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The Phoenicians and the Origins of Collective Rule in Archaic Greece

by

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## Abstract

Over the last few centuries, the ancient Greeks and their systems of government have been held in high esteem as they are routinely treated as the direct precursors to modern western democracies. For example, the contemporary historian Wilfried Nippel writes:

Nowadays democracy is an unambiguously positive norm... it is a reminder of the great Athenian experiment and invites comparison with the inventors of this order. Athens remains contemporary... it is seen as a flame pointing to the future that has warmed the hearts of countless numbers of men and women striving for autonomy and self-determination.<sup>1</sup>

While such statements remain common in modern scholarship and political discourse, researchers rarely seem to consider whether the Greeks and their political institutions were truly unique in antiquity or if other people were also developing broad-based governments at around this time.

My research here intends to challenge some of these Hellenocentric oversights by demonstrating that the Phoenicians were another Mediterranean civilization in antiquity that developed broad-based oligarchical governments. In fact, my thesis will demonstrate that the trend of establishing broader, more collective systems of rule appears to have begun several centuries *earlier* among the Phoenicians than the Greeks. From this, I will argue that the origins of broad-based non-monarchical forms of government lie, not with the ancient Greeks and the institutions they developed over the course of the Archaic Period, but with the Phoenicians and the governments that existed in their city-states from as far back as the late Bronze Age. I will also argue that because the Phoenicians began this process of broadening their governments earlier, had political systems that were quite similar to the ancient Greeks', and were in constant

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<sup>1</sup> Wilfried Nippel, *Ancient and Modern Democracy: Two Concepts of Liberty?*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 359.

contact with the Hellenes at this time, perhaps the Phoenicians and their governments in some ways inspired the political developments of the Archaic Period. By doing so, I will advocate that modern researchers should perhaps focus less on the ancient Greeks and more on the Phoenicians when discussing the origins of democracy, or at the very least, concede that the history of broad-based governments is far older and more complicated than is generally assumed.

### **Acknowledgments**

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In addition to my two supervisors, there are some other scholars whom I would like to acknowledge. I want to thank all of the professors at the University of Calgary who taught me courses in Greek and Roman Studies during my time here as a graduate student, whose knowledge and expertise helped lay the groundwork for this thesis. I also want to thank the University of Arkansas' Dr. Daniel Levine, who led a seminar at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in the summer of 2022, that I was fortunate enough to have attended. There, Dr. Levine reinvigorated my passion for ancient history and provided me with some key firsthand experience of Greece and its material culture (including at a number of the locations discussed in this work, such as Athens, Corinth, Crete, the Peloponnese, Lefkandi, and more).

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their incredible support as I have been working on this project and completing my master's degree. I am grateful for my fellow graduate students here at the University of Calgary and the encouragement they have provided me to keep pushing onward and work towards my ultimate goals. I would also like to specifically thank my parents, Ed Vanderkloet and Catherine Deboer, as well as my partner, Brianna Cranford, for sticking by my side and supporting me throughout this entire process.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

Over the course of the Archaic Period, which lasted from around 800 to 480 BC, ancient Greek society undoubtedly experienced some major changes and developments. At this time, many of the small villages scattered throughout Greece that had survived the Bronze Age Collapse began unifying through the process of *synoikism* to form larger city-states and consolidate the surrounding countryside into their territory. Cooler and wetter climate conditions seem to have given rise to dramatic changes in the demographics of Greece as the population of the region appears to have doubled over the course of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC alone.<sup>2</sup> During the Archaic Period the Greeks also made significant advances in the art of war as they began developing the phalanx formation and hoplite warfare, two things that allowed them to serve as valuable mercenaries in the armies of contemporary civilizations, that helped them repel the Persian invasions of the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, and that they would ultimately continue to make use of throughout antiquity until their eventual demise at the hands of the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>3</sup> Although they were divided into numerous states and polities, the Greeks do appear to have established a broader sense of cultural identity in the Archaic Period as they created festivals, games, and sanctuaries of panhellenic importance. These sanctuaries included places like Apollo's oracle at Delphi or Zeus' temple at Olympia, which were frequently consulted by visitors from throughout the ancient Greek world, especially during the quadrennial festivals, the Pythian and Olympic Games respectively. As the Archaic Period progressed, the Greeks also engaged in new art forms such as lyric poetry, theatre, philosophy, geography, and more.

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<sup>2</sup> Ian Morris, "The Eighth-Century Revolution," in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Hans van Wees, 1st ed. (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 66-67.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Krentz, "Warfare and Hoplites," in *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. H. A. Shapiro (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61-62, 80.

Unlike in the immediate aftermath of the Bronze Age Collapse, during the Archaic Period the Greeks began to increasingly engage in long-distance trade with the broader Mediterranean. This allowed the Greeks to come into closer contact with other cultures, from whom they were able to adopt various technologies and innovations. The civilizations that the Greeks were perhaps the most indebted to in this regard were those of the contemporary Near East, particularly the Phoenicians, a maritime people from modern-day Lebanon who played a crucial role in re-establishing trade between the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> As the Roman orator Cicero once said, “The Phoenicians were the first, through their trading and merchandise, to import into Greece greed and grandiosity and the insatiable desire for all things.”<sup>5</sup> The presence of Phoenician pottery, jewels, and an inscribed bronze bowl from the Tekke cemetery suggest that Phoenician traders were visiting the island of Crete and engaging in commerce there since at least the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>6</sup> In fact, some Phoenician craftsmen seem to have stayed on the island and resided there permanently, as evidenced by the fact that the Phoenicians appear to have built a shrine, known as Temple B, in the Cretan port city of Kommos in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the island of Crete, the Dodecanese islands of Cos and Rhodes appear to have had a strong connection with the Phoenicians as well. The presence of Phoenician wares and burials, such as the Phoenician child burial discovered at Ialysos, suggest that Phoenician merchants were visiting these islands and trading with their inhabitants since at least the 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, trans. Margaret E. Pinder (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 21. Carolina López-Ruiz, *The Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 27-28.

<sup>5</sup> Cicero *De Re Publica* Fragment 3.3 (quoted in Nonius Marcellus 431M). Translation taken from: James E. G. Zetzel, *Cicero: On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 78.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph W. Shaw, “Phoenicians in Southern Crete,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 93, no. 2 (April 1989), 181.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph W. Shaw, “Phoenicians in Southern Crete,” 181-182.

century BC.<sup>8</sup> From the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, the islands of Rhodes and Cos appear to have stopped importing ceramics in such high quantities from the Near East and instead began producing local imitations of Cypro-Phoenician pottery, especially Black-on-Red ware juglets. This has led scholars to conclude that by the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, Phoenician craftsmen had established permanent workshops on Rhodes and Cos for the bottling and selling of perfumes, oils, and other unguents.<sup>9</sup> Our surviving literary sources written by the ancient Greeks themselves only further corroborate the Phoenicians' early presence in the Aegean as they claim that the Phoenicians had established a presence on several islands, such as Thasos and Cythera, before the Greeks ruled there.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the Aegean islands, the Greek mainland appears to have developed a growing connection or relationship with the Phoenicians at this time too. For example, from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, Greek coins and vases increasingly depict chickens on them and various Greek authors make references to these birds in their written works.<sup>11</sup> This is significant, as the Phoenicians are believed to have ultimately introduced this species of livestock to the region by transporting them from the Near East aboard their ships, given that the earliest remains of chickens in Europe seem to all come from Phoenician sites, especially their colonies in Iberia.<sup>12</sup> At this time, large quantities of Phoenician goods seem to have also made their way into mainland Greece, even into the area of Laconia, which is surprising considering that this was an

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<sup>8</sup> Giorgos Bourogiannis, "The Phoenician Presence in the Aegean during the Early Iron Age: Trade, Settlement, and Cultural Interaction," *Rivista Di Studi Fenici* 46 (2018), 67.

<sup>9</sup> Giorgos Bourogiannis, "The Phoenician Presence in the Aegean during the Early Iron Age: Trade, Settlement, and Cultural Interaction," 68, 70.

<sup>10</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.8.1, Herodotus *Histories* 1.105.3, 2.44.3-4, 6.47, Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 3.1.1, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.14.7, 5.25.12,

<sup>11</sup> Lee Perry-Gal et al., "Earliest Economic Exploitation of Chicken Outside East Asia: Evidence from the Hellenistic Southern Levant," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112, no. 32 (August 11, 2015), 9850.

<sup>12</sup> Lee Perry-Gal et al., "Earliest Economic Exploitation of Chicken Outside East Asia: Evidence from the Hellenistic Southern Levant," 9849.

especially insular region of Greece due to the fact that its major city, Sparta, was landlocked and prohibited its citizens from engaging in commerce.<sup>13</sup> Archaeological surveys at the port city of Gythium in Laconia have led to the discovery of a large number of murex shells, which has caused scholars to believe that in the early Iron Age, this city was heavily involved in the Phoenician trade of purple dyes.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, a number of Phoenician carved ivories and terracotta masks dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC have been discovered at Artemis' sanctuary at Orthia, suggesting that by the early Archaic Period, the Lacedemonians were engaging in long-distance trade with the Near East.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, at this time commercial goods not only made their way from the Near East to Greece, but from Greece to the Near East as well. For example, from the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards a number of Greek ceramics, especially of Euboean origin, appear to have been exported to the trade post of Al Mina situated along the northern coast of the Levant, from which they were distributed throughout the Near East and were brought as far inland as the Neo-Assyrian capital of Nineveh.<sup>16</sup> The close trade connections between the Phoenicians and Greeks (especially from the island of Euboea) seem to be only further corroborated by the archaeological evidence suggesting that the Greek ἄποικος or 'colony'<sup>17</sup> of Ischia, which was founded by settlers from the Euboean cities of Chalcis and Eretria in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, was also inhabited by a number Phoenicians in its early history.<sup>18</sup> Because of these various interactions

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<sup>13</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.38.2-2.39.1, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 7, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 9.3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Niki C. Scoufopoulos and John G. Mckernan, "Underwater Survey of Ancient Gythion, 1972," *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* 4.1 (1975), 103.

<sup>15</sup> Jane Burr Carter, "The Masks of Orthia," *American Journal of Archaeology* 91, no. 3 (July 1987), 374.

<sup>16</sup> John Boardman, "The Early Greek Sherd at Nineveh," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 16, no. 3 (1997), 375.

<sup>17</sup> From now on, I will use the word 'colony' as a translation of ἄποικος, even though I recognize some of the inherent problems or challenges in using this term. For more on this topic, see: Robin Osborne, "Early Greek Colonization? The Nature of Greek Settlement in the West," in *Archaic Greece: New Approaches and New Evidence*, ed. Nick Fisher and Hans van Wees (London, England: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1998), 251-270.

<sup>18</sup> M. W. Frederiksen, "Archaeology in South Italy and Sicily, 1973-76," *Archaeological Reports* 23 (1977), 44.

between the Phoenicians and Greeks in the early Iron Age, by the time the Homeric epics were produced in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Phoenicians appear to have already had a well-established reputation for producing high-quality goods and for trading these goods in ports all over the Mediterranean.<sup>19</sup>

As the Greeks increasingly interacted with the Phoenicians, they seem to have adopted a number of Phoenician innovations and ideas. For example, it was from the Phoenicians that the Greeks adopted their script, which allowed them to produce a variety of written works in the Archaic Period just like they had previously done in the Bronze Age.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, as the Archaic Period progressed, the Phoenicians seem to have greatly influenced Greek art and religion. For example, a number of scholars have demonstrated that over the course of the Archaic Period, Greek pottery seems to have been increasingly influenced by contemporary Near Eastern motifs as the Greeks shifted away from using geometric designs in favor of depicting human beings, wild animals, mythological creatures, and floral designs, especially ones with palmette volutes.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, researchers like Walter Burkert have demonstrated significant parallels between Greek and Phoenician gods such as Aphrodite/Ashtarte, Apollo/Resheph, Heracles/Melqart, as well as Greek and Phoenician forms of divination in antiquity.<sup>22</sup> The Phoenicians appear to have also had a profound influence on Greek seafaring and navigation.

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<sup>19</sup> For the luxury of the Phoenicians and their goods, see: Homer *Iliad* 6.289, 23.740, *Odyssey* 4.614, 15.425. For the Phoenicians' involvement in Mediterranean trade see: Homer *Odyssey* 13.271, 14.288, 15.415.

<sup>20</sup> Roger D. Woodard, "Contextualizing the Origin of the Greek Alphabet," in *The Early Greek Alphabets: Origin, Diffusion, Uses*, ed. Robert Parker and Philippa M. Steele (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2021), 74-75.

<sup>21</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, "The Emergence of Orientalizing in Greek Art: Some Observations on the Interchange between Greeks and Phoenicians in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries BC," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 301 (February 1996), 52-54. Thomas Mannack, "Greek Decorated Pottery I: Athenian Vase-Painting," in *A Companion to Greek Art*, ed. Tyler Jo Smith and Dimitris Plantzos (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018), 44.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 145, 152-153, 210. Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, 46.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, the Greeks seem to have abandoned the practice of sewing the planks of their ships together in favour of using pegged mortise and tenon joints.<sup>23</sup> Considering that mortise and tenon joints have a far older history of use in the ancient Near East, have been observed in Phoenician ships dating back to the late Bronze Age such as in the Uluburun and Cape Gelidonya shipwrecks, and were known to the Romans simply as *Punicanis coagmentis* or ‘Phoenician joints’,<sup>24</sup> scholars believe that this shipbuilding technique must have been adopted by the Greeks from the Phoenicians.<sup>25</sup> It is likely that the bireme, a ship with two banks of rowers on each side for increased speed and maneuverability in naval warfare, was another Phoenician invention that was adopted by the archaic Greeks as our earliest depictions of these ships come from Neo-Assyrian portrayals of the Phoenicians and their navy during the reign of King Sennacherib (705-681 BC).<sup>26</sup> Overall, the influence from the Near East, particularly the Phoenicians, over the Greeks at this time was so prevalent that 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars decided to coin this era of Greek history, “the Orientalizing Period.”

Out of all of the developments that occurred in Greece during the Archaic Period, perhaps the most noteworthy are the political changes that a number of Greek city-states experienced. At this time, many foundational laws and institutions were established within Greek cities that persisted well into the later Classical (479-324 BC) and Hellenistic Periods (323-31 BC). For example, the Spartans appear to have undergone drastic legal reform in the early Archaic Period which they attributed to Lycurgus, a shadowy figure who was revered as one of

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<sup>23</sup> George F. Bass, “New Techniques of Archaeology and Greek Shipwrecks of the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BC,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 150, no. 1 (March 2006), 14.

<sup>24</sup> Cato the Elder *On Agriculture* 18.9.

<sup>25</sup> Yaacov Kahanov and Patrice Pomey, “The Greek Sewn Shipbuilding Tradition and the Ma’agan Mikhael Ship: A Comparison with Mediterranean Parallels from the Sixth to the Fourth Centuries BC,” *The Mariner’s Mirror* 90, no. 1 (February 2004), 24-25.

<sup>26</sup> Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 58.

the city's major founders. Meanwhile, we hear that Athens experienced similar legal reforms under their famous lawgivers Draco and Solon in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC respectively. As the Archaic Period progressed and these various legal reforms were implemented, Greek cities seem to have gradually reduced the power of their kings and, in many instances, outright abolished their monarchies in favor of broader oligarchical political systems. In the case of Athens, for example, this led to the creation of its 'democracy' in 508 BC.

This trend of overthrowing monarchies and replacing them with broader, more collective forms of government seems to have been considered one of the defining traits of the ancient Greeks and something that ultimately distinguished them from contemporary civilizations. In his *Politics*, Aristotle calls hereditary kingships 'barbarian monarchy' and contrasts this with what he classifies as 'Spartan kingship,' where the monarch seemingly holds the least amount of political power.<sup>27</sup> This suggests that Aristotle drew a distinction between the Greeks, who are constantly striving to reduce the power of their kings, and 'foreigners' (βάρβαροι), who are more complaisant towards monarchy. Aristotle's teacher, Plato on the other hand, does not seem to have considered monarchies a 'Greek' form of government at all in his *Republic*.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, in Herodotus' *Histories*, when King Xerxes of Persia, in preparation for his invasion of Greece, asks the former Spartan king, Demaratus, to summarize the Hellenes as best he can, he defines them as a people who are constantly (διαχρεωμένη) fighting off both poverty (πενίην) and despotism (δεσποσύνην).<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Hippocrates in his work, *Airs, Waters, and Places* claims

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<sup>27</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a-b.

<sup>28</sup> Plato *Republic* 8.544C.

<sup>29</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 7.102.1.

that the reason why the ‘Asian race’ (γένος τὸ Ἀσιηνὸν) is more cowardly than the Hellenes is because much of Asia (τῆς Ἀσίας τὰ πολλὰ), unlike Greece, is ruled by kings (βασιλεύεται).<sup>30</sup>

This Hellenocentric view that the ancient Greeks were the sole innovators of democracy and were in many ways unique or exceptional, continues to be perpetuated in modern scholarship and political discourse. Books written on the topic of democracy and its history often begin by discussing the ancient Greeks and the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BC.<sup>31</sup> Throughout his term as the British prime minister, Boris Johnson kept a bust of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian politician, Pericles in his office and frequently referred to this figure in his political speeches on the nature and origins of democracy.<sup>32</sup> The present-day constitution of the European Union even begins with a preamble that quotes directly from Pericles’ funeral oration delivered in the winter of 431 BC, “Our constitution ... is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole of the people.”<sup>33</sup> This notion that ancient Greek governments were the direct precursors to modern democracies remains quite prominent in contemporary American political discourse as well. For his last trip overseas as president in November of 2016, Barack Obama travelled to Greece and delivered a speech in which he declared “we’re indebted to Greece for the most precious gifts – the truth, the understanding that as individuals of free will, we have the right and capacity to govern ourselves.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hippocrates *Airs, Waters, and Places* 16.

<sup>31</sup> For examples, see: Luciano Canfora, *Democracy in Europe: A History of an Ideology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Kurt A. Raaflaub, Josiah Ober, and Robert Wallace, eds., *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007). Jim Miller, *Can Democracy Work?: A Short History of a Radical Idea, from Ancient Athens to Our World*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018). Kim Covert, *Ancient Greece: Birthplace of Democracy* (Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Peter Jones, “Boris’s Periclean Optimism,” *The Spectator* 325, no. 9688 (May 3, 2014), 23.

<sup>33</sup> Luciano Canfora, *Democracy in Europe: A History of an Ideology*, 7. This quotation comes from Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.37.

<sup>34</sup> Uri Friedman, “Obama Makes the Case for Democracy, in the Land Where It Was Born,” *The Atlantic*, November 17, 2016. Accessed on May 31st, 2023: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/11/obama-democracy-greece/507890/>

While the history of the ancient Greeks and the abolishment of their monarchies in favour of broader, more collective systems of government is a much-discussed topic in modern scholarship and political discourse, researchers rarely contemplate whether the Greeks were truly unique in this regard or if other civilizations in antiquity were also developing oligarchies at this time. Simon Hornblower is one rare exception as he does, at the very least, consider the possibility that Athenian democracy was inspired by the Phoenicians who were also developing collective systems of rule at around this time.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Hornblower only ponders this point very briefly in his work before quickly moving on to discuss the Greeks and their contributions to democracy, saying little more than “The Phoenicians, in western Asia, had something comparable to the self-regulating city-state or *polis* of archaic and classical Greece... the Greek political arrangements we most admire. Scientific study in this area has, however, hardly begun... we can do no more than mention the Phoenicians and move on.”<sup>36</sup>

My thesis here will attempt to amend some of these shortcomings in modern scholarship surrounding the ancient Greeks and the development of their political thought over the course of the Archaic Period. After providing a brief outline of my research methodology (Chapter 2), I will first summarize our surviving evidence of monarchies in ancient Greece, from when the Greeks first appear in the archaeological record during the Bronze Age, to the Archaic Period, the main period of focus in this paper (Chapter 3). Then, I will discuss how the Greeks appear to have gradually reduced the powers of their kings or abolished their monarchies in favour of broader political systems. I will do this by focussing specifically on the histories of Corinth

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<sup>35</sup> Another notable exception is: Stephen Stockwell, “Israel and Phoenicia,” in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy*, ed. Benjamin Isakhan and Stephen Stockwell (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Simon Hornblower, “Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece,” in *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey, 508 BC to AD 1993*, ed. John Dunn (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 2.

(Chapter 4), Sparta (Chapter 5), and Athens (Chapter 6) during the Archaic Period and discussing the various political changes that these three city-states each underwent at this time, according to our various ancient sources and other evidence. Finally, I will discuss the history of the Phoenicians from the late Bronze Age to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and how they too, appear to have gradually reduced the powers of their kings in favour of establishing broader, oligarchical political systems in their city-states (Chapter 7). In this final chapter, I will not only draw comparisons between the forms of government that existed among the Phoenicians and Greeks, but will demonstrate that the trend of establishing broader, more collective systems of rule began several centuries *earlier* in Phoenicia than in Greece. By doing so, I will speculate that the political developments of archaic Greece were in some ways inspired by the Phoenicians and their oligarchies. The purpose of this thesis is not to lessen or discredit the Greeks' contributions to the development of democracy, but rather to argue that the history of broad-based governments is much older and far more complicated than is generally assumed. Furthermore, my thesis is meant to demonstrate that it is perhaps more fruitful to study the ancient Greeks and their political developments – not in isolation as though this civilization existed in a vacuum – but within their appropriate context and in conjunction with the other civilizations of the Mediterranean, with whom the Greeks were in close contact.

## **Chapter 2 Methodology**

To begin, it is important to state that my approach to this work has very much been a multidisciplinary one. My research does not simply focus on the ancient Greeks and their political developments in isolation, but studies them in conjunction with the other civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean with whom the Greeks were in close contact and who were also experiencing substantial political changes at this time. The Phoenicians are, of course, the main civilization that I will be comparing to the Greeks and their political developments over the course of the Archaic Period. However, I will also make mention of other cultures, such as the Romans, Egyptians, and Arameans, on occasions where their histories or politics are relevant to the discussion and help illuminate broader trends of the period.

Moreover, I have taken a multidisciplinary approach in terms of the variety of sources that I have made use of in this work. As evidence for my arguments, I have tried to draw from a range of source material, including archaeological remains, inscriptional evidence, ancient literary works, modern scholarship, and more. I have also tried to capture both insider and outsider perspectives on the political developments that city-states experienced at this time. So, for example, when I recount the history of the Phoenicians from the late Bronze Age to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (Chapter 7), I will not only discuss what the Phoenicians themselves have left behind or revealed about their political systems, but will demonstrate what the neighbouring Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, Israelites, and others have written about them as well. There were some instances, however, where it was, admittedly, quite challenging to capture both insider and outsider perspectives. Perhaps the most obvious example is my chapter on the history of archaic Sparta (Chapter 5).

Apart from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC poet, Tyrtaeus, whose surviving works provide only a vague outline of the political organization of Sparta at this time,<sup>37</sup> there are virtually no ancient authors from Sparta itself who can provide us with an insider perspective on their government. Those who wrote extensively on the political history of Sparta were, by and large, outsiders who tended to view the city as peculiar in comparison to the other polities of Greece.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, a number of our surviving ancient literary sources are not only separated geographically from archaic Sparta and its political institutions, but temporally as well. For example, authors such as Plutarch and Justin wrote their works at a time when Sparta no longer existed as an independent polity but was firmly under the hegemony of the Roman Empire as it had been for centuries by that point.<sup>39</sup> For these 2nd century Roman authors, the city of Sparta was little more than a popular tourist destination and a relic of a bygone era. The fact that our sources on the history of Sparta were written mostly by outsiders is quite problematic as these non-Spartan authors seem to have fallen into the habit of distorting the city's exceptional features or idiosyncrasies.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, it seems that the Spartans themselves were inclined to misinform outsiders on their way of life so that they could give off the impression that they were more powerful, intimidating, or brutal than they really were and deter others from challenging their authority.<sup>41</sup> These sorts of myths or exaggerations likely became even more prominent over time as authors became more and more separated temporally from the events and institutions of early Spartan history. As a

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<sup>37</sup> Tyrtaeus Fragments 2, 4, 5, and 6.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, "Sparta: An Exceptional Domination of State over Society?," in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 32.

<sup>39</sup> Yves Lafond, "Sparta in the Roman Period," in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 403-405.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, "Sparta: An Exceptional Domination of State over Society?," 32.

<sup>41</sup> Anton Powell, "Sparta: Reconstructing History from Secrecy, Lies, and Myth," in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 8.

whole, scholars have called this tendency in our ancient sources to exaggerate or idealize Sparta's features the 'Spartan Mirage.'<sup>42</sup>

While the 'Spartan Mirage' admittedly creates several challenges in reconstructing the history of archaic Sparta, I believe that I have made notable efforts in my research to mitigate these issues. First of all, to avoid the issue of relaying falsehoods or distortions that have emerged in the literary tradition over time, I have decided to primarily rely on sources that are older or written closer temporally to the events I discuss. For this reason, throughout my thesis, I will rely far more on authors like Herodotus (485-425 BC), than Plutarch or Justin (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD). Even though some of the events of the Archaic Period are, unfortunately, only recorded in much later sources, I will often provide this information with the caveat that it warrants suspicion or by pairing it with modern scholarship on the topic. Furthermore, to get as close as possible to an insider's perspective on Sparta, I have given preference to sources written by authors who are known to have lived in the city, even if they were not themselves, Spartan citizens. For example, in my chapter on the history of archaic Sparta, I will frequently rely on Xenophon as he is known to have fought under the Spartans as a mercenary, been a close friend of the Spartan king Agesilaus II, and had his own sons raised and educated in the city.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, I will also frequently rely on Thucydides as he is known to have lived amongst the Spartans and gathered information from them during his twenty-year exile from Athens following the Battle of

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<sup>42</sup> This term was first coined in: François Ollier, *Le Mirage Spartiate: Étude Sur l'idéalisation de Sparte Dans l'antiquité Grecque Du Début de l'école Cynique Jusqu'à La Fin de La Cité* (Paris, France: Les Belles Lettres, 1943).

<sup>43</sup> Xenophon *Anabasis* 7.6, *Agesilaus* 1.1, *Hellenica* 3.1.6, 3.2.7, Plutarch *Life of Agesilaus* 20.2. Although it should be noted that in recent years some scholars have questioned whether Xenophon's sons were truly raised in Sparta, such as: Noreen Humble, "Xenophon's Sons in Sparta? Perspectives on *Xenoi* in the Spartan Upbringing," in *Spartan Society*, ed. Thomas J. Figueira (Swansea, Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2004), 231–50.

Amphipolis in 424 BC.<sup>44</sup> Thus, by primarily relying on our oldest extant sources and by providing both outsider and insider (or at the very least quasi-insider) perspectives whenever possible, I believe that my research method has allowed me to mitigate some of the challenges presented in our ancient source material, such as the phenomenon of the ‘Spartan Mirage.’

Another challenge that our ancient sources present, is the tendency to over-simplify the political developments of archaic Greece by providing what we would today call a ‘Great Man’ history.<sup>45</sup> Instead of capturing the complexities or nuances of a city’s political developments, our ancient sources often attribute a city’s system of government to a single founder or lawgiver. For example, our ancient sources on the history of Athens often treat Cleisthenes as the sole founder of the city’s democracy.<sup>46</sup> This view is, of course, quite problematic as it assumes that Cleisthenes made his constitutional reforms by relying purely on his own genius and not by relying on any outside influences or pre-existing concepts. Moreover, it assumes that Athens’ ‘democracy’ was a stable institution that did not undergo any major changes or developments following its creation in 508 BC.

In my thesis, I have tried to distance myself from this ‘Great Man’ approach to history-writing. While I will certainly make mention of lawgivers like Cleisthenes and their contributions to their cities’ political systems, I will also treat our information about these figures with skepticism and remind the reader to be cautious of our ancient sources’ overgeneralizations

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<sup>44</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.10.2, 5.26.5, 5.68.2. See also: Anton Powell, “Information from Sparta: A Trap for Thucydides?,” in *Thucydides and Sparta*, ed. Paula Debnar et al. (Swansea, Wales: The Classical Press of Wales, 2021), 261-264.

<sup>45</sup> Nathan Rotenstreich, “Individuals, Great Men, and Historical Determination,” *Social Research* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1971), 139, 142. Sarah Brown Ferrario, *Historical Agency and the “Great Man” in Classical Greece* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2014).10-12.

<sup>46</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.66, 6.131.1, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 21-22.4, *Politics* 3.1275b, Isocrates *Antidosis* 232, Demosthenes *Against Midias* 144, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.29.6, Aelian *Varia Historia* 13.24, Plutarch *Life of Pericles* 3.1, *Life of Cimon* 15.2, *Life of Aristides* 2.1.

(for examples, see pages 66, 87, 89 & 99-100). Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the political developments of archaic Greece were, in many instances, not the product of a single man's actions, but a response to broader social conflicts and political tensions in Greek cities (see pages 54-56, 65 & 88). By doing so, I will show that there were, in all likelihood, a number of other groups or individuals who played key roles in the political developments of the Archaic Period, but whose names are, unfortunately, not recorded in the annals of history.

Instead of suggesting that the constitutional reforms of archaic Greece were accomplished entirely through the agency and innovations of famous lawgivers, I will propose that these reforms received external influence and were modelled off preexisting systems of government. In particular, I will advocate that the political developments of archaic Greece were inspired by the Phoenicians, a people who were also developing broad-based oligarchical systems of government at this time.<sup>47</sup> I will make this argument mostly by comparing Phoenician systems of government with those of archaic Greece and by showing that they shared a number of remarkable similarities. I will also demonstrate that the trend of establishing broader non-monarchical forms of government appears to have begun several centuries earlier among the Phoenicians than the Greeks, which means that it is quite possible that the political systems of archaic Greece were, in some ways, inspired by these various Phoenician precursors or counterparts.

Because I argue that the Greeks gradually turned to outside influences (i.e. the Phoenicians and their political institutions) for solutions to their growing social problems in the Archaic Period, one could say that my thesis adheres to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory.

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Stockwell, "Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States," *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 2, no. 2 (2010), 129.

This theory states that over time, new ideas and technologies tend to spread through channels of communication to neighbouring civilizations, where these innovations can also be put to good use.<sup>48</sup> One could say that my thesis also adheres to Network Theory, an approach that has, in recent years, been increasingly used by scholars to argue that instead of viewing the ancient Mediterranean as a series of distinct or separate regions, we should conceptualize it as a collection of nodes linked to one another by networks of exchange.<sup>49</sup> Considering the ancient Mediterranean was such a hub of trade and interaction – not least between the Greeks and Phoenicians – I will contend that the political developments of archaic Greece were, in many ways, the consequence of diffusion or cross-cultural communications. By doing so, I will stand in direct opposition to Hellenocentrism, the notion that ancient Greek civilization essentially emerged from within itself and was unique or exceptional in antiquity. I will also stand in direct opposition to Oriental Despotism, the assumption that throughout history, almost all ‘eastern’ states relied on narrow authoritarian regimes,<sup>50</sup> as I will demonstrate that broad-based systems of rule clearly existed, not just in ancient Greece and the western Mediterranean, but in the ancient Near East as well.

Having briefly summarized both what I accept and reject as research approaches, I hope to have provided a clear impression of where my research falls in line in terms of its

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<sup>48</sup> James W. Dearing and Jeffrey G. Cox, “Diffusion of Innovations Theory, Principles, and Practice,” *Health Affairs* 37, no. 2 (February 2018), 183-184. For examples of works that have explored or studied the diffusion of innovations in antiquity, see: Anna Collar, “Network Theory and Religious Innovation,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 22, no. 1 (June 2007), 152-155. Henrik Gerding and Per Östborn, “The Diffusion of Architectural Innovations: Modelling Social Networks in the Ancient Building Trade,” in *Sinews of Empire: Networks in the Roman Near East and Beyond*, ed. Eivind Seland and Hakon Teigon (Havertown, PA: Oxbow Books, 2017), 71–84.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Molho, “The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 2 (2002), 490. Irad Malkin, *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5, 8-10.

<sup>50</sup> Frederick G. Whelan, “Oriental Despotism: Anquetil-Duperron’s Response to Montesquieu,” *History of Political Thought* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2001), 619. Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1957).

methodology. Although there are, admittedly, several challenges in reconstructing the history of Archaic Period, I believe that I have made notable efforts to mitigate these issues by employing a wide range of sources, modern scholarship, and a healthy bit of skepticism, especially regarding the early history of Sparta and the numerous achievements ascribed to ‘Great Men.’ With this research method in mind, I shall now proceed to lay out my arguments and begin my discussion on the political histories of ancient Greece and Phoenicia.

### Chapter 3

## From *Wanax* to *Basileus*: A History of Greek Monarchies from the Bronze Age to the Archaic Period

“I think it is best that we no longer be ruled by one of ourselves as a monarch, since that kind of government is neither pleasant nor good... How could monarchy be a harmonious and coherent system when it permits the ruler to do whatever he wishes, to be accountable to no one? Even the best of men, if placed in this position of power [i.e. king], would lose his normal mental balance, for arrogance will grow within him as he enjoys all the good things at hand, as will envy, too, which is always a fundamental component of human nature... The rule of the majority, however, not only has the most beautiful and powerful name of all, equality [ἰσονομίην], but in practice, the majority does not act like a monarch. Indeed, the majority chooses its magistrates by lot, it holds all of these officials accountable to an audit, and it refers all resolutions to the authority of the public. I therefore propose that we abandon monarchy and raise the majority to a ruling position, for in numbers lies everything.”<sup>51</sup>

– Herodotus, *Histories* 3.80.2-6.

Before discussing how, as the Archaic Period progressed, the various city-states of Greece increasingly turned away from their traditional, monarchical forms of government towards systems of collective rule where power was more broadly distributed, it is important to first demonstrate why scholars believe monarchies were so prevalent in Greece to begin with. In this chapter, I will briefly summarize both the archaeological and literary evidence for the presence of kingships in Greece from the Mycenaean Bronze Age to the Archaic Period. As I am doing so, I will particularly try to address the question of whether kings ruled over Greece in the early Iron Age, as this is an especially difficult topic to address given that literacy had almost entirely disappeared from the region at this time, leaving us no written records from the period to rely on. Despite these challenges, I will demonstrate that it is, nevertheless, fair to assume that monarchies existed, by and large, throughout Greece up until the Archaic Period, when dramatic changes begin to occur in the Greeks’ political thought or systems of government. This fact is significant for my thesis, as it shows that the Greeks started broadening their governments and

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<sup>51</sup> Translation taken from: Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*, trans. Andrea L. Purvis (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2009), 245-246.

lessening their kings' powers several centuries *after* the Phoenicians had already begun to do so (as I will demonstrate in further detail later on in Chapter 7).

Let us begin by discussing the Bronze Age (3000-1200 BC), the period when an urbanized literate civilization (i.e. the Mycenaeans) first began to emerge in mainland Greece. From the works of Homer<sup>52</sup> and the numerous Linear B tablets discovered at sites such as Pylos or Knossos,<sup>53</sup> we know that during the Bronze Age, Mycenaean Greece was divided into a number of kingdoms that were each ruled by a monarch called a *wanax*. These *wanakes* or 'great kings' held control over large swaths of territory and appear to have played a central role in their states' economies as they managed the cultivation of crops, taxed the population, and kept detailed records of commercial activity.<sup>54</sup> We also know that *wanakes* had a number of lesser officials serving beneath them to help manage and administer the various communities in their kingdoms, such as *damokoroi* or 'provincial governors' who appear to have been directly appointed by the *wanax* himself.<sup>55</sup> The significant role and authority of Mycenaean kings can perhaps also be inferred from Hittite records such as the Tawagala letter where the Hittite king, Hattusili III (1267-1237 BC) refers to a contemporary Mycenaean (Ahhiyawan) leader as a 'great king,' his 'brother' and his 'equal.'<sup>56</sup> This suggests that the status of Mycenaean kings was comparable or similar to that of contemporary Near Eastern monarchs.

The various kingdoms of the Mycenaeans appear to have dominated the political landscape of Greece for several centuries up until the Bronze Age Collapse (c. 1200 BC), when

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<sup>52</sup> Such as *Iliad* 9.163 or *Odyssey* 1.397.

<sup>53</sup> James T. Hooker, "The Wanax in Linear B Texts," *Kadmos* 18, no. 2 (1979), 100.

<sup>54</sup> Dimitri Nakassis, *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 2.

<sup>55</sup> Dimitri Nakassis, *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos*, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Willemijn J.I. Waal, "'My Brother, a Great King, my Peer': Evidence for a Mycenaean Kingdom from Hittite Texts," in *From "Lugal.gal" to "Wanax": Kingship and Political Organisation in the Late Bronze Age Aegean*, ed. Jorrit M. Kelder and Willemijn J. I. Waal (Leiden, Netherlands: Sidestone Press, 2019), 12.

they were ultimately toppled and fractioned into a variety of smaller independent communities. These more sparsely populated settlements seem to have, to some extent, continued to operate under monarchical forms of government in the early Iron Age. These early Iron Age kings, however, held sway over much smaller territories and were not called *wanakes* but *basileis*, a title that likely derives from the Mycenaean *qa-si-re-u*, a hereditary ‘chieftain’ who ruled over a village on the *wanax*’s behalf.<sup>57</sup>

The existence of these monarchies in early Iron Age Greece is, in some ways, exhibited through the archaeological record. At a number of early Iron Age sites, archaeologists have discovered large buildings which seem to have been of central importance to the community and to have served as the dwelling of the local ruler. In fact, many of these discovered dwellings are *megara*, the same style of structure that, during the Bronze Age, served as the palaces and throne rooms of Mycenaean kings (*wanakes*).<sup>58</sup> At Tiryns, for example, after the city was destroyed during the Bronze Age Collapse, a *megaron* (known as Building T1) appears to have been constructed directly atop of its Mycenaean predecessor on the city’s acropolis and to have continued to be used there until the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>59</sup> The fact that this Iron Age *megaron* was discovered with twelve large *pithoi* (ceramic vessels used for storing grain and fluids) along its rear wall seems to be an indication that this structure primarily served as a residence and not a temple or religious site during this period.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the fact that this building reused many of

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<sup>57</sup> Thomas G. Palaima, “Wanaks and Related Power Terms in Mycenaean and Later Greek,” in *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer*, ed. Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Irene Lemos (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 68-69.

<sup>58</sup> Rodney Castleden, *Mycenaeans* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 25-26, 47.

<sup>59</sup> James C. Wright, “The Formation of the Mycenaean Palace,” in *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer*, ed. Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Irene S. Lemos (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 40.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Maran, “Political and Religious Aspects of Architectural Change on the Upper Citadel of Tiryns: The Case of Building T,” in *Potnia, Deities and Religion in the Aegean Bronze Age: Proceedings of the 8th International Aegean Conference*, ed. Robert Laffineur and Robin Hägg (Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University Press, 2001), 118-119.

the architectural features from the site's previous *megaron*, including the platform where the *wanax*' throne presumably once stood, suggests that this Iron Age structure served a rather similar function as its Mycenaean precursor: to house the local ruler. Considering that this building continued to be used for several generations, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC without interruption, it seems that the rulers who dwelt there were, in all likelihood, hereditary or dynastic leaders (i.e. kings).<sup>61</sup>

Another example of a site that contains evidence of monarchical rule during the early Iron Age is the community of Nichoria in the Peloponnese. There, archaeologists have unearthed a *megaron* structure (known as Unit IV-1) built in the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, which occupied the central ridge of the community. Over time, this *megaron* was remodeled by having a larger courtyard added to its front while an apsidal storage room was built onto its rear. Even though there are signs of cult activity at Unit IV-1, the presence of *pithoi* (storage containers), *scyphoi* (drinking cups), and other ceramic cooking vessels seems to clearly indicate that this structure functioned as a dwelling and not a temple.<sup>62</sup> Given the size of this *megaron*, its central position within the community, and the fact that it was inhabited for several generations, scholars assume that this building must have belonged to the local *basileus* of Nichoria and his dynastic successors.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to the sites of Tiryns and Nichoria, several other Greek communities dating to the early Iron Age have been discovered containing large central dwellings that are believed to

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<sup>61</sup> Alexander Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion, and Society in Early Iron Age Greece (1100-700 BC)* (Jonsared, Sweden: Paul Astroms Forlag, 1997), 161, 270.

<sup>62</sup> W. A. McDonald et al., "Excavations at Nichoria in Messenia: 1972-1973," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 44, no. 1 (March 1975), 91.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 65-68

have belonged to the local king (*basileus*).<sup>64</sup> Such sites include examples from beyond the Greek mainland as well like the community of Emporio on the island of Chios, which appears to have had a large, 18 by 6.85m *megaron* built within its fortified acropolis in the 8th century BC that was kept noticeably apart from the other residential buildings in the community until the site's abandonment in the mid-Archaic Period.<sup>65</sup> While these structures may provide key insight into the political institutions of early Iron Age Greece, one must also recognize that the question of whether these structures belonged to a local king (*basileus*) is often determined through the subjective interpretation of facts like the building's size, its architectural features, prominent position in the community, interior furnishings, and the other finds associated with it.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, although the abovementioned evidence is certainly noteworthy and compelling, its shortcomings should also be acknowledged and warrant a degree of caution.

Another way archaeologists have advocated for the existence of monarchical political systems in early Iron Age Greece is by examining burials. For example, at the site of Lefkandi on the Greek island of Euboea, archaeologists have discovered a massive 50-meter-long structure dating to the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, which contains the remains of two individuals, one male and one female, along with several ornate grave goods, some of which came from as far away as Babylon.<sup>67</sup> Considering the size of this mausoleum and the quality of the goods found within it, especially compared to contemporary graves discovered at the site, scholars believe that these

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<sup>64</sup> Such as 'Building A' discovered at Koukounaries on the Greek island of Paros, as discussed in: Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World, Ca. 1200-479 BCE*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, 2014), 132-133. Alexander Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion, and Society in Early Iron Age Greece (1100-700 BC)*, 82-83, 273.

<sup>65</sup> John Boardman, *Excavation in Chios, 1952-1955: Greek Emporio* (Oxford, England: The British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1967), 31-34, 250-251.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion, and Society in Early Iron Age Greece (1100-700 BC)*, 270-276.

<sup>67</sup> Mervyn Popham, E. Touloupa, and L. H. Sackett, "The Hero of Lefkandi," *Antiquity* 56 no. 218 (1982), 172.

remains must have belonged to the community's king (*basileus*) and queen (*basileia*).<sup>68</sup> Even scholars like Mait Kōiv, an individual who is generally rather sceptical of the archaeological evidence of monarchy at this time, admits that the so-called heroön of Lefkandi is one clear example of early Iron Age kingship in Greece.<sup>69</sup> Another example from the island of Euboea is the site of Eretria, which contains a number of high-status burials near its West Gate dating to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>70</sup> These burials were each accompanied by a variety of valuable grave goods such as daggers, diadems, bronze cauldrons, jewels, and more. Of particular note is a man buried in Tomb 6, who was accompanied by a Mycenaean-era *skeptron*, a bronze staff or spear that appears to have been passed down to him as an heirloom, perhaps as a symbol of his family's royal prerogative.<sup>71</sup> Combined with the fact that these burials seem to have later become the focus of a local hero cult and that there is a near contemporary structure (Building A) in the city which could have quite possibly served as the ruler's dwelling, scholars believe that those buried at this cemetery must have been the king (*basileus*) of Eretria and his royal family.<sup>72</sup>

On the island of Cyprus near Kourion, archaeologists have discovered a number of Greek tombs that also appear to have belonged to the local royal family. These tombs date back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC and were discovered containing a variety of lavish grave goods such as bronze tripods, ceramic kraters, gold rings, and more.<sup>73</sup> One of the earliest burials at the site, Tomb 40 was even found containing an ornate gold sceptre, which has been interpreted by scholars as

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<sup>68</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 67-68.

<sup>69</sup> Mait Kōiv, "Basileus, Tyrannos, and Polis: The Dynamics of Monarchy in Early Greece," *Klio* 98, no. 1 (2016), 7.

<sup>70</sup> Keith G. Walker, *Archaic Eretria: A Political and Social History from the Earliest Times to 490 BC* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 107.

<sup>71</sup> Jan Paul Crielaard, "Cult and Death in Early 7th-Century Euboea: The Aristocracy and the Polis," *Travaux de La Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen* 27, no. 1 (1998), 46.

<sup>72</sup> Alexander Mazarakis Ainian, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples: Architecture, Religion, and Society in Early Iron Age Greece (1100-700 BC)*, 58-62.

<sup>73</sup> Diana Buitron-Oliver, "Kourion: The Evidence for the Kingdom from the 11th to the 6th Century BC," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 308, no. 1 (November 1997), 29-30.

proof that the individual buried there was a king (*basileus*),<sup>74</sup> given that sceptres were considered the typical symbol of royalty in antiquity.<sup>75</sup> Epigraphical evidence from the later tombs at this site seem to only confirm that those buried there were members of the royal family. For example, one 8th century BC bowl discovered at the site, known as Cy8, contains an inscription claiming that it was the property of a certain Akastor, the king or ‘βασιλῆΦος’ of Paphos (a nearby Greek city on the island).<sup>76</sup> A similar bowl, referred to as Cy14, has an inscription claiming “I belong to king [βασιλῆΦος] Diweithemis.”<sup>77</sup> A third bowl discovered at the site, known as Cy6, does not list the name of the king who was buried there, but at the very least provides a depiction of an enthroned man and woman who are labelled ‘the king’ and ‘queen’ respectively.<sup>78</sup> It is also worth mentioning that two 7<sup>th</sup> century gold bracelets were discovered in one of these tombs containing the inscription “of Eteandros, king [βασιλῆΦος] of Paphos,”<sup>79</sup> an individual who was most likely the very same “Ituandar, king of Pappa” mentioned in contemporary Neo-Assyrian records.<sup>80</sup> In sum, there are a variety of archaeological remains which seem to demonstrate that in the early Iron Age, Greek communities operated under narrow monarchical forms of government ruled by a local chieftain or *basileus*. In the case of the royal tombs of Kourion, we even seem to have epigraphical evidence to corroborate the fact that those buried there, were indeed kings (*basileis*).

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<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth Goring, “The Kourion Sceptre: Some Facts and Factoids,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, no. 63 (1995), 106.

<sup>75</sup> For examples see: Homer *Iliad* 2.46, 14.93, *Odyssey* 3.412, 11.569, Aeschylus *Prometheus Bound* 761, *Eumenides* 626, Sophocles *Philoctetes* 140, *Oedipus at Colonus* 425, 449, Herodotus *Histories* 7.52.2, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.9.2-4, etc.

<sup>76</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 156, 177-178.

<sup>77</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean*, 78.

<sup>78</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenician Bronze and Silver Bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean*, 175-176.

<sup>79</sup> Diana Buitron-Oliver, “Kourion: The Evidence for the Kingdom from the 11th to the 6th Century BC,” 31.

<sup>80</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 291 and 294, as found in: James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament: Third Edition with Supplement*, 291, 294.

Unfortunately, our archaeological information is the only evidence we have for Greek monarchies that comes directly from the early Iron Age itself, since this was a time when literacy had almost entirely disappeared from the region, leaving no written evidence behind. Nevertheless, once literacy reemerged in Greece in the early Archaic Period with the adoption of the Phoenician script, our earliest written sources do seem to paint a rather similar picture: that the various communities of Greece were primarily ruled by monarchs in the aftermath of the Bronze Age Collapse. For example, the Homeric epics portray Greece as being subdivided into various kingdoms, each ruled by a hereditary chieftain or ‘*basileus*.’ Leaders such as Proetus of Corinth or Pheidon of Thesprotia are repeatedly referred to as the *basileus* of their respective polities and appear to have ruled as such because they descended from a long line of similar kings.<sup>81</sup> The central importance and authority of these monarchical rulers is revealed already in the first book of the *Iliad*. When Achilles begins his dispute against King Agamemnon, Nestor admonishes him by saying “As for you, son of Peleus, do not seek to rival a king [βασιλῆϊ] by force, since a sceptre-holding king [σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς] to whom Zeus grants glory enjoys a greater portion of honour [τιμῆς] than other men do.”<sup>82</sup> The fact that Greece was divided into these various kingdoms each ruled by a local *basileus* and his dynastic successors seems to be treated as an assumed fact throughout the Homeric epics and to have played a central role in their plots. For example, the plot of the *Odyssey* largely centers around the tensions between Odysseus’ young son Telemachus and the various suitors who are threatening to steal his birthright [γενεῆ πατρώιον] and become king [βασιλῆα] of Ithaca by marrying his mother, Queen Penelope.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Homer *Iliad* 6.163, *Odyssey* 14.316, 19.287.

<sup>82</sup> Homer *Iliad* 1.277. Translation taken from: Anthony Verity, *Homer: The Iliad* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

<sup>83</sup> Homer *Odyssey* 1.385.

In addition to the king or *basileus* of a community, assemblies (*ἀγοραί*) and councils (*βουλαί*) seem to have also played a significant role in politics too, as they are repeatedly portrayed in the Homeric epics deliberating on important matters of state and advising their king.<sup>84</sup> However, even though kings are often portrayed ruling in conjunction with other assemblies or governing bodies, it seems that the king ultimately had the final say in political matters.<sup>85</sup> For example, when in Book 2 of the *Iliad*, an assembly (*boule*) of the Greeks is debating whether they should abandon their expedition against Troy, Odysseus rebukes them by saying, “there is no way that we Achaeans can all serve as kings [*βασιλεύσομεν*] here. Many rulers are an evil thing, so let there be a single commander, one king [*βασιλεύς*], to whom the son of crooked-scheming Cronus has given a sceptre [*σκῆπτρόν*] and the power to judge, to decide over his people.”<sup>86</sup>

The overwhelming presence of monarchies or kingships in the Homeric epics is noteworthy as scholars believe that these works not only reflect oral traditions that trace back to the late Bronze Age but also, to a large degree, the events and institutions of Homer’s own day or lifetime.<sup>87</sup> From this, perhaps we may conclude that kingships resembling those presented in the Homeric epics, existed throughout the early Iron Age and at the time when these works were produced. As Pierre Carlier explains:

It is hard to believe that the Greek epic poets would have imagined this political system if it was totally unknown to the Greek communities themselves... kings probably existed in most Greek communities of the early archaic period – villages, *ethne* and many emerging *poleis*; they probably worked more or less as the poems describe them. As this type of

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<sup>84</sup> See: David F. Elmer, “Assemblies and Councils,” in *The Cambridge Guide to Homer*, ed. Corinne Ondine Pache (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 293–95.

<sup>85</sup> Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, 700-338 BC* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 23-24.

<sup>86</sup> Homer *Iliad* 2.203-206. Translation taken from: Anthony Verity, *Homer: The Iliad*, 24.

<sup>87</sup> C. G. Thomas, “The Roots of Homeric Kingship,” *Historia* 15, no. 4 (November 1966), 407.

government is considered traditional by the poets and their audience, it probably already existed in the late Dark Age.<sup>88</sup>

Carlier's argument here seems to be only further supported by the fact that several early Iron Age structures that are believed to have functioned as the dwelling of a local king, closely match the descriptions found in the Homeric epics. For example, at the early Iron Age site of Zagora on the Greek island of Andros, archaeologists have discovered a large *megaron* known as House 19, which is believed to have belonged to the local *basileus* and has been noted for its remarkable similarities to Odysseus' palace – especially its walled courtyard and feasting hall – as it is described in Homer's *Odyssey*.<sup>89</sup>

Besides Homer, a variety of other authors from the Archaic Period provide us with the impression that monarchies existed throughout early Iron Age Greece. For example, the archaic poets Tyrtaeus (mid 7<sup>th</sup> century BC) and Pindar (late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC) tell us that after the Bronze Age Collapse, the Peloponnese was invaded by Dorian Greeks supposedly descended from Heracles who proceeded to divide the region amongst themselves and rule over it as kings (*basileis*).<sup>90</sup> Some parts of the Peloponnese even seem to have continued to be ruled by these Heraclid kings during the Archaic Period, such as Argos. The 7<sup>th</sup> century ruler, Pheidon of Argos, for example, who played a crucial role in expanding the city's influence over the Argolid plain and in creating a standardized system of weights and measurements, is said to have been a member of Argos' Temenid dynasty and ruled over the city as its rightful monarch (called either *basileus* or *tyrannos*).<sup>91</sup> Although our most detailed accounts of Pheidon and the other Temenid

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<sup>88</sup> Pierre Carlier, "Ἀνάξ and Βασιλεύς in the Homeric Poems," in *Ancient Greece: From the Mycenaean Palaces to the Age of Homer*, ed. Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy and Irene S. Lemos (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 108.

<sup>89</sup> Alexandra Coucouzeli, "From Megaron to Oikos at Zagora," *British School at Athens Studies* 15 (2007), 180.

<sup>90</sup> Tyrtaeus Fragment 2 (as found in Oxyrhynchus Papyri, *Politica* 38.2824), Pindar *Pythian Ode* 5.69-72, 10.1-5, *Isthmian Ode* 7.12.

<sup>91</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.127.3, Aristotle *Politics* 5.1310b, Ephorus (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 8.3.33, 8.6.16), Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 7.57, Plutarch *Amatoriae Narrationes* 2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 6.22.2.

kings of Argos mostly come from the Classical Period and beyond, it seems fair to say that by the late Archaic Period, such stories were already in extensive circulation. When the Macedonian king, Alexander I tried registering for the Olympics in 504 BC, he did so by claiming that his family was descended from Argos' Temenid dynasty.<sup>92</sup> After the careful consideration of the Olympic judges (Ἑλληνοδίκαι), Alexander I's claims were determined to be true and he was permitted to take part in the games, which clearly suggests that by this time, the stories of Argos' Temenid kings were well-known and widely accepted as historically accurate. Otherwise, it would have hardly made sense for Alexander I to seek legitimacy in this way. In fact, some modern scholars have even argued that it was only in the closing decades of the Archaic Period, after the Battle of Sepeia in 494 BC, that Argos fully abolished its Heraclid monarchy in favour of a broader, more democratic political system.<sup>93</sup>

It is likely that Messenia was another region in the Peloponnese that continued to be ruled by its Heraclid kings during the early Archaic Period. Numerous sources from the early Classical Period and beyond record the names and deeds of Messenia's various Heraclid kings and even claim that these monarchs were still ruling during historical events like the First Messenian War (743-724 BC).<sup>94</sup> Moreover, surviving fragments of the *Processional Hymn to Apollo*, written by the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC poet Eumelus of Corinth, indicate that this work was commissioned in

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<sup>92</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.22, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic History* 7.2.13-14. It is likely that both Pindar (Fragment 121 found in Dionysius of Halicarnassus *On the Style of Demosthenes* 26) and Bacchylides (Fragment 20B found in Oxyrynchus Papyri 1361.1 and Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 2.10) wrote epinician poems for Alexander I in honour of this victory at the Olympic Games. See also Aeschines *On the Embassy* 32 and Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.99.3, for more the Macedonian royal family's claims of Greek ancestry.

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Kelly, *A History of Argos to 500 BC* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 141. Robert Drews, *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 58-61.

<sup>94</sup> Plato *Laws* 3.690d, Isocrates *Archidamas* 23, Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 2.8.5, Hyginus *Fables* 137, 184, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 4.3.8, 4.4.4. Euripides' *Cresphontes* would have been another good source of information on this matter but it, unfortunately, is no longer extant.

honour of the contemporary Messenian king, Phintas of Ithome and his recent dedications at the sanctuary of Delos.<sup>95</sup> Although the archaic poet Tyrtæus unfortunately does not mention any kings of Messenia in the few surviving fragments of his poetry, he does claim that during the Second Messenian War (c. 660-650 BC), the Messenians allied themselves with both the Arcadians, led by their king (βασιλέα) Aristocrates of Orchomenus and the Pisans, led by their king, Pantaeleon.<sup>96</sup> Thus, Tyrtæus seems to confirm that during the early Archaic Period (i.e. his own lifetime), communities in the Peloponnese were often ruled by a local king or *basileus* who traced his lineage back several centuries, to the Dorian invasion of Greece that had supposedly occurred just after the Bronze Age Collapse (for more on this topic, see my later discussions on the early histories of Corinth and Sparta in chapters 4 and 5 respectively).

In addition to the Peloponnese, several Greek communities in Asia Minor claimed to have been ruled by kings throughout the early Iron Age as well. For example, the island of Lesbos was said to have initially been ruled by a series of kings (*basileis*) known as the Penthilids, who were supposedly descended from King Penthilus, the leader who had encouraged the Aeolian Greeks to first settle there.<sup>97</sup> Aristotle tells us that the Penthilid royal dynasty (βασιλικὰς δυναστείας) was eventually overthrown after it had fallen out of favour with the people of Lesbos for ruling too despotically.<sup>98</sup> Aristotle mentions a revolt against the Penthilids led by a certain Megacles, whose supporters had grown tired of the Penthilids' practice of beating the populace with staves (κορύναις). Aristotle also mentions a later instance, where a

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<sup>95</sup> Eumelus *Processional Hymn to Apollo* Fragment 2 (as found in Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 4.4.1.)

<sup>96</sup> Tyrtæus Fragment 7 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 8.4.10).

<sup>97</sup> Cinaethon Fragment 4 (as quoted in Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 2.18.6), Myrsilus of Mithymna *BNJ* 477 F14 (as quoted in Plutarch *Moralia* 984E), Strabo *Geography* 13.1.3, Anticleides of Athens *BNJ* 140 F4 (as quoted in Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 11.15), Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.2.1, Plutarch *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 20. Hellanicus of Lesbos *BNJ* 4 F32 (quoted in Scholia *Nemean Odes* 11.43), seems to provide an alternative account where Penthilus' father, Orestes, was the one responsible for settling Aeolia instead.

<sup>98</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1311b.

man named Smerdis assassinated a Penthilid king as revenge for beating him and dragging him out of his wife's presence.<sup>99</sup> Although Aristotle does not mention when these events occurred, based on a fragment of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC poet, Alcaeus, which appears to claim that the Penthilids were overthrown when he was still a young child,<sup>100</sup> scholars believe that these events likely occurred during the Archaic Period as opposed to the more remote, mythical past.<sup>101</sup> This can perhaps also be inferred from the surviving fragments of the near-contemporary poet, Sappho, who speaks rather harshly about the Penthilids, as though their reputation for being despotic rulers still existed in her lifetime.<sup>102</sup>

After the Penthilids were overthrown, Lesbos appears to have been ruled by a number of rather short-lived monarchies. The first of these monarchies was under the leadership of Melanchrus, an individual who is often called a tyrant (*tyrannos*) in our later ancient sources,<sup>103</sup> although the surviving fragments of the contemporary poet, Alcaeus, unfortunately reveal nothing about Melanchrus' official title, other than it was worthy (ἄξιός) of reverence or respect (ἀδωός).<sup>104</sup> Melanchrus was then overthrown and replaced by the ruler Myrsilus, who is called a monarch (μοναρχίαν) in the poetry of the contemporary author, Alcaeus and either a king (*basileus*) or tyrant (*tyrannos*) in our later sources.<sup>105</sup> After the death of Myrsilus, we hear that Pittacus of Mytilene became the next monarchical leader of Lesbos. Pittacus is mostly referred to as the 'tyrant' of Mytilene,<sup>106</sup> although occasionally, he is called a *basileus* or *aesymnetes* as

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<sup>99</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1311b.

<sup>100</sup> Alcaeus Fragment 75 (as quoted in Oxyrynchus Papyrus 1234).

<sup>101</sup> Μαιτ Κόιν, "Basileus, Tyrannos, and Polis: The Dynamics of Monarchy in Early Greece" n.138.

<sup>102</sup> Sappho Fragment 71 (as quoted in Oxyrynchus Papyrus 1787)

<sup>103</sup> Strabo *Geography* 13.2.3, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.74, Suda s.v. Pittacus.

<sup>104</sup> Alcaeus Fragment 331 (as quoted in Hephaestion *Handbook of Meters* 14.3).

<sup>105</sup> Alcaeus Fragment 6 (as quoted in Oxyrynchus Papyrus 1789), Heraclitus *Homeric Allegories* 5, Plutarch *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 147b, Strabo *Geography* 13.2.3,

<sup>106</sup> Alcaeus Fragment 348 (as quoted in Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a), Plutarch *Life of Solon* 14, Strabo *Geography* 13.2.3.

well.<sup>107</sup> Upon his ascension to power, Pittacus seems to have formed an alliance with the Pentilids by marrying one of its members,<sup>108</sup> which caused the poet Alcaeus to accuse Pittacus of blatantly trying to seek legitimacy for his rule by associating himself with the island's former royal family.<sup>109</sup> In the end, Pittacus ruled over Mytilene for ten years before he abdicated from power, which seems to have ultimately brought an end to this dynastic system of government on Lesbos and led to the establishment of a broader oligarchical political system there.<sup>110</sup> Thus, it appears that it was only in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that a much broader, more collective system of government was truly established on the island. All of our literary information about Lesbos before this period, including the works of the archaic poet Alcaeus, suggest that the island was ruled by a series of kings (i.e. the Pentilids) or other monarchical governments (i.e. tyrannies) ever since the early Iron Age, when the island was first settled by the Aeolian Greeks.

Another region in Asia Minor that was said to have been ruled by a series of kings in the early Iron Age, is Ionia. Our earliest reference to this come from the surviving fragments of the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC poet, Mimnermus, a native Ionian from the city of Smyrna. Mimnermus claimed that after the Peloponnese was invaded by the Dorian Greeks, the descendants of the legendary king Nestor of Pylos (i.e. the Neleids) proceeded to migrate to Ionia and rule there as kings.<sup>111</sup> Mimnermus says that the founder of Colophon, for example, was Andraemon of Pylos.<sup>112</sup> From the works of later authors such as Pherecydes of Athens, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, and Hellanicus of Lesbos (individuals who were all born in the late Archaic

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<sup>107</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a, Plutarch *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 157E.

<sup>108</sup> Diogenes Laertius *Live of Eminent Philosophers* 1.81

<sup>109</sup> Alcaeus Fragment 5 and 70 (as quoted in Oxyrynchus Papyrus 1789 and 1234 respectively).

<sup>110</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a, Strabo *Geography* 13.2.3, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 9.11.1, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.75.

<sup>111</sup> Mimnermus Fragment 9 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 14.1.4)

<sup>112</sup> Mimnermus Fragment 10 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 14.1.3)

Period, but wrote their works in the early Classical Period) we hear that the city of Ephesus was founded by the Neleid, Androclus, while Miletus was founded by Neleus son of Codrus.<sup>113</sup>

Unfortunately, the names of the remaining Neleid founders of Ionia are only preserved in our later sources from the Hellenistic and Roman Periods.<sup>114</sup> Nevertheless, it seems fair to assume that during the Archaic Period, such stories were likely already in circulation. The scholar, Robert Drews for example, has no problem claiming that “most Ionians of the Archaic period believed that their ancestors had emigrated from Neleus’ Pylos, and presumably they regarded their twelve cities [or *Dodecapolis*] as founded by offspring of Neleus’ twelve sons.”<sup>115</sup>

Not only do our ancient sources mention the various legendary founders of Ionia’s twelve cities, but in some instances, they suggest that these Neleid kings were still ruling in the early Archaic Period. For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC author, Ion of Chios claimed that his native island of Chios was still ruled by a Neleid king (*basileus*) named Hector, when it joined the Ionian League and began taking part in sacrifices at the Panionion.<sup>116</sup> Considering that the Ionian League and Panionion sanctuary of Poseidon Heliconius at Melia were not established until the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>117</sup> it seems that Ion is situating King Hector of Chios, not in the distant mythical past, but in the relatively recent history of the Archaic Period. Another example would be when the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC historian, Herodotus claims that the reason why the Aeginetans decided to

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<sup>113</sup> Pherecydes of Athens *BNJ* 3 F155 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 14.1.3), Herodotus *Histories* 9.97, Helanicus *BNJ* 323a F23 (as quoted in Scholia *On Plato’s Symposium* 208d).

<sup>114</sup> For the founding of Erythrae, see: Strabo *Geography* 14.1.3, Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 259a.

For the founding of Teos, see: Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 7.3.6

For the founding of Myus, see: Plutarch *On the Bravery of Women* 16.

For the founding of Phocaea, see: Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 7.3.10.

For the founding of Samos, see: Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 7.4.2.

<sup>115</sup> Robert Drews, *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece*, 11.

<sup>116</sup> Ion of Chios *BNJ* 392 F1 (as quoted in Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 7.4.8).

<sup>117</sup> Hans Lohmann, “Ionians and Carians in the Mycale: The Discovery of Carian Melia and the Archaic Panionion,” in *Landscape, Ethnicity and Identity in the Archaic Mediterranean Area*, ed. Gabriele Cifani and Simon Stoddart (Oxford, England: Oxbow Books, 2012), 35-36.

help the Spartans invade the Ionian island of Samos in 525 BC was because they wanted revenge for a previous offence that the Samians had committed against them under the reign of their king (*basileus*), Amphicrates.<sup>118</sup> Although Herodotus does not provide us with a specific date for when this king of Samos ruled, he does seem to be implying that his reign and commencement of this enmity with Aegina occurred in relatively recent memory. Some scholars have argued that King Amphicrates of Samos likely ruled around the time of the Lelantine War in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>119</sup> while others have argued that he ruled in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>120</sup> Regardless of which theory is true, it seems that scholars tend to believe King Amphicrates of Samos was a real historical figure who reigned, not in the remote mythical past, but during the early Archaic Period. There are several other references in our later Hellenistic and Roman sources that additionally seem to place the reigns of various Ionian kings in the Archaic Period, although the historical reliability of these sources should be treated with a greater degree of caution considering that they were produced much later than the events they recorded.<sup>121</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems fair to say, based on our ancient literary evidence, that the Ionian Greeks were likely ruled by kings (*basileis*) throughout the early Iron Age up until the Archaic Period. Several ancient sources including the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC poet Mimnermus, provide us with the impression that the Ionian Greeks of the Archaic Period widely believed that their cities had been founded by legendary kings and ruled by their descendants for several generations. Some sources even seem to suggest that certain Neleid kings, such as Hector of Chios, were still ruling

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<sup>118</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.59.4.

<sup>119</sup> Graham Shipley, *A History of Samos: 800-188BC* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1987), 37-38

<sup>120</sup> Thomas J. Figueira, "Aeginetan Independence," *The Classical Journal* 79, no. 1 (October 1983), 23.

<sup>121</sup> The other Greek kings of Asia Minor who appear to have ruled in the Archaic Period are: King Hippoclus of Chios (mentioned in Plutarch *On the Bravery of Women* 3), King Demoteles of Samos (mentioned in Plutarch *Greek Questions* 57), Kings Amphitres and Leodamas of Miletus (mentioned in Conon *BNJ* 26 F1 section 44 and in Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F52-53), King Agamemnon of Cyme (mentioned in Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 9.83) and King Knopus of Erythrae (mentioned in Hippias of Erythrae *BNJ* 421 F1).

in recent memory and took part in the historical events of the early Archaic Period. At this point, I should also reiterate that we have archaeological evidence from the Ionian island of Chios, suggesting that a monarchical government existed there at the site of Emporio in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>122</sup> I should also, once again, draw attention to the fact that in the Homeric epics (works that were, in all likelihood, composed in the region of Ionia around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC), there are no representations of non-monarchical forms of government.<sup>123</sup> There are only depictions of polities ruled by kings (*basileis*) and their subordinate advisory bodies or councils, which could very well suggest that these monarchical political systems were the standard form of rule at the time that the Homeric epics were produced.

Beyond Asia Minor and the Peloponnese, several regions in northern Greece claimed to have been ruled by kings in the aftermath of the Bronze Age Collapse as well. For example, the Molossian people of Epirus were ruled by a series of kings known as the Aeacids who claimed descent from Achilles' son Neoptolemus, a hero who supposedly arrived in the region and founded this dynasty shortly after the conclusion of the Trojan War.<sup>124</sup> The story of Neoptolemus' journey to Epirus and establishment of a royal dynasty there seems to have been well-known by at least the late Archaic Period as the poet Pindar alludes to it several times in his poetry, such as in his seventh Nemean Ode where he claims that Neoptolemus "when he sailed away [from Troy] missed Scyros, but after wandering, he and his men reached Ephyra. In Molossia he ruled as king [ἐμβασίλευεν] for a short time, but his offspring [γένος] have forever

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<sup>122</sup> John Boardman, *Excavation in Chios, 1952-1955: Greek Emporio*, 31-34, 250-251.

<sup>123</sup> For more on the dating of the Homeric epics, see: Eric Lewin Altschuler et al., "Linguistic Evidence Supports Date for Homeric Epics," *BioEssays* 35, no. 5 (February 18, 2013).

<sup>124</sup> Theopompus *BNJ* 115 F382 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 7.7.5), Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.1.5, Virgil *Aeneid* 3.296, Strabo *Geography* 13.1.27, Pomponius Mela *Chorographia* 2.54, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 2.29.4, Plutarch *Life of Pyrrhus* 1.2, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 17.3, Silius Italicus *Punica* 14.94, 15.288, etc.

since [αἰεῖ] held that privilege of his.”<sup>125</sup> The myths connecting Achilles’ son, Neoptolemus to the region of Epirus may have already been in circulation at the time the Homeric epics were produced. It is notable that when, in the *Iliad*, Achilles prays to Zeus, he does so by invoking Zeus’ cult form from Dodona, the oldest and most famous oracle in all of Epirus.<sup>126</sup> This invocation is noteworthy, as it is not only the sole reference to Epirus in the entire epic,<sup>127</sup> but the far more common practice in the *Iliad* seems to have been to invoke Zeus’ cult form from the nearby mount, Ida.<sup>128</sup> Thus, Achilles’ unusual invocation of Zeus’ cult form from Epirus here may have been a subtle reference to the fact that this region was known for later becoming the land ruled by his son Neoptolemus and his subsequent progeny.<sup>129</sup>

The names and deeds of the various Aeacid kings of Molossia from the Classical Period until the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, when this dynasty was eventually removed from power, are well-attested in our ancient sources.<sup>130</sup> However, our knowledge of Epirus’ Aeacid kings in the Archaic Period unfortunately remains rather obscure with the exception of perhaps two individuals. The first is the Molossian king, Admetus, who is first attested in Thucydides’ history and appears to have ruled around the time of Xerxes’ invasion of Greece in 480/479 BC.<sup>131</sup> Thus, to consider this figure an archaic king would, in a way, be splitting hairs. The second individual who may very well have been a member of Epirus’ Aeacid dynasty is Alcon of Molossia, an

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<sup>125</sup> Pindar Nemean Ode 7.36-40. Translation taken from: William H. Race, trans., *Pindar: Nemean Odes, Isthmian Odes, and Fragments*, Loeb Classical Library 485 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 77. See also: Nemean Ode 4.51-55 and Paean 6.109 (as found in Oxyrynchus Papyrus 841).

<sup>126</sup> Homer *Iliad* 16.234.

<sup>127</sup> The ‘Dodona’ mentioned in Homer *Iliad* 2.749 is a reference to a different site, situated in Thessaly according to: G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 236.

<sup>128</sup> For references to Idaean Zeus see: Homer *Iliad* 3.275, 3.320, 7.202, 16.605, 22.170, 24.290, 24.309, etc.

<sup>129</sup> Sanna-Ilaria Kittelä, “Dodona and Neoptolemus: Heroic Genealogies and Claims of Ethnicity,” in *Studies in Ancient Oracles and Divination*, ed. Mika Kajava (Rome, Italy: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2013), 35-36.

<sup>130</sup> For more information on this dynasty’s eventual demise in the Hellenistic Period see: Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 4.35.3-5, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus’ Philippic Histories* 28.3, Polyaeus *Stratagems* 8.52.

<sup>131</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.136-137, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 11.56.1-4, Plutarch *Life of Themistocles* 24.

individual who is first referenced in Herodotus' history and is said to have tried to form an alliance with the tyrant, Cleisthenes of Sicyon by marrying his daughter Agariste around the year 565 BC.<sup>132</sup> However, Herodotus never actually specifies whether Alcon of Molossia was a member of the Aeacid royal family so the question remains unclear.

Despite this obscurity, it nevertheless seems fair to assume that the Molossians were ruled by their Aeacid kings throughout the Archaic Period. It is unlikely that the stories of Neoptolemus' journey to Epirus and founding of a royal dynasty there would have been in circulation during the late Archaic Period and referenced several times in Pindar's poetry, if the Aeacidae were not an already well-established dynasty ruling over the Molossians by this point in time. It is also notable that Aristotle, in his *Politics* uses the Molossian royal family (ἡ περὶ Μολοττοῦς βασιλεία) as a prime example of a dynasty that has continued to rule in Greece for an exceptionally long time (πολὸν χρόνον διέμεινεν).<sup>133</sup> Aristotle then goes on to compare the Molossian royal family with the kings of Sparta, another long-lasting monarchy that was in power throughout the Archaic Period (for more information about Sparta's kings, see pages 62-64). Several other ancient authors also emphasize the great antiquity of the Molossian royal family and the fact that this dynasty seems to have continued to rule without interruption, from the distant mythical past to the historical period.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, if we know that kings (*wanakes*) were ruling before the Bronze Age Collapse and we know that kings (*basileis*) were ruling Epirus afterwards as well (during the events of the Classical Period and beyond), then it seems reasonable to assume that kings were likely ruling Epirus in between these two periods too, even

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<sup>132</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.127.4

<sup>133</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1313a.

<sup>134</sup> Plutarch *Life of Pyrrhus* 1.2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.11.1-3, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 17.3.

if all we have are later, semi-legendary accounts about this region's early Iron Age history. As

J.K. Davis puts it:

Even if we decline to accept as historical the details of the developed story of its origins, the Aeacid dynasty was clearly well rooted in Molossian society in the archaic period, and provided military leadership while also serving as the unifying focus and as 'the government.' Its similarity to the Macedonian monarchy on the other side of Pindus... would be obvious enough even without Aristotle's own juxtaposition of them in *Politics* 1310B34ff. We may even think tentatively of Balkan Iron Age monarchy as a specific type of polity with its own uniformities and patterns of interaction.<sup>135</sup>

Another region in northern Greece that was said to have been ruled by kings (*basileis*) in the aftermath of the Bronze Age Collapse is Thessaly.<sup>136</sup> In the Classical Period, the people of Thessaly were divided into various territories, each ruled by a narrow oligarchy that was dominated by a local aristocratic family or *genos*. For example, the city of Larissa and the surrounding region were ruled by the Aleuadae, the city of Crannon and its surrounding area were ruled by the Scopadae, and the city of Pharsalus was controlled by the Creonidae. These aristocratic clans were named after their founders, who were supposedly descendants of Heracles that had arrived in Thessaly soon after the Bronze Age Collapse and proceeded to rule over the region as kings (*basileis*). Such stories about the early Heraclid kings of Thessaly seem to have, at the very least, been in circulation by the late Archaic Period. Excavations at the Late Bronze Age *tholos* tomb at Georgiko have revealed that since the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, this site was the focus of a local hero cult in honour of Aeatus,<sup>137</sup> the Heraclid king who supposedly first conquered Thessaly and who fathered Thessalus, the eponymous founder of the Thessalian

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<sup>135</sup> J.K. Davies, "A Wholly Non-Aristotelian Universe: The Molossians as Ethnos, State, and Monarchy," in *Alternatives to Athens: Varieties of Political Organization and Community in Ancient Greece*, ed. Roger Brock and Stephen Hodkinson (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2002), 251.

<sup>136</sup> Slawomir Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae: A Study on the History of Thessaly in the Years 431-370 BC*, ed. Edward Dabrowa (Krakow, Poland: Jagiellonian University Press, 1999), 20-21.

<sup>137</sup> Maria Stamatopoulou, "Forging a Link with the Past: The Evidence from Thessalian Cemeteries in the Archaic and Classical Periods (Plates 69-80)," in *Tumulus as Sema: Space, Politics, Culture and Religion in the First Millennium BC*, ed. Oliver Henry and Ute Kelp (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2016), 193-194.

people.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, the late archaic poet, Pindar demonstrates that he was clearly aware of the stories of Thessaly's early kings as he begins his tenth Pythian Ode, which was written in honour of the Aleuad, Hippocleas of Pelinna, by saying "Sparta is prosperous; Thessaly is divinely blessed. Both are ruled [βασιλεύει] by the race [γένος] of a single ancestor, Heracles."<sup>139</sup>

This quotation is noteworthy as it not only shows that Pindar was familiar with the stories of Thessaly's legendary kings, but by using the present tense βασιλεύει here, Pindar seems to be implying that Thessaly, like Sparta, was still being ruled by its Heraclid kings during his own lifetime. This can perhaps also be inferred from the final line of the poem, where Pindar claims that in Thessaly, the governing of states (πολίων κυβερνάσιες) is passed down from father to son (κεῖνται πατρώϊαι).<sup>140</sup> In addition to Pindar, a number of other ancient authors talk about Thessaly in the late Archaic Period as though it were still ruled by kings at this time. The first author that is worth mentioning here, is Simonides of Ceos, a 6<sup>th</sup> century BC poet who composed numerous odes for members of both the Aleuad and Scopad families.<sup>141</sup> Unfortunately, the few surviving fragments of Simonides' poetry do not reveal the official title or function of these Thessalian aristocrats. However, we do have a poem from the Hellenistic author, Theocritus, which refers to Simonides' two patrons Antiochus son of Echekratides and Aleuas son of Simus, as the ἄνακτος or *wanax* of their respective cities and claims that these kings' deeds would have all been forgotten, if not for Simonides' immortal poetry.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, it seems likely that one of

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<sup>138</sup> Polyaeus *Stratagems* 1.12, 8.44, Charax *BNJ* 103 F6 (as quoted in Stephanos of Byzantion *Ethnika s.v. Δώριον*), Zenobius *Proverbs* 4.29.

See also: Herodotus *Histories* 7.176.3-4, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.12, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 4.67.2, Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 4.14, Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 1.3.1.

<sup>139</sup> Pindar *Pythian Ode* 10.1-3. Translation taken from: William H. Race, trans., *Pindar: Olympian Odes and Pythian Odes*, Loeb Classical Library 56 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 368.

<sup>140</sup> Pindar *Pythian Ode* 10.71-72.

<sup>141</sup> Simonides Fragment 542 (as quoted in Plato *Protagoras* 339a), Fragment 57 (as quoted in *Planudean Anthology* 60), Cicero *De Oratore* 2.351-353, Quintilian *Principles of Oratory* 11.2.11-16.

<sup>142</sup> Theocritus *Idylls* 16.34-44. See also: Scholia *On Theocritus* 16.34-44.

Simonides' patrons here, Antiochus son of Echekratides, is the very same "Antiochus, king [βασιλεύοντι] of all Thessalians" mentioned in the works of the early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC Socratic philosopher, Aeschines of Sphettus.<sup>143</sup> We also know that another one of Simonides' patrons, Scopas son of Creon (or 'Scopas the Drinker'), featured in an early Hellenistic work known as *The Revenge-Killings of Tyrants*, which seems to suggest that the author of this work, Phaenias of Eresus considered Scopas to have been a *tyrannos* or tyrant.<sup>144</sup>

Another author who provides us with the impression that the Thessalians were still operating under a monarchical system of government in the late Archaic Period, is Herodotus. This is because, in his history Herodotus repeatedly refers to the leaders of Thessaly as *basileis* or 'kings.' For example, when Herodotus is describing the Athenian tyrant, Hippias' victory over the Spartans in 510 BC, he claims that this battle was won, in large part, thanks to the efforts of Hippias' Thessalian cavalry, who were led by their very own king (βασιλέα τὸν σφέτερον) Cineas of Conium.<sup>145</sup> Later on, when Herodotus is describing the Aleuadae's attempts to ally with the Persians in the leadup to Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480/79 BC, he refers to the members of the Aleuadae simply as the 'kings of Thessaly' (Θεσσαλίας βασιλέες).<sup>146</sup>

Thucydides on the other hand, provides a much more obscure depiction of Thessaly's government. At times, Thucydides describes the Thessalians making their political decisions collectively (τοῦ πάντων κοινοῦ), as though they were ruled by broader councils or governing bodies.<sup>147</sup> Thucydides also claims that in battle, the Thessalians were led by a number of officials

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<sup>143</sup> Aeschines of Sphettus Fragment 10 (as quoted in Philostratus the Elder *Letters* 73). Translation taken from: Allen R. Benner and Francis H. Fobes, trans., *Alciphron, Aelian, and Philostratus: The Letters*, Loeb Classical Library 383 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 545.

<sup>144</sup> Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 10.438c.

<sup>145</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.63.3.

<sup>146</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 7.6.2.

<sup>147</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.102.4, 3.93.2, 4.78.3

whom he calls ἄρχοντες or ‘archons,’ the same term used for Athens’ annually elected magistrates.<sup>148</sup> At other times, however, Thucydides seems to present a monarchical system of rule in Thessaly. For example, Thucydides claims that in 454 BC, the Athenians led an expedition to Pharsalus in order to restore Orestes, the exiled son of Echekratides, king of Thessaly (Ἐχεκρατίδου τοῦ Θεσσαλῶν βασιλέως).<sup>149</sup> Similarly, when Thucydides is describing the Spartan general, Brasidas’ march through Thessaly in the summer of 424 BC, he claims that Thessaly’s government was dynastic rather than democratic (δυναστεία μᾶλλον ἢ ἰσονομία).<sup>150</sup> In addition to the abovementioned evidence, we have various sources from the Roman Period and beyond that also portray Thessaly as being ruled by monarchs (either *basileis* or *tyrannoi*) in the Archaic Period, although the historical value of these later sources should be treated with a much greater degree of caution or skepticism.<sup>151</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems fair to say that from at least as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Thessalians believed that their land had been invaded by descendants of Heracles in the early Iron Age who proceeded to rule over the region as kings and to found various royal dynasties there. In fact, based on the works of Pindar, Herodotus, and our surviving accounts about Simonides, we may even speculate that these Heraclid kings were still ruling over Thessaly in the late Archaic Period, as these authors often refer to Thessaly’s leaders as *basileis*.<sup>152</sup> At times, Thucydides also speaks about Thessaly as though it were ruled by a monarchical form of government, although our information from Thucydides’ history is much more contradictory and

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<sup>148</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.22.3.

<sup>149</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.111.1.

<sup>150</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.78.3.

<sup>151</sup> For examples of Thessalian *basileis*, see: Plutarch *On Brotherly Love* 21, Suda s.v. Aleuas. For examples of Thessalian tyrants, see: Plutarch *On the Malice of Herodotus* 21, Scholia *On Demosthenes’ Orations* 1.22.

<sup>152</sup> J. A. O. Larsen, “A New Interpretation of the Thessalian Confederacy,” *Classical Philology* 55, no. 4 (October 1960), 238-239.

confusing, leaving us with the impression that by the early Classical Period, only slight vestiges of Thessaly's former monarchical political system were still around.

Having sufficiently summarized our literary evidence for the presence of monarchies in Greece throughout the early Iron Age and, in some instances, the perseverance of these dynasties into the Archaic Period, it is now time to address some of the notable problems or shortcomings of this evidence. First and foremost, there is the fact that literacy did not exist in Greece from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, which means that for the early Iron Age history of Greece, we are primarily forced to rely on sources that were written several centuries later on, after the Greeks had adopted the Phoenician script in the early Archaic Period. Moreover, the surviving fragments of some of our earliest archaic sources are, on occasion, only preserved in the works of later authors, which is problematic as it requires us to trust that these later authors had quoted their sources reliably and did not adapt or distort their citations in order to serve their own agendas.

There is perhaps also a semantic issue that arises from our literary sources. While the term 'basileus' seems to have most often referred to a hereditary monarch in the Homeric epics and our other ancient sources,<sup>153</sup> it appears that these works did not always necessarily treat 'basileus' the same as the modern English word 'king.' For example, when the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC poet, Hesiod mentions the *basileis* of his hometown, Thespieae, he does not appear to be referring to its 'kings,' but to a group of individuals who served as the city's judges and who presided over important legal matters.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, in Athens, from at least the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, 'basileus' did not refer to the city's king, but to an annually elected official in charge of managing the state's religious affairs (this topic will be discussed in more detail on

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<sup>153</sup> Pierre Carlier, "Ἀναξ and Βασιλεύς in the Homeric Poems," 107-108.

Thomas G. Palaima, "Wanaks and Related Power Terms in Mycenaean and Later Greek," 69.

<sup>154</sup> Hesiod *Work and Days* 38.

page 81). As a result, even though ‘basileus’ seems to have, by and large, been used to refer to a hereditary monarch in our ancient literary sources, it would be wrong to assume that *every* reference to a ‘basileus’ carries this exact meaning and must therefore, be considered evidence of a monarchical political system. In fact, some scholars have argued that the abovementioned references to the *basileis* of Thessaly in the late Archaic Period should be interpreted, not as references to Thessaly’s ‘kings,’ but to their *tagoi*, elected officials who served as military leaders (although I do not know how convincing I personally find this argument to be, considering that these *tagoi* only appear as Thessaly’s supreme magistrates in sources and events from the 4th century BC onwards).<sup>155</sup>

The last notable problem with our archaic sources that depict monarchies in early Iron Age Greece is that these accounts can, at times, be quite biased or prone to the influence of later events. Many scholars have noted that throughout the Archaic Period, the Greek ruling elite appear to have claimed descent from semi-divine kings and to have initiated the worship of these legendary ancestors, not necessarily out of a benevolent desire to record the past, but in order to justify the current social hierarchies or institutions in their cities.<sup>156</sup> Peter Rose, for example, argues that many of the legendary rulers of early Iron Age Greece were “claimed as legitimating ancestors of the self-styled *aristoi*... [as a way of] insisting on the genealogically based

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<sup>155</sup> For more on this argument see: W. W. How and Joseph Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus: with Introduction and Appendices*, vol. 2 (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1957), 5.63.3, 7.6.2. Slawomir Sprawski, *Jason of Pherae: A Study on the History of Thessaly in the Years 431-370 BC*, 18-20.

Our earliest reference to the *tagos* as Thessaly’s highest political position is in Xenophon *Hellenica* 6.1.8-9, 18, 6.4.33. Although we have inscriptional evidence for *tagoi* in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, this evidence seems to suggest that they were minor officials in charge of organizing small companies of troops and were not eponymous at this time. For more on this topic, see: Bruno Helly, "Tagos," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>156</sup> Greg Anderson, “Before *Turannois* Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History,” *Classical Antiquity* 24, no. 2 (October 2005), 183-184.

superiority and therefore ‘legitimacy’ of the ruling elite.”<sup>157</sup> Thus, one must acknowledge that our archaic sources for kings like the Penthilids of Lesbos or Aleuadae of Thessaly, may not necessarily present an accurate portrayal of the political institutions of early Iron Age Greece, but instead, the aetiological legends that these aristocratic families had invented for themselves by the Archaic Period in order to justify their position or status in contemporary society.

Moreover, one must acknowledge the potential influence of broader, inter-state relations over our ancient sources for the Greeks’ early Iron Age kings. For example, the abovementioned 5<sup>th</sup> century BC author, Pherecydes of Athens likely had a strong political motivation for recounting the stories of Ionia’s legendary kings in his works. This is because, Pherecydes’ native town of Athens also had myths about the Neleids ruling there in the early Iron Age (for more on this topic see page 77) and during Pherecydes’ own lifetime, Athens ruled over much of the Ionian Greek world as *hegemon* of the Delian League. Thus, Pherecydes’ retelling of the Neleids’ founding of Ionia was quite possibly embellished to help legitimize Athens’ relations with Ionia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC under the Delian League, an empire that was largely established by Cimon, a member of Athens’ Philaid clan who also claimed descent from the legendary Neleid kings.<sup>158</sup>

Because of these various shortcomings in our literary sources, there are admittedly several challenges to using them as evidence for the presence of kings in early Iron Age or Archaic Greece. In fact, some scholars in recent years have decided to push back against the notion that Greece was primarily ruled by kings in the early Iron Age, arguing instead that at this time the Greeks began developing broader, non-monarchical systems of government.<sup>159</sup> I,

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<sup>157</sup> Peter W. Rose, “Class,” in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Hans, 1st ed. (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 474.

<sup>158</sup> Pherecydes of Athens *BNJ* 3 F2 (as quoted in Marcellinus’ *Life of Thucydides* 2-4).

<sup>159</sup> Robert Drews, *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983). Mait Kōiv, “Basileus, Tyrannos, and Polis: The Dynamics of Monarchy in Early Greece,” *Klio* 98, no. 1 (2016).

however, disagree with this argument and side more with the scholars who advocate that it was only later on, in the early Archaic Period that this shift towards broader, more collective political systems occurred.<sup>160</sup> While I agree that many of our literary sources are flawed and may not accurately portray the institutions or history of early Iron Age Greece, it seems like a bit of a stretch to suggest that *all* of these sources are completely unreliable and that in reality, early Iron Age Greece was dominated by a completely separate form of rule, oligarchy.

As this chapter has clearly shown, the Greeks of the Archaic Period widely believed that their cities had been ruled by hereditary monarchs after the Bronze Age Collapse until only relatively recently, when these monarchies were eventually overthrown. Furthermore, from at least the early Classical Period and beyond, the Greeks formally outlined the constitutional developments of their cities from the rule of hereditary kings (*basileis*) in their early history, to the rule of the tyrants who usurped them as monarchs in the mid 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, to the eventual establishment of broader, oligarchical political systems by the end of the Archaic Period.<sup>161</sup> To quote from Thucydides, “as Hellas grew more powerful and continued to acquire still more wealth than before, along with the increase of their revenue, tyrannies [τυραννίδες] began to be established in most of the cities, whereas before that [πρότερον], there had been hereditary kingships [πατρικὰ βασιλείαι].”<sup>162</sup> Given the sheer amount of literary – not to mention archaeological – evidence we have, I see no reason to doubt this general outline of the Greeks’

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<sup>160</sup> Walter Donlan, “The Relations of Power in the Pre-state and Early State Politics,” in *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*, ed. Lynette Mitchell and P.J. Rhodes, (London, England: Routledge, 1997), 21. Ian Morris, “The Eighth-Century Revolution,” 64, 72, 74, 75, 80. Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 107-108. Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, 700-338 BC*, 23.

<sup>161</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 1.1252b, 2.1272a, 3.1285b, 3.1286b, 5.1310b, Polybius *History* 6.7-9, Cicero *De Re Publica* 1.41-43, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 5.74, etc.

<sup>162</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.13.1. Translation taken from: C. F. Smith, trans., *Thucydides’ History of the Peloponnesian War, Volume 1: Books 1-2*, Loeb Classical Library 108 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 25.

constitutional developments; that there were hereditary monarchies up until the Archaic Period, when we start to see dramatic changes in the Greeks' political thought or systems of government. Furthermore, as the upcoming chapters will show, this gradual development of Greek political systems over the course of the Archaic Period, from hereditary monarchies to broader systems of rule, also existed in the traditions of perhaps our three most well-recorded *poleis*, Corinth, Sparta, and Athens. So, with this framework in mind, let us proceed to discuss the histories of Corinth, Sparta, and Athens and answer the questions of how, why, and when these states developed more collective systems of government. As I am doing so, it is worth taking note of the specific kinds of political institutions the Greeks introduced to broaden their governments as they appear remarkably similar to the councils, assemblies, and annual magistracies that also existed in ancient Phoenician city-states (as I will demonstrate in further detail in Chapter 7).

## Chapter 4 A Political History of Corinth in the Archaic Period

“Planted on an isthmus, Corinth had always been a commercial *emporium*; as formerly almost all communication between the Hellenes within and outside of the Peloponnese was carried out overland, and the Corinthian territory was the highway through which it traveled. She [Corinth] had consequently great money and resources, as is shown by the epithet ‘wealthy’<sup>163</sup> bestowed by the old poets on the place, and this enabled her, when traffic by sea became more common, to procure her navy and put down piracy; and as she could offer a market for both branches of the trade [i.e. terrestrial and maritime commerce], she acquired for herself all the power that a large revenue affords.”<sup>164</sup>

– Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.13.5.

Corinth, like the vast number of other Greek cities, began the Archaic Period under monarchical rule but over time experienced substantial political change, so much so that by the end of this period, it was ruled by a considerably broader, oligarchical form of government. As previously mentioned, following the Bronze Age Collapse, the Peloponnese was said to have been invaded by a group of Dorian Greeks supposedly descended from Heracles himself who proceeded to divide the region amongst themselves and rule over it as kings (*basileis*).<sup>165</sup> The city of Corinth was certainly no exception as its Bronze Age monarchs, the Sisypidae, were believed to have been overthrown during the Dorian Invasion by the Heraclid, Aletes who then ruled over the city as its king (*basileus*) and established a new royal dynasty (*genos*) there.<sup>166</sup> These Heraclid kings were said to have ruled over Corinth for eleven generations, until their final

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<sup>163</sup> See: Homer *Iliad* 2.570.

<sup>164</sup> Translation taken from: Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1998), 11.

<sup>165</sup> Tyrtaeus Fragment 2 (as found in Oxyrhynchus Papyri, *Politica* 38.2824), Pindar *Pythian Ode* 5.69-72, 10.1-5, *Isthmian Ode* 7.12. The historicity of these Heraclid kings, including the kings of Corinth is discussed in: Lilian H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece: The City-States c. 700-500 BC* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 39-41.

<sup>166</sup> Pindar *Olympian Odes* 13.14, Theopompus *BNJ* 115 F357 (as quoted in *Scholias On Theocritus* 5.83), Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F18 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 8.8.5), Callimachus *Aetia* 54i (as quoted in Plutarch *Quaestiones Convivales* 676f and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 2212), Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 7.9.2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 2.4.3-4, Conon *Narrations* 26, Velleius Paterculus *Roman History* 1.3.3

king, Telestes was eventually assassinated and overthrown by the members of his family sometime in the early Archaic Period, around the year 747 BC.<sup>167</sup>

After King Telestes' assassination, the members of his family – known as the Bacchiadae – were said to have formed an oligarchy in Corinth. Under this new form of government, elections were held each year to determine who would serve as the city's chief magistrate or *prytanis*, an annual position that essentially replaced the role of king.<sup>168</sup> In addition to the *prytanis*, there appears to have been other lesser officials who acted within this oligarchy as well, such as the Polemarch who was tasked with managing the city's military affairs.<sup>169</sup> Given that councils (βουλαί) and assemblies (ἀγοραί) are mentioned already in the Homeric epics, modern scholars have speculated that the Bacchiad oligarchy of Corinth likely had similar governing bodies in charge of advising the city's *prytanis* on important political matters, although we unfortunately hear no mention of these governing bodies in our surviving literary sources.<sup>170</sup>

While the Bacchiad oligarchy of Corinth was likely a broader form of government than the hereditary monarchy that preceded it, it is important to bear in mind that this was still a rather narrow political system where power rested in the hands of a very limited few.<sup>171</sup> Under this oligarchy, only members of the Bacchiad clan (*genos*) were permitted to run for political office or take part in the city's elections. This means that only a small handful of Corinthians would have been able to participate in the city's politics as Diodorus Siculus claims that at the time of Telestes' assassination in 747 BC, the Bacchiadae consisted of no more than two hundred of

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<sup>167</sup> J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1997), 55-56.

<sup>168</sup> Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 2.4.4, Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 7.9.6, Strabo *Geography* 8.8.5

<sup>169</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22).

<sup>170</sup> Stewart Irvin Oost, "Cypselus the Bacchiad," *Classical Philology* 67, no. 1 (1972), 11-12.

<sup>171</sup> Stewart Irvin Oost, "Cypselus the Bacchiad," 10-11, argues that the Bacchiads even still used the title of king (*basileus*) while they ruled over Corinth.

Corinth's wealthiest aristocrats.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, according to Herodotus, the Bacchiadae pursued a strict policy of endogamy, meaning they only allowed for intermarriage between fellow members of their clan so that the total number of Bacchiadae remained relatively small.<sup>173</sup> For these reasons, several ancient authors refer to the Bacchiad oligarchy of Corinth as though it, in truth, was not all that different from the monarchy that came before it. Herodotus, for example, refers to the Bacchiadae as ἀνδράσι μουνάρχοισι or 'monarchs.'<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Nicolaus of Damascus refers to the final ruler of the Bacchiad oligarchy, Patrokleides, not as Corinth's *prytanis* but as its king (*basileus*).<sup>175</sup> Diodorus Siculus likewise claimed that the eldest descendant (ὁ πρεσβύτατος τῶν ἐγγόνων) of the Heraclid, Aletes, ruled as king (ἐβασίλευσε) of Corinth until the tyranny of Cypselus (μέχρι τῆς Κυψέλου τυραννίδος), which suggests that he did not consider the leaders of Corinth's Bacchiad oligarchy to have been noticeably different from the hereditary monarchs (*basileis*) that ruled beforehand.<sup>176</sup> Finally, it is possible that Strabo also considered the Bacchiadae and their government to have been quasi-monarchical in nature, as he claimed that the Bacchiads ruled over Corinth as tyrants (οἱ Βακχιάδαι τυραννήσαντες).<sup>177</sup>

Be that as it may, in the end, the Bacchiad oligarchy lasted for less than a century before it was overthrown in 657 BC by Cypselus, a Corinthian aristocrat who instituted a new form of monarchical rule in the city by making himself its sole leader (c. 657-627 BC) and establishing his descendants as dynastic successors. Cypselus is most often referred to as a *tyrannos* or

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<sup>172</sup> Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 7.9.6.

<sup>173</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92β.1.

<sup>174</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92β.2.

<sup>175</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22).

<sup>176</sup> Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 7.9.3-6.

<sup>177</sup> Strabo *Geography* 8.6.20. For more information on ancient Greek oligarchies and their seeming resemblance to authoritarian regimes, see: Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 71-73.

‘tyrant’ in our ancient sources, although it should be noted that he is occasionally called a ‘king’ (*basileus*) as well,<sup>178</sup> which could suggest that he went by this title during his lifetime or that the differences between these two terms were not as distinct or clear-cut in the early Archaic Period.<sup>179</sup> According to Aristotle, Cypselus, like most other Greek tyrants, seized power over his city through demagoguery and the support of the masses.<sup>180</sup> This, to a certain extent, makes sense as we hear from our ancient sources that Cypselus enacted several populist reforms or policies throughout his reign. For example, after he ascended to power, Cypselus exiled the remaining Bacchiadae from the city, confiscated their property,<sup>181</sup> and likely redistributed these lands amongst Corinth’s lower classes.<sup>182</sup> Meanwhile, he allowed the political enemies of the Bacchiadae that had been exiled from the city, to return to Corinth and regain their citizenship rights there.<sup>183</sup> Cypselus also devoted much of his efforts towards the construction of public buildings. Under Cypselus, both the sanctuary of Apollo on Temple Hill and the sanctuary of Poseidon at Isthmia were built.<sup>184</sup> Cypselus additionally made several contributions to panhellenic sanctuaries outside of Corinth, such as at Delphi where he built the oracle’s first treasury or at Olympia where he dedicated an ornate chest.<sup>185</sup> For these reasons, Aristotle, Ephorus, and Nicolaus of Damascus all claim that Cypselus was so beloved by his fellow citizens that he never bothered hiring bodyguards for protection.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Such as in Herodotus *Histories* 5.92ε.2 and Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22). See also: Herodotus *Histories* 3.52.4 and Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F58.

<sup>179</sup> Mait Kōiv, “Basileus, Tyrannos, and Polis: The Dynamics of Monarchy in Early Greece,” 62-63.

<sup>180</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1310b.

<sup>181</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92ε.2.

<sup>182</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 129.

<sup>183</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22).

<sup>184</sup> Sian Lewis, *Greek Tyranny* (Exeter, England: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 30.

<sup>185</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.14.2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 5.18.7.

<sup>186</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1315b, Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F179 (as quoted in Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.98) Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22).

With that said, in recent years, some scholars have decided to push back against this notion that championing the causes of the masses (*demos*) or acting as popular rulers were some of the unique and defining traits of ancient Greek tyrants.<sup>187</sup> For example, Greg Anderson argues that even though Cypselus and other Greek tyrants constructed a number of public works and had their fair share of lower class supporters, this was not necessarily unusual or radically different from the behavior of contemporary oligarchical leaders in the Archaic Period.<sup>188</sup> Moreover, Anderson demonstrates that it is highly unlikely that ancient Greek tyrants wanted to totally upend the current political system, social hierarchies, or status quo in their cities as these conditions were what ultimately allowed them to seize power and rule as tyrants to begin with. Thus, perhaps we should view tyrants, not as radical revolutionary figures, but as a consequence of what happens when one particular individual becomes too successful at eliminating their political rivals and at dominating their local oligarchical system of rule.<sup>189</sup>

So, if it was not the lower classes (*demos*) of Corinth who principally supported Cypselus and the overthrow of the Bacchiadae, then who did? Although it is never explicitly stated in our ancient sources, many scholars believe that tyrants like Cypselus were particularly supported by the local merchant class, which, at this time, was becoming increasingly wealthy as well as dissatisfied with their marginal role in the city's political decision-making.<sup>190</sup> As Robert Drews explains, "the growing complexity of the Greek economy... created a wealthy class distinct from the landed aristocracy. Distressed that the aristocrats monopolized all political power the

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<sup>187</sup> G. L. Cawkwell, "Early Greek Tyranny and the People," *The Classical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1995), 86.

<sup>188</sup> Greg Anderson, "Before *Turannoi* Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," 192-193, 196.

<sup>189</sup> Greg Anderson, "Before *Turannoi* Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," 202.

<sup>190</sup> Robert K. Fleck and F. Andrew Hanssen, "How Tyranny Paved the Way to Democracy: The Democratic Transition in Ancient Greece," *The Journal of Law and Economics* 56, no. 2 (May 2013), 396-397.

Terry Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC: A Source-Based Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 49, 51.

Pavel Oliva, "The Early Tyranny," *Dialogues d'histoire Ancienne* (1982) 363, 369.

*nouveaux riches* backed a revolution which put into power a single ruler responsive to their wishes [i.e. a tyrant].”<sup>191</sup> There are perhaps a few indications that the tyranny of Cypselus was supported by the *nouveaux riches* that had become dissatisfied with their marginal role in Corinth’s politics. Firstly, we know that Cypselus himself was a member of the Corinthian elite who remained on the periphery of political power under the Bacchiadae. Although his mother, Labda, was technically a member of the Bacchiad clan, according to Herodotus she was born *χολή* or ‘crippled.’<sup>192</sup> As a result, she was not sought by any suitors within her clan and was instead, forced to go against the aforesaid custom of endogamy and get married outside the family to Aetion son of Echekrates, a man of lower status.<sup>193</sup> Therefore, it is possible that Cypselus himself is an example of a wealthy Corinthian who sought to overthrow the Bacchiad oligarchy because it had largely excluded him from politics.

If the tyranny of Corinth was indeed supported by the local merchant class, then this would also explain why Cypselus and his successors pursued several policies of commercial expansion. For example, during his reign, Cypselus seems to have established close diplomatic ties with a number of contemporary mercantile powers such as Lydia, an Anatolian kingdom known especially for its production of gold. Under Cypselus’ rule, King Gyges of Lydia made several lavish dedications to the aforementioned Corinthian treasury at Delphi.<sup>194</sup> During his reign, Cypselus also founded several colonies along the northwestern coast of Greece, such as at Ambracia, Leucas, and Anactorium, which were each placed under the rule of one of his

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<sup>191</sup> Robert Drews, “The First Tyrants in Greece,” *Historia* 21, no. 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 1972), 131.

<sup>192</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92 β.1.

<sup>193</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92 β.1.

<sup>194</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.14.1-2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 10.13.5

illegitimate sons.<sup>195</sup> This was most likely done in an effort to facilitate maritime trade between Corinth and the western Mediterranean, especially the various Greek colonies of southern Italy.

This policy seems to have continued to a certain extent under the reign of Cypselus' successor, Periander (c. 627-585 BC), who founded the colony of Potidaea in Chalcidice and left it under the rule of his son, Evagoras, most likely in an effort to get more involved in the Thracio-Macedonian region's timber, gold, and silver trade.<sup>196</sup> This colony in particular would remain firmly under Corinthian control for quite some time, receiving annual colonists and magistrates all the way up until 433 BC.<sup>197</sup> Like his father, Periander also increased Corinth's influence over the northwestern coast of Greece by regaining control of Corcyra,<sup>198</sup> one of Corinth's oldest colonies that had since developed an animosity towards its parent city.<sup>199</sup> Soon after, Corinth and Corcyra jointly founded the colonies of Epidamnus and Apollonia along the eastern edge of the Straits of Otranto.

In addition to these efforts, Periander seems to have strengthened Corinth's relations with Lydia as Herodotus claims he sent 300 Corcyraean aristocrats to the region so that they could serve as eunuchs in the royal court of their king, Alyattes.<sup>200</sup> Herodotus also claims that Periander played a crucial role in brokering a peace deal between Lydia and the Greek city of Miletus sometime in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>201</sup> In addition to Lydia, Periander seems to have developed close ties with Egypt, another important trade partner, particularly for its grain. This

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<sup>195</sup> Strabo *Geography* 10.2.8, Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22).

<sup>196</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F59 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 23).

<sup>197</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.56.2.

<sup>198</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.52.6.

<sup>199</sup> For more on the tensions between Archaic Corinth and Corcyra see: Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.13.5, 1.25.3-4, & 1.38.1-5.

<sup>200</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.48.2

<sup>201</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.20.3

is, in part, exhibited by the fact that Periander named his nephew and successor, Psamettichus after the contemporary Egyptian pharaoh, Psamtik I.<sup>202</sup> During Periander's reign, the Greek *emporion* or trading post of Naukratis, situated along the coast of the Nile delta was also established, the remains of which have yielded a number of wares and goods of Corinthian origin.<sup>203</sup> Beyond his foreign policy, Periander supported the merchant class even further through his domestic policy as he funded the construction of the Diolkos, a trackway that allowed commercial ships to be dragged across the isthmus between the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs. Periander also oversaw the construction of Corinth's artificial harbour at Lechaeum.<sup>204</sup>

As a whole, it was under the Cypselid tyrants that Corinth reached the peak of its commercial power. Corinthian 'black figure' pottery quickly became the most popular style of the period and was traded extensively throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>205</sup> It was also most likely under the Cypselids that Corinth began to mint its first coins.<sup>206</sup> It is quite possibly because of these commercial policies and the Cypselids' mercantile supporters that Herodotus, when talking about the bias against trade and manufacture, claims "all the Greeks have adopted this attitude, especially the Spartans, but the Corinthians have the least prejudice towards craftsmanship."<sup>207</sup>

Despite these efforts, over time the Cypselid tyrants' popularity began to wane. While Cypselus appears to have generally been an admired leader, his eldest son and successor, Periander seems to have had a more mixed reputation. On the one hand, he was respected enough

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<sup>202</sup> Victor Parker, "Tyrants and Lawgivers," in *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. H.A. Shapiro (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21.

<sup>203</sup> Albert Leonard Jr., *Ancient Naukratis: Excavations at a Greek Emporium in Egypt. Part I: The Excavations at Kom Ge'if*, vol. 1 (Alexandria, VA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1997), 33, 145, 289 and 291.

<sup>204</sup> Sian Lewis, *Greek Tyranny* (Exeter, England: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 30.

<sup>205</sup> Stavros A. Paspalas, "Greek Decorated Pottery II: Regions and Workshops," in *A Companion to Greek Art*, ed. Tyler Jo Smith and Dimitris Plantzos (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2018), 66.

<sup>206</sup> Donald Kagan, "The Dates of the Earliest Coins," *American Journal of Archaeology* 86, no. 3 (July 1983), 359.

<sup>207</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 2.167.2. Translation taken from: Terry Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC: A Source-Based Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 51.

to have been asked to arbitrate the dispute between Athens and Mytilene in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, over who should control Sigeum.<sup>208</sup> Several ancient sources also claim that Periander was one of the so-called seven sages of Greece.<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, however, authors like Herodotus and Aristotle claim that Periander was a ruthless leader who frequently executed his political rivals.<sup>210</sup> Herodotus additionally claims that Periander committed several other despicable acts like forcing all of Corinth's women to strip naked during the festival of Hera,<sup>211</sup> murdering his wife,<sup>212</sup> and having intercourse with her dead corpse.<sup>213</sup> One should be somewhat skeptical of these accusations however, as modern scholars have shown that it had become a common trope by Herodotus' time to portray tyrants in this way, committing various sexual misdeeds and other extreme taboos.<sup>214</sup>

The reputation of the last Cypselid tyrant, Psamettichus (c. 585-582 BC) seems to have been even worse than that of Periander. Psamettichus was never the ideal successor of Corinth's tyranny. We hear from our various sources that Periander's son, Lycophron, had always been the intended heir and was in fact on his way to Corinth to succeed his father, when he was tragically betrayed and killed by a group of Corcyraeans, wanting to recommence hostilities with their parent city.<sup>215</sup> As a result, Psamettichus was forced to succeed his uncle in a rather impromptu

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<sup>208</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.95.2.

<sup>209</sup> Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.23.1, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.13, Ausonius *The Masque of the Seven Sages* 10. In Plutarch's *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, Periander is similarly associated with the Seven Sages since he serves as the host who gathers them all together for the eponymous dinner party.

<sup>210</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92.η1 and Aristotle *Politics* 3.1284a.

<sup>211</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92.η1. A slightly different version of this story was repeated by Ephorus according to Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.96.

<sup>212</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.50.3. Two alternative versions of this story are also provided in Diogenes Laertius *Life of Eminent Philosophers* 1.94.

<sup>213</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92.η2

<sup>214</sup> Carolyn Dewald, "Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus," in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn A. Morgan, 1st ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 30-31.

<sup>215</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.53.1-7, Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F59 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 23), Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.95.

manner. From our surviving sources, we hear little to nothing else about Psamettichus' reign, except that it lasted for a mere three years before he was assassinated and the Cypselid tyranny was officially brought to an end.<sup>216</sup>

After their successful coup against Psamettichus in 582 BC, the people (*demos*) of Corinth established yet another oligarchy in the city.<sup>217</sup> This oligarchy, however, seems to have been much broader than the system in place under the Bacchiadae as it appears that power was no longer considered strictly hereditary. We hear that under this new oligarchy, Corinth's entire citizen population was divided into eight tribes or *phylai*.<sup>218</sup> Each tribe could elect nine of its members to serve in the city's council or Boule. Each tribe could also elect one of its members to serve as a *Proboulos*, a magistrate who played a leading role in this decision-making body.<sup>219</sup> In addition to the Boule, more powers seem to have been allotted to those chosen to serve as Corinth's envoys or ambassadors. This was, in large part, due to the fact that under its new oligarchy, Corinth became a leading member of the Peloponnesian League, a network of alliances headed by Sparta (for more on the Peloponnesian League see pages 74-75). From our ancient sources, we hear that at the Peloponnesian League's meetings, Corinth's emissaries could play a major role in swaying the votes of various other member states and consequently, shape much of the political landscape of contemporary Greece.<sup>220</sup>

In addition to its council (Boule), Corinth was said to have had other governing bodies such as an assembly (called either σύλλογος or ἐκκλησία) where all citizens could at least in theory, voice their opinions and take part in politics, although it seems that in practice, these

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<sup>216</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1315b.

<sup>217</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F60 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 24).

<sup>218</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F60 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 24).

<sup>219</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F60 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 24).

<sup>220</sup> Such as: Herodotus *Histories* 5.93.2, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.124.3-1.125.1.

governing bodies held little power.<sup>221</sup> Plutarch, for example, claims that “the Corinthians had a polity which leaned more towards oligarchy [ὀλιγαρχικώτερόν] and that they transacted little public business in their assembly of the people [τῶν κοινῶν ἐν τῷ δήμῳ].”<sup>222</sup> It is also worth mentioning that from our surviving literary and epigraphical sources, we know that during the Classical Period, Corinth had a number of other elected officials serving in its oligarchy such as *strategoï* who were in charge of leading the city’s military or *grammatistas*, an eponymous magistrate in charge of managing civic affairs.<sup>223</sup> However, it remains unclear whether these positions were established already in the late Archaic Period (in the immediate aftermath of Psamettichus’ assassination) or if they were only added to Corinth’s political system later on.<sup>224</sup>

As a whole, this redistribution of power under Corinth’s new oligarchy seems to have abated many of the social tensions that had plagued the city throughout the preceding centuries. By the end of the Archaic Period, Corinth had shifted away from being a city ruled by hereditary monarchs to become a politically stable city with the reputation of having a rather broad and just system of government.<sup>225</sup> This sentiment is perhaps best summarized by the late archaic poet, Pindar, when he stated:

While I praise... [the Oligaithidai, one of Corinth’s leading families], I shall recognize prosperous Corinth... There dwells Good Government [Eunomia] and her sisters, the secure foundation of cities: Justice [Dike] and Peace [Eirene], who were raised together with her, the guardians of wealth for men, the golden daughters of wise Law [Themis]. They are resolute in repelling Hubris, the bold-tongued mother of Disdain [Koros].<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History*, 18-19.

<sup>222</sup> Plutarch *Life of Dion* 53.4. Translation taken from: Bernadotte Perrin, trans., *Plutarch’s Parallel Lives, Volume 6: Dion and Brutus. Timoleon and Aemilius Paulus*, Loeb Classical Library 98 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 113.

<sup>223</sup> Nicholas F. Jones, “The Civic Organization of Corinth,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 110 (1980), 167.

<sup>224</sup> J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC*, 232.

<sup>225</sup> J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC*, 236.

<sup>226</sup> Pindar *Olympian Odes* 13.1-10. Translation taken from: Diane A. Svarlien, trans., *The Odes of Pindar* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991).

## Chapter 5

### A History of Archaic Sparta: From *Stasis* to *Eunomia*

“It occurred to me one day that Sparta, though among the most thinly populated of the states, was evidently the most powerful and most celebrated city in Greece; and I fell to wondering how this could have happened. But when I considered the institutions of the Spartans, I wondered no longer.”<sup>227</sup>

– Xenophon, *Constitution of the Spartans* 1.1.

The early Iron Age history of Sparta, at first glance, appears to have been much like that of its fellow Peloponnesian city-state, Corinth. According to our ancient sources, Sparta had been ruled by a number of legendary kings (*wanakes*) throughout the Bronze Age, the most famous of which was perhaps King Menelaus, the hero of the Trojan War who was the brother of Agamemnon and husband of Helen. Following the Bronze Age Collapse, we hear that the Peloponnese was invaded by Dorian Greeks and that Sparta’s Atreid dynasty was overthrown and replaced by a series of kings (*basileis*) who were supposedly descended from Heracles himself.<sup>228</sup> Soon after the Dorians’ arrival in the Peloponnese, Sparta’s first Heraclid king (*basileus*), Aristodemus is said to have begotten twin sons with his wife, Argeia.<sup>229</sup> Because Sparta’s monarchy relied on a system of primogeniture, this apparently caused a succession crisis as it was unknown which of the two twins, Eurysthenes and Procles, was born first. Consequently, the Spartans decided to make both of these twins their kings and thereafter adopted a form of government ruled jointly by their two monarchs.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Translation taken from: E. C. Marchant and G. W. Bowersock, trans., *Xenophon’s Scripta Minora: Hiero, Agesilaus, Constitution of the Lacedaemonians, Ways and Means, Cavalry Commander, Art of Horsemanship, On Hunting, and Constitution of the Athenians*, Loeb Classical Library 183 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925). 137.

<sup>228</sup> Tyrtaeus Fragment 2 (as found in Oxyrhynchus Papyri, *Politica* 38.2824), Pindar *Pythian Ode* 1.62, 5.69-75, Herodotus *Histories* 6.52.1, 7.204, Strabo *Geography* 8.5.5, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.1.5.

<sup>229</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.52.2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.1.6-7.

<sup>230</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.52.5, Strabo *Geography* 8.5.5, Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 2.8.2, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.1.5.

With that said, these ancient accounts of Sparta's early history appear rather suspect and, in all likelihood, are largely mythical. Little to no archaeological remains have been discovered in Sparta itself dating to the Bronze Age. One noteworthy exception is the so-called Menelaion, but this site is situated more than 4 km southeast of the city and is on the opposite side of the Eurotas river.<sup>231</sup> As a result, it is questionable whether 'Sparta' even existed in the Bronze Age, let alone was ruled by the various kings that we hear of from our later sources.<sup>232</sup> Instead, Sparta appears to have emerged as a city in the early Iron Age over the course of the tenth and ninth centuries BC as the four nearby villages of Pitana, Mesoa, Limnae and Cynosoura gradually grew in size and unified through the process of *synoikism*.<sup>233</sup> Later, during the early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, a fifth village, Amyclae, also became part of Sparta.<sup>234</sup> Scholars have suggested that it was rather during this period of *synoikism* that Sparta's dual monarchy was established, perhaps as a compromise between the chieftains (*basileis*) of the two most powerful villages that later formed part of the city.<sup>235</sup>

Regardless of when the Spartans adopted their dual monarchy, this development appears to mark the first stage in the reduction of their kings' powers. Under this diarchic government, Sparta's two monarchs held equal authority and thus provided a greater system of checks and

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<sup>231</sup> Panagiota A. Pantou, "An Architectural Perspective on Social Change and Ideology in Early Mycenaean Greece," *American Journal of Archaeology* 118, no. 3 (July 2014), 372.

<sup>232</sup> Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 BC*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 58, 80-81.

<sup>233</sup> Paul Cartledge, "The Peculiar Position of Sparta in the Development of the Greek City-State," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature* 80C (June 13, 1980), 97.

William Cavanagh, "An Archaeology of Ancient Sparta with Reference to Laconia and Messenia," in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 63.

<sup>234</sup> Michael Whitby, ed., *Sparta* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 8.

<sup>235</sup> Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World, Ca. 1200-479 BCE*, 136.

William G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta, 950-192 BC* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), 28-29.  
J. F. Lazenby, *The Spartan Army* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2012), 84-86.

balances than had existed before.<sup>236</sup> Moreover, the members of Sparta's two royal families, the Agiad and Eurypontid dynasties, seem to have been kept apart in some important ways.<sup>237</sup> For example, even though our sources describe several Spartan royal marriages and spousal relationships, including even cases of incestuous marriages within the same dynasty,<sup>238</sup> we curiously hear of no instances where an Agiad married a Eurypontid. This could indicate that the members of these two dynasties were not allowed to intermarry, perhaps in an effort to encourage a sense of rivalry between them or to hinder them from forming political alliances with each other and from collaborating on matters of state. From our surviving ancient sources, we in fact hear of several Spartan kings who fiercely rivalled each other and opposed the actions of their counterpart, such as King Eurysthenes and King Procles, the supposed founders of these two dynasties,<sup>239</sup> or King Cleomenes I and King Demaratus, Sparta's monarchs during the late Archaic Period.<sup>240</sup>

With that said, the creation of this diarchy does not seem to have achieved much in reducing the social tensions in Sparta at the time. Both Herodotus and Thucydides portray this period of early Spartan history as one full of political unrest or *stasis*.<sup>241</sup> As Sparta consolidated the surrounding region of Laconia under its rule, it developed a highly repressive system which

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<sup>236</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 177.

Herodotus *Histories* 5.75 & 6.50 tells us that up until the late Archaic Period, both of Sparta's kings had to go on military campaigns together and were required to agree on all decisions or matters of policy, before they could act on it. Therefore, Sparta's kings seem to have been able to essentially 'veto' each other up until this point.

<sup>237</sup> For example, their burial sites were kept separate according to Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.12.8, 3.14.2. According to Aristotle *Politics* 2.1271a, the Spartan political system depended on there being division between the two kings.

<sup>238</sup> Such as the Agiad marriage between King Leonidas I and his niece Gorgo (Herodotus *Histories* 7.239.4) or the Eurypontid marriage between King Archidamus II and his aunt Lampito (Herodotus *Histories* 6.71.2).

<sup>239</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.52.8, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.1.7.

<sup>240</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.75, 6.50-51, 6.61.1, 6.64-65.1, 6.67 6.70 and Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.4.3-5. Several other ancient sources allude to when King Cleomenes I deposed Demaratus, although they do not explain this rivalry in as much detail, such as Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.1.6, *Anabasis* 2.1.3, 7.8.17, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 11.6, and Seneca *De Beneficiis* 6.31.4.

<sup>241</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.65.2 and Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.18

reduced much of its population into ‘helotage,’ a form of slavery or serfdom. Some estimates claim that for every Spartan citizen there could have been as many as seven helots.<sup>242</sup> Because Sparta’s citizens were so heavily outnumbered, they were almost constantly concerned about maintaining the status quo and suppressing any helot revolts.<sup>243</sup> This tension was likely only exacerbated by the fact that in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, after engaging in a twenty-year-long conflict, Sparta practically doubled in size by gaining control of the neighbouring region, Messenia, and subjugating much of its population into helotage as well.<sup>244</sup>

From our surviving ancient sources, we get the impression that the citizen-soldiers of various Greek city-states, like Sparta, were a major driving force behind the political changes of the early Archaic Period, since they were almost constantly occupied in wars at this time and therefore, increasingly wanted a role in the political decision-making behind these conflicts and sought certain benefits as compensation for their military service.<sup>245</sup> Aristotle, for example, provides this impression in his work *Politics*, when he claims that:

Indeed, the earliest form of constitution among the Greeks after the kingships, was made up of those who were actually soldiers... [and] as states grew and the wearers of heavy armor had become stronger, more persons came to have a part in government.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Thomas J. Figueira, “The Demography of the Spartan Helots,” in *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures*, ed. Nino Luraghi and Susan E. Alcock (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2003), 361, 365.

<sup>243</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.80.3, Aristotle *Politics* 2.1269a

<sup>244</sup> Michael Whitby, ed., *Sparta*, 8. So many people were reduced to helotage from this war, that the word ‘Messenian’ appears to have become a common synonym for ‘helot,’ as Thucydides tells us in *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.101.2.

<sup>245</sup> Peter Krentz, “Warfare and Hoplites,” 64. Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myth and Realities* (London, England: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2004), 56-57. This may also be evidenced by the fact that in Sparta especially, the concept of citizenship seems to have been closely tied to military service. For example, we hear of several instances where helots were offered citizenship (probably the partial or quasi-citizenship of the *Perioeci*) in exchange for fighting in Sparta’s wars, such as in Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.26.5-8, 4.80.3, 5.34.1, Xenophon *Hellenica* 6.5.28, and Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 6.271F.

<sup>246</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 4.1297b. Translation taken from: H. Rackham trans., *Aristotle’s Politics*, Loeb Classical Library 264 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1932), 343.

Therefore, it is perhaps due to the Spartans' perpetual state of war and their almost constant involvement in the suppression of the local helot population, that the next major change in Sparta's government occurred, the constitutional reforms of Lycurgus.

Lycurgus is an obscure figure in the early history of Sparta. Most scholars believe that Lycurgus lived sometime around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>247</sup> although some have argued that he was entirely legendary and thus, did not exist at all.<sup>248</sup> As a result, there is no clear-cut scholarly consensus on the matter. Furthermore, when discussing Lycurgus' constitutional reforms, one needs to be wary of the fact that our surviving ancient sources tend to attribute almost all of Sparta's customs or traditions to Lycurgus, even though we now know this was not the case. For example, several ancient writers like Xenophon and Herodotus claim that Lycurgus established the *sysitia* or the 'mess halls' where Spartan male citizens would dine together.<sup>249</sup> Given that mess halls are recorded to have existed in several other Greek city-states as well, particularly on Crete, it seems more likely that this practice of communal feasting was in fact much older, perhaps dating all the way back to the early Iron Age, before the Dorians migrated from the Greek mainland onto Crete, the Dodecanese, and the various promontories of Caria.<sup>250</sup> Similarly, Plutarch claims that Lycurgus outlawed the use of coinage in Sparta and instead, encouraged his

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<sup>247</sup> This date is often derived from a variety of ancient authors. For example, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 1.1-2 states that Aristotle, Timaeus, the so-called Disk of Iphitus, and other sources, all suggest Lycurgus lived around the time of the first Olympiad and Homer. By relying mostly on Ephorus, Strabo *Geography* 10.4.19 also claims that Lycurgus was a contemporary of Homer. Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 5.4.5 says Lycurgus lived during the first Olympiad. Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.18.1 suggests that Lycurgus' reforms occurred around 400 years before the end of the Peloponnesian War, which would put it around the late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Cicero in *Pro Flacco* 63, claims that Sparta had been living under the same political system for 700 years, and in *De Republica* 1.9, he says Lycurgus reforms happened shortly before the reign of Romulus, which both suggest an 8<sup>th</sup> century date, etc. If Lycurgus wrote down his laws and, as far as we know, the Greek alphabet was adopted sometime around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC (Pomeroy et al., 91), then this date appears to be the *terminus post quem*.

<sup>248</sup> Massimo Nafissi, "Lykourgos the Spartan 'Lawgiver': Ancient Beliefs and Modern Scholarship," in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 1 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 94-94.

<sup>249</sup> Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 5.2 and Herodotus *Histories* 1.65.5.

<sup>250</sup> Pindar *Pythian Ode* 9.19, Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272a, Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F149 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 10.4.17), Dosiadas and Pyrgion as quoted in Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 4.143A-F.

fellow citizens to use iron rods as their currency.<sup>251</sup> This too seems highly unlikely, considering that the archaeological evidence suggests coinage had not even been invented yet in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, when Lycurgus is generally thought to have lived.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, in the opening lines of his *Life of Lycurgus*, Plutarch himself casts serious doubt on the historical reliability of his work and, by extension, of our ancient sources about Lycurgus overall, when he says:

Generally speaking, it is impossible to make any undisputed statement about Lycurgus the lawgiver, since conflicting accounts have been given of his ancestry, his travels, his death, and above all, of his activity with respect to his laws and government; and there is least agreement about the period in which the man lived.<sup>253</sup>

Despite these challenges, there may be some things that we can infer from our ancient sources about the constitutional reforms accredited to Lycurgus or the so-called ‘Great Rhetra.’ For example, the laws attributed to Lycurgus seem to have played a significant role in organizing Sparta’s citizens into a professional army.<sup>254</sup> Many sources such as Xenophon, Plutarch, and Pausanias, claim that Lycurgus established the *agoge*, the military education that each male Spartan citizen had to undergo throughout their youth, starting at the age of seven.<sup>255</sup> Aristotle similarly associates Lycurgus with the professionalization of Sparta’s military, by claiming that he founded the *Crypteia*, an organization made up of Sparta’s young adults who were tasked with brutalizing the local helot population every year, after the state had ritually declared war on them.<sup>256</sup> Perhaps our earliest source on this matter, Herodotus, also seems to have been under the

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<sup>251</sup> Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 9.3.

<sup>252</sup> Donald Kagan, “The Dates of the Earliest Coins,” 343-344.

<sup>253</sup> Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 1.1. Translation taken from: Richard J. A. Talbert, trans., *Plutarch: On Sparta*, ed. Christopher Pelling (New York, NY: Penguin Classics 2005), 53.

<sup>254</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, “Professionalism, Specialization, and Skill in the Classical Spartan Army?,” in *Skilled Labour and Professionalism in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Edmund Stewart, Edward Harris, and David Lewis (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 348-351.

<sup>255</sup> Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 2, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 16-17, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.14.8, 3.16.10, 7.8.5.

<sup>256</sup> As quoted by Plutarch in *Life of Lycurgus* 28. The nature and function of the *Crypteia* is also described in Plato *Laws* 1.633b-c, 6.763a-b, and Plutarch *Life of Cleomenes* 28. Plutarch seems to have been under the impression that

impression that Lycurgus made substantial contributions to Sparta's army, as he writes that "he established Sparta's military institutions, the platoons of citizens bound together by oath, [and] the companies of thirty."<sup>257</sup>

In exchange for their military service, Lycurgus is said to have given the Spartans several rights or privileges, many of which seem to have emphasized creating a sense of equality between citizens.<sup>258</sup> According to ancient writers like Polybius, Plutarch, and Justin, the Great Rhetra stipulated that each Spartan citizen was allotted an equal-sized portion of farmland by the state known as a *kleros*, as well as the necessary number of helot serfs to cultivate these lands.<sup>259</sup> Plutarch additionally tells us that male Spartan citizens were forced to live together in communal barracks until at least the age of thirty.<sup>260</sup> Xenophon similarly expresses this notion of shared property when he claims that Lycurgus gave Spartans the right to borrow slaves, hunting dogs, and horses from each other, whenever they wished.<sup>261</sup> He also claims that all citizens were permitted to discipline or punish the children of other Spartans as though they were their own.<sup>262</sup> This sentiment seems to be echoed in a number of other sources, which state that polyandry or 'wife-sharing' was permitted and was not an uncommon practice in Sparta either.<sup>263</sup> Above all,

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the slaughter of 2000 helots described in Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 4.80.4, was performed by the Crypteia. When Herodotus claims in *Histories* 4.146.2 that the Spartans only performed executions at night, this could also be a reference to the nighttime actions of the Crypteia.

<sup>257</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.65.5. Translation taken from: Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*, 37.

<sup>258</sup> Philip Davies, "Equality and Distinction within the Spartiate Community" in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 2 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 481.

<sup>259</sup> Polybius *History* 6.45, 6.48, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 8, 16.1, *Sayings of Lycurgus* 226b, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 3.3.3

<sup>260</sup> Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 16.7, 25.3.

<sup>261</sup> Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 6.3. We also hear this in Aristotle *Politics* 2.1263a

<sup>262</sup> Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 6.2.

<sup>263</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.40.2, Polybius *History* 12.6.8, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 15.6-10. Xenophon also mentions this custom in *Constitution of the Spartans* 1.7-9.

this notion of equality is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that several ancient sources refer to Spartan citizens simply as ὅμοιοι<sup>264</sup> or ‘equals.’<sup>265</sup>

To a certain degree, these rights seem to have been extended not only to Spartan men, but to women as well. For example, in Sparta, female citizens, like their male counterparts, were provided with educations which included a physical education in sports and combat.<sup>266</sup> For this reason, Spartan women seem to have been well-known in antiquity,<sup>267</sup> particularly for their wits and clever quips.<sup>268</sup> Unlike other Greek city-states, Sparta also allowed female citizens to manage their own finances, own property, and inherit wealth from their parents.<sup>269</sup> In fact, this seems to have enabled at least a few Spartan women to become considerably wealthy and influential, for which they were referred to as the πατρούχοι or the ‘heiresses.’<sup>270</sup> Aristotle tell us that by his day, these ‘heiresses’ had accrued so much wealth that they owned nearly two-fifths of all of Sparta’s arable lands.<sup>271</sup>

With that said, it is important to bear in mind that this notion of Spartan equality was, by and large, illusory or a façade.<sup>272</sup> Although the Spartans had some notable customs and laws that created the appearance of equality, as a whole, Spartan society was extremely hierarchical and stratified, with well over half of its population reduced to helotage. Even within Sparta’s citizenry itself, there appears to have been certain class distinctions as some families were

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<sup>264</sup> Xenophon *Hellenica* 3.3.5, *Constitution of the Spartans* 13.1, 7, Aristotle *Politics* 5.1306b.

<sup>265</sup> Massimo Nafissi, “Sparta,” in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt A Raaflaub and Hans van Wees, 1st ed. (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 130.

<sup>266</sup> Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 82, Euripides *Andromache* 595-601, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 1.4, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 14.2-15.1, *Moralia* 227d.

<sup>267</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.134.5, Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 81-83, Euripides *Andromache* 590-604.

<sup>268</sup> As seen in Herodotus *Histories* 5.50-51, 7.239, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 14.4, or *Sayings of Spartan Women*.

<sup>269</sup> Ellen G. Millender “Spartan Women,” in *A Companion to Sparta*, ed. Anton Powell, vol. 2 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2018), 511-512.

<sup>270</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.57.4

<sup>271</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1270a

<sup>272</sup> Philip Davies, “Equality and Distinction within the Spartiate Community,” 481.

considerably more powerful and influential than others.<sup>273</sup> The ‘heiresses,’ for example, would have possessed significantly more wealth than the average Spartan woman. Likewise, even though female citizens were granted some noteworthy rights or powers in Sparta, this does not change the fact that Spartan society was patriarchal and, in general, privileged men over women. At this point, I should also reiterate that almost all of our literary sources on ancient Sparta were written, not by the Spartans themselves, but by outsiders who had a tendency to idealize or exaggerate certain aspects of Sparta’s institutions and customs. Thus, one should be somewhat cautious of our descriptions of Spartan equality, as these descriptions may be, to some extent, the byproduct of their authors’ wishful thinking or of the aforementioned phenomenon of the ‘Spartan Mirage’ (for more on this topic, see my discussion on pages 17-18).<sup>274</sup>

Perhaps the most significant reform accredited to Lycurgus, especially as it pertains to this study, is that he dramatically changed Sparta’s system of government. A number of ancient authors such as Herodotus, Xenophon, and Plato, claim that Lycurgus established the Gerousia or Sparta’s senate.<sup>275</sup> This council consisted of Sparta’s two kings along with twenty-eight *gerontes* or elders over the age of sixty, who were elected into power by their fellow Spartans and thereafter, held the position for life. The primary function of the Gerousia seems to have been judicial as its members served as the jury during important court cases. Because each member of the Gerousia, including Sparta’s two kings, could cast only a single vote and judicial decisions were based on a simple majority, the *gerontes* seem to have held considerable power in

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<sup>273</sup> This is implied in: Plato *Laws* 3.696b, Aristotle *Politics* 4.1294b Ephorus *BNJ* 70 F149 (as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 10.4.16), Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 7.3.

<sup>274</sup> Stephen Hodkinson, “Female Property Ownership and Empowerment in Classical and Hellenistic Sparta,” in *Spartan Society*, ed. Thomas J. Figueira (Oakville, CT: The Classical Press of Wales, 2004), 103.

<sup>275</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.65.5, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 9.1-4, Plato *Laws* 3.691e-692a, Ephorus as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 10.4.18, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 5.6, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 3.3.1-2, Tyrtaeus Fragment 4.

legal proceedings.<sup>276</sup> In addition to this, the Gerousia appears to have served as the city's main advisory body, tasked with counselling the Spartans and their kings on important matters of state.<sup>277</sup> Our sources suggest that in Sparta, political decisions or acts of legislation first needed to be approved by the Gerousia before they could be put to a vote in Sparta's citizen assembly (ἐκκλησία).<sup>278</sup> As a result, the creation of the Gerousia seems to have given at least some Spartans the opportunity to take part in politics and have a role in their government's decision-making. Having said that, it is important to bear in mind that this system was still by no means democratic. According to our sources, Sparta's citizen assembly would elect new *gerontes* through acclamation.<sup>279</sup> Aristotle considered this form of voting childish, probably because the existing members of the Gerousia who presided over these elections, could easily manipulate the results by claiming that their preferred candidate had received the loudest shouts.<sup>280</sup> For these reasons, even though in theory, every male Spartan citizen over the age of sixty was eligible to serve in the Gerousia, in practice, the *gerontes* seem to have all come from the same small number of aristocratic families.<sup>281</sup>

The final noteworthy change that Sparta's government experienced during the Archaic Period was when the office of the Ephors or 'overseers' was created. It is somewhat unclear when this position was established as some sources suggest that it was an invention of Lycurgus,<sup>282</sup> while others claim that it was founded later by Sparta's Eurypontid king,

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<sup>276</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.57.5, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.20.3, Plato *Laws* 3.692a.

<sup>277</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.40.1, Aeschines *Against Timarchus* 180, Plato *Laws* 3.692a, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 26.1.

<sup>278</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272a, Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 11.50, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 6.3, *Life of Agis* 8.1, 11.1.

<sup>279</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.87.2, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 26.2-3.

<sup>280</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1271a.

<sup>281</sup> Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., eds., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, 178.

<sup>282</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.65.5, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 8.3-4, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 3.3.2.

Theopompus,<sup>283</sup> who ruled during the late 8<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Perhaps this is another example where our sources carelessly attribute an institution to Lycurgus, when in truth, these legal changes had developed gradually over the course of the Archaic Period. Regardless of when the Ephors were created, this development appears to have greatly reduced the power of Sparta's two monarchs. As their name suggests, the Ephors primary role was to oversee the kings and make sure they were kept in check. This function is perhaps best summarized by Xenophon, who tells us that every month Sparta's two kings were required to meet with the Ephors and swear before them to rule in accordance with the established laws of the state. In response to this, the Ephors would declare, "while you abide by your oath, we will keep the kingship unshaken."<sup>284</sup> In Sparta itself, the five Ephors regularly maintained watch over the kings and their affairs. Furthermore, during times of war or military campaigns, at least two Ephors would accompany the kings and their forces.<sup>285</sup> If, at any point, the Ephors felt that a king had neglected their duties or had broken the law, they had the ability to charge the kings with a crime and to serve as jury members in their trial alongside the aforementioned Gerousia. In fact, towards the end of the Archaic Period, the Ephors seem to have especially made use of this power as we hear that they charged both King Cleomenes I and King Leotychidas II for bribery in 494 BC and 476 BC respectively,<sup>286</sup> and prosecuted the Agiad regent, Pausanias for medizing in 478 BC.<sup>287</sup>

In addition to overseeing the kings, the Ephors seem to have served an important legislative role in Sparta's government. For example, after seeking approval from the Gerousia,

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<sup>283</sup> Plato *Laws* 3.692a, Aristotle *Politics* 5.1313a, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 7.1, *Life of Cleomenes* 10.

<sup>284</sup> Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 15.7. Translation taken from: E. C. Marchant and G. W. Bowersock, trans., *Xenophon's Scripta Minora: Hiero, Agesilaus, Constitution of the Lacedaemonians, Ways and Means, Cavalry Commander, Art of Horsemanship, On Hunting, and Constitution of the Athenians*, 187.

<sup>285</sup> P. J. Rhodes, "The Selection of Ephors at Sparta," *Historia* 30, no. 4 (1981), 499.

<sup>286</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.72 and 6.82.

<sup>287</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.31.2.

the Ephors were allowed to put political decisions or acts of legislation to a vote in Sparta's citizen assembly (ἐκκλησία).<sup>288</sup> Perhaps the most radical element of the Ephors was that each year they appear to have been selected, to some degree, at random from Sparta's adult male population. Plato for example, tells us that "the power of the Ephors came near to being a power conferred by lot [ἐγγὺς τῆς κληρωτῆς ἀγαγὼν δυνάμεως]."<sup>289</sup> Aristotle similarly alludes to this practice as he refers to the Ephors simply as οἱ τυχόντες<sup>290</sup> or 'whoever happens to be appointed'<sup>291</sup> and claims that this position was often held by individuals from Sparta's poorest families.<sup>292</sup> Because of these various powers or rights, many ancient authors seem to have been under the impression that the Ephors were Sparta's chief magistrates. Thucydides, for example, dates the events in his history not by aligning them with the reigns of Sparta's kings, but by providing the name of one of the Ephors of that year as though this position was equivalent to the Athenians' Eponymous Archon.<sup>293</sup> Likewise, Aristotle, when describing Sparta and the Ephors, writes that "this magistracy has authority over the highest matters."<sup>294</sup> Plato takes it a step even further by comparing the office of the Ephors to the rule of tyrants.<sup>295</sup>

Ultimately, by the end of the Archaic Period, the creation of the Gerousia and the Ephors seems to have caused Sparta's government to essentially become an oligarchy and Sparta's kings (*basileis*) to lose much of their powers. Whenever our ancient sources describe Sparta's kings and their function or privileges at home, we get the impression that their role was primarily

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<sup>288</sup> As we see the Ephor, Sthenelaidas do in Thucydides 1.85.3 & 1.87.1.

<sup>289</sup> Plato *Laws* 3.692a. Translation taken from: P. J. Rhodes, "The Selection of Ephors at Sparta," 498.

<sup>290</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1270b, 2.1272a-b.

<sup>291</sup> P. J. Rhodes, "The Selection of Ephors at Sparta," 498.

<sup>292</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1270b

<sup>293</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.2.1, 5.25.1, 8.58.1.

<sup>294</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1270b. Translation taken from: Benjamin Jowett, trans., *Aristotle's Politics* (Kitchener, Canada: Batoche Books, 1999), 42.

<sup>295</sup> Plato *Laws* 4.712d.

religious and symbolic as their duties mostly consisted of holding certain priesthoods, performing sacrifices, and consulting oracles.<sup>296</sup> The kings possessed their most authority during times of war when they were serving as Sparta's chief military leaders, but even then, their powers were limited as they were still overseen by at least two Ephors and, from the late Archaic Period onwards, only one king was allowed to leave the city and go on a military expedition at a time.<sup>297</sup>

While Sparta's government became increasingly oligarchical at home, it also began to pursue new foreign policies which encouraged the creation of oligarchies abroad, in other city-states too. As previously mentioned, in the early Archaic Period, the Spartans sought to increase their power by subjugating neighbouring regions like Messenia under their rule. Over time, however, this policy changed as the Spartans attempted to increase their influence more so through diplomacy. By the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Sparta had formed a network of alliances with a number of other city-states, known as the Peloponnesian League, the main objectives of which was to overthrow contemporary Greek tyrannies and replace them with pro-Spartan oligarchies.<sup>298</sup> Herodotus, for example, tells us that in 525 BC, the Peloponnesian League led an expedition to Samos in an attempt to overthrow the tyrant, Polycrates<sup>299</sup> while later in 510 BC, they successfully ousted the Peisistratid tyrant, Hippias from Athens (for more information on this particular event see pages 97-98).<sup>300</sup> Plutarch tells us that the Spartans additionally overthrew Lygdamis of Naxos, Aeschines of Sicyon, Symmachus of Thasos, Aulis of Phocis,

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<sup>296</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.57.1-4, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 15.3-5, Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 21.4, 22.2.

<sup>297</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.75.2

<sup>298</sup> G. L. Cawkwell, "Sparta and Her Allies in the Sixth Century," *The Classical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1993), 371-372.

<sup>299</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 3.56.

<sup>300</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.63-65.

and the Cypselid tyrants of Ambracia.<sup>301</sup> Thucydides perhaps puts it the most succinctly when he simply says “but at last a time came when the tyrants of Athens and the far older tyrannies of the rest of Hellas were, with the exception of those in Sicily, once and for all put down by Sparta.”<sup>302</sup>

It is also worth noting that as members of the Peloponnesian League, the Spartans appear to have regularly convened with their allies in an assembly (σύλλογος) where the delegates of each member state could deliberate and cast their vote on important political or military matters.<sup>303</sup> Therefore, by the late Archaic Period, the Spartans’ foreign policy seems to have, to some extent, been shaped by the decisions that were determined collectively, by both themselves and their allies, in the assembly meetings of the Peloponnesian League.

In sum, although Sparta was able to maintain some semblance of its traditional monarchy, by the end of the Archaic Period it had, by and large, transformed into an oligarchy like its fellow Peloponnesian city-state, Corinth. The creation of the Gerousia and the Ephors appears to have given rise to a broader system of government, where more citizens could take part in Sparta’s political decision-making than ever before. Moreover, the creation of the Gerousia and Ephors seems to have greatly reduced the powers or duties of Sparta’s two kings (*basileis*), so much so that they were, henceforth, relegated to a primarily religious and symbolic role within Sparta itself. While Sparta’s hereditary kings still held power outside of the city, especially in times of war when they would lead military expeditions, this privilege seems to have also been circumscribed by the late Archaic Period as only one king was permitted to leave

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<sup>301</sup> Plutarch *On the Malice of Herodotus* 21.

<sup>302</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.18.1. Translation taken from: Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1998), 13.

<sup>303</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.91.2, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.67.3, 1.87.3-4, Xenophon *Hellenica* 5.2.11, 5.2.20.

the city at a time and even then, he was required to bring at least two Ephors with him to oversee his handling of affairs. Finally, by the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Sparta, as hegemon of the Peloponnesian League, seems to have made its important political decisions collectively, in conjunction with its allies and to have firmly committed itself to overthrowing monarchical governments (or 'tyrannies') in contemporary Greek city-states and replacing them with broader oligarchies.

## Chapter 6 A History of the Athenian *Polis* to the Birth of ‘Democracy’

“Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands, not of a minority, but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of his poverty. And, just as our political life is free and open, so is our day-to-day life in relations with each other.”<sup>304</sup>

– Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.37.1-2.

Even though Athens is the Greek city-state that we appear to know the most about, thanks to a number of surviving ancient literary sources and archaeological sites, its early Iron Age history is nevertheless shrouded in obscurity. According to our ancient sources, Athens was ruled by a number of legendary kings (*wanakes*) throughout the Bronze Age, the most famous of which was perhaps King Theseus, the hero who is said to have slain the Minotaur and established many of Athens’ most important traditions or institutions.<sup>305</sup> Following the Bronze Age collapse, Athens’ traditional Erechtheid dynasty was overthrown and replaced by the Melanthids, a family that supposedly originated from the Peloponnese but had been displaced by the recent Dorian Invasion.<sup>306</sup> In the end, the Melanthid dynasty’s rule over Athens was rather short-lived as it only lasted until the reign of their second king, Codrus, who allegedly ruled around the time of the Ionian migration or the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>307</sup>

According to our ancient literary sources, following the death of King Codrus, Athens’ monarchy was officially abolished and replaced by an oligarchy.<sup>308</sup> Under this new form of government, the noble families of Athens, known as the Eupatridae, would elect one of their

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<sup>304</sup> Translation taken from: Rex Warner, trans., *Thucydides: History of the Peloponnesian War* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books 1976), 145.

<sup>305</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.15.2, Aelian *Varia Historia* 5.13.

<sup>306</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.65.3, Conon *Narrations* 39.

<sup>307</sup> Strabo *Geography* 14.1.3, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 7.2.10.

<sup>308</sup> Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 4.5.10, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 2.7.1-3.

members to serve as Perpetual Archon, a life-long position that essentially replaced the role of king.<sup>309</sup> As a result, our sources seem to describe this system functioning much like the aforementioned Bacchiad oligarchy of early archaic Corinth (for more on this topic see page 52). According to tradition, this Athenian oligarchy lasted for roughly three centuries until 752 BC, when it was slightly altered. Instead of serving for life, the Archons would, thereafter be elected by the Eupatridae to serve for ten-year terms.<sup>310</sup> Compared to the Perpetual Archons, these Decennial Archons' rule over Athens did not last long, as there would only be seven in total before the system was almost entirely remodelled in 682 BC. By this point in time, we hear that at least some of the Decennial Archons had developed a strong reputation for cruelty. The Decennial Archon, Hippomenes, for example, was known for having his own daughter, Leimone, killed after he had caught her having pre-marital intercourse. Hippomenes supposedly murdered her by locking her away in an empty house with a horse, so that when, after a while, the creature had become starving and desperate, it eventually devoured her.<sup>311</sup> Hippomenes is also said to have killed his daughter's lover in a rather brutal way too, by dragging him to death behind his chariot.<sup>312</sup>

Having said all that, most modern scholars concur that these traditions concerning the early history of Athens and the reign of their Perpetual and Decennial Archons, are, for the most part, mythical and contain little to no historical value.<sup>313</sup> As Michael Stahl and Uwe Walter put it:

Such mythical stories tell us much about Athenian self-consciousness in the classical period and the construction of their identity from the late sixth century.

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<sup>309</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.1, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.8.2, Plutarch *Life of Theseus* 25.2.

<sup>310</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea *Chronicles* 1.67

<sup>311</sup> Aeschines *Against Timarchus* 182, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 8.22, Ovid *Ibis* 459-460,

<sup>312</sup> Heracleides *Epitome of Aristotle's Athenian Constitution*, Fragment 7.

<sup>313</sup> Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States, 700-338 BC*, 95-96.

But for the question of the beginning of a political organization or state in Attica, they have no value.<sup>314</sup>

In some ways, the unreliability of these traditions can be inferred from the very fact that the sources that record them, were written many centuries later and are full of internal inconsistencies or contradictions. For example, even though our sources claim that this new oligarchy was a broader system than the monarchy that preceded it and that it relied on at least some form of voting, they, at the same time, suggest that each of the Perpetual Archons were direct descendants of one another. Eusebius, for instance, declares that the first Perpetual Archon, Medon, was the son of Athens' final king, Codrus.<sup>315</sup> He then says that after Medon died, the Perpetual Archonship was passed onto his son, Acastus, who was then later succeeded by his son Archippus, and so on and so forth.<sup>316</sup> Similarly, we hear that this direct line of succession continued throughout the reign of the Decennial Archons until at least the reign of their fourth leader, Hippomenes (c. 723-713 BC).<sup>317</sup> As a result, it is entirely unclear from our sources how this early oligarchic government differed much at all from the monarchy that preceded it. This confusion is only further muddled by the fact that several ancient authors like Plato, Aristotle, and Pausanias refer to the Perpetual and Decennial Archons as 'kings' or *basileis*.<sup>318</sup>

Beyond these internal inconsistencies, our accounts also run into serious issues when compared to the archaeological record. For example, many ancient sources claim that Athens consolidated the surrounding region of Attica during the reign of their Erechtheid king, Theseus,

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<sup>314</sup> Michael Stahl and Uwe Walter, "Athens," in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt Raaflaub and Hans van Wees, 1st ed. (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 139.

<sup>315</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea *Chronicles* 1.65

<sup>316</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea *Chronicles* 1.67

<sup>317</sup> Heracleides *Epitome of Aristotle's Athenian Constitution* Fragment 7, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.3.3, 4.5.10.

<sup>318</sup> Plato *Menexenus* 238d, *Symposium* 208d, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.3, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.3.3, 7.2.1, Marmor Parium *BNJ* 239.a23-a31.

which would suggest that this all occurred in the Bronze Age.<sup>319</sup> Despite this, most modern scholars agree that in truth, Athens did not unify the surrounding region of Attica until more than a half millennium later, during the Late Geometric Period or the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, when a series of roads were built linking the Athenian Acropolis to the Attic countryside as well as when a number of other Greek city-states were also showing signs of increased urbanization and *synoikism*.<sup>320</sup> In sum, much of what we hear from our ancient sources about the early history of Athens and its various forms of government has been called into serious question and should be treated with skepticism.

After the reign of the Perpetual and Decennial Archons, our ancient sources tell us that Athens' oligarchy was heavily reformed or restructured in 682 BC. At this time, the Archons' term of office was greatly reduced from ten years to just one.<sup>321</sup> In addition to this, the Eupatridae could now elect three of their members to serve as the city's chief magistrates. The first magistracy was the Eponymous Archon, the highest position of authority in Athens' government which was primarily responsible for managing civic affairs and bringing certain legal cases to trial.<sup>322</sup> The Eponymous Archon would spend their term of office dwelling in the *Prytaneum*, Athens' main seat of government where the city's central hearth was situated and each Eponymous Archon had their year of service named in their honour.<sup>323</sup> The second most powerful magistracy under this Athenian oligarchy was the Polemarch, tasked with leading Athens' military forces and making important war-time preparations or decisions.<sup>324</sup> The final

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<sup>319</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.15.2, Plutarch *Life of Theseus* 24.

<sup>320</sup> John K. Papadopoulos, "The Emergence of the Polis," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens*, ed. Jenifer Neils and Dylan K. Rogers (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 37. Steven Diamant, "Theseus and the Unification of Attica," *Hesperia Supplements* 19 (1982), 45.

<sup>321</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea *Chronicles* 1.67, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 4.15.1.

<sup>322</sup> William E. Dunstan, *Ancient Greece* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 104.

<sup>323</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.5

<sup>324</sup> William E. Dunstan, *Ancient Greece*, 104.

major office was that of the Archon Basileus, which, despite its name, was the least powerful of the three. The Archon Basileus primarily functioned as Athens' religious figurehead and would serve an important priestly role during certain festivals such as at the Anthesteria, where they were required to ritually hand over their wives to the god Dionysus (for more on this topic and how it may be related to the Phoenicians see pages 115-116).<sup>325</sup>

In addition to these three chief magistracies, we hear of several minor positions within this oligarchic government. For example, six members of the Eupatridae could also be elected to serve as Junior Archons or *Thesmothetae*, who were assigned to legislative roles in the city.<sup>326</sup> We also hear of positions such as the superintendents, treasurers, and clerks, although we seem to know less details about these positions, other than that they appear to have been elected through a show of hands at this time.<sup>327</sup> In addition to these various offices, all adult male Athenians who possessed more wealth than the lowest class of citizens, the *Thetes*,<sup>328</sup> were permitted to take part in their government's political decision-making by serving in the *Ecclesia*, Athens' popular assembly that would vote and deliberate on important matters of state.<sup>329</sup> Lastly, under this new Athenian oligarchy, former Eponymous Archons, Polemarchs, and Archon Basileis, became permanent members of the Areopagus, a council which, like Sparta's Gerousia, mainly served as an advisory body for the city's leaders and as a jury during important legal

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<sup>325</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.5, 57.1, Pseudo-Demosthenes *Against Neaera*, 73-76.

Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, 105, argues that this ritual was intended to recreate the myth of when King Theseus gave Ariadne away to Dionysus.

<sup>326</sup> Federica Carugati, *Creating a Constitution: Law, Democracy, and Growth in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 23.

<sup>327</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 54.3, Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 14, 25.

<sup>328</sup> Plutarch *Life of Solon* 18.2, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 7.3.

<sup>329</sup> Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History*, 15-16, 18-19.

proceedings, especially homicide trials (for more information on the similarities between the Areopagus, Gerousia, and other councils of elders in antiquity, see pages 119-122).<sup>330</sup>

Unlike the early Iron Age history of Athens, this development towards a broader, oligarchic government around 682 BC is well-attested and generally accepted as historical fact. For example, most modern scholars agree that by the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Areopagus hill does, in fact, appear to start being used as the site of Athens' homicide trials and other legal proceedings.<sup>331</sup> Moreover, archaeologists have discovered fragments of the original stele used by the Athenians up until the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to record the names of each of their annual Archons. Although the names of the Archons who ruled before 548 BC are no longer extant, based on what the surviving fragments of the inscription indicate about its overall length, scholars estimate that this list of names would have stretched considerably further back in time,<sup>332</sup> to around the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>333</sup> In addition to this, there is the so-called Parian Marble, a 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC stele that also provides the names of each year's Eponymous Archon in Athens. The inscription on this stele is preserved in much better condition and lists Athens' annual Archons as far back as Lysiadas, an individual who, according to the chronology, appears to have ruled in the year 682/681 BC, which is precisely when our sources say this system of annual Archons was introduced.<sup>334</sup>

Because this change in Athens' government in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC does appear to be well-attested and corroborated, unlike what we hear about earlier periods in Athenian history,

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<sup>330</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.6, 4.4, 8.4, 16.8, 57.3.

<sup>331</sup> Robert W. Wallace, *The Areopagus Council, to 307 BC* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 30-31.

<sup>332</sup> Plato *Hippias Major* 285e seems to imply that this very list, displayed publicly in the Athenian agora, contained the names of Archons stretching at least as far back as Solon (594/3 BC).

<sup>333</sup> Donald W. Bradeen, "The Fifth-Century Archon List," *Hesperia* 32, no. 2 (1963), 197-198.

<sup>334</sup> T. J. Cadoux, "The Athenian Archons from Kreon to Hypsichides," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 68 (1948), 88-89.

perhaps 682 BC, in truth, marks the year when Athens officially shifted away from its traditional monarchy towards its first ever oligarchy.<sup>335</sup> If this were the case, then it would certainly make more sense chronologically with what we hear was going on elsewhere in the Greek world at the time. As previously mentioned, it was only 65 years before this change in Athenian government that Corinth abolished its traditional monarchy and established its first oligarchy in 747 BC. Similarly, it was right around this time, in the late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC that the Spartan king Theopompus was said to have established the office of the Ephors, thereby turning Sparta's government into a much more oligarchic system and relegating Sparta's kings to a primarily religious role in society, much like the role that the Archon Basileis seem to have served under this Athenian oligarchy. Having said that, it is important to note that some scholars prefer a slightly earlier date for the abolishment of Athens' monarchy, around the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. They argue that at this point, as the region of Attica was unifying through the process of *synoikism*, Athens' king along with the kings (*basileis*) of the other villages in Attica decided as a compromise, to relinquish their positions and establish a broader system of rule where power could be more evenly shared.<sup>336</sup>

Regardless of whether the Athenians abolished their monarchy in 682 BC, this year seems to mark an important stage in Athens' development towards a broader system of government. After these reforms, power no longer resided in the hands of a single ruler who reigned for a lengthy period of time, but was now distributed among several individuals who

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<sup>335</sup> David D. Phillips, *The Law of Ancient Athens* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 2. Robert W. Wallace, *The Areopagus Council, to 307 BC*, 32-33.

<sup>336</sup> Ron Owens, *Solon of Athens: Poet, Philosopher, Soldier, Statesman* (Brighton, England: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 39-40. J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece*, ed. Russell Meiggs, 4th ed. (London, England: Macmillan Education, 1977), 170. Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World, Ca. 1200-479 BCE*, 135. Jan Paul Crielaard, "Cities," in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Hans van Wees, 1st ed. (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 365.

occupied various annual positions or magistracies. Moreover, all but the lowest class of Athenian citizens now became eligible to serve at least some role in their government's political decision-making by being part of the *Ecclesia*. Having said that, it is important to bear in mind that this system was still far from democratic as only the members of Athens' noble family, the Eupatridae were permitted to run for the highest positions of power.<sup>337</sup> Moreover, because elections were achieved through a show of hands, votes were not kept anonymous and could therefore be influenced by one's peers or superiors.<sup>338</sup> Ultimately, while the creation of this oligarchy did lead to a broader system of rule, within just fifty of years of its existence, by the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, this system seems to have encountered some serious problems.

Our first indication of major political tension within this Athenian oligarchy appears around 632 BC with the so-called Cylonian Affair. According to ancient historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides, this event occurred when an Athenian aristocrat named Cylon, after accruing a great deal of popularity and support from the masses (thanks in large part to his recent victory at the Olympic Games), decided to launch a coup and seized the Acropolis with his followers in attempt to make himself the city's tyrant.<sup>339</sup> Although this coup was ultimately unsuccessful and Cylon's supporters were, by and large, put to death for their involvement in the conspiracy, this event nevertheless demonstrates a growing sense of political unrest or *stasis* in Athens at the time and appears to have loomed large over the subsequent decades as Athens' oligarchy began to soon push for various legal reforms.

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<sup>337</sup> Robert W. Wallace, "Revolutions and a New Order in Solonian Athens and Archaic Greece," in *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub, Josiah Ober, and Robert Wallace, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 49. William E. Dunstan, *Ancient Greece*, 103-104. Federica Carugati, *Creating a Constitution: Law, Democracy, and Growth in Ancient Athens*, 23.

<sup>338</sup> Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History*, 18-19, demonstrates that at this point in time, the *Ecclesia* was simply expected to ratify or approve of whatever was being proposed by the city's leaders.

<sup>339</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.71, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.126, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 12.

The first major wave of legal reforms occurred just ten years after the Cylonian Affair, around 621 BC under the instigation of Athens' famous lawgiver, Draco. According to our sources, Draco was assigned by the Athenians to create the city's first ever written code of laws and to enact various reforms in an effort to abate the growing social tensions and factionalism.<sup>340</sup> On the one hand, Draco's laws had a reputation for being rather harsh, from which we get the meaning of the modern English word 'draconian.'<sup>341</sup> Aristotle, for example, goes so far as to say that, "there is nothing original worth mentioning about Draco's laws except their severity."<sup>342</sup> The main reason for this harsh reputation appears to have been due to the severe penalties that Draco imposed on those who had broken his rules. For instance, our ancient literary sources tell us that under Draco, even petty crimes like theft or idling were punishable by death.<sup>343</sup> Likewise, archaeologists have discovered a 5<sup>th</sup> century BC stele containing a copy of Draco's homicide law, which states that even those who were convicted of killing somebody by accident or without intent were to be permanently exiled from the city.<sup>344</sup>

On the other hand, Draco seems to have been remembered as a wise and well-respected lawmaker.<sup>345</sup> One reason for this, may have been because he was the first to commit Athens' laws to writing.<sup>346</sup> Prior to this, the laws of Athens appear to have been preserved orally by the

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<sup>340</sup> Plutarch *Life of Solon* 13, Gellius *Attic Nights* 11.18.2.

<sup>341</sup> Herodotus as quoted in Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.1400b.19-20, Demades as quoted in Plutarch *Life of Solon* 17.2, Gellius *Attic Nights* 11.18.4.

<sup>342</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1274b. Translation taken from: Alfred C. Schlesinger "Draco in the Hearts of His Countrymen" *Classical Philology* 19 no. 4 (Oct. 1924), 371.

<sup>343</sup> Plutarch *Life of Solon* 17.1, Gellius *Attic Nights* 11.18.3

<sup>344</sup> Chris Carey, "In Search of Drakon," *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 59 (2013), 37.

This law is also quoted in Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 6.11.6

<sup>345</sup> Xenophon *Economics* 14.4, Demosthenes *Against Timocrates* 211, Aeschines *Against Timarchus* 6, Cicero *De Re Publica* 2.2, *De Oratore* 1.197, Gellius *Attic Nights* 11.18.1, Lucian *Slander* 8, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.55 (quoting Lysias' *Against Nicias*).

<sup>346</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 41.2, *Politics* 2.1274b, Demosthenes *Against Aristocrates* 28, 51.

Archons,<sup>347</sup> who were therefore at liberty to distort the legal system to their advantage or to the benefit of their aristocratic clan, the Eupatridae.<sup>348</sup> By writing his laws down, however, and by permanently displaying them to the public on wooden tablets (*axones*), Draco appears to have done away with this system and created a greater sense of equality under the law or *isonomy*.<sup>349</sup>

Perhaps Euripides summarizes this point best, when, in the *Suppliants*, he claims that:

...a tyrant [is a man] in whose keeping and in his alone the law resides, and in that case, equality is at an end. But when the laws are written down, rich and weak [men] alike have equal justice, and it is open to the weaker [man] to use the same language to the prosperous [man] when he is reviled by him, and the weaker [man] prevails over the stronger [man] if he has justice on his side.<sup>350</sup>

Our ancient literary sources also tell us that Draco enacted several reforms that allowed Athenians who were not Eupatrids to have a larger role in government. For example, Draco is said to have allowed all adult male citizens possessing properties worth more than ten minae, to run for the archonship and to serve as treasurers.<sup>351</sup> Meanwhile, he declared all citizens with legitimate children and more wealth than 100 minae eligible to serve as *strategoï* and *hipparchoi*,<sup>352</sup> military positions that were subordinate to the Polemarch.<sup>353</sup> Lastly, Draco is said to have granted all male citizens over the age of thirty who could afford equipping themselves

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<sup>347</sup> This seems fairly safe to assume, considering that it would have been impossible for the junior archons to have acted as *Thesmothetai* ‘legislators,’ or for former archons to have served as judges in the Areopagus, had they not known what the pre-existing oral laws were.

<sup>348</sup> “You see that the laws stand as they were originally written, whereas the words of rascals [τῶν συκοφαντῶν] are spoken to fit the day and the occasion.”- Aeschines *Speech on the Embassy* 66. Translation taken from: C. D. Adams, trans. *Aeschines’ Speeches*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), 209. This sentiment is expressed in a number of other ancient sources too such as Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 8.1.22, Isaeus *On the Estate of Dicaeogenes* 25, or Solon as quoted in Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 12.4.

<sup>349</sup> For more on the apparent benefits of written laws see Rosalind Thomas, “Writing, Law, and Written Law,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Law*, ed. Michael Gagarin and David Cohen (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 46-49.

<sup>350</sup> Euripides *Suppliants* 429-437. Translation taken from: Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O’Neill Jr., eds., *The Complete Greek Drama: All the Extant Tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the Comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, in a Variety of Translations*, vol. 1 trans. E. P. Coleridge (New York, NY: Random House 1938), 930.

<sup>351</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 4.2

<sup>352</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 4.2.

<sup>353</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.110-111.

with hoplite armour the right to be elected into the Boule, a new council of 400 citizens, which seems to have taken over some of the advisory duties of the Areopagus.<sup>354</sup> Perhaps this reveals that Draco's laws were designed, in part, to appease the city's citizen-soldiers, much like the aforementioned Spartan reforms of Lycurgus (see pages 65-68, for more on this topic).

With that said, one should bear in mind that our information on Draco's reforms is rather unclear and should all be treated with a degree of skepticism as our surviving ancient literary sources frequently contradict each other on the matter. For example, Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians* claims that Draco established Athens' council of 400, but then later, inexplicably, goes on to say that it was Solon who created Athens' first Boule,<sup>355</sup> a tradition that Plutarch seems to repeat in his *Life of Solon*.<sup>356</sup> In addition to this, all of our sources are likely being influenced by later events in Athenian history, such as when in 411 BC an oligarchic council of 400 citizens seized control of the city and tried to legitimize their rule by claiming that they were simply restoring one of Athens' oldest institutions.<sup>357</sup> This of course only further distorts our modern understanding of the history of Athens' early legal reforms. Lastly, one should always be wary of the fact that our ancient literary sources have a tendency to attribute almost all of a city's customs or institutions to a particular famous lawgiver (as we have already seen with the Spartan reforms of Lycurgus, described on pages 66-67).

In the end, Draco's laws do not seem to have succeeded in their goal of curbing Athens' growing social tensions or creating stability, as they would only last for around twenty-five years

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<sup>354</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 4.3.

<sup>355</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 8.4.

<sup>356</sup> Plutarch *Life of Solon* 19.1.

<sup>357</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 8.65-69, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 31.1.

Similarly, we hear that after Thrasybulus ousted the 'Thirty Tyrants' from Athens in 403 BC, he tried to legitimize his rule by also claiming that he was simply restoring the laws of Draco and Solon (Andocides *On the Mysteries* 81-83).

before being almost entirely repealed and replaced by a new wave of legislative reforms.<sup>358</sup> According to our ancient sources, in the year 594/3 BC, the Eponymous Archon Solon was compelled to create another series of laws in an effort to abate Athens' political unrest or *stasis*.<sup>359</sup> By this point in time, we hear that at least one major problem in Athens was that the lower classes were becoming increasingly unable to pay their debts, so much so that many citizens were being forced into debt slavery. In response to this, Solon is said to have abolished the practice of debt bondage and to have forgiven all existing loans.<sup>360</sup>

Like Draco, Solon is also said to have created various reforms which enabled more Athenians to take part in government. Solon reorganized the city's population into four economic classes, the *Pentakosiomedimnoi*, *Hippeis*, *Zeugitai*, and *Thetes*.<sup>361</sup> The wealthiest class, the *Pentakosiomedimnoi*, which consisted of individuals who earned more than 500 bushels-worth of grain each year, were given the exclusive right to serve as treasurers, Archons, and members of the Areopagus.<sup>362</sup> Meanwhile, the remaining magistracies were made available to the second and third highest classes, the *Hippeis* and *Zeugitai*, which consisted of individuals who earned more than 300 and 200 bushels-worth of grain respectively.<sup>363</sup> Those who belonged to the lowest class of Athenian citizens, the *Thetes*, remained excluded from political office, but were granted the right to serve as members of the *Ecclesia* and as jurors in the *Heliaia*, a newly-founded lawcourt which seems to have taken over some of the former duties of the Areopagus.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 7.1, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 17.1, Gellius *Attic Nights* 11.18.4

<sup>359</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.29, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 13.1, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 14.2, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.62.

<sup>360</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.2, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 5.65.1, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 13, 15.3-7, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.45

<sup>361</sup> Michael Stahl and Uwe Walter, "Athens," 146-147.

<sup>362</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 43.1

<sup>363</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1274a, *Constitution of the Athenians* 7.3.

<sup>364</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 7.3, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 18.2.

As a whole, Solon's reforms appear to have earned him a great deal of popularity and admiration. Many ancient sources treat him as one of Athens' most important founding figures, while others even go so far as to claim that he was as one of the Seven Sages of ancient Greece.<sup>365</sup> Because Solon developed this legendary-like status in Athens, one needs to be very cautious of what our ancient sources claim as they may fall into the habit of misattributing various later reforms or institutions to him. For example, some sources suggest that Solon introduced the practice of selecting Archons and other magistracies by lot,<sup>366</sup> when, in truth, most modern scholars agree that this practice was not invented until almost a century later, perhaps as late as 487 BC.<sup>367</sup> This tendency in our ancient sources to view Solon as an almost proto-democratic lawgiver or as the direct precursor to the later reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BC,<sup>368</sup> clouds our understanding of this historical figure. While we can certainly tell from the surviving fragments of Solon's own poetry that his reforms were, to some extent, designed to curb the unrestrained powers and actions of Athens' political elites,<sup>369</sup> we must also recognize that his reforms were, by no means, meant to fully empower the masses (*demos*) or uproot the status quo. In his poetry, Solon calls the people of Athens 'empty-headed [*χαῦνος νόος*]',<sup>370</sup> and says that the rights he established for them were sufficient, arguing that "the masses [*δῆμος*] would best follow their leaders if they are neither given too much freedom nor subjected to too

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<sup>365</sup> Plato *Protagoras* 343a, *Timaeus* 20e, Demosthenes *The Erotic Essay* 50, Isagoras *Antidosis* 235, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 9.1.2, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.13, Plutarch *The Dinner of the Seven Wise Men*, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 10.24.1.

<sup>366</sup> Isocrates *Areopagiticus* 22, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 8.1,

<sup>367</sup> Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, "Five Notes on Solon's Constitution," in *Athenian Democratic Origins and Other Essays*, ed. David Harvey and Robert Parker (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 99.

<sup>368</sup> Aristophanes *Clouds* 1189, Aeschines *Against Ctesiphon* 257, Demosthenes *On the Crown* 6, Hyperides *Against Athenogenes* 21, Isocrates *Areopagiticus* 16-17, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 9.1.4.

<sup>369</sup> Solon as quoted in Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 5.2, Demosthenes *On the Embassy* 255, and Plutarch *Life of Solon* 14.2

<sup>370</sup> Solon as quoted in Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 9.20.2. Solon expresses a very similar sentiment in another fragment of his poetry quoted in this same passage of Diodorus, where he calls the masses ignorant.

much restraint. For excess breeds insolence, whenever great prosperity comes to men who are not sound of mind.”<sup>371</sup>

Despite these challenges, modern scholars agree that overall, this period of legal reforms under Solon does appear to have shifted Athens’ government away from a system that prioritized the status of one’s birth or family (i.e. the Eupatridae), towards a timocracy or a system that emphasized one’s worth.<sup>372</sup> Under this new timocratic system, an Athenian’s τιμή or ‘worth’ seems to have been determined not just by their personal wealth, but, to some degree, by their ability to serve as soldiers in the city’s army, as the names of Athens’ new social classes, like the *Hippeis* or *Zeugetai*, appear to have derived from various military classifications.<sup>373</sup> From this, perhaps we can assume that Solon’s reforms were, in some ways, intended to appease Athens’ citizen soldiers as well as its wealthy inhabitants (i.e. the *nouveaux riches*) who did not belong to the city’s traditional aristocratic families and were therefore desirous of a larger role in politics.<sup>374</sup> With that said, in recent years some scholars have pushed back against the notion that in Archaic Athens, citizenship and status were primarily determined by calculating one’s wealth or possessions. Alain Duplouy, for example, argues that citizenship was determined, not by carefully measuring one’s worth, but by observing their behavior and the way they presented themselves in public. According to Duplouy, in order to be considered a ‘citizen’ in the Archaic Period, one needed to regularly participate in local sacrifices and religious festivals, adhere to the city’s customs and traditions (*nomoi*), wear certain attire, and behave in a way that was befitting

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<sup>371</sup> Solon says this in two fragments of his poetry quoted in Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 12.1-2. Translation taken from: Douglas E. Gerber, trans., *Greek Elegiac Poetry: Tyrtaeus, Solon, Theognis, and Mimnermus*, Loeb Classical Library 258 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 123.

<sup>372</sup> Kurt A. Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan Eunomia, or: What to Do with Solon's Timocracy?,” in *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches*, ed. Josine Blok and André Lardinois (Boston, MA: Brill, 2006), 422-423.

<sup>373</sup> Kurt A. Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan Eunomia, or: What to Do with Solon's Timocracy?,” 408-409.

<sup>374</sup> Robert W. Wallace, “Revolutions and a New Order in Solonian Athens and Archaic Greece,” 60-61.

of one's social standing.<sup>375</sup> Thus, perhaps we should view Athenian citizenship at the time of Solon not necessarily as a right or privilege that was allotted to people on the basis of their worth, but as a sort of performance that people were expected to participate in as a way of proving or displaying their wealth and status to the community.

Be that as it may, in the end, Solon does not appear to have accomplished enough to diminish Athens' growing political unrest or social tensions. We are told that after creating his constitution, Solon made all Athenians swear oaths to ratify and abide by his new laws.<sup>376</sup> He then left the city for a period of ten years, so that during this time, he could not be approached by any fellow Athenians wanting to convince him to repeal or abolish his acts of legislation.<sup>377</sup> Within these ten years of Solon's absence, we are told that at least twice, Athens fell into a period of anarchy, where they were unable to choose an Eponymous Archon for the year and were thus, forced to leave the position vacant.<sup>378</sup> Within these ten years, we are also told that there was an Eponymous Archon named Damasias, who refused to step down from his position after his term of office had expired and instead continued to hold the archonship for an extra fourteen months before eventually being violently deposed by his political rivals.<sup>379</sup> All of these anecdotes reveal that things were neither running smoothly nor going well in Athens in the immediate aftermath of Solon's reforms. By the end of his life, Solon would ultimately see Athens' oligarchy completely overturned when in 561 BC a distant relative of his, Peisistratus,

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<sup>375</sup> Alain Duplouy, "The Making of the Greek City: An Athenian Case Study," in *Rethinking Athens Before the Persian Wars*, ed. Constanze Graml, Vincenzo Capozzoli, and Annarita Doronzio (Munich, Germany: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2019), 207-209.

<sup>376</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.29.2, Demosthenes *On the Crown* 6, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 25.2.

<sup>377</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.29.1, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 11.1, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 25.4.

<sup>378</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 13.1

<sup>379</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 13.2.

seized control of the city and reinstated a form of monarchical rule by becoming Athens' first tyrant.<sup>380</sup>

According to our ancient sources, Peisistratus, like the Corinthian tyrant Cypselus, was able to seize power through demagoguery or appealing to the masses.<sup>381</sup> By the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, we hear that three major political factions had emerged in Athens: the Men of the Plains, the Men of the Coast, and the Men of the Hills.<sup>382</sup> This last party appears to have been the most disenfranchised of the three as it mostly consisted of individuals belonging to the poorest class of Athenian citizens, the *Thetes*.<sup>383</sup> According to our surviving ancient sources, it was primarily through the support of the Men of the Hills that Peisistratus was able to seize power as Athens' tyrant in 561 BC.<sup>384</sup> Although Peisistratus would eventually be overthrown in 556 BC, he was able to return from his exile and rule over Athens twice more as tyrant, with his longest reign lasting from 546 BC to his death in 527 BC. Throughout his three reigns, Peisistratus seems to have maintained the avid support of the lower classes by pursuing various populist policies. For example, we hear that Peisistratus made it easier for lower class Athenians to own farmlands by refusing to tax their properties and by giving out generous loans.<sup>385</sup> We also hear that Peisistratus oversaw the construction of a number of public buildings in Athens such as the temple of Olympian Zeus,<sup>386</sup> the temples of Athena and Dionysus on the Acropolis,<sup>387</sup> the temple of Apollo

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<sup>380</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 14.2-3, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 9.20, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.49-50, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 32.3, Gellius *Attic Nights* 17.21.5.

<sup>381</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1310b

<sup>382</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.59.3, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 13.4, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 13.1.

<sup>383</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 13.5, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 29.1.

<sup>384</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.59.3, Aristotle *Politics* 5.1305a.

<sup>385</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 16.2-6.

<sup>386</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1313b.

<sup>387</sup> Victor Parker, "Tyrants and Lawgivers," 30.

Patroos in the Agora, and more.<sup>388</sup> Peisistratus also established several public celebrations or festivities, the most famous of which was perhaps the Greater Panathenaic Games, Athens' quadrennial sporting competition.<sup>389</sup> Furthermore, he founded the Greater Dionysia, the festival that gave rise to Athenian drama and was therefore, another major source of public entertainment.<sup>390</sup> That said, I should, once again mention that in recent years, some scholars like Greg Anderson have argued against the notion that Greek tyrants were as popular and revolutionary as our ancient sources claim or that their efforts to gain the support of the masses (*demos*) were necessarily radical in comparison to the efforts of contemporary oligarchical leaders.<sup>391</sup>

Be that as it may, Peisistratus seems to have received a great deal of political support not only from Athens' *Thetes*, but from the local merchant class as well (much like Cypselus, as discussed on pages 55-56).<sup>392</sup> Various ancient literary sources like Herodotus or Aristotle, claim that Peisistratus was able to seize control of Athens for his second time by forming an alliance with Megacles, the leader of the mercantile Men of the Coast.<sup>393</sup> The support of Megacles and, by extension, the traders and merchants who formed the coastal party, seems to have been crucial for Peisistratus' tyranny.<sup>394</sup> Although Megacles' descendants, the Alcmaeonidae, would later claim that they were staunch enemies of the Peisistratid tyrants and were exiled from the city for

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<sup>388</sup> Charles W. Hedrick, "The Temple and Cult of Apollo Patroos in Athens," *American Journal of Archaeology* 92, no. 2 (April 1988), 206.

According to Theopompus (as quoted in Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 12.533a), Peisistratus also converted his private gardens into a public space.

<sup>389</sup> Claudia Zatta, "Making History Mythical: The Golden Age of Peisistratus," *Arethusa* 43, no. 1 (2010), 56.

<sup>390</sup> Claudia Zatta, "Making History Mythical: The Golden Age of Peisistratus," 56.

<sup>391</sup> Greg Anderson, "Before *Tyrannoi* Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," 202.

<sup>392</sup> Pavel Oliva, "The Early Tyranny," 370-372.

<sup>393</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.60.2, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 14.4

<sup>394</sup> When Peisistratus is described eventually falling out of favor with Megacles, he is soon overthrown and exiled from Athens according to Herodotus *Histories* 1.61.2, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 15.1. More famously in 510 BC, the Peisistratid tyrant Hippias was overthrown and exiled after falling out of favor with *Alcmaeonid*, Cleisthenes according to Herodotus *Histories* 5.63.1-2.

opposing their rule,<sup>395</sup> in truth, the aforementioned 5<sup>th</sup> century Archon List reveals that the Alcmaeonidae continued to faithfully serve under the Peisistratids, providing them with the invaluable support of the Men of the Coast, until at least 525/4 BC.<sup>396</sup>

If Peisistratus and his successors did indeed receive strong support from the local merchant class, then this would explain why they devoted so much effort towards various policies of commercial expansion throughout their reigns. For example, they appear to have strengthened Athens' ties with Macedonia, most likely in an effort to get more involved in the region's gold, silver, and timber trade.<sup>397</sup> Peisistratus himself would spend his second exile (556-546 BC) living along the timber-rich shores of the Strymon river and near the mines of Mount Pangaeus, which suggests that he already had close connections in the area by this time.<sup>398</sup> During his exile there, Peisistratus is also said to have founded the colony of Rhaecelus along the coast of the Thermaic Gulf.<sup>399</sup> Athens' relations with Macedonia seem to have only continued to grow under the rule of Peisistratus' sons, as we hear that Hippias, after being overthrown and exiled from Athens in 510 BC, was welcomed with open arms by King Amyntas I and offered to rule over the Macedonian city of Anthemus.<sup>400</sup> In addition to developing these close ties with Macedon, the Peisistratids strove for control over the Hellespont, most likely in an effort to get more involved in the Black Sea's grain trade.<sup>401</sup> Under Peisistratus' reign, Athens seized control

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<sup>395</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.64.3, 5.62.2, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.126.12, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 30.4.

<sup>396</sup> Michael Stahl and Uwe Walter, "Athens," 153.

<sup>397</sup> Floris van den Eijnde, "The 'First Athenian Empire'? Athenian Overseas Interests in the Archaic Period," in *Empires of the Sea: Maritime Power Networks in World History*, ed. Rolf Strootman, Floris van den Eijnde, and Roy van Wijk (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 62.

<sup>398</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.64.1, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 15.2.

<sup>399</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 15.2.

<sup>400</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.94.1 Athens' growing ties with Macedon at this time, also explains why King Alexander I was sent as a messenger to Athenians during the Greco-Persian Wars and is called their *proxenos* in Herodotus *Histories* 8.136.1, 8.143.3.

<sup>401</sup> Floris van den Eijnde, "The 'First Athenian Empire'? Athenian Overseas Interests in the Archaic Period," 59.

of the Greek city of Sigeum in the Troad and left it under the rule of Peisistratus' illegitimate son, Hegesistratus.<sup>402</sup> Peisistratus' successor, Hippias would further cement Athens' ties to the region by marrying his daughter Archedice off to Aeantides, the tyrant of Lampaskos, another major city in the Troad.<sup>403</sup> Under Peisistratus, Athens would also gain control of the opposite side of the Hellespont Strait, by invading the Thracian Chersonese, fortifying this peninsula, and leaving it under the rule of Miltiades the Elder.<sup>404</sup>

As a whole, it was under the Peisistratid tyrants that Athens became a major commercial power. Athenian 'red figure' pottery quickly became the most popular style of the period and was traded extensively throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>405</sup> It was also under the Peisistratids that Athens began to mint its first coins.<sup>406</sup> Lastly, during the reign of the Peisistratids, the Athenian Agora appears to have undergone some major developments. Prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Athenian Agora appears to have been a small unorganized space situated along the southern slopes of the Acropolis, which contained mostly residential buildings and was used primarily for gatherings of the *Ecclesia*.<sup>407</sup> During the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, however, the Agora appears to have been relocated to its present position along the northwestern slopes of the Acropolis and transformed into a major public space and the commercial epicenter of the city.<sup>408</sup> The creation of this marketplace appears to have been accomplished, in large part, thanks to the efforts of the

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<sup>402</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.94.

<sup>403</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.59.3.

<sup>404</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 6.36.

<sup>405</sup> Thomas Mannack, "Greek Decorated Pottery I: Athenian Vase-Painting," 52, 58.

<sup>406</sup> John H. Kroll and Nancy M. Waggoner, "Dating the Earliest Coins of Athens, Corinth, and Aegina," *American Journal of Archaeology* 88, no. 3 (July 1984), 331.

<sup>407</sup> Homer A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens: The History, Shape, and Uses of an Ancient City Center* (Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1972), 1-2, 19.

<sup>408</sup> Homer A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens: The History, Shape, and Uses of an Ancient City Center*, 19.

Peisistratids, who marked the Agora's new borders with boundary stones,<sup>409</sup> built the marketplace's first fountain house, known as the *Enneakrounos*,<sup>410</sup> and established the Altar of the Twelve Gods, a structure that Pindar would later call the *omphalos* or 'navel stone' of the city.<sup>411</sup>

As a consequence of these efforts to appease Athens' merchant and lower classes, Peisistratus seems to have been remembered as a mild and well-respected ruler.<sup>412</sup> His two sons, Hipparchus and Hippias, however, have much harsher reputations in our surviving literary sources. For example, we are told that in 514 BC, Peisistratus' son Hipparchus made sexual advances on a young Athenian man named Harmodius. When his advances were rejected, Hipparchus decided to publicly humiliate Harmodius by declaring that his sister was not a virgin and was therefore, unworthy of participating in the festivities at the Panathenaic Games. Because of this humiliation and because he feared that Hipparchus would soon try to rape him, Harmodius, with the help of his lover, Aristogeiton, assassinated Hipparchus.<sup>413</sup> In the aftermath of this assassination, Hipparchus' brother Hippias started ruling over Athens with even more severity. We are told that Hippias became paranoid and began putting to death a number of Athenians whom he suspected of conspiring against him.<sup>414</sup> For example, we hear that Leaena, the *hetaera* or prostitute of one of the tyrannicides,<sup>415</sup> was ruthlessly tortured for her suspected

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<sup>409</sup> Homer A. Thompson and R. E. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens: The History, Shape, and Uses of an Ancient City Center*, 20.

<sup>410</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.15.5, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.14.1.

<sup>411</sup> Pindar as quoted in Dionysius of Halicarnassus *On Literary Composition* 22. Herodotus *Histories* 2.7.1 also seems to treat this altar as the epicenter of Athens.

<sup>412</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.59.6, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.54.5-6, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 16.2-9, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.23.1, Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 12.532f

<sup>413</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.55-56, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.54-57, Aristotle *Politics* 5.1311a, *Constitution of the Athenians* 18.2.

<sup>414</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.62.2, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.59.2.

<sup>415</sup> Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 13.596F says she was the prostitute of Harmodius, but Polyaeus *Stratagems* 8.25 and Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.23.2 say that she was the prostitute of Aristogeiton. Meanwhile Plutarch *De Garrulitate* 8 seems to imply that she was the prostitute of both.

involvement in the plot against Hipparchus' life.<sup>416</sup> We also hear that Hippias was a rather avaricious tyrant, who was always devising new ways of raising more money for himself at the public's expense.<sup>417</sup> With that being said, one should treat all of these accusations with a degree of skepticism as it had become a common cliché by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC to portray tyrants in this way, committing various atrocities and becoming increasingly despotic over the generations (as we've already discussed on pages 58-59, in regard to Corinth and its Cypselid tyrants).<sup>418</sup>

Regardless of whether these accusations of cruelty were true, within just four years of Hipparchus' assassination, Hippias seems to have quickly fallen out of favor with the Athenians. By 510 BC, the Alcmaeonid Cleisthenes had convinced the Spartans, as members of the Peloponnesian League, to come to Athens and overthrow the Peisistratid tyranny.<sup>419</sup> Although Hippias was able to flee the city during this uprising and later make several attempts to regain control of it, perhaps most famously at the battle of Marathon in 490 BC,<sup>420</sup> he would never again rule over Athens as tyrant. After deposing Hippias in 510 BC, we hear that the Spartans tried to establish a new oligarchy in Athens under the leadership of their close ally, Isagoras. When he attained the archonship in 508 BC, however, Isagoras and his pro-Spartan oligarchy seem to have soon crumbled apart. Isagoras' rule immediately received staunch opposition from Cleisthenes and his supporters, who had become a powerful political force in Athens by

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<sup>416</sup> Pliny the Elder *Natural History* 7.23, Athenaeus *The Deipnosophists* 13.596F, Polyaeus *Stratagems* 8.25, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.23.1-2, Plutarch *De Garrulitate* 8.

<sup>417</sup> Aristotle *Economics* 2.1347a.

<sup>418</sup> Thucydides highlights these tyrannical vices in *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.17 and claims that all tyrants shared a lust for wealth.

The gradual decline or worsening of tyrannies over the generations is described in several ancient sources such as Aristotle *Politics* 5.1315b or Herodotus *Histories* 5.92. These sources summarize the era of Greece's tyrants in a way that is rather similar to Aeschylus' famous parable of the lion cub in *Agamemnon* 717-736. Like a lion cub, the tyrants first seemed gentle and friendly, but after being adopted, grew increasingly savage and feral.

<sup>419</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.63-65, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 19.3-6, Isocrates *Antidosis* 232, *Areopagiticus* 16.

<sup>420</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.96.1, 6.102, 107, 109.3. Another attempt by Hippias to regain power in Athens, following his exile in 510 BC, is described in Herodotus *Histories* 5.91.1-2, 93.2-94.1

appealing to the masses (*demos*) and advocating for radical reforms.<sup>421</sup> The situation became so dire for Isagoras that he summoned the Spartan king, Cleomenes I and his army back to Athens to forcibly remove the Alcmaeonidae and seven hundred of their strongest supporters from the city. After banishing Cleisthenes, Isagoras attempted to pass a law that would limit the size of Athens' Boule. Outraged by all of this, the Athenian people rose up against Isagoras and King Cleomenes' forces and besieged them on the Acropolis.<sup>422</sup> When the Spartans surrendered just three days later and agreed to leave Attica under truce, Cleisthenes returned to Athens and began instituting a series of radical constitutional reforms.

Above all, Cleisthenes appears to have passed laws that allowed more Athenians to participate in government. We hear that he offered citizenship to a number of Athenian slaves and *metics* (i.e. resident foreigners).<sup>423</sup> Cleisthenes is also said to have reorganized the city's population by dividing it into ten new tribes or *phylai* and by giving each tribe the right to elect fifty of their members into the Boule.<sup>424</sup> Moreover, each tribe could now choose one of their members to serve as their official representative, known as a *phylarch*, and could elect one of Athens' ten *stratēgoi* or 'generals,' a military position that seems to have become considerably more powerful at this time.<sup>425</sup> As a whole, our sources claim that Cleisthenes' reforms allowed the masses (*demos*) to gain substantial political power and control over Athens' government, on account of which this new system was called a democracy.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>421</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.66-69, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 20.1-2.

<sup>422</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.72, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 20.3, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 3.4.2, 6.8.6.

<sup>423</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 3.1275b, Isocrates *On Peace* 50.

<sup>424</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.66.2-69.2, Aristotle *Politics* 6.1319b, *Constitution of the Athenians* 21.2-3, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.29.6.

<sup>425</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.69.2, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 22.2.

<sup>426</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.78, Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 22.1, Isocrates *Areopagiticus* 16-17, Plutarch *Aristides* 13.1

Even though our sources portray Cleisthenes as this revolutionary father of democracy, in truth, the system he created very much resembled an oligarchy. Under this new system of government, Athens' traditional aristocratic families would continue to hold the highest positions of power and rule over the city, just as they had always done. Cleisthenes' own family, the Alcmaeonidae, for example, were a prominent aristocratic clan in Athens since at least the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>427</sup> and after Cleisthenes' reforms, would continue to dominate Athenian politics until at least the late 5<sup>th</sup> century, when we see figures like Pericles or Alcibiades.<sup>428</sup> Because this 'democratic' system did not allow slaves, women, children, or resident foreigners (*metics*) to vote, scholars estimate that up to 90% of Attica's population would have been excluded from politics.<sup>429</sup> Moreover, the space where political speeches and votes were held under this new democratic system, the Pnyx, is estimated to have been able to contain at most, around 6,000 people.<sup>430</sup> This means that it would have essentially been impossible for Athens' assembly meetings to have been attended by all adult male citizens, since, by the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, there would have been around 30,000-50,000 of them in total.<sup>431</sup>

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the most radical or 'democratic' institutions of this government were for the most part, established many years after the reforms of Cleisthenes. For example, a number of scholars have argued that ostracism, the right Athenian citizens had to vote to remove their politicians from power and exile them from the city, was not established by Cleisthenes but more than three decades later, in 487 BC, as this is the first known instance when

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<sup>427</sup> Our earliest reference to the Alcmaeonidae is during the Cylonian affair described in Herodotus *Histories* 5.71, Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.126, Plutarch *Life of Solon* 12.

<sup>428</sup> Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.127, 5.43, Plutarch *Life of Alcibiades* 1.

<sup>429</sup> John Thorley, *Athenian Democracy* (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), 74.

<sup>430</sup> Mogens Herman Hansen, "The Athenian 'Ecclesia' and the Assembly-Place on the Pnyx," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 23, no. 3 (1982) 241-242.

<sup>431</sup> John Thorley, *Athenian Democracy*, 74.

an ostracism occurred.<sup>432</sup> As previously mentioned, some scholars believe that it was also in this year (487 BC) that the practice of selecting archons and other magistrates by lot was first introduced.<sup>433</sup> Be that as it may, it seems that the most progressive reforms of Athens' democracy were introduced even later than this, during the Classical Period. For example, it was only during the *Pentecontaetia* or the mid 5th century BC that the property requirements to run for the archonship were lowered, the Areopagus council's powers were significantly reduced, and citizens were granted the right to receive daily wages for serving as jurors.<sup>434</sup> As a result, it is fair to say that at least during the Archaic Period (800-480 BC), Athens' 'democracy' in truth, resembled more of an oligarchical system than anything.

In conclusion, from the early Iron Age to the dawn of the Classical Period, Athens' government underwent several drastic changes. At first, Athens, like most other Greek cities, relied on a monarchical system of rule and was governed by a series of kings (*basileis*). Our surviving sources then tell us that Athens began to gradually develop towards an oligarchy by first introducing the office of the Perpetual Archon, later replacing it with the position of the Decennial Archon, and by finally, reducing all magistracies to one-year terms. Out of these three developments, only the latter appears to have any historical basis as it can be corroborated by epigraphical evidence, which suggests that Athens did indeed develop an oligarchy with annual magistracies sometime around 682 BC. Even though the creation of this oligarchy did allow more Athenians to take part in government and did lead to a broader system of rule, by the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, it already seems to have encountered some major problems. We hear of

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<sup>432</sup> Wilfried Nippel, *Ancient and Modern Democracy: Two Concepts of Liberty?*, 14.

Donald Kagan, "The Origin and Purposes of Ostracism," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 30, no. 4 (Oct-Dec 1961), 394.

Norman A. Doenges, "Ostracism and the 'Boulai' of Kleisthenes," *Historia* 45, no. 4 (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 1996), 402-404.

<sup>433</sup> Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, "Five Notes on Solon's Constitution," 99.

<sup>434</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 27, Isocrates *On Peace* 130, Plutarch *Life of Pericles* 9.3-4.

aristocrats like Cylon, trying to seize power over Athens by becoming the city's popular ruler or 'tyrant.' We also hear of the major constitutional reforms instituted by Athens' two famous lawgivers, Draco and Solon. In the end, both Draco and Solon's efforts seem to have all been in vain as they were ultimately unable to fix Athens' growing social problems or stave off its oligarchy's impending doom. By 561 BC, the city's government would be completely overturned, when the Athenians reinstated a form of monarchical rule with Peisistratus and later, his two sons, serving as their tyrant. Peisistratus seems to have gained power, in large part, by championing the causes of the people and pursuing various commercial policies, but like Draco and Solon, his efforts do not seem to have accomplished enough to diminish Athens' political infighting or *stasis*. Moreover, the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC appears to have given rise to an increasing disdain for tyrants, not just within Athens, but throughout the ancient Greek world (for more on this topic, see my discussion on the Peloponnesian League on pages 74-75). Eventually the Peisistratids would be overthrown in 510 BC, and in the aftermath of the ensuing power struggle, Cleisthenes would found Athens' first ever democracy. One should recognize that within the Archaic Period, however, this 'democratic' system still very much resembled an oligarchy. Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that as a whole, these developments show that Athens gradually progressed toward a broader and more collective system of rule over the course of the Archaic Period. Athens began this period under a monarchy, but by the end of it, was operating under a mostly oligarchic form of rule, just like Corinth and Sparta.

## Chapter 7

### A History of Phoenician Oligarchies: From the Late Bronze Age to the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC

“The Carthaginians are considered to have an excellent form of government, which differs from that of any other state in several respects, though it is in some [respects] very much like the Spartan. Indeed, the Spartan, Cretan, and Carthaginian states closely resemble one another and are very different from any others. Many of the Carthaginian institutions are excellent. The superiority of their constitution is proved by the fact that the common people [*demos*] remain loyal to it. The Carthaginians have never had any rebellion [*stasis*] worth speaking of, and have never been under the rule of a tyrant.”<sup>435</sup>

– Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1272b

Having demonstrated that as the Archaic Period progressed, the various city-states of ancient Greece increasingly turned away from their traditional monarchical forms of government towards broader systems of rule, I shall now discuss the history of the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians, like the Mycenaean Greeks, appear to have first been divided into various kingdoms during the Bronze Age, each of which were under the rule of a local monarch and his dynastic successors.<sup>436</sup> For example, inscriptional evidence suggests that the Phoenician city of Byblos was ruled by a series of kings stretching at least as far back as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC.<sup>437</sup> Meanwhile, Tyre and Sidon appear to have had longstanding monarchical governments throughout the Bronze Age as well, the earliest evidence of which comes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>438</sup> This, to a certain extent, is not surprising as almost all of the major powers of the ancient Near East, such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Elamites, also relied on monarchical forms of government at this time.<sup>439</sup> What is perhaps more noteworthy, however, is that like Corinth, Sparta, and Athens, the city-states of Phoenicia appear to have gradually

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<sup>435</sup> Translation taken from: Benjamin Jowett, trans., *Aristotle's Politics*, 47.

<sup>436</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, “Political and Administrative Organization,” in *The Phoenicians*, ed. Sobatio Moscati (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1988), 126.

<sup>437</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 87.

<sup>438</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, trans. Mary Turton, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 144.

<sup>439</sup> Marc van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East Ca. 3000-323 BC*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 134-135.

reduced the powers of their kings in favor of adopting broader, oligarchical forms of government.

This chapter will provide a brief history of these political developments in Phoenicia and an overview of the surviving evidence of Phoenician oligarchies. In addition, I will draw close comparisons between these Phoenician political systems and the aforementioned political systems of archaic Greece. Perhaps most importantly, I will show that our surviving evidence indicates that this historical trend towards broader, oligarchical governments began several centuries *earlier* in Phoenicia than in Greece. This last point will be a crucial one for the sake of my thesis, as I will use it to argue that it is quite possible that the political developments of archaic Greece were in some ways inspired by these various Phoenician precursors or counterparts.

The earliest known evidence of the Phoenicians developing broader, potentially oligarchical political systems, comes from the late Bronze Age. At this time, the Phoenician cities of the Mediterranean coast were important allies or client states for the Egyptians, as they not only served as an important buffer zone against the more northern kingdoms of the Hittites and Mitanni, but also supplied the Egyptians with valuable trade goods such as cedar wood, textiles, carved ivory, finished metal objects,<sup>440</sup> and of course, the purple dye that the Phoenicians were famous for throughout antiquity.<sup>441</sup>

Perhaps our best sources of information on this period are the Amarna Letters of the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, which are the official correspondences made between the Egyptian administration

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<sup>440</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, "The Origins in the East," in *The Phoenicians*, ed. Sobatio Moscati (New York, NY: Abbeville Press, 1988), 29-30.

<sup>441</sup> The famous purple dye extracted from murex shells appears in the archaeological record of cities like Tyre, starting in the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC according to: Charlene Elliott, "Purple Past: Color Codification in the Ancient World," *Law & Social Inquiry* 33, no. 1 (2008), 178.

and its representatives or allies in the Levant. In addition to providing significant insight on the diplomatic relations between Egypt and its neighbours, these epistles reveal how various Phoenician cities were politically organized at this time. For example, we hear that Sidon was ruled by a king named Zimredda,<sup>442</sup> Tyre had a sovereign named Abi-Milku,<sup>443</sup> and Byblos similarly relied on a monarchical form of government, first under the reign of their king Rib-Addi,<sup>444</sup> and later under the reign of his brother, Ili-Rapih.<sup>445</sup> These kings seem to have served an important administrative role in their respective cities as they are frequently described forming their own political alliances,<sup>446</sup> waging wars,<sup>447</sup> and petitioning their causes directly to the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III and later, his successor Amenhotep IV (also known as Akhenaten).<sup>448</sup>

That said, these Phoenician kings do not seem to have held absolute power over their cities, but to have operated under broader political systems. This is perhaps best illustrated through the diction or word choice of the Amarna letters, as some notably diverge from the standard formula of these correspondences. For example, in one letter, it is not the king of Irqata,<sup>449</sup> but “Irqata and its elders” who write to the Egyptian pharaoh and request military aid.<sup>450</sup> Similarly, there is an instance where Abi-Milku, the king of Tyre, complains to the

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<sup>442</sup> Zimredda authors letters such as EA 144, 145 found in: William L. Moran, trans., *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 230-231. For brevity’s sake I will, from now on, be referring to letters only by their EA number, but shall be relying solely on Moran’s translation.

<sup>443</sup> Abi-Milku authors letters such as EA 146-155.

<sup>444</sup> Rib-Addi authors letters such as EA 68-95.

<sup>445</sup> Ili-Rapih authors letters such as EA 139, 140.

<sup>446</sup> Such as the political marriage between the king of Byblos and the king of Tyre described in EA 89 or the alliances that the king of Sidon and king of Beirut made with the Amurru according to EA 83.

<sup>447</sup> Such as Byblos’ war against the Amurru recorded in EA 121, Sidon’s war against the Apiru described in EA 144, or the hostilities between King Abi-Milku of Tyre and King Zimredda of Sidon reported in EA 146.

<sup>448</sup> King Rib-Addi of Byblos, for example, authored at least 64 of the 350 surviving Amarna letters according to: Louise M. Pryke, “The Many Complaints to Pharaoh of Rib-Addi of Byblos,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131, no. 3 (July-September 2011), 411.

<sup>449</sup> King Aduna of Irqata is mentioned in both EA 75 and 140.

<sup>450</sup> EA 100

Egyptian pharaoh about how King Zimredda of Sidon had formed an alliance, not with Arwad's respective king, but with the "men of Arwad," as a whole.<sup>451</sup> This curious phrasing seems to parallel a letter written by the king of Byblos, Rib-Addi, who laments that the city of Sumur was being attacked on the one hand, by the "sons of Abdi-Ashirti" (the king of Amurru), but on the other hand, by the "people of Arwad" collectively.<sup>452</sup> In fact, out of the entire corpus of the Amarna letters, we interestingly hear no mention whatsoever of a king ruling over the Phoenician city of Arwad.<sup>453</sup> Perhaps the most revealing or insightful letter on the topic of Phoenician government, is one written by King Rib-Addi of Byblos, who claims that although he wanted to form an alliance with King Hammuniri of Beirut, the "people of Byblos" insisted on forming an alliance with King Aziru of Amurru instead. Because of this, when Rib-Addi left for Beirut to exchange his new oaths of friendship, the "people of Byblos" decided to go behind their king's back and form an alliance with King Aziru of Amurru, on their own initiative. Later, when Rib-Addi returned from Beirut, he claims that the "people of Byblos" locked him out of his own city and forced him to live in exile with his new Beirutian allies.<sup>454</sup>

Apart from these examples, there are some other passages that are perhaps also worthy of mention, although they are admittedly more contentious or disputed. For instance, some scholars believe that one of the surviving Amarna letters was written to the Egyptian pharaoh by the "people of Byblos" as well.<sup>455</sup> This, however, is rather controversial as the text is highly fragmentary and consists of several lacunae. In truth, the opening lines of this letter, which would have clearly identified the writer, are illegible, leaving the authorship of this text a

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<sup>451</sup> EA 149

<sup>452</sup> EA 105

<sup>453</sup> Stephen Stockwell, "Israel and Phoenicia," in *The Edinburgh Companion to the History of Democracy*, 77.

<sup>454</sup> EA 138

<sup>455</sup> EA 131. Perhaps most famously argued in: William M. Flinders Petrie, *Syria and Egypt: From the Tell El Amarna Letters* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 99-100.

mystery.<sup>456</sup> Another controversial passage which may indicate that Phoenician monarchs did not hold complete authority over their cities, but shared power in some sort of broader political system, is a letter written by King Aziru, who complains about how the “magnates” of the Phoenician city of Sumur have been thwarting his political efforts.<sup>457</sup> The crux of the debate here is whether the “magnates” referenced in this passage should be understood to mean a group of local, Phoenician politicians who held sway over Sumur,<sup>458</sup> or if instead, it is simply referencing certain officials or administrators stationed in Sumur by the Egyptians themselves.<sup>459</sup> The last letter that is perhaps worth mentioning, is one that is written not by Tunip’s king,<sup>460</sup> but by the “citizens of Tunip,” who request military aid from the Egyptian pharaoh and claim to have written several other (now lost) letters as well.<sup>461</sup> The controversy surrounding this passage however, is that although many scholars have argued that Tunip was, in all likelihood, a city situated in northern Phoenicia,<sup>462</sup> its precise location remains unknown and is a topic of debate.<sup>463</sup>

As a whole, the abovementioned examples taken from the Amarna letters have been used by some scholars to argue that by the late Bronze Age, a few Phoenician city-states had even

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<sup>456</sup> Unlike Flinders Petrie, Moran doesn’t even bother trying to translate the first six lines of this letter, in: William L. Moran, trans., *The Amarna Letters*, 212.

<sup>457</sup> EA 157.

<sup>458</sup> As argued in Stephen Stockwell, “Israel and Phoenicia,” 76.

<sup>459</sup> As argued in n. 2 of William L. Moran, trans., *The Amarna Letters*, 243.

also see Marwan Kilani, *Byblos in the Late Bronze Age: Interactions between the Levantine and Egyptian World* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2020), 161.

<sup>460</sup> Tunip’s king, Aki-Teshub is mentioned only briefly in this letter. See n. 6 of William L. Moran, trans., *The Amarna Letters*, 131.

<sup>461</sup> EA 59.

<sup>462</sup> Michael C. Astour, “Tunip-Hamath and Its Region: A Contribution to the Historical Geography of Central Syria,” *Orientalia* 46, no. 1 (1997), 60.

Stephen Stockwell, “Israel and Phoenicia,” 77.

<sup>463</sup> Michael C. Astour, “Tunip-Hamath and Its Region: A Contribution to the Historical Geography of Central Syria,” 51.

developed broad, non-monarchical forms of rule.<sup>464</sup> This conclusion, however, is rather problematic. First of all, just because our surviving literary sources do not mention any kings ruling over certain Phoenician cities, like Arwad, does not mean that we can assume these cities, therefore, did not have monarchical governments, but more collective systems of rule. Secondly, even if one were to, for argument's sake, take the most charitable interpretation of a letter like EA 157 and assume that the Phoenician city of Sumur was indeed governed by a group of local 'magnates,' we still know absolutely nothing about *how* these officials attained their political positions to begin with. This is a crucial question that needs answering before any serious conclusions can be drawn about whether Sumur's government truly was a broad-based collective form of rule, as it is quite possible that these various 'magnates' were not elected by the city's citizenry or by the larger public at all, but were instead appointed by a very narrow group of aristocrats (which as we have already seen occurred in early archaic Corinth and Athens under the Bacchiadae and Eupatridae respectively).

While it is impossible to say whether the Amarna letters demonstrate the existence of broad non-monarchical governments in late Bronze Age Phoenicia, it is fair to say that they, at the very least, demonstrate that some Phoenician cities operated under political systems that were noticeably broader than any absolute monarchy.<sup>465</sup> Phoenician kings do not seem to have held complete control over their respective cities but could, in some cases, clearly face substantial opposition at home. Moreover, several letters appear to deliberately break convention and use broader, more collective language, which seems to indicate that some Phoenician cities had

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<sup>464</sup> As argued in: Stephen Stockwell, "Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States," 126-127. Or perhaps more infamously in: Martin Bernal, *Black Athena Writes Back*, ed. David Chioni Moore (London, England: Duke University Press, 2001), 356-357.

<sup>465</sup> Anson F. Rainey, "Amarna and Later: Aspects of Social History," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 172-173.

official governing bodies or councils that at times could make their own political decisions.<sup>466</sup>

The precise nature of these councils, however, is left rather obscure or vague. It is only by examining later evidence from the Iron Age that our understanding of this topic becomes more clear. Nevertheless, the Amarna letters are worthy of consideration, especially since they were written at a time when the Greeks were still firmly under the rule of their Mycenaean kings or *wanakes*, indicating that the movement towards broader, more collective governments seems to have begun several centuries *earlier* in Phoenicia than in Greece.

One of the earliest pieces of evidence from the Iron Age that provides important insight into the structure of Phoenician governments is the so-called Report of Wenamun. This 11<sup>th</sup> century BC text recounts the travels of an Egyptian priest named Wenamun to the Phoenician city of Byblos in order to retrieve cedar wood. Along his way, Wenamun suffers a number of misfortunes that each delay or prolong his trip and when he finally arrives in Byblos his struggles continue there as well. The report claims that after Wenamun met with the Byblian king, Zakerbaal, and made his request for lumber, the king summoned a meeting of his ‘assembly.’<sup>467</sup> The purpose of this ‘assembly’ meeting was to debate whether they should comply with Wenamun’s solicitations or instead extradite him to the Tjekker, a neighbouring people demanding his arrest. During this meeting, King Zakerbaal reveals that he is rather hesitant to arrest Wenamun as he is, after all, a guest and the priest of a very powerful deity (Ammon). Nevertheless, King Zakerbaal appears to be forced into a compromise as he agrees to let

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<sup>466</sup> This is, perhaps, not too dissimilar from the sort of collective language that we see appearing on Athenian inscriptions, following the creation of their democracy in 508 BC. For more on the topic of Athenian inscriptions and their emphasis on the fact that decisions were being made collectively by the Boule and people of Athens see: Anna Missiou, *Literacy and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 90-100.

<sup>467</sup> Report of Wenamun 2.71 found in: Miriam Lichtheim, ed., *Ancient Egyptian Literature Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), 567.

authorities pursue Wenamun immediately after departing from Byblos' harbour. The events recorded in the Report of Wenamun seem to demonstrate that at this time, the king of Byblos did not hold complete power over his city, but instead shared it in a broader, potentially oligarchical political system.<sup>468</sup> Kings like Zakerbaal appear to have been expected to consult their 'assembly' before making important political decisions and the members of this advisory body quite possibly held enough power to convince the king do something he really did not want to do.

The existence of this broader, potentially oligarchical political system in Byblos appears to be corroborated by the near contemporary coffin of the Byblian king, Ahiram. This 11<sup>th</sup> century BC sarcophagus contains an inscription that not only cautions any future kings from opening the coffin, but future 'governors' and 'commanders' of Byblos' army as well.<sup>469</sup> This inscription is worthy of consideration as it, like the Report of Wenamun, seems to indicate that the kings of Byblos at this time, did not hold complete authority over their city but shared it in a broader political system with various other important offices or magistracies.<sup>470</sup> Moreover, the fact that there appears to be three chief magistrates of the city, a 'governor' in charge of civic administration, a 'commander' in charge of the military, and a 'king' is noteworthy as it appears remarkably similar to the tripartite division of power that we later see in the oligarchy of archaic Athens, with its Eponymous Archon, Polemarch, and Basileus (which I have already discussed on pages 80-81).

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<sup>468</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, 145-146.

<sup>469</sup> Ahiram inscription, as found in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1982), 14.

<sup>470</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, "Political and Administrative Organization," 126.

Unfortunately, we have very little information about Phoenician political systems from the period immediately following the Report of Wenamun and Sarcophagus of Ahiiram, specifically the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. In fact, this lack of evidence has, in and of itself, led some scholars to believe that Phoenician monarchs were less important at this time as they, unlike most contemporary Near Eastern kings, seem to have made little effort to publicly flaunt their wealth or record their achievements.<sup>471</sup> If we are to trust our later ancient literary sources and what they have to say about this period of Phoenician history, we get a rather similar impression that kings grew increasingly less powerful or important over time. For example, even though the Tyrian king, Hiram I (980-947 BC) is described as a dominant and influential political figure,<sup>472</sup> we hear little to nothing about the exploits of any of his successors.<sup>473</sup> From this, scholars like Robert Drews have concluded that, "...after Hiram in the tenth century they [the kings of Tyre] are not imposing figures."<sup>474</sup>

The circumstances in Phoenicia at this time were perhaps not too dissimilar from neighbouring Syria, where there appears to have been a number of small Aramean polities throughout the early Iron Age, each of which were ruled by relatively minor kings, whose names and deeds are preserved, not so much in the inscriptions of the Arameans themselves, but in the scanty references of the nearby Assyrians and Luwians.<sup>475</sup> Moreover, these Aramean kings, like

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<sup>471</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, 144-145.

<sup>472</sup> Josephus *Against Apion* 1.17-18, *Jewish Antiquities* 7.65, 8.50-57, 141, 160. Our biblical sources for King Hiram include 1 Chronicles 14:1, 1 Kings 5, 7, 9, 10:11, 2 Samuel 5:11.

<sup>473</sup> For example, see how much information Josephus (quoting Menander of Ephesus) provides about Hiram in contrast to the other Tyrian kings in *Against Apion* 1.18.

<sup>474</sup> Robert Drews, "Phoenicians, Carthage, and the Spartan Eunomia," *The American Journal of Philology* 100, no. 1 (1979), 47. This assertion is reiterated in: Stephen Stockwell, "Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States," 127. This opinion, however, is not universally accepted as others have argued that Tyre's kings only started losing their importance after the reign of King Luli in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, as seen in: Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, 145.

<sup>475</sup> K. Lawson Younger, *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 109, 157.

their Phoenician counterparts, do not seem to have held absolute power over their kingdoms, but shared it with other officials and governing bodies in broader systems of rule.<sup>476</sup> For example, inscriptional evidence suggests that throughout the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, the city of Carchemish was ruled by its ‘Great King’ in conjunction with its ‘Country Lords.’<sup>477</sup>

Be that as it may, the little information that we do receive about Phoenician kings from the early Iron Age, gives us the impression that their role in society was, in large part, religious or priestly. This, to a certain extent, is not surprising considering the long history of similar ‘priest-kings’ in the Ancient Near East, especially the various city-states of Mesopotamia.<sup>478</sup> In fact, some scholars such as Piotr Steinkeller have argued that the earliest kings of Uruk and the other Sumerian city-states of the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC primarily drew their power and authority from serving as the priests of important local goddesses.<sup>479</sup> Thus, the sacerdotal function of Phoenician kings in the early Iron Age likely represents a much broader trend or older tradition of kings behaving in this way throughout the Bronze Age Near East.

At the Phoenician city of Byblos, we get the impression that early Iron Age kings served a priestly function in society, mainly from our surviving epigraphical evidence. For example, all four of the so-called Royal Byblian Inscriptions from the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC are epigraphs commemorating either a dedication or construction made by the king in honour of the city’s patron deity, Baalat Gebal.<sup>480</sup> Out of these four epigraphs, the Yehimilk inscription is perhaps the

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<sup>476</sup> Dagmar Kühn, “Society, Institutions, Law, and Economy,” in *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria*, ed. Herbert Niehr (Boston, MA: Brill, 2014), 44.

<sup>477</sup> K. Lawson Younger, *A Political History of the Arameans: From Their Origins to the End of Their Polities*, 119.

<sup>478</sup> Marc van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East Ca. 3000-323 BC*, 24-27.

<sup>479</sup> Piotr Steinkeller, “On Rulers, Priests, and Sacred Marriage: Tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship,” in *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East: Papers of the Second Colloquium on the Ancient Near East--the City and Its Life Held at the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan (Mitaka, Tokyo), March 22-24, 1996*, ed. Kazuko Watanabe (Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 116.

<sup>480</sup> See the Yehimilk, Abibaal, Elibaal, and Shipitbaal inscriptions in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 17-23.

most noteworthy as it not only invokes Baalat Gebal, but her consort, the supreme sky god Baal Shamin, along with an “assembly of the holy gods of Byblos.”<sup>481</sup> The reason why this could be of interest, is because the Byblians may very well be portraying their pantheon of gods – ruled not just by a divine king and queen but an ‘assembly’ of other deities – as operating in the same way as their own political system or government at this time. The tendency that people have for portraying their gods as ruling under the same power structures or social conditions as their own, is perhaps best summarized by Aristotle at the beginning of his *Politics* when he writes:

[The reason] why all races speak of the gods as ruled by a king, [is] because they themselves too are some of them actually now so ruled and in other cases used to be of old; and as men imagine the gods in human form, so also they suppose their manner of life to be like their own.<sup>482</sup>

Leaving this topic aside, the close connection between the kings of Byblos and their city’s tutelary divinity seems to have continued well into the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as evidenced by inscriptions like the Yehaumilk Stele, which likewise commemorates dedications made by the Byblian king in honor of Balaat Gebal.<sup>483</sup>

The circumstances surrounding Tyre and its monarchy during the early Iron Age, appear to have been much the same as its kings also seem to have served as the city’s chief religious officials. For example, some of the major feats attributed to the aforementioned 10<sup>th</sup> century BC king, Hiram I, include constructing the temples of Tyre’s patron deities, Melqart and Astarte, establishing Melqart’s main festival, the *Egersis*, rebuilding several older temples in the city, and

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<sup>481</sup> John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 18.

<sup>482</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 1.1252b. Translation taken from: H. Rackham trans., *Aristotle’s Politics*, Loeb Classical Library 264 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1932), 9.

<sup>483</sup> The Yehaumilk Stele, as translated in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 95.

making dedications to the god Baal.<sup>484</sup> Similarly, our sources refer to the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC Tyrian king, Ithobaal I, as a ‘priest of Astarte’<sup>485</sup> and his grandson, Sychaeus (also known as Acerbus), as a ‘priest of Melqart.’<sup>486</sup> Perhaps this also explains why Ithobaal’s daughter, Jezebel, is portrayed in biblical accounts promoting the cult of Melqart so adamantly, especially to King Ahab and the Israelite royal family.<sup>487</sup> The connection between Tyre’s monarchy and the cults of Melqart and Astarte seems to be corroborated by a 7<sup>th</sup> century BC treaty made between the Neo-Assyrian King Esarhaddon and King Baal of Tyre, which makes sure to invoke both of these deities in its closing lines.<sup>488</sup>

Finally, the kings of Sidon appear to have also had a close connection with their city’s tutelary gods, Eshmun and Astarte. This is perhaps best demonstrated through the inscriptions found on the sarcophagi of Sidon’s 6<sup>th</sup> century BC kings. For example, the epitaph found on the coffin of Eshmunazar II, boasts that he and his mother funded the construction of the city’s main temple of Eshmun.<sup>489</sup> This construction project seems to have continued later under the rule of his successor King Bodashtart as well, according to our surviving epigraphical evidence.<sup>490</sup> What is perhaps more noteworthy, is the inscription found on the sarcophagus of King Tabnit, who not

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<sup>484</sup> Menander of Ephesus claims that Hiram constructed Melqart and Astarte’s temples, as quoted in Josephus’ *Against Appion* 1.18 and *Jewish Antiquities* 8.146. Both Menander of Ephesus and Dios also claim that Hiram was famous for rebuilding several temples in Tyre and making dedications to Baal, as quoted in Josephus’ *Against Appion* 1.17-18 and *Jewish Antiquities* 8.145, 147.

<sup>485</sup> Menander of Ephesus as quoted in Josephus *Against Appion* 1.18.

<sup>486</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus’ Philippic Histories* 18.4.5. Although it is never said explicitly, it is strongly implied that Sychaeus was a priest in Virgil *Aeneid* 1.349 and Ovid *Heroides* 7.97, as he is described being killed in front of an altar (presumably while conducting his usual sacrifices).

<sup>487</sup> 1 Kings 16:32, Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 8.317-318. In these accounts, Melqart is called Baal of Tyre, a title for the god which is also found on several Phoenician inscriptions. For more on this topic see: Richard J. Clifford, “Phoenician Religion,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 279 (August 1990), 59-60.

<sup>488</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 533-534, the translation of which can be found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 212-213.

<sup>489</sup> Eshmunazar II inscription as found in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 107-109.

<sup>490</sup> Such as the Bodashtart inscription found in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 117.

only refers to himself and his predecessor, King Eshmunazar I, as a ‘priest of Astarte,’ but even goes so far as to put this designation before their title of king.<sup>491</sup> Perhaps this indicates that the primary function of Sidon’s kings was to serve as the city’s chief religious official or act as an intermediary between the divine and human realms.

In addition to the abovementioned evidence, it is worth taking note of the fact that almost all Phoenician kings seem to have had theophoric names that denoted their roles as priests or religious officials. For example, we frequently come across kings with names like Adonibaal (‘my lord is Baal’), Abdastartus (‘servant of Astarte’), Eshmunazar (‘helper of Eshmun’), and so on.<sup>492</sup> The Phoenician word for king (*mlk*) is even the same word used for the verb ‘to sacrifice.’<sup>493</sup> Moreover, scholars believe that Phoenician kings served an important sacerdotal role during religious festivals and were particularly involved in the performance of a *hieros gamos* or ‘sacred marriage’ with the patron goddess of their city.<sup>494</sup> At Byblos, this ritual is alluded to in epigraphs like the 10th century BC Safatba’al inscription or the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Yehaumilk Stele, where the king appears to address the goddess, Baalat Gebal as his wife or consort.<sup>495</sup> Meanwhile, in the city of Tyre, kings appear to have performed a ‘sacred marriage’ to Astarte during the *Egersis*, a springtime festival held in honour of Melqart’s annual death and rebirth.<sup>496</sup> On the second day of this three-day celebration, the king and queen would assume the roles of Melqart and Astarte respectively and perform a *hieros gamos* which presumably involved having intercourse with one another as a way of ensuring the earth’s fertility in the

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<sup>491</sup> Tabnit Inscription, as translated in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 103

<sup>492</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 88.

<sup>493</sup> Francesca Stavrakopoulou, “The Jerusalem Tophet: Ideological Dispute and Religious Transformation,” *Studi Epigrafici e Linguistici* 29-30 (2012), 144.

<sup>494</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 117.

<sup>495</sup> John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 22, 95.

<sup>496</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, 154.

upcoming planting or sowing season.<sup>497</sup> It is quite possible that a rather similar festival was also held at the Phoenician city of Sidon in honour of its chief deities, Eshmun and Astarte.<sup>498</sup> Unlike at Tyre, however, it is impossible to say if this festival and its *hieros gamos* were practiced at Sidon already in the early Iron Age, as our best evidence for them only come from a Sidonian marble vase from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>499</sup>

The religious or priestly role of Phoenician kings is worthy of consideration as it appears remarkably similar to the function that Greek kings (*basileis*) served in their respective city-states, especially as the Archaic Period progressed. For example, I have already shown that, after the constitutional reforms of Lycurgus and Theopompus, Sparta's kings were increasingly relegated to a religious role in the city and became mainly in charge of things like holding certain priesthoods, performing sacrifices, and consulting oracles.<sup>500</sup> Perhaps an even closer comparison to Phoenician kings would be the Archon Basileis of Athens. These 'kings' like their Phoenician counterparts, not only served a priestly role in society, but appear to have been particularly involved in the performance of a *hieros gamos* during the *Anthesteria*, a festival that was perhaps not too dissimilar from the Phoenician *Egersis*. Like the *Egersis*, the *Anthesteria* was a three-day-long festival held in the spring that seems to have been closely related to agriculture and the growth of new vegetation (with the name of the festival itself, coming from the Greek verb ἀνθεῖν 'to blossom' or 'to flower').<sup>501</sup> The sacred marriage performed at this Athenian festival

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<sup>497</sup> For more information on this festival, its rites, and our ancient sources about it, see: Corinne Bonnet, *Melqart: Cultes Et Mythes De L'Heracles Tyrien En Méditerranée* (Brussels, Belgium: Namur University Press, 1988) 104-112.

<sup>498</sup> Richard Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization* (New York, NY: Viking, 2011), 34.

<sup>499</sup> Rodrigo A. de Lima, "Herakles/Melqart: The Greek Façade of a Phoenician Deity," *Hélade* 5, no. 2 (2019), 190-191.

<sup>500</sup> For more on the sacerdotal role of Spartan kings see: Herodotus *Histories* 6.57.1-4, Xenophon *Constitution of the Spartans* 15.3-5, Aristotle *Politics* 3.1285a, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 21.4, 22.2.

<sup>501</sup> For more on the Anthesteria see: Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, 237-242. For the etymology of this festival see: *The Liddell-Scott-Jones Ancient Greek Lexicon* s.v. Ἀνθεστήρια.

required both the ‘king’ and ‘queen’ to play the roles of Dionysus and Ariadne respectively and presumably consummate the marriage through intercourse.<sup>502</sup> This is noteworthy as much the same has been said or argued about Phoenician kings and how they conducted their respective sacred marriages.

Finally, even though the Greek cities of Corinth, Athens, and Sparta are certainly the main focus of this thesis, it is worth briefly mentioning that similar priestly ‘kings’ or Archon Basileis appear elsewhere in the Hellenic world during the Archaic Period as well.<sup>503</sup> For example, in the so-called Constitution of Chios, a stele from the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that clearly describes a democratic system of government on the island (ruled by a council of *demarchoi*), we hear that there were certain ‘basileis’ in charge of collecting tithes and dedicating them to the goddess Hestia.<sup>504</sup> The religious role of these ‘kings’ seems to be confirmed by a later 4<sup>th</sup> century BC inscription from Chios that outlaws pasturing at the grove of a nearby sanctuary, as the inscription claims that all violations of this sacred space, should be reported to the local *basileis*.<sup>505</sup> Even in Rome, a city on the periphery of the Greek world, we can see a rather similar trend occurring. Although the Romans abolished their monarchy in 510 BC, they nevertheless made one of their republic’s highest religious officials a ‘king’ of some sort, known as the *rex sacrorum*.<sup>506</sup> This priesthood was solely held by those belonging to Rome’s noble families, the

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<sup>502</sup> For our ancient sources on this ritual marriage, see: Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 3.5, 57.1, Pseudo-Demosthenes *Against Neaera*, 73-76. For the scholarly debates surrounding this *hieros gamos* and how exactly it was carried out, see: Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion Archaic and Classical*, 109 & 239-240.

<sup>503</sup> This much can be inferred from Aristotle *Politics* 6.1322b.

<sup>504</sup> For a translation of this inscription see: James H. Oliver, “Text of the So-Called Constitution of Chios from the First Half of the Sixth Century BC,” *The American Journal of Philology* 80, no. 3 (1959), 300. For more on the seemingly religious role of the *basileis* in this inscription see: Robert Drews *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece*, 26.

<sup>505</sup> Wilhelm Dittenberger, ed. *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* Volume 3, (Leipzig, Germany: S. Hirzel, 1915), 986.

<sup>506</sup> For more on the regal origins of the Rex Sacrorum, see: Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.2.1-2, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 4.74.4, 5.1.4, and T. J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the*

patricians,<sup>507</sup> who appear to have been the Roman equivalent to the Athenian Eupatridae (i.e. those who held the hereditary right to serve as Archon Basileus).<sup>508</sup> In sum, over the course of the Archaic Period, not only Athens and Sparta, but cities throughout the Greco-Roman world seem to have increasingly relegated their ‘kings’ to a religious role in society, a role that is not too dissimilar from the one we see Phoenician kings serving throughout the early Iron Age.

Fortunately, by the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, our sources for the Phoenicians and their political systems become more numerous thanks in large part to the growing influence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Phoenicians seem to have frequently interacted and traded with the Assyrians. We hear of several Phoenician cities giving gifts of valuable trade goods such as gold, ivory, and dyed textiles to Neo-Assyrian kings,<sup>509</sup> and we even hear that King Ashurbanipal II invited ‘delegates’ from Sidon and Tyre to the opening of his new palace at the Assyrian capital of Nimrud in 879 BC.<sup>510</sup> Be that as it may, throughout the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Neo-Assyrian Empire seems to have been kept relatively at arm’s length and to have been only a looming presence for the Phoenicians.<sup>511</sup> It was only during the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, after the defeat of the kingdom Aram-Damascus in 796 BC, that the Neo-Assyrian Empire’s presence in the region became significantly more prominent.<sup>512</sup>

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*Late Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 BC)* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 234-236. For the chief importance of this priesthood see: Festus s.v. *Ordo Sacerdotum*. In addition to the Rex Sacrorum, outside of Rome near lake Nemi, the chief priest of Diana was also a ‘king’ of sorts, known as the Rex Nemorensis, mentioned in: Strabo *Geography* 5.3.12, Ovid *Fasti* 3.271, Suetonius *Life of Caligula* 35, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 2.27.4  
<sup>507</sup> Cicero *De Domo Sua Ad Pontifices Oratio* 39, 41, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 6.41.9.

<sup>508</sup> For examples where ‘patrician’ is directly translated as εὐπατρίδης in Greek, see: Plutarch *Life of Publicola* 18.2, *Life of Fabius Maximus* 16.6, Appian *History of Rome* 2.9.1, Herodian *History of the Empire* 7.10.4, Cassius Dio *Roman History* 46.45.3, etc.

<sup>509</sup> Sidon, Tyre, Byblos, and Arwad are all recorded to have given gifts to Ashurbanipal II in ANET 275-76. Tyre and Sidon are said to have given gifts to Shalmaneser III in ANET 277-81. For translations of both these inscriptions see: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 250, 257.

<sup>510</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 558-60, as found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 254.

<sup>511</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 55.

<sup>512</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians*, 40-41.

Some Phoenician cities, particularly in the north like Arwad and Irqata, seem to have initially been rather opposed to Assyrian rule as they allied themselves with the Arameans and openly fought against the Neo-Assyrians.<sup>513</sup> Other Phoenician cities however, like Sidon, Tyre, and Byblos, seem to have put up little no resistance against the Neo-Assyrians, for which they were allowed to remain relatively autonomous and self-governing under this empire.<sup>514</sup> Despite this, by the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC we start to see a number of Phoenician revolts against the Neo-Assyrians. The Tyrians, under their king, Luli revolted against the Assyrians in 701 BC<sup>515</sup> and the Sidonians under their king, Abdi-Milkutti led a rebellion from 680 to 677 BC.<sup>516</sup>

It is perhaps from our sources on these events and its aftermath, that we get the most insightful information about the Phoenicians and their political systems at this time. For example, we hear that when Sidon's revolt was squashed in 677 BC, the Neo-Assyrians not only beheaded the city's king, Abdi-Milkutti, but brought back a number of Sidon's 'chief officials' whom they paraded throughout the city of Nineveh during their victory celebrations.<sup>517</sup> This seems to suggest that at the time, the Sidonians were ruled not only by their king, but by a variety of other magistrates who also played a leading role in their city's politics and decision-making. Similarly, in a treaty made between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and King Baal of Tyre around 675 BC which stipulates where the Tyrians were allowed trade and what they were to do if a Tyrian merchant vessel ever gets shipwrecked along the shores of the Neo-Assyrians'

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<sup>513</sup> ANET 277-81, as found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 256.

<sup>514</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians*, 40, 42.

<sup>515</sup> ANET 287-88, as found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 269. King Luli's revolt is also recorded in Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 9.14.2.

<sup>516</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 290-291, as found in: James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament: Third Edition with Supplement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 290-291.

<sup>517</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 290-291, as found in: James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament: Third Edition with Supplement*, 290-291.

territories, there are noticeable distinctions drawn between the ‘ships of Baal’ and the ships of ‘the people of Tyre.’<sup>518</sup> This seems to suggest that Tyre’s king did not hold complete control over the city’s trade or naval fleet, but instead shared authority in some sort of broader political system.

One governing body that we frequently hear of and that appears to have shared power with Phoenician kings is a council of elders. This political body appears to be referenced in the abovementioned treaty between King Esarhaddon of Assyria and King Baal of Tyre, as it stipulates that an Assyrian ‘royal deputy’ was to oversee the running of Tyre, which was apparently done by both “you [King Baal] and the elders of your country.”<sup>519</sup> Many scholars believe that this very same council of elders is what is being alluded to in a passage from the book of Isaiah (composed in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC)<sup>520</sup> which states Tyre’s “merchants were all princes” and their “traders were nobles.”<sup>521</sup> Furthermore, in the book of Ezekiel, Tyre is described as being ruled by “princes of the sea.”<sup>522</sup> Not only does Tyre appear to have had an oligarchic council of elders, but Byblos as well. This can be inferred from a passage in the book of Ezekiel, which claims that “the elders and wisemen of Byblos”<sup>523</sup> ruled over the city.<sup>524</sup> Many scholars believe that the ‘assembly’ that appears in the aforementioned Report of Wenamun is

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<sup>518</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 533-34, as found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 212-213.

<sup>519</sup> ANET<sup>3</sup> 533-34, as found in: James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts & Pictures*, 212.

<sup>520</sup> For the scholarly dating of the Book of Isaiah, see: Jacob Stromberg, *An Introduction to the Study of Isaiah* (New York, NY: T&T Clarke International, 2011), 2-4.

<sup>521</sup> Isaiah 23:8. Translation taken from: *Holy Bible: The New Living Translation*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

<sup>522</sup> Ezekiel 26:16. Translation taken from: *Common English Bible*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Nashville TN: Abington Press, 2013). See also: Ezekiel 27:35. For scholarly discussion on these passages and its relation to Tyre’s council of elders, see: Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 145.

<sup>523</sup> Ezekiel 27:9. Translation taken from: *Common English Bible*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Nashville TN: Abington Press, 2013).

<sup>524</sup> For scholarly discussion on this passage and its relation to Byblos’ council of elders, see: Sandro Filippo Bondi, “Political and Administrative Organization,” 126.

also a reference to this governing body at Byblos.<sup>525</sup> In at least some Phoenician cities, a council of elders can even be dated as far back as the late Bronze Age, as this seems to be strongly implied in the Amarna Letters when “Irqata and its elders” write to the Egyptian Pharaoh.<sup>526</sup> Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that a council of elders is reported in the late Bronze Age texts of Ugarit, a city which, although not Phoenician, was inhabited by very closely related Western Semitic peoples.<sup>527</sup> As a whole, the abovementioned evidence has been used by scholars to argue that the governments of Phoenician cities during the Iron Age were, in truth, not monarchies but ‘merchant oligarchies.’<sup>528</sup>

The presence of these councils of elders in a variety of Phoenician cities is noteworthy as they appear remarkably similar to the institutions that developed in Greece over the course of the Archaic Period. Perhaps the most obvious example is how in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC under Lycurgus, the Spartans founded the Gerousia, a council of elders that would advise their kings on important matters of state and would serve as jurymen during trials.<sup>529</sup> Similarly, in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the Athenians created the Areopagus council, a board of former Archons who would advise Athens’ leaders in political matters and would serve as judges during important legal proceedings.<sup>530</sup> The Areopagus council, like the Gerousia, is also commonly believed to have originally functioned as a sort of council of elders for Athens’ kings.<sup>531</sup> Another, perhaps less

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<sup>525</sup> Stephen Stockwell, “Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States,” 127.

<sup>526</sup> EA 100.

<sup>527</sup> Wilfred H. van Soldt, “The City-Administration of Ugarit,” in *City Administration in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Volume 2*, ed. Leonid E. Kogan (Moscow, Russia: Russian State University for the Humanities, 2010), 256.

<sup>528</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 145. Ronald M. Glassman, *The Origins of Democracy in Tribes, City-States, and Nation-States*, vol. 1 (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017), 497-499.

<sup>529</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.40.1, Aeschines *Against Timarchus* 180, Plato *Laws* 3.692a, Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 26.1.

<sup>530</sup> For the dating of the Areopagus Council, see: Robert W. Wallace *The Areopagus Council to 307 BC*, 29-30.

<sup>531</sup> T.J Cadoux and P.J. Rhodes “Areopagus,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2012). Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 158.

obvious, institution resembling the Phoenicians' council of elders is the Boule of Corinth established in 582 BC. This advisory body mostly consisted of Corinthian aristocrats and only had a total of 80 members,<sup>532</sup> which was evidently narrower than Athens' Boule of 500 members.<sup>533</sup> Moreover, there are instances where ancient authors like Diodorus Siculus refer to this Corinthian council not as a Boule but as a Gerousia,<sup>534</sup> which likewise suggests that it functioned as a sort of council of elders.<sup>535</sup>

While the Greek cities of Corinth, Athens, and Sparta are certainly the main focus of this thesis, it is worth briefly mentioning that similar councils of elders appear elsewhere in the Greek world during the Archaic Period as well. For example, Aristotle claims that a Gerousia existed not only in Sparta, but on Crete and in the city of Elis too.<sup>536</sup> It is also noteworthy that certain political titles in Greek, like that of an ambassador 'πρέσβυς' ultimately derive from the word for an 'old man.'<sup>537</sup> Moreover, it seems likely that the council of elders that is described advising King Priam of Troy in the *Iliad*, would have been a familiar or recognizable institution to much of Homer's 8<sup>th</sup> century, panhellenic audience.<sup>538</sup> Finally, over the course of the Archaic Period Rome, a city on the periphery of the Greek world, is said to have developed its senate, a governing body which also seems to have functioned as a council of elders, since the word

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<sup>532</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F 60.

<sup>533</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.66.2-69.2, Aristotle *Politics* 6.1319b, *Constitution of the Athenians* 21.2-3, Pausanias *Descriptions of Greece* 1.29.6.

<sup>534</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 16.65.6, 9.

<sup>535</sup> J. B. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC*, 231.

<sup>536</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272a, 5.1306a.

<sup>537</sup> *The Liddell-Scott-Jones Ancient Greek Lexicon* s.v. πρέσβυς.

<sup>538</sup> Homer *Iliad* 3.146-160.

‘senatus’ itself is often translated to ‘Gerousia’ in Greek, and appears to have ultimately derived from the Latin word ‘senex’ meaning ‘elder.’<sup>539</sup>

At this point, I should mention that not all scholars are of the belief that councils of elders first appeared in the Greek world over the course of the Archaic Period. Some have argued that councils of elders were instead established centuries earlier, in the Mycenaean kingdoms of the late Bronze Age, as our surviving Linear B tablets appear to refer to an institution called the *ke-ro-si-ja* (Gerousia?).<sup>540</sup> I, however, disagree with this argument and believe that it can mostly be ignored or treated as negligible. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that out of all of the discovered Linear B tablets, only one of them, known as PY An 261, mentions the *ke-ro-si-ja*.<sup>541</sup> So, we have no indication that this institution was widespread in Greece at the time, only that it existed somewhere in the late Bronze Age kingdom of Pylos. Secondly, it is important to bear in mind that while some scholars have argued (mostly on etymological grounds) that the *ke-ro-si-ja* was some sort of council of elders, others believe that it was nothing more than a guild of local bronzesmiths.<sup>542</sup> As a result, there is no clear-cut scholarly consensus on the meaning of *ke-ro-si-ja* or its function. Even if one were to, for argument’s sake, assume that the *ke-ro-si-ja* was some kind of governing body, we still have no indication that this council advised the king (*wanax*). In fact, all of our evidence suggests that the *ke-ro-si-ja* was closely associated with the *qa-si-re-u*, an official of relatively minor importance at this time, who helped govern a village or small

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<sup>539</sup> For examples of the Roman senate being referred to as a Gerousia, see: Plutarch *Life of Romulus* 24.2, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.14, Julian *Orations* 2.97b. For the etymology of ‘senate,’ see: *Lewis and Short’s Latin Dictionary* s.v. ‘senatus.’ For the Roman senate’s origins in the regal period as a council of elders, see: Cicero *De Re Publica* 2.15-16, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 2.14, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 1.8.7, 2.1.10-11, Plutarch *Life of Romulus* 24.2.

<sup>540</sup> James T. Hooker, “Linear B as a Source for Social History,” in *The Greek World*, ed. Anton Powell (London, England: Routledge, 1995), 22. Rodney Castleden, *Mycenaeans*, 81.

<sup>541</sup> James T. Hooker, “Linear B as a Source for Social History,” 22.

<sup>542</sup> Dimitri Nakassis, *Individuals and Society in Mycenaean Pylos*, 93. John T. Killen, “Bronzeworking at Knossos and Pylos,” *Hermathena*, no. 143 (Winter 1987), 66. George E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 207.

community on the *wanax*'s behalf.<sup>543</sup> Thus, we have no reason to believe that the *ke-ro-si-ja* advised Mycenaean kings (*wanakes*) or that they played a major role in the administration of the kingdoms and palatial economies of late Bronze Age Greece. Because the function of the *ke-ro-si-ja* remains ambiguous and this institution is only mentioned once, in a tablet dating almost two centuries after 'Irkata and its elders' had already written to the Egyptian pharaoh, I believe that it is fair to say that the Phoenicians, in all likelihood, developed their councils of elders several centuries *before* such advisory bodies ever appeared in Greek city-states like Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. From this, perhaps we can assume that the councils of elders that existed in the ancient Greek world were in some ways inspired by these Phoenician precursors or counterparts.

While the Neo-Assyrians appear to have held sway over Phoenicia throughout much of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC and provided a number of important written sources on Phoenician political systems at this time, by the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC the might of the Neo-Assyrian Empire had waned and given rise to a new power in the region, the Neo-Babylonians. It is somewhat unclear when the Neo-Babylonians began to assert their authority over the Phoenicians. The 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish historian Josephus claims that Tyre fell under the hegemony of King Nebuchadnezzar II after a 13 year-long siege against the city, which began in the seventh year of his reign.<sup>544</sup> This would mean that the Neo-Babylonians started besieging Tyre in 598 BC and finally concluded hostilities with the Tyrians in 585 BC. The Book of Ezekiel, on the other hand, claims that the Neo-Babylonian siege of Tyre was foretold in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of King Zedekiah's reign and was finally concluded in the 27<sup>th</sup> year after Zedekiah's ascension to the throne.<sup>545</sup> This

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<sup>543</sup> Michael Ventris and John Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 39, 409.

<sup>544</sup> Josephus *Against Apion* 1.21, *Jewish Antiquities* 10.11.1.

<sup>545</sup> Ezekiel 26:1-21, 29:17-20.

would suggest the siege began sometime after 587 BC and ended around 571 BC.<sup>546</sup> In more recent years however, scholars have viewed these dates with increasing scepticism. Scholars have cast doubt on whether the Neo-Babylonians truly besieged Tyre for as long as thirteen years, since our earliest manuscripts of Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* often state that the siege of Tyre lasted for, instead, only three years and ten months.<sup>547</sup> Moreover, scholars have noted that in the surviving chronicles of the Babylonians themselves, Phoenician cities like Tyre, Sidon, and Arwad are mentioned paying tribute to Nebuchadnezzar II as early as 603 BC.<sup>548</sup> This has led some scholars to suggest that the siege of Tyre, in reality, occurred as early 603 BC.<sup>549</sup>

Although Tyre and the other Phoenician city-states had fallen under the hegemony of the Neo-Babylonians by the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, they appear to have been allowed to maintain a degree of autonomy and self-governance. The Babylonians likely granted the Phoenicians these privileges, not out of compassion or altruism, but for pragmatic reasons as they wanted to stabilize the region and decrease the chances of revolt while they were preoccupied with extensive campaigns in Arabia and in dealing with the growing threat of the Medes to the northeast.<sup>550</sup> Moreover, by leaving the Phoenicians relatively independent, the Neo-Babylonians could reap the benefits of the Phoenicians' flourishing economies and trade networks. Under the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC), cedar wood from Phoenicia was used in a number of major building projects, including for the construction of Nebuchadnezzar's own palace in Babylon.<sup>551</sup> The high functionary (*rab tamkari*) in charge of Nebuchadnezzar's palace

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<sup>546</sup> Josette Elayi, *The History of Phoenicia*, trans. Andrew Plummer (Nottingham, England: Lockwood Press, 2018), 197.

<sup>547</sup> Helen Dixon, "Re-examining Nebuchadnezzar II's 'Thirteen-Year' Siege of Tyre in Phoenician Historiography," *Journal of Ancient History* 10, no. 2 (2022), 176-177.

<sup>548</sup> Josette Elayi, *The History of Phoenicia*, 190-191.

<sup>549</sup> Josette Elayi, *The History of Phoenicia*, 199.

<sup>550</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *The Phoenicians*, 48.

<sup>551</sup> Glenn E. Markoe, *The Phoenicians*, 48.

merchants, Hanon, also appears to have been of Phoenician origin and shows, one again, just how important the Phoenicians were for the Neo-Babylonians and their economy at this time.<sup>552</sup>

The relative autonomy or independence of Phoenician cities at this time is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, just ten years after the Neo-Babylonian siege of Tyre, the citizens of Tyre are said to have abolished their monarchy. In its place, they established a new system of government where they would elect a suffete or ‘judge’ to rule over Tyre for a limited term.<sup>553</sup> This political development in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century BC is noteworthy as even scholars like Sandro Fillipo Bondi, who is generally rather skeptical of the existence of Phoenician oligarchies in antiquity, concede that this is one clear example of a non-monarchical form of Phoenician government with elected magistracies.<sup>554</sup> Over the subsequent years, similar forms of collective rule appear to have sprouted elsewhere in the Phoenician world as well. A 5<sup>th</sup> century Phoenician inscription from Sarepta, for example, seems to suggest that the city was ruled by a board of ten councillors.<sup>555</sup>

It is also worth noting that a number of later ancient Greco-Roman sources, produced either during the Classical Period or beyond, portray Phoenician cities as operating under broadly-based forms of rule. For example, in Diodorus Siculus’ *Library of History*, Sidon is portrayed as being ruled at least in part, by a group of more than four hundred of the city’s aristocrats (ἐπιφανεστάτους τῶν πολιτῶν), who functioned as ‘councillors’ (σύμβουλοι) and appear to have regularly convened at ‘public assemblies’ (κοινός σύνοδος).<sup>556</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>552</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 119.

<sup>553</sup> Josephus *Against Apion* 1.21. This political development appears to be corroborated by contemporary Neo-Babylonian records, as they only mention “the chiefs of the town of Tyre” and not any kings ruling over the city. For more on this topic see: Robert Drews, “Phoenicians, Carthage, and the Spartan Eunomia,” 48.

<sup>554</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, “Political and Administrative Organization,” 126.

<sup>555</sup> James B. Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta, A Phoenician City: Excavations at Sarafand, Lebanon, 1969-1974*, by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 103.

<sup>556</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 16.45.1

Diodorus claims that the people of Sidon, Tyre, and Arwad regularly convened in a ‘council’ (συνέδριον) at the city of Tripoli to vote and deliberate on important political matters regarding these three respective city-states (from which ‘Tripoli’ received its name).<sup>557</sup> Our surviving Greco-Roman historians of Alexander the Great and his conquests also seem to portray Phoenician cities as oligarchies. For example, Arrian claims that the inhabitants, not the kings of Phoenician cities like Byblos and Sidon, were the ones who ultimately negotiated their surrender to Alexander.<sup>558</sup> Quintus Curtius Rufus on the other hand, slightly differs in his account as he mentions a king of Sidon, Straton, who was apparently responsible for surrendering his city over to Alexander, albeit claims that this was done “rather at the desire of the people [*popularium*] than of his own accord.”<sup>559</sup> Later on, our ancient Greco-Roman historians claim that Alexander was met by delegates sent by the people (τοῦ κοινοῦ) of Tyre, who had decreed in an assembly that their city should negotiate its surrender.<sup>560</sup> These negotiations however, were ultimately unsuccessful, for which Alexander later besieged and destroyed the city.

Finally, our surviving inscriptional evidence from the Greco-Roman period also seems to indicate that Phoenician cities operated under broad-based forms of government. For example, a bilingual Attic inscription from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC claims that the citizens of Sidon had an ‘assembly,’ which could apparently make important political decisions.<sup>561</sup> Similarly, a Hellenistic inscription from Tyre dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC provides both the year of the

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<sup>557</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 16.41.1.

<sup>558</sup> Arrian *Anabasis of Alexander the Great* 2.15.6, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 17.40.2.

<sup>559</sup> Curtius Rufus *History of Alexander the Great* 4.1.15-16. Translation taken from: J. C. Rolfe, trans., *Quintus Curtius' History of Alexander, Volume I: Books 1-5*, Loeb Classical Library 368 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946), 165.

<sup>560</sup> Arrian *Anabasis of Alexander the Great* 2.15.6, Quintus Curtius Rufus *History of Alexander the Great* 4.2.2, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philipic Histories* 11.10.10. A citizen assembly at Tyre is also mentioned later on in Quintus Curtius Rufus *History of Alexander the Great* 4.3.21.

<sup>561</sup> John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 149.

contemporary Ptolemaic king's reign and the year of the reign of the 'people of Tyre' as a whole.<sup>562</sup> While it is certainly noteworthy that various ancient Greco-Roman sources portray Phoenician cities in this way, it is also important to bear in mind that these works were produced, for the most part, long after the Archaic Period. As a result, even though these sources may reflect, to some degree, the political institutions that we hear of already in the Archaic Period, they also likely reflect developments in Phoenician political systems or constitutions that occurred sometime between the late Archaic Period and when these sources were produced. Therefore, it is unfair to assume that after the Archaic Period, Phoenician governments remained relatively unchanged or stagnant in their development and to treat these later Greco-Roman sources without any caution or scrutiny.

Not only do the Phoenician cities of the ancient Near East appear to have developed broader, non-monarchical forms of government over the course of the Archaic Period, but the Phoenician colonies of the western Mediterranean appear to have done so as well. The best example of this is, of course, Carthage, a city that was ruled by two suffetes who, although often called 'basileis' in Greek,<sup>563</sup> were elected officials appointed annually by Carthage's citizens and,<sup>564</sup> according to Aristotle, were usually selected on the basis of their wealth and merit.<sup>565</sup> These two suffetes appear to have been primarily in charge of managing local civic affairs and were not permitted to lead Carthage's military as this was a responsibility that was instead,

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<sup>562</sup> John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 119. See also: pages 135-138 for a similar inscription from Phoenician Cyprus.

<sup>563</sup> Such as in: Aristotle *Politics* 2.1273a, Polybius *Histories* 6.51, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 13.43.5, 14.54.5, Cornelius Nepos *Life of Hannibal* 7.4.

<sup>564</sup> Plato *Laws* 2.674a-b, Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272b, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 30.7.5, Cornelius Nepos *Life of Hannibal* 7.4, Seneca *De Tranquillitate Animi* 9.4.5, Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.82.

<sup>565</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1273a

allotted to Carthage's generals, another annually elected position.<sup>566</sup> In addition to these offices, we hear that Carthage had a council of around one hundred magistrates who served as the city's judges during important legal proceedings.<sup>567</sup> We also hear of a Carthaginian 'senate' or 'council of elders' (*senatus*/γερουσία) that advised the suffetes on important matters of state and would conduct diplomacy with foreign powers.<sup>568</sup> Lastly, we hear that Carthage had a citizen assembly that held considerable power over the city's political decision-making,<sup>569</sup> even more than the assemblies in contemporary Greek city-states did.<sup>570</sup> For these reasons, Aristotle calls Carthage a 'democracy' (δημοκρατουμένη),<sup>571</sup> Eratosthenes lauds the Carthaginian political system for being 'marvelous' (θαυμαστῶς) and 'civilized' (ἀστείους),<sup>572</sup> Polybius claims that the masses (τὸ πλῆθος) possessed supreme authority in Carthage,<sup>573</sup> and a number of other ancient authors compare Carthage's constitution to contemporary Greco-Roman ones, particularly the diarchic systems of Sparta and Rome.<sup>574</sup>

In addition to Carthage, various other Phoenician colonies in the western Mediterranean seem to have also developed broader, non-monarchical forms of government over time. The Roman historian Livy, for example, tells us that during the Second Punic War (218-201 BC), the Phoenician city of Gades (modern-day Cadiz, Spain), like Carthage, relied on a system of

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<sup>566</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1273a, Appian *Punic Wars* 5.25, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 13.43.5, 13.80.2, 15.15.2, 16.81.3.

<sup>567</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272b 3.1275b, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 33.46.1-8, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 19.2.5.

<sup>568</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1273a, Q. Fabius Pictor *BNJ* 809 F21 (as quoted in Polybius *Histories* 3.8), Polybius *Histories* 1.87, 6.51, Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 14.47.1, 20.59.1, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 30.16.2, Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 21.4.1, 22.3.6.

<sup>569</sup> Polybius *Histories* 6.51, Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 33.46.5, 33.47.2.

<sup>570</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1273a.

<sup>571</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1316b.

<sup>572</sup> Eratosthenes as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 1.4.9.

<sup>573</sup> Polybius *Histories* 6.51.

<sup>574</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272b, Isocrates *The Cyprians* 24, Cicero *De Re Publica* 2.41-42, Cato the Elder as quoted in Servius *Commentary on the Aeneid* 4.682.

government ruled by two suffetes.<sup>575</sup> Similarly, a 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC inscription from Roman Sardinia claims there were two annually elected suffetes ruling there as well, a likely remnant of a Phoenician political system that existed prior to Rome's invasion of the island in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>576</sup> Outside of Spain and Sardinia, archaeologists have discovered a number of inscriptions ranging from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the reign of Roman Emperor Commodus (177-192 AD), which, likewise, suggest that the chief magistrate in more than 40 Punic cities in North Africa as well as Eryx on the island of Sicily, continued to go by the title of 'suffete' throughout this period.<sup>577</sup> From these inscriptions, perhaps we can conclude that the Phoenician cities of the western Mediterranean, for the most part, operated under oligarchical political systems in antiquity, headed by their two annually elected 'judges.'

While it is known that Carthage and other Phoenician colonies in the western Mediterranean eventually developed broader, non-monarchical forms of government, it is somewhat unclear when these political systems were first introduced. A number of Greco-Roman authors recount the story of the legendary Queen Dido (also known as Elissa), who was supposedly driven from her hometown of Tyre by her tyrannical brother Pygmalion and, after wandering throughout the Mediterranean, eventually founded the city of Carthage to become its first monarch.<sup>578</sup> However, even if one were to, for argument's sake, believe everything our ancient sources say about Dido, then one could still question whether these legends truly portray early Carthage as a sort of monarchy. This is because, our most detailed account of Dido's life, Justin's *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories*, claims that she founded Carthage

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<sup>575</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 28.37.2

<sup>576</sup> Andrew Erskine, "Encountering Carthage: Mid-Republican Rome and Mediterranean Culture," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 120 (2013), 119.

<sup>577</sup> Josephine C. Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 165-166.

<sup>578</sup> Strabo *Geography* 17.3.15, Virgil *Aeneid* 1.335-370, Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.75-81, *Heroides* 7, Tacitus *Annals* 16.1, Appian *Punic Wars* 1.1.

along with a number of Tyre's leading men (*principibus in societatem*) and senators (*senatorum*).<sup>579</sup> Later on, when the Numidian king, Iarbas asks for Dido's hand in marriage, it is not the queen herself who negotiates with this foreign ruler, but a board of ten Carthaginian councillors.<sup>580</sup> When these 'legates' (*legati*) return from their diplomatic mission, they are described initially being rather hesitant to tell Dido the truth of what Iarbas requested. However, after Dido demanded that all Carthaginians must do whatever they can for their newly founded city, these magistrates eventually reveal the truth. Upon realizing that she, in accordance with her own advice, must now marry Iarbas, Dido decides to construct a funeral pyre and kill herself upon it, choosing to honour her dead husband Acerbas over remarrying (unlike in Virgil's more famous account of Dido's death, where she commits suicide after her failed love affair with Aeneas).<sup>581</sup> Thus, it seems that our ancient Greco-Roman sources, in truth, portray early Carthage as a sort of oligarchy, ruled by the city's queen in conjunction with a senate and a number of other magistrates (perhaps not too dissimilar from the political system of archaic Sparta). Moreover, our ancient sources claim that Dido died childless and do not mention anybody succeeding her as Carthage's monarch.<sup>582</sup> As a result, if one were to believe our ancient Greco-Roman sources and what they say about early Carthage, then it seems that the city was ruled by a monarchy for, at best, one generation and even then, the queen's powers were circumscribed by various other officials.

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<sup>579</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 18.4.9-15. See also: Virgil *Aeneid* 1.426, 4.682 and Cato the Elder as quoted in Servius *Commentary on the Aeneid* 4.682.

<sup>580</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 18.6.1.

<sup>581</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 18.6.5-7. Our earliest account of Dido, written by Timaeus of Tauromenion (*BNJ* 566 F82) also claims that she dies in this way, after being pressured by her fellow citizens to marry Iarbas. For Virgil's account of Dido's death see: *Aeneid* 4.642-666.

<sup>582</sup> Virgil *Aeneid* 4.31, 4.329 implies that Dido died childless and Ovid *Fastii* 3.523-710 claims that Anna (Dido's sister) fled Carthage soon after her death and did not become queen.

With that said, in practice, one should treat the story of Dido with great caution in terms of its historical value. She is not mentioned in a single Carthaginian source and the earliest known reference to Dido was written by the Greek historian, Timaeus of Tauromenion around 300 BC, more than five centuries after the city of Carthage was founded.<sup>583</sup> Therefore, our earliest sources for this monarch were written very late, even later than say Aristotle's *Politics*, where Carthage is clearly described as an oligarchy and is said to have never been ruled by a tyrant or to have suffered from any major political upheavals.<sup>584</sup> Some scholars have suggested that instead of having monarchies, Phoenician colonies in the western Mediterranean were ruled from the very beginning by a collection of aristocratic families who had taken part in the city's foundation.<sup>585</sup> If this is true, then it would mean that the Phoenicians of the western Mediterranean developed broader, non-monarchical forms of government even before the ancient Greeks did, as Carthage is typically thought to have been founded around the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>586</sup> whereas the city-states of Greece, such as Corinth and Athens, seem to have abolished their monarchies in the mid 8<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.<sup>587</sup>

Other scholars have suggested that at first, Phoenician colonies like Carthage were ruled by a governor who acted on behalf of the king of Tyre (i.e. its parent city).<sup>588</sup> This may be evidenced by an 8<sup>th</sup> century BC inscription from Cyprus, which claims that the Tyrian colony of Kition was ruled by a certain 'governor' who represented the contemporary Tyrian king, Hiram

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<sup>583</sup> Timaeus of Tauromenion *BNJ* 566 F82.

<sup>584</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272b.

<sup>585</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, "Political and Administrative Organization," 128.

<sup>586</sup> Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 1st ed. (London, England: Routledge, 2020), 2-3.

<sup>587</sup> As previously mentioned, some scholars have alternatively dated the abolishment of Athens' monarchy to slightly earlier, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, such as: Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 32. Ron Owens, *Solon of Athens: Poet, Philosopher, Soldier, Statesman* 39-40. J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece*, 170. Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World, Ca. 1200-479 BCE*, 135.

<sup>588</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 89.

II.<sup>589</sup> Moreover, we hear that around 708 BC, Tyre led an expedition against Kition because the city had apparently stopped paying its regular tribute and revolted.<sup>590</sup> Perhaps Carthage, like Kition, was also initially under the suzerainty of Tyre, but over time as the Tyrians became increasingly occupied in dealing with Neo-Assyrians and Babylonians at home, their grip over the city was loosened and Carthage's leaders began to represent, more and more, the interests of the local inhabitants. For the proponents of this theory, Carthage's system of government ruled by its two annually elected suffetes should not be dated much before the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>591</sup>

Regardless of which theory is true, it seems fair to say that by the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Carthage had already developed its oligarchy. The earliest Carthaginian political figure that our ancient Greco-Roman sources mention, apart from Dido, is Malchus, a general (*imperator*) who had apparently earned a name for himself by leading several successful campaigns in Sicily and Libya during the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>592</sup> After experiencing mixed success in his expeditions on the island of Sardinia, however, Malchus is said to have been exiled by the people of Carthage. In response to this, Malchus led his army against Carthage and besieged the city. Upon capturing it, Malchus is said to have executed ten of the 'senators' (*senatoribus*) who had contributed the most to his banishment and gave pardon to those who requested clemency during an assembly of Carthage's citizens. Malchus then left the city to be governed in its usual way, but soon afterwards, was tried and executed by his political opponents on the grounds that he was aspiring to make himself king (*rex*).<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> See the Baal Lebanon Inscription, as found in: John C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions Volume III: Phoenician Inscriptions*, 66-68.

<sup>590</sup> Nadav Na'aman, "Sargon II and the Rebellion of the Cypriot Kings against Shilta of Tyre," *Orientalia* 67, no. 2 (1998), 243. Menander of Ephesus as quoted in Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 9.284.

<sup>591</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 89.

<sup>592</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 18.7.2, Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 4.6.7.

<sup>593</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 18.7.3-18, Orosius *History Against the Pagans* 4.6.8-9.

The story of Malchus seems to clearly suggest that at this time, Carthage did not have a monarchy but was ruled by a much broader, non-monarchical form of government. Furthermore, scholars believe that the story of Malchus, unlike Dido, holds a degree of historical truth to it.<sup>594</sup> This is because, it appears that it was indeed during the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that Carthage began to expand its sphere of influence to include larger portions of North Africa as well as the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia. Herodotus, for example, tells us that around 540 BC, the Carthaginians fought a naval battle against the Phocaeans in the ‘Sardinian Sea’ (τὸ Σαρδόνιον καλεόμενον πέλαγος) in order to prevent these Greek settlers from founding a colony on the nearby island of Corsica.<sup>595</sup> Similarly, from a treaty signed between Carthage and the Roman Republic in 509 BC, we get the impression that by this time, the regions of Sardinia, western Sicily, and Cape Bon, were firmly under Carthaginian hegemony.<sup>596</sup> The expansion of Carthage’s influence in the western Mediterranean during the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC seems to be further corroborated by archaeological evidence. At this time, the Phoenician strongholds at Monte Sirai and Cuccureddus appear to have been violently destroyed along with the Nuragic settlement at Su Nuraxi, which suggests that there were growing conflicts between the native Sardinian and Punic peoples.<sup>597</sup> Moreover, the increasing prevalence of Carthaginian pottery and funerary practices on Sardinia in the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC seems to coincide with Carthage’s imperialistic efforts in the region.<sup>598</sup> It may also be worth pointing out that in the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, more than 50% of Carthage’s food appears to have been imported from overseas.

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<sup>594</sup> Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 40-41.

<sup>595</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 1.166. It is perhaps also worth mentioning the Carthaginians efforts to prevent the Spartans from founding colonies in Libya and western Sicily around 520-510 BC, discussed in: Herodotus *Histories* 5.42.2-3, 5.46 Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 4.23.3.

<sup>596</sup> Polybius *Histories* 3.23.

<sup>597</sup> Richard Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization*, 75.

<sup>598</sup> Giampaolo Piga et al., “A Funerary Rite Study of the Phoenician-Punic Necropolis of Mount Sirai (Sardinia, Italy),” *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 20, no. 2 (2008), 145.

From the mid 6<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, however, our archaeological evidence suggests almost all of Carthage's food was produced locally in North Africa.<sup>599</sup> Having said that, it is important to bear in mind that this piece of evidence does not necessarily prove by default that at this time, Carthage acquired more land in North Africa through military action as it could also be an indication of new treaties or alliances between Carthage and the neighbouring Libyan kingdoms.

Even if one were to doubt the historical reliability of Malchus, then it, nevertheless, seems fair to say that Carthage had developed its oligarchy by the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Carthaginian ruler Hasdrubal I, who was active from around 530-510 BC, is said to have held the office of 'dictator' eleven times throughout his reign, which seems to be a clear indication that he was not a king, but an elected official of some sort.<sup>600</sup> Likewise, when Herodotus claims that the Magonid ruler, Hamilcar I (510-480 BC), was made king (βασιλεύσαντά) of the Carthaginians on account of his manly virtue (κατ' ἀνδραγαθίην),<sup>601</sup> he does not seem to be implying that Hamilcar I was a dynastic monarch who inherited his position,<sup>602</sup> but rather some sort of elected military leader.<sup>603</sup> For these reasons, Diodorus Siculus calls Hamilcar I a 'general' (στρατηγός) who was elected (προκρίναντες) by the Carthaginians because he was held in very high esteem (τὸν μάλιστα θαυμαζόμενον) amongst them.<sup>604</sup> Finally, on an inscription from Carthage itself dating to the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, there are 'suffetes' mentioned ruling over the city.<sup>605</sup> The inscription may even provide a date for how long the Carthaginians had been ruled by their

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<sup>599</sup> Richard Miles, *Carthage Must Be Destroyed: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Civilization*, 75, 78.

<sup>600</sup> Justin *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' Philippic Histories* 19.1.7.

<sup>601</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 7.166.

<sup>602</sup> Compare with Herodotus *Histories* 5.39.1, where the Spartan King Cleomenes I, is said to have held the kingship, (τὴν βασιλείην), not on account of his manly virtue (οὐ κατ' ἀνδραγαθίην σχὼν) but his birth (ἀλλὰ κατὰ γένος).

<sup>603</sup> See: W. W. How and Joseph Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus: with Introduction and Appendices*, vol. 2 (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1957), 7.165 s.v. βασιλεύα.

<sup>604</sup> Diodorus Siculus *Library of History* 11.20.1

<sup>605</sup> Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 32.

elected suffetes at this point, one hundred and twenty years, which if true, suggests that the city developed its oligarchy sometime around the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. With that said, because this inscription is highly fragmentary and poorly preserved, there are debates over this date and some scholars tend to prefer an interpretation where the inscription does not tell us at all about when this political system began.<sup>606</sup>

If Carthage did indeed develop a non-monarchical form of rule prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, then this would mean its – to use Aristotle’s classification – ‘democratic’ government was established even before Athens’ was in 508 BC.<sup>607</sup> It would also mean that Carthage’s political system predates the Roman Republic (founded in 509 BC) and our earliest evidence of a democratic government on the Greek island of Chios (the so-called constitution of Chios, dated to 575-550 BC). Even though Corinth is said to have abolished its monarchy in the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, we have already seen that its early oligarchy was incredibly narrow and remained in the hands of only the limited few who belonged to Corinth’s former royal family, the Bacchiadae. For these reasons, a number of ancient literary sources treat the Bacchiad oligarchs of Corinth as though they, in truth, were not all that different from the hereditary monarchs who ruled beforehand.<sup>608</sup> As a result, even if one were to, for argument’s sake, assume that Carthage initially operated under a monarchy, ruled by kings in conjunction with the city’s council of elders and other magistrates until the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, then one could still question whether this

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<sup>606</sup> Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 32.

<sup>607</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1316b.

<sup>608</sup> Herodotus *Histories* 5.92β.2, Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F57 (as quoted in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpts on Ambushes* 22), Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 7.9.3-6, Strabo *Geography* 8.6.20.

system of government was truly narrower or more restrictive than the early oligarchies of contemporary Greece.<sup>609</sup>

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the Bacchiad oligarchy of Corinth lasted for less than a century before it was overthrown and replaced by yet another monarchy, this time under the leadership of the Cypselid tyrants. It was only in 582 BC, after overthrowing their tyrant, Psammatichus, that the Corinthians truly established a much broader, more collective system of rule where all adult male citizens were, at least in theory, permitted to take part in government.<sup>610</sup> Thus, it seems that Corinth too only established a much broader, non-monarchical system of government *after* Carthage had already done so (at some point prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC). The overthrow of Corinth's tyranny in 582 BC, the composition of the constitution of Chios around 575-550 BC, and the creation of the Solonian reforms that broadened Athens' oligarchy in 594/3 BC, would have all occurred *after* Carthage had already developed its political system and at around the same time that Tyre was establishing its oligarchy ruled by its elected suffetes, just ten years after the Neo-Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar II's invasion of Phoenicia. The creation of the Peloponnesian League and the trend throughout Greece of abolishing tyrannies and replacing them with oligarchies (typically pro-Spartan ones) would have all occurred *after* non-monarchical systems of rule had already been established both in the Phoenician colonies of the western Mediterranean and in Tyre.

In sum, the Phoenicians, like the ancient Greeks, appear to have gradually reduced the powers of their kings and replaced them with broader oligarchical governments. However, unlike the Greeks, the Phoenicians appear to have begun this process long before the Archaic Period.

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<sup>609</sup> For more information on early Greek oligarchies and their resemblance to narrow authoritarian regimes, see: Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History*, 71-73.

<sup>610</sup> Nicolaus of Damascus *BNJ* 90 F 60.

Our first indication that some Phoenician cities began developing broader, more collective political systems comes from the Amarna Letters of the late Bronze Age. As we have seen, a number of documents from the Iron Age show that this trend appears to have continued in Phoenician cities during this period as well until the end of the Archaic Period. Thus, the trend of adopting broader oligarchical governments appears to have begun several centuries *earlier* in Phoenicia than in Greece and eventually ran concurrently with the events of the Archaic Period. Moreover, this chapter has shown that many of the oligarchical institutions that existed in Phoenician cities, such as their councils of elders and the priestly role of their kings, are remarkably similar to what we can see in archaic Greece. From this, I would argue that it is quite possible that the political developments of archaic Greece were in some ways inspired by these various Phoenician precursors or counterparts.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Archaic Period (800-480 BC) was, without a doubt, an important era in the history of ancient Greece, where Greek society underwent a number of major changes or advancements. This period saw an increased wave of urbanization in Greece, the reemergence of literacy and long-distance trade, the development of various new art forms, and above all, an abandonment of the traditional monarchies that had been ruling over the region from time immemorial, in favour of newer, more collective political systems. As this thesis has clearly shown, at the dawn of the Archaic Period, most Greek city-states were ruled by narrow, monarchical regimes headed by a local chieftain or ‘basileus,’ whose dynasty claimed descent from a legendary hero of the distant mythical past (Chapter 3). As the Archaic Period progressed, however, these city-states seem to have gradually reduced the powers of their kings and, in many instances, outright abolished their monarchies in favour of broader oligarchical governments, where power could be more evenly distributed. This trend of establishing broader, more collective forms of rule over the course of the Archaic Period can perhaps best be seen in the histories of Corinth (Chapter 4), Sparta (Chapter 5), and Athens (Chapter 6) as these three city-states each appear to have undergone a series of constitutional reforms that left them, more or less, under oligarchical political systems by the end of this era.

The political developments of the Archaic Period remain to this day a popular topic in scholarship and political discourse as the governments of the ancient Greeks are routinely viewed as the direct precursors to modern western democracies. Books written on the history of democracy often begin by discussing the ancient Greeks and their political developments over

the course of the Archaic Period, especially the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BC.<sup>611</sup> Likewise, a number of contemporary world leaders and politicians continue to reference the ancient Greeks and their political institutions, when delivering speeches on the nature or origins of democracy.<sup>612</sup> While the history of the ancient Greeks and the abolishment of their monarchies in favour of broader, more collective systems of government is a much-discussed topic in modern scholarship and political discourse, researchers rarely contemplate whether the Greeks were truly unique in this regard or if other civilizations in antiquity were also developing oligarchies at around this time. These Hellenocentric oversights are unfortunate as it seems that, in truth, the ancient Greeks were not alone or exceptional in the way they organized their city-states.

My research here has attempted to amend some of these oversights in modern scholarship and demonstrate that instead of myopically focussing on the ancient Greeks and their political developments in isolation – as though this civilization existed in a vacuum – it is far more fruitful to study them in their appropriate context and in conjunction with the other civilizations of the ancient Mediterranean. I have achieved this, in large part, by exhibiting that the Phoenicians were another people in antiquity who, like the Greeks, developed broad-based oligarchical forms of government over time (Chapter 7). From as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC, we have evidence to suggest that Phoenician kings did not hold complete authority over their cities, but shared power with other governing bodies or officials. From the early Iron Age onwards, we have a number of sources written either by the Phoenicians themselves or their neighbours (the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Israelites, etc.) which suggest that the Phoenicians continued limiting the powers of their kings throughout this period and to operate

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<sup>611</sup> For examples, see: Luciano Canfora, *Democracy in Europe: A History of an Ideology*. Kurt A. Raaflaub, Josiah Ober, and Robert Wallace, eds., *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*. Jim Miller, *Can Democracy Work?: A Short History of a Radical Idea, from Ancient Athens to Our World*.

<sup>612</sup> Peter Jones, “Boris’s Periclean Optimism,” 23.

under broader, more collective systems of government. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, several Phoenician cities in the Levant, such as Tyre and Sarepta, appear to have even abolished their monarchies in favour of governments ruled by elected magistrates who served for limited terms.

Of course, it was not only in the Levant that the Phoenicians developed broader, non-monarchical forms of government, but in the western Mediterranean as well. Some scholars have suggested that instead of having monarchies, the Phoenician colonies of the western Mediterranean were ruled from the very beginning by a collection of aristocratic families who had taken part in the city's foundation.<sup>613</sup> If this is true, then it would mean that the Phoenicians of the western Mediterranean developed broad non-monarchical forms of government even before the ancient Greeks did, as Phoenician colonies like Carthage are typically thought to have been founded in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>614</sup> whereas the city-states of Greece, such as Corinth and Athens, appear to have abolished their monarchies around the mid 8<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.<sup>615</sup> With that said, it is important to bear in mind that other scholars have argued that the Phoenician colonies of the western Mediterranean were initially ruled by 'governors' who acted on behalf of the king of Tyre and his interests.<sup>616</sup> For the proponents of this theory, it was only shortly before the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC that these political systems were eventually abandoned in favour of broader oligarchies, led by locally elected rulers.

Regardless of which theory is true, it seems fair to say, based on our surviving evidence, that by the dawn of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, Carthage along with a number of other Punic cities in the

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<sup>613</sup> Sandro Filippo Bondi, "Political and Administrative Organization," 128. Robert Drews, "Phoenicians, Carthage, and the Spartan Eunomia," 51, 54.

<sup>614</sup> Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 2-3.

<sup>615</sup> As previously mentioned, some scholars have alternatively dated the abolishment of Athens' monarchy to slightly earlier, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, such as: Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 32. Ron Owens, *Solon of Athens: Poet, Philosopher, Soldier, Statesman* 39-40. J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece*, 170. Jonathan M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World, Ca. 1200-479 BCE*, 135.

<sup>616</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 89.

western Mediterranean, had likely developed broad non-monarchical forms of government.<sup>617</sup>

These political systems were led by two annually elected suffetes or ‘judges’ as well as a number of other officials, governing bodies, and councils. Our surviving sources on the history of Carthage, for example, often praise the Carthaginian political system for the rights it provided to citizens and the many striking similarities it had to the contemporary governments of the ancient Greeks and Romans.<sup>618</sup> In fact, Aristotle even went so far as to call Carthage’s government a ‘democracy’ (δημοκρατουμένη).<sup>619</sup>

Not only do our various ancient sources on the history of the Phoenicians suggest that their cities operated under broad-based – potentially even ‘democratic’ – forms of government, but in recent years, modern scholars have been coming to rather similar conclusions.<sup>620</sup> For example, in his 2010 article “Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City-States,” Stephen Stockwell boldly declared:

It is clear from this historic arc that the Phoenician cities commenced as strong monarchies and ended with relatively weak kings. It is also clear that all along the way, from the fifteenth century BC to the fourth, the leaders were advised by councils or assemblies which gradually took greater power. There are questions as to how broadly those institutions represented the populace and how free and unconstrained their deliberations were but on the balance, it may be concluded that the active role that the assembly took on the few occasions we see it in operation suggests that the Phoenicians had something more than an autocracy or even oligarchy and that it earns categorization as a proto-democracy, at least, if not full recognition as a democracy.<sup>621</sup>

With that said, other scholars have preferred a more reserved approach than Stockwell and have decided, instead, to classify the political systems of the ancient Phoenicians as ‘merchant

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<sup>617</sup> Glenn E. Markoe *Phoenicians*, 89. Dexter Hoyos, *Carthage: A Biography*, 32.

<sup>618</sup> Eratosthenes as quoted in Strabo *Geography* 1.4.9, Polybius *Histories* 6.51, Aristotle *Politics* 2.1272b, Isocrates *The Cyprians* 24, Cicero *De Re Publica* 2.41-42, Cato the Elder as quoted in Servius *Commentary on the Aeneid* 4.682.

<sup>619</sup> Aristotle *Politics* 5.1316b.

<sup>620</sup> Simon Hornblower, “Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece,” 2.

<sup>621</sup> Stephen Stockwell, “Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States,” 129.

oligarchies.’<sup>622</sup> In this thesis, I have perhaps taken ‘the middle-road’ between these two arguments. On the one hand, I agree with scholars like Maria Aubet, who suggest that Phoenician cities operated, by and large, under oligarchical political systems in antiquity. On the other hand, however, I agree with Stockwell’s assertion that we might even classify Phoenician governments as ‘democracies’ or at the very least, ‘proto-democracies’ in so far as we recognize that in antiquity, Greek ‘democracies’ (Athens, Chios, etc.) were really rather oligarchical in nature.

As I have clearly shown (in Chapter 6), by the late Archaic Period, Athens’ ‘democracy’ resembled more of an oligarchical political system, than anything. Around 90% of Athens’ population would have been excluded from politics as women, children, slaves, and resident foreigners were all strictly prohibited from voting and holding offices.<sup>623</sup> Out of the 30,000 to 50,000 property-owning adult men who did, in fact, qualify for Athenian citizenship, only around 6,000 of them, at any given point, could have feasibly attended the city’s assembly meetings on the Pnyx and taken part in their government’s decision-making.<sup>624</sup> Moreover, under Athens’ new ‘democracy’ the same aristocratic families that had been dominating the city’s politics for centuries, such as the Philaids and Alcmaeonidae, would continue to hold the highest positions of power and to rule over the city. Although the word ‘democracy’ (δημοκρατία) itself implies that this was a system where the masses (*demos*) held supreme authority (κράτος) over political matters, the use of this term in reference to the government established by Cleisthenes in 508 BC appears to be a euphemism or misnomer. In truth, it was only after the Archaic Period, in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, that Athens’ government became increasingly ‘democratic’

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<sup>622</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 145. Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians*, 87. Ronald M. Glassman, *The Origins of Democracy in Tribes, City-States, and Nation-States*, 497.

<sup>623</sup> John Thorley, *Athenian Democracy*, 74.

<sup>624</sup> Mogens Herman Hansen, “The Athenian ‘Ecclesia’ and the Assembly-Place on the Pnyx,” 241-242.

in nature as the property requirements to run for the archonship were lowered, the Areopagus council's powers were reduced, and citizens were granted the right to receive daily wages for serving as jurors.<sup>625</sup> Even then, some scholars have preferred to suggest that during the Classical Period, oligarchies and democracies were, for the most part, indistinguishable from one another and were far more similar than our ancient sources indicate.<sup>626</sup>

Having said all that, if scholars have no qualms about calling Athens' political system by the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC a 'democracy,' then I see no reason why they should hesitate to use the same terminology when describing the governments of contemporary Phoenician city-states. If, however, we acknowledge that ancient Greek democracies were really not so 'democratic' in practice, then perhaps we should refrain from using the term 'democracy' altogether and strictly limit ourselves to 'oligarchy,' when describing the political institutions of the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians (especially during the Archaic Period). Whichever side of this argument one takes could have larger ramifications over what kinds of conclusions, one can draw from the evidence. If we, like Aristotle and Stephen Stockwell, are able to call the political systems of the ancient Phoenicians 'democracies' and can recognize that such systems were established in Punic cities already by the start of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, then this would lead us to conclude that the Phoenicians invented 'democracy' before the Athenians (508 BC), Chians (575-550 BC?) or any other Greeks had ever done so. If we, however, wish to refrain from using this sort of terminology, then we, at the very least, can say that the Phoenicians began the process of broadening their governments several centuries before the Greeks (starting as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC). We can also say that the broad-based, non-monarchical forms of government that

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<sup>625</sup> Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 27, Isocrates *On Peace* 130, Plutarch *Life of Pericles* 9.3-4.

<sup>626</sup> Hartmut Leppin, "Unlike(ly) Twins? Democracy and Oligarchy in Context," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck (London, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 146-147. Paul Cartledge, *Democracy: A Life*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-2, 8.

existed in Phoenician cities like Carthage, appear to have been established before the Greeks made significant strides in broadening their oligarchies (e.g. the Solonian reforms of 594/3 BC, Corinth's political reforms of 582 BC, etc.) and in getting rid of the various monarchical governments or tyrannies that prevailed throughout the region (which were, for the most part, overthrown by the Spartans in the latter half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC).

Of course, my research has not only shown that the Phoenicians began the process of developing broader, more collective systems of government *before* the ancient Greeks did, but that the Phoenicians and Greeks shared a number of remarkable similarities in the ways their societies were organized. Both the Phoenicians and Greeks were divided into a number of city-states in antiquity. These cities often began as monarchies, but over the course of the early Iron Age, increasingly circumscribed the powers of their kings. One way this was achieved was by establishing a senate or 'council of elders' to advise the king on important political matters and to serve as judges during legal proceedings. Another way this was achieved was by relegating the 'king' (whether *mlk* or *basileus*) to a primarily religious and symbolic role in society, while distributing his former duties to various other magistracies. When considering these close similarities between the political systems of the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians in combination with the fact that our evidence suggests the Phoenicians established broader oligarchical forms of government *before* the Greeks did, it seems likely that the Phoenicians and their oligarchies had at least some influence over the political developments of archaic Greece.<sup>627</sup> This seems even more likely when one considers the close contact the Greeks and Phoenicians had with one another throughout the Archaic Period and the numerous innovations the Greeks are known to

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<sup>627</sup> As scholars have been increasingly arguing in recent years, such as: Simon Hornblower, "Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece," 2. Stephen Stockwell, "Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States," 129. Robert Drews, "Phoenicians, Carthage, and the Spartan Eunomia," 57-58.

have adopted from the Phoenicians at this time (such as their written script, shipbuilding techniques, pottery styles, and more). Thus, my thesis has mainly argued that as the Archaic Period progressed and the Greeks started to experience growing social unrest in their cities, they quite possibly turned to the Phoenicians and their political institutions for inspiration on how to solve this infighting and establish broader, more collective systems of rule that could appease the demands of their cities' citizens.

While my research has shown that the Phoenicians started developing broader forms of government several centuries before the ancient Greeks and that there were a number of similarities between these two peoples' political systems in antiquity, I have not, unfortunately, provided direct evidence of the Greeks receiving inspiration from the Phoenicians and their oligarchies. I have not quoted from any source, whether Greek or Phoenician, that overtly claims the political developments of archaic Greece were inspired by the contemporary city-states of Phoenicia. Nevertheless, I hope I have shown that, in many ways, this lack of a 'smoking gun' from our surviving literary sources, is not surprising. The Greeks of the early Classical Period (from whom we get most of our information about the political developments of archaic Greece) appear to have had, at best, only a vague or obscure understanding of their cities' histories. These ancient authors often provided semi-legendary accounts of Greece's early history that were quite oversimplified, attributing almost all of a city's political institutions to the deeds of a single famous lawgiver, like Lycurgus of Sparta or King Theseus of Athens. When compared to the archaeological record, these accounts often run into serious issues or are disproven entirely. Therefore, if our ancient sources had this tendency of glossing over important historical events and misattributing various laws or institutions to semi-legendary figures, then I see no reason

why it would be hard to believe that in doing so, these authors failed to mention the role of the Phoenicians and their governments over this period's political history.

Be that as it may, even without a direct reference to the influence of the Phoenicians over the Greeks' political developments during the Archaic Period, one could still argue that the origins of broad-based non-monarchical forms of government ultimately lie in Phoenicia. This is because one of the major driving forces behind the political developments of the Archaic Period, as my thesis has clearly shown, were growing social conflicts between a polis' traditional aristocracy and the *nouveaux riches* who were emerging from its merchant class.<sup>628</sup> We have already seen this phenomenon, for example, in Corinth, where the tyrannies of the Cypselids appears to have received strong support especially from the city's wealthy traders who had grown dissatisfied with their marginal role in politics under the previous Bacchiad oligarchy.<sup>629</sup> Similarly, we have seen that in early 6<sup>th</sup> century Athens, the Solonian reforms attempted to shift the city's oligarchy away from a system that prioritized the status of one's birth (i.e. the members of the Eupatridae) towards a timocracy or system where wealth was what ultimately determined one's political rights and social standing.<sup>630</sup> Later on, Athens' *nouveaux riches* seem to have earned an even greater degree of political autonomy as they backed the tyrannies of the Peisistratids, who in return, appear to have pursued a number of commercial policies that benefited their mercantile supporters. This phenomenon appears to have occurred not only in the oligarchies of ancient Greece but of the Phoenicians as well. When the Book of Isaiah declares that Tyre's "merchants were princes,"<sup>631</sup> when our other ancient sources mention the

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<sup>628</sup> Robert Drews, "The First Tyrants in Greece," 131. Pavel Oliva, "The Early Tyranny," 363. Robert K. Fleck and F. Andrew Hanssen, "How Tyranny Paved the Way to Democracy: The Democratic Transition in Ancient Greece," 396-397.

<sup>629</sup> Terry Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750-323 BC: A Source-Based Approach*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 49-51.

<sup>630</sup> Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Athenian and Spartan Eunomia, or: What to Do with Solon's Timocracy?," 422-423.

<sup>631</sup> Isaiah 23:8. Translation taken from: *Common English Bible*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Nashville TN: Abington Press, 2013).

Phoenicians' governing bodies deliberating especially over matters of trade,<sup>632</sup> and when modern scholars call the Phoenicians' governments 'merchant oligarchies,'<sup>633</sup> the implication seems to be that the movement towards broader, more collective systems of government arose particularly from Phoenicia's merchant class. Stephen Stockwell perhaps summarizes it best, when he claims that "as trade increased [among the Phoenicians], the power of the king became constrained by the wealth of merchant families keen to influence public affairs."<sup>634</sup>

The reason why the merchant class and their role in broadening the governments of ancient city-states is so significant, is because the Phoenicians can, in many ways, be seen as the cause of this emerging merchant class in archaic Greece. As the famous Roman orator, Cicero once said, "the Phoenicians were the first, through their trading and merchandise, to import into Greece greed and grandiosity and the insatiable desire for all things."<sup>635</sup> This statement appears to be corroborated by our archaeological evidence, which suggests that the Phoenicians played a crucial role in reestablishing trade between the Aegean and broader Mediterranean throughout the so-called Greek Dark Ages.<sup>636</sup> From as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, Phoenician merchants appear to have travelled to the Aegean and traded various goods with the Hellenes both on the Greek mainland and on numerous islands. Furthermore, in some locations such as Crete, Cos, and Rhodes, Phoenician merchants appear to have resided permanently, where they played a key role in developing these regions' commercial industries. Some of the Greeks earliest colonial efforts, such as the founding of Ischia just off the coast of Italy in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, seem

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<sup>632</sup> Such as: Report of Wenamun 2.71 and ANET<sup>3</sup> 533-34.

<sup>633</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West*, 145. Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians*, 87. Ronald M. Glassman, *The Origins of Democracy in Tribes, City-States, and Nation-States*, 497.

<sup>634</sup> Stephen Stockwell, "Before Athens: Early Popular Government in Phoenician and Greek City States," 127.

<sup>635</sup> Cicero *De Re Publica* Fragment 3.3 (quoted in Nonius Marcellus 431M). Translation taken from: James E. G. Zetzel, *Cicero: On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, 78.

<sup>636</sup> Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, 21. Carolina López-Ruiz, *The Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean*, 1-3, 27-28.

to have been accomplished with the help of a number of Phoenician colonists.<sup>637</sup> The Greeks' ability to engage in maritime trade throughout the Archaic Period was likely only further facilitated by their adoption of Phoenician shipbuilding and navigation techniques, weights and measures,<sup>638</sup> as well as the Phoenicians' written script, which appears to have been first used by the Greeks to record commercial activity.<sup>639</sup> The major role the Phoenicians played in developing Greek trade and in reconnecting the Aegean with the broader Mediterranean over the course of the early Iron Age, is a topic that has been covered thoroughly by many scholars in recent years,<sup>640</sup> but perhaps Carolina López-Ruiz summarizes it best, when she writes:

As the Iron Age progressed, especially during the eighth century, a burst of economic dynamism produced a global transformation, with the effect of setting the central and western Mediterranean into direct contact with the Levant. Access to cultural assets as well as new markets, with their opportunities and risks, was now in the grasp of local kings, artisans, merchants, farmers, sailors, and soldiers. New forms of writing facilitated a growing dynamic merchant class. Fast, high-capacity sailing boats transported not just goods but people and new cultural models. And at the helms of those boats were, above all, Phoenician mariners, settlers, traders, and explorers... it was these Phoenicians who set in motion the new connectivity networks and to a great degree created a first, truly interconnected Mediterranean.<sup>641</sup>

In sum, even without a 'smoking gun' from our surviving ancient literary sources, one could still argue that the Phoenicians were ultimately the cause of the political developments of archaic Greece, in so far as one recognizes that these political developments were often instigated by the disgruntled local merchant class and that the Phoenicians played a critical role in developing trade and the rise of this merchant class in Greece over the course of the early Iron

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<sup>637</sup> M. W. Frederiksen, "Archaeology in South Italy and Sicily, 1973-76," *Archaeological Reports* 23 (1977), 44.

<sup>638</sup> John C. Scott, "The Phoenicians and the Formation of the Western World," *Comparative Civilizations Review* 78 (2018), 34.

<sup>639</sup> Paola Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing: A Cultural History (600-150 BC)*, 1st ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2013), 28.

<sup>640</sup> Susan Sherratt, "Greeks and Phoenicians: Perceptions of Trade and Traders in the Early First Millenium BC" in *Social Archaeologies of Trade and Exchange: Exploring Relationships among People, Places, and Things*, edited by Alexander A. Bauer and Anna S. Agbe-Davies (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group 2010), 124-131. John C. Scott, "The Phoenicians and the Formation of the Western World," 25-31.

<sup>641</sup> Carolina López-Ruiz, *The Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean*, 1-2.

Age. By reconnecting the Aegean to the wider Mediterranean and engaging in extensive trade with the Greeks, the Phoenicians quite possibly gave rise to the social tensions in Greek cities that led its inhabitants to turn to outsiders and their systems of government for inspiration, in the first place. Therefore, the fact that the Phoenicians began developing broader political systems *before* the Greeks, the fact that the Phoenicians and Greeks shared a number of remarkable similarities in the ways their city-states were organized, and the fact that the Phoenicians extensively traded and communicated with the Greeks throughout the early Iron Age, can in and of itself, be seen as enough evidence to conclude that the Phoenicians were one of the major causes behind the political developments of archaic Greece. The purpose of this thesis has not been to lessen or discredit the Greeks' role in developing democracy, but rather to demonstrate that the history of broad-based governments is far older and more complicated than is generally assumed. With my research now complete, perhaps we can say that significant strides have been made in determining the Phoenicians' influence over the ancient Greeks and their political institutions, an area of research where Simon Hornblower once said, "scientific study... has hardly begun."<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>642</sup> Simon Hornblower, "Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece," 2.

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