

BOB DEVELIN

THE BATTLE OF OINOE MEETS OCKHAM'S RAZOR?

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 99 (1993) 235–240

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn

THE BATTLE OF OINOE MEETS OCKHAM'S RAZOR?

It may seem rash in the extreme to return to a problem which Professor Badian has recently found "totally intractable."¹ I am not sure that the solution to the quandary, could it be found, would be of great significance, but I am provoked by the question because of its possible implications for the priority of evidence and the legitimacy of assumptions, matters which must exercise any historian. There is much to agree with in Badian's understandably aporetic discussion and I seek partial mitigation for another entry into the insoluble by avoiding a rehearsal of the modern historiography, though one piece not noticed by Badian (and probably best forgotten) must engage some attention.²

Literary and archaeological evidence continue to combine in dating the establishment of the Peisianakteion, later called the Stoa Poikile, around or before 460 B.C.³ Six hundred years later Pausanias (1.15) described what he saw there.⁴ The first painting was "the Athenians drawn up at Oinoe in Argive territory in opposition to the Lakedaimonians:" the depiction was of the time when battle was about to be joined. Then "in the middle of the walls" (the meaning to be examined later) was a series of paintings: the Athenians and Theseus fighting the Amazons, the Greeks after the capture of Troy, the battle of Marathon and the fleeing barbarians. Here arises the first question: Was the scene of Oinoe part of four panels in sequence or did it stand by itself?

The conclusion of Francis and Vickers (see n.2) is on p.112: "we can see no reason to allow the usual practice of relegating it to a side wall and 'explaining it away' as a post-(and even anti-)Cimonian accretion to the original design." I will not enter into political speculations, and this comes at the end of a tangled argument, not all of which we need unravel - it can be more simple. And it *is* simple to ask whether Pausanias can have meant

¹ E.Badian, "Towards a chronology of the pentekontaetia down to the renewal of the Peace of Callias," EMC/CV 32 (1988), 310-312.

² For a treatment of views up to the time of his writing see R.Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford 1972), 469-472. The additional item is E.D.Francis and M.Vickers, "The Oenoë painting in the Stoa Poikile and Herodotus' account of Marathon," *ABSA* 80 (1985), 99-113. See also below n.7, and for considerations on the paintings C.Carena, M.Manfredini and L.Piccirilli, *Plutarco. Le vite di Cimone e di Lucullo* (Milano 1990), 214-217.

³ On chronological matters see T.L.Shear Jr., "The Athenian agora: excavations of 1980-1982," *Hesperia* 53 (1984), 13-19.

⁴ I give the relevant parts of the Greek, αὕτη δὲ στοὰ πρῶτα μὲν Ἀθηναίους ἔχει τεταγμένους ἐν Οἰνῶν τῆς Ἀργειᾶς ἐναντία Λακεδαιμονίων...ἐν δὲ τῷ μέσῳ τῶν τοίχων Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Θησεὺς Ἀμαζόσι μάχονται...ἐπὶ δὲ ταῖς Ἀμαζόσιν Ἑλληνέες εἰσὶν ἡρηνότεροι Ἴλιον...τελευταῖον δὲ τῆς γραφῆς εἰσὶν οἱ μαχεσάμενοι Μαραθῶνι...ἔρχεται δὲ τῆς γραφῆς νῆες τε αἱ Φοίνισσαι...ἐνταῦθα ἀσπίδες κεῖνται χαλκαῖ, καὶ ταῖς μὲν ἐστὶν ἐπίγραμμα ἀπὸ Σκιωναίων καὶ τῶν ἐπικούρων εἶναι, τὰς δὲ...Λακεδαιμονίων εἶναι λέγεται τῶν ἀλόντων ἐν τῇ Σφακτηρίᾳ νήσῳ.

what these authors wish. I think not. Pausanias begins *πρῶτα μὲν*-Oinoe. The (first) answering δέ I find in *ἐν δὲ τῷ μέσῳ τῶν τοίχων* - Theseus and the Amazons etc. I take this mean not "in the middle of the wall(-panels)," but "in the middle one of the walls." The word order suggests this; compare 1.17.3, *τοῦ δὲ τρίτου τῶν τοίχων ἡ γραφή μὴ πυθομένοις ἃ λέγουσιν οὐ καφῆς ἐστὶ...* . Furthermore, those words seem to mark a move to a connected series of paintings which could be referred to as *the* painting: *ἐπὶ δὲ ταῖς Ἀμαζόσιν Ἑλληνας εἶσιν...τελευταῖον δὲ τῆς γραφῆς εἶσιν οἱ μαχεσάμενοι Μαραθῶνι... ἔχεται δὲ τῆς γραφῆς νῆες τε αἱ Φοίνισσαι...* .

We know from Pausanias 1,15,4 that there were shields dating from the 420s dedicated next to the paintings. We should allow the possibility that other paintings too were added to the Stoa Poikile. The volume of literary and epigraphical testimonia has 52 items under the Stoa, some 28 of which refer to the paintings with varying degrees of certainty.⁵ The number is more impressive than the information to be derived. It may be that Polygnotos was in overall charge: at least he was responsible for the Trojan scene, a theme he pursued elsewhere too (Paus. 10.25.1ff.). Mikon probably did the Amazonomachy, which he may have portrayed also in the Theseion (Paus. 1.17.1ff.; Agora III T 351). Mikon and Polygnotos probably worked together on several projects (Agora III TT 68, 92, 140, 351) and their association in the original paintings of the Stoa fits in well with all else we know. A third artist, brought in with regard to the Marathon painting, is Panainos (Pliny NH 35.57; Paus. 5.11.6), who is conveniently placed at Pliny NH 35.54 in Olympiad 83, 448-445 B.C. Though there are differences in the precise attribution of specific paintings, these are the artists made responsible for the three scenes I have placed on a single wall; this allows us the impression that these three comprised the original decoration of the Stoa. Beyond Pausanias, no-one even mentions the Oinoe painting, let alone identifying the artist. Yet it remains true that this could be a function of chance and true also that references to individual scenes are to the famous Marathon painting.

There is a case for following the orthodox belief that the Oinoe painting is to be kept separate from the others in time and concept. The evidence for additions to the art work in the Stoa is suggestive, but not strong. If scholiasts could be trusted, then we might have more confidence than we must in schol. Aischines 3.186, that the Stoa contained "very many paintings" (*πλείεσται γραφαί*). One of the scholia on Aristophanes *Ploutos* 385 collected at Agora III T 58 mentions the painting of the *Herakleidai* "into the stoa of the Athenians" (*εἰς τὴν στόαν τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἔγραψε*). Here, as in other scholia, it is attributed to Pamphilos; in one scholion, however, Apollodoros is the artist, this in specific contradiction of the other tradition.⁶ The identification of the stoa remains unsure, but let us remark the time of the

⁵ R.E.Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora* vol. III (Princeton 1957), TT 47-98.

⁶ *γραφὴ μὲντοι ἐστὶν οἱ Ἑρακλεῖδαι...ἰκετεύοντες...ἥτις Παμφίλου οὐκ ἔστιν, ὡς φασι, ἀλλ' Ἀπολλοδώρου, ὃ δὲ Πάμφιλος, [ὡς εἶκε, καὶ] νεώτερος ἦν Ἀριστοφάνους.*

artists. With Pamphilos we are into the fourth century: Pliny NH 35.76 attributes to him "a battle near Phleious and a victory of the Athenians," which would seem to refer to events of the 370s or 360s, possibly exactly 367 B.C.⁷ The scholiast which mentions Apollodoros also notes that "Pamphilos, so it seems, was more recent than Aristophanes." Pliny NH 35.60 places Apollodoros in Olympiad 93, 408-405 B.C. Finally, we have the passage from a life of Sokrates commented on at Agora III T 90, which says "he was depicted with a lyre in the Stoa Poikile."⁸ Was this another separate painting or are we to accept the suggestion that it was a likeness of the poet "introduced into one of the larger pictures, possibly by Polygnotos in the picture of Troy"? For the latter there is not the least evidentiary warrant, so far as I can see.

So we have some testimony for additions to the original paintings and no reason in general to assume this could not happen. But no-one among modern scholars wishes to separate the battle of Oinoe far in time from the original decoration. Francis and Vickers want the painting to refer to Oinoe near Marathon and thus tie in with a theme. Essentially we may ignore the discussion of Marathon which is expected to buttress this, for there are two problems at base, our attitude to which will allow the validity of that discussion or not. One is whether we would expect part of the preliminaries to Marathon to come first when the battle itself comes last. I feel not, but that is a compositional matter where opinions may differ. Much more serious is the assumption that Pausanias has misinterpreted the Oinoe painting. Now one should not shrink from allowing Pausanias the fallibility which may affect all ancient (and modern) writers, and whatever the truth about the battle, it remains the case that it is remembered nowhere else in what has survived from antiquity. But quite simply, Pausanias is at least reporting orthodox opinion on what was depicted, even if the necessary inscriptions of names on the paintings had faded with time (though it seems more likely that he was reading what he saw). It is too much to conclude that he or someone else has interpreted for himself, and in a way which was not at all obvious, or even been influenced by what he saw at Delphi (to which I shall come). Details which identify Athenian opposition to Lakedaimonians and the territory as Argive cannot be overturned. The same considerations apply to the theory which wants a depiction of the known battle of Oinophyta and thus creates Boiotians and Boiotia to replace Pausanias' identifications.

Finding an occasion for a battle at Oinoe has certainly been an exercise to demonstrate the fertility of the historical imagination (for it has to be imagined or, if it be preferred, conjectured). The apparent presence of hoplites does not aid the already weak supposition that it was mythical. An orthodoxy of sorts provides a location in the 450s, when the Athenians were allied with Argos, though Badian quite properly remains mystified as to why

⁷ See R.Develin, *Athenian Officials 684-321 B.C.* (Cambridge 1989), 256, under the general Chares.

⁸ Φασι δὲ ὅτι καὶ κιθάραν ἀναλαβὼν ἕν μόνῳ τῷ Θαμύριδι ποτε ἐκιθάρισε, ὅθεν καὶ ἐν τῇ ποικίλῃ στοᾷ μετὰ κιθάραι αὐτὸν γεγράφθαι.

such an engagement, probably a minor one in Athenian terms, should have received pictorial commemoration in Athens. The belief of Francis and Vickers in a battle at that time seems to reverse the usual approach and to serve only to provide a source for what they perceive as Pausanias' error in interpreting both the relevant pieces which he saw. For they want the evidence from Delphi to refer in fact to Oinophyta. This is simply to compound the fallacy of their "method."

At 10.10.3 Pausanias describes more votive offerings of the Argives at Delphi. There are representations of the Seven against Thebes, which he records "are the work of Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton and they made them, as the Argives themselves say, from (the spoils of) the victory which they themselves and allied troops from the Athenians won against the Lakedaimonians at Oinoe in Argive territory."⁹ It is Pausanias' opinion (on what grounds we cannot know) that the portrayal of the Epigonoι, which he mentions next, came from the same source. Here, then, the battle is not depicted, but the view of the Argives (whether by literary or oral tradition) is not easily spurned. Can we really suppose that they should have said Oinophyta? Can we really suppose, as an alternative, that Pausanias misunderstood them? Surely not. If one is permitted to play fast and loose with testimony of this sort, then anything is possible. The conclusion must be that there was a historical battle at Oinoe in Argive territory at which the Athenians helped the Argives defeat the Spartans.

So when did the battle take place? On the evidence so far an answer may emerge which will be found uncomfortable. One of the sculptors of the Delphi dedication was Hypatodoros. Pliny NH 34.50 mentions a sculptor of that name who flourished in Olympiad 102, 372-369 B.C. This takes us back to an old and discredited view that the battle of Oinoe belongs in the early fourth century, when indeed Athens and Argos were part of the coalition against Sparta and when Athenian troops and mercenaries operated in the northern Peloponnese. This otherwise natural and sensible conclusion is hindered by one item only. The names of Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton appear on the base of a private dedication found at Delphi made for Epizelos of Orchomenos in Boiotia.¹⁰ This promising coincidence is undermined by the fact that when it was rediscovered, its lettering was pronounced archaic, not, as before, archaistic. So Meiggs and a hundred-year old orthodoxy. To argue against this must be a dangerous path, but might not the epigraphical argument have its own snares? How does one tell that letters are not deliberately archaizing? Jeffery did not encompass the fourth century, but she wrote the following of this inscription (p.93): "The tailed epsilon and upsilon give a look of archaism to the inscription, which is belied by the late forms of

⁹ οὔτοι μὲν δὴ Ὑπατοδώρου καὶ Ἀριστογεΐτονος εἰς ἔργα, καὶ ἐποίησαν σφᾶς, ὡς αὐτοὶ Ἀργεῖοι λέγουσιν, ἀπὸ τῆς νίκης ἦντινα ἐν Οἰνῶν τῇ Ἀργείᾳ αὐτοὶ τε καὶ Ἀθηναίων ἐπικούροι Λακεδαιμονίους ἐνίκησαν. ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖν ἔργου καὶ τοὺς Ἐπιγόνους ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων καλουμένους ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἀργεῖοι....

¹⁰ Conveniently in L.Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961), 93, 163-4 (the supplements of the 1990 edition add nothing on this matter). It is also Fouilles de Delphes III.1.574.

heta...and theta..." Is one entitled to ask whether this mixture can be explained as an inexact attempt to reproduce archaic script? These are genuine questions which I place before those who are expert in such matters. How was it that an original assessment could conclude that it was archaizing? No obvious reason occurs as to why it should be so - the reason is unlikely to be obvious - and I can offer no parallels.

Consider, further, the monument which Pausanias saw at Delphi. It has been suggested that part of it was found and is Fouilles de Delphes III.1.91. E.Bousquet (pp.380ff.) restored, *exempli gratia*, Ἀργεῖοι [ἀπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων δεκάταν τὰς ἐν Οἰνόαι μάχῃ], but he found the lettering inconsistent with a date in the 450s: "la forme des lettres...indique les vingt dernières années du V^e siècle." If we *are* dealing with the same monument and unless it was, as Bousquet proposes, a later fulfilment of an earlier vow (which would mean a false attribution to the earlier sculptors), we have further fuel to propel us in the direction I wish us to go.

The principle of Ockham's razor would remove any multiplication of homonyms and leave us with one Hypatodoros. Pliny's lists of artists and sculptors contain chronological error; they demonstrate both separation of two artists of the same name and conflation of separate homonyms. Yet the fact remains that he notices only one Hypatodoros and it would be unwise to suppose that he has misdated him by a century. The only other work attributed to Hypatodoros alone, so far as I can determine, is a bronze Athene at Aliphera in Arkadia (Paus. 8.26.7), and there is no hint of date. Aristogeiton appears to be unknown other than as the partner of Hypatodoros. For the orthodoxy to be maintained this must be an earlier Hypatodoros, unknown to Pliny or his sources, and that suggests the very real possibility of a sculptural tradition in a family which used this name. Yet an earlier Hypatodoros has to have been, one would think, both well-known in his own day and overlooked by Pliny.

The sculptors were Thebans, and it does not disturb me in itself to find them producing an Argive dedication, especially given the subject-matter, mythological data and traceable Argive influence on Boiotian cults.¹¹ Yet there is a problem with such an association in the 450s, given the alliance of Argos and Athens and Athenian relations with Boiotia, even after Oinophyta. Argives fought with the Athenians at Tanagra (Thuc. 1.107.5). No such problem would present itself in the 390s.¹²

That the Argives should commemorate a victory over the Spartans, and do so in no mean fashion, need cause no surprise. How then to explain the painting at Athens (in which

¹¹ A.Schachter, "The Theban Wars," *Phoenix* 21 (1967), 1-10; R.J.Buck, *A History of Boiotia* (Univ. of Alberta 1979), 61-63.

¹² In "Argive Oenoe," *AC* 54 (1985), 105-115, Francis and Vickers again argue for Oinophyta, state simply that the Delphi group "was executed by two Theban statuaries active in the 450s" (p.110), and canvass the suggestion that the group may itself have been war booty (P.113). Jefferey, in the article which they cite ("The Battle of Oinoe in the Stoa Poikile," *ABSA* 60 (1965), 41-57 at 49f.), was led to this by surprise at Theban artists executing an Argive commission when Thebes and Argos were at war.

Pausanias mentions no depiction of Argives)? I present two alternatives. One is that the Argives commissioned the painting as well as their own dedication, a sort of thanks to the Athenians and an expression of solidarity. This would be appropriate in the wake of Argive deaths in the defeat at Tanagra and equally comprehensible in the atmosphere of the anti-Spartan coalition of the late 390s. A second explanation is that, for not dissimilar reasons of public expression, the Athenians decided to match the Argive dedication at Delphi. If this was in the 450s I would prefer to see it as positive ebullience rather than a negative counterblast aimed at Kimonian laconism. In any event, the battle was given the most prominent of display arenas and for a fourth-century willingness to depict such battles we at least have Pamphilos' painting of a battle near Phleious mentioned earlier, whether or not it was in the Stoa Poikile.

Anxious as I am to find arguments for a fourth-century date for Oinoe, I am not willing to countenance two sets of associates named Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton working generations apart. What is to be highlighted is that there is only one piece of solid evidence standing in the way of assigning the battle to an accommodating fourth-century context: the nature of the lettering on the base from Delphi. If that can be overcome, convincingly, then I feel the edge of Ockham's razor is well-honed to shave off the 450s, allowing the shadow of the 390s to grow. If it cannot, then we must allow the implications which locate the battle in the 450s, after Oinophyta if one is concerned about the fact that Theban artists sculpted the dedication, and presumably before the truce arranged by Kimon on his return, whenever that was. Or the adventurous might consider the heretic Schreiner's dating to between 465 and 463, another shot in his war against Thucydides.¹³ Whatever the case, the meanness of time has diminished a victory which in its day was highly touted.

University of Ottawa

Bob Develin

¹³ J.H.Schreiner, "The battle of Oinoe and the credibility of Thucydides," *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to Rudi Thomsen* (Aarhus Univ. Press 1988), 71-76.