolid. Of most interest to the current chapter is his discussion of the sacred treasury of Argos in Kritzas 2006, which analyses many of the texts that have been discovered but does not publish them in their entirety. The observations and discussion that follow below are taken from this 2006 publication. Kritzas 2006: 397–404 for the provenance of these artefacts.

36 Kritzas 2006: 404.

The majority of the texts published so far is financial in nature, and provide a rather dry account of decisions taken by the boards of various magistrates. The plaques of most interest to us are those that form part of the archives of the sacred treasury, which itself served as something akin to the Argive central bank.[37] These archival texts record transfers or disbursements of sums of money among various colleges of religious and civil magistrates, or payments from the state to outside contractors. It merits note that the sacred treasure of Argos is officially called the treasure of Athena Pallas, the ancient protectress of the city whose prominence outdates Hera.[38] As Kritzas has noted, even the funds which concern the cult of Hera are kept in the treasury of Athena, thus the former had been incorporated into the financial structures of the latter at some point after the conquest of the Argive Plain.[39] Hera's funds, in other words, were held in Athena's bank, which itself was probably located near the temple of Athena in Argos. When funds were deposited or withdrawn, a record of the transaction was inscribed on a plaque and placed in a stone or vase at the treasury. The impression that we gain throughout these texts is that the complex bureaucracy which had overseen the administration of the Heraion and its competitions was simply relocated *en masse* from the Heraion to Argos itself after it fell into Argive hands while still maintaining many of its distinct features. All of the following details are taken from Kritzas' 2006 summary.

The complexity of the Heraion's institutional machinery attests at once to the historical popularity of the cult and its festivals, as well as its newfound importance in Argive administration. A new college of magistrates called *ha epignṓma* is attested in these texts for the first time. The board was formed of eight *synepignṓmones* (two from each tribe) and a secretary who served as stewards of the city's sacred lands, charged with depositing revenue from these lands as well as providing statements of account from time to time.[40] The sums themselves are significant, as one text lists a total of 217,373.5 drachmas in the board's account.[41] There is one attestation of a board specifically identified as *ha epignṓma ha ens Hḗran* which leads us to wonder whether there was always separate college of magistrates tasked with maintaining lands sacred to Hera, or if this was folded in to the *epignṓma* of the city as a whole. With our current documentation, however, the question

37 Kritzas 2006: 404.

38 Cf. Auffarth 2006 on the relationship between Argos and Athena.

39 Kritzas 2006: 409 and n. 29: *Hymne* V (*Le bain de Pallas,* composé vers 270–260 av. J.–C.), surtout v. 51 *sq*., 140 *sq*., quoting directly: "Je ne pense pas que ce dépôt était dû aux circonstances de la guerre et à l'insécurité régnant dans la région de l'Héraion. Il apparaît que le trésor de Pallas, comme le prouve *IG* IV 554 sur laquelle on reviendra, servait de banque à l'État depuis une date ancienne et a continué à jouer ce rôle après la mainmise définitive d'Argos sur l'Argolide et la substitution graduelle d'Athéna à Héra comme déesse–patronne de la région."

40 Kritzas 2006: 412.

41 Kritzas 2006: 412.

remains unresolved, but at any rate we do catch some glimpse of the vast funds available to these magistrates.[42]

There is, however, little ambiguity when it comes to two further colleges of magistrates that must obviously have been long established at the Heraion and then brought into the Argive fold. There are four annual *hiaromnḗmones ens Hḗran*, one taken from each tribe of the re–organised civic body among whom the presidency of the college rotated every three months, and two secretaries.[43] This board, in Kritzas' reconstruction, represents the supreme authority in the city for religious affairs relating to the cult of Hera, and oversaw the maintenance of the sanctuary itself and the handling of funds consecrated to the goddess or confiscated from exiles or criminals.[44] This board would thus have been charged with maintaining the physical environment in which the Hekatomboia took place, as well as the sanctuary as a whole. The fact that the presidency of this college rotates among the four tribes every three months is of more importance than it may seem at first glance: given that membership in these civic subdivisions was hereditary, it seems that the rotating presidency is geared towards involving all groups of Argive society in the cult of Hera at the Heraion, even those who might not have historically had a strong attachment to the goddess.[45] In something akin to the social mixing encouraged by the Kleisthenic reforms, it appears that Argos sought to make the Heraion and its festivals a part of the cultic life of all aspects of Argive society, not just the recently incorporated Herakleidai communities to which she had been the principal goddess. The fact that representatives from all four tribes of Argos play a part in administering the cult of Hera again testifies to this Argive effort to make Hera – and the competitions in her honor – into a regional rather than local tradition.[46]

We find the same conscious attempt at involving all the *phylaí* of Argos in the games of Hera attested in another board of magistrates specifically tasked with organizing the Hekatomboia. A group of four magistrates entitled *Hawethlothétai* (digamma), again presumably one from each tribe, along with two secretaries oversee the planning of the festival itself and its competitions, which are again financed by sums disbursed through the sacred treasury of Athena.[47] The amount of money given towards the Hekatomboia is again significant: the records mention regular deposits of around 10,000 drachmas

42 Kritzas 2006: 412.

43 Interestingly, as Kritzas 2006: 413n48 notes, the term 'iaromnemones' has already been attested by an Archaic inscription in Mycenae (*IG* IV 493) and several other inscriptions in Tiryns, thus this office would seem to be of local provenance but later integrated into the Argive state.

44 Kritzas 2006: 413.

45 Piérart 2004: 604.

46 On the tribes of Argos, see Kritzas 1992 and Piérart 2000, 297–301.

47 Kritzas 2006: 413–415.

towards the funds called the *hawéthlimon*, which the magistrates then spent on the sacrificial animals for the festival as well as the banquet at which panegyric competitions took place. The city, however, could and did intervene in the finances of the festival: there is at least one occasion noted by Kritzas in which the funds destined for the Hekatomboia were levied instead by the 'eighty' (*ogdoẽkonta*), the college of civic magistrates on charge of the city's finances as a whole. Despite the delicate measures of regional inclusion at work here, the civic magistrates at Argos were still superior. The Heraion itself must have retained at least some of the lands which had been in its control before the Argive expansion, as a significant amount of the Argive state's revenue comes from the deme consecrated to Hera – though of course the Argives must have taken their share of this before re-disbursing it on the goddess and her competitions.

A few other groups of magistrates also play a part in the administration of these competitions which should be noted. In the Argive tradition the term *artýna* (collective noun) or *artýnai* (individuals) is used generically to refer to magistrates whose specific task is enumerated in the attributive position after the repeated definite article – thus *ha artýna ha* (function) *ai artýnai ai* (function).[48] Among these we find some very specific assignments related to the shrine and its competitions. The long history of equestrian races at the Heraion is again reinforced by the presence of '*ha artýna ha tas hippaphésios*, a group of four magistrates (again probably from each tribe) specifically charged with running the horse and chariot races long attested at the site. Specifically, according to Kritzas' reconstruction, this would have been an *ad-hoc* group charged with overseeing the construction of a device controlling the staggered starts of horses competing in the hippodrome.[49] Another *artýna* is tasked with making the silver and gold cups for public banquets during panegyrics, and perhaps there are other *artýnai* who were involved in sacrificing the victims at the Hekatomboia and other festivals. Finally, the extent of Argive administrative involvement in the Heraion is further indicated by groups of *artýnai* who continued to oversee specific aspects of the reconstruction of the temple at the beginning of the fourth century. Among them we find magistrates in charge of the portal of the temple, others in charge of the finer architectural details, and yet more overseeing woodworking. A separate, specific group of magistrates oversaw the construction of the famous chryselephantine statue of the goddess herself that was installed at the temple, in the process controlling vast sums of money and precious

48 Kritzas 2006: 415–418.
49 Kritzas 2006: 414.

metals.[50] The completion of this would be commemorated with coin issues featuring the goddess' head that appear in the 370s BC.[51]

There are several conclusions to be drawn from this highly technical review of the games' administration. First and foremost, the sheer size of the bureaucracy involved in managing the competitions is stunning: dozens of officials serving annual terms are engaged in overseeing very specific aspects of the games themselves, the physical space, and the sacrifices in honor of the goddess. Given the long pre-Argive history of the Heraion, we must presume that these magistracies had already existed at the sanctuary when it came under Argive control, and they were simply brought into the city's administrative structure, perhaps with a change of title. At any rate, this administrative complexity of the games was likely not a purely Argive innovation. Second, and perhaps most obvious, is the depth to which the Argives involved themselves in the administration of this new sanctuary and its festivals. It is not as if the conquering Argives maintained the local *status quo* while keeping this all at arm's length from the city itself. Quite the opposite: Argos drew the cult and games of Hera fully into its own structures of civic and religious administration in a manner that echoes other contemporary vectors of regional integration. This was very much part of a calculated policy to make the Heraion into the Argive Heraion. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this complex administrative structure sought to involve the Argives as a whole in the administration of the cult of Hera and its festivals. Rotating presidencies and magistrates drawn from all four tribes of the Argive demos ensured that this cult would not be the exclusive purview of a local ethnic group, but rather sought to de-localize the sanctuary and its festivals by making them part of the cultic fabric of the region. The sheer amount of money and manpower invested in this project speaks to the traditional importance of the games, and their ideological prominence in Argos and throughout the Greek world. By involving itself so heavily in such a renowned competition, Argos was advertising its newfound influence to the broader Greek world every time the Hekatomboia were held. Lavish expenditure in the local realm ensured lavish returns in the realm of international public relations.

From the Local to the Trans-Local: The Hekatomboia outside Argos

By all accounts this effort at 'international' relations mediated through the Heraion and its competitions worked, as did the Argive effort to make the Heraion one of its local cultic

50 All of these functions are listed and described by Kritzas 2006: 415–422, with notes.
51 Kritzas 2006: 421n26.

centers. I have discussed the ethnic dynamics at work in the lists of *theōrodókoi* from Argos, Nemea, and Epidauros elsewhere, and need not rehash the entire argument here suffice to say that these three sanctuaries drew on common ethnic ties in a collaborative manner to expand the reach of the festivals held at each shrine. This link between the local shrines, ethnicity, and external relations is certainly not limited to these fascinating theoric lists. A decree passed by Argos at some point in the late fourth century recognizes the generosity of the people of Rhodes for having lent funds necessary for rebuilding the city wall to the Argives. The decree[52] refers to the Rhodians in lines as *syngenḗes eóntes tṓn Argeiṓn*, and it was out of loyalty to their ancestral metropolis that they gave this money in the first place. A local contribution from *syngeneís* merits a local reward: the decree of the Argive damos states that the Rhodians are to be honored with a crown announced by the *agōnothétēs* of the Hekatomboia and the Nemeia during each competition's *gymnikoí agṓnes* (l. 19–21). Already by the end of the fourth century, the Heraion and its competitions had been so fully brought into the Argive local orbit that the sanctuary itself became a venue for Argive diplomatic relations along with the sanctuary of Apollo Lykeios and the sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea.[53]

The Rhodians were not the only 'ancestral' Argives to be given privileges related to games held at the Heraion. A decree of Argos found at Nemea relating to the Pamphylian city of Aspendos, dated to anywhere between c.330–254 BC, recognizes the people of Aspendos as sharing common descent from the Argives and then proceeds to outline in great detail the legal and political rights that this ancestral status affords them.[54] In the process, the decree makes reference to previous laws regarding the Rhodians and the people of Soloi, and Seriphos, so this is not the only outside community to be recognized as Argive.[55] But again it is the prominence with which the Heraion and its festival figure in this decree that is of most interest to us: the cultic rights of the Aspendians as full Argive citizens are presented on an equal footing as political participation and economic status. As such, the Aspendians are to send *theōroí* bearing offerings to Zeus at Nemea, and 'to Hera at Argos'. (l.9). These Aspendian *theōroí* are invited to join their kinsmen at the head of the procession leading from Argos proper to the Heraion, and once there are

52 *SEG* 19.317.

53 Stroud 1984: 216.

54 Following the text and analysis of Stroud 1984.

55 The decree for Soloi is mentioned and discussed by Stroud 1984: 201 and the ethnic of the people of Soloi appears in line 7 of this inscription. Attestations – numismatic and epigraphic – of the ethnikon of the Solians is discussed by Stroud 1984: 205n24. The decree of Seriphos is one of the more frustrating pieces of Argive evidence: found near the Temple of Zeus at Nemea in 1884 it was subsequently lost, with no photographs or line drawings. What we have of the inscription was published as *IG* IV 480. The similarity of this decree's phraseology with that of our Aspendian decree hints that they were contemporary.

invited to take part in the festival and competitions in the same way as all other Argives.[56] Given the practical tone of the decree and its legalistic precision, there is no reason to think that the Aspendians would not actually have taken advantage of these rights; rather, again we see Argive diplomacy mediated through this shrine and its competitions that had only been brought into the Argive locale in the past century or so.

This diplomacy revolving around the Heraion was a two-way street which drew individual benefactions to Argos as well as the sort of communal ties we have encountered above. Nikokreon, king of Salamis in Cyprus (r.332–310), is praised by the Argives for having given the materials out of which the prizes of the games of Hera would be made – which at this point would still have been known as the Hekatomboia. The inscription, perhaps most importantly, captures the depth to which the connection Argos sought to establish with the Heraion had taken hold in the broader Greek cultural sphere barely a century after its integration into the region.[57] Nikokreon was motivated to provide these gifts to the sanctuary because he identified himself (and was recognized as) a Pelasgian Argive descended from Aiachos, thus in making this gift he was contributing to the cult of his ancestral metropolis – even though his ancestral metropolis did not have such a mythical or historical link to the sanctuary. For his part, along with the similar patronage of Kleopatra of Epirus at roughly the same time, such benefaction and recognition of Argive descent provided the monarch with a ticket into the local world of the Argolid, and thus by extension the Greek Mainland, through the gates of the competitions and festivals held at the Heraion.[58] But for the mechanism to be effective is contingent on the popular recognition of the Hekatomboia and its mother sanctuary as being Argive in the first place. It is only after the delicate integration of the competition into the Argive realm of local influence during the fifth century that such external relations were made possible. At any rate, by the close of the fourth century the Heraion

56 Stroud 1984: 202–203.

57 On the decree and its context see Perlman 2000: 105–111 and Miller 1978: 78–80. The decree is also discussed by Amandry 1980: 219f, and more recently by Bing 2013, especially p. 42. The traditional ties between Argos and Cyprus are discussed by Kritzas 2014. The full text of the inscription (*IG* IV 583):

ματρ[όπο]λίς μοι χθὼν Πέλοπος τὸ Πελαζγικὸν Ἄργος,
Πνυταγόρας δὲ πατὴρ Αἰάκου ἐκ γενεᾶς·
εἰμὶ δὲ Νικοκρέων, θρέψεν δέ με γᾶ περίκλυστος
Κύπρος θειοτάτων ἐκ προγόνων βασιλῆ,
στᾶσαν δ' Ἀργεῖοί με χάριν χαλκοῖο τίοντες,
Ἥραι ὃν εἰς ἔροτιν πέμπον [ἄε]θλα νέοις.

My mother city is the land of Pelops, Pelasgian Argos,
and Pnytagoras my father sprang from the line of Aiakos.
I am Nikokreon, raised in the wave-beaten land
of Cyprus, king from the most divine ancestors.
The Argives set me up to give thanks for the bronze
for Hera, which I would send to the festival as prizes for the youths.

58 See McAuley 2018 and Perlman 2000 on these *theōrodókoi* and their ramifications for Argive external relations in the period.

and the Hekatomboia had become distinctly Argive, in a process that reminds us of the fluidity and malleability of local attachments both here in the northern Peloponnese and beyond.

The reach and political clout of the games of Hera would continue to expand apace into the following centuries, even as the name and location of the competition had been changed. As Amandry has discussed, the name Hekatomboia disappears around the end of the third century, though the fragmentary nature of our evidence does not allow much precision in the date or context. A decree of the Argives in honor of Alexandros of Sikyon, dated by Amandry to between 225–215, mentions that the honors awarded to him are to be announced by the Hellanodikai of the Nemeia and the Heraia during the competitions, respectively, of the Heraia and the Nemeia (l.16–18).[59] In 209, Philip V was the *agōnothétēs* of both the Heraia and the Nemean games, which were both held between the middle of June and the end of July, leading Amandry and others to surmise that they took place at the same locale – though there is no definitive proof of this.[60] By 189, however, the Heraia are attested as having been held in Argos itself, during the same time as the assembly of the Achaian League in the presence of Q. Caecilius Metellus,[61] though whether this was a permanent or temporary occurrence remains unclear.

Regardless, games in honor of Hera held in the Argolid continued to feature prominently in the Greek agonistic circuit during the second and first centuries BC. Among the competitors involved in these competitions we find a cross-section of the Greek world and firm attestation of the wide range of events: Menodoros of Athens[62] (running, boxing, *pankrátion*), Demetrios of Chios[63] (boxer in the youth competition), and Philippos Glaukon of Pergamon[64] (wrestler), as well as a Milesian runner (20 BC).[65] The Heraia thus continued to attract competitors from throughout the Greek world well into the Roman conquest of the Greek Mainland, and did so with a full program of athletic, wrestling, and boxing events, as well as likely musical and equestrian competitions.[66] In no small part these competitions likely remained successful because of their antique renown and archaic reputation. Amandry explains the continued importance of the Heraion and its competitions to the Argives by precisely this argument, writing that

59 Amandry 1980: 226n30 with full history of the decree in honor of Alexandros, and his discussion at 229–230 and 244–248.
60 Liv. 27.30–31, and Amandry 1980: 246.
61 Polyb. 22.10.1.
62 *IDelos* 1957, *IAG* 51.
63 Robert 1938, 127, Amandry 1980: 230n33.
64 *IAG* 58, Amandry 1980: 230–232 for the full list.
65 *IAG* 59.
66 For the full list of attested events and competitors, see Amandry 1980: 230–234.

'l'Héraion demeurait, pour les Argiens, un sanctuaire vénérable par l'ancienneté des liens qui le rattachaient à leur ville' which was at the very least maintained as part of their heritage.[67] As we have seen, the antique links between the city and the games of Hera claimed by the Argives were readily accepted by contemporary Greeks as well as by modern scholars, but as I have argued above, Argive involvement in these competitions was very much a mid–fifth century phenomenon. If they were not Argive, then by means of conclusion what can be said about the early origins of the local competitions at the Heraion?

Conclusion: Retracing the Horses' Path

As we have seen above, Argive attempts to project archaic links between the civic community and the Heraion proceeded from a very specific set of circumstances in the 460s BC. The aftermath of the destruction of Mycenae and Tiryns, and the consolidation of Argive power in the plain in the following decades represents what Catherine Morgan has termed 'an Argive renaissance,' of which the poetry of Pindar commemorating the Hekatomboia 'is only a small part'.[68] At the same time we see 'a positive explosion of public and religious construction in the city centre,'[69] and renovation projects at the Heraion itself that coincide with the installation of democracy.[70] An elaborate programme of mytho-historical embroidery analyzed by Jonathan Hall in 1997 occurred apace, and taken as a whole this Argive strategy aimed at integrating the plain and its communities into the structures and traditions of Argos proper. In essence, the Argives were attempting to make their newly subject communities seem Argive as well, and convey the impression that they always had been. We can similarly see this integrative strategy at work in administrative structure of the city as revealed by the epigraphic evidence considered above. In this background, the reference made by Herodotus[71] to the procession from the city to the Heraion in the episode of Kleobis and Biton fits neatly into a contemporary pattern. Because the story is related by Solon to Croesus of Lydia, taken at face value it seems that the procession had been taking place since early in the sixth century – thus well before the Argive conquest of the plain. But given recent arguments regarding a statue group at Delphi that has been re-identified as the Dioskuroi rather than Kleobis and Biton, Herodotus becomes the lone source of evidence for the

67 Amandry 1980: 250.
68 Morgan 2007: 251.
69 Morgan 2007: 251.
70 It is noteworthy that the first race track at the Heraion was constructed by the Argive at this time as well, as noted by Pariente, Piérart, and Thalmann 1998: 216.
71 Hdt. 1.3.1.

archaic antiquity of this practice linking the city to the sanctuary.[72] In the mid-fifth century background we have reconstructed, Herodotus thus represents only one of many contemporary attempts to provide an Argive link to the shrine stretching back into the Archaic Period in the aftermath of their regional conquest.

But these thoughtful attempts to bring the Heraion and its competitions into the Argive local orbit in turn provide hints of the original local character of the shrine and its games. If the Argives were trying so actively to link themselves to the Heraion and the games in honor of Hera, then the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that these games were already being held in the 460s, and likely had been for some time. The broad reach of the games and the prominence with which they figured in the Greek agonistic cycle could not have been created out of nothing, so the games in honor of Hera must likewise have been widely recognized before the sanctuary passed under Argive administration. In the same vein, the complex administrative structures and magistrates responsible for the games that are attested in the fifth and fourth centuries were not likely created *e nihilo*, but must have been grafted into Argive structures with some modification. Indeed, Argive attempts to de-localize the shrine and its mythic associations speak in turn to the strength of the original attachments.

What can we say then of the extra-Argive local traditions surrounding these competitions? The perennial debate regarding the origins and territorial associations of the Heraion continues to rage in archaeological circles, and putting forward another resolution to the matter is well beyond the scope of this chapter.[73] Given the amount of research that remains to be done on the Heraion and its environs, ranging from a definitive catalogue of pin finds and a comprehensive study on the origins of the site's pottery finds, our picture of the early history of the sanctuary will remain fluid. In the same vein, the precise relationship between the activities and deposits associated with the 'funerary' landscape of the Prosymna tombs and their 'cultic' equivalents in honor of Hera at the early Heraion remains difficult to resolve at best. Nevertheless, some comments and reflections can be made on agonistic history of this region which at the very least provides an illustrative comparandum for subsequent traditions we have explored. I shall consider these two broad aspects of the agonistic landscape around the Heraion – here labelled the funerary and the cultic – in turn.

The epitaph in honor of the young man Hyssematas erected by Kossina near the Heraion in c.500 BC provides a fitting starting point for re-creating the earlier history of the

72 Morgan 2007: 250, following the arguments of Faure 1985 over Vatin 1982, but as she notes in n71, the resulting identification of the statue group is the same.
73 See Hall 1995 and Pfaff 2003 for the scholarly history of the Heraion.

games against a longer chronological trajectory. As mentioned above, the epitaph states explicitly that the column dedication marking the burial place of Hyssematas, the *aethlophóros*, was placed 'near the hippodrome' (l. 1 *pélas hipodromoío*). Following McGowan's reconstruction, the monument itself was meant to either serve as or evoke the turning-post that was placed to mark the course of the equestrian competitions held here. There are two remarks to be made that emerge from this monument. First, the fact that there are no archaeological finds of a hippodrome at the site does not at all mean that there were not equestrian competitions held at the site. Daly in 1939 noted that the area in which the column was found was flat and level, and would provide suitable land for horse racing.[74] H. A. Harris suggests that early Greek equestrian races took place on agricultural land that was marked out for the purpose when the games were held, but was otherwise used for regular farming.[75] Any visitor to the Heraion and its immediate surroundings quickly notes how the location would lend itself well to horse racing, and indeed the terrace which pre-dates the old temple on the site provides the ideal location from which to watch these races. The absence of monumental architecture associated with games does not attest to the absence of the games themselves; here, as elsewhere in the Archaic Period, games were held within decidedly *ad hoc* confines.

Second, as noted by McGowan and Friedländer, the tone of the epigram and its language are distinctly Homeric and thus self-consciously archaizing.[76] The implication, as mentioned above, is that neither the equestrian competitions near the Heraion nor the broader habit of placing a tomb marker near a hippodrome are new innovations when this monument was erected. To the contrary: in her analysis of this and the similar monuments of Xenares, Praxiteles, and Damotimos, McGowan concludes that this use of Homeric language 'reflects the attempt by the families and friends of the dead men to establish a link with a pre-sixth century aristocracy associated with the age of Homeric heroes'.[77] This was thus a self-conscious attempt to cast Hyssematas as an epic hero at a time in which the conventions and associations of epic heroism were well established – in other words, in 500 BC Kossima was imitating a custom that had been recognized for some time previously. Again, the implication is that this sort of funeral monument and the games held nearby conformed to a well-established pattern of elite behavior both in the region specifically and the broader Greek community. Sixth-century vases attest to the practice of using such columns as turning points in both equestrian and foot races.[78]

74 Daly 1939: 168, noted by McGowan 1995: 628n75.
75 Harris 1973: 162–163.
76 McGowan 1995: 628n74 discussion Friedländer *Epigrammata:* 125–126.
77 McGowan 1995: 631–632.
78 I.e. by the Tyrrhenian Group in the mid-sixth century BC discussed by McGowan 1995: 624, Florence inv. 3773, which is an amphora with a chariot race, and other exempla discussed by McGowan *ad. loc. cit.*

The practice of heroic tomb monument serving as a race marker in an agonistic context is attested in literary sources as well: in Book 23 (lines 326–333) of the *Iliad*, before the funeral games of Patroklos, Nestor explains to his son Antilochos the course he is going to follow when he competes:

σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ᾽ ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει.
ἕστηκε ξύλον αὖον ὅσον τ᾽ ὄργυι᾽ ὑπὲρ αἴης
ἢ δρυὸς ἢ πεύκης: τὸ μὲν οὐ καταπύθεται ὄμβρῳ,
λᾶε δὲ τοῦ ἑκάτερθεν ἐρηρέδαται δύο λευκὼ
ἐν ξυνοχῇσιν ὁδοῦ, λεῖος δ᾽ ἱππόδρομος ἀμφὶς
ἦ τευ σῆμα βροτοῖο πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,
ἢ τό γε νύσσα τέτυκτο ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνθρώπων
καὶ νῦν τέρματ᾽ ἔθηκε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

> Now I will tell you a most certain sign that will not escape you. There stands, about a fathom's height above the ground, a dry stump, of oak or pine, which rots not in the rain, and two white stones on either side of it are firmly set against it at the turning of the course, and on either side is smooth ground for driving. Perhaps it is a monument of some man long ago dead, or perhaps was made the turning post of a race in days of men of old; and now has swift-footed noble Achilles marked it as his turning post (transl. Murray 1924).

The sort of competition for which Nestor is preparing Antilochos in this passage seems to align quite neatly with the type of competition attested by the monument to Hyssematas: in the middle of a field there is a marker that has been designated as the turning post of a track that has been marked off for the occasion – in this case the race takes place on land outside Troy. The funerary context of this competition is also noteworthy, as these games are being held as commemoration of the fallen Patroklos. There is, of course a symbolic valence to such competitions as well, and the idea the concept of the 'racecourse of life' is found in early Greek literature and has been well-discussed by contemporary scholars.[79] As McGowan notes, however, Nestor himself is not sure whether the marker is a turning post or the grave of some earlier mortal, and this ambiguity might be precisely the point.[80] This passage of Homer, it seems, attests to an Archaic-period practice of using the funerary landscape of a region on an *ad-hoc* basis as markers for competitions held near (or indeed in honor of) these tombs. This intersection of competition and funerary monuments calls to mind the mysterious Taraxippos of Olympia, attributed to various

79 Davies 1985, cited by McGowan 1995: 629n76.
80 McGowan 1995: 629.

dead heroes by Pausanias, as well as similar phenomena at Isthmia and Nemea.[81] The association of the dead (and their monuments) with competitions that took place in the same locale is thus hardly exclusive to the Argolid, but appears in local traditions throughout the Archaic world. We must not push the envelope too far and suggest that these Archaic practices reflect Bronze Age traditions of local funerary competitions, but we can surmise with more security that the sort of competition attested by the column of Hyssematas could well have its origins in Iron Age traditions reflected in the epic cycle.

I have dwelled at such length on the funerary context of these competitions because this is of critical importance to anchoring these games in the unique landscape near the Heraion. An element of the region that is often overlooked by those considering the Classical temple is the extensive necropolis located near the prehistoric settlement of Prosymna near what would become the Heraion. Carl Blegen excavated the region in 1925, 1927, and 1928, in the process discovering fifty three chamber tombs that had Mycenaean origins but continued to be frequented into the Geometric and Archaic periods.[82] Subsequent expeditions have since discovered more tombs, and the sheer size of this necropolis and the number of deposits at the site is remarkable, especially considering there is no indication of an earlier Mycenaean palatial settlement at Prosymna, unlike Athens, Mycenae and Tiryns.[83] The presence of extensive Geometric period material in these Bronze Age tombs suggests that there were ritual activities at these sites centuries after the initial burials. It would be excessive to conclude, as Blegen initially suggested, that these offerings represent continuous ancestor worship of Bronze Age burials by relatives in the Geometric and Archaic periods, and it seems rather more likely that this activity represents ritual activity at the site of what was presumed by later residents of the region to have been heroic burials from the Bronze Age.[84] The subsequent re-use of many tombs in the Geometric and Archaic period likewise attests that this region was a very active funerary – and thus ritual – landscape well before the Argive conquest of the plain in the fifth century.

Can we presume that competitions would have regularly accompanied this local funerary activity? Several artefacts dating from the Mycenaean through to the Archaic Period discussed by Donald Kyle suggests that we can indeed. According to his analysis, Linear B documents attest to the presence of chariots in funerary contexts, and images on

81 Paus. 6.20.15–19.

82 As discussed by Antonaccio 1992: 86. It is noteworthy how much of the scholarship on the Heraion focuses on the temple itself, not the broader *témenos*.

83 On the Mycenaean–period geography of the plain, see especially Darcque 1998 and Dabney 1999.

84 Antonaccio 1992: 99 with discussion of the scholarly history of this notion in n40–42. As she argues, it would be somewhat excessive to make a connection between this apparent hero cult and the goddess Hera herself, and we should not view the two cults as being equivalent.

pottery suggest that races were held as part of funeral rituals. A thirteenth-century amphora from Tiryns has been identified as depicting a seated goddess of the underworld on one side, and racing chariots on the other.[85] A larnax found in a chamber tomb in Tanagra contains images of a funeral procession with mourners and burial scenes on parts of its front and top panels, while its side panels show a variety of competitions: two-horse chariots racing, duels, and hunting.[86] The presence of ritualized competition in a funerary context is also attested after the Mycenaean Period, and Kyle argues that Dark Age funerary games continued to be held but on a smaller scale than their Bronze Age predecessors. Scenes on late Geometric vases from Attica and Boiotia seem to suggest that contests of boxing, chariot races, and horse races continued as part of aristocratic funerals, with an increasing emphasis on the prize awarded to the victors.[87] It is not difficult to imagine a scene akin to these attested on Archaic vases taking place in the area of the Heraion in the eighth or seventh centuries: the flat plain lent itself well to horse racing, and there was no shortage of funerary monuments that could be used as a turning post. Perhaps the enigmatic Old Temple Terrace of the Heraion with its massive Cyclopean retaining wall, provides a venue for this ritualistic competitive activity. The terrace dates to roughly the seventh century, its purpose remains unclear though it lacks any architectural elements built on to it, though it was clearly used regularly given the number of pottery sherds throughout the terrace and the brunt irregular area in its centre which well have been an altar.[88] Deposits at the terrace indicate a flurry of seventh century activity but ongoing use of the site in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Perhaps this flattened area, highly visible from around the plain, provided the hub of ritual competitive activity at the site. At any rate, it seems sound to suppose that competitive activity near the Heraion could well have taken place in the eighth and seventh centuries amid this funerary landscape, and that such competitions were not initially associated with the cult of Hera.[89]

How then does Hera enter the picture? As argued above, we do not need to follow in the footsteps of de Polignac and Antonaccio in explicitly associating the construction of temples such as the Heraion with the emergence of polis communities in the Archaic period. In the case of the Heraion, we do not need to look exclusively towards Argos as the only community which drove the development of the site. First, we must not commit

85 Kyle 2007: 49 and n22, citing Kilian 1980 and Decker 1982–3.
86 Kyle 2007: 50.
87 Kyle 2007: 90–92, and also Roller 1981, who concludes that funeral games were commonplace from the eighth century onwards, and goes so far as to suggest, in the summation of Kyle 2007: 356n28 that 'originally non–funeral Panhellenic games took on funeral associations.'
88 Antonaccio 1992: 89, 100.
89 On the broader landscape of the region during this period, see Foley 1988.

Snodgrass' 'positivist fallacy' by presuming that, as Hall put it, 'an absence of dedications at the sites of future sanctuaries precludes earlier cultic enactment.'[90] Simply because we have no explicit Geometric attestations of a cult to Hera this does not mean that there was no cult to Hera at the site. As Hall has demonstrated, the eastern half of the Argive plain contains an extensive cult system dedicated to Hera, with a consistent set of similar votive objects in honor of the goddess deposited at various sites stretching from the Heraion to Tiryns, Mycenae, and other rural religious sites.[91] The objects found at the Heraion itself are consistent with this general pattern of dedications to Hera, and it is likely that from an early date the site of the future Heraion was associated with the goddess. Hall goes on to argue that Hera was likely the principal deity honored in the urban cults of Tiryns and Mycenae, based on material finds in the cities along with literary references linking the goddess to each community.[92] Mycenae itself is linked to the Heraion by a road leading from its citadel, and today the walk from Mycenae to the Heraion is much easier than from Argos to the Heraion – as indeed it would have been in antiquity.[93] The picture that emerges, thus, is that the site of the future Heraion was originally part of a larger cultic network dedicated to the goddess among the communities of the eastern Argolid.[94] The site itself would thus have been the location of ritual activity in honor of Hera since, by inference, the eighth or seventh century at the latest. The spike in monumental building activity at the site can accordingly be viewed as part of the broader shift identified in the second half of the eighth century away from investment in grave offerings and towards investment in sanctuaries.[95] It is likely that as the *témenos* of Hera was made more distinct, the local funerary competitions which were taken place in the region were either made to coincide with a festival of the goddess, or re-associated with her cult. The games continued to be held, just under a different pretext as the Heraion became a more clearly defined cultic center.

In sum, I would argue that there are two distinct local trends unique to the site which intersected at the Heraion to produce the games in honor of Hera that we have explored above: first, the regular occurrence of competitions in the region associated with its Bronze Age funerary landscape; and second, the site's increasing prominence as a node of the cultic network to Hera in the Eastern Argolid. These two trends then collided at some point in the late eighth century, and the two local traditions were fused into what

90 Snodgrass 1987: 38.
91 Hall 1995: 596–597 and especially fig. 5.
92 Hall 1995: 596–598.
93 With my thanks to Professor James Whitley (Cardiff) for this observation in personal discussions of the topic.
94 It is noteworthy also that, as Hall 1995 argues, Argos itself does not fit into this regional pattern of dedications to Hera.
95 Snodgrass 1987: 52–54 and Hall 1995: 578.

we can identify in the early fifth century as the games in honor of Hera. Although initially the Heraion itself and its festivals were associated with Mycenae, Tiryns, and the communities of the eastern Argolid, after these came under Argive dominion in the 460s, they along with their ancestral sanctuary were carefully redefined as 'Argive' by the mechanisms described above. In the process, local cultic traditions of festivals and competitions were re-associated with another locale – in this case, Argos. This thus represents a very different process than the emergence of extramural, rural sanctuaries connected with the emergence of polis communities that de Polginac argued was at work with the Heraion and Argos. Instead of this polis-centric view of local religion and its associated competitions, we find in the games at the Heraion a fitting example of a uniquely local religious tradition established over centuries that was grafted into the mechanisms of a fifth-century polis only much later. It was at this point in the 460s that the games in honor of Hera became the games in honor of *Argive* Hera, though by then they had been well established as a prominent fixture on the Panhellenic agonistic circuit. In this sense, we find that these competitions are a fitting exemplar of the complex interplay between local religious traditions and a unifying Panhellenic religious sensibility identified by Julia Kindt in 2012.[96] As an illustrative case study, these games in honor of Hera speak to the long penchant for continuity in Greek local religion, as well as the sacrality of place, not of polis.

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96 Especially chapter five of Kindt 2012.

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Chapter 8

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The Asklepieia and Epidauros

Introduction

The Epidaurians had enough. They had caught the cheaters (again) and were unwilling to let it pass this time. Thus they decided to set up a stele with an inscription communicating the names of the scammers for everybody to know. This is what they wrote:

> ἐπὶ ἀγωνοθέτα τῶν Ἀσκλαπιείων Κλεαιχμίδα τοῦ | Ἀριστοκλέος κατάδικοι οἱ γενόμενοι τῶν ἀθλη|τᾶν διὰ τὸ φθείρειν τὸν ἀγῶνα ἕκαστον στατῆρ|σι χιλίοις Ταυρίδης Τελεσίου Σολεὺς ἀνὴρ στα|διαδρόμος, Φίλιστος Καλλισθένους Ἀργεῖος ἀπ' Ἀ|χαΐας, ἀνὴρ πένταθλος, Σίμακος Φαλακρίωνος Ἠπει|ρώτης ἀπὸ Θεσπρω-τῶν ἀνὴρ πανκρατιαστής.
>
> When Kleaichmidas son of Aristokles was *agōnothétēs* of the Asklepieia, the following athletes have been fined 1,000 *statéres* each of them for corrupting the competition: Taurides son of Telesios from Soloi, *stádion* runner, Philistos son of Kallisthenes, Achaian from Argos, pentathlete; Simakos son of Phalakrion, Epirotan from the Thesprotians, pankratiast.[1]

This inscription dating to the second century BC is one of the rare cases which attest to the public condemnation of cheating in Greek athletics beyond Olympia.[2] It shows that the famous Zanes had local counterparts elsewhere in the Greek world, namely in

1 *IG* IV² 1.99 II (Epidauros, second century BC); cf. Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 334–337.
2 With a recently published "contract to lose a wrestling match" (*POxy*. LXXIX 5209; 23 February AD 267; cf. Rathbone 2014, Decker 2014 [2019]), there is intriguing new evidence on athletic cheating in Late Antiquity (for a similar case, Philostr. *gym*. 45).

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 170-188.

Epidauros.[3] Beyond that, it is striking where the athletes who had "corrupted the competition" (φθείρειν τὸν ἀγῶνα) came from. Two of them originated from rather distant places from a Peloponnesian point of view: Simakos was an Epirotan, and Taurides even stemmed from Soloi in Cicilia. Thus the catchment area of the contest transcended the local as well as the regional level in the second century BC.

Another picture emerges, however, if we take a look at the origin of the successful horse owners in a victor list of the same contest dating to AD 32/33 who all hailed from Epidauros. Had the Asklepieia ceased to attract strong competitors from outside the city and became a truly 'local' contest in terms of their catchment area in the first century AD?[4] Of course, both cases only represent two snapshots in the long and varied history of the games, and catchment areas are generally difficult to determine. Yet the evidence for the Asklepieia appears to be comparatively good,[5] which is why the first part of this chapter will focus on a comparison between the catchment area of the athletic festival of the Asklepieia and that of the sanctuary's healing cult.

In doing so this chapter profits from a seminal article by Michel Sève on the festival which still represents the current state of research on the topic.[6] Yet Sève was primarily interested in the 'agonistic realities' of the games: their development, history, and organization.[7] Inspired by recent research on ancient (and modern) localism this chapter will focus on the relevance and meaning the games gained for those involved instead.[8] It will ask what the Asklepieia meant to the Epidaurians and how the games were perceived from an outer point of view, that is from the perspective of the athletes coming to Epidauros.[9] I cannot help but wonder: what was the relationship between Epidauros and

3 Paus. 5.21.2–17; cf. Weiler 1991, Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 335–336, Matthews 2007: 88–90.

4 *IG* IV² 1.101, l. 43–49. Yet we must not jump to conclusions here bearing in mind that even the most renowned athletic festival the Olympic Games underwent a period in the first century BC for which only Elian victors in the equestrian contests are attested and which cannot be interpreted in terms of a general decline of interest in the festival anymore, as recent research has shown (contra earlier positions Scharff 2019; cf. Freitag 2011). For a different explanation of what might have happened in Epidauros see below.

5 There is a broad variety of instructive material on the games that sheds light on such important aspects as female athletics and corruption which remain in the dark for most other athletic festivals. What is more, the remaining evidence of the healing cult (esp. the famous *iámata*) offers the chance to compare with other findings beyond the field of athletics.

6 Sève 1993; cf. Ringwood 1927: 70–71, Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002, Miller 2004: 129–132, Valavanis ²2017: 397–398, and Nielsen 2018: 43–44, 89, 129–130, 165, 203–204.

7 Sève 1993: 304.

8 Ancient localism: Hodos 2006, Beck 2020; modern localism: Robertson 1995 ("glocalization"), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o 2012.

9 The following analysis profits also from important new epigraphic material on the sanctuary (esp. the so-called 'stele of the punishments': Kritzas and Prignitz 2020) and the games (Petzl and Schwertheim 2006; for an agonistic inscription not to be found in Sève 1993, see *IG* IV 673) and is informed by significant new work on the sanctuary which established a new chronology of the building program of the fourth century BC (Prignitz 2014 and 2022; see on Asklepios sanctuaries in general, Riethmüller 2005 and Melfi 2007; on incubation sanctuaries: Renberg 2017).

its most important athletic festival? But let us begin with a short overview of the history of the games.

The Asklepieia of Epidauros: a Short History of the Sanctuary and the Games

The first attestation of the games which took place every four years in spring in the second year of an Olympic circle goes back to the 530s BC.[10] It is in the work of Pindar that three agonistic victories in Epidauros are mentioned, all in odes on young pankratiasts from Aigina.[11] But while the victories of Aristokleides and Kleandros date to the 480s or 470s, the successes of Themistios in Epidauros must refer to a period two generations before the Nemean victory of his grandson Pytheas who won in the 480s and who is praised by *Nemean Five*.[12] Themistios was a pugilist, but is explicitly said to have won the *pankrátion* in Epidauros. Thus the *pankrátion* is the first attested athletic event in Epidauros, but we have no reason to assume that it was the only discipline in which athletes competed in Epidauros in the sixth century BC. Although the name of the contest is not explicitly mentioned by Pindar, it is likely that the games were called Asklepieia right from the beginning.[13]

That the earliest attested victors all stem from Aigina is not surprising given the geographical proximity of the island and the fact that the Aiginetans had a highly developed agonistic culture already in the sixth and fifth century BC.[14] It is interesting to note that two of the three known Pindaric victors in Epidauros also succeeded at the Alkathoia of Megara.[15] In addition to the evident attractiveness of the most renowned

10 Nielsen 2018: 89.

11 Pind. *Nem*. 3.144; 5.94–96; *Isthm.* 8.147–150; Kramer 1970: 37.

12 Pind. *Nem*. 5.91–98:

> εἰ δὲ Θεμίστιον ἵκεις, ὥστ᾽ ἀείδειν, μηκέτι ῥίγει: δίδοι
> φωνάν, ἀνὰ δ᾽ ἱστία τεῖνον πρὸς ζυγὸν καρχασίου,
> πύκταν τέ νιν καὶ παγκρατίῳ φθέγξαι ἑλεῖν Ἐπιδαύρῳ διπλόαν
> νικῶντ᾽ ἀρετάν, προθύροισιν δ᾽ Αἰακοῦ
> ἀνθέων ποιάεντα φέρε στεφανώματα σὺν ξανθαῖς Χάρισσιν.
>
> But if you come to Themistios, let there be no more coldness! Lift up your voice, and hoist the sails to the top-most yard; proclaim him as a boxer, and tell how he claimed double excellence with his victory in the pankration at Epidaurus. Bring to the porch of Aiakos green garlands of flowers, in company with the golden-haired Graces. (Transl. D. Arnson Svarlien).

13 The earliest epigraphical attestation for the cult of Asklepios in Epidauros is *IG* IV² 1.136 dating to ca. 500 BC. Archaeological evidence, however, shows that Asklepios was venerated at least since the middle of the sixth century, probably even since 600 BC as a newly found building structure in the area of the Asklepieion may suggest (https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2020/01/archaic-building-found-at-asclepeion.html), although, of course, we have to wait for final publication here.

14 On the successes of Aiginetan athletes in this period which were based upon a strong aristocracy, Mann 2001: 192–235. Note that the Aiginetans even engaged athletic coaches from Athens (Pind. *Nem.* 5.89–90; see Fisher 2015).

15 Pind. *Nem*. 3.144–145 (Aristokleides from Aigina, *pankrátion* 475? BC):

> τίν γε μέν, εὐθρόνου Κλεοῦς ἐθελοίσας, ἀεθλοφόρου λήματος ἕνεκεν
> Νεμέας Ἐπιδαυρόθεν τ᾽ ἄπο καὶ Μεγάρων δέδορκεν φάος.
>
> By the grace of Clio on her lovely throne and because of your victorious spirit, the light has shone on you from Nemea and Epidauros and Megara. (transl. D. Arnson Svarlien).

athletic festivals of the grand four, it was the Saronic region that gave orientation and meaning to the agonistic activities of Aiginetan athletes.

In the course of the fifth century BC, then, we find at least two top athletes active in Epidauros: the *stádion* runner and multiple victor at holy crown games Nikoladas of Corinth[16] and the even more successful pankratiast and *periodoníkēs* Dorieus of Rhodes, a member of the city's most prominent agonistic clan who achieved four victories at the Asklepieia, between 440 and 420 BC.[17] Given all the surviving late-Archaic and early-Classical evidence of the Asklepieia,[18] it is a fair assumption that the festival (like the Lykaia, the Hekatomboia of Argos or the Aleaia of Tegea) belonged to the second category of athletic games just behind the level of the 'grand four' (and probably after the Panathenaia) in this period.[19]

It is the end of the fifth century BC at the latest that saw a substantial extension of the agonistic program of the festival. A fifth-century BC inscription mentions a [ὅρ]ος ἱπ|[π]οδρόμ[ο] which is the earliest attestation of equestrian facilities, and thus of horse and chariot races, in Epidauros.[20] The earliest attested victor in a hippic competition the horse owner Akestorides son of Hermokreon from the Troad belongs to the third century BC and succeeded in the two- or four-horse chariot race for colts.[21] Only slightly later appears to be a passage at the very beginning of Plato's *Ion*, a dialogue which is usually dated to 395/94 BC. Having been asked by Sokrates where he came from the rhapsode Ion replied:

> Ion: From Epidauros and the festival there of Asklepios.

Pind. *Isthm.* 8.147–150 (Kleandros from Aigina, *pankrátion*, 478 BC):

> ἀλίκων τῷ τις ἁβρὸν
> ἀμφὶ παγκρατίου Κλεάνδρῳ πλεκέτω
> μυρσίνας στέφανον, ἐπεί νιν Ἀλκαθόου τ' ἀγὼν σὺν τύχᾳ
> ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ τε νεότας δέκετο πρίν:
> Therefore let another young man weave for Kleandros a garland of tender myrtle in honor of the pankration, since the contest of Alkathoos and the young men (*neótai*) of Epidauros welcomed him before in his success. (transl. D. Arnson Svarlien).

16 *Anth. Pal.* 13.19 (Ebert 1972: no. 26); Sève 1993: no. 25. According to the surviving epigram, Nikoladas won once in Delphi, five times at the Panathenaia, thrice at the Isthmos and in Nemea, four times at the Theoxenia of Pellene, twice at the Lykaia on Mount Lykaion, at the Aleaia of Tegea, the Aiakeia of Aigina, the Asklepieia of Epidauros, the Herakleia of Thebes, the Alkathoia of Megara and at a festival in Phleious – a veritable agonistic landscape. It is striking that the Panathenaia are referred to before the Isthmia and Nemeia are mentioned. This is unusual and may only be in part explained by the particularly high of victories Nikoladas achieved in Athens.

17 *Syll.*³ 82, l. 3–4; Sève 1993: no. 14; cf. Perlman 2000: 67. The inscription was re-inscribed in Delphi between 370 and 360 BC. On the Diagorids, David 1986, Cairns 2005, and Scharff 2022: 301n13, 319–320.

18 Note that the earliest phase of the stadion of Epidauros also dates to the fifth century BC (Patrucco 1976: 122).

19 Cf. Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 330.

20 *IG* IV² 1.153; cf. Sève 1993: 311-312; Nielsen 2018: 44.

21 Ebert 1972: no. 68.

> Sokrates: Do you mean to say that the Epidaurians honor the god with a contest of rhapsodes also?
> Ion: Certainly, and of music in general.[22]

Thus we have positive evidence that by the beginning of the fourth century BC (and probably earlier) the program of the Asklepieia also included musical contests. No doubt, the games had a very broad set of events at least from the fourth century BC onwards.

It was the same century that also saw a significant innovation in the way the festival was announced. An elaborate system of *epangelía* that included at least 85 poleis is attested from the middle of the fourth century BC onwards.[23] The two surviving lists of *theōrodókoi* ('hosts of sacred envoys') mention the announcement of the festival in the cities of Sicily and Southern Italy, of Epeiros, Akarnania and Aitolia, of West Lokris and Phokis, of Boiotia, the Isthmos and Attika, of Thessaly, the Aegean, Makedonia, the Chalkidike, and Thrace.[24] However, the surviving evidence does not reflect the entire system that existed in the fourth century BC: one of the stelae is fragmentary, and we must certainly assume that there were more inscribed *theōrodókoi* lists in the sanctuary of Epidauros than we have today. Proxeny decrees from Epidauros show that the sacred envoys of the Asklepieia additionally went to Argos, Astypalaia, Lampsakos, Kardia, Cyprus –[25] and probably many other cities including most of the Peloponnesian poleis.

The introduction of the system of *epangelía* in Epidauros in about 360 BC followed a massive building program that started already at the beginning of the century, as Sebastian Prignitz has shown.[26] Although the work on the temple of Asklepios commenced 20 years earlier than had been generally thought and was quickly finished in four years and nine months, other buildings were not erected at the same speed.[27] Thus when the Epidaurians decided to intensify their efforts with regard to the announcement of their games in the Greek world, there was still construction work going on in the

22 Plat. *Ion* 530a:
> Σωκράτης: τὸν Ἴωνα χαίρειν. πόθεν τὰ νῦν ἡμῖν ἐπιδεδήμηκας; ἢ οἴκοθεν ἐξ Ἐφέσου;
> Ἴων: οὐδαμῶς, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀλλ' ἐξ Ἐπιδαύρου ἐκ τῶν Ἀσκληπιείων.
> Σωκράτης: μῶν καὶ ῥαψῳδῶν ἀγῶνα τιθέασιν τῷ θεῷ οἱ Ἐπιδαύριοι;
> Ἴων: πάνυ γε, καὶ τῆς ἄλλης γε μουσικῆς. (Transl. J. Burnet).

23 *IG* IV² 1.94–95; see Perlman 2000: 67–97; Nielsen 2007: 63–68 (cf. Nielsen 2018: 44).

24 The sequence of the regions follows the overview in Nielsen 2007: 64–66; cf. Rutherford 2013: 73. On the cities of Epeiros and Makedonia, see Daubner 2018: 139–141.

25 Argos: *SEG* 26.445 (ca. 350 BC); Astypalaia: *IG* IV² 1.48 (ca. 350–275 BC), Lampsakos: *IG* IV² 1.51, Kardia: *IG* IV² 1.49 (323-309 BC), city on Cyprus – Soloi (?): *IG* IV² 1.53 (350–275 BC). For these additions, cf. Nielsen 2007: 68n226.

26 Prignitz 2014: 250. On the date of the *theōrodókoi* lists and hence the introduction of the *epangelía* system, see Perlman 2000: 67; 69–74.

27 For instance, it took 25 to 40 years to build the Tholos (sometime between 380 and 340 BC; Prignitz 2014: 248).

sanctuary[28] – and part of this work included the athletic facilities as well as those for the musical competitions. The famous theater, for instance, was built at the end of the fourth/beginning of the third century BC;[29] and although the stadion goes back to the fifth century BC already, the last third of the fourth century saw spectator stands built on the south and north sides and the installation of a stone border laid around the track to channel and drain rainwater. A complex starting device (*hýsplēx*) followed in the third century BC,[30] and finally, as in Olympia and Nemea, a vaulted entranceway to the stadion was built in the third or second century BC.[31]

Apart from the mere chronology, it is striking how much time and effort the Epidaurians invested to improve the facilities and to make their festival known.[32] With regard to the athletic facilities, Epidauros' building program is more or less contemporaneous with that at the big four and must have been part of a larger trend. Note that the point of reference is the big four! Even more so, the geographical scope of Epidauros' *epangelía* system stood out among the small and medium-sized games and was comparable to that of the four grand. The Asklepieia clearly exceeded the local level in this regard. But why is it that they tried so hard?

One of the most interesting features of the surviving lists from Epidauros is that at times even very small and insignificant communities appear,[33] especially in Aitolia and Akarnania, regions which were in general far from being well known for their vital agonistic cultures.[34] Thus it is not very probable that the Epidaurians went there to attract the most talented athletes possible. Rather, it shows how much the announcement of the games was about politics. Contests were "connecting the Greeks" and the Epidaurians clearly wanted to expand their political networks.[35]

The years following the massive building program in the sanctuary saw the heyday of the contest which became renamed as Asklepieia kai Apollonia,[36] and it was probably in the

28 For the building program of the second half of the century, see Prignitz 2022.
29 Prignitz 2022: 163–172; on the theatre: von Gerkan and Müller-Wiener 1961.
30 It is first attested for the third century BC. On the fines for the constructor Philon, see *IG* IV² 1.98 I (cf. Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 331–334).
31 Patrucco 1976: 122; Sève 1993: 310–311.
32 Although some *theōrodókoi* are also known for athletic festivals like those of Lousoi and Hermione (Perlman 2000: 157–166), the lists from Epidauros are considerably more extensive which seems not simply to be due to the state of the surviving evidence.
33 Three out of five Aitolian communities (Akripos, Phyleia, Therminea) are exclusively known from this list. Hyporeiai in Akarnania remains unlocated and is only referred to in one other ancient source, Nielsen 2007: 66.
34 Scharff 2023: 212–214.
35 But note that it may have been in 368 BC that a pankratiast from Akarnania succeeded for the first time in Olympia (Paus. 6.2.1). However, the date of victory of this heavy athlete from Stratos is uncertain (Moretti 1957: no. 416) to say the least. Moretti 1957: no. 409 also places a victorious boy pugilist from Korkyra four years earlier.
36 *IG* IV² 1.100, l. 5 (Epidauros, second / first century BC); on the title, Sève 1993: 312–313.

third or second century BC that the status of the games was elevated to that of an *agṓn stephanítēs*.[37] When, in roughly about the same time, a boy wrestler from Priene had his Epidaurian success celebrated, "(all of) Hellas heard the news" of his victory and became the imagined audience of his epigram.[38] Like him, other victorious athletes at the Asklepieia kai Apollonia regularly hailed from Asia Minor in this century. Yet it is interesting to note that all top athletes successful in Epidauros in the Hellenistic period succeeded in the age class of boys and did not return as a man.[39] Did the top athletes of the Hellenistic period preferred to participate in the Asklepieia just at the beginning of their career? If so, this would mean that they followed some kind of career planning: avoid the strongest competitors possible as a youth in order to have the chance to learn from your mistakes, while nevertheless competing at a very high competitive level.[40]

With the Roman imperial period, a difficult time dawned for the games in Epidauros. The Peloponnese no more constituted the center of Greek athletics. Contests in other parts of the ancient world flourished and were founded and supported by Roman emperors. In consequence, no top athletes are attested at the Asklepieia for almost two centuries. Yet the Epidaurians may have tried to take countermeasures at an early stage including the introduction of running events for female athletes in the first half of the first century AD.[41] However, the competition from festivals in Rome, Italy, and Asia Minor remained strong and the games did not succeed in recovering immediately. The prestige of the contest declined; and when the emperor Hadrian wrote his famous second letter to the synod of *technítai* around Dionysos in AD 133/34 and ordered a 'new circuit' of games, the Asklepieia did not form part of the picture.[42]

And yet, by the end of the second century AD, the *periodoníkai* returned and the games succeeded in securing themselves a firm place in the agonistic landscape of relevant Greek

37 A "green branch/crown" (θαλλός) as victory prize is attested in a mid-second century BC agonistic epigram from Priene (Ebert 1972: no. 73 A, l. 5; B, l. 4; cf. Sève 1993: 324-326). The fact that the games of Epidauros belonged to the 'holy crown games' is probably also referred to in *IAG* 63.3, l. 5-6 (Delphi, ca. AD 45), when Epidauros is called "holy" (Ἀσκλάπεια ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ | τῇ ἱερᾶ). On the status of the Asklepieia, see also Robert 1984: 37, Chaniotis 1995: 164.

38 Ebert 1972: no. 73 A, l. 5-6 (Priene, mid-second century BC). No doubt, the formulation is generic but it is one that is usually reserved for victories at the big four.

39 *IAG* 40 (Kallistratos of Sikyon, 'heavy athlete', ca. 260–220 BC), 44 (Damatrios of Tegea, *dólichos* runner; end of the third century BC), 48 (Athenopolis of Priene, wrestler, mid-second century BC), 53 (Sokrates of Epidauros, runner, ca. 100 BC), 56 (Drakontomenes of Halikarnassos, runner, ca. mid-first century BC). Another example is the late-Hellenistic wrestler Athanippos of Corinth (Peek 1972: no. 39; cf. Sève 1993: 327).

40 If this interpretation is correct, the behavior of top athletes changed at least at the end of the second century AD: a champion like M. Aurelius Asklepiades (*IAG* 79) won in Epidauros in the age class of men.

41 *IAG* 63 C, l. 3 (Delphi, ca. AD 45).

42 Petzl and Schwertheim 2006 (Alexandria Troas, AD 133/34), l. 62–74. In addition to the remarks in *SEG* 56.1359, see esp. Slater 2008. The literature on this inscription has now become something of an industry unto itself. On Hadrian's 'new *períodos*' see Gouw 2008, Gordillo Hervás 2011, and Strasser 2016.

contests.[43] It was also around the same time that the games received a new name again and were called, sometimes exclusively, sometimes additionally, 'Olympia'.[44] When the games were last held is not exactly clear. The latest more or less securely dated victory at the games in Epidauros was won by the herald Valerius Eklektos between AD 253 and 257.[45] Finally, the games met a fate similar to that of most other Greek *agṓnes*: they came to an abrupt end in the fourth century AD (or shortly thereafter).[46]

The Catchment Areas of the Games and the Healing Cult Compared. Snapshots from the Fourth Century BC

One of the aspects which make the Epidaurian evidence stand out is that relevant information on the catchment area(s) of the sanctuary and the games came down to us on three different levels. In addition to the *theōrodókoi* lists and victor inscriptions, the famous miracle reports (*iámata*) constitute a unique piece of evidence.[47] However, there are some methodological caveats. As the *theōrodókoi* lists, the *iámata* do not simply represent "transcriptions of actual itineraries, but (…) also serve the purpose of (…) advertising the size of the sanctuary's catchment area"[48] which was at least in part an "imagined community".[49] Hence from a methodological point of view, the *iámata* are not necessarily representative of the catchment area of the healing cult in the fourth century BC. Yet they must at least represent what the Epidaurian priests believed or wanted the catchment area to be. But note that we do not possess the entire documentation of miracle reports, as it existed in the fourth century BC.[50] Thus we have to bear in mind that, although there is a richer documentation than for any other festival beyond the 'big

43 *IAG* 79 ('heavy weight' M. Aurelius Asklepiades, ca. AD 200), 81 (anonymous *aulētḗs*, beginning of the third century AD), 88 (anonymous athlete of an unknown discipline; Megara, mid-third century AD), 90 (Athens, AD 253–257).

44 Exclusively: *SEG* 17.843, (Ankyra, third century AD), l. 13–14 (Ὀλ[ύ]μπια | ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ), *IAG* 90 (Athens, AD 253–257), l. 17–18 (Ὀλύμπια ἐν | Ἐπιδαύρῳ); additionally: *IAG* 87 (Delphi, mid-third century AD), l. 9 (Ἀσκλήπεια Ὀλύμπια ἐν Ἐπιδα[ύρ]ω).

45 *IAG* 90, l. 17–18 (Athens, AD 253–257).

46 On the reasons, Remijsen 2015.

47 For the text of the inscriptions which date to the second half of the fourth century BC: Herzog 1931; LiDonnici 1995. The inscriptions have initially intrigued scholarly attention mainly due to the obvious parallels to Christian miracle tales. More recently, however, the focus shifted on aspects such as the composition of the *iámata* (LiDonnici 1992), emotions (Martzavou 2012), and different 'voices' in the text (Prêtre 2019).

48 Rutherford 2013: 73.

49 Rutherford 2013: 87; on the advertising strategy as to be found in the *iámata*: Prêtre 2019: "propaganda polyphonique".

50 In the second century AD, Pausanias saw six stelae (Paus. 2.27.3) which appeared "ancient" to him, but only three (reporting 70 miracles) survived from antiquity (LiDonnici 1995 = *IG* IV² 1.121–123).

four' in this period, a comparison between the catchment area of the *theōrodókoi* lists and that of the *iámata* still starts from two incomplete sets of evidence.[51]

We have already seen that the catchment area of the *epangelía* system reached as far as the Hellespontos in the north, Cyprus in the southeast, and Sicily and Southern Italy in the west. What remains difficult to determine is why Asia Minor remains almost completely absent from the picture.[52] On the one hand, this is in line with a general trend in Greek athletics according to which the regular participation of athletes from Asia Minor in the games of the *períodos* only started in the Hellenistic age,[53] on the other hand, the agonistic evidence analyzed so far included a pankratiast from Rhodes and a rhapsode from Ephesos both active in the second half of the fifth century BC already.[54] Yet it was no earlier than from the third century BC onwards that athletes from Asia Minor competed at the Asklepieia on a more regular basis.[55]

In the surviving *iámata*, out of a total of 24 poleis and three regions, four cities from Asia Minor and the Eastern Aegean appear as places of origin of the people healed in the sanctuary.[56] Thus Asia Minor was not out of sight for the Epidaurians, and it is a fair assumption that at least some cities in Asia Minor formed part of the *epangelía* system of the Asklepieia, especially since we have positive evidence that the games were not only announced in Lampsakos, but as far east as on Cyprus.[57] However, we do not know in how many cities this was the case and if the athletes followed the announcement on a regular basis before the third century BC.

What is safe to assume is that both the *theōrodókoi* lists as well as the *iámata* formed part of a comprehensive advertising strategy of the sanctuary: in the miracle reports, this strategy

51 This is why, despite more matches with regard to regions referred to, only three poleis are mentioned in the *iámata* as well as in the *theōrodókoi* lists: Athens, Thebes, and Thasos. If we include the evidence of the Epidaurian proxeny decrees we must also add Argos and Lampsakos. Note that Lampsakos had its own Asklepieia by the second century BC (*LSAM* 8 = *I.Lampsakos* 9; cf. Chaniotis 1995: 168).

52 See table of poleis compiled by Nielsen 2007: 64–67 including the addenda in 68n226.

53 Scharff 2024: 66–98, esp. 66; on Olympia, Farrington 2014.

54 A member of the Diagorid family would not necessarily have needed the invitation of a sacred envoy to participate in the Asklepieia since the clan had friends and acquaintances all over the Greek world which means that they must have known what was going on in terms of athletics very well; on the Diagorids, see n. 17.

55 Ebert 1972: no. 68 (Olympia, end of the third century BC) praises a successful horse owner from the Troad, Ebert 1972: no. 73 (Priene, mid-second century BC) refers to a victorious wrestler from Priene, and *IAG* 56 (Halikarnassos, mid-first century BC) commemorates the victories of a runner from Halikarnassos.

56 The cities are Lampsakos, Mytilene, Knidos, and Kios. See *Table* 1.

57 The same must be true for most of the cities of the Peloponnese which constitute a major part of the poleis named in the *iámata* and which certainly belonged to a *theōrodókoi* list which did not survive. In the *iámata*, nine poleis (plus one region) out of a total of 24 (27) were located in the Peloponnese. From the nine Peloponnesian poleis, five (Epidauros, Halieis, Hermione, Troizen, and Argos) were situated in the Argolid, two in Arkadia (Tegea, Kaphyai), and one each in Achaia (Pellene) and Messenia (Messene). Among the multiple mentions, Epidauros (five), Troizen (four) and Halieis (three) stand out. See *Table* 1.

can be seen very clearly in the story of Thersandros of Halieis by which the authority of Asklepios of Epidauros over the neighboring healing cult of Halieis is established.[58] Other miracles narrate epiphanies of the god and advocate his power by stories in which he punishes unbelieving or audacious supplicants.[59] Going hand in hand with the massive building program, such stories helped establish and secure the leading role of the Asklepieion of Epidauros among the healing cults of the Greek world in the fourth century BC.[60]

The success of the healing cult in the fourth century may have somewhat predated that of the games whose status was elevated to that of crown games probably no earlier than in the third or second century BC,[61] but the miracle reports show that athletics were integrated into the advertising strategy of the healing cult already in the fourth century BC. Healed by the god of his headache, a certain Hegestratos is said to have successfully competed as a pugilist in Nemea later.[62] The message is: come to Epidauros and Asklepios will not only heal you but make you succeed. This may be interpreted as an attempt to attract talented athletes. No doubt, the games in Epidauros also profited from the success of the advertising strategy of the healing cult.

Returning to a comparison between the *iámata* and the *theōrodókoi* lists, the most striking difference is the total absence of Southern Italy and Sicily in the *iámata*.[63] Since we do not know of an agonistic victor from these regions at the Asklepieia before the Roman Imperial period either, the inclusion of cities from Magna Graecia in the *theōrodókoi* list is probably not indicative of a significant number of participants from Southern Italy and Sicily, but of the wishes of the organizers of the games. It was well-known in the Greek world that many Olympic victors of the past (esp. of the sixth and fifth century, but also of the fourth century BC) had hailed from Magna Graecia.[64] If you wanted to organize a prestigious athletic festival in the fourth century BC, you had to announce the games there.

58 The healing cult of neighboring Halieis as a branch of Epidauros: LiDonnici 1995: §33 (*IG* IV² 1.122, l. 69–82).
59 Epiphany: LiDonnici 1995: §25 (*IG* IV² 1.122, l. 26–35); the unbelieving supplicant: LiDonnici 1995: §3 (*IG* IV² 1.121, l. 22–33); Kaphisias laughing at Asklepios: LiDonnici 1995: §36 (*IG* IV² 1.122, l. 95–101).
60 Riethmüller 2005; Melfi 2007.
61 Sève 1993.
62 Note that there actually is a Hegestratos son of Philon from Athens who won in Nemea at the beginning of the fourth century BC (*IG* II² 3122; Kostouros 2008: no. 71; Nielsen 2018: 197). Yet the event of his victory is not mentioned.
63 Also note that the cities of Akarnania and Aitolia which appear so frequently in the *theōrodókoi* lists are not mentioned in the *iámata*.
64 On Olympic victors from Magna Graecia: Mann 2001: 164–191 (Kroton), and 236-291, Mann 2013 (Sicily).

It is probably no coincidence that neither Trikka nor Kos or Pergamon appear in the *iámata* or in the *theōrodókoi* lists. Trikka in Thessaly hosted the most ancient sanctuary of Asklepios which is indirectly referred to in the *Iliad* already. The fame of the sanctuary is still emphasized by Strabo.[65] Since Epidauros strived for becoming the most important Asklepios sanctuary in the Greek world, Trikka was competition,[66] as later became Kos and Pergamon.[67] With other Asklepios sanctuaries situated in the vicinity of the city in the Saronic-Gulf region, however, Epidauros closely interacted,[68] if they accepted Epidauros' eminent status, as it seems to have been in the case of Halieis.

To put it in a nutshell, the fourth century BC clearly constituted a time when the Epidaurians invested the most in the development and advertisement of their sanctuary – and those efforts included the athletic festival held in honor of Asklepios. No doubt, Epidauros' advertising strategy was first and foremost directed to be perceived as the most eminent sanctuary of the healing cult of Asklepios in the Greek world; and yet, in order to achieve this goal, the fields of religion, athletics, and medicine intermingled and cross-fertilized each other in a special way.[69]

The City and Its Festival

But how was the athletic festival perceived from an external point of view and what did the Epidaurians themselves think about their games? The etic perspective can be best deduced from the study of agonistic epigrams which reveals at least one characteristic feature of Epidauros' presentation in these poems: the place is repeatedly characterized by a descriptive epithet referring to its geographical position on a rock. Epidauros is called "rocky" (κραναά)[70] or "towering" (αἰπεινά),[71] a characterization that is obviously plain wrong with regard to the athletic facilities of the festival which were situated in a hollow. From the perspective of external victors, the topography of the city seems to have overshadowed that of the sanctuary which lay some 13 kilometers away from the polis.

65 Hom. *Il.* 2.729–733; 4.200–219; Strab. 9.5.17 (most renowned in the Greek world); 14.1.39 (birthplace of Asklepios).
66 The effort to replace Trikka was successful according to Paus. 2.26.1–28.1, but it was not according to a tradition reported by Strab. 9.5.17.
67 Kos' fame as a sanctuary of Asklepios depended not the least on its school of physicians. Yet the city also hosted the second-most important athletic festival in honor of Asklepios in the Greek world since 242/41 BC: for the victor lists from Kos (*IG* XII 4.2.451–454), see still Klee 1918, on *theōroi* of the Asklepieia Rigsby 2004.
68 For a map of Asklepios sanctuaries in the Saronic-Gulf region, see van Wijk forthcoming: fig. 2.
69 Clearly in another way than it had in Archaic Kroton where the local school of physicians, according to Hdt. 3.131 the best in the Greek world at the time, has been interpreted as one of the reasons for the impressive chain of Olympic victories won by athletes from the city between 588 and 488 BC (Mann 2001: 164, 171–181).
70 *Anth. Pal.* 13.19 (Ebert 1972: no. 26 [fifth century BC]), l. 9.
71 Ebert 1972: no. 73 A, l. 5; B, l. 3–4 (Priene, mid-second century BC).

This is all the more striking, as "rocky" is a Homeric epithet, but not of the city of Epidauros. In the *Iliad*, the place is called "vine-clad" (ἀμπελόεις) instead.[72]

Two explanations for this observation which are not mutually exclusive suggest themselves. First, the epithet can be interpreted as a Saronic perspective of the participants arriving at Epidauros by the sea. The acropolis of the city towering over the bay was what visitors coming to Epidauros saw first (*fig.* 1). It must have shaped their impression and obviously had a lasting impact on the way they remembered the city and its games.

However, there is also a more generic dimension to the use of the epithet, since other cities are called "high-lying" in agonistic poetry as well, even in one of the epigrams in which Epidauros is referred to as "rocky".[73] Therefore, one may assume at first glance that the topography of the organizing cities may have been highlighted at times in order to emphasize the troubles athletes had to go through just to reach the place of competition. Yet, this would be contrary to the concept of agonistic praise which is all about stressing the extraordinary deeds of the successful athlete. Simply getting to a place of competition, though certainly much more troublesome as today,[74] did not set oneself apart but was something everybody could achieve. So this cannot be the reason why Epidauros' position on a rock was highlighted.

Instead, it is important to note that 'rocky' had generally good connotations when referring to a city and was simply considered a positive attribute in this context.[75] In a fifth-century BC poem celebrating a Corinthian victor, there may also be a political meaning attached, since, in this century, ἡ Κραναὰ πόλις was Athens,[76] the city's inhabitants were called αἱ Κρανααί,[77] and there existed even a mythic king Kranaos of Athens in the Athenian imagination.[78] Thus referring to Sparta's loyal ally Epidauros as κραναά may have included a jibe directed towards Athenian self-presentation. What is more, "rocky" meant having good natural defenses,[79] a quality highly useful in a situation of armed conflicts. In sum, the epithet was used as a positive attribute reflecting the

72 Hom. *Il.* 2.561: ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδαυρον. However, other cities like Aulis or Kalydon are well described by the poet as "steep" or "stony" (Hom. *Il.* 2.496: Αὐλίδα πετρήεσσαν; 2.640: Καλυδῶνά τε πετρήεσσαν); cf. Beck 2020: 80. But also note the oracle quoted by Paus. 2.26.7, which may go back to Hesiod and in which Epidauros is explicitly called "rocky" (ἐνὶ κραναῇ Ἐπιδαύρῳ).

73 *Anth. Pal.* 13.19 (Ebert 1972: no. 26), l. 7-8: ἄκρᾳ Πελλάνᾳ ("in high-lying Pellene").

74 Just think, for instance, of the location of the stadion in Delphi which is situated at the most-elevated level of the sanctuary.

75 It was already in the later sixth century BC that Phokylides of Miletus had praised "a small and orderly polis on a rock" in contrast to "foolish Nineveh" (Phokylides F 4 Gentili/Prato); see Beck 2020: 11; 43–44; 106–107.

76 Ar. *Ach.* 75; for ἡ Κραναά as used for the Acropolis, Ar. *Lys.* 481.

77 Ar. *Av.* 123; cf. Κραναοί for the people of Attika (Hdt. 8.44, Str. 9.1.18).

78 In A. *Eu.*1011 the Athenians become παῖδες Κραναοῦ.

79 Beck 2020: 43.

Saronic perspective of the competitors arriving in Epidauros, a meaning that could be turned, in a particular historical situation, into a jibe against Athens.

But how was the festival perceived from an Epidaurian point of view? Unfortunately, we do not have an agonistic epigram praising the success of an Epidaurian athlete at the Asklepieia. Yet it is clear from the surviving epigraphic and archaeological evidence that the games strongly mattered to the Epidaurians. Take the fines referred to at the very beginning of this chapter. The three athletes who were accused of having "corrupted the competition"[80] had to pay 1,000 stateres each. Yet they also received another penalty in the form of public humiliation: their names and athletic specialty were published together with the verdict in the sanctuary for everyone to see.[81] No doubt, the Epidaurians took care of their games as they did for the sanctuary as a whole.[82]

It is interesting to note that all the Epidaurian investment in the sanctuary and the games seems not to have gone hand in hand with a similar investment in local athletes.[83] At least, it did not result in a relevant track record of Epidaurian athletes at the most important Greek contests: while five Olympic victories of Epidaurian athletes of the Archaic and Classical periods are known, there is no secure mention of an Olympic champion from the city in the entire Hellenistic age and just one Epidaurian *Olympioníkēs* of the Roman imperial period that we know of.[84]

80 *IG* IV² 1.99 II, l. 3 (Epidauros, second century BC): φθείρειν τὸν ἀγῶνα. But what does this mean exactly? What had they done? Due to the rather common nature of bribing in Greek athletics (cf. n. 2–3) and the fact that Plutarch used the same wording with regard to the Kallippos scandal (Plut. *Vit. dec. or*. 850 B), it is usually assumed with good reason that the three athletes had bribed or tried to bribe their opponents. But note that they competed in different disciplines. Thus we have three individual cases of bribery.

81 On this and other possible reasons for the publication of the names of the wrongdoers, Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 337.

82 Just think of the building program, the *epangelía*, and the *iámata* as part of a comprehensive advertising strategy for the sanctuary. At first glance, one might also refer in this context to the money the participants in the musical contests received in advance of their participation (*IG* IV² 1.99 II; 100), although this is probably not to be interpreted as a measure to attract the strongest competitors possible in the sense of an 'Antrittsgeld'. Rather the parallels to the contracts used in construction work at the sanctuary show that the money was paid for a service which had to be performed in the future ('Werksvertrag'). Evidence from Eretria (*IG* XII 9.207) suggests that this was general practice with regard to *technítai*. See Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002: 337–338.

83 At least, we do not hear of talent promotion in the surviving evidence from Epidauros. The active promotion of athletic talents with the aim at participating in their future successes is good attested on different levels (kings, poleis, private benefactors) in the Greek world from the third century BC onwards (Mann 2017).

84 The Archaic and Classical victors include the *stádion* runners Polos in 712 BC (Moretti 1957: no. 19), Kleon in 608 BC (Moretti 1957: no. 74), and Antikrates in 600 (Moretti 1957: no. 77), the *diaulodrómos* (….)ges in 473 BC (Moretti 1957: no. 223), and the pugilist Aristion in 368 BC (Moretti 1957: no. 415). The champion of the Roman imperial period is a certain Apollonios (Moretti 1957: no. 758), again a *stádion* runner. However, an anonymous *stádion* runner, wrestler and pentathlete who had his victor inscription set up in the Asklepieion (Peek 1969: no. 210 [2] [Epidauros, third century BC]) is a good candidate for a Hellenistic Olympic victor from the city. Due to the fragmentary state of the inscription, the name of his hometown did not survive, but since the Asklepieia are not mentioned among his victories the place of publication is hard to explain other than by the athlete hailing from Epidauros.

Although the evidence for athletes and performers from Epidauros who succeeded at the Asklepieia is not overly impressive either, there is good reason to believe that the lack of Olympic victories from the Hellenistic period onwards is not simply due to the state of the surviving evidence in Epidauros, but that another explanation suggests itself. The only victor list from the Asklepieia that came down to us includes remarkably many local victors.[85] Thus it constitutes a fair assumption that the Epidaurians went local with regard to the participation in athletic contests in the Hellenistic age. At least, this is exactly what the Athenians did in the same period: they engaged in their own games (in this case the Panathenaia, Theseia, and Eleusinia) but did not participate very often in the Olympics or other crown games with a supra-regional catchment area.[86]

Such a 'local-first' attitude is even to be found in the case of the only known Hellenistic athlete from Epidauros who competed successfully on 'big-four' level. The inscription honoring the Epidaurian runner Sokrates son of Sokrates begins as follows:

> ἁ πόλις τῶν Ἐπιδαυρίων ἀνέθηκε Σωκράτη
> Σωκράτεος τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου Ἐπιδαύριον
> νικάσαντα παῖδας μὲν Ἀσκλαπίεια ἵππιον,
> Νέμεᾳ ἵ̣ππιον, (…).
> The polis of the Epidaurians dedicated Sokrates son of Sokrates grandson of Apollonios from Epidauros victorious in the *híppios* run for boys at the Asklapieia and in Nemea, (…).[87]

The erection of the agonistic monument is presented as an initiative of the polis. It is explicitly the city of the polis which did not only honor the athlete by setting up the inscription but "dedicated" his statue.[88] No doubt, the polis and the games take center stage at the beginning of the inscription (four mentions in three lines). Having this in mind, it comes as no surprise that the Asklepieia appear as the first contest in the list and are referred to even before the prestigious Nemean Games. Most of this – the initiative of the polis, the 'dedicatory' formula, the local contest listed first – is not restricted to Epidauros, but can be found at many other places in the second and first centuries BC.[89]

85 *IG* IV² 1.101, l. 43–49 (Epidauros, AD 32/33).
86 See Scharff 2024: 112–133.
87 *IAG* 53 (*IG* IV² 1.629; Epidauros, ca. 100 BC), l. 1-4. Sokrates' victories in different running events in the age class of men achieved at various contests on the Peloponnese (Lykaia, Aleaia of Tegea, Poseidaia and Rhomaia in Antigoneia/Mantineia), at the Isthmos (Pythaeia and Rhomaia in Megara), in Boiotia (Eleutheria of Plataiai) and Lokris (Dia, Aianteia and Rhomaia in Opous) follow.
88 On the 'dedicatory' formula of late-Hellenistic honorary inscriptions, Ma 2013: 24–30.
89 A well-documented parallel is the case of late-Hellenistic Messene (Scharff 2024: 169–183, esp. 180–182).

It nevertheless clearly speaks to the local relevance of (contests like) the Asklepieia in this time. It was at home that the local victory counted the most.

Conclusion

Under different names, the games of Asklepios were of crucial importance to the people of Epidauros. As an athletic festival, they enjoyed a long and varied history of at least 800 years. Already in the sixth century BC among the most prestigious games on the level behind the big four, the catchment area of the Asklepieia expanded in the Hellenistic period following a comprehensive advertising strategy of the fourth century BC. The Hellenistic age saw the heyday of the contest.[90] Two trends came together: while the catchment area of the Asklepieia expanded to Asia Minor and beyond, Epidaurian athletes became more local. Both developments should not be interpreted as opposing trends, but as cross-fertilizing each other. For the Epidaurians, there probably was not much need to compete elsewhere in this period. The festival had achieved a remarkable status and a victory at home had the advantage of being won in front of one's own peers. After having gone through a rough patch in the first and second centuries AD, the festival flourished again at the end of the second century AD, when some of the most renowned athletes and performers returned to Epidauros. It was only from the end of the third onwards that the games disappeared in our record.

The surviving evidence allowed various insights into very different aspects of life at an athletic festival: female athletics, the miraculous healing of an athlete, fraud scandals resulting in public humiliation of the cheaters. The Asklepieia clearly constitute a grand-four candidate with regard to the most colorful character of the surviving evidence.

From an outer perspective, it was the Saronic region that gave orientation and meaning to athletes competing at the Asklepieia. Saronic perspectives already shone through in Pindar and continued to do so under different auspices in the agonistic epigrams. While epinicians on Aiginetan victors highlighted the embeddedness of the Asklepieia in a Saronic landscape of athletic festivals, agonistic epigrams stressed Epidauros' 'rocky' nature that is the perspective Epidauros was seen by competitors arriving from the sea. To put it in a nutshell, the athletic facilities of the Asklepieia were not situated on a rock, but they clearly represented a pillar in the agonistic landscape of the Greek world.

90 Epidauros' increased relevance is also indicated by the fact that it became as place for the erection of important treaties like the re-establishment of the Hellenic League under Antigonos Monopthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes in 302 BC (*Staatsverträge* III 446).

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Table 1

Place as listed in the *iámata*	**Region**	**Frequency**	**Evidence**
1. Epidauros	Argolid	5	§8, 35, 49, 56, 66
2. Troizen		4	§23, 34, 48
3. Halieis		3	§18, 24, 33
4. Argos		2	§37, 62
5. Hermione		1	§20
6. Aigina	Saronic Gulf	1	§26
7. Pellene	Achaia	1	§2
8. Kaphyai	Arkadia	1	§41
9. Tegea		1	§47
10. Lakonia	Lakonia	2	§21, 60
11. Messene	Messenia	1	§42
12. Athens	Attika	1	§4
13. Thebes	Boiotia	1	§28
14. Kirrha	Phokis	1	§38
15. Epeiros	Epeiros	1	§31
16. Pherai	Thessaly	1	§25
17. Thessaly		1	§6
18. Torone	Chalkidike	1	§13
19. Thasos	The Aegean	1	§22
20. Chios		1	§63
21. Keos		1	§39
22. Crete		1	§68
23. Mytilene	Lesbos	1	§19
24. Lampsakos	Mysia	1	§15
25. Knidos	Caria	1	§32
26. Kios		1	§43
27. Herakleia	Unclear	1	§30

Fig. 1: Epidauros as seen from the Saronic Gulf.

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Chapter 9

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The 'Whip Agṓnes' for Orthia: Education, Religion, Memory and Identity in Sparta*

The sanctuary of Ortheia, the Limnaion,[1] in the Limnai area of Sparta, owes its fame primarily to the juvenile *agṓnes* that took place there, and above all to that 'whipping to the bitter end' on the altar of the goddess, the so-called *diamastígōsis,* of which late Hellenistic and imperial sources speak so much.[2] The *diamastígōsis* is, however, heir to an earlier *agṓn*, which we know about largely thanks to Xenophon:[3] for that event, the boys had to steal cheese intended for the goddess, and in attempting to do so were soundly whipped. We might well call these two *agṓnes* the 'whip *agṓnes*'. From at least the fourth century BC, however, another series of *agṓnes* was also held in honor of Ortheia, those known in imperial times by the general name of *paidikón* or *paidikhón*. The *agṓnes* of the *paidik(h)ón* comprised different kinds of contests, each then organized into competitions for the different age groups of Spartan ephebes between their seventeenth and nineteenth years of age. These competitions are best known to us through the series of famous stelae with sickles, the prizes that the winners dedicated to the goddess. Most of the stelae

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1 Strab. 8.4.9; Paus. 3.16.7.

2 Most of the literary evidence for the *diamastígōsis* is collected and translated by Kennell 1995: 149–161. In addition to the standard abbreviations, the following are adopted:
AO = Woodward 1929.
Plut. *inst. lac*. = Plutarchus instituta laconica.

3 Xen. Lac. 2.9.

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 190-222.

known to us today were found during excavations carried out in the sanctuary by the British School at Athens at the beginning of the twentieth century.[4]

The discoveries of the British School at the Limnaion revealed the millennial history of the sanctuary: worship had begun in the ninth or early eighth century BC, and the site underwent its last major building phase after the mid-third century AD, when an unusual theatre-type building was constructed, enclosing the area between the temple façade and the altar. This was intended, in fact, for viewing the *diamastígōsis* competition.[5]

Following the publications of the British excavations, the goddess of Limnaion is commonly known as Orthia by modern scholars. This spelling has been retained for the title of this study, despite it probably being incorrect.[6] Ortheia, the form used in the rest of the present text, is a graphic rendering common to two variants found in the two sets of names by which the goddess is designated: on the one hand (F)ορθαία, (F)ορθασία, (F)ορθεία, and on the other Ὀρθ(ε)ία. For a long time, the Spartans identified Ortheia by one of these terms, i.e., without adding the theonym Artemis, which only appears in dedications from the early imperial period.[7] For this reason, many believe – though it cannot be verified – that Ortheia was a local deity, originally distinct from Artemis.[8]

4 For dedications by *paidk(h)ón* winners, *AO* 285–353, no. 1–135 is a more recent and complete edition of *IG* V 1.255–356; Massaro 2018 includes only dedications for *móa* and *keloía* victories. Two stelae with sickles have now been published by Steinhauer 2022: II nos. 3–4, 172–173. These *agṓnes*, as well as other topics briefly touched on in this paper, are the subject of a detailed analysis in a work in preparation, *Il ritorno di Licurgo. Gli agoni di Artemis Orthia e altri studi su Sparta ellenistico-romana*.

5 The results of these excavations, carried out between 1906 and 1910, are presented systematically in Dawkins 1929a. For the chronology of the sanctuary and recent summaries of the evidence, see Boardman 1963, Zink Kaasgaard Falb 2009: 129–132, Johannessen 2021: 55–59 and *passim*. On the (amphi)theatre, see Dawkins 1929b: 37–47, Baudini 2013: 196–198. *IG* V 1.314 = *AO* 335, no. 71 sets the post quem date for its construction in the middle of the third century AD (cf. Rizakis et al. 2004: 95 no. 115); a date in the Tetrarchic period is suggested by Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 122–123, 221 ([2]2002: 112, 203).

6 Cf. Jucker and Risch 1979.

7 On the name Ortheia in Sparta, see Woodward 1929: 293, Davison 1938: 457–458, Vegas Sansalvador 1996 and Alonso Déniz 2008: 42, 59–63 (according to the latter two, the adjectives of the first series derive from the root **u̯erdh-* and are associated with the notion of 'growth'; in contrast, Ὀρθία derives from **h3r-dh-*, cf. ὄρνυμι, and is associated with the notion of 'straightening', in the healing sense). The theonym Artemis Ortheia was thought to have appeared only in Flavian times: Steinhauer 2022: II no. 3, 172 has recently published a Tiberian inscription in which Ortheia is called Artemis.

8 See, e.g., Burkert[2] 2011: 190, 282, Larson 2007: 105. Conversely, the identification of the goddess with Artemis is central to the study by Johannessen 2021. As Parker 2017: 21n80 notes, outside Sparta (evidence in Kowalzig 2006) Ortheia (or variants) appears consistently as an epiclesis of Artemis (thus in the fifth century in Hdt. 4.87 and in Athens *IG* I[3] 1083), and simply as Ὀρθωσία only in Pind. *Ol*. 3.30; however, the mention of Taygeta, in the archaic tradition the mother of Lakedaimon through Zeus (Paus. 3.18.10 with Nafissi 2019: 40–42), leads the latter instance back to Sparta. In any case, the burden of proof should be on those who wish to prove the original distinction between Ortheia and Artemis. *IG* V 2.429, l. 11–12 = *IPArk* 27 from Phigalia, fourth century, is not a clear indication of this, despite Jost 1985: 91 and Vegas Sansalvador 1996: 279. There is more on this subject in Nafissi in preparation.

Ortheia is traditionally seen as a goddess of the wilderness and of margins; she has also been called a goddess of vegetation, and sometimes even, albeit without solid evidence, of agriculture. There is no doubt, however, that the goddess accompanied young people as they grew up, and it is generally accepted that the rituals and youthful trials organized in her honor at festivals were initiatory.[9] It seems certain that the rituals or *agṓnes* included forms of drama and the participation of virgins with choirs and dances: the available documentation, however, highlights the competitive activities of the boys.

This essay aims to offer a general examination of 'the *agṓnes* of the whip'. It will leave to one side the '*agṓnes* of the sickle' and those enigmatic literary and archaeological documents on Ortheia (some verses from Alcman's *Partheneion*, the famous terracotta masks and ancient reports on comic and mimetic dances in Laconia): these would expose one to the risk of explaining *obscura per obscuriora*.[10]

The discussion begins with two sections that examine the documentation for the two *agṓnes*: the earlier *agṓn* of the theft of cheese and the *diamastígōsis*. It will do this by examining their *aítia* and cultural significance, the conduct of the contests, and the honors bestowed upon both winners and victims of the *diamastígōsis*. The following section explores the chronology involved and the reasons why one the 'whip *agṓnes*' developed into the other; the differences between the two *agṓnes* are crucial to understanding the values and demands that motivated the reform of the contest. We then turn to the interaction between the competitors and spectators of the *diamastígōsis*, which

9 The relationship between Artemis and agriculture is mainly borne out by the choice of the sickle as a reward and votive. This hypothesis is already found in Rose 1929: 406 and expanded by Kron 1998: esp. 203–204, in a seminal work on sickles in myth and as votive dedications. Jeanmaire 1939: 523, in contrast, offers a ritual interpretation: the sickles were used to cut the trunk which was to be erected as a kind of May pole to celebrate the goddess (*orthós* - Orthia). Arguing against this 'natural' profiling of Ortheia is Des Bouvrie 2009. Ducat (2006: 212) is forthright in stating that the agrarian character of the goddess "is nowhere attested". The first to link Ortheia celebrations to initiations was, to my knowledge, Frazer 1898: III 341–343; generally cf. Nilsson 1906: 190–196, Jeanmaire 1939: 514–523, Brelich 1969: 130–138, Calame 1997: 156–169 (Calame 1977: I 276–281), Vernant 1984, Frontisi-Ducroux 1984, Graf 1985: 86–90, Vernant 1987, Ducat 1995, Kennell 1995: 70–97, Ducat 2006: 249–260, des Bouvrie 2009, Budin 2015: 24–31.

10 The identification of the Ὀρθρία of Alcm. 1 *PMGF* = fr. 3.61 Calame with Ortheia remains uncertain, despite the opinion of Aristophanes of Byzantium reported by Scholia A (and the arguments of Page 1951: 71–82 and Luginbill 2009: esp. 3940): see, e.g., Calame 1977: II 119–128, Id. 1997: 169, Ferrari 2008, Tsantsanoglou 2012: esp. 40, 68–69. Scholars often connect masks (Dickins 1929) with initiatory rituals, following the influential studies of Vernant (1987: 181–187 and Vernant 1984), and also discuss them in relation to the origin of dramatic forms of performance, as is also the case in Lloyd Rosenberg 2015; understanding them is not aided by the hypothesis of a derivation from Near Eastern models (Carter 1987: cf. Waugh 2012: 5–7). On comic performances probably related to masks, see Sosib. *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 595 F 7 *ap.* Ath. 14.621d–f, Poll. 4.104–105, Hsch. s.vv. βρυδαλίχα, βρυλλιχισταί, δεικηλισταί, δίκηλον and other sources collected by Csapo and Wilson 2020: 502-509 Bx 1–13, with David 1989: esp. 8–11, Olson 2007: 4–6 Sonnino 2014: 130–134, Csapo and Wilson 2020: 509–514. On the choruses of young girls at the sanctuary of Ortheia, see Calame 1997: 158–161. For another unusual series, the lead votives, see Boss 2000, Fragkopoulou 2010, Lloyd 2021.

was strongly conditioned by the image of Sparta. The conclusions summarize the results of the previous sections.

The Ancient *agṓn*

Xenophon describes the ancient *agṓn* when he discusses the theft of food as part of the education of young Spartans:

> And Lycurgus, having proposed as a point of honour (for the young men) the stealing of as many cheeses [*tyroús* (τυρούς)] as possible from Ortheia, ordered others to strike them with the whip: his intention was to show that one can enjoy lasting fame by enduring short-lived suffering; which also shows that in cases where speed of execution is required, the indolent have the least advantage and the most discomfort.[11]

The contest was probably also mentioned by Plato in the *Laws* among the practices of pain endurance that Lycurgus devised to train the Spartans in warrior virtue. Plato simply recalled "some thefts practised each time among many beatings".[12]

A vague idea of what must have happened can also be gleaned from a passage in Plutarch. Plutarch presents it as an *aítion* for the *diamastígōsis*, although his narrative, it is usually conceded, seems to describe the *agṓn* of theft. Plutarch writes:

> Some say that as Pausanias was sacrificing and praying, a little to one side of his line of battle, some Lydians suddenly fell upon him and rudely hurled away the sacrificial offerings; and that Pausanias and his attendants, being without weapons, smote the intruders with the sacrificial staves and goads.

Things are thus quite complicated, though we will see that this passage is a very important source for the history of the 'whip *agṓnes*'.[13]

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11 Xen. *Lac*. 2.9: καὶ ὡς πλείστους δὴ ἁρπάσαι τυροὺς παρ᾽ Ὀρθίας καλὸν θείς, μαστιγοῦν τούτους ἄλλοις ἐπέταξε, τοῦτο δηλῶσαι καὶ ἐν τούτῳ βουλόμενος ὅτι ἔστιν ὀλίγον χρόνον ἀλγήσαντα πολὺν χρόνον εὐδοκιμοῦντα εὐφραίνεσθαι. δηλοῦται δὲ ἐν τούτῳ ὅτι καὶ ὅπου τάχους δεῖ ὁ βλακεύων ἐλάχιστα μὲν ὠφελεῖται, πλεῖστα δὲ πράγματα λαμβάνει.

12 Pl. *Leg*. 1.633b: Ἔτι τοίνυν καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ἔγωγε πειρῴμην ἂν λέγειν, τὸ περὶ τὰς καρτερήσεις τῶν ἀλγηδόνων πολὺ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν γιγνόμενον, ἔν τε ταῖς πρὸς ἀλλήλους ταῖς χερσὶ μάχαις καὶ ἐν ἁρπαγαῖς τισιν διὰ πολλῶν πληγῶν ἑκάστοτε γιγνομένων· ἔτι δὲ καὶ κρυπτεία τις…. It has been suggested that Plato is referring to the everyday practice of stealing and not to the competition; however, in saying "every time" (ἑκάστοτε), Plato is alluding to a punishment that could not be avoided, an inevitable result that did not characterise the daily robbery practised by boys (Paradiso 2007: 313; cf. also Lipka 2002: 127).

13 Plut. *Arist*. 17.10 (transl. B. Perrin): ἔνιοι δέ φασι τῷ Παυσανίᾳ μικρὸν ἔξω τῆς παρατάξεως θύοντι καὶ κατευχομένῳ τῶν Λυδῶν τινας ἄφνω προσπεσόντας ἁρπάζειν καὶ διαρρίπτειν τὰ περὶ τὴν θυσίαν, τὸν δὲ Παυσανίαν καὶ τοὺς περὶ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔχοντας ὅπλα ῥάβδοις καὶ μάστιξι παίειν. *Aition* of the *agṓn* of theft: Bonnechère 1993: 16;

Annalisa Paradiso has raised a thorny textual question as to whether the boys actually stole wheat rather than cheese. Some codices of Xenophon's *Politeia* present the lesson *pyroús* (πυρούς: 'wheat') as an alternative to *tyroús* (τυρούς: 'cheese'). Neither the manuscript tradition, nor an examination of the relationship between Artemis and cheese making and cereals, nor the material from the Ortheia excavation allow one hypothesis to prevail over the other,[14] and a simple search of the keywords *pyrós* and *tyrós* in the *Collection of Greek Ritual Norms* shows that both wheat (in the form of grain or flour) and cheese were frequent offerings. However, we can assume that the boys were trying to steal cheese, a much more delicious and nutritious temptation than wheat (after all, the competition at the sanctuary of Ortheia dramatised the everyday practice of stealing food), and at the same time a much easier object to count in order to determine a winner!

Nonetheless, we know very little about this competition. Young people were assigned the task of stealing as many cheeses as possible, while others tried to prevent them from doing so with their whips. Perhaps these were the *mastigóphoroi*, the young men (*hēbôntes*) who assisted the magistrate responsible for supervising the youth of Sparta, the *paidonómos*. Xenophon makes it clear that the contest brought honor and fame to the winner.[15] On the whole it must have been a violent game, "a rough game", as Herbert Jennings Rose once termed it, but the Spartans were accustomed to the brutalities of their upbringing, and it is not hard to imagine that they found it amusing. Attack and withdrawal must have alternated swiftly in the contest. The astuteness and speed of the boys would have aroused the enthusiasm and admiring cheers of the onlookers, although they would have also burst into laughter every time the whip struck.[16]

All the *agṓnes* of Ortheia were closely connected with specific Spartan educational practices,[17] but this was particularly the case with the cheese stealing *agṓn*. Indeed, stealing was one of the activities that characterized Spartan education in the Classical period and

Ducat 1995: 357; Ducat 2006: 252. Roy 2019: § 28–29 draws attention to the events that immediately preceded the episode, highlighting details that refer to the *agṓn* of *diamastígōsis* (see below).

14 Paradiso 2007; cf. Ducat 2006: 253. However, Muratore 2022: 235, 293, accepts τυρούς: 'cheese'. The most common reference is to the goddess (despite Aristid. *or*. 41.7) making cheese from lion's milk in Alcm. 56 *PMGF* = fr. 125 Calame.

15 Xen. *Lac*. 2.2. On the *mastigóphoroi*, see Ducat 2006: 253. Many scholars claim that the cheese-stealing contest involved two groups and was a team event: For cheese-stealing as a team competition see e.g. Nilsson 1967–1974: 488, Graf 1993: 115; Hodkinson 1999: 148, Luginbill 2009: 31. Rzepka 2020: 61–62. The accusative singular participles of Xen. Lac. 2.9 provide strong evidence to the contrary. Rose 1929: 405, had left the alternative open: it could have been an individual or team event.

16 Rose 1929: 405; more generally, see Ducat 2006: 249–252. Spartan tastes are revealed by two comic scenes: the fruit thief and the thief caught red-handed stealing rotten meat, recalled by Sosibios *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 595 F 7 ap. Ath. 14.621d–f and Poll. 4.105 respectively.

17 On the '*agṓnes* of the sickle', see Nafissi in preparation.

that differentiated Sparta from other Greek cities.[18] The practice obviously aroused censure. Isocrates observes that the sons of the Spartans behaved unworthily and stole from the people in the fields, i.e., from the helots.[19] Such criticism took root on fertile ground, since the Spartans were often accused of *pleonexía* ('greed'). An echo of critical voices can already be heard in the *Anabasis*, in a playful dialogue between Xenophon and the Spartan Cheirisophos. The two blame each other for the faults of their respective cities: the Spartans teach their children to steal, the Athenians elect as magistrates those who steal the most public money.[20] In the *Politeia*, Xenophon thus handles the subject with the apologetic tone characteristic of his treatise: stealing is limited to food, it is necessary to supplement a deliberately and healthily reduced diet, it requires hard work and, above all, it prepares boys for military life, sharpening their cunning and teaching them to be vigilant and resistant to sleep.[21] Later we find mention of theft in the 'Aristotle' of the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*[22] and Plutarch.[23] Essentially, the picture is clear: stealing food was permitted, indeed encouraged, but boys had to be careful not to be caught in the act. If they were, they were punished with lashes.

The competition at Limnaion was clearly inspired by the stealing that the boys were encouraged to practice to supplement their meals. In the *agṓn* the boys were called upon to prove their stealing skills. The food was, however, an offering to the goddess, and was therefore well protected by men armed with whips. Consequently, in order to win, the boys had to prove that they could steal and also endure pain, another major goal of the Spartan *paideía*.

We do not know the relationship between the stealing *agṓn* and the *paidik(h)ón* contests, but we can perhaps assume that it was integrated into them. It is likely that only this event, among the many minor ones held at Limnaion in classical times, drew the attention of ancient authors, as it was linked to a sensitive issue that attracted the criticism of Sparta's detractors. The other contests, however, remained unnoticed in the literary

18 Ducat 2006: 201–207, emphasizes its enigmatic character at the outset and clarifies many of its cultural implications (e.g., its relation to hunting) and its role in the socialization of boys. For boys, stealing is more than a necessity: in a certain sense it is an obligation. It is a pseudo-game because adult control turns it into a test of ability with very serious consequences for the social standing of the individual boy. Risking what might appear to be an overly naive or passive attitude to ancient tradition, I believe that stealing was considered and developed as a culturally appropriate initiation practice for those who had to conduct a military campaign and sustain themselves in enemy territory. Whether this practice derived from more ancient initiatory trials, as Ducat (2006: 205–207) suggests, remains, in my opinion, impossible to prove.

19 Isoc. *Panath*. 211–214.

20 Xen. *An*. 4.6.14–16

21 Ducat 2006: 9–10, 21–22, 202–206.

22 Fr. 611.13 Rose = *Exc. Polit*. 13 Dilts.

23 Plut. *Lyc*. 17.5–18.2, *inst. lac*. 12 (*Mor*. 237d–e).

tradition. The whip *agṓn* took on completely different connotations when it was celebrated in the form of the *diamastígōsis*.

In 1929, in the final publication of the Ortheia excavations, Herbert Jennings Rose, as we saw above, defined cheese stealing a "rough game". Later on, in 1941, in a paper entitled "Greek Rites of Stealing",[24] Rose felt he had to go back on this original idea, redefining the event as a "rite" or a "ritual". Nowadays too, the cheese-stealing event is very often referred to as a (religious) "ritual".

In a similar vein, scholars have sought religious *comparanda* for the Spartan event described by Xenophon. Reference has been made here to *bōmolochía* (βωμολοχία), understood as 'ambushing and stealing food from the altar'. In the light of a study by Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux,[25] the *bōmolóchos* is seen as a buffoonish beggar, who lurks at the altar ready to grab food; for this reason, a certain relationship between the famous masks of Ortheia and the rituals of theft has also been argued. This argument, however, does not hold up: Stephen Kidd has shown that in classical times the term *bōmolóchos*, when referring to a person, simply meant 'jester' or 'fool'.[26] In fact, *bōmolóchos* was originally a bird,[27] but the name also described someone prone to empty chatter and silly jokes. Only in the grammatical culture of the imperial period did *bōmolóchos* come to mean 'a person lurking by the altar',[28] a misinterpretation of certain puns made by fifth-century comedians.[29] The cheese *agṓn* has nothing to do with the human *bōmolochía*.

Most scholars emphasize the religious nature of the Spartan *agṓn* by comparing it with a Samian ritual for Artemis mentioned by Herodotus.[30] Herodotus tells the story behind the ritual: the tyrant of Corinth, Periander, sent three hundred young boys from Corcyra to Alyattes, the king of Lydia, to have them emasculated. On reaching Samos, the Samians learned of the boys' sad fate and arranged for the young Corcyraeans to take refuge as supplicants in the sanctuary of Artemis. In response to this, the Corinthians who were transporting the boys to Lydia tried to seize them from the sanctuary and prevent any food from being taken to them. At night the Samians sent out dancing groups of boys and girls to offer sesame sweets and honey to the goddess. The Corcyraean boys took the

24 Rose 1941: 1–2.
25 Frontisi-Ducroux 1984.
26 Kidd 2012.
27 Arist. *Hist. an.* 617b; Attic vases depict birds perched on altars.
28 Harpocr. s.v. *bōmolócheuesthai* (76.9-17 D. = β 27 Keaney).
29 Pherec. fr. 150 K.–A., Aristoph. *Equ.* 1194.
30 Hdt. 3.48. Just a few of the most important studies include Rose 1941, Sourvinou-Inwood 1991: 249–250nn32–34, Ducat 1995, Bonnechère 1998, Ducat 2006: 256–260. See also Vernant 1987: 197n58.

food by force [*harpázontes* (ἁρπάζοντες)] and were able to feed themselves. The festival, says Herodotus, continued in the same way in his own time.

This comparison has led some to regard the competitive nature of the Spartan event as 'secondary', and to postulate ritual origins for the practice we know. Jean Ducat, for example, suggests that the Spartans added a competitive element to an older ritual, perhaps in the seventh century BC.[31] This genetic and ritual perspective seems unconvincing. There is no reason to assume that cheese stealing derives from the religious rituals of taking offerings to the deity, and it has no affinity with them.

While the comparative perspective is valuable, it should not lead us to separate the Spartan *agṓn* from the forms and intentions of the educational practice that determined its extraordinary specificity. The singularity of the cheese-stealing *agṓn* actually reflects a no less striking feature of Spartan *paideía*: theft. The comparison with Herodotus' account of the Corcyraean boys on Samos is instructive for another reason. Ritual or agonistic behavior involving the theft of food intended for a god aroused unease. In Herodotus' *aítion*, the theft is justified by a moral obligation to save the young men: they are seriously threatened by the cruelty of a tyrant who has condemned them to barbaric and degrading mistreatment. In the case of Plutarch's foundation story of the Spartan *agṓn*,[32] the tale attributes the theft of the offerings to the barbarians' disrespect for the gods and *nómos*. The defense of the altar, on the other hand, recalls one of the most glorious moments in Spartan history, the Battle of Plataiai.

To sum up, we have here a rather extraordinary *agṓn*, and the actions of the young men, though certainly authorized, might almost seem sacrilegious, so much so that their origins are associated with the action of barbarians.

The *diamastígōsis: tâs karterías agṓn*

Pausanias gives perhaps the most horrific, and certainly the best-known description of this infamous event.[33] The boys were flogged, and the altar was covered with their blood as the priestess held the statue of the goddess. When the blows became less severe, "out of respect for the beauty or rank of the young man", the priestess would declare that the statue had become heavier and reprimand the floggers.

31 Ducat 2006: 254.
32 Plut. *Arist*. 17.10. See above, n. 13.
33 Paus. 3.16.10–11.

The Late Hellenistic-Imperial flogging contest is often explicitly referred to as an *agṓn*.[34] Ancient authors often call it *(dia)mastígōsis/diamastigṓseis* [(δια)μαστίγωσις/ διαμαστιγώσεις: "whipping(s)"] and also *mástix/mástiges* [μάστιξ/μάστιγες: "the whip(s)"]. Plutarch seems to imply that *diamastígōsis* is the formal local name of the contest.[35] However, the only name known from local epigraphic evidence, *tâs karterías agṓn* (τᾶς καρτερίας ἀγών: 'contest of endurance'), is less descriptive and focuses more on the virtue of the young competitors. Epigraphic and literary texts contain adjectives, nouns and verbs derived from *karterós* to emphasize that the young Spartans were strong enough to 'withstand' and 'endure'.[36] The winners were called *bōmoníkai* (βωμονίκαι: 'the winners of the altar contest').[37] The earliest mention of the contest – which can be dated with any certainty – is to be found in Cicero, who probably attended the *diamastígōsis* in 79 BC.[38] Plutarch, Pausanias, Lucian and Philostratus probably also witnessed the contest, and they all mention or imply that Greeks flocked to the Limnaion to view the *agṓn*. As far as we know, Libanius is the last ancient author to have witnessed the *agṓn*, sometime between AD 336 and 340.[39]

34 Nic. Dam. *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 90 F 103z11, Hyg. *Fab.* 261, Plut. *inst. lac.* 40 (*Mor.* 329c–d), Stat. *Theb.* 4.231–233, Lucian. *Anach.* 38, Them. *Or.* 21.250A, Ps.-Nonnus in Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.11, 4.58 (Nimmo Smith), Simpl. *in Epict.* 5 and 8.

35 Plut. *inst. lac.* 40 (*Mor.* 329c–d). *Mastigṓseis*: Charikles *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 367 F 1 ap. Ath. 8.350c. *Diamastígōsis/diamastigṓseis*: Tert. *mart.* 4.8, Sch. Pl. *Leg.* 1.633a (pl.), 633b (pl.), Ps.-Nonnus in Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.58 (Nimmo Smith) (pl.), Suda *s.v.* Lykoûrgos. *Mástix/mástiges*: Philostr. *V A* 6.20, Paus. 3.16.9 (pl.), Lib. *Or.* 1.23 (pl.).

36 *Tâs karterías agṓn* is attested in the dedication of a victor (*IG* V 1.290 = *AO* 316–317, no. 37) and in Philostr. *V A* 6.20; a statue honors a young man *epiphanṓr karterḗanta* (ἐπιφανῶρ καρτερήαντα, i.e., ἐπιφανῶς καρτερήσαντα: "having distinguished himself in resistance"): *IG* V 1.653a = *AO* 356, no. 142 (on the occasion of the dedication of the statue, see below). "Strength to resist" and "to resist" (καρτερία and καρτερεῖν, διακαρτερεῖν, ἐγκαρτερεῖν): Plut. *inst. lac.* 40 (*Mor.* 239c–d), Lucian. *Anach.* 38, Max. Tyr. 19.5E (90B) Hobein, Philostr. *Gym.* 58 p. 293, Sch. Lib. *Or.* 1.23, Simpl. *in Epict.* 5, Sch. *Od.* 4.425 Dindorf]: the young are thus "very strong in resistance" [καρτερικώτατοι: Lucian. *Anach.* 38), they learn to be "strong to endure" [καρτερικοί: Ps.-Nonnus in Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.58 (Nimmo Smith)], and to "behave with strength and endurance" (καρτερικῶς ἔχειν: ibid. 39.8). These Greek terms are reminiscent of the "proofs of endurance" (*karterḗseis*, καρτερήσεις) in Pl. *Leg.* 1.633b. Latin authors refer to the same virtue with terms such as *patiens* (Hor. carm. 1.7.10) or *tolerantia* (Tert. *Apol.* 50.9).

37 The title of *bōmoníkēs/ās* is attested by *IG* V 1.554 (Severan period), *IG* V 1.652 (second century AD), *IG* V 1.653 [after AD 212], *IG* V 1.653b = *AO* 357-358, no. 143 pl. CCI, b (after AD 212), *AO* 358, no. 144 (first quarter of the third century AD), in Latin by Serv. *Aen.* 2.116, Hyg. *fab.* 261 and in Greek by *Myth. Vat.* II 202; the verb *bōmonikéō* is attested by *IG* V 1.654 (late second century AD).

38 Cic. *Tusc.* 2.34, see also 2.46, 5.77. It is generally accepted that Cicero was in Sparta in 79 BC, sometime during the first of the two years he spent between Athens, Rhodes and Asia Minor (e.g., Gelzer 1939: 838, Büchner 1964: 101, Gelzer 1969: 24n57, Rawson 1975: 27, Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 94 [^{2} 2002: 86]). Another possibility would have been almost totally impractical: on his return journey from the proconsulate in Cilicia in 50 BC Cicero was on a very tight schedule (cf. Marinone ^{2}2004: 158–159). Kennell 1995: 21–23 dates the source of Plut. *inst. lac.* 40 (*Mor.* 239c–d) shortly after 146 BC. Plutarch's source is certainly relatively old, but we do not know how old.

39 Liban. *Or.* 1.23, Cic. *Tusc.* 2.34, Plut. *Lyc.* 18.1–2, Lucian. *Anach.* 38–39, Paus. 3.16.9–11, Philostr. *V A* 6.20, Favorin. *de exilio* 21, col. 20 Barigazzi. Libanius does not describe the event, but in his *Autobiography* he claims to have gone to Sparta to attend it. On the date, cf. Tigerstedt 1965–1978: II 549n1278.

Before considering how the *agṓn* took place, it is useful to recall its *aítion*, which is found in Pausanias and other ancient authors. In Sparta it was claimed that the statue of the goddess was that of Artemis Taurica and that it was Orestes who brought it to the city. The story told by the Spartans is a development of the well-known myth of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Euripides links the cult of Artemis Tauropolos of Halai Araphenides in Attica – where human blood is shed – with the bloodthirsty Taurian goddess.[40] As we know from Pausanias[41] and other sources, many communities claimed to possess the statue of the Taurian goddess. The cults associated with the Taurian Artemis usually involved ceremonies of a particularly violent and bloody nature. A case in point is Diana Aricina and the killing of the *rex nemorensis*. The violent and threatening character of the Tauropolos also explains why the goddess was prominently included among the oath deities in international treaties, as was often the case in Hellenistic times.[42]

According to Pausanias,[43] the statue of Taurian Artemis was brought to Sparta by Orestes, who had fled Tauris with Iphigenia. Much later, two brothers, Alopekos and Astrabakos, found the simulacrum on the banks of the Eurotas, standing upright and bound with willow branches. Once freed, the goddess unleashed her power and drove the two young men mad. Later, during a sacrifice, fratricidal fights broke out between the members of the city's subdivisions, and the survivors fell ill. An oracle then ordered the altar to be bathed in human blood. Human sacrifice was introduced, which Lycurgus eventually replaced with the more civilized *diamastígōsis*.

While the earliest reference to this story is in the *Periḗgesis*,[44] we do not know when the story told by Pausanias originated. However, it would be rash to assume that it dates from the time of the reformation of the *agṓn*. One might assume that the myth identifying Ortheia with the Taurian Artemis contributed to the custom of naming the goddess *Artemis* Ortheia, rather than simply Ortheia (or a variant of Ortheia) as before. This custom is first documented in inscriptions of the Tiberian period and in the literary

40 Eur. *IT* 1450–1461.

41 Paus. 3.16.7–8.

42 Pausanias acknowledges Sparta's claim over that of the Athenians – and indeed over that of Laodikeia in Syria, where the statue of the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia would eventually be found – although many other communities claimed to possess the goddess's statue: cf. Graf 1979: 37–38, Braund 2018: 61–95, Lo Monaco 2018: 440–446 and *passim*. Tauropolos and treaty oaths: Scharff 2016: 136–137; Scharff forthcoming.

43 Paus. 3.16.7–11.

44 Some scholars date the tradition of the Artemis Taurica in Sparta to the Augustan age on the basis of Hyg. *Fab*. 261. However, the *fabula* is taken from Servius' commentary on Virgil (*Aen.* 2.116; for the derivation of chapters 258–261 from Servius, see Schmidt 1872: xxviiin). The attribution of parts of the stratified mythographic manual to the Augustan grammarian C. Julius Hyginus is controversial. Many believe it to be a second-century AD work wrongly attributed to him: see Cameron 2004: 11n36, Smith and Trzaskoma 2007: xlii–lv. Flavius Philostratus (*V A* 6.20), Gregorius Nazianzenus (*Or*. 39.4 and 4.103) and Synesius (*Ep*. 41) clearly knew that the Spartan goddess was identified with the Taurian.

tradition in Plutarch[45] (and perhaps in his sources). If this assumption were correct, the story of the arrival of the Taurian statue in Sparta would have been invented at least in the early imperial period. However, the time gap between Pausanias and the first mention of Ortheia as Artemis Ortheia in the epigraphic evidence is so great that it might be preferable to see the development of the tradition of also calling Ortheia by the divine name Artemis in socio-linguistic terms. The supra-local significance that the sanctuary acquired through the influx of distinguished foreigners who attended the spectacle of the *karterías agṓn* led to the use of a less parochial and more dignified Panhellenic term to refer to the goddess. The existence of descriptions, such as that in the Scholia to Plato's *Leges* (633B Greene), which are incompatible with the idea that the flogging took place to appease the bloodthirsty goddess, is probably an indication that for some time the *diamastígōsis* was not associated with the Taurian deity.[46] Even the fact that an author as learned as Plutarch, who even visited Sparta and showed some interest in the *agṓn*, made no mention of Ortheia's history as Artemis Taurian and gave a different account of its origins,[47] suggests that this was the case and should not be dismissed as a weak *argumentum e silentio*.

The most substantial attempts to reconstruct the *agṓn* have been made by Jean Ducat and Nigel Kennell.[48] We can only speculate on important features such as its place in the festival calendar[49] or the exact age of the participants. However, Ducat and Kennell reasonably suggest that the young Spartans faced the *karterías agṓn* as a final moment of their *paideía* when on the threshold of their entry into adulthood.[50]

The ancient descriptions of the *agṓn* present us with two sets of divergences. The first is difficult to explain satisfactorily. Two of the oldest testimonies in our possession

45 Inscriptions above n. 7. Plut. *inst. lac*. 40 (*Mor*. 239c–d): in any case Plutarch's sources also knew of the *diamastígōsis*.

46 "Endurances: He (*scil.* Plato) means the Flagellations. They took place at the altar of Artemis Orthosia, who restores the constitution. Nearby stood her priestess carrying in her hand something hidden, which remains unknown until now. And if the person being flogged was whipped less than he should (for he was not allowed to move his hands, which he held on his head), she was weighed down by what she was holding, but if he suffered the proper punishment, the priestess felt a light weight." (transl. Kennell, with slight changes) καρτερήσεις. τὰς διαμαστιγώσεις φησί. ἐγένοντο δ' αὗται πρὸς τῷ βωμῷ τῆς Ὀρθωσίας Ἀρτέμιδος, τῆς τὴν πολιτείαν ἀνορθούσης. παρειστήκει γὰρ ἡ ταύτης ἱέρεια φέρουσά τι ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς κεκρυμμένον, ὃ μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἄγνωστόν ἐστι, καὶ εἰ μὲν ἧττον τοῦ δέοντος ἐμαστιγοῦτο· κινεῖν γὰρ τὰς χεῖρας οὐκ ἐτόλμα, ἔχων ταύτας ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὁ μαστιζόμενος· ἐβαρεῖτο ἐκείνη ὑπὸ τοῦ φερομένου, δεόντως δὲ τὴν δίκην εἰ ὑπεῖχεν, κούφως ἡ ἱέρεια διετίθετο. Compare Pausanias' description of the priestess carrying the image of the goddess (above). The etymology of Orthosia given by the scholium is not attested elsewhere.

47 Plut. *Arist*. 17.10, cf. *Lyc*. 18.2 and *inst. lac.* 40 (*Mor*. 329c–d): more on Plutarch's account of the *aítion* is found below.

48 Ducat 1995: 347–354 and Kennell 1995: 70–78.

49 The *diamastígōsis* was celebrated annually (Plut. *inst. lac*. 40 [*Mor*. 239C]), supposedly between the end of May and the beginning of June, and it took up a considerable part of the day (the whole day, according to the same passage): cf. Kennell 1995: 71–72, for the date 195n6.

50 In literary sources the participants in the *agṓn* are sometimes called *paîdes*, sometimes *éphēboi*: on their age, see Ducat 1995: 348, Kennell 1995: 76. We are rather in the dark as to who the floggers were.

apparently contradict each other irreconcilably as to the conclusion of the contest. Nicolaus of Damascus speaks of several victors,[51] while Plutarch, in a passage (*Instituta laconica* 40 = *Mor*. 239c), which undoubtedly goes back to a relatively old source, declares that the greatest glory belongs to "the one who lasts longest and most". Other ancient authors also imply that there was a single victor.[52] Ducat stresses that the two results correspond to the two radically different models of trial and *agṓn*. He rightly believes that the *diamastígōsis* was a contest and that there was only one winner, as suggested by the epigraphic documentation, which we will examine in a while.[53]

The second set of divergences concerns how the action actually developed, and, to some extent, the spectacular quality of the event. The main body of sources refers to the beatings inflicted on the young men "on the altar" or "by the altar" and mentions the blood they shed, sometimes noting explicitly how the altar was bathed in it. Furthermore, the importance of the altar is underlined by the use of *bōmoníkai* for the victors, which is attested from the middle of the second century AD.[54] However, the descriptions – even the famous, or infamous, one given by Pausanias – are all too general in describing how the boys were flogged. The scholia on Horace seem to offer valuable but anomalous information by describing a single (!) young man being whipped while his hands were resting on the altar.[55] Nicolaus of Damascus, on the other hand, makes no mention of blood and depicts "the boys who, according to the law, are flogged while circling an altar until the few who still resist are crowned".[56]

The conflicting accounts of Nicolaus of Damascus and Ps. Acro led Ducat to suppose that there were two successive forms of *diamastígōsis*. In the earlier period, boys would have been whipped as they circled the altar with their arms raised (Lucian. *Anach*. 38; Sch. Pl.

51 *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 90 F 103z11.

52 See also, for instance, Ps.-Nonnus in Greg. Naz. *Or*. 4.11, 4.58 (Nimmo Smith).

53 Ducat 1995: 351–353.

54 Flagellation "on the altar" is alluded to by ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ, ἐπὶ τῷ βωμῷ, ἐπὶ τὸν βωμόν, πρὸς βωμόν, παρὰ τοὺς βωμούς, sometimes with a reference to blood, Favorin. *de exilio* 21, col. 20 Barigazzi, Plut. *Lyc*. 18.2, *inst. lac*. 40 (*Mor*. 239c), Lucian. *Anach*. 38, Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. 3.208, Alciphr. *Ep.* 3.18.3, Philostr. *Gym*. 58 p. 293, Themist. *Or*. 21.250a, Sch. Pl. *Leg*. 1.633b, Ps.-Nonn. in Greg. Naz. *Or*. 4.58. Slightly more explicit variants, also often with reference to blood, are found in Paus. 3.16.10, Philostr. *V A* 6.20, Greg. Naz. *Or*. 4.70 and 39.4, 4.103, *carmina* 2.2.7.273. Mentions of the altar in Latin authors can be found in Cic. *Tusc*. 2.34, Hyg. *Fab*. 261, Tert. *Ad Mart*. 4.8. Plutarch also speaks of blows received "by the altar": *Arist*. 17.10. On blood on the altar and/or for the goddess, see Paus. 3.16.10, Sext. Emp. *Pyr*. 3.208, Philostr. *V A* 6.20, Ps.-Acro 1.7.10; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 4.70, 4.103, 39.4; Synes. *Ep.* 41 (αἵματι … ἐτίμησαν Ἄρτεμιν). For the sources on *bōmoníkai* cf. n. 37.

55 Ps.-Acro 1.7.10: "They decreed that a young man should go up to the altar, lay his hands on it and be whipped by another young man until the altar was bathed in blood and the god was appeased." (*statuerunt hoc, ut iuvenis aras ascenderet, superimponet manus et tamdiu loris c<a>ederetur ab alio iuvene, quamdiu sanguis de vibicibus in aram manaret et satisfieret numini*). Young people are also "placed on the altars" (*aris superpositi*) in Hyg. *Fab*. 261.

56 *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 90 F 103z11 οἱ δὲ παῖδες νομίμως περί τινα βωμὸν περιιόντες μαστιγοῦνται, ἕως ἂν ὀλίγοι λειφθέντες στεφανωθῶσιν.

Leg. 1.633b), while in the imperial period, around AD 150, the custom of whipping boys on the altar to bathe it in blood was established.

Perhaps it is not necessary to distinguish between these two types of flogging. In fact, in order to cover an altar with blood it was not necessary for someone to drip blood directly onto the altar (by bending over it, for example).[57] It also goes without saying that when the young men were near the altar, some of the blood that was dripping from their bodies and from the whips might have simply splashed onto the *bōmós* or fallen onto the platform of the *próthysis*. Moreover, it would have been enough to rest or wipe blood-stained whips on the altar in order to bathe it in blood. Vases from the classical period show altars with deliberately bloodied sides, apparently applied using various instruments including branches and sticks.[58] Moreover, Ps.-Acro's description of just one man bent over the altar seems more like a dramatic antiquarian-mythographic fantasy than reliable evidence. The sources identifying Ortheia with Artemis Taurica emphasize that the blood bathes the altar, although earlier than these Cicero had also mentioned the altar and noted the blood shed by the boys (Tusc. 2.34: "*ut multus e visceribus sanguis exeat*").[59] Ducat considers the possibility that the tradition of the Taurian origin of the goddess may have been decisive in how the event was described, i.e., with its emphasis on the blood on the altar, but he does not choose this line of interpretation. Indeed, while this tradition may have led the Spartans to ensure that the blood of the young men copiously bathed the altar, it also led to a different way of seeing and describing the *agṓn*, i.e., with attention now focused on the blood on the altar.

I would therefore suggest that the two ideas of the boys circling the altar and being beaten on the altar are not incompatible. Cicero speaks of the blows that fell on the young men as they approached the altar ("they are received at the altar");[60] these words seem to refer to the initial procession, but they could allude to the blows the young men received each time they drew near the altar while "circling" it.

I would therefore not suggest that there were two successive types of *diamastígōsis*. On the contrary, we can imagine that the youths walked slowly in a wide circle around the altar and that in groups, one after the other, they stopped in front of it. Those closest to the altar, were flogged while still standing, with their arms raised and their hands on their heads.[61]

57 As Ducat 1995: 350 suggests.
58 Ekroth 2005: especially 19–23.
59 Probably a tragic fragment of unknown authorship and subject: inc. inc. *TRF* 209 R.2-3 = Adesp. 53 Schauer.
60 Cic. *Tusc*. 2.34: *ad aram … accipiuntur*.
61 Lucian. *Anach*. 38, Sch. Pl. *Leg*. 1.633b.

This hypothesis solves a problem that has already been addressed by Kennell. The altar at Ortheia is relatively small (8.20m × 2.60m in Roman times) and Kennell rightly suggests that the boys, probably about 70 boys per year, were divided into groups (it is less certain that these were the *bouaí* and that there were five *bouaí* of around fifteen boys).[62] The different groups competed on equal terms and at the same time, so it was possible to identify the boy who had lasted the longest. The boys moved in a circle around the area between the altar and the front of the temple, with regular pauses marked by the time when all the individual young men of each group, who had taken their turn at the altar, were subjected to the lashes. Here some of their blood would have splashed onto the *bōmós* or dripped onto the platform. More blood may have been deliberately spilled on the altar by placing or wiping the whips on it. As far as the number of young participants in the games is concerned, the 'arena' of the (amphi)theatre, with a diameter of about 20m,[63] must have been deliberately designed to accommodate all the boys. It is almost certain that, due to the demographic crisis of the time, there was a significant decline after the middle of the third century AD.

The solemn pace of the youths in the area between the front of the temple and the altar, and later, when the theatre had been built, along the circumference of the 'orchestra', gives a decidedly dramatic edge to this cruel *agṓn*. The riotous dash to steal the cheese was replaced by the calm and disciplined demeanor of the young men determined to endure the pain. The new *agṓn* was above all an exemplary compendium and display of Spartan virtues. The young men submitted in silence to the lashes of the whip in an act of endurance that is expressed in the very names given to the contest: the term *kartería* (καρτερία) recalls the strength of their resistance, and the preposition *dia-* (as a prefix to *mastígōsis*) emphasizes the intensity and relentlessness of the action and their ability to overcome it.

But how far did these challenges go? Cicero claims to have heard of Spartan boys dying from the blows,[64] Lucian mentions it as a fact,[65] and Plutarch seems to assume widespread contemporary knowledge of such deaths.[66] While these sources should certainly be treated with some caution, they seem to be generally reliable.[67]

62 Kennell 1995: 72–74. On the number of youths, see also ibid. 63. On *bouaí* below n. 127.
63 Dawkins 1929b: 39 and tab. 3.
64 Cic. *Tusc*. 2.74.
65 Lucian. *Anach*. 38.
66 Plut. *Lyc*. 18.1–2.
67 On this subject, see Ducat 1995: 348, 352 and Kennell 1995: 26, 73–74. The latter is overly cautious about these deaths.

This is further supported by Lucian, who mentions statues of young men who died in the *diamastígōsis*, stating that they were erected by the city.[68] Honorary statues in imperial Sparta, granted by polis decree, were usually erected at the expense of private individuals.[69] Lucian, however, would have seen these evergetic acts for what they were: gestures of private devotion to the community that in no way diminished the public dimension of the honor bestowed.

What has not been noted previously is that it is likely that the base of one of these statues has come down to us. This is *IG* V 1.653a = *AO* 356, no. 142 tab. CCI, a, found in the substructure of the theatre of Ortheia. The text, which probably dates from after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (AD 212), reads:

> The city (honors) Markos Aurēlios Euarestos, son of Zōilos, companion in the education of M(arkos) Aurēlios Aristokratēs, son of Damainetos, and of Tiberios Claudios Eiraniōn, son of Hyginos, for his admirable resistance; the *bouagoí* have borne the expenses.[70]

The statue certainly honors a participant in the *diamastígōsis*, the *agṓn tâs karterías* ("having admirably resisted", l. 8: ἐπιφανῶρ *καρτερήαντα*!). Most interpreters believe that M. Aurēlios Euarestos was a *bōmoníkas*,[71] but this hardly seems to be the case. Why should the victory not have been openly boasted of? Why avoid the high-sounding title of *bōmoníkas*, which had long been in use when the statue was dedicated? Kennell, on the other hand, suggests that the young man was not a winner, but had finished the contest on his feet.[72] To support this interpretation, we might be tempted to recall what Nicolaus of Damascus had to say about the recognition reserved for the "few" who excelled in such a trial. However, even this interpretation is not very plausible. Not only is a contest leaving just one competitor the victor incompatible with a test that allows more than one, but it is also most unlikely that the city would reserve the same great honor for both the winner and those (albeit few) who simply endured.

It is more likely that the young man did not win, but allowed himself to be flogged to death, and that the locution ἐπιφανῶρ καρτερήαντα ("having admirably resisted") refers

68 Lucian. *Anach*. 38.

69 Camia 2017: 129–137, 142.

70 ἁ πόλιρ | Μᾶρκον Αὐρῆλιν | Εὐάρεστον Ζωΐλω, | συνέφηβον Μ(άρκω) Αὐρηλίῳ || Ἀριστοκράτηρ τῶ Δαμαι|νέτω καὶ Τιβερίῳ Κλαυδίῳ | Εἰρανίων{ο}ορ τῶ Ὑγείνω, | ἐπιφανῶρ καρτερήαντα, | ποδδεξαμένων τὸ || ἀνάλωμα τῶν βουαγῶν.

71 Kolbe in *IG* V 1, *ad loc*., Woodward 1929: 356, and later, e.g., Brelich 1969: 173, Rizakis et al. 2004: 133 (with discussion of the date), Newby 2005: 159–160.

72 Kennell 1995: 77.

to death using a restrained, but highly charged, euphemism. A statue in his honor would therefore be entirely appropriate, as Lucian states.[73]

The *diamastígōsis* presented the young men with the supreme alternative of victory or death. Each participant had to bear the full weight of the ideals and the glory of Sparta, the social pressures,[74] as well as the fear of his own fears, including the fear of physical suffering.

Reforming the *agṓn*: When and How

The case of the two whipping contests is the clearest example of the transformation of Spartan educational institutions between the Classical and Roman eras, a transformation that Nigel Kennell, in his seminal work *The Gymnasium of Virtue*, urges us to examine with great care.[75] But when did the change from the cheese-stealing *agṓn* to the *agṓn tâs karterías* take place? Opinions are divided.

Kennell himself attributes the change to the *agōgḗ* reforms implemented by Kleomenes III on the advice of the Stoic Sphairos of Borysthenes.[76] In contrast, Jean Ducat dates this change to the revival of Spartan institutions in the second century BC after the Achaian parenthesis.[77] Antony Spawforth, on the other hand, believes that the *diamastígōsis* was introduced in the Augustan period, an admittedly unlikely hypothesis since it conflicts with the testimony of Cicero, who undoubtedly witnessed the *diamastígōsis* in 79 BC.[78] Indeed, since Cicero recalls having heard of deaths in Sparta in the past,[79] the *agṓn* must have been reformed at least a few decades before his visit to the city.

The dating proposed by Kennell and Ducat brings into play the complex issues of the decline, abolition and restoration of the Lycurgan laws and the discontinuity between classical and Roman education. The terms of this debate deserve careful consideration.

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73 Lucian. *Anach*. 38.

74 The mothers and fathers present showed that they were faithful upholders of the Spartan tradition and urged the young people to resist: Sen. *dial*. 1.4.11, Stat. *Theb.* 4.231–233, 8.436–437, Mart. 7.80.10, Lucian. *Anach*. 38, Tert. *Apol*. 50.9, *mart*. 4.8.

75 Kennell 1995.

76 Kennell 1995: 111–113 (which is also partly based on the controversial chronology he proposed for the *Instituta laconica*); earlier Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 207 (^{2}2002: 191–192).

77 Ducat 1995: 357–358 (earlier Rose 1929: 305).

78 Spawforth 2012: 92–95. According to Rzepka 2020, the *diamastígōsis* was an ancient secondary contest that became the pivot of the Ortheia contests when the team contest of stealing cheeses ceased to be practiced because *oliganthropia* prevented the gathering of groups above a certain number. This thesis is based on unverifiable and partly on probably erroneous assumptions (see above n. 15 on the stealing of cheeses as an individual contest).

79 Cic. *Tusc*. 2.34.

As is well known, Kennell has emphasized the great differences between the Spartan educational system of the Classical period and that of the Roman period. The vicissitudes of Spartan education in the Hellenistic period would have been crucial to the development of these differences. According to Kennell, Spartan *paideía* underwent two profound and prolonged breaks in the third and second centuries BC. The first break would have begun in the second quarter of the third century. Kleomenes III would have then renewed the Spartan *paideía* thoroughly, this Kleomenean phase of the institution lasting from about 226 to 188 BC. The abolition of Lycurgus' laws by Philopoimen in 188 BC[80] would have caused another rupture: the 'Lycurgan customs' restored by Kleomenes would have been abandoned and Achaian institutions imposed. A new period of rupture would have thus begun, ending with the reintroduction of the 'laws of Lycurgus' in 146 BC.[81]

It should be noted, however, that the concept of Lycurgus' laws is very vague. They covered almost every aspect of public life, from political and social institutions to traditional customs and education. Moreover, the ancestral Lycurgan *nómoi* were a cultural, political and identity asset of great, and even emotional, worth. As such, they lent themselves to instrumental use. Since Lycurgus' norms affected personal behavior, infidelity to the strict spirit of traditional norms (particularly to what may have happened in the third century BC) could be seen as the neglect and abandonment of the *nómoi*, even if certain traditional practices were formally still in place. Moreover, in both the third and second centuries BC, such persistence, and this is a detail of specific interest to us here, might also have been fostered by the integration of educational practices into religious institutions. The extension and plasticity of the notion of the 'laws of Lycurgus' further facilitated the instrumental use of both the intention to reintroduce such *nómoi* and the accusation of having betrayed them, an accusation made by both contending parties in the course of the revolution of the third century BC.[82] It is therefore unclear to what extent the rites, organization and practices of traditional education had fallen into disuse when Agis IV and Kleomenes III set out to restore them. [83]

Similar issues regard the interruption of Spartan education in the second century BC.[84] According to ancient sources, Philopoimen abolished Lycurgus' institutions after his violent intervention in Sparta in 188 BC.[85] There has been much debate about the extent

80 See below.
81 Kennell 1995: 7–14.
82 Plut. *Agis* 10. Even the same political institutions were subject to different, partisan reconstructions (e.g., Kleomenes III is said to have justified the abolition of the Ephorate as non-Lycurgan: Plut. *Cleom.* 10.1–3).
83 Plut. *Agis* 4.2, *Cleom.* 11.3–4, 18.4. Cf. Lévy 1997: 152, Ducat 2006: x.
84 On this topic, see Nafissi forthcoming.
85 Liv. 38.34.2 and 9, Plut. *Phil.* 16.7–9, Paus. 7.8.5, 8.51.3.

and length of this break. The debate is mostly based on Livy's mention of L. Aemilius Paullus' visit in 167 BC to a Sparta "notable … for its discipline and institutions" [86] and on the role the sources attribute to Rome in the restoration of the educational institutions themselves.[87] The traditional view is that educational institutions at least – if not all political and social institutions – had already been restored by the time of L. Aemilius Paullus' visit to Sparta, while the city remained a member of the Achaian League.[88] Today, however, many scholars, including Kennell, argue that Sparta only returned to its traditional laws when it became a *civitas libera* in 146 BC.[89]

In this discussion, the historicity of the accounts of Philopoimen's abolition of Spartan educational institutions was not questioned until relatively recently,[90] when Jean-Georges Texier argued that the suspension of Lycurgus' laws was primarily a propaganda issue.[91] In a paper now in press, I have taken up Texier's suggestion and examined the historiographical tradition of Philopoimen's intervention and its reverberations.[92] I will briefly summarize my main conclusions below.

Sparta's integration into the Achaian League certainly entailed changes in the city's weights, measures, currency, and political institutions. Undoubtedly, during the period when Sparta was a member of the league (192–146 BC),[93] it adopted some Achaian-type institutions. Two proxeny decrees dating from the period of league membership clearly show that there were Achaian-type magistrates,[94] and the city minted silver coins using the types and the weight system of the Achaian League, switching from the Attic to the reduced Egyptian standard.[95] However, greater caution must be exercised in the face of statements by Livy, Plutarch and Pausanias regarding the abolition of Sparta's educational

86 Liv. 45.28.4: *disciplina institutisque memorabilem* (transl. A.C. Schlesinger).
87 Plut. *Phil*. 16.9, Paus. 8.51.3.
88 Tigerstedt 1965–1978: II, 344 n130, and Kennell 1995: 173n24 with bibliography; later Lévy 1997: 153, Ducat 2006: xi, Dmitriev 2011: 323 and now Steinhauer 2022: I 151–154; cf. Texier 2018: 202n61, 203, 212n114. I also argued for a similar solution in Nafissi 2018: 94–95. These scholars date the restoration of traditional institutions as 183 or 179 BC. Paus. 7.14.2 (see below n. 103) is significant, though he testifies more to Spartan attachment to their own identity than to the vitality of any particular traditional political or social institutions.
89 Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 198 ([2] 2002: 77, 183), Kennell 1992a: 201–202, Kennell 1992b, Kennell 1995: 9–10, Kennell 2008, Spawforth 2012: 91–92, Kennell 2018: 646. On Sparta's new status after 146 BC, see Strab. 8.5.5, Paus. 7.16.10.
90 Lévy 1997: 153: "Quant à la deuxième interruption de l'agogè, qui, elle, est assurée, elle paraît moins longue que ne l'avait supposé Kennell"; Ducat 2006, xi: "in 189/8, … the reality of an interruption seems to be indisputable."
91 Texier 2014: 259-268.
92 Nafissi forthcoming.
93 I accept the traditional date for Sparta's integration into the koinon. Texier 2014: 242–252 has suggested that Sparta only became an ally of the league in 192 and was subject to it from 188, becoming a full member from 182. However, cf. Nafissi forthcoming: n5.
94 *IG* V 1.4 and 5. See, in general, Nafissi forthcoming: n6. Particularly significant is the mention of the *synarchía* in *IG* V 1.4, l. 4 and the *epidamiorgós IG* V 1.5, l. 18.
95 Thompson 1968: 48–49, Grandjean 2019.

institutions.[96] One might certainly assume that integration into the Achaian League required some adaptation of the latter, but there is no direct or even indirect evidence of such adaptations. Moreover, the information on *ephēbeía* in Achaian cities is so scarce and uneven in form that it is plausible to assume that the League did not have a coherent *ephēbeía* program imposed by federal regulations on its member cities, as something that occurred, for example, in the Boiotian League.[97]

One should also be aware that the ancient texts that speak of the abolition of the Lycurgus discipline by Philopoimen are the result of complex cultural-historical and historiographical developments. In general, the idea that Philopoimen had abolished the laws of Lycurgus only became a fact for sources writing from a philo-Spartan and pro-Roman perspective after the liberation of Sparta in 146 BC and the simultaneous restoration to the city of its ancestral laws. Polybius, given his general convictions about the history of Spartan institutions and his judgment of Philopoimen's intervention,[98] clearly did not present the abolition of Lycurgus' laws by Philopoimen as a fact, but only as an argument adopted by the Spartans in their protests. As for the specific issue of the abolition of traditional Spartan education, we certainly find it in the *Histories* of Polybius as a rhetorical argument used by the Romans.[99] The argument was an offshoot of a broader Spartan theme, the protest against the abolition of Lycurgus' *politeía* and laws:[100] since Lycurgus' institutions had been replaced by Achaian ones, the same must have been true of *paideía*. Subsequent historiographical reflection adopts the theme of the abolition of the *agōgḗ* of youth to explain the steep decline in Sparta's capacity to react, and its inability to oppose Achaian rule effectively. By making Sparta's political nadir correspond to the abolition of Lycurgus' laws, Livy and Plutarch reproduce a widespread historiographical and philosophical-political topos. On the one hand, this links the city's power to Lycurgus and his laws and its decline to their abandonment;[101] on the other, it recognizes in Lycurgus' education the basis of its citizens' bravery.[102] For ancient scholars, such a reading of historical events must have been very attractive and almost instinctive. It should be added that education was the most characteristic feature of Spartan civic culture in late Hellenistic and Imperial times and the keen interest it aroused in contemporary educated elites certainly contributed to the success of this interpretation.

96 Liv. 38.34. 2 and 9, Plut. *Phil*. 16.7–9, Paus. 7.8.5, 8.51.3.
97 McAuley 2018: especially 229–230.
98 Polyb. 4.81.12–14, cf. Liv. 39.37.1–7.
99 Cf. Liv. 39.36.4.
100 Polyb. 22.7.6, Liv. 39.33.6–7, 36.4, cf. Liv. 39.37.1–7 and see Nafissi forthcoming.
101 Sources in Nafissi forthcoming; cf. n. 54.
102 Sources in Nafissi forthcoming; cf. n. 55.

It is therefore not possible to accept the strict black and white picture suggested by Livy, Plutarch and Pausanias and imagine that a radical suspension of Spartan *disciplina* and Lycurgan *paideía* took place on the orders of Philopoimen. Two questions suffice to demonstrate the implausibility of a sudden radical erasure of Lycurgus' customs and paideutic traditions. How could norms that underpinned the entire way of life in the city be abolished by law? How was it possible, when intervening in educational practices, to cut the Gordian knot that bound them to religious practices?[103]

The reasons for the decline of the traditional educational system in Sparta were far more complex than any authoritative decision by the Achaian confederation. Extremely strong community cohesion and a committed adherence to traditional values were required to survive the unique dynamics of the Spartan public *paideía*, i.e., the fierce rivalry between individuals living together in grueling conditions, and practices that violated private property (e.g., boys indulging in thieving). These socio-cultural characteristics had certainly already been severely tested by the deepening economic disparities of third-century Sparta. Kleomenes III promoted a more rigorous education system and the restoration of traditional customs, but even then, and even more so after him, massive disenfranchisement and the large-scale registration of new citizens, frequent *stásis* and exile profoundly disrupted the continuity of Spartan *anthrōpopoíēsis* and communal solidarity. Some remnants of traditional education (certainly partly modified by Kleomenes) would have survived into the reign of Nabis and the Achaian Sparta period, but it is hard to say how many and which ones. They may well have included the cheese-stealing contest at the Limnaion.

It seems clear, indeed, that whenever the *diamastígōsis* was introduced, whether by Kleomenes III or by the free republican city after 146 BC, the Spartans certainly had the cheese-stealing *agṓn* very much in mind: the similarities between the two *agṓnes* (the whips, the centrality of the altar) suggest this. The creation of the *agṓn tâs karterías* was not a consequence of forgetting and breaking with traditional educational practices, but a product of intentional imagination.

Comparison with the older whip *agṓn* allows us to assess 'how' the *agṓn tâs karterías* was reformed, or, one might say, conceived. The reform must have been proposed by the king or by influential individuals in accordance with shared values. Even though they

103 It is difficult to imagine that the annexation of Sparta by the Achaian League could have led to "wiping out everything that made Sparta a distinct society" (Ager 2019: 187). Pausanias should avert us to this. In 147 BC, the Spartans in Corinth were recognizable by their appearance: "(The Achaians) arrested everyone, not only those whom they knew for certain to be Lacedaemonians, but also all those they suspected to be such from the cut of their hair, or because of their shoes, their clothes or even their names." (7.14.2, transl. W.H.S. Jones).

might have been more than willing to follow the proposals of a *basileús* like Kleomenes, the approval of the reform by civic political bodies brought into play demands for individual and collective self-representation. Decrees approving religious reform were usually motivated by the desire of the polis to honor the gods in a more appropriate and splendid way, while at the same time acting in a manner that was worthy of itself.

When young people took part in the *diamastígōsis*, they no longer practiced the theft that had characterized the competition described by Xenophon.[104] However, we are not dealing here with the simple moralization of competition and – perhaps contextually – of Spartan educational practices. Indeed, it is fair to assume that Spartan boys in imperial times were still expected to steal as part of their education, at least during the *phoúaxir*, the relatively short period of preparation for the *diamastígōsis*, known to us thanks to some lemmas of Hesychius.[105]

The reform was aimed at doing away with a specific type of theft: the Spartans eliminated *sacrilegious* theft. With the *diamastígōsis*, the test of resistance to pain not only became more demanding, but also took on religious concerns and connotations.

The boys were whipped on the altar and the altar was bathed in their blood. These religious implications, inherent in the new contest from the beginning, were further emphasized by the tradition of the goddess' Taurian origins, which gave the contest a 'para-sacrificial' edge. From then on, the Spartans would have seen the *diamastígōsis* and the blood of the young men as a substitute for the human sacrifices that had once been made to ensure the benevolence of Artemis and the welfare of the city.

The proposal to turn the theft of cheese into the *agṓn tâs karterías* must therefore have been based, at least in part, on the demands of religious piety. This should come as no surprise, given the importance the Spartans traditionally attached to maintaining a proper relationship with the divine.[106] It also seems important to recall "the readiness with which they (the Spartans) attributed their own misfortunes to religious causes, and in particular to divine displeasure".[107] Whatever the exact context of the reform, it is likely that when

104 Xen. *Lac*. 2.9.

105 On *phoúaxir* – in which theft was practiced – as an imperial period practice, cf. Nafissi in preparation. That young people stole during *phoúaxir* can be inferred from the famous anecdote, commonly associated with *phoúaxir* itself, about the child who died from the bites of a fox that he had stolen and kept hidden in silence (Plut. *Apophthegmata laconica anon*. 35 [*Mor*. 234a–b] and *Lyc*. 18.1).

106 As Flower 2009: 193 puts it, "the Spartans arguably paid a more scrupulous attention to religious rituals and acted more often from religious motives than did any of the other Greeks". More extensively, see Flower 2018: 428–430. Cf. Hdt. 5.63, 6.106, 7.206, 9.7, Thuc. 5.82, Xen. *An*. 2.5.7–8, *Lac*. 13.2–3, *Hell*. 4.5.11, *Ages*. 11.1–2.

107 Flower 2018: 430, who recalls, among other things, how the Spartans associated the great earthquake with Poseidon's violent wrath against the supplicant helots of his sanctuary (Thuc. 1.128.1) and felt the need to atone for the wrath of Talthybios (Hdt. 7.134).

the Spartans carried it out they were aware of the city's decline from the splendor of a more or less distant past. Therefore, they looked critically at the way the community addressed its gods on certain occasions and sought to 'improve' the relationship with them in order to honor them more worthily.

What is more remarkable is the iconic value of the *diamastígōsis*, which embodies the essential values of Spartan discipline: a high tolerance of pain, the ability to face death with courage,[108] and generally to act with dignity. The contest took on an ethically irreproachable character that was in keeping with the traditional *semnótēs* of the city. The calm, disciplined and determined bearing of young men who stepped forward and endured the beatings in silence replaced the noisy dashing of the cheese thieves – who, like barbarians, had rushed to the altar for scraps of food and were whipped like slaves or thugs.

Here we return to the story told by Plutarch in the *Life of Aristides*,[109] which seems to encapsulate the anxieties and values that we have evidenced so far. The narrative artfully reworks Herodotus,[110] and presumably other sources from the Classical and Hellenistic periods, although it also takes into account Spartan information from a more recent period when the *diamastígōsis* was already in force.

I would suggest that Plutarch's account still reflected the 'historical' and 'rhetorical' arguments that were raised when the *agṓn* was reformed. The origins of the stealing *agṓn* were explained: it had been established to commemorate a glorious episode in Spartan history, the Battle of Plataiai. Pausanias and the men in his entourage had been looking for favorable signs for the battle when some barbarians attacked them and caused outrage by throwing the sacrificial offerings. The Spartans fought their enemies with daggers and whips, as they had no weapons. The young men who ran to steal the cheese were thus likened to barbarians who had committed an impious act against the deity.[111] However, there is another important detail in the account. The other Spartan warriors, patiently

108 If we accept that the *agṓn* of the Platanistas was conceived with the rule against surrender (and, consequently, against participation in pancratium and boxing contests) in mind, it can be said to resemble the *agṓn tâs karterías* in at least two respects. Indeed, the rule against surrender is the precondition of the obligation to win or die, and the team *agṓn* of the Platanistas is, like the *agṓn* of *diamastígōsis*, an iconic and concise illustration of the virtues of Spartan youth. Platanistas: Paus. 3.14.8–10, Lukian. *Anach*. 38, cf. Pl. *Leg*. 1.633b, Cic. *Tusc.* 5.77, Lucian. *Salt*. 10–11, Plut. *Mor*. 290d; among the most recent studies on the Platanistas *agṓn* see: Kennell 1995: 55–59, Gengler 2005, Ducat 2006: 208–209, Sanders 2009, Richer 2012: 457–545, Fornis 2020, 9–10). Rule against surrender: Plut. *Lyc*. 19.9, *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata Lyc*. 4 (*Mor.* 189e), *Apophth. lac. Lyc*. 23 (*Mor*. 228d), Sen. *Ben.* 5.3.1, Philostr. *Gym*. 9 p. 265 and 58 p. 293; recent studies: Hodkinson 1999: 157–160, cf. now Scharff 2024: 153–154 and Fornis 2020: 3–4.

109 Plut. *Arist*. 17.8–10.

110 Hdt. 9.61.2-3; on the sources of the *Life of Aristides*, see Calabi Limentani 1964: ix–xxxvii.

111 Plut. *Arist*. 17.10, see above n. 13.

awaiting the outcome of the sacrifice and their general's order to fight, were struck down by enemy missiles.[112]

> By this time the horsemen were charging upon them; presently their missiles actually reached them, and many a Spartan was smitten.[113] Their experience was indeed a terrible one, but the restraint of the men was wonderful. They did not try to repel the enemy who were attacking them, but awaited from their god and their general the favorable instant, while they endured wounds and death at their posts.[114]

As Romain Roy has astutely noted, this seems to refer to the *agṓn* of *diamastígōsis*.[115] I would add that it was suggested, that the Spartans should draw inspiration from this noble example, which was also the one most suited to their youth. The boys would no longer imitate the behavior of the barbarians, but the wonderful *enkráteia* of their forefathers, the Spartan warriors of Plataiai.[116]

With a predictable result, the boys became victims of their own illusion of emulating the heroism of their ancestors. Their flesh martyrized, the Spartans proved themselves worthy descendants of the fighters of Plataiai and Thermopylai, whom Herodotus in his narrative, and through the voice of Demaratus, had made lasting embodiments of the rule of victory or death.[117]

To conclude, I would like to move from the 'how' back to the 'when'. When did the Spartans make the decision to subject their male offspring to the pain and danger of the *diamastígōsis*? Such an extreme choice is difficult to comprehend unless it was motivated by genuine religious concerns and perhaps, above all, by an incredibly determined desire to assert the excellence of traditional Spartan education. If the question of the chronology of the reform of the *agṓn* is reconsidered in this light, it may well be linked to Kleomenes III and his restoration of Lycurgan norms. However, it seems that a more stable situation, free from social and military worries, plus the chauvinistic mood that must have prevailed

112 Plut. *Arist*. 17.8–9.

113 At this moment, one of them – Kallikrates, the finest of them all – died. Cf. Hdt. 9.72.

114 Plut. *Arist*. 17.8–9 (transl. B. Perrin): αὐτὸς δὲ πάλιν ἐσφαγιάζετο. καὶ προσέπιπτον οἱ ἱππεῖς· ἤδη δὲ καὶ βέλος ἐξικνεῖτο καί τις ἐπέπληκτο τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν. ἐν τούτῳ δὲ καὶ Καλλικράτης (…) ἦν οὖν τὸ μὲν πάθος δεινόν, ἡ δ' ἐγκράτεια θαυμαστὴ τῶν ἀνδρῶν. οὐ γὰρ ἠμύνοντο τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπιβαίνοντας, ἀλλὰ τὸν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ καιρὸν ἀναμένοντες ἠνείχοντο βαλλόμενοι καὶ πίπτοντες ἐν ταῖς τάξεσιν.

115 Roy 2019: § 28–29.

116 Note the rationale that underpins the stages of the boys' development: at this crucial stage of passage to adult status, their models are warriors. One should not take this description too literally and imagine that the young men of the *diamastígōsis* were standing still around the altar [on the contrary, they were "moving around the altar", περί τινα βωμὸν περιιόντες, as Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 90 F 103z11 says]. The *aítion* suggests a behavioral and ethical paradigm from a situation that is evocative and generally similar, but to a certain extent objectively different.

117 Hdt. 7.104.4–5.

in Sparta when its sovereignty was restored after 146 BC, provide the most appropriate context for the emergence of a competition that was as consciously self-representative as the *diamastígōsis*.

The *diamastígōsis* and Its Public. Spartans and the Greco-Roman Elite at the Sanctuary of Orthia

The *diamastígōsis* evokes instinctive revulsion in the modern mind: the bloodshed and seemingly gratuitous deaths scandalize us, and the scandal is magnified by the 'amphitheatre' of Ortheia with its audience seduced by the bloody spectacle.

There are illuminating studies on cultivated tourism in late Hellenistic and imperial Sparta, and on the complexity of the cultural filters that qualified the experience of visiting the city.[118] When the *agṓn* is mentioned in passing, however, modern scholars present it as a brutal ritual, implying a dubious tourism with a bloodthirsty, if not sadistic, edge. Indeed, many scholars suggest that the spectators had a clichéd Roman interest in spectacles, especially the bloody ones, such as the *munera gladiatoria* or the *venationes*.[119] This suggestion seems to be completely misleading.

The very appearance of the building in which this spectacle took place, with its altar and the façade of the temple incorporated into the structure, accentuated any differences with a 'secular' structure designed or converted for the celebration of *venationes* and *munera*. There are also various features that should qualify our ideas about the *diamastígōsis*, distancing it from any gladiatorial spectacle. These included: the strong links of the Spartan *agṓn* to the culture of the city and the traditional values of Greek civilization; the theme of respect for the gods; the reference to the virtues of Sparta and overcoming the fear of death; the evocation of the Lycurgan origins of the *agṓn*; the nobility of the participants (and the absence of a monetary prize), and, last but not least, the reference to philosophical values such as *kartería* (a Stoic virtue and an essential component of

118 Cartledge and Spawforth 1989: 207-211 ([2] 2002: 192–195); see also Cusumano 2009–2010, with Nafissi in preparation.

119 The adjectives 'horrifying' and 'gruesome' describe the revulsion aroused by the idea of a goddess and boys being whipped on her altar (des Bouvrie 2009: 153); sometimes the comparison with gladiator spectacles is explicit (Burkert 1965: 172n20, cf. Lebessi 1991: 102 and n9). The emphasis is on the sadistic nature of tourism and on attraction to a degenerate ritual (Rose 1929: 405, Marrou 1948: 53–54, Den Boer 1954: 272–273, Cartledge 2001: 172, Engels 2004: 101, Burkert[2] 2011: 393, Christesen 2012: 201) or even just on such a dubious "entertainment" (McInerney 2015: 311, Braund 2018: 73). König 2005: 91–92 suggests a more complex relationship between the appreciation of traditional gymnasium culture and gladiatorial shows. Making a comparison between the Spartan *agṓn* and the ritual of Patrai for Artemis Laphria, in which the enormous number of animals, even wild ones, sacrificed on the acropolis suggested a kind of *venatio* (Pirenne-Delforge 2006: 106–107, Mylonopoulos 2008: 54–56, Spawforth 2012: 93–95), is a more sophisticated reading, though it still does not convince.

courage), not to mention Plato's *karterḗseis tôn algēdónōn*.[120] Perhaps most importantly, the public included the boys' fellow citizens. Membership of the same civic subdivisions with their specific social and personal relations must have determined emotional participation, disappointment and jubilation. First and foremost in this scale of relationships were obviously the young people's families, who are frequently mentioned in the sources. It would be wrong, I think, to dismiss the passages that mention the pressure exerted on children by their parents, urging them to resist at all costs, as empty reiterations of an old topos. Long-held beliefs about Spartan behavior would have affected all spectators, Spartans and non-Spartans alike. It is probable, for example, that the mothers present wanted to be seen as faithful representatives of traditional Spartan motherhood.[121] Indeed, the reactions of the parents must have been a spectacle within the spectacle.

The influx of spectators from the Greco-Roman *oikouménē* into the sanctuary of Ortheia probably influenced the epigraphic habits of the dedicators. From the early imperial period, as we have seen, the goddess began to be named not only with the local epiclesis, but also, in a less parochial fashion, with the theonym Artemis. A more striking phenomenon should probably be read in the same way: the use of the local dialect, well noted by Nigel Kennell, which characterizes many of the dedications of the winners of the *paidik(h)ón* and other inscriptions relating to the *agōgḗ* in the second and third centuries AD. Again, this localist emphasis is at least partly an effect of the presence of non-Spartans, however much this might seem to run contrary to expectations.[122] From the late Hellenistic period, Spartan epigraphy was otherwise characterized by an initially prevalent, then exclusive, use of the *koinḗ*, generally in the Doric variant of Laconia. This *koinḗ*, with very rare traces of dialectal forms more specific than the preservation of /ā/, was also the language of public inscriptions in the imperial period. On the other hand, the inscriptions from the sanctuary of Orthia already show a greater tendency to preserve specific features of the Laconian dialect between the first century BC and the first century AD.[123]Among the stelae with sickles dedicated to Ortheia, from the time of Hadrian onwards, in addition to texts in *koinḗ* with a Doric coloring, we find a fairly large group in the distinctive Laconian dialect of the imperial age, the most striking feature of which is the rhotacism of the final sibilant.

120 Pl. *Leg*. 1.633b-c Kennell (1995: 111–113) in particular has done well in highlighting the noble philosophical pedigree of the *agṓn tâs karterías*. The Solon of Lucian's *Anacharsis* (38) interpreted the actions of Spartan youths of the imperial era as proof that they would become *karterikṓtatoi*, fully in the spirit of Plato's Megillos (Ducat 2009: 427–428).
121 See n. 74. Cf. Figueira 2010: esp. 271.
122 Kennell 1995: 87–93.
123 Brixhe 1996 (on Ortheia): 101–102.

It is not clear how widely this dialect was actually spoken in the city, but there is no doubt that it was used as a deliberate choice in the dedications for the boys and as a mark of identity. It underlined the specific character of local traditions and recalled the venerable antiquity of the Lycurgan customs.[124] The adoption of Laconian in the inscriptions probably reflects, in part, the use of the dialect in the rituals and especially in traditional songs. The epichoric and archaic flavor of dances and songs, noted for the Hyakinthia by Polykrates,[125] would also have been emphasized by the linguistic features, although the form of the imperial Laconian dialect differed from its presumed classical models. The unusual use of this dialect in the famous false Spartan decree against Timotheus, transmitted by Boethius (Mus. 1.1), seems to indicate a link between the Laconian dialect of the imperial period, ostentatious localism and traditional songs and music.[126] In order to fully appreciate the connotations of the use of the 'hyperlocal' dialect, it should be noted that the decree, while drawing on the Laconian of the imperial period, aims to restore the flavor of a classical Spartan text. The decree does not refer to the songs for Ortheia, but implicitly to the Karneia and explicitly to the *agṓnes* for Demeter and Kore at the Eleusinion of Kalyvia (tēs) Sōkhás. It is also worth noting, however, that the decree's declared purpose was to protect both traditional music and youth from corruption.

At the Limnaion, some of the songs may have been performed by the young people themselves during some of the *paidik(h)ón* competitions,[127] and the use of dialect was probably encouraged by the presence of an audience from all over the Greek world, before whom it was particularly important to present a language with local and ancient

124 Kennell 1995: 87–93, Alonso Deniz 2014, Kristoffersen 2019.

125 *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 588 F 1: "Numerous choruses of young men come in and sing some of their local poems, and dancers mixed in with them move in the ancient style, accompanied by the pipe and the song." (transl. S. Douglas Olson: χοροί τε νεανίσκων παμπληθεῖς εἰσέρχονται καὶ τῶν *ἐπιχωρίων* τινὰ ποιημάτων ᾄδουσιν, ὀρχησταί τε [ἐν] τούτοις ἀναμεμιγμένοι τὴν κίνησιν ἀρχαικὴν ὑπὸ τὸν αὐλὸν καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν ποιοῦνται). On Polykrates, see Lloyd 2019, 35–37, 239–242, who argues for an identification of the author with the early fourth-century Athenian rhetor. Referring to the archaic and local character of dancing and singing seems to be more suited to a Hellenistic writer.

126 ἐπειδὴ Τιμόθεορ ὁ Μιλήσιορ παραγινόμενορ ἐττὰν ἁμετέραν πόλιν τὰν παλαιὰν μῶαν ἀτιμάσδε κτλ. "Since Timotheus of Miletus, having come to our city, dishonours the ancient muse and by turning away from the seven-stringed cithara and introducing a variety of tones he corrupts the ears of the youth; and since by means of the multiplicity of the strings and the novelty of his song in place of her simple and well-ordered garments he clothes the muse in ignoble and intricate ones by composing the frame of his melody according to the chromatic genre instead of the enharmonic one to the antistrophic responsion; and since being further invited to the musical contest at the festival honouring the Eleusinian Demeter he arranged the story improperly, for he did not instruct becomingly the youth about the Birthpangs of Semele; be it resolved *** that the kings and ephors shall censure Timotheus for these two reasons and, after having cut the superfluous among the eleven strings and leaving the seven, shall also enforce that anyone who sees the grave dignity of the city will be deterred from introducing into Sparta any unpleasant (musical) ethos and the glorious fame of the contests may not be affected." (transl. L. Prauscello). Cf. Prauscello 2009: 172–188. The first part of the decree must refer to the Karneia, that in other sources are the setting of the anecdote: Plut. *inst. lac.* 17 (*Mor.* 238c) and Paus. 3.12.10 (D'Alessio 2013: 129–130).

127 Nafissi in preparation.

connotations.[128] It seems especially significant that the inscription on the statue of a young man who – as suggested above – died in the *diamastígōsis* competition (*IG* V 1, 653a = *AO* 356, no. 142) also has these specific dialectal features. The other honorary inscriptions, on the other hand, are generally written in local *koinḗ*, as are those for the *bōmoníkai*. The statue in question was erected in the sanctuary of Ortheia and was financed by the boy's *bouagoí*, i.e., by young men of the same age group, members of that city elite that had financed his education.[129] The anomalous choice of language seems to have been dictated by the location chosen for the statue, by the desire to emphasize participation in a shared educational experience and, of course, by the local origin of this extraordinary act of courage and resistance. The Laconian dialect of the imperial age was an enduring hallmark of Spartan excellence.

Conclusion

When the *agṓnes* of Ortheia began is uncertain, but they probably took place – at least as far as the theft of the cheese described by Xenophon is concerned – between the full Archaic and the early Classical ages.[130] These are the centuries when the Sparta we know best was maturing. During their education, boys competed in unusual contests, such as the stealing *agṓn*, but also in more common contests involving gymnastics and athletics. All these competitions gauged the physical and moral abilities of young people and contributed to hierarchies being established within the community. Success was a prerequisite for further selection or co-option into more prestigious roles.[131] By staging an event in which theft was forbidden, the contest made it possible to measure and reward cunning in theft and resistance to pain, two skills that were considered central to the education of young Spartans, an education vaguely inspired by the harshness of a warrior's life in the countryside.[132] It is probable that this unusual contest was one of the sickle contests, and that it was held in the same festive setting as the latter.[133]

128 Although this cultural choice also had a local importance; see Prauscello 2009: 186-188.
129 At least from the late first century AD, young people of all ages formed groups of "cattle herds" (*bouaî*), led by a "herdsman" of their own age, a *bo(u)agós*. Among other things, the *bo(u)agós* probably had to bear part of the expenses necessary for the correct performance of their activities, including the religious ones provided for in the common training course and, as in this case, those for the honorary statue. The prestige inherent in the title of *bo(u)agós* is borne out by its frequent occurrence in lists of magistrates, dedications, and *cursus honorum*.
130 Xen. *Lac*. 2.9. Powell 1998: 129-133, proposed to recognize a flogging scene in the cup Stibbe 1972, no. 64, from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia: the hypothesis is rather unlikely, cf. Delahaye 2019: 452–453n2784 and Nafissi in preparation.
131 Ducat 2006: 214–219.
132 Nafissi in preparation.
133 Nafissi in preparation.

The *diamastígōsis* is a clear example of invented tradition, probably created in the climate of exaggerated patriotism at the time of Sparta's 'liberation' from Achaian domination. The introduction of the *diamastígō*sis made Spartan practices more in keeping with the city's traditional image as well as more pleasing to the gods. The unfolding of the *agṓn*, although briefly touched on in a large number of sources, starting with Cicero,[134] is not easy to reconstruct. Nonetheless, a new reconstruction of the contest has been proposed here: the contest seems to have involved the boys going round the altar and, when they reached the platform on which the altar itself stood, the blood from their whipping bathed it in blood. The new *agṓn* took on an unusual religious edge, and any reference to theft, which had characterized the previous competition, was eliminated. However, the *agṓn tâs karterías* was not simply a moralization of earlier Spartan competitive and educational practices: in fact, even during the imperial period, Spartan boys engaged in theft during their education, if only for brief periods. In this particular form, however, the competition reflects the desire to eliminate the worrying sacrilegious traits that might be found in the cheese-stealing contest.

The young man who withstood the relentless succession of lashes the longest was declared the winner of the contest,[135] and could boast the title of *bōmoníkās*, as attested in the imperial era. The contradictory evidence of Nicolaus of Damascus *FGrH* (= *BNJ*) 90 F 103z11, who states that a few participants were given the victory prize, remains difficult to explain. At least from the mature imperial era, the city voted for the winner to be honored with a statue, which was then usually dedicated by private individuals at their own expense. Rumors of deaths were known as early as Cicero[136] and there is no reason to doubt that such tragic events, also reported by other ancient authors, really did occur. Lucian states that, like the victors, these young men were awarded statues by public decree and that they were the object of special honors.[137] An inscribed base honoring one of these ill-fated young men has been recognized here for the first time.[138]

The contest thus took on the ultimate connotations of a challenge ending in victory or death. All the protagonists, the young competitors and the spectators, were affected by the commonplaces and implications of a Spartan tradition, of which every Spartan had to be worthy: from the historical and anecdotal memories of the warriors of Plataiai and Thermopylai to the clichés of mothers demanding that their sons conform to the heroic standards of the city. The presence of a foreign public accentuated these tendencies:

134 Cic. *Tusc*. 2.34, 2.46, 5.77.
135 Plut. *inst. lac*. 40 (*Mor*. 239c).
136 Cic. *Tusc*. 2.34.
137 Lucian. *Anach*. 38.
138 *IG* V 1.653a = *AO* 356, no. 142.

expressions of the culture and dynamism of local society and of a civic pride impervious to changing times. Whatever our moral judgment of the *diamastígōsis*, hasty references to sadism or a taste for gladiatorial spectacles only bring into play issues of individual/mass psychology and cultural parameters that are completely inappropriate for understanding this phenomenon and its drama.

Foreigners were perhaps not particularly large in number, but were distinguished by their social background, culture, authority and political role. They came to Sparta from all over the Greek world, indeed from the entire imperial world. Although the cult of Artemis Ortheia must have appeared venerable, especially after a narrative about its Taurian origins was propagated, perhaps in the second century AD, the festival and sacrifice of Ortheia were not recognized in the religious calendar of other poleis and thus did not attract any official delegations.[139] Foreigners visited Sparta for much more individual reasons. They were attracted by the Panhellenic stature of the past and the image of Sparta, and by the fame and enduring heroism of its young men.

Undoubtedly, the myth and prestige of Sparta exerted a great fascination on the outside world. However, the homage paid to tradition was not only the result of decisions made by an elite seeking a place for themselves and their community in the Greco-Roman world, nor was it the result of adherence to the classical models of Rome.[140] The city's elite had a deeply felt need to live up to its own traditions and past greatness. Sparta's homage to its own myth was primarily an endogenous product, even if the myth was further fueled by interaction with the political and cultural elite of the Greco-Roman world.

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139 On city delegations to the Panhellenic Games of the imperial period, see Rutherford 2013: 47–50 and *passim*.

140 This is the dominant line in Spawforth 2012.

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Chapter 10

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The Eleutheria and Larisa

Evidence

The direct evidence for the Thessalian Eleutheria is chiefly epigraphic, with which some numismatic, literary, and archeological evidence has been productively associated. The inscriptions consist of: a number of fragmentary lists documenting victors in festival contests;[1] several monuments commemorating an individual's victories in the Eleutheria;[2] and decrees of the Thessalian League and the Delphic Amphiktyony, which mention the sanctuary of Zeus Eleutherios in Larisa as an *epiphanéstatos tópos* for the publication of Thessalian League decrees and the Eleutheria festival as a principal occasion for honoring benefactors.[3] Most of the epigraphic evidence dates to the second and first centuries.

Coinage can be brought indirectly into conversation with the epigraphic record in two ways. First, the coinage of the Thessalian League in the second and first centuries typically represents what are thought to be Zeus Eleutherios and Athena Itonia, the chief recipients of League cult, on the obverse and reverse. The prominence of Zeus on this League media indicates his high status in the regional pantheon and suggests, by extension, that the festival in his honor was viewed accordingly. Second, a number of curious contests in the festival program seem to reflect a Thessalian agonistic tradition – especially the *aphippodromás*, *aphippolampás*, and *taurothēría* – and may be depicted on some earlier polis coinages of the region.[4]

1 These victor lists have been collected recently at Graninger 2011. All dates BC unless otherwise indicated.
2 E.g., *IG* VII 48.
3 *CID* 4 106, 128; *IG* IX 2.507–509; *SEG* 34.558.
4 See, e.g., Gallis 1988: 219–225 (*aphippodromás*; *taurothēría*); Zafiropoulou 2004: 115–117 (*taurothēría*); Axenidis 1947: 15–24 (*taurothēría*).

Sebastian Scharff (editor). Beyond the Big Four. Local Games in Ancient Greek Athletic Culture. Teiresias Supplements Online, Volume 4. 2024: 224-242.

Salvage excavations in Larisa have brought to light two theaters, either of which is likely to have furnished a venue for some contests in the festival program. Other architecture in the city has been tentatively associated with the sanctuary of Zeus Eleutherios.[1] Direct literary evidence for the festival is conspicuously, albeit not unexpectedly, muted.[2]

Foundation

The Eleutheria are likely to have been established in the wake of the Roman defeat of Philip V in the Second Macedonian War at Kynoskephalai in 197. T. Quinctius Flamininus, the victorious consul in the campaigning, famously proclaimed free Thessaly and several other regions of northern Greece that had been under Macedonian control at the celebration of the Isthmian games in 196 and set about reorganizing these territories in subsequent years during a series of visits to the region. Bruno Helly has plausibly further specified the precise foundation date for the festival as 193/92.[3]

Like most festival names, the Eleutheria are most probably derived from the name or *epíklēsis* of the divinity in whose honor it was celebrated, who was almost certainly Zeus Eleutherios. His cult is not earlier attested in Thessaly and was probably installed in Larisa after the Second Macedonian War.[4] The Thessalian Eleutheria thus seem likely to have been a "freedom festival," a particularly popular type of festival in all periods of Greek history, that commemorated an historical event.[5]

Organization

The Thessalian Eleutheria were organized by the Thessalian koinon and are likely to have been a penteteric festival.[6] Chaniotis has described common elements of "freedom festivals" and it is probable that several were present in the Eleutheria program, despite not being formally attested:[7]

1) Crowning of participants, council members, commemorative monuments;

5 References to these remains will be discussed below ("Facilities and Spectators").
2 Discussed at Graninger 2011: 78–80: these are references not to the Eleutheria per se, but perhaps to the *aphippolampás* and *taurothēría* as Thessalian contests.
3 *BE* 2013, no. 224, based on *CID* 4.106 and a plausible emendation of *IG* IX² 508, presented *ad loc*.
4 Bouchon and Helly 2013: 218–222, have hypothesized recently that the cult of Zeus Eleutherios was related to the cult of Zeus Olympios, which is now known to have been a significant cult in the region in the third century (Malay and Ricl 2009); cf. Parker 2011.
5 Chaniotis 1991; Chaniotis 2005: 227–233.
6 Preuner 1903: 372; Graninger 2011: 76–77.
7 Chaniotis 1991: 127–131.

2) Procession to the location of sacrifice. It is likely that prominent officials of the Thessalian League would have taken part or perhaps representatives of member cities. Chaniotis observes the occasional participation of foreigners in such processions and stresses the importance of the participation of youths, which marks out the importance of the gymnasium in Hellenistic urban life: both categories of participant seem plausible for the Eleutheria;
3) Sacrifice. There must certainly have been a sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios in his sanctuary in Larisa;
4) Prayer. It was common for prayers to be uttered by the priest or sacrificial officiant in remembrance and celebration of those who participated in the events commemorated by the festival as well as the divinity or divinities associated with both the historical event and the festival;
5) Singing of hymns or other types of cult song. Zeus Eleutherios and, indeed, Flamininus himself, if the literary sources do not mislead concerning his prominence in both the victory over Philip V and the reorganization of the region, emerge as likely recipients of such song;
6) Sacrificial meal;
7) Contests;
8) Orations concerning the events commemorated by the festival; and
9) Dramatic representation of the events commemorated by the festival.

While only one of these nine elements is firmly attested in the case of the Thessalian Eleutheria, 7) contests, Chaniotis' study offers us an opportunity to imagine the conduct of the festival in somewhat more vivid detail. Garlanding, procession, sacrifice, prayer, song, and consumption of meat are common elements of most normative religious festivals in the ancient Greek world (and contests are not uncommon); we can reconstruct their presence in the Thessalian Eleutheria without difficulty.[8] Indeed, in some cases, there exist chronologically close potential parallels.[9] Orations and dramatic

8 For example, an honorary statue of Flamininus is known from Thessalian Skotussa, dedicated by Praulos, son of Phoxinos, who served as *stratēgós* of the Thessalian League 190/89 (ed. pr. Mastrokostas 1964: 309–310, no. 2a [*SEG* 23.412; *BE* 1965, no. 213]); Praulos does not describe himself as *stratēgós*, so the dedication may date to before or after his term of office, or even Skotussaios, which may hint at the purely local significance of the gesture, and Flamininus is not here described as *hýpatos*, *stratēgós hýpatos*, or with any other designation of office – he appears in effect as a private benefactor. One may easily imagine the existence of such a statue in Larisa and hypothesize that such a monument would have been crowned at the time of the Eleutheria. For additional discussion, see Daux 1965: 301–303.
9 For the possibility of a cult hymn in honor of Flamininus, see Plut. *Flam.* 16.4, where his 13 intercessions on behalf of Chalkis with the Roman consul M'. Glabrio at the time of the war with Antiochos III led to the institution of a priesthood for Flamininus: "Moreover, even does to our own day a priest of Titus is duly elected and appointed, and after sacrifice and libations in his honor, a set hymn of praise is sung: it is too long to be quoted entire, and so I will give only the closing words of the song: 'And the Roman faith we revere, which we have solemnly vowed to cherish; sing, then, ye maidens, to great Zeus, to Rome, to Titus, and to the Roman faith: hail, Paean Apollo! Hail, Titus our savior!'" (transl. Perrin).

reenactments are more specific to the genre of commemorative festival and appear more variable in how they are deployed within specific festival settings. And it is tempting to speculate about how other historical commemorative festivals, particularly freedom festivals like the Eleutheria, and other festivals so-named, may have influenced one another; the Plataian Eleutheria may loom especially large here.[10] What emerges from a plausible filling out of the festival program via comparison with other events is the likelihood that Rome and, indeed, the figure of Flamininus were specifically celebrated by the Thessalian League alongside Zeus Eleutherios.[11]

More concrete details can be offered on the matter of the festival's contests. While no single complete victor list survives offering a snapshot of the agonistic program at one particular time, it is possible to cobble together a composite program for the second and first centuries from the fragmentary lists and other commemorative victor monuments. One may distinguish between four categories of events occurring in the preserved victor lists: 1) melic contests: trumpeters, heralds, *aulētaí*, kitharists, *kitharōdoí*; 2) the spectacles: *taurothēría*, *aphippolampás*, *aphippodromás*; 3) gymnic contests (age classes in parentheses): *péntathlon* (boys, youths, men), *dólichos* (boys, men), *stádion* (boys, youths, men), *díaulos* (age classes unknown), boxing (age classes unknown), *pankrátion* (boys, youths, men); 4) hippic contests: foal race, horse race, two-foal chariot race, two-horse chariot race, four-foal chariot race, four-horse chariot race. A fragmentary victor list from early first-century Larisa indicates that dramatic contests took place there at that time; the Eleutheria make good sense as a venue for such contests.[12] Catalogues of *theōroí* or *theōrodókoi* do not survive, unfortunately, and so it is difficult to know the festival's *epangelía*. It is probable, however, that, as a festival organized by the Thessalian koinon, the Eleutheria would have been announced within the cities of the koinon and, as the territory administered by the koinon expanded over the course of the second and first centuries, so too did its regional *epangelía*.[13]

Athletes

The Eleutheria victor lists present the complete (or, if fragmentary, plausibly restored) ethnica of approximately 50 victors: 25 are Thessalian, 25 are non-Thessalian. Among the

10 For the Plataian Eleutheria in the early Hellenistic period, see Wallace 2011; cf. Schachter 1981 III: 125–143.
11 Compare the rather more explicit Titeia festival celebrated at Argos, which recognized Flamininus' "liberation" of the city, that is, its reincorporation within the Achaian League, in 195: Daux 1964; Kralli 2017: 324.
12 Graninger 2011: 180–182. For a more complete text, see *BE* 2013, no. 224.
13 For territorial expansion of the Thessalian League in the later Hellenistic period, see Graninger 2011: 35–39.

Thessalians Larisa dominates (18, 72% of the Thessalian victors and 36% of the 50 total),[14] with stray participation by other principal cities: Atrax (1), Gyrton (1), Kierion (2), Metropolis (1), and Pherai (2). The non-Thessalian victors are quite fragmented, with no single city or ethnos home to more than three victors. We may organize into four larger geographic groups: central and northern Greece (7);[15] Peloponnese (7);[16] the Greek east (9);[17] and the western Greeks (2).[18] Stray reference to victories at the Thessalian Eleutheria in other commemorative monuments do not shift the overall impression offered by the victor lists.[19] In a synchronic perspective, it is the prominence of Thessalian, and notably Larisan, victors in the sample that is most striking, rather than the presence of any particular non-Thessalian participants. Among Hellenistic festivals outside the "big four,"[20] we may contrast festivals like the Amphiaraia (and variants) at Oropos, where the local is underrepresented (only eight of the 165 victors with preserved ethnic are from Oropos [ca. 5%]), or the Herakleia at Chalkis, where the local is overrepresented (25 Chalkidians among the 33 victors with preserved ethnic [ca. 76%]); a closer comparandum may be offered by another federal festival like the Basileia at Lebadeia, where, although Lebadeians are absent, Boiotians (from, e.g., Anthedon, Chaironeia, Koroneia, Thebes, and Thespiai) account for victors among the 42 attested with preserved ethnic (ca. 38%) with Thebans responsible for eight (or 50% of Boiotian victories and ca. 19% of total)[21] and Thespians for five (ca. 31% of Boiotian victories and ca. 12% of total).[22]

While the logic of koinon sponsorship and geographic proximity may drive in some measure the particular profile of Thessalian victors at the Eleutheria, a decisive role was

14 I have not included in this count "Kratinos, son of Pythonikos, Thessalian [from….]" (*IG* IX² 525, l. 14) whose city ethnic has been plausibly restored on prosopographic grounds as "[from Larisa]"; see Graninger 2011: 161 for discussion of the question.

15 Athamania (1), Boiotia (2), Epiros (1), Kerkyra (1), Thasos (1), and Thebes (1; I regard this as a reference to Boitian Thebes). I do not include in the count Kallon, son of Xenophilos, (*IG* IX² 529, l. 19) whose ethnic has been plausibly restored on prosopographic grounds as "[from Opous]"; see Graninger 2011: 175 for discussion of the question.

16 Kleitor (1), Lakedaimon (3), Patras (1), and Sikyon (2).

17 Alabanda (1), Antioch on the Maiander (1), Ephesos (1), Kos (1), Kyme (1), Kyzikos (1), Laodikeia (1), Magnesia on the Maiander (1), and Miletos (1).

18 Neapolis (1) and Syracuse (1).

19 E.g., *IG* VII 48, for a Megarian who won victories in boxing and *pankrátion* at "the Eleutheria in Larisa" and *IG* IX² 614a, for a Larisan who took "one [crown] from the Thessalian Eleutheria of Zeus"; the latter monument will be discussed in greater detail below.

20 I have used the Mannheim database for the numerical estimates that follow.

21 The Theban total may be artificially high: one individual is responsible for six victories as the commemorative epigram is generally understood (*IG* VII 4247; Ebert 1972: no. 70–the text and its meaning are difficult, however).

22 Comparison with the Herakleia at Chalkis, Amphiaraia at Oropos, and Basileia at Lebadeia reveals another distinctive feature of Eleutheria: the absence of Roman or Italian victors. I am inclined to read this gap as an area where our data are not especially representative. For the substantial Roman and Italian presence in Thessaly in the second and first centuries, including office holders and victors in a local, Larisan competition, the so–called Stena, see Helly 1983; cf. Bouchon 2007.

played by a festival program with a major complement of equestrian contests and a unique suite of spectacle events – *taurothēría*, *aphippodromás*, *aphippolampás* – that drew on particular regional Thessalian agonistic tradition. Only Thessalians are attested as victors in both categories of event. And these were no ordinary Thessalian elites, but often had direct ties to high offices in the Thessalian koinon, including that of League *stratēgós*.[23]

A diachronic frame of analysis reveals a festival that seems to have drawn from a fairly modest pool of competitors in Thessaly and central Greece in its early years but which acquired a more prominent position in the wider Aegean and eastern Mediterranean world by the first half of the first century. Dated to the late 190s or 180s, the earliest preserved list, *IG* IX² 525, is fragmentary: of the five contests for which victors are preserved, only Thessalians (two Larisans, plus another individual marked with the ethnic Thessalos but whose city of origin is not preserved) or Boiotians (two) are listed as victors. Contrast the victors in the same series of contests in *IG* IX² 528, dated to approximately 80 to 120 years later: Thessalians are again prominent (one Larisan, one from Kierion), but in place of Boiotians, who are now absent, we find champions from: Asia Minor – Ephesos (one), Antioch on the Maiander (one), Kyzikos (one); the western Greek world – Neapolis (one); and the Peloponnese – Patras (one). A list that seems to have fallen between these two, *IG* IX² 526, preserves the extensive end of a victor list and suggests that already by the middle of the second century interest in the festival had spread; thirteen victors are here attested: alongside a heavy Thessalian presence (seven total: one each from Metropolis and Atrax, five Larisans), victors from central Greece (one Theban), the north Aegean (one Thasian), the northwestern and western Greek world (one each from Corcyra, Syracuse, and Kyme), and Asia Minor (one from Magnesia on the Maiander) are listed. We unfortunately do not possess festival invitations, *theōrodókoi* catalogues, and the like for the Eleutheria and so cannot reconstruct a general catchment area for the festival.

Cheating

There are no known instances of cheating in the Eleutheria, but cheaters there must have been. Punishments known from other games may offer a useful guide: fines, flogging, expulsion;[24] a third-century epitaph from Larisa identifies the deceased by his occupation as a *rhabdoúchos*, "rod-bearer."[25]

23 Graninger 2011: 82–84.
24 See, e.g., Crowther and Frass 1998. For the Zanes at Olympia, bronze statues of Zeus funded by fines paid by cheating athletes, a highly marked commemoration of cheating mentioned at Paus. 5.21.2, see Buraselis 2017.
25 *IG* IX² 735.

Continuity and Change

The absence of any single complete, or nearly so, victory list, let alone a sequence of them, renders any diachronic claim about continuity or change difficult to sustain. All is not lost, however, and one may make some plausible inferences.

Cult officials of Zeus Eleutherios may have become more prominent in the conduct of the festival. Victor list preambles offer useful perspective on the administration of the Eleutheria festival. Two such preambles are partially preserved, from the first decades of the second century to the first half of the first. The earlier of the two is simple and consists of a dating formula based on the federal office of agonothetes: "When Androsthenes, son of Italos, from Gyrton was agonothete of the Thessalians…". The later monument offers an additional date: "When Isagoras [son of so-and-so was agono]thete….and when [so-and-so], son of Kleonikos, from Gyrton was [prie]st of Zeus Eleu[therios…"[26] The higher visibility of the priest of Zeus Eleutherios in the victor lists may suggest a more prominent role for the official in the organization of the contest or, at the very least, an increased standing within the wider framework of the festival.

Increasing prominence of the "Thessalian triad" may also be observed. *IG* IX² 525, the earliest of the Eleutheria victor lists, which Helly argues commemorates victors in the inaugural Eleutheria, presents first the group of victors in the melic contests, followed by the victors in the gymnic contests. *IG* IX² 528, dated ca. 90–70, offers a similarly full presentation of melic victors, but lists after them victors in the "Thessalian triad," before proceeding to the gymnic victors. Such an epigraphic change may reflect either the introduction of the events to the Eleutheria program at some point after 194 or, more plausibly, the movement of these events from a later to an earlier period in the festival, assuming, as is reasonable, that the order of events on the victor list reflects the actual temporal order in which these competitions took place.

Other changes can be imagined on the basis of other shifts that we know to have taken place in Larisa and Thessaly during the later Hellenistic period. Significant among them must have been the appearance of a new festival, the so-called Stena, which, like the Eleutheria, commemorated military events in which Thessaly, Rome, and Antigonid Macedon were implicated: the Third Macedonian War. The respective position of Thessaly and Rome in the foundation narratives of the two festivals seem likely to have shifted, however: from Rome as savior of Thessaly in the Second Macedonian

26 The word "priest" is incomplete and one may well imagine other possible supplements. That this individual, whatever his role, was somehow connected with the cult of Zeus Eleutherios is clear, however.

War/Eleutheria to Rome as saved by Thessaly a generation later at Kallinikos during the Third Macedonian War/Stena.[27] While the Stena shared certain elements of its agonistic program with the Eleutheria, including the events of the so called Thessalian triad, and so must have shared in addition some competition venues, further facilitating comparison between the two festivals, the Stena offered a much more unusual program of events, participation in which appears to have been limited to Thessalians alone. How precisely the emergence of this new festival would have impacted perception of the Eleutheria, particularly among its Thessalian and more narrowly Larisan audiences, is uncertain, but the sensitivity of local historical consciousness to competing commemorative claims is well known.

Notes of continuity are struck by the overall program of competition – excepting the possible shift in order of competitions noted above, the types of competition represented in the victor lists remain consistent in the preserved victor lists – and the healthy presence of Thessalian participants, especially in the spectacle and equestrian events and including regional elites who held high office in the koinon.

"Connecting festivals"

The Eleutheria existed in a wider ecosystem of festivals in the Hellenistic Mediterranean world. A significant question centers on the participation of athletes from Eleutheria host communities, Larisa as well as the other member cities of the Thessalian koinon, in other festivals. Hellenistic evidence preceding or contemporary with the conduct of the Eleutheria suggests some interesting patterns.[28] The Mannheim database indicates three principal groupings: one is closely associated with Olympia and is largely limited to the third century (I treat here as well the smaller number Thessalian participants in the Pythia at Delphi); the second is tied to the participation of Thessalian klerouchs in Ptolemaic Egypt in local contests, again in the third century; a third grouping is rather more significant for locating the Eleutheria in a network of contemporary festivals and consists of victors in central Greek, especially Boiotian, contests, many of whom were active during the second and first centuries.

27 For the Stena foundation narrative, see *BE* 1964, no. 227; cf. Helly 2007.

28 For Thessalian victors in Panhellenic and local competitions in the Archaic and Classical period, see Stamatopoulou 2007: *passim*, with incisive discussion of Thessalian patronage of Pindar, Bacchylides, and Simonides. For the apparent dearth of Thessalian equestrian victors in Panhellenic contests in these centuries, see Aston and Kerr 2018.

Of the twelve known Olympic victors from Thessaly during the Hellenistic period, ten won in equestrian contests during the first three quarters of the third century;[29] the two non-equestrians were *stádion*-runners.[30] The character of the source material is partially responsible for this impression: five of the third-century equestrian victors are known from epigrams of Poseidippos and the remainder from Eusebius and a fragmentary second-century AD papyrus from Oxyrhynchus containing an Olympiad chronicle with quite detailed knowledge of Hellenistic Athens (*P.Oxy*. XVII 2082 [*BNJ* 257a]).[31] While Pharsalos and Krannon are explicitly marked as cities of origin for two victors, it is striking how, in the Poseidippan material, equestrian victors in these commissioned monuments seem to downplay their membership in a particular polis in preference to celebrating the regional, Thessalian, origin of the horse or horses with which the victory was gained;[32] and it is equally striking that of the four equestrian victors mentioned in *P.Oxy*. XVII 2082 (*BNJ* 257a), two appear with a regional ethnic Thessalos rather than a city ethnic, while a third seems to have been designated by a combination of regional and city ethnics.[33] There may appear here then, in an otherwise murky period of Thessalian history about which little is known and even worse has been suspected, evidence for a

29 1) Pandion of Thessaly, no city ethnic mentioned, victorious in the *kélēs* in 296 (*P.Oxy*. XVII 2082 [Moretti,1957, 134, no. 523; *BNJ* 257a F4; not in Mannheim]).
2) Amyntas, no city ethnic mentioned, victorious in the *kélēs* ca. 280–240 (Poseidipp. AB 85 [XIII 23–26] [Mannheim 50]).
3) Hippokrates, no city ethnic mentioned, victorious in the *kélēs* in 256 (Moretti, 1957, 138, no. 558 [Mannheim 536]).
4) Karteros of Thessaly, victorious in the four-horse chariot ca. 268 (*P.Oxy*. XVII 2082 [Moretti 1957: 136, no. 546; Mannheim 585; Rzepka *ad BNJ* 257a F6 suggests emending to Krateros on no good grounds]; while the precise date remains somewhat uncertain, the 260s seem virtually certain [see *BNJ* 257a F6]).
5–6) Two other Thessalian victors are also mentioned at *BNJ* 257a F6, although little has been preserved of their names: one, M[——] from Krannon, was victorious in the *kélēs* (Moretti, 1957, 136, no. 547 [Mannheim 659]); the other, [——] of Thessaly, won the *synōrís* competition (Moretti 1957: 136, no. 548 [Mannheim 1109]; Rzepka *ad BNJ* 257a F6 suggests that the winner of the *synōrís* was also Karteros on the basis of the shared preserved ethnic, Thessalian, but this seems an unnecessary inference, given the apparently marked preference in the Poseidippos epigrams for similar regional identification).
7) Poseidipp. AB 84 (XIII 19–22 [Mannheim 871]) commemorates an anonymous Thessalian victorious in the *kélēs* ca. 280–240.
30 Philomelos of Pharsalos, victorious in 284 (Moretti 1957: 135, no. 534 [Mannheim 855]; for the declining fortunes of Pharsalos in the Hellenistic period, see Stamatopoulou 2009); Demostratos of Larisa, the chronological outlier in the series, was victorious in 84 (Moretti, 1957: 148, no. 669 [Mannheim 321]). Nothing further is known of either individual: see *LGPN* IIIB s.v. Φιλόμηλος 19; Δημόστρατος 9.
31. Poseidipp. AB 83 (XIII 15–18), 84 (XIII 19–22), 85 (XIII 23–26). For further discussion of the *Hippika* of Poseidippos and the programmatic position of Thessaly and Thessalians within that collection, see Fantuzzi 2005. For Eusebius, see Christesen 2007: 232–276 and *passim*. For *P.Oxy.* XVII 2082 (*BNJ* 257a), see Christesen 2007: 334–336, 520 n. 4.
32 For these strategies of elite self–representation in the Hellenistic period, see Scharff 2016.
33 *P.Oxy* XVII 2082 (*BNJ* 257a F6): Κ̣αρτεροῦ Θεσσαλο[ῦ | ἀπὸ . . . . . .]ς τέθριππον. Larisa, [Λαρίση]ς, would fit the lacuna and is a plausible restoration, especially given the prominence of the city. Such a fashion of describing Thessalian victors by both regional and city ethnics becomes typical in second and first century victor lists. The sources accessed by the author of the history preserved in *P.Oxy.* XVII 2082 may thus have preserved Thessalian victors at Olympia during the first half of the third century with three distinct forms of self–designation: by polis alone, by region alone, or by a combination of region and polis.

powerful regional elite possessed of Panhellenic aspirations and participating in a continuing public discourse about Thessaly and Thessalian identity.[34]

Evidence for Thessalian participation in other of "the big four" festivals in the Hellenistic period is slender. Two victors are known from the Pythia: one, an equestrian and *stádion*-runner commemorated in a Poseidippan epigram, is dated ca. 280–240,[35] while the other won the boy's *díaulos* after the middle of the second century.[36] An honorary inscription from Larisa documents victories won by an individual in non-equestrian competitions at several festivals, including Nemea; the monument will be discussed in greater detail below.[37] The few known Thessalian victors at Isthmia date to the Classical period.[38]

A second, smaller group of Thessalian victors in non-Thessalian contests, consisting in fact of one individual, warrants cursory mention. Kineas, son of Alketas, a Thessalian, is listed as victor in both the Ptolemaic *paídes* and adolescent's *stádion* race at a Basileia celebrated in Egypt somewhere outside of Alexandria in 267.[39] The festival apparently mirrored an official celebration of the same festival in Alexandria; while the provenance of the stone within Egypt is unknown.[40] The festival seems to have been organized by and for klerouchs in the region, among whom Thessalians were quite prominent.[41] Louis Robert identified this victor with a Kineas, son of Alketas, attested in a papyrus from

34 For a revision of traditional "decline" narratives of this period in Thessalian history, see Helly 2009. For earlier contestations of Thessalian identity in the Classical period, see Graninger 2009.

35 Hippostratos of Thessaly was victorious in both the *kélēs* and *stádion* (Poseidipp. AB 71 [XI 3921–24] [Mannheim 540, although only the *kélēs* victory is noted there]). Father's name and city ethnic are not mentioned in the epigram. This Hippostratos appeared too late to be treated in *LGPN* IIIB, although the name was not uncommon in the region (see *LGPN* IIIB s.v. Ἱππόστρατος 1–14).

36 Neon son of H[egemo]n (?) (ed. pr. Woodward 1910: 146–147, no. 2 [Mannheim 1502]). The date is as suggested by ed. pr. on the basis of the lack of iota adscript; letter forms as described by ed. pr. seems broadly consonant with a later Hellenistic or early Imperial date. The findspot in Raches may suggest an initial locus of publication in southern Achaia Phthiotis; Stählin 1924: 186n2, associated the monument with ancient Alope, but other candidates in the area may be more likely (e.g., Echinos, Larisa Kremaste). This Neon is otherwise unknown (*LGPN* IIIB s.v. Νέων 28).

37 *IG* IX² 614a. Although the specific competitions are not themselves preserved in the fragmentary inscription, the fact that the victor is described as having been victorious in both boy's and adolescent's age categories proves that these were non–equestrian events.

38 Farrington 2012.

39 Koenen 1977: l. 19–22a (*SEG* 27.1114; *BE* 1977, no. 566). For the age–class distinction *Ptolemaikoí paídes*, compare the *Olympikoí*, *Pythikoí*, and *Isthmikoí paídes* attested in other areas of the Greek world; see now the helpful discussion at D'Amore and Mari 2013: 235 (*SEG* 63.418), where it seems likely that these designations help to mark out specific divisions within the larger category of *paídes* in first-century Amphipolis; cf. Couvenhes 1998: 60–61. A similar purpose may be at work in this inscription, although it remains curious that Kineas could compete in two apparently distinct age classes.

40 See Bingen 2007: 86, n. 12 for a survey of scholarly opinion on likely original locus of publication. Fraser 1993: 449–451 suggests Middle Egypt since the text was inscribed on a basalt stele. Gauthier 1995: 585 suggests Memphis.

41 For the Ptolemaic settler population, see Mueller 2006: 166–174, where "Thessalian" is observed as sixth most common ethnic designation in Ptolemaic Egypt and third most common among Greek designations, following only Crete and Attica; cf. La'da 2002: 80–85. For Thessalians as core of a major cavalry division (*hipparchía*) in the Ptolemaic military, see Fischer–Bovet 2014: 127.

Hibeh as priest of Alexander in 263–262 and used this finding to highlight the elite status of some Thessalians in Ptolemaic Egypt.[42]

A third trend, of greater immediate relevance for the Eleutheria, is represented by a sequence of Thessalian victors at central Greek contests, especially the Amphiareia (and Rhomaia) at Oropos, and the Basileia at Lebadeia. Early members of the group can be dated to 329/28: a victor's list from the Amphiareia Megala at Oropos preserves the names of two Thessalian victors, one in the *díaulos*, another in the *péntathlon*.[43] While Thessalians won victories at smaller Boiotian festivals like the Basileia at Lebadeia in the second and first centuries, the evidence to hand is insufficient for discerning any deeper, local pattern of engagement at those festivals;[44] rather, such data tend to resolve at the regional, central Greek level. Impressive evidence comes from early first century Oropos, where Thessalians appear especially active at the recently reorganized Amphiaraia and Rhomaia. Seven victors in a range of contests are known from victor lists associated with the festival dated to the period 80–50: *I.Oropos* 522,[45] *I.Oropos* 528,[46] and *I.Oropos* 529.[47]

42 Robert 1968: 433–435. Cf. *LGPN* IIIB s.v. Κινέας 5; Peremans and van 't Dack 1950: no. 17215, 5168; Clarysse and van der Veken 1983: 6, no. 28.

43 Epikrates of Larisa was victorious in the *díaulos* (*I.Oropos* 520, l. 13f. [Mannheim 398]), while Melanippos of Pharsalos won the *péntathlon I.Oropos* 520, l. 27f. (Mannheim 672). Father's names are not part of the commemorative format. Neither individual is otherwise known: see *LGPN* IIIB s.v. Ἐπικράτης 41; Μελάνιππος 7.

44 […]mos, son of Hippokrates, was victorious in the *kélēs* (*pōlikós*) at the Basileia at Lebadeia in the early second century (Mannheim 1145); the regional ethnic Thessalos is preserved, but the city ethnic unfortunately is not (*SEG* 3.367). The stone has been plausibly down-dated to the middle of the first century (Knoepfler 2008: 1454). *IG* IX² 614a also records a victory won most probably by a Larisan at the Basileia. Sostratos, son of Dorotheos, from Demetrias was victorious in boxing at a Boiotian festival ca. 60–50 (*IG* VII 1765, l. 32f. [Mannheim 973]); for the date and identity of the festival (often associated with the Erotidea at Thespiai on insecure grounds), see Knoepfler 1997: 34–37 (*SEG* 47.518); he is otherwise unknown (*LGPN* IIIB s.v. Σώστρατος 65). As a citizen of Demetrias, Sostratos was of course a resident of Thessaly in the broad, geographic sense of the word, although Demetrias was not part of the Thessalian League at this date, but functioned as the head of the neighboring Magnesian League (see, e.g., Boehm 2018: 206–208).

45 *I.Oropos* 522: Thessalian victorious in men's *stádion* – name, father's name, and city of origin not preserved (l. 1–2 [Mannheim 1347]); Thessalian from Larisa, son of Demet]rios (?), victorious in men's *díaulos* – name not preserved (l. 5–6 [Mannheim 1347]); Thessalian from Larisa, son of Demetrios, victorious in men's *híppios* – name not preserved (l. 9–10 [Mannheim 1347]). These three partial names are not implausibly regarded as referring to the same individual. A fourth Thessalian victory is recorded in the same victor list: Andronikos son of Sotylos, city of origin not preserved, was victorious in men's boxing (l. 27–8; Mannheim 67). Andronikos is otherwise unknown (*LGPN* IIIB s.v. Ἀνδρόνικος 56).

46 *I.Oropos* 528: Maurinas, son of Polemokrates, a Thessalian from Larisa, was victorious in boy's *péntathlon* (l. 47f. [Mannheim 667]). Maurinas is otherwise unknown (*LGPN* IIIB s.v. Μαυρίνας 1); the name is rare in the region, attested only here.

47 *I.Oropos* 529: Hybristas, son of Chanas, a Thessalian from Pelinna, was victorious in the *kélēs pōlikós* (l. 16 [Mannheim 543]); Mnasimacha, daughter of Phoxinos, a Thessalian from Krannon, in *hárma pōlikon* (l. 18 [Mannheim 718]); Polyxenos, son of Antigonos, a Thessalian from Krannon, in *arma tele* (l. 19 [Mannheim 892]); and Philokrates, son of Antigonos, a Thessalian from Larisa, in *kélēs téleios* (l. 20 [Mannheim 849]). Hybristas, Mnasimacha, and Polyxenos are otherwise unknown (*LGPN* IIIB s.v. Ὑβρίστας 3; Μνασιμάχα 4; Πολύξενος 84). For Philokrates, see above.

While discussion in the preceding has largely focused on evidence from outside of the region of Thessaly, I mention briefly a curious commemorative monument from Larisa that celebrates a series of victories won by an individual at Nemea, Delos, Tegea, Larisa, and Lebadeia (Basileia) (*IG* IX² 614ab); two victories were in the adolescent age-class, three in the men's – the specific competition (or competitions) has unfortunately not been preserved. Given the findspot, it is likely that the monument commemorated a Thessalian, probably from Larisa. The side of the base contains a second inscription, added later presumably, which commemorates victories in the boy's *stádion* and *díaulos* in the Po[seidon]ia (?) of the Thessalians and additional victories in men's *stádion* and *apobatikós* at the Kaisareia. Neither festival is otherwise attested in Larisa.

The application of network theory to Hellenistic festivals has opened up the potential for individual competitors to serve in effect as mobile nodes of contact and communication. These were not simply participants in so many athletic or cultural contests, but deeply implicated as agents in wider networks of social and political significance. Connections developed in such settings could have immediate impact beyond signifying membership in "an imagined community of Greek cities."[48] We have seen Thessalian victors in the Eleutheria play prominent political roles in the Thessalian koinon and locally within their home poleis, but consider now, for example, a recently published decree from the city of Larisa dating ca. 70. Although fragmentary, enough is preserved to indicate that a Philokrates, son of Antigonos, from Larisa, who has been identified with a victor in two-foal chariot races in both the Eleutheria at Larisa and the Amphiaraia at Oropos, made a specific demand before the Larisan assembly that citizenship be granted to Zobios, son of Zobios, from Chalkis, and his son Dionysos.[49] While it is now clear that Oropos is not to be read in the document[50] – the initial reading in the *editio princeps*, particularly tantalizing given that Chalkis, Oropos, and Larisa each hosted prominent festivals and Philokrates had been victorious at two of them – it remains an intriguing possibility that Philokrates' success at Oropos conferred status sufficient to petition in support of Zobios, who hailed from nearby Chalkis. The document may touch on another prominent theme in this chapter, Larisa qua polis and qua capital of Thessalian League, for Zobios had previously been awarded proxeny by the Thessalian League, which status is mentioned prominently in the document.

48 Van Nijf and Williamson 2016: 57.
49 Tziafalias and Helly 2004: 407–417 (*SEG* 55.608; *BE* 2007, nos. 322, 332).
50 *BE* 2008, no. 316.

Facilities and spectators

The question of facilities and spectators is tightly bound with the broader question of festival program discussed above. Three main types of facility can be distinguished: first, and most significant, are the sanctuary and related cult buildings dedicated to the divinity in whose honor the festival is held; second are competition venues – theaters, stadia, and the like – where contestants vied with one another for prizes and fame; and, finally, other supporting infrastructure for both contestants and spectators which may include stoas, inns, and gymnasia. It is important to note at the outset that many of these categories of architecture could and did support other types of activity.[51] This is even true for stadia and hippodromes, which, while appearing as perhaps the most specialized in function, could be used for other purposes.

A second general consideration concerns the broader topography of the festival. Comparison with "the big four," each of which was conducted in relatively close confines within or adjacent to the sanctuary of the honored divinity (with the exception of the hippodrome, which seems to have posed problems of siting in virtually every location), offers a pointed contrast with festivals conducted in more urban settings, where it is the polis, understood in this instance as an urban area, that provides the essential spatial framework. It is likely that contestants and spectators alike at the Eleutheria would have moved in and through different areas of Larisa.

Finally, a central tension in the ideological construction of the Eleutheria concerns the relationship of polis and koinon, of the Thessalian League and its capital city, Larisa. Such tension was imprinted upon the topography of Larisa, as some polis-centered or – specific venues were re-appropriated for use in this festival for the koinon, while other locations, more central to the life of the koinon, received greater attention than usual; this condition was doubtless hastened by the emergence of the Stena as a second major agonistic festival celebrated in Hellenistic Larisa, which shared contests and doubtless competition venues with the Eleutheria while reversing the benefactor/beneficiary relationship of Rome and Thessaly commemorated therein. Conditions in Larisa were particularly dynamic. The restrictive franchise imposed by Flamininus doubtless created both winners and losers at the local level and Philip V had enjoyed considerable support in the region; he and Perseus are mentioned as contributing to the renovation of a gymnasium in Larisa soon after the Second Macedonian War.[52] The Stena, too, may have provided a vehicle for

51 Cf. Scott 2014: 305 (and *passim*), on the "indeterminacy" of athletic spaces and structures in the Archaic and Classical periods. While festival facilities tended to acquire more fixed architectural form in the Hellenistic period, such buildings are often documented as being used for a wider range of activities.
52 Habicht 2006.

additional contestation a generation later. And one wonders how the recent past would have been described by Bombos, from Alexandria Troas, who was honored by Larisa for his presentations in the city's gymnasium.[53] While we do not know how such tension would have been negotiated, we can confidently surmise that there would have been rather more at stake for participants, spectators, and their hosts than simple movement from lodging to cult and competition locations.

It is appropriate to consider first the sanctuary of Zeus Eleutherios, which is likely to have been a prominent, perhaps terminal, location on the processional route of the festival and site of sacrifice, prayer, feasting, and hymning in honor of the god. It is plausible to imagine *témenos* wall, altar, temple, and cult image at a minimum, perhaps supported by ancillary buildings (e.g., stoas, dining rooms) and display areas for dedications and decrees. A. Tziafalias has tentatively associated with the sanctuary architectural remains in the Doric order exposed by rescue excavations in the city.[54] A section of road bed covered with marble paving slabs has recently been excavated between this proposed sanctuary area and the 1st theatre of Larisa. One may imagine urban processions associated with the festival traversing such a road.[55]

Melic and dramatic contests were likely held in the so-called first theatre of Larisa, which has been excavated and painstakingly restored.[56] While a final excavation report is eagerly awaited, reports and in-progress studies offer some basic interpretive guidelines. The theatre seems to have been constructed during the third century and would presumably have served as a venue for musical and theatrical performances, in addition to other civic functions. It was probably this facility that hosted individual contests of that nature during the Eleutheria, at least until the first century, when Larisa was equipped with a second, smaller theatre nearby – the so-called "second theatre".[57] Other prominent cities in the Greek world were similarly equipped with two theaters (e.g., Argos, Epidaurus, etc.), although the motivation in Larisa remains uncertain;[58] it is plausible that the second theatre also served as a competition venue during the Eleutheria.

53 Helly 2006.

54 Tziafalias 1994: 170–172. It is significant that the sanctuary was not located on Larisa's acropolis, which seems to have still been commanded by Athens Polias.

55 Tziafalias and Karagkounis 2017: 8.

56 The theatre is mentioned in a third- or second-century inscription, *IG* IX² 522 (*SEG* 13.391; *BE* 1953, no. 99).

57 For recent discussion of the architectural history and potential uses of the second theatre, see Tziafalias and Darmezin 2015, with reference to earlier scholarship.

58 Tziafalias and Karagkounis 2017: 4 suggest that the first theatre had at that time been converted to an arena for the performance of gladiatorial style contests. Such transitions are well attested in the Aegean world, of course, but at a somewhat later date in the first and second centuries AD; see, e.g., Welch 1998: 122.

Gymnic and equestrian competitions would presumably have been held in a stadium and hippodrome respectively. A stadium has yet to be physically located in Larisa.[59] Two Roman-era epitaphs from Larisa do refer to gladiatorial combat ἐν σταδίοις, however, and it seems certain that the city would have possessed some such formal venue.[60] An ancient hippodrome has also yet to be identified in Larisa.[61] A Roman period epitaph for a Larisan who had been victorious at the Olympia and in the Hadriania mentions that the deceased was buried near the city's hippodrome, where he had previously been active.[62] The proximity of a burial to this monument may indicate that the hippodrome was located outside the walls of the ancient city; T. Axenidis has attractively speculated that the location of the ancient hippodrome may be sought in the vicinity of the Ottoman hippodrome.[63]

Beyond cult and competition locations at the Eleutheria, other facilities are likely to have been utilized in support of the festival. Larisa had an active gymnasium culture, well-attested beginning in the third century and continuing into the Roman era.[64] At least two gymnasia are known in the city in the Hellenistic period, either (or both) of which could have been used by local or visiting athletes in preparation for the Eleutheria.[65] A palaistra is attested in Larisa on the acropolis of the city in the third century and may have been similarly utilized.[66]

Who attended the festival? We have treated in some measure earlier in this chapter two principal categories of participant, namely, the festival organizers and contestants. A third

59 Scott 2014: 295–296, elaborating on the tentative and early interpretation of Gallis 1988: 231, writes: "…no stadium has been found in the city of Larisa, home to the Eleutheria festival; there was instead an open-air, horseshoe shaped structure…" That structure is now known to have been the lowest several rows of seats in the cavea of the second theatre.

60 *IG* IX² 644; *SEG* 32.605; cf. Welch 1998: 127–128: the expression was standard in the genre and is thought to reflect the performance of some gladiatorial combat in stadia. The matter is complicated for Larisa since the first theatre seems to have been converted at an early date, already in the first century.

61 See Scott 2014: 296, who notes that the number of physical hippodromes that have been identified and studied from the ancient Mediterranean is actually quite small and hypothesizes that such facilities often lacked formal architecture and took advantage of existing features of the landscape (e.g., Olympia). Cf. Mann and Scharff 2020 (= Mann and Scharff 2022). For the comparatively well-understood hippodrome associated with the Arcadian Lykaia, see Romano 2019.

62 *IG* IX² 645. While the text of the epitaph most probably suggests the deceased had indeed won victories in the Larisan hippodrome, festivals otherwise unattested or poorly attested in the region – the Hadriania and the Olympia – are singled out for specific reference with inscribed crowns in the field beneath the epigram. It remains possible that festivals so–named were celebrated in Larisa in this period. Axenidis attractively suggests that these two festivals are to be associated with Athens and the creation of the Panhellenion under Hadrian's patronage (Axenidis 1947: 37). Cf. De Sanctis 1898: 49–50, no. 62.

63 Axenidis 1947: 26. See now Helly 2019.

64 For full discussion of the gymnasiarchy at Larisa, including citation of the principal ancient sources, see Helly 2006: 183–190.

65 Helly 2006: 190.

66 Helly 1970: 281, 295.

group, essential to the conduct of ancient Greek sport, must also be mentioned: spectators. These may be subdivided into two basic groups. First, non-Thessalian spectators, who likely were political elites representing their home poleis or koina as diplomats and *theōroi*. Second, we must imagine the presence of Thessalian spectators, some elites in an official capacity, others, including elites and non-elites, who were there for the show and, often enough, to service the crowd itself.[67]

Agṓn and polis

Among other festivals sponsored by the Thessalian League in the post-196 era, only the Itonia in honor of Athena Itonia can be considered a peer of the Eleutheria, but it apparently lacked an agonistic program.[68] While the city of Larisa qua polis was more significant to the conduct of the games spatially and symbolically than administratively, it is well known that additional festivals with agonistic components took place in Larisa that were directly administered by the city, the most significant of which where the Stena.[69]

The evidence at hand for the Eleutheria provides no guidance as to how or to what extent the contests could be described using any of the evaluative terms characteristic of the Hellenistic era (and beyond), viz., thematic, stephanitic, sacred, isolympian, isopythian, etc. And, indeed, as much of the wider debate about the significance of these statuses hinges on the type of award given to victors by the organizing authority of the festival and on how that victor was recognized by his home polis,[70] it is important to point out that we have no clear response to either question in the case of the Eleutheria. Some hint may be offered by a commemorative epigram from Larisa (*IG* IX² 614a), where a Larisan is described as having fit five crowns about his temples: one each from Nemea, the Delia at Delos, the Alea at Tegea, the Thessalian Eleutheria, and the Basileia at Lebadeia. But one cannot be sure if the "crowns" of the inscription are meant to indicate simply victory in a generic, poetic manner or if in fact they communicate something significant about the high status of the festivals in which the honorand competed and won, which could in turn impact the victor's status in Larisa.[71] A similar problem is posed by other commemorative monuments in which a victory at the

67 See, e.g., Mann 2014: 279, 282–284, with reference to additional scholarship.
68 For the federal Itonia at Philia, see Graninger 2011: 58–67.
69 See the section on "Continuity and Change" above.
70 For recent discussions of the status quaestionis, see, e.g., Remijsen 2011 and Slater 2012, with copious reference to earlier scholarship.
71 For the status of stephanitic victors in their home poleis, see Slater 2012: 170–173.

Eleutheria is signified visually by the presence of an enclosing crown around the contest and festival name.[72]

Conclusion

The Thessalian Eleutheria offers a stimulating case study of the dynamic, complex relationship between cultural contest and sociopolitical context in an era of momentous change in the northern Greek world in the later Hellenistic period. One glimpses here in the conduct of a single festival program a venue for: the relation and interplay of supra-regional, indeed global, states; the expression of tensions between regional, Thessalian and local, Larisan conceptions of past and present; and the ever-present churn of individuals competing for glory and, often enough, to perform their political power.

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72 E.g., *IG* VII 48 (Megara), where not all victories so designated are attested as stephanitic.

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