

A POINT OF PRECEDENCE AT PLATAIA

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN ATHENS AND SPARTA OVER LEADING THE PROCESSION

SEVERAL WRITERS of the early Empire refer to a solemn dispute which Athens and Sparta conducted at Plataia over leading the procession, *περὶ τῆς προπομπείας*, obviously a procession at the Panhellenic festival Eleutheria (§II). In modern works this dispute has been noticed only in passing, in an odd footnote here or there. The sole advance has been L. Robert's observation that a Hellenistic epigram on stone honors an Athenian victor in the dispute (§IV). This is not the only epigraphic mention, and a fuller treatment is long overdue. The dispute makes a small chapter in the history of panegyric oratory in Hellenistic and Roman times. It will be convenient to begin with the latest evidence and to work back to the earlier period. Certain inscriptions of the years A.D. 164–196, although hitherto unrecognized as bearing on our topic, provide some of the surest details.¹

I. THE *διάλογος* AT PLATAIA

In four ephebic catalogues of the second half of the 2nd century after Christ we hear of a ceremonial occasion at Plataia called “the *dialogos*”, ὁ *διάλογος*, at which the Athenian ephebes assisted and received a distribution of money: *IG* II², 2086, lines 33–34, of A.D. 163/4; 2089, lines 16–17, probably of A.D. 167/8; 2113, lines 143–144, of A.D. 187/8; and 2130, line 39, of A.D. 195/6 (the archon dates are discussed below). In the first of these, *IG* II², 2086, the relevant passage runs as follows (lines 33–38).

35 ἐκ τῶν σεβαστοφορικῶν ἐδόθη ἐν Πλαταιαῖς τῶι δι-
αλόγῳ διανομῇ τοῖς ἐφήβοις καὶ τοῖς περὶ τὴν ἐπιμέ-
λειαν αὐτῶν τεταγμένοις καὶ εἰς θυσίας ὑπὲρ τῆς νί-
κης τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων καὶ ὑγείας τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ
εἰς τὸν ἐνδεήσαντα χρόνον ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐγυμνασιαρχήθ[η]
καὶ ὑδρία ἀνετέθη τοῖς ἀεὶ ἐσομένοις ἐφήβοις.

Out of the Sebastophoric Fund a distribution was made at Plataia at the *dialogos* to the ephebes and to those placed in charge of them, and also for the purpose of sacrificing towards the victory of the emperors and the health of the pontiffs, and out of it too the gymnasiarchy was defrayed during the time when it was vacant, and a hydria was set up for each successive group of ephebes.²

¹ Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

Follet = S. Follet, *Athènes au II^e et au III^e siècle*, Paris 1976

Graindor, = P. Graindor, *Chronologie des archontes athéniens sous l'Empire*, Brussels 1921
Chronologie

Oliver = J. H. Oliver, “Roman Emperors and Athenian Ephebes,” *Historia* 26, 1977, pp. 89–94

² A similar translation is given by J. H. Oliver (Oliver, p. 94).

The next inscription, *IG II*², 2089, is fragmentary, but the corresponding passage (lines 14–20) appears to say that when the Sebastophoric Fund gave out, a private donor made up part of the distribution: at all events the distribution again took place at the *dialogos* at Plataia, and went to the ephebes and those placed in charge of them, and was further used for offerings on behalf of the emperors. In the last two inscriptions as in the first the distribution comes from the Sebastophoric Fund alone, and the details are much the same (2113, lines 142–151; 2130, lines 37–47),³ save that both refer to money left over after the offerings for the emperor, which in *IG II*², 2113 is given to the staff of the Diogeneion, and in *IG II*², 2130 is used for the festival Athenaia. No inscription but the first mentions the vacant gymnasiarchy or the hydria.

The distribution of money from the Sebastophoric Fund is mentioned in yet another ephebic catalogue, *IG II*², 2221, lines 20–21, of A.D. 216/7.⁴ Here the distribution takes place at the Panhellenia, not at the *dialogos* at Plataia, but this other occasion will help us with the *dialogos*. The passage says that “after all the Sebastophoric distributions in the course of the Panhellenia, both the ephebes and the staff of the Diogeneion enjoyed the graduation feast on equal terms, with sacrifice and libation in the Diogeneion.”

What then is meant by “the *dialogos* at Plataia”? During the period in question extensive fragments of a good many ephebic catalogues have survived, and yet the *dialogos* appears in only four of them. This makes it very unlikely that the ephebes took part in the *dialogos* every year; we look for a longer interval, for a fourth-yearly event. The inference is strikingly confirmed by the dates which are now securely established for three of the four inscriptions: A.D. 163/4, 187/8, and 195/6. The intervals are respectively 24 years and 8 years; moreover, the fourth inscription can be assigned to one of the three years A.D. 166/7, 167/8, and 168/9, of which 167/8 fits the fourth-yearly cycle.

This pattern has been determined only recently. Of the four inscriptions *IG II*², 2086, archon Philisteides, has long been dated to 163/4, mainly in virtue of the “era” of the *paidotribēs* Abaskantos;⁵ but the various dates conjectured for the other three were quite misleading (although *IG II*², 2130, archon G. Helvidius Secundus, was at one point placed in 191/2, making an interval of 28 years after *IG II*², 2086). The truth first dawned with the discovery of a fragmentary archon list in which the seven names preserved can only fall in the years 182/3–187/8 and the last of them proves to be the archon of *IG II*², 2113, Tib. Cl. Bradua Marathonius (called “Cl. Atticus” in the archon list).⁶ Since then Follet has found good reasons for assigning G. Helvidius Secundus to 195/6,⁷ and she has also bracketed

³ *IG II*², 2130 records the sum given to each ephebe, 3 denarii, and to each of those placed in charge of them, 5 denarii; the sacrifices for the emperor were defrayed from this latter distribution.

⁴ For the date, see Follet, p. 236. M. T. Mitsos (Ἀρχ'Εφ, 1971, pp. 56–58) has produced a fuller text of this catalogue by combining several smaller fragments with *IG II*², 2221.

⁵ W. Kolbe, “Studien zur attischen Chronologie,” *AthMitt* 46, 1921, pp. 131–149; Kirchner on *IG II*², 2086; Follet, pp. 214, 299, 508. The date given by S. Dow (“The Attic Demes Oa and Oe,” *AJP* 84, 1963 [pp. 166–181], p. 173, repeated in *SEG* XXI, 622) is only a slip.

⁶ J. S. Traill in ΦΟΡΟΣ. *Tribute to B. D. Meritt*, Locust Valley, N.Y. 1974, p. 155 (addendum); S. I. Rotroff, “An Athenian Archon List of the Late Second Century after Christ,” *Hesperia* 44, 1975, pp. 402–408; Follet, pp. 228, 308, 509.

⁷ Follet, pp. 228, note 3, 230–231, 509.

IG II², 2089, archon unknown, within the years 166/7–168/9.⁸ The pattern, already noticed by Follet, cannot be fortuitous: the *dialogos* was conducted every four years.

It is also possible (and this was done long ago) to fix the season of the *dialogos*: the month Metageitnion.⁹ The most obvious clue comes from the later inscription, *IG* II², 2221, linking the distribution of money not with the *dialogos* but with the Panhellenia; for “after” the distribution the ephebes and the staff of the Diogeneion celebrated the graduation feast, τὰ ἐξιτήρια εὐωχήθησαν. In one of our inscriptions, *IG* II², 2113, the remainder of the distribution is given to the staff of the Diogeneion, doubtless as a tip for their devoted service; this gesture, like the table fellowship of *IG* II², 2221, marks the end of the year-long association between the staff and the ephebes.¹⁰ In *IG* II², 2130 the remaining money is spent on the Athenaia, which in lists of ephebic festivals usually comes at or near the end,¹¹ and which doubtless perpetuates the sacrifice to Athena Polias known from Hellenistic inscriptions as a part of the graduation rites.¹² The setting up of the hydria for the next group of ephebes, as in *IG* II², 2086, also shows that the year is at an end; the hydria was perhaps used to fetch water from a river or a spring, an appropriate task for ephebes, witness the contest called Hydrophoria on Aigina.¹³ The distribution and the *dialogos* therefore belong to the end of the ephebic year, *sc.* the month Metageitnion. The dated instances fall in Metageitnion of the years A.D. 164, 168, 188, and 196.

Two further points can be made about the *dialogos* of Plataia. First, although the ephebes attended the *dialogos* as they attended other Panhellenic festivals, there is no suggestion that the *dialogos*, whatever it may have been, was performed by the ephebes. This single word denotes some distinctive ceremonial activity. Second, no festival name is attached, although we might expect one if the *dialogos* was merely part of a larger festival; we might even expect the *dialogos* to be subsumed in the festival name.

Armed with these observations, we may now confront the different theories about the *dialogos* which have been urged in the past; none of them will stand up. Unger and Mommsen thought of the fourth-yearly Eleutheria, but Mommsen was doubtful, because the inscriptions do not name this festival; Follet now regards the epigraphic dates as indicating that the *dialogos* coincides with the Eleutheria.¹⁴ In fact, the new dates conclusively refute this view, for the periodicity of the *dialogos* does not match the periodicity of the Eleutheria. It is true that there is no direct evidence for the dating of any celebration of the Eleutheria.

⁸ Follet, pp. 225–226, 349.

⁹ A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen*, Leipzig 1898, p. 170; cf. L. Deubner, *Attische Feste*, Berlin 1932, p. 237 and Follet, p. 115, apropos of the Panhellenia. I repeat and amplify those arguments of Mommsen which remain valid.

¹⁰ Cf. S. Dow, “Οἱ περὶ τὸ Διογένειον,” *HSCP* 63, 1958 (pp. 423–436), pp. 433–434.

¹¹ P. Graindor, “Études sur l’éphébie attique sous l’Empire,” *MusB* 26, 1922 (pp. 165–228), p. 210.

¹² C. Pélékidis, *Histoire de l’éphébie attique*, Paris 1962, p. 256.

¹³ F. Graf (“Apollon Delphinios,” *MusHelv* 36, 1979 [pp. 2–22], pp. 18–19) places the Hydrophoria of Aigina in the context of ephebic ritual and suggests the same for the enigmatic Hydrophoria of Athens. Graf might have added that the spring Asopis where the Aeginetan ephebes drew the water for their race (*Etymologicum magnum*, *s.v.* *amphoritēs*) bears a name typical of child-nurturing waters; cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft V, ii)* I, 3rd ed., p. 238, note 1.

¹⁴ G. F. Unger, *Zeitrechnung der Griechen und Römer*, 2nd ed., Munich 1892, p. 761; Mommsen, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 170; Follet, p. 349.

But equally there is no conceivable reason why this festival should not fall on the fourth-yearly anniversary of the battle of Plataia in 479. If it fell on this anniversary, the last celebration before Christ was in 3 B.C., the next in A.D. 2, and in our period celebrations were due in A.D. 162, 166, 170, and in 186, 190, 194, 198. The *dialogos* came midway between these celebrations, in 164, 168, and so on.

Graindor, followed by Kirchner and Oliver, connected the *dialogos* with the annual grave service which was conducted by the Plataeans at the Panhellenic burial ground on 16th Alalkomenios = Maimakterion;¹⁵ Plutarch knew the rite at first hand and describes it at length (*Aristeides*, 21.2–6; cf. *de malignitate Herodoti*, 42.872F). According to Graindor the rite is the annual counterpart of the fourth-yearly Eleutheria, and the hydria of IG II², 2086 was used in laving the grave *stēlai*, an action recorded by Plutarch.

The objections to Graindor's view are manifold. 16th Alalkomenios as the date of the grave service is much closer to the beginning of the ephebic year in Boedromion than to its end in Metageitnion, when the *dialogos* took place. The ceremony known to Plutarch, as also to Thucydides (III.58.4–5) and Isokrates (XIV.61), is a civic festival of Plataia; the processioners are all Plataeans, headed by the archon of the town. Indeed it seems rather likely, in view of certain archaic features (notably the archon's dress and conduct), that the local festival existed even before the Persian Wars and was once the general tendance of fallen soldiers at Plataia, which after 479 was amplified to include a special tour of the allied graves.¹⁶ To be sure, the Plataeans conducted the grave service in the presence of observers from other parts of Greece, *ἐναγίζουσιν ἄχρι νῦν Πλαταιεῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων συμπαρόντων* (Plutarch, *de malignitate Herodoti*, 42.872F); the so-called "Covenant of Plataia" speaks of these observers as *θεωροί* (Plutarch, *Aristeides*, 21.1).¹⁷ But even if it were appropriate for

¹⁵ Graindor, "Les cosmètes du Musée d'Athènes," *BCH* 39, 1915 (pp. 241–401), p. 388, note 1; Graindor, *Chronologie*, pp. 169–171; *idem*, *op. cit.* (footnote 11 above), pp. 219–220; Kirchner on IG II², 2086; Oliver, p. 91.

¹⁶ The Plataean festival resembles other festivals commemorating fallen soldiers. For example, the Athenian Epitaphia fell at about the same time of year, and the Athenian polemarch like the Plataean archon made chthonian offerings to the dead (Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 58.1, where the papyrus text is preferable to Pollux; Heliodoros, *Aethiopica*, I.17.5); at a like festival on Thasos the dead received like offerings and as at Plataia were invoked as *agathoi* (Pouilloux, *Nouveau choix d'inscriptions grecques*, no. 19, lines 7–11). No doubt many would deny that this pattern antedates the Persian Wars. Wrongly, in my opinion; for I think it can be shown that "the ancestral rites" of the Athenian polemarch, which warrant the inference that this office goes back to the beginning of Athenian government (Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens*, 3.3), are the festivals Boedromia and Epitaphia, as described (without the name Boedromia) at chap. 58.1.

¹⁷ The passage of *de malignitate Herodoti*, which I have not seen cited in any discussion of these matters, is the only indication that the Plataean rite was attended by outsiders (among whom we may count Plutarch himself); in the light of this passage the annual *probouloi* and *theōroi* of the "Covenant of Plataia" are seen to be, as we should indeed expect, different persons with different destinations, which are respectively the Council meeting in Metageitnion and the grave service in Maimakterion. The grave service and the annual meeting of the Council are sometimes confused or conflated, e.g., by B. D. Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery, and M. F. McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists* III, Princeton 1950, p. 101, and by W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* III, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1979, p. 178. The authors of *The Athenian Tribute Lists* distinguish between the secular business of the *probouloi* and the attendance of the *theōroi* at the grave service but fail to notice the different calendar dates. On the other hand Pritchett's notion of "annual funeral offerings by probouloi and theōroi of Hellas on Maimakterion (= Alalkomenios) 16" is both puzzling in itself and irreconcilable with Plutarch.

Athenian ephebes to join the *theōroi*, they would not be entrusted with the special instrument of the Plataean ritual, the hydria which, says Plutarch, the archon first obtained from the records office, *grammatophylakion*, and then carried “through the middle of the city” out to the burial ground, and used to lave the *stēlai* with water from a sacred spring.¹⁸

Plutarch’s account makes it perfectly clear that the grave service is distinct from the worship of Zeus *eleutherios*, whether Plataean or Panhellenic, whether annual or fourth-yearly, which Plutarch himself dates to 26th Panemos = Metageitnion (*Aristeides*, 19.8). The rites of Maimakterion are addressed to the dead and to the gods of under-earth, not to Zeus *eleutherios*.¹⁹ There is no likelihood that the corps of Athenian ephebes turned out for this occasion. And as already said, our inscriptions point to a different time of year and to fourth-yearly intervals.

The very word *διάλογος* has defied explanation. The usual meaning is of course “conversation” or “discussion”, a meaning which seems ill suited to describe what must have been, as was said above, a distinctive ceremonial activity. Graindor suggested that a literary dialogue, perhaps the *Menexenos* of Plato, was read out at the festival, as Cicero says the funeral speech of the *Menexenos* was read out each year at the Epitaphia (*Orator*, 151).²⁰ Such a recitation may be thought less likely in the second half of the 2nd century after Christ, when festival oratory was in full swing, than in Cicero’s time; but in any case the term *dialogos* would be oddly used of the recitation, more oddly still if, as Graindor thought, the funeral speech of the *Menexenos* was excerpted from the framing dialogue. It would be even odder if the recitation gave its name, *dialogos*, to the festive setting in which the ephebes received the distribution of money.

Oliver rejected the idea of a recitation in favor of “a dialogue like that of *IG II² 2788* or a re-enactment of a dramatic interchange culminating in the alleged oath of the Hellenes before the battle (Diodorus, xi.29).”²¹ This interpretation is hard to grasp. *IG II², 2788*, to be examined below (§III), gives us not a dialogue but the resumé of a speech; although the speech, as I shall argue, is intended for delivery at the *dialogos* of Plataia, it does not illuminate the term *dialogos*. As for Diodorus, the passage in question tells how the allied delegates first resolved to fight at Plataia and to institute the Eleutheria in case of victory,

¹⁸ Graindor (*Chronologie*, p. 170) appears to think that whereas the archon of Plataia laved other *stēlai*, the Athenian ephebes laved those of the Athenian grave. Plutarch, however, describes the archon as performing all the ritual actions from start to finish: laving and anointing the *stēlai*, slaughtering a bull, praying to the gods and conjuring up the dead, making libations of wine. None of these actions could be delegated to Athenian ephebes. Conversely, the hydria of *IG II², 2086* has nothing to do with the *dialogos*, so far as one can see; it was set up for the incoming ephebes somewhere in Athens, perhaps at the Diogeneion.

¹⁹ During the grave service the archon prays *Διὶ καὶ Ἑρμῇ χθονίῳ* (Plutarch, *Aristeides*, 21.5). This is Zeus’ chthonian avatar, as I. Calabi Limentani remarks *ad. loc.*; for Zeus *eleutherios* could not be associated with chthonian offerings and incantations. From Pausanias’ notice of the monuments of Zeus *eleutherios* at Plataia (ix.2.5) something is missing, seemingly a reference to a statue of a deity other than Zeus; to think of Hermes *chthonios* (so Kayser) is certainly mistaken.

²⁰ Graindor, *op. cit.* (footnote 11 above), p. 220; he disposes of some earlier suggestions which need not be repeated here. Cicero’s testimony is straightforward and unexceptionable; nor is anything gained by postulating “a confusion with an annual lecture for the epheboi,” as Jacoby has it, “Patrios Nomos,” *JHS* 64, 1944 (pp. 37–66), p. 65, note 137.

²¹ Oliver, p. 91.

and how the allied army then mustered at the Isthmos and swore their famous oath; the venue of the meeting of delegates is not stated but can only be Sparta, where Herodotos situates other less edifying preliminaries to the campaign of Plataia. The meeting, the muster, and the successive resolves otherwise known as “the Covenant of Plataia” and “the Oath of Plataia” are simply Ephoros’ combination of several familiar elements; there is nothing here which deserves to be called “a dramatic interchange” or to be compared with the *dialogos* of our inscriptions.

Others have felt bound to ascribe to *διάλογος* a meaning which is both unattested and hard to reconcile with the normal meaning. *Redeaktus*, i.e. a program of ceremonial speeches, says Mommsen; “speech” or “series of speeches”, say LSJ, *s.v.* *διάλογος* II; Neubauer, followed by Kirchner, thought of a contest in speechmaking.²² But although festival speeches were common, it is impossible to believe that such speeches could be designated as *ὁ διάλογος*. As Graindor observes, inscriptions normally use the term *ἐγκώμιον* for a festival speech as the subject of a contest. And if the speeches were part of a festival, we expect to find the festival name, not a term which means in effect “the speechmaking”.

The upshot is that the true interpretation of the *dialogos* has yet to be found. It is time to consider the possibility that this is not an aberrant name for a well-known festival but a separate occasion which has no other name.

The *dialogos* falls in Metageitnion of the second year after, or before, a celebration of the Eleutheria, e.g. in Metageitnion of 164, between celebrations of the Eleutheria in 162 and 166. Since Metageitnion is indeed the month of the Eleutheria, we ask whether there was also some annual or biennial observance in the cult of Zeus *eleutherios*. Such an observance is plainly indicated by the very words of Plutarch which establish the date of the Eleutheria. The battle of Plataia was fought, he says, on 4th Boedromion by Athenian reckoning but on 26th Panemos by Boeotian reckoning, the day “on which even now the Greek Council is still convened at Plataia and the Plataeans sacrifice to Zeus *eleutherios* on behalf of the victory,” *ἥ καὶ νῦν ἔτι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς ἀθροίζεται συνέδριον καὶ θύουσι τῷ ἐλευθερίῳ Διὶ Πλαταιαῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς νίκης* (*Aristeides*, 19.8).²³ As proof of the Boeotian date Plutarch cites an observance which takes place every year; this is why he speaks of the Council meeting and the Plataean sacrifice, instead of saying that on this day

²² Mommsen, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 170; R. Neubauer, *Commentationes epigraphicae*, Berlin 1869, p. 53 (*non vidi*); Kirchner on *IG* II², 2086. LSJ compare *διάλεξις*, but this is not very helpful. The meanings “popular discourse”, “lecture” (as those of Maximus of Tyre) given under *διάλεξις* IV are not very far from the meanings “discourse”, “argument”, “conversation”, “interview” given under *διάλεξις* I, and the instances adduced would not lead one to suppose that *διάλεξις* might denote a festival speech, much less a series of speeches.

²³ Graindor (*Chronologie*, pp. 169–171) takes Plutarch to mean that the Eleutheria of Plataia regularly fell on 26th Panemos in the Boeotian calendar but on 4th Boedromion in the Athenian, an unlikely meshing of the two calendars and not at all what Plutarch means; he is concerned to date the battle and gives the two anniversaries known to him (there were doubtless others in other cities such as Sparta), which presumably go back to the different calendar dates on which the battle actually fell in 479 B.C. Elsewhere, at *Camillus*, 19.5 and *de gloria Atheniensium*, 7.349F, Plutarch dates the battle to 3rd Boedromion (and this is the date which Graindor prefers for the Eleutheria). The date in *Aristeides* might be a copyist’s error, *sous l’influence de τετράδι φθίνοντος qui suit*, as Graindor thought; or we might resort to one of the explanations proposed by E. Badian and J. Buckler, “The Wrong Salamis?” *RhM* 118, 1975 (pp. 226–239), p. 228, note 8.

the Council conducts (or starts to conduct) the festival Eleutheria, or that on this day the Greeks at large sacrifice to Zeus *eleutherios*.²⁴

A page or two after this Plutarch quotes a document which purports to be the original charter of the Eleutheria, a “decree” of the Greek allies meeting after the battle of Plataia, and here too we find provision for an annual meeting of councillors, *probouloi*, as well as for the annual mission of *theōroi* who are concerned with the grave service, as explained above: the very first clause is *συνιέναι μὲν εἰς Πλαταιὰς καθ’ ἑκάστον ἐνιαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος προβούλους καὶ θεωροὺς* (*Aristeides*, 21.1). The decree is certainly a later construction, but just how late? If it were as late as the early Hellenistic period, this clause might reflect contemporary practice; for both the Council and the festival Eleutheria sprang into life before the mid-3rd century, whether they directly continue the work of the Corinthian League or form a new initiative of Athens and the Boeotian League in the years around 280 B.C.²⁵ But before 338 Plataia lay desolate, and in those days and even down to the very end of the 4th century no Council or festival existed to inspire the decree. There is a very strong presumption that the decree goes well back into the 4th century. Since Aristeides is the author of the decree, it redounds to the glory of Athens and so resembles other imposing documents bandied by 4th-century publicists;²⁶ Ephoros knows or invents a rival version of the enactment;²⁷ Plutarch’s source for the decree was very likely Krateros (who gave a biographical account of Aristeides illustrated with documents) and his collection of ostensible 5th-century decrees. If the decree is of the early or mid-4th century, we must then ask whether the first clause like the others is purely visionary or preserves some memory of a short-lived undertaking by the Greek allies in the years after 479.

²⁴ Whether the Plataean worship of 26th Panemos was conducted at the Panhellenic altar outside the east gate of the town, or at a civic altar in the agora, or at both, is a minor question which cannot be answered. When Pausanias in the hour of victory sacrificed to Zeus *eleutherios* in the agora of Plataia (Thucydides, II.71.2), it was doubtless at a pre-existing altar of Zeus *sōtēr*, a cult attested for Plataia by a late inscription (*IG* VII, 1668); the Athenians too, whether then or later, gave the title *eleutherios* to Zeus *sōtēr* as worshipped from of old at the northwest corner of the Athenian Agora. After 479 the Plataeans would of course perpetuate the new title together with the old cult, and this is why the envoys to Archidamos recall Pausanias’ gesture, as well as the subsequent proceedings at a congress of the allies (Thucydides, *loc. cit.*). Isokrates, in evoking the Plataean gods and heroes who were honored for vindicating the “freedom” of Greece (xiv.60), will have his eye on the civic cult of Zeus *eleutherios*, among other things.

²⁵ R. Étienne and M. Piérart (“Un décret du koinon des Hellènes á Platées,” *BCH* 99, 1975 [pp. 51–75], pp. 67–68) hold that the festival was first instituted by the Corinthian League in the period 325–300 B.C. and that somewhat later the rump of the Corinthian League became the General Council of Greece meeting at Plataia. This reconstruction is not free from difficulty, and I think it more likely that both the festival and the Council were set going by Athens and the Boeotian League sometime after 287 B.C., during the period when the Athenian cult of Zeus *eleutherios* also returned to favor (Pausanias, I.26.2, x.21.5).

²⁶ In certain details the decree seems to offer a paradigm for the Second Athenian Alliance, as I have pointed out in “False Documents at Athens: Fifth-century History and Fourth-century Publicists,” *Historical Reflections* 3, 1976 (pp. 3–24), pp. 5–6, 16–18.

²⁷ Diodorus gives only two clauses, supposedly a vow in case of victory: “that on this day the Greeks shall conduct freedom rites, *ἐλευθέρια*, in common, and shall celebrate the freedom festival, *τὸν ἐλευθέριον ἀγῶνα*, at Plataia” (xi.29.1). There is nothing about a levy of men and ships or about the inviolacy of Plataia, the third and fourth clauses in Plutarch. No doubt it might be argued that because Diodorus does not expressly mention an annual meeting of delegates, this was no part of Ephoros’ version. But Diodorus is careless and fuzzy, and his first clause, about freedom rites marking the date of the victory, may well reflect the annual meeting; his second clause, about the fourth-yearly festival, exactly matches Plutarch’s second clause.

In the present context these questions about Plutarch's decree can only be asked, not answered. We do not need to answer them to see that the annual meeting of the Council was an important part of the arrangements at Plataia. The annual meeting may have already taken place in the 470's and 460's; or the notion may have first arisen in the early or mid-4th century; if either is true, then the real or notional antecedent was faithfully adopted in the early 3rd century; otherwise both the reality and its projection in the decree originate in the early 3rd century. Plutarch's *probouloi* obviously form what he previously calls "the Greek Council", a body which is better known from inscriptions and which is fully styled τὸ κοινὸν συνέδριον τῶν Ἑλλήνων (e.g. *BCH* 99, 1975, p. 53, lines 25–26). As Plutarch says, the Council met at Plataia every year in Metageitnion; when the Athenian ephebes of the Antonine and Severan periods came to Plataia in Metageitnion of every fourth year, it must have been to attend a meeting of the Council. And it must have been this meeting which was called ὁ διάλογος.

If διάλογος has its normal meaning, then this meeting of the Council saw a "discussion" between two parties. There is, however, reason to think that in the inscriptions the normal meaning has been slightly narrowed or intensified and that the word has become a quasi-technical term denoting a formal and binding discussion between two parties in a diplomatic milieu, i.e. an "arbitration". It is so used in a literary source contemporary with our inscriptions: [Herodes], *περὶ πολιτείας*, 13. Once begun, civil strife is hard to stop, says the author: τὸν διάλογον γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν εὐρεῖν, "for it is not possible to find the (desired) arbitration."²⁸ He goes on to explain that other people will not intervene to end such strife, because they hope to profit by the weakness of a neighbor. It seems more likely than not that this little work with its misleading title is falsely ascribed to Herodes Atticus; but the language and also the rhetorical commonplaces point unmistakably to the Second Sophistic, the time of our inscriptions.²⁹ The special meaning of διάλογος (not registered in LSJ) is one such indicator. By the 2nd century the word had come to mean "arbitration", with the emphasis on the "discussion" of rival claims, and in this sense is a useful alternative to other terms which refer to the judicial process of arbitration (*διαδικασία*, *δίαιτα*, *κρίσις*) or to the end result (*διαλλαγὴ* or *καταλλαγὴ*, *διάλυσις* or *κατάλυσις*).

The "arbitration" which exercised the General Council of Greece at fourth-yearly meetings can only be the ceremonial dispute between Athens and Sparta over precedence at the Eleutheria; we know from a Hellenistic inscription to be considered below that the dispute was in fact adjudicated by the Council (§IV). Since the dispute took the form of solemn speeches delivered by representatives of the two cities, the *dialogos* does evoke speechmaking after all, but this is not the meaning of the word.

It was wrong to assume that the dispute over precedence took place at the festival itself.

²⁸ U. Albin, the latest editor and the best (Florence 1968), renders διάλογος by *conclusionone* (p. 13), *il parlare che dirime, il parlare conclusivo* (p. 60); but "arbitration" is preferable, for the author has his eye on third parties who might serve as arbitrators but will not. Albin convincingly defends the word against emendation (and our inscriptions are the clincher); in the past critics have wished to substitute a similar word meaning "arbitrator" or "arbitration".

²⁹ So Albin. After his edition no words need be wasted on that strange heresy which treats the work as an authentic document of ca. 400 B.C., *pace* A. Andrewes, "Two Notes on Lysander," *Phoenix* 25, 1971, pp. 218–219.

Even as a display of festival oratory, harking back to the proudest achievements of Athens and Sparta, the dispute was impressive enough to make a separate event midway between celebrations of the festival. But there were very likely practical reasons as well for settling the point of precedence well in advance of the festival. Unlike other Panhellenic festivals the Eleutheria could not be left entirely in the hands of the host city; the little town of Plataia had not the means. Athens and Sparta must have contributed very largely, perhaps taking it in turns to bear the expense—and to lead the procession. It may be that to settle the point of precedence was to confer responsibility for arranging the whole festival.

The corps of Athenian ephebes were a good audience, loyal and impressionable, for the Athenian orator, who drew on the favorite themes of the panegyric tradition (§III below). We can assume that Sparta too sent her ephebes to applaud the Spartan speaker. Although the speechmaking goes back to late Hellenistic times, the attendance of the ephebes probably does not; for the Athenian ephebic decrees of this period, while expatiating on the ephebes' ceremonial duties, do not refer to any occasion at Plataia.

II. THE SPEECHES *περὶ τῆς προπομπείας*

In four writers of the early Empire, Eirenaïos, Dio Chrysostomus, [Lucian], and Hermogenes, we hear of the ceremonial dispute between Athens and Sparta over leading the procession, *περὶ τῆς προπομπείας*, at Plataia.³⁰ The last two are close in time to the ephebic catalogues discussed above. In [Lucian] two boon companions meditating antithetic speeches on love are mockingly described as plunged in thought “as if they were about to contend for precedence at Plataia,” *ὥς περὶ τῆς προπομπείας ἀγωνιούμενοι Πλαταιᾶσιν* (XLIX [*Amores*].18, Macleod).³¹ In his treatise on the *Forms* of oratory Hermogenes says that panegyric oratory, like forensic and deliberative, deals with “political” questions, “as if Athenians and Spartans after the Persian Wars should argue about the point of precedence,” *οἶον εἰ περὶ τῆς προπομπείας ἀμφισβητοῖεν Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι μετὰ τὰ Μηδικά* (*περὶ ἰδεῶν*, 2, pp. 373–374, Walz = p. 388 Spengel). Dio Chrysostomus refers scornfully, and so in a somewhat similar vein to [Lucian], to the Athenians and Spartans of his own day as “contending bravely for precedence in the parade,” *ὑπὲρ τῆς προπομπείας καλῶς ἀγωνίζεσθαι*, a sad contrast with their momentous struggle of earlier days (*Orationes*, xxxviii.38); the speech, on relations between Nicomedeia and Nicaea, belongs to Dio's last period, under Trajan. The influential grammarian Eirenaïos of Alexandria, alias Minucius Pacatus, wrote a book *περὶ τῆς Ἀθηναίων προπομπείας* (Suda, *s.v.* *Εἰρηναῖος*); like his teacher Heliodoros, Eirenaïos was at work sometime in the 1st century after Christ.³²

Thus the dispute consisted of epideictic speeches delivered at Plataia by Athenians and

³⁰ Cf., e.g., E. Kirsten, *RE* XX, 1950, col. 2372, *s.v.* Plataiai 1; F. Bömer, *RE* XXI, 1952, col. 1962, *s.v.* *Pompa*.

³¹ The *Amores* is certainly not Lucian's work but was meant to pass as such (“Lycinus” is one of the interlocutors). It may well be later than Lucian's lifetime (R. Helm, *RE* XIII, 1927, col. 1730, *s.v.* *Lukianos*, cites a dissertation writer who assigns it to the beginning of the 4th century), but if so, it would be rash to assume that the dispute at Plataia is a contemporary item.

³² L. Cohn (*RE* V, 1905, cols. 2120–2121, *s.v.* *Eirenaïos* 7) and O. Hense (*RE* VIII, 1912, cols. 28–30, *s.v.* *Heliodoros* 16) agree in placing Heliodoros in the middle of the 1st century and Eirenaïos slightly later.

Spartans in turn; the title of Eirenaios' book mentions Athenians alone because, as an Atticist, he was concerned only with the Athenian side of the question. [Lucian]'s comparison implies that there was just one speaker on either side; we shall soon encounter an Athenian orator who gained the victory for Athens (§IV). All four writers show that the speeches were a customary exercise of long standing; they must go back well before the 1st century, when Eirenaios wrote, for his interest was undoubtedly antiquarian. The speechmaking, like the *dialogos* of the inscriptions, is not expressly linked with the festival Eleutheria; it sounds like a separate event.

III. AN ATHENIAN SPEECH FOR THE OCCASION

An actual speech delivered at Plataia on behalf of Athens appears to survive on stone as *IG* II², 2788.³³ This curious performance, featuring Athens herself as the speaker, is unfortunately known only from old copies of a very fragmentary inscription which gave the beginning of some 38 lines; the suggested date is *fn. s. II a.* The speech reviews Athens' achievement during the Persian Wars in the manner generally familiar from the panegyric tradition originating in the 4th century; as often in this tradition Sparta is noticed adversely. That the speech addresses the point of precedence in the Eleutheria is suggested by the word *προπομπείαν* (line 8) and by the mention of Plataia and its shrine and altar (line 23) and of the General Council of Greece, as it seems (lines 2?, 35?), and of Zeus *eleutheros* (line 36). So the speech is worth considering at length.

So little is left of the first 8 lines that their general purport is obscure.³⁴ Perhaps they give the occasion for reviewing Athens' achievement. There is talk of worship, of something belonging to "the god" (line 4), of "the shrine" (line 6), of "the right of leading the procession" (line 8); the last suggests Plataia, as do also "Sparta" or "Spartans" (line 1), "benefactors" (line 3), and a possible reference to the General Council of Greece (line 2; cf. line 35). Zeus *eleutheros* appears in due course (lines 23, 36; cf. line 17). Moreover, "the right of leading the procession" seems to be disputed in lines 7–8, for it is followed by a genitive-absolute phrase which is doubtless concessive and therefore means that some other notable honor "itself" (*αὐτῆς*) "belongs by right" (a usual meaning of *ἐπιβάλλειν* intransitive) "all the while" (present tense). Perhaps the phrase was *ἐπιβαλλούσης αὐτῆς [τῆς προεδρίας]*.³⁵ If mention of the General Council of Greece and of the dispute over precedence is followed by a review of Athens' achievement, then the inscription probably records an actual speech delivered at Plataia by the Athenian spokesman, who impersonates the city of Athens.

³³ This inscription is adduced by Oliver (p. 91), apropos of the *dialogos* at Plataia, and by J. W. Day (*The Glory of Athens. The Popular Tradition as Reflected in the Panathenaicus of Aelius Aristides*, Chicago 1980, pp. 175–176) in the service of his theory that a separate oral tradition of Athenian history reaches from the 5th century down to Aristeides.

³⁴ Yet in view of what follows we can safely rule out Boeckh's suggestion, as reported by Kirchner, that line 6 refers to the First Sacred War.

³⁵ Athenians at large enjoyed *prohedria* at the Isthmian games (Plutarch, *Theseus*, 25.6, citing Hellanikos, *FGrHist*, 323a F 15 and Andron, *FGrHist*, 10 F 6; as Jacoby says, Athens' *prohedria* is the historical fact behind the mythical embroideries). In the mid-3rd century the expatriate Athenian Glaukon and his descendants were awarded *prohedria* at the Eleutheria (*BCH* 99, 1979 p. 53, lines 32–34), but of course individual *prohedria* would be worth having too, for there were degrees of precedence in seating.

Since the length of line in the inscription is quite unknown (although lines 7–38 seem to be complete on the left), serious restoration cannot be attempted; but it will do no great harm to illustrate what the gist of the first few lines is likely to have been:

--- νῦν δὲ ἐμοί τε]

καὶ τῇ] Λακεδαίμονι περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγῶν καθέστηκε ---]
 παρὰ] τῷ κοινῷ [συνεδρίῳ τῶν Ἑλλήνων --- ἀμφοτέρων]
 δ' ἡμ]ῶν εὐεργετῶν ἐ[μ πολλοῖς καιροῖς γεγεννημένων --- οὐ
 δοκεῖ ῥάδιον διακρίναι,]
 εἰκό]τως, εἰ τῶν τοῦ θε[οῦ τιμῶν αἵτιοί γ' ὑπάρχομεν ἀμφότεροι ---]

“Deeds in the war against the Persians” are announced in line 9, and lines 10–14 speak of Marathon and subsequent campaigns and losses sustained in the cause of freedom and the memorable result. Of more interest are the ceremonial undertakings described in lines 14–18 *init.* Something was done “by the Greeks, man by man and city by city” (line 15), i.e., an oath was sworn. According to Ephoros the Greek allies made a solemn vow to institute the cult and festival of Zeus *eleutherios* in case of victory (Diodorus, xi.29.1); and an oath-taking is implicit in “the Covenant of Plataia” reported by Plutarch (*Aristeides*, 21.1–2), as also in that part of it avouched by Thucydides, the guarantee of Plataean independence and inviolacy (ii.71.2). Next in our inscription the oath was implemented in one important respect as “in other respects conformably with the” purpose evinced “on that occasion” (line 16). The “oracle” mentioned in line 17 reminds us of the oracle solicited from Delphi as to the procedure for inaugurating the worship of Zeus *eleutherios* (Plutarch, *Aristeides*, 20.4). Something more was done “while the sacrifice was being performed,” evidently the initial sacrifice to Zeus. The action which accompanied the sacrifice was very likely another oath-taking; in Thucydides the guarantee of independence and inviolacy follows Pausanias’ sacrifice in the agora of Plataia (ii.71.2). In the inscription the second oath may have made the founding of the Eleutheria doubly sure and solemn:

χρησμόν καὶ τῆς θυσίας ἐπιτελουμένης --- ὁμωμοκέναι ἐμμε-
 νεῖν ἐμ πᾶσιν ἅπερ ὁ θεὸς ἐπέσκη-]
 ψεν· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, κτλ.

Thus the cult of Zeus *eleutherios* at Plataia is traced back to a series of steps at the time of the Persian Wars: to a preliminary oath sworn by the Greek allies while still in danger, to a Delphic oracle, and to another oath sworn at the first sacrifice to Zeus *eleutherios*. This Athenian version combines elements which are separately known from Thucydides, Diodorus, and Plutarch.

There is more of Zeus *eleutherios*. Lines 18–24 describe the mission of the Delian League and the rescue of the Asian Greeks, who seemingly appeal to Athens during a celebration of the Eleutheria:

--- παρακεκλη]

κέναι δέ με καὶ θεωρίας ἐξαποστέλλον[τας εἰς τὰ Ἐλευθέρια
 --- καὶ φάσκοντας ἄδι]
 εἶσθαι Πλαταιᾶς καὶ τὸ ἱερόν καὶ τὸν βωμόν [τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἐλευθε-
 ρίου ---

Lines 25–26 record the estrangement of Athens and Sparta, 27–30 the infamous King’s Peace, 30–34 Athens’ response to the universal complaints against Sparta. In lines 34–35 we hear of a *synhedrion*, and in line 36 of Zeus *eleutherios*. The remains of these closing lines are too slight to warrant any reconstruction of the sense, and the question may be raised whether they refer to the General Council of Greece and the Panhellenic cult at Plataia or to the *synhedrion* of the Second Athenian Alliance and the Athenian cult at the northwest corner of the Athenian Agora; these Athenian institutions would be naturally mentioned as a sequel to the King’s Peace and Spartan oppression.

The substance of the speech brings no surprises. Its main interest is in showing that the dispute over precedence at the Eleutheria goes back, in the same form, long before the sources discussed in §§I–II. But another epigraphic testimony is earlier still.

IV. THE ORATOR PYTHOKLES

An offering table in Athens’ Asklepion bears two epigrams honoring a certain Pythokles, provisionally dated to “the Macedonian period” or to *ca.* 200 B.C. (W. Peek in J. F. Crome *et al.*, *Mnemosynon Theodor Wiegand*, Munich 1938, pp. 14–18, no. 1; cf. *IG* II², 3189 *add.*). The first epigram praises Pythokles for his righteousness, comparing him to Zeus and Solon, and thus disclosing a man active in public life.³⁶ It is the second epigram that is of interest here; Peek’s text runs as follows:

Φοίβου Ἀπόλλωνος τὸν δμῶνυμον εἶσιδε Παλλάς
 Κεκροπιδ[αι]ς νίκας κλῶνας ἀναψάμενον,
 ἀνίκα δῆ[ριν] ἔθεντο Λάκων καὶ δῆμος Ἀθηνῶν,
 παῖδες δ’ Ἐλ[λήν]ων ψᾶφον ἀειράμενοι
 5 οὐ Σπά[ρ]τα[ς] λαοῖς, ἀλλ’ Ἀτθίδι τᾷ μεγαλὰ[ύ]χ[ωι]
 κλεινὸν ἀριστ[είας] ἀμφέθεσαν στῆ[φανον].
 ἀνθ’ ὧν Θεσείδα[ι] χ[ο]ρ[ὸ]ν ἐγ μ[ε]
 3-4 σταν, χρυσέοις δ’ ἡγλάισαν[]

Lines 1–6 speak of a dispute between Athens and Sparta, of the Greeks at large deciding between them, and of Pythokles adjudged the winner and crowned with a wreath. In lines 7–8 Pythokles receives further honors from the Athenians, including “golden [crowns]”.³⁷ The “chorus” of line 7, which led Peek to think of “a choregic monument”, is illusory and should be expunged from the text.³⁸ In the light of our other sources the subject of the epigram can only be the dispute over leading the procession at the Eleutheria of Plataia.³⁹ “The sons of the Greeks” in line 4 are the General Council of Greece; the presiding body is

³⁶ [Πυθοκ]λέους, suggested to Peek by P. Maas, is a certain restoration at the beginning of line 3, where the sense requires the name of the man being honored; according to the second epigram the name evokes Apollo.

³⁷ As Peek says, *στεφάνοις* or *στέφειν* should probably be restored at the end of line 8.

³⁸ Peek’s earlier reading of the traces hereabouts, as recorded at *IG* II², 3189 *add.*, was quite different. He later declined “to build too much on the doubtful [χ]ορ[ὸ]ν” (*Mnem. Wiegand*, p. 18) but persisted nonetheless in regarding Pythokles as a choregic victor at some Panhellenic festival. Without the choregic reference there is no reason to suppose that the offering table has been brought to the Asklepion from the area above the Theater of Dionysos (Peek, *ibid.*).

³⁹ So Robert, *Études anatoliennes*, Paris 1937, p. 142, note 5; *Hellenica* 8, 1950, pp. 91–92; Kirsten, *RE* XX, 1950, col. 2327, *s.v.* Plataiai 1.

properly τὸ κοινὸν συνέδριον τῶν Ἑλλήνων or τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Ἑλλήνων (so inscriptions) or τὸ Ἑλληνικόν . . . συνέδριον (Plutarch, *Aristeides*, 19.8) but may be loosely called οἱ Ἕλληνες (*BCH* 37, 1913, p. 241, a dedication at Notium; *SIG*³, 835A, Hadrian's statue at Delphi). At this tribunal Pythokles spoke for Athens, and his opposite number spoke for Sparta.⁴⁰ After the speeches the Council cast ballots like any jury (line 4),⁴¹ and Pythokles was crowned with a wreath, like a victor at the games (lines 2, 6).

This is the earliest mention of the dispute, but just how early is it? The dating assigned to the letter forms does not seem to be secure or agreed. The first editor, Kumanudis, followed by Kirchner on *IG* II², 3189, spoke of "the Macedonian period", i.e. the 3rd century, perhaps even before 229 B.C. According to Peek certain letter forms "point to the end of the third or to the beginning of the second century," a slightly lower date. Furthermore, when Peek looked for known bearers of the name Pythokles, he entertained a date much lower still; for he adduced *PA* 12439 as the likeliest, *am ehesten*, on chronological grounds (this is indeed the only Pythokles later than the 4th century registered in *PA*); *PA* 12439 is a third magistrate of Athens' New Style coinage, for whom the date given by Kirchner and accepted by Peek was 186–146 B.C. Thus he did not exclude a date as late as the middle of the 2nd century. From Peek's description of the tiny, crowded lettering one suspects that it was nearly as hard to date as it was to read.⁴²

The Ἀχαιοί/Ἕλι series of coins on which one Pythokles appears as a third magistrate (M. Thompson, *The New Style Silver Coinage of Athens*, New York 1961, nos. 425b, 426a–d, 427a–b) would now, on the general chronology of New Style coinage which is gaining acceptance, be dated somewhat later, perhaps to 128/7 B.C.⁴³ A Pythokles of this period might also be the son of Pytheas son of Pythokles of the deme Acharnai, Councillor in 178/7 B.C. (Meritt and Traill, *The Athenian Agora*, XV, *The Inscriptions. The Athenian Councillors*, Princeton 1974, p. 163, no. 194, line 29). Yet any such identification is no better than a possibility, which moreover does not explain the prominence of the Pythokles commemorated by the epigrams. The first epigram indicates that Pythokles held an important office or discharged an important commission which had to do with Athens' laws. Whereas Zeus is arbiter of the heavens (line 1) and Solon was author of his country's *eunomia* (line 2), it was the greatness of Pythokles which for all Athenian citizens [κα]νό[να]ς θ[ῆ]κε δικαιοσύνας (lines 3–4); wherefore he is now honored and somehow, as it seems, regarded as Δ[ί]κας πάρεδρον (lines 5–6, very fragmentary). This effusion must have meant more to Pythokles' contemporaries than it means to us, but the absence of any circumstantial details does at least suggest that this epigram commemorates some regular post. Yet surely Pythokles was not merely an archon, one member of a board of nine. Was he perhaps an early Herald of the Council of the Areopagus, an office first attested in the

⁴⁰ The personified Ἀθίδι τῇ μεγαλα[ύ]χ[ω]ι in line 6 of the epigram is reminiscent of the personified Athens as the speaker in *IG* II², 2788.

⁴¹ No doubt the phrase "take up a ballot" might be used figuratively, but it is unlikely that the Council voted by the method proper to an assembly, *viz.* a show of hands.

⁴² Peek, *Mnem. Wiegand*, pp. 15 (on the lettering), 18 (on *PA* 12439).

⁴³ So H. B. Mattingly, "Some Third Magistrates in the Athenian New Style Coinage," *JHS* 91, 1971 (pp. 85–93), p. 90. Thompson (*The New Style Silver Coinage of Athens* I, pp. 166–168) placed the series in 160/59 B.C.

record of the Pythais of 128/7 B.C. (*SIG*³, 697A)?⁴⁴ This brings us down to the same period as Pythokles the third magistrate.⁴⁵

V. CONCLUSION

To sum up briefly, in Metageitnion of every fourth year the General Council of Greece meeting at Plataia heard the rival claims of Athens and Sparta to lead the procession at the festival Eleutheria when it was celebrated two years later. This occasion became known as *ὁ διάλογος*, “the arbitration”. An accomplished orator spoke for either side, rehearsing the proud achievements of the past. In the period A.D. 164–196 the speechmaking was attended by the corps of Athenian ephebes, and no doubt by their Spartan counterparts as well. After the two speeches the Council voted; the winning orator was crowned with a wreath; and preparations were set on foot for the forthcoming festival.

Our testimonies span something like 350 years, from the later 2nd century B.C. to the end of the 2nd century after Christ.⁴⁶ There is indeed some uncertainty about the beginning of the series, for epigraphists have suggested a higher dating, *ca.* 200 or even the 3rd century, for the epigram honoring Pythokles; but as we saw, the epigraphic dating does not inspire confidence (§IV). We should also ask ourselves when this custom first arose, even though the answer can only be conjecture. In the later 3rd century and in the early 2nd, down to *ca.* 180 B.C., Sparta was troubled and often revolutionary, a thorn to her neighbors in the Peloponnesos; Athens on the other hand kept out of these broils. At this period the picture of Athenian and Spartan orators discoursing at Plataia on the glories of the past does not come easily to the mind’s eye. From *ca.* 180 down to the eve of the Achaean War Sparta was more at peace with herself and with the Achaean League, and conceivably the custom originates during these years. But it is after 146 B.C., when Sparta as well as Athens was an acknowledged friend of Rome, when the Athenians revived and cultivated old traditions, when the Spartans must have done the same (in view of Sparta’s condition under the early Empire), that the time seems most propitious for the custom to emerge. Pythokles’ epigram and the speech recorded on stone may bear witness to this development.

Although the dispute was undoubtedly a late innovation, there was ancient precedent. For it was said that after the battle of Plataia the Athenians and the Spartans disputed the

⁴⁴ The incumbent in 128/7 was Mnasikles son of Mnasikles. Peek (*Mnem. Wiegand*, p. 16) said that in the epigram *Μνησικλέους* “fills the space better” than *Πυθοκλέους*, but the name does not satisfy the indication of the other epigram (footnote 36 above).

⁴⁵ It is just worth mentioning a small fragment of an Athenian decree which is dated by the lettering towards the middle of the 2nd century B.C. and which may possibly honor another festival orator: B. D. Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” *Hesperia* 32, 1963 (pp. 1–56), pp. 20–21, no. 20; cf. J. and L. Robert, *REG* 77, 1964, p. 149, *BE*, no. 117; *SEG* XXI, 458. The words *ἐἰς τὰ Ἑλευθέρια κατ[* (line 6) occur in the final instructions for posting the decree in two or more copies. The last copy is to be posted in front of the Stoa of Zeus in the Athenian Agora (line 8), with its altar and statue of Zeus *eleutherios*; Meritt’s supplement [– – – καὶ στῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῆς τοῦ Διὸς] *στοᾶς*, reasonable in itself, is supported by the provenance of the fragment. In lines 8–10 funds are provided for inscribing and setting up the *stelai*, plural. Unfortunately too little is preserved to reveal the occasion of the honors.

⁴⁶ We lose sight of the dispute during the 1st century B.C. A. G. Gossage, “The Comparative Chronology of Inscriptions relating to Boiotian Festivals in the First Half of the First Century B.C.,” *BSA* 70, 1975, pp. 115–134, shows that some Boeotian festivals flourished more than ever after the Mithradatic War, partly because of Roman patronage, but the evidence for the Eleutheria is slight (pp. 115, 125).

prize of valor and the honor of setting up the trophy, and the dispute grew so warm that they almost raised their weapons against each other (Plutarch, *Aristeides*, 20.1; *de malignitate Herodoti*, 42.873A). Violence was narrowly averted when Aristeides persuaded his fellow generals “to refer the issue to the Greeks,” τὴν κρίσιν ἐφείναι τοῖς Ἑλλησιν; when this body met, ἐνταυθα βουλευομένων τῶν Ἑλλήνων, speeches were made, and a speech urging both claimants to withdraw in favor of Plataia carried the day; Plataia received the prize of valor, and Athens and Sparta were reconciled, οὕτω δὲ διαλλαγέντες (*Aristeides*, 20.1–3). Plutarch’s narrative leaves it doubtful whether “the Greeks” who render judgment are simply the council of allied generals or some formal deliberative body. On any realistic view it must be the council of generals,⁴⁷ and Plutarch himself may have agreed. But other evidence strongly suggests that Plutarch’s source envisaged a formal deliberative body like the General Council of Greece.

When Plutarch relates the contention between Athens and Tegea for the post of honor on the right wing, it is “the delegates and commanders”, οἱ σύνοδροι καὶ ἡγεμόνες, who assign the post to Athens after a speech by Aristeides (*Aristeides*, 12.1–4); it is not unlikely, in view of Aristeides’ role, that Plutarch’s source is the same as for the dispute about the prize of valor and the trophy. The source cannot be identified, unless it was Idomeneus;⁴⁸ it was not Ephoros, but we know that Ephoros described similar proceedings before the council of allied delegates. This council, said Ephoros, and not the council of generals as in Herodotos (VIII.123.2), awarded the prizes of valor for the campaign of 480 and conspired to slight Themistokles; after the battle of Plataia they awarded the prizes to Sparta and to Pausanias. For whereas Diodorus does not identify the presiding body in his narrative of these events but speaks of undue influence by Sparta (XI.27.2, 33.1), we are later told that when Sparta proposed to arraign Themistokles before “the General Council of Greece”, τὸ κοινὸν συνέδριον τῶν Ἑλλήνων, Themistokles knew this body to be subservient to Sparta because of their conduct in awarding the prizes of valor (XI.55.4–7).

Thus Ephoros and one or two authorities known to Plutarch asserted that during the Persian invasion points of honor arising among the Greek allies were adjudicated by a council of delegates; according to Ephoros this body afterwards became the General Council of Greece. When in the later Hellenistic period Athens and Sparta submitted their dispute over precedence to the General Council of Greece, it was another instance, which would seem less surprising to the Greeks than to us, of life imitating literature.

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⁴⁷ So Calabi Limentani *ad loc.*

⁴⁸ So Busolt (*Griechische Geschichte*, 2nd ed., II, pp. 629–630) who makes Idomeneus the main source for this *Life* but without sufficient reason.