

# IG V 1, 16 AND THE GEROUSIA OF ROMAN SPARTA

(PLATE 46)

IG V 1, 16 is embedded upside down in the apse of the Katholikon in the monastery of the Agioi Saranta, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, some nine kilometers east of Sparta.<sup>1</sup> Kolbe, the editor of the Laconian section of the *corpus*, based his edition on transcriptions of the text in the works of antiquarian travelers, among them Col. William Leake and Ludwig Ross. Although the inscription, thanks to a restoration Adolf Wilhelm proposed and Kolbe adopted, is directly relevant to the vexatious problem of the size of the Spartan gerousia in the Roman period, no one has examined the stone since the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> A new edition based on autopsy is required.

*p. ante vel p. post* A.D. 61

NON-ΣΤΟΙΧ.

Height 0.205 m.

Width 0.277 m.

Letter height 0.011–0.019 m.

## COL. I

[ὁ δεῖνα ----- office -----[[N]ε]]  
 [[ρῶνος]] Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος -----]OIO  
 [ -----]II[---]  
 [ -----]  
 5 [ -----]  
 [ -----]  
 [ -----]  
 [ -----]

## COL. II

*vacat*  
 τοῦ δὲ λοιποῦ μηδὲν ἄνομ[ον? -----]  
 ΣΟΥ αἰτεῖσθαι. *vacat* [ *vacat* ]  
 Διὰ τούτου τοῦ κεφαλαίου [ -----]  
 τούτους γὰρ ὁ μὲν Σεβασ[τὸς -----δ]

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was given as the paper “Forty Saints, But How Many Gerontes?” at the 1989 annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Boston, Massachusetts. I would like to thank this journal’s referees for their useful comments.

Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

Cartledge and Spawforth = P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta. A Tale of Two Cities*, London 1989

Oliver = J. H. Oliver, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri*, Philadelphia 1989

Kennell = N. M. Kennell, *The Public Institutions of Roman Sparta*, diss. University of Toronto 1985

<sup>2</sup> H. J. W. Tillyard (“Excavations at Sparta 1907: Inscriptions,” *BSA* 13, 1906–1907 [pp. 174–196], p. 191) laconically refers to the stone: “In the same monastery Leake copied an inscription which is built into the wall of the small chapel.”

5 δὲ δῆμος πολλαῖς ἡμ[ετέραις ἐπιστολαῖς πειθόμενος -----]  
 μὲν ἐξέβαλεν ΟΥ[ ----- ὡς ἐν τῷ περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγ]  
 [μα]τος γέγραπται νόμω -----]  
 [. . .] τῶν κη' ἐγγρ[αφέντων -----]

### Column I

Kolbe thought that the letters visible in line 2 belonged to a different document. The space between the broken top edge of the stone and the first line of column II measures 0.02 m., however, while the space between the other lines fluctuates from 0.010 m. to 0.016 m. The wider space at the top of the stone is therefore a margin: the first two lines of column II do not begin a new text but rather conclude a section begun in a lost left-hand column.

*Lines 1 and 2.* [[N]ε/[ρῶνος]] The stone has flaked off and obscured letters in several places: at the beginning of lines 3 and 4, 7 and 8; and at the end of lines 5 and 6. These breaks are irregular and clearly accidental, but something quite different has happened in line 1. The area where the surface of the stone has been lost is virtually rectangular, ending at the conclusion of line 1 and respecting the last letters of line 2. Along the edge of this area can be seen the marks of both a pointed chisel and a straight-edged chisel.<sup>3</sup> This part of the stone was deliberately defaced in antiquity to remove the last letters of the first line of the first column. Within the erasure traces of a letter are discernible: a vertical with three horizontal strokes to the right, the bottommost of which aligns with the base of the letters in the first line of column II. These traces can be resolved into a quite serviceable epsilon. The full restoration of the emperor Nero's name to fill the erasure will be discussed below along with the document's date (pp. 197–198).

### Column II

*Line 1.* Kolbe ἀνό[ητον]. Traces of a base apex and the beginning of the rightward-slanting stroke of a mu are visible to the right of the omicron.

*Line 2.* The letters after αἰτεῖσθαι which Seidel noted in the 18th century existed only in his imagination.

Working only from transcripts, Kolbe inserted a blank line between lines 2 and 3.

*Line 5.* Kolbe πολλά<κ>ις ἦδ[η]. A rightward-slanting stroke and the top of a leftward-slanting stroke remain after the eta. The angle of the slant is too near the vertical for the letter to have been delta but would fit the shape of a mu as it is formed in this inscription. There is, then, no reason to follow Kolbe by inserting a kappa into πολλαῖς to make sense of the line.

*Line 6.* Kolbe οὐ[ς δὲ---].

*Line 7.* Kolbe [-]ος γέγραπται. The right tip of a horizontal with its apex is just visible at the top of the letter space to the left of omicron. The nu at the end of the preserved part of the line did not appear in the transcription Kolbe saw.

*Line 8.* Wilhelm *per* Kolbe γερ[όντων]. Wilhelm and Kolbe used Ross's transcription, in which were sketched traces of three letters following the numeral. In the corpus, these traces appear as three gammas, which Wilhelm quite logically resolved into a reference to the gerontes. Unfortunately, in this case logic is not enough, since even a casual glance at the stone shows that the remains of the letters of the last line can in no way support his restoration. Four letters, not three, can easily be seen. The first three all preserve their top horizontals and portions of verticals to the left. Of the fourth, a large portion of a curved top stroke is preserved and is attached to the right side of a vertical. This is the only letter that can be resolved into a rho. I restore ἐγγρ[αφέντων], which here should be translated as "enrolled" or "registered".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For a good example of the use of a pointed chisel to erase part of an inscription, see A. J. S. Spawforth, "A Severan Statue-Group and an Olympic Festival at Sparta," *BSA* 81, 1986 (pp. 313–332), pp. 318–319, figs. 6–8.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1110, lines 16–17; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 1109, line 50; *OGIS* II, 487, line 10; *POxy.* XXXVI, 2768, lines 20–22.

## CHARACTER AND PURPOSE

Wilhelm, followed by Kolbe, held the inscription to be a letter from a proconsul or imperial legate under Augustus or Tiberius. It is certainly a letter from a Roman official, as the language indicates, but more can be said.

The document consists of at least two columns, with one section concluding at the beginning of column II. The section ends with what looks like a prohibition or a warning: "For the future, (I order) . . . to make no illegal request of you." The author (here, as it will be argued [p. 196], the emperor) dictates what course of action is to be taken henceforth. *μηδέν* in line 1 and the infinitive in line 2 are probably dependent on a verb such as *κελεύω*, as is often the case in this sort of text.<sup>5</sup> The infinitive *αἰτεῖσθαι* in this context refers to a formal request made of the emperor or Roman officialdom generally.<sup>6</sup> The precise identity of the official referred to here remains concealed behind the genitive *-σου*, which could represent the last letters of a *cognomen* ending in *-SUS* but more likely indicates the genitive singular of the second person pronoun, for reasons that will become apparent (see p. 196 below).<sup>7</sup>

The beginning of the next section is highlighted, as was common practice, by displacing the initial letter of the first word into the margin. What follows is crucial to an understanding of the document. *τοῦτο*, as usual, refers to what has preceded it, which here is called a *κεφάλαιον*. In financial accounts the word denotes the principal sum, as opposed to the interest, on a loan or deposit.<sup>8</sup> But in the Roman period, *κεφάλαιον* is very often used to mean "section" or "extract" and appears in texts that consist entirely of or include relevant extracts from lengthy imperial communications.<sup>9</sup>

From the particles *γάρ* and *μέν*, it is clear that a new sentence begins with line 4. The reference to "the Emperor" (*ὁ Σεβασ[τός]*) in the nominative case shows that the author of this part of the document was not himself the emperor. It seems logical to assume, on the strength of *διά*, that the action the emperor is described as taking followed from or was connected in some way with the content of the section concluded in line 2. It was not unknown for governors to include extracts from or, on occasion, the complete texts of imperial

<sup>5</sup> For this type of construction, see V. Ehrenberg and A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1986, no. 322 (= Oliver, no. 2), lines 14–15; E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*, Cambridge 1967, no. 370 (= Oliver, no. 19), lines 88–90; Oliver, no. 38, line 4, no. 56, line 4.

<sup>6</sup> Smallwood, *op. cit.*, no. 64 (= Oliver, no. 296), lines 11–12; *PLond.* 1178 (= Oliver, no. 37), line 35; E. M. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian*, Cambridge 1966, no. 333 (= Oliver, no. 70), lines 27–28. On this usage, see L. Robert, "ΑΙΤΗΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ sur les monnaies," *Hellenica* XII, Paris 1960, pp. 53–62.

<sup>7</sup> Of the Roman officials listed by E. Groag (*Die römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia bis auf Diokletian* [Schriften der Balkankommission: Antiquarische Abteilung 9], Vienna/Leipzig 1939, cols. 12–13), only M. Licinius Crassus, *proconsul* in 29–28 B.C., fits. As will be shown (pp. 196–197 below), however, his tenure is too early.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. *IG* II<sup>2</sup>, 1479, line 45; 1495, lines 8, 17; 1496, line 90.

<sup>9</sup> J. Reynolds, "Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and the Cyrenaican Cities," *JRS* 68, 1978 (pp. 111–121), pp. 113–114, line 13 (cf. Oliver, no. 121), line 25 (cf. Oliver, no. 122), line 69 (cf. Oliver, no. 123); *IGRR* IV, 1168, line 2; *POxy.* XLVIII, 3364, line 1; Oliver, no. 165, lines 40–41; *Digesta* XXVII.1.6.2 (= Oliver, Appendix, no. 8); *Digesta* XXVII.1.6.8 (= Oliver, Appendix, no. 9). Cf. W. Williams, "Epigraphic Texts of Imperial Subscripts: A Survey," *ZPE* 66, 1986 (pp. 181–207), p. 195.

epistles in public communications in order that citizens might appreciate the emperor's interest and concern.<sup>10</sup> Here we are dealing with a letter from a Roman official which contained at least one extract from a communication by the emperor to him. In the surviving fragment, the official first presents the opinion of the emperor, as communicated to him personally, then apparently proceeds to explain the emperor's intentions and later to order that the recipients take some action on their own part.

In line 5, the people is contrasted with the emperor by means of the particle δέ. Only ἡμ[ετέραις] fits the sense and the syntax here. As a further supplement I would tentatively suggest ἐπιστόλαις πειθόμενος.

ἐξέβαλεν in line 6 is the word, which, if more of the document had been preserved, would have helped determine the precise subject of these letters. As it is, we can use it to establish the possible areas of concern. The verb ἐκβάλλω can denote exiling of political opponents, expulsion from landed property, or even divorce.<sup>11</sup> We are probably dealing here with political unrest, as Wilhelm and Kolbe thought. Like them, we should look for a link with one of the several falls from imperial favor suffered by the descendants of the dynast Gaius Julius Eurycles in the 1st century after Christ.<sup>12</sup> The nature of this connection, so far as it can be determined, will be discussed with the date of the document (see pp. 197–198 below).

Lines 6 and 7 contain a reference to legal precedent. The displacement of νόμω is typical of the hyperbaton found in official Roman documents from Augustus to Justinian.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps the most important gain from this reexamination of *IG V 1, 16* is the corrected reading of line 8. Now that Wilhelm's restoration of a reference to "twenty-eight gerontes" has been invalidated, no obstacle stands in the way of accepting the unanimous testimony of the complete lists of gerontes from Roman Sparta, which indicates that the gerousia comprised twenty-three members and no more.<sup>14</sup>

In determining a date for the inscription, we should start with the letter forms, although this is a notoriously unreliable method, especially for texts from the Roman period. *IG V 1, 16*, however, does seem to contain enough characteristic forms for an attempt to be made: kappa with short arms, mu with slanting uprights, and the curved uppsilon are the most diagnostic, as is the unusual phi. At Sparta, the closest parallels with these letters are found in the early inscriptions carved on the East *parodos* wall of the theater beside the acropolis. These texts have been assigned to the years stretching from the later 1st century after Christ

<sup>10</sup> E.g. *IGRR I/II*, 598; *IGRR IV*, 571.

<sup>11</sup> *SIG*<sup>3</sup>, 643, line 15; 826C, line 15; *POxy.* LI, 3641, line 18.

<sup>12</sup> On Eurycles and his descendants see R. Weil, "Die Familie des C. Julius Eurykles," *AM* 6, 1901, pp. 10–20; G. W. Bowersock, "Eurykles of Sparta," *JRS* 51, 1961, pp. 111–118; Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 97–107.

<sup>13</sup> *IGRR IV*, 1031 (= Oliver, no. 6), lines 38–39, καὶ τὰ ἐν τοῖς δημ[οσίοις] / ὑμῶν ὁμολογεῖν γράμματα; J. H. Oliver, *Marcus Aurelius: Aspects of Civic and Cultural Policy in the East (Hesperia, Suppl. 13)*, Princeton 1970 (= Oliver, no. 184), lines 21–22, αὐτὸς ἠξίωσεν ἐπὶ τὴν π[αρ' ἐ] / κείνοις πεμφθῆναι κρίσιν; *SEG XXXIII*, 1177, lines 26–27, παύσονται τῇ ἑαυτῶν ἀντιπ[ρ]άσσουν[τες ἀ]σφαλεία; Justinianus, *Nov.*, XLIX praef. 1, ταῦτα . . . ἐν κοινῷ γέγραπται νόμω.

<sup>14</sup> *IG V 1*, 93, 94, 97 (= *SEG XI*, 564); *SEG XI*, 585. The date and the motive behind this reduction will be discussed below (pp. 198–202).

through the reign of Trajan.<sup>15</sup> Outside Sparta, a text from Aphrodisias originating in the late Republic or Augustan period provides good parallels for the forms of mu, upsilon, and phi, while Athenian texts dated to A.D. 42 contain similar forms of upsilon, mu, kappa, and beta.<sup>16</sup> Splitting the difference between the two extreme periods provides the not unreasonable date of the middle of the 1st century after Christ.

Ironically, what is not on the stone is of more use in dating than what survives. As has been shown above, the end of the first line of column I was erased in antiquity. Since the document clearly emanated from the Roman authorities, it is reasonable to assume that the erasure resulted from a senatorial decree of *damnatio memoriae*. In the 1st century after Christ, two emperors suffered the posthumous penalty of having their *acta* rescinded, their statues removed from public spaces, and their names deleted from inscriptions: Nero and Domitian (Suetonius, *Nero* 49.2; *Domitian* 22). The custom, as evidenced in numerous inscriptions, was for the most recognizable element of the nomenclature to be erased, in Nero's case, his second *praenomen*, in Domitian's, his *cognomen*, while other *nomina* and titles were left intact.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the surviving epsilon of line 1 indicates that the erasure has obscured the emperor Nero's name, because his *praenomen* includes this letter, while Domitian's *cognomen* normally does not.<sup>18</sup> Since the *praenomen* is split between two lines, it seems prudent to restore the genitive rather than the nominative form, considering the scruples apparently felt about dividing this particular element of imperial nomenclature. While the emperor's name is regularly divided in the oblique cases, only rarely is the nominative split.<sup>19</sup> I supply Nero's other titles only *exempli gratia*. In all likelihood, the letter began in column I with the sender's name and his title as an official of Nero's government.

A date during Nero's reign allows an important connection to be made. As mentioned, Wilhelm correctly saw in  $\xi\xi\beta\alpha\lambda\epsilon\nu$  (column II, line 6) a reference to a "downturn" in the fortunes of Gaius Julius Eurycles or his descendants but erred in dating the inscription to the reign of Augustus or of Tiberius. Under Nero, Spartiatikus, the last of the Euryclids to hold power at Sparta, fell from grace and went into exile. The prominence of the individuals involved and the totality of their ruin could not fail to impress contemporary opinion. Plutarch, it has been plausibly conjectured, refers to Spartiatikus and his sibling when in his treatise on brotherly love he mentions the undying enmity of  $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\eta\gamma\omega\nu\ \omicron\iota\ \kappa\alpha\theta'\ \eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\tau\acute{\omega}\tau\alpha\iota$ .<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> K, M: *SEG XI*, 515 (ca. A.D. 100), 608 (ca. *imit. aet. Trai.*), 610 (*aet. Trai.?*). K,  $\Phi$ : *SEG XI*, 539 (*fin. I. p.*). K, T: *SEG XI*, 593 (ca. A.D. 100).  $\Phi$ : *SEG XI*, 626 (ca. A.D. 110). Unfortunately, no photographs of these inscriptions appear in the excavation reports (*BSA* 26–29, 1923/1925–1927/1928).

<sup>16</sup> J. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome* (*JRS Monographs* 1), London 1982, pl. XVIII:2, cf. p. 92; J. Kirchner, *Imagines Inscriptionum Atticarum*, Berlin 1935, nos. 123, 125.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. *IGRR I/II*, 1034, line 1; 1110, line 2; 1118, lines 1, 8; 1119, line 1. *IGRR III*, 300, lines 7–8; 354, line 1; 486, line 1; 551, lines 14–15; 656, line 1; 944, line 3. *OGIS II*, 538, lines 1–2. *SEG XXVII*, 1009, lines 1–2.

<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, the form  $\Delta\omicron\mu\epsilon\tau\iota\alpha\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  is not uncommon; e.g. *SEG XIX*, 474; *SEG XX*, 651; *SEG XXXV*, 1483; cf. L. Thraette, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions*, Berlin/New York 1980, p. 140. It seems better, however, to consider the epsilon visible here as part of a standard, rather than a variant, spelling and to link the text with Nero because of the significance of  $\xi\xi\beta\alpha\lambda\epsilon\nu$  in col. II, line 6 (see below).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *IGRR I/II*, 569, lines 3–4; 853, lines 4–5. *IGRR III*, 336, lines 6–7.

<sup>20</sup> Plutarch, *de Frat. Amore* 487F–488A; E. Groag, *RE IIIA*, ii, 1929, cols. 1537–1538 (Spartiatikos).

Scholarship has introduced another figure into this scenario, the traveling wonder-worker Apollonius of Tyana, who seems to have visited Sparta in A.D. 61.<sup>21</sup> According to Philostratos, Apollonius aided the Spartans in drafting a diplomatic reply to a letter in which Nero upbraided them for abusing their liberty; a connection with Spartiaticus' feud and his downfall has been proposed.<sup>22</sup> While no serious claim can be made to identify *IG V 1, 16* with this letter (for one thing, *IG V 1, 16* was not sent by the emperor), it remains possible to associate the document with events surrounding the disgrace of the last Euryclid dynast. Philostratos credited Apollonius with a revival of traditional customs at Sparta (Philostratos, *VA* 4.27). Given Spartiaticus' notorious love of luxury, this revival would not have come about until after his fall, which must therefore have taken place before Apollonius' visit in A.D. 61.<sup>23</sup> *IG V 1, 16*, then, is to be dated to the period around 61 and to be connected with concerns arising out of Spartiaticus' own exile or that of his family and partisans.

The corrected reading of the last line of *IG V 1, 16* and the subsequent recognition that the gerousia of Roman Sparta had only 23 members beg two important questions: when and why was the membership reduced? There are two possible moments for the change to have occurred: during the reforms of Cleomenes III (235–222 B.C.) or while Sparta was living under an imposed constitution in the first half of the 2nd century B.C.

Pausanias (2.9.1) writes that Cleomenes, "having broken the power of the gerousia, ostensibly established the *patronomoi* in its place." Pausanias has been thought mistaken on this point, since there is no other evidence that Cleomenes took any action against the gerousia, and the passage has even been construed to mean that Cleomenes replaced the college of ephors, which he is known to have abolished, with officials called the *patronomoi*.<sup>24</sup> Even so, Pausanias may be correct, for Cleomenes could have diminished the power of the gerousia by transferring its probouleutic function to the patronomate and by reducing its membership to 23.<sup>25</sup> The Macedonian Antigonos Doson, however, forced the repeal of most of Cleomenes' reforms after he vanquished the Spartans in 222 B.C. at Sellasia.<sup>26</sup> Under these circumstances, it is highly unlikely that so drastic a change in the composition of the gerousia would have survived.

A more plausible argument can be made for a date during the time of Sparta's unwilling membership in the Achaean League. The changes Sparta endured in this period went far deeper than Cleomenes' and were politically much longer lasting. Following the

<sup>21</sup> Philostratos, *VA* 4.33; for the date see Groag (note 7 above), cols. 37–38.

<sup>22</sup> G. W. Bowersock in C. P. Jones, *Philostratos: Apollonius of Tyana*, Harmondsworth 1970, p. 96, note 11. On Apollonius' visit, see now Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 106–107.

<sup>23</sup> On Spartiaticus, see Stobaeus, *Florilegium* 4.40.9. On Apollonius at Sparta, see Cartledge and Spawforth (pp. 106–107), who sensibly distinguish between the revival under Nero, attested only by Philostratos, and the later archaism demonstrated by many inscriptions from the late 1st century on. On archaism at Roman Sparta, see Kennell, pp. 59–64, 153–197; Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 107–108, 190–211.

<sup>24</sup> W. W. Tarn, *CAH* VIII, p. 754; B. Niese, *Geschichte der griechischen und makedonischen Staaten seit der Schlacht bei Chaironeia* II, Gotha 1899, p. 317; cf. E. N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity* II, Uppsala 1974, pp. 335–336, note 79.

<sup>25</sup> On the probouleutic function, see R. Andreotti, "Sull'origine della patronomia spartana," *Athenaeum*, n.s. 13, 1935, pp. 187–194; Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 51–52.

<sup>26</sup> Polybios 2.70.1; B. Shimron, *Late Sparta: The Spartan Revolution 246–146 B.C.*, Buffalo 1970, pp. 53–59.

assassination in 192 of the so-called tyrant Nabis, the Achaean League, with the tacit permission of the Romans, deftly absorbed Sparta, while allowing her to keep all her traditional laws and customs.<sup>27</sup> Three years later, after an outbreak of unrest, Sparta was punished by having these laws taken away and an Achaean-style constitution imposed in their place; this state of affairs lasted until 146.<sup>28</sup> Following their defeat of the Achaean League in 146 B.C. the Romans allowed the Spartans to take back their ancestral constitution, as Plutarch reports, “as much as was possible after their misfortunes and so much degeneration” (*Philopoemen* 16.9).

During Sparta’s forty years under an Achaean constitution, the ephors were finally displaced as sole rulers by the *synarchia*, a joint committee consisting of the ephors themselves and the five *nomophylakes*, the guardians of the laws.<sup>29</sup> The term *synarchia* first appears at Sparta, in the plural form *synarchiai*, in an inscription from the Achaean period (IG V 1, 4, line 4). Joint committees of high-ranking officials were characteristic of the Achaean League and of its member states: *synarchiai* set the agendas for debates in civic councils or assemblies.<sup>30</sup> After several decades with an institution of this kind and since so many elements of the pre-Cleomenean constitution had vanished irrevocably, it would have made sense for the Spartans to retain the *synarchia* to serve as the city’s probouleutic committee, even following the reestablishment of Sparta’s “traditional” constitution in 146. This is a striking instance of the truth of Plutarch’s statement.

Given the lasting influence of this constitutional settlement on Roman Sparta, as is apparent in the case of the *synarchia*, it is justifiable to look to Achaean League practice to account for other constitutional changes at Sparta. In particular, the parallels in structure between the councils of Sparta and of the League itself provoke interest. First, however, we must determine the precise character of the Spartan *boule*.

The epigraphical evidence makes it quite plain that the gerousia of Roman Sparta was severely restricted in its ability to take independent action. The gerontes appear to have had little or no executive power by themselves. Only when working in tandem with other magistrates did they exercise anything like their old sway. Even instances when the gerontes were able to act in concert with another body are few. For example, they erected a statue in honor of the emperor Caracalla “by means of” (*δία*) the *synarchia*, and gerontes appear at the conclusion of a decree establishing an athletic festival, along with the ephors and *nomophylakes*.<sup>31</sup> Of the numerous honorific statue bases found at Sparta, not one mentions the gerousia as dedicator; in its place is the *boule*. Indeed, wherever the gerousia might have been expected to play a prominent role, we find the *boule* instead.

<sup>27</sup> Livy 35.35.1–19, 35.37.1–3; Plutarch, *Philopoemen* 15.2, 15.4; Shimron, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 77–78.

<sup>28</sup> On this date for the revival of the “traditional” Spartan constitution, see Kennell, pp. 13–19, followed by Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 84, 198.

<sup>29</sup> For the composition of the *synarchia*, see Kennell, pp. 108–123; Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 144–145.

<sup>30</sup> On Achaean *synarchiai*, see H. Swoboda, *Die griechischen Volksbeschlüsse: Epigraphische Untersuchungen*, Leipzig 1890, pp. 139–142; *idem*, “Studien zu den griechischen Bunden II,” *Klio* 12, 1912 (pp. 17–50), pp. 43–50; J. A. O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States*, Oxford 1968, p. 222. On their probouleutic function, see Swoboda, “Studien,” p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> Statue: IG V 1, 448. Decree: IG V 1, 20.

Although most authorities simply equate the later Spartan *boule* with the gerousia itself,<sup>32</sup> the evidence indicates that the two were different. As we have seen, the gerontes do not seem to have had power by themselves. On the other hand, the *boule* was involved in most of the daily business of the state: it approved the erection of statues and the publication of lists of ephors and gerontes; it chose the mortal stand-in for the god, Lykourgos, in the latter's term as eponymous magistrate.<sup>33</sup> A formula appearing in several fragmentary headings best illustrates the relationship between gerousia, *synarchia*, and *boule*. With the help of an inspired suggestion by Adolf Wilhelm, the heading of a decree from the Messenian town of Pherai (*IG V 1*, 1370) can be made to read as follows:<sup>34</sup>

[γνώμ]α [τᾶν] σ[υ]ναρχιᾶν, καθὰ καὶ οἱ γέροντες ἐπέκρειναν

A famous 1st-century decree of consolation passed at Sparta and erected at Epidaurus provides another example:<sup>35</sup>

[γνώμα συναρχ]ιᾶν, καθὼς καὶ οἱ γέροντες ἐπέκρειναν

Finally, a document from Sparta containing a series of measures passed in the *boule* (*IG V 1*, 11) admits of a similar restoration:<sup>36</sup>

[---ψαφί]σματα Ἀρτεμιτίου τᾶς α' Βου(λᾶς)  
[γνώμα τᾶν συναρχιᾶν, καθὰ καὶ οἱ γέρο]ντες ἐπέκρειναν

These headings make it evident that the gerousia and the *synarchia* were involved in the *boule*. This would fit with what is known of later Greek constitutional practice, when motions before deliberative bodies tended to be proposed by corporations rather than by individuals.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, these texts show that the gerousia and the *synarchia* together formed the *boule*. Such a "composite *boule*" is paralleled by the Achaean League's own *boule*, meetings of which were presided over by the *synarchiai* and the League's military leader, the *strategos*, who served as chairman of the *synarchiai* and *ex officio* president of the *boule*.<sup>38</sup> Following this Achaean precedent, the same man served as chairman (πρέσβυς) of the Spartan

<sup>32</sup> For an exception, see Cartledge and Spawforth, p. 146.

<sup>33</sup> *IG V 1*, 479, 541, 542, 623; *SEG XI*, 511, 564, 578, 594.

<sup>34</sup> A. Wilhelm, "Zu den Inschriften aus Magnesia am Maeander," *ÖJh* 4, 1901, Beiblatt (pp. 22–35), p. 26. Wilhelm, and Kolbe, restored the first word as [δόγμα]α, but γνώμη is the proper term for a motion introduced to a legislative body for consideration; cf. Swoboda, *Volksbeschlüsse* (note 30 above), pp. 59–61.

On Pherai's imitation of Spartan institutions, see Cartledge and Spawforth, pp. 144–145.

<sup>35</sup> W. Peek, *Inschriften aus dem Asklepieion von Epidaurus* (*AbhLeip* 60.2), Berlin 1969, pp. 29–31 (*IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 86).

Peek: [δόγμα συναρχ]ιᾶν. The correction of the heading is confirmed, in this inscription at least, by the appearance of δι' ἅ καὶ πάντα ἔδοξε τῷ δάμῳ in line 16, which indicates that the document is a decree of the *damos*.

<sup>36</sup> Corpus: [--- καθὰ καὶ οἱ γέρο]ντες ἐπέκρειναν.

<sup>37</sup> I. Levy, "Études sur la vie municipale de l'Asie Mineure sous les Antonins. Première série," *REG* 8, 1895 (pp. 201–250), p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> On the presidency of the Achaean *boule*, see A. Aymard, *Les assemblées de la confédération achaienne* (Bibliothèque des universités du Midi 21), Bordeaux 1938, p. 358, note 5; Larsen (note 30 above), pp. 227–231.

On the full Achaean *synarchiai*, see Swoboda, *Volksbeschlüsse* (note 30 above), pp. 136–139; Aymard, *op. cit.*, p. 358, note 5; Larsen, *loc. cit.* (note 30 above).



*synarchia* and as chairman of the gerousia.<sup>39</sup> Roman Sparta's council was thus yet another result of the Achaean League's years of hegemony over the city.

The question of why the number of gerontes was reduced can now be addressed. There must have been a reason for the number to be reduced to 23. Why that particular number? Why shrink the gerousia at all? The answer seems to lie not in the reduced size of the gerousia, but in the size of the post-Achaean composite *boule*. That body, excluding the secretary, had a total of 33 members. A deliberative body of this size is not difficult to find in earlier Spartan history: it was the so-called Little Assembly of Sparta, which met at times of high crisis from the 5th century on.<sup>40</sup> The Little Assembly was composed of the 28 gerontes and the five ephors. It is surely no coincidence that these two bodies, the post-Achaean *boule* and the Little Assembly, both contained the ephors and the gerontes and both totaled 33 members. The later *boule* can thus be seen as an adaptation of the earlier body to accommodate the newly instituted college of *nomophylakes*. For the supreme council at Sparta still to have 33 members, the gerousia had to be reduced by five to 23.

The reason for this specious continuity between an institution of the pre-Achaean period and one of the post-Achaean can be found by way of the well-documented Spartan obsession with tradition. When the Spartans were able to recover their "ancestral constitution" in 146 B.C., they evidently jettisoned all the posts and institutions that smacked of the Achaean League.<sup>41</sup> They viewed the institutions they did keep, on the other hand, as somehow connected with the constitution as it had been before the Achaean conquest. As we have seen, the *synarchia* now formed the probouleutic committee, an institution well suited to the contingencies of a Roman Greece. The *boule*, for its part, had a similar claim to be connected with an earlier deliberative body.

If this reconstruction is correct, then something important can be determined about the exact character of the constitution the Achaean general Philopoemen imposed in 188 B.C. There are two opposing schools of thought on how far reaching Philopoemen's action was: one holds that the entire Spartan constitution was revoked and an Achaean one imposed in its place; the other argues that only the Spartan educational system, the *agoge*, was abolished.<sup>42</sup> Today the majority of scholars subscribe to the first view, but the truth lies between the two extremes. Ancient sources, as might be expected, stress the removal of the *agoge*,<sup>43</sup> while the two inscriptions from the Achaean period (IG V 1, 4 and 5) apparently attest the

<sup>39</sup> IG V 1, 448; Kennell, pp. 108–111, 121–122. Pace K. M. T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta: A Re-examination of the Evidence*, Manchester 1949, p. 149 and A. S. Bradford, "The Synarchia of Roman Sparta," *Chiron* 10, 1980, p. 417.

<sup>40</sup> The name is Xenophon's (*Hellenica* 3.3.8); Herodotos 4.40; Pausanias 3.5.2. Cf. P. Cartledge, *Agasilaos and the Crisis of Sparta*, Baltimore 1987, pp. 109, 111–112.

<sup>41</sup> Two inscriptions from the Achaean period survive, IG V 1, 4 and IG V 1, 5. Two officials with impeccable Achaean pedigrees, the *ἐκδοτήρ* and the *ἐπιδαμιουργός*, appear nowhere else in Spartan epigraphy.

<sup>42</sup> For all traditional laws abolished, see G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde II (Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft 4.1.1)*, Munich 1892, pp. 733–734; Larsen (note 30 above), p. 446; R. M. Errington, *Philopoemen*, Oxford 1969, p. 146; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius III*, Oxford 1979, p. 138; Cartledge and Spawforth, p. 78.

For *agoge* only abolished, see Chrimes (note 39 above) pp. 45–47; Shimron (note 26 above), p. 106.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Livy, 38.34.9; Pausanias 8.51.3.

total abolition of the traditional constitution by containing no mention of traditional Spartan institutions. In their place are such bodies as the *synarchiai* and such officials as the *ekdotes* and the *epidamiourgos*.<sup>44</sup> The latter two posts are obvious innovations, but the *synarchiai* were made up of two eminently Spartan magistracies, the ephors and the *nomophylakes*.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the *boule* was a new configuration of three preexisting corporations, the ephors, the *nomophylakes*, and the *gerousia*, and its size was the same as that of a traditional Spartan institution.

The Achaeans did not wipe the constitutional slate clean in 188. Such an act would have been impossible, irresponsible, and likely to lose them what support they enjoyed at Sparta. Instead, in the constitution at large, they modified the existing institutions to conform to an Achaean model. From this resulted the *synarchia* and the *boule*, configurations maintained by the Spartans, who recognized their utility, even after gaining independence from the League. The *agoge*, it cannot be doubted, was simply abolished by the Achaean League: no mere tinkering with this most Spartan of institutions would suffice. An outsider might be confused by the constitutional settlement after 188, with an Achaean framework imposed on Spartan institutions. One thing, however, would have been obvious to him: the *agoge* no longer existed; this may account for the tendency of our sources to emphasize the abolition of the *agoge* at the expense of clarity concerning the constitution as a whole. On the other hand, an Achaean ambassador to the Roman Senate was moved to reply to the clamors of the Spartans that the League had taken their ancestral laws away by stating,

quod ad leges ademptas attinet, ego antiquas Lacedaemoniis leges tyrannos ademisse arbitror; nos non suas ademisse, quas non habebant, sed nostras leges dedisse (Livy 39.37.1–6).

As is often the case, there is more substance to this rhetoric than first meets the eye.

The 23-member *gerousia* was part of the far-reaching but strikingly subtle rearrangement of Spartan public institutions carried out by the Achaean League. It is, moreover, a manifestation of the endless vicissitudes endured by Sparta in the Hellenistic age and their effects on the constitution of that city.

NIGEL M. KENNEL

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND  
Department of Classics  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1C 5S7 Canada

<sup>44</sup> Cf. note 41 above.

<sup>45</sup> I believe the *nomophylakes* were founded by Cleomenes III; cf. Cartledge and Spawforth, p. 147.



IG V I, 16