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THE LAKEDAIMONIAN DEDICATION TO OLYMPIAN ZEUS: THE DATE  
OF *MEIGGS & LEWIS 22* (*SEG 11, 1203A*)

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THE LAKEDAEMONIAN DEDICATION TO OLYMPIAN ZEUS:  
THE DATE OF *MEIGGS & LEWIS 22* (*SEG 11, 1203A*)<sup>1</sup>

[δέξ]ο φάν[α]ξ Κρονίδα{ι} Δεῦ Ὀλύμπιε καλὸν ἄγαλμα  
 ηιλέφο[ι θυ]μοῖ τοῖ(λ) Λακεδαιμονίο[ις]

“Accept Lord, Son of Kronos, Olympian Zeus, this fine statue  
 From the Lakedaimonians with propitious spirit.”

This inscription, an elegiac couplet, inscribed on a cylindrical statue-base discovered at Olympia,<sup>2</sup> was made in thanksgiving by the Spartans to Zeus. The couplet is also recorded by Pausanias (5.24.3), who has removed the peculiarities of the dialect:

δέξο ἄναξ Κρονίδα Ζεῦ Ὀλύμπιε καλὸν ἄγαλμα  
 ἰλάφ θυμῷ τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις.

The date of this inscription has long been a matter of dispute. Pausanias dates the inscription to the Second Messenian War,<sup>3</sup> which would seem to be appropriate. The Spartans had subjugated the Messenians, or at least some of them, in the First Messenian War. The last Messenian victory in the Olympic festival took place in 736, which means that the Messenians stopped sending competitors from the date of that celebration, or very soon after, for after their defeat by the Spartans in the First Messenian War, they could no longer send competitors. Parker rejects this argument on analogy with modern nations in sporting competitions, that a lack of a victory from a certain date does not mean that the nation involved has ceased to exist. But his two modern examples refer only to a single sporting event; the Olympic games involved numerous events, and the fact is that no Messenian won a single competition after 736, despite the fact that there were seven

<sup>1</sup> R. Meiggs & D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Oxford 1969, revised edition 1988, no. 22, p. 47, henceforth Meiggs & Lewis; other editions: L. H. Jeffery, “Comments on Some Archaic Greek Inscriptions,” *JHS* 69, 1949, pp. 27–30; eadem, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961, revised edition 1990, pp. 196, 201 n. 49, pl. 37; 446 (1990 Supplement), henceforth *LSAG*; P. Friedländer (with the collaboration of H. B. Hoffleit), *Epigrammata: Greek Inscriptions in Verse*, London 1948, no. 113; C. D. Buck, *Greek Dialects*, Chicago 1955, second edition, no. 68, p. 266. P. A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, Berlin 1983, no. 367, p. 196 provides a full bibliography.

<sup>2</sup> For photographs of the base, see Jeffery, “Comments on Some Archaic Greek Inscriptions,” p. 27 fig. 5, p. 29 fig. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Paus. 5.24.3: τοῦ ναοῦ δὲ ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ μεγάλου Ζεὺς πρὸς ἀνατολὰς ἡλίου, μέγεθος μὲν δυῶδεκα ποδῶν, ἀνάθημα δὲ λέγουσιν εἶναι Λακεδαιμονίων, ἠνίκα ἀποστᾶσι Μεσσηνίοις δεύτερα τότε ἐς πόλεμον κατέστησαν. Scholars interpret this as a reference to the Second Messenian War, but some are inclined to reject this as the date for the dedication, considering that the lettering of the dedication is not early enough for this date. I argue below that the lettering is consistent with a mid-seventh-century date.

Messenian victors recorded by Pausanias from 768 to 736.<sup>4</sup> This lack of Messenian participation (the first Spartan victory at the Olympics occurred in 716) points to a late eighth century context for the first war. The Spartan king Theopompos (784–737) was involved in the war,<sup>5</sup> and the approximate dates for his reign indicates that the First Messenian War can be approximately dated to c. 740-20, or perhaps slightly later.<sup>6</sup>

The reasons behind the Second Messenian War are not so clear: this was either a revolt by the already subjugated Messenians or perhaps was fought against still unconquered Messenians waging war on the Spartans. The Second Messenian War probably dates to the mid-seventh century. Tyrtaeus has the First Messenian War fought in the time of the grandfathers of the warriors fighting in the Second Messenian War, and the ancient tradition placed the war in the middle of the seventh century.<sup>7</sup> The inscription, then, if Pausanias is correct in assigning it to the Second Messenian War, would belong to the mid-seventh century,<sup>8</sup> and this conflict would seem to provide an adequate historical context for the dedication.

Pausanias' dating of the inscription to the Second Messenian War, however, has been rejected by many scholars, on the grounds of the style of the lettering of the inscription. But there is disagreement about the date to which the inscription should be reassigned. Buck dated the dedication to the sixth century.<sup>9</sup> Several scholars, however, prefer a date in the 490s: Jeffery, Wallace, Huxley, followed by Meiggs and Lewis.<sup>10</sup> These consider the letters to be of the fifth, rather than the sixth or seventh century, without adequately specifying the reasons for their view. These scholars provide, in addition, an alternative historical context for the dedication, postulating Spartan difficulties with the Messenians in 490 (this epigram,

<sup>4</sup> V. Parker, "The Dates of the Messenian Wars," *Chiron* 21, 1991, p. 27, also lists the Messenian victors.

<sup>5</sup> For Theopompos, see in particular Tyrtaeus 5; cf. A. H. M. Jones, *Sparta*, Oxford 1968, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> For the First Messenian War, see G. L. Huxley, *Early Sparta*, London 1962, pp. 33-35; G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, London 1972, pp. 89-90 with n. 2; L.H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece: The Greek City States*, New York 1976, pp. 14-15; J. T. Hooker, *The Ancient Spartans*, London 1980, pp. 99-101. V. Parker, "The Dates of the Messenian Wars," *Chiron* 21, 1991, pp. 25-43 prefers to date the First Messenian War to c. 690-70.

<sup>7</sup> Tyrtaeus 5; for the date in the mid-seventh century, see esp. the discussion of Huxley, *Early Sparta*, pp. 56-57 (putting it in the 660s).

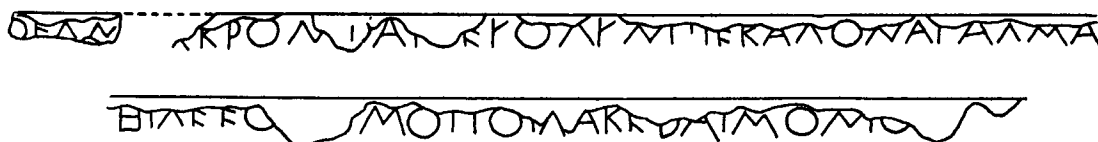
<sup>8</sup> For the Second Messenian War, see de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, pp. 89-90; Jeffery, *Archaic Greece: The Greek City States*, pp. 117-18; W. G. Forrest, *A History of Sparta*, London 1980, second edition, pp. 69-71; N. G. L. Hammond, "The Peloponnese," in *Cambridge Ancient History* III.3, second edition, Cambridge 1982, pp. 351-52; Parker, "The Dates of the Messenian Wars," pp. 25-43, downdates the Second Messenian War to c. 635/625-610/600; cf. also his "Some Dates in Early Spartan History," *Klio* 75, 1993, pp. 45-60. His arguments for downdating the traditional chronology do not affect the attribution of this inscription to the Second Messenian War.

<sup>9</sup> Buck, *Greek Dialects*, p. 266.

<sup>10</sup> Jeffery, "Comments on Some Archaic Greek Inscriptions," pp. 26-27, *LSAG*, p. 196 no. 49; W. P. Wallace, "Kleomenes, Marathon, the Helots, and Arcadia," *JHS* 74, 1954, p. 32; Huxley, *Early Sparta*, p. 88; Meiggs & Lewis, p. 47. Note also that G. L. Cawkwell, "Cleomenes," *Mnemosyne* 56, series 4, 1993, pp. 511-12 accepts a revolt in 490 as the reason why the Spartans were unwilling to go to Attica, but this neglects Herodotos' clear testimony concerning the phase of the moon. Cf. P. A. Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia*, London 1979, pp. 153ff.

in fact, is used as supporting evidence for a Messenian revolt in 490). There is, in fact, some evidence to suggest that there was a revolt at this time, but this evidence will not stand up to close scrutiny. One consideration that is not raised in rejecting Pausanias' clear testimony that the dedication belongs to the Second Messenian War is Pausanias' reliability. While any source is only as good as its informants, Habicht has clearly demonstrated that Pausanias is an extremely reliable authority when it comes to inscriptions.<sup>11</sup> If there is a choice between accepting Pausanias' testimony or opting for what is clearly a non-existent helot revolt in 490, the former is the only logical choice.

The main problem with the dedication seems to be that several scholars have believed that Pausanias is wrong in dating it to the Second Messenian War, because they believe that the lettering of the inscription is not sufficiently archaic. Buck thinks the lettering is sixth century, Jeffery that the lettering is fifth century but not seventh century; and Meiggs and Lewis are quite certain on this point: that the "monument refers to the Second Messenian War of the seventh century is out of the question".<sup>12</sup> They also note, quite correctly, that a firm dating in the fifth century is not possible, but that the lettering "in some respects . . . looks more archaic than one would expect c. 460" (and thus the dedication could not refer to the revolt of the helots and perioikoi of the 460s), and assign it to the date ?490–480. Meiggs and Lewis do not explain why they prefer not to date the lettering to the seventh century. However, the fluidity of opinion amongst the experts about the dating, with dates in the sixth or fifth centuries, means that the criteria of lettering need to be examined more closely, and cannot be lightly used to dismiss Pausanias' explicit testimony and attribution to the Second Messenian War.



Facsimile L. H. Jeffery

Significantly, as Jeffery herself notes, the tailed epsilon and epsilon in this inscription are "rather archaic types".<sup>13</sup> The tailed epsilon, present in Δεῶν and Ολύμπιε, is the earliest form of Lakonian epsilon; it is in fact the form of epsilon directly derived from Semitic.<sup>14</sup> If the inscription belonged to 490, or 465, a much more developed form of epsilon would be

<sup>11</sup> C. Habicht, "Pausanias and the Evidence of Inscriptions," *ClAnt* 3, 1984, pp. 40–56.

<sup>12</sup> Meiggs & Lewis, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> *LSAG*, p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, cf. pp. 24–25 for ε and ϵ.

expected,<sup>15</sup> not the earliest of the three Lakonian forms classified by Jeffery.<sup>16</sup> The epsilon, with its short tail and sloping side bars, as in Δεῦ, Ὀλύμπιε, ἠλέφο[ι], and Λακεδαίμωνίο[ις], is similarly archaic; the tailless form is usual in the fifth century, and while Jeffery dates some inscriptions with tailed forms to c. 500, these datings appear with a question mark (?), and being far from secure probably need to be updated.<sup>17</sup> The letter Ϝ as appearing in Ϝάν[α]ξ is definitely archaic, but could conceivably represent the continued use of this letter in archaic words, particularly epithets (as here: Ϝάν[α]ξ Κρονίδα[ι] Δεῦ Ὀλύμπιε), which apparently occurred in the fifth century.<sup>18</sup> The nature of the statue base also supports an archaic date for the inscription. The dedication is inscribed on a hollow open-ended cylinder, and Jeffery believes that this hollow base on which the dedication is inscribed would have held a bronze pillar-statue as was common in the archaic period.<sup>19</sup>

Dating criteria involving letter forms are one of the most important means of giving a chronological context to a particular inscription, and can be notoriously difficult, as in the case of this dedication, Meiggs & Lewis 22, and indicates that the letter forms need to be carefully considered. Clearly, the letter forms in this inscription are not incompatible with a seventh century date, which supports the accuracy of Pausanias when he gives the dedication a context in the mid-seventh century. Another example from the archaic period is relevant in this context, and helps to highlight further the uncertainties of dating by letter forms. In Athens, the lettering on the inscription on the altar of Apollo in the Pythion<sup>20</sup> (also recorded by Thucydides<sup>21</sup>) which commemorated the archonship of Peisistratos, grandson of Peisistratos the tyrant, in an unknown year, has sometimes been dated to the fifth century, whereas this is historically implausible.

The date of Peisistratos' archonship is in fact uncertain, but the archonship is known from Thucydides (6.54.6–7), who states that amongst those who held the eponymous archonship during the tyranny was "Peisistratos son of Hippias the tyrant, who had the name of his grandfather, and who as archon dedicated the altar of the twelve gods in the agora and that of Apollo in the Pythion. Afterwards the Athenian people built an additional length to the altar in the agora and erased the altar's inscription, but the inscription of the altar in the

<sup>15</sup> Though note that *LSAG*, p. 184, dates *IG* V.I.721 (her p. 201 n. 50) with tailed upsilon to the beginning of the fifth century. As Jeffery notes on pp. 195-96, cf. 184, however, various "phantom" readings had dated this inscription to the battle of Tanagra in the 450s, and these can be safely rejected. A more developed form of upsilon than that used in Meiggs & Lewis 22 was coming into use in the mid-sixth century, and a generally archaic context for the tailed upsilon is typical.

<sup>16</sup> *LSAG* p. 183. Note that on p. 184 she incorrectly states that the inscription has the third form of upsilon which she has classified (cf. p. 196).

<sup>17</sup> *LSAG* p. 201, pl. 37; cf. 183.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *LSAG* p. 183. The Ϝ in ἠλέφο[ι] is represented by the letters εε in the inscription.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *LSAG* p. 196, followed by Meiggs & Lewis, p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 948 (see esp. bibliography); other editions: Meiggs & Lewis 11; *IG* I<sup>2</sup> 761; *LSAG* pp. 75, 78 no. 37, pl. 4; Friedländer, *Epigrammata: Greek Inscriptions in Verse*, no. 100; D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, Cambridge 1981, pp. 240–41; Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, no. 305. There is a line drawing of this inscription at D. M. Lewis, "The Tyranny of the Peisistratidai," *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. IV, second edition, Cambridge 1988, p. 295 fig. 30, a–b.

<sup>21</sup> Thuc. 6.54.7.

Pythion even today still clearly says in faint letters: ‘Peisistratos son of Hippias as a memorial of his archonship / Erected this in the precinct of Pythian Apollo’.<sup>22</sup> Thucydides clearly states that the archonship took place during the period of the tyranny, i.e. not after 510. The fragmentary archon list *IG I<sup>3</sup> 1031a* (Meiggs & Lewis 6c) preserves several letters of the name of the archon for 522/1: [...5..]στρατ[ος]. It is tempting, of course, to restore [Peisi]strat[os], but this is not absolutely certain.<sup>23</sup>

The letters of the inscription from the altar of Pythian Apollo are described by Thucydides with the phrase ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι, which is usually taken to mean that the letters were ‘faint’, and yet the letters on the stone itself today are clearly cut and easily read; in fact, it has recently been suggested that Thucydides’ phrase meant that the letters were ‘plastered over’.<sup>24</sup> Raubitschek believed that the lettering of this inscription dated to the early fifth century, because he thought that the letter forms were not archaic, but fifth century, although he admitted the problems which such a date would imply for Athenian history.<sup>25</sup> The letters involved are alpha and epsilon, for which the ‘developed classical type’ is used, both letters having horizontal bars which could well suggest a fifth century date for the inscription.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the letter mu is symmetrical. However, the Peisistratidai and their children were expelled in 511/10.<sup>27</sup> That descendants of the Peisistratidai through the male (as opposed to female)<sup>28</sup> line remained in Athens after the expulsion of the tyrants is extremely unlikely. Meritt, however, argues that Peisistratos was in fact still in Athens in the 490s, and held his archonship in this period.<sup>29</sup> He argues that Peisistratos was ostracised, on the basis of the name – Πισίς(τ)ρατος – incised on a fragment of a geometric vase (found in the Agora),<sup>30</sup> which he interpreted as an ostrakon used in an ostrakophoria, and that as the first ostracism took place in 488/7,<sup>31</sup> Peisistratos must still have been in

<sup>22</sup> The verse is by Simonides, 26b; see Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, pp. 240-41.

<sup>23</sup> The same fragment records Miltiades’ archonship: he is known to have been archon in 524/3, and this dates the archonship of [...5..]στρατ[ος] to 522/1 (Dion. Halic. 7.3.1); T. J. Cadoux, “The Athenian Archons from Kreon to Hysichides,” *JHS* 68, 1948, p. 110 with n. 216; M. E. White, “Hippias and the Athenian Archon List,” in J. A. S. Evans (ed.), *Polis and Imperium: Essays in Honour of Edward Hugo Salmon*, Toronto 1974, p. 83; but cf. B. D. Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” *Hesperia* 8, 1939, pp. 62-63.

<sup>24</sup> B. M. Lavelle, “Thucydides and *IG I<sup>3</sup> 948*: ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι,” in R. F. Sutton (ed.), *Daidalikon: Studies in Memory of Raymond V. Schoder*, Wauconda 1989, pp. 207-12.

<sup>25</sup> A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis*, Cambridge 1949, p. 450.

<sup>26</sup> Jeffery, *LSAG* pp. 66, 75; Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis*, p. 450.

<sup>27</sup> [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 19.6; Hdt. 5.65.1-2.

<sup>28</sup> Hipparchos, the first Athenian to be ostracised, in 488/7 ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.3-4), was probably the grandson of Hippias, through one of Hippias’ daughters (he is described as a relative, συγγενής, of Peisistratos at [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.4 and elsewhere); see J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families 600-300 B.C.*, Oxford 1971, pp. 451-52; P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, Oxford 1981, pp. 240, 271-72.

<sup>29</sup> Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> Note E. Vanderpool, “Some Ostraka From the Athenian Agora,” in *Commemorative Studies in Honor of T.L. Shear*, *Hesperia Supplement* 8, Princeton 1949, pp. 405-08, pl. 60; *LSAG* pp. 70, 76 n. 9e, pl. 2; M. Lang, *The Athenian Agora 21: Graffiti and Dipinti*, Princeton 1976, D 1; H. R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script: A Survey*, Oxford 1990, no. 48, p. 14; see *SEG* 39.42 for a discussion with bibliography.

<sup>31</sup> [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.4.

Athens at this time and could well have held his archonship in the early 490s (he argues specifically for 497/6) and that this accounts for the advanced letter forms, with the altar commemorating his archonship dedicated and inscribed in the 490s. However, it is clear that the object in question is not an ostrakon, but a graffito which was incised on a pottery fragment, and it probably dates to the early sixth-century; the fragment was not used for an ostrakophoria and is not proof that Peisistratos was still in Athens in the 480s.

But while alpha and epsilon in this inscription are the developed classical forms, the letter forms for theta and chi are instructive: both are archaic forms<sup>32</sup> (note in particular the perpendicular cross of the theta and chi).<sup>33</sup> Despite the fact that some of the letter forms of the inscription appear to belong to the fifth century, clearly here there is a case of a stonemason using ‘advanced’ letter forms which ought not on the formal epigraphic criteria to occur until decades later.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, the epigraphic criteria can not be jettisoned, but this example shows that there can be no “sacred canon”, and that dating by letter forms must remain only approximate. In this case, strict adherence to the epigraphic criteria pertaining to the letters alpha and epsilon would have provided an anomaly, yielding a son of Hippias in Athens after the expulsion of the tyrants and their children, which is historically implausible.

Briefly, another example which urges caution in using rigid categories of letter criteria is the use of the three-barred sigma to date Athenian inscriptions of the fifth century. The last firmly dated use of three-barred sigma occurs in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 265* of 447/6, and the first dateable four-barred sigmas appear in *IG I<sup>3</sup> 264* of 448/7;<sup>35</sup> it therefore became generally accepted that all inscriptions with three-barred sigmas dated to before c. 445, which became the cutting off point for undated inscriptions with three-barred sigmas; yet the chances of survival meant that one more or one less precisely dated inscription would have significantly modified this criterion. The use of the three-barred sigma criterion meant that inscriptions such as *IG I<sup>3</sup> 1453*, the decree on coins, weights and measures, which on any other evidence belongs in the 420s, is generally dated to c. 450-446. Modern technology, the use of lasers and enhanced photography, has established that three-barred sigmas are found as late as 418/7: *IG I<sup>3</sup> 11*, the Athenian alliance with Eggesta, can be re-assigned from its traditional date of 458/7 or 454/3 to 418/7.<sup>36</sup> If the new dates for many of the inscriptions of

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<sup>32</sup> Meiggs & Lewis, p. 20. But as Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis*, p. 450 notes, these letter forms persisted “even after 480”.

<sup>33</sup> *LSAG* pp. 66–67.

<sup>34</sup> Dinsmoor (cited by Meiggs & Lewis, p. 20) suggested that the inscription was engraved at a later date than the dedication of the altar, but this would seem unlikely. The suggestion that the letters of the inscription were recut in the fifth century (Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” p. 63 n. 1, citing Löwy’s suggestion) is also unnecessary.

<sup>35</sup> Before *IG I<sup>3</sup> 264*, there are earlier isolated examples: *IG I<sup>3</sup> 1147.67* (460 or 459) and *IG I<sup>3</sup> 260.1* (453/2); note that Meiggs & Lewis 52 & 53 cannot be securely dated. Cf. R. Meiggs, “The Dating of Fifth-Century Attic Inscriptions”, *JHS* 86, 1966, pp. 89, 92; H. Mattingly, “Review Article”, *AJPH* 105, 1984, p. 340; C. W. Fornara & L. J. Samons, *Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles*, Berkeley 1991, p. 186.

<sup>36</sup> For the three-barred sigma, modern technology and the down-dating of fifth-century inscriptions, with the consequent effect on the history of the Athenian empire, see details and bibliography in M. P. J. Dillon &

the fifth-century are accepted, the history of the Athenian empire will be considerably modified. This example shows that scholars need to be prepared to reconsider the criteria for dating by letter forms.

Scholars in support of their conclusions that the lettering in Meiggs & Lewis 22 does not belong to the Second Messenian War have also suggested that there are alternative historical contexts for this inscription, and have suggested a possible helot revolt in 490. The evidence for this revolt is Plato *Laws* 692d, 698d–e, Strabo 8.4.10 (362), and Pausanias 4.23.5–10. Plato states that trouble with the Messenians prevented the Spartans from coming to the aid of the Athenians at the time of the first Persian invasion, specifically, at Marathon. This contradicts Herodotos, who gives the excuse for Spartan non-participation as being their law (nomos) that they could not take up arms until the full moon, and it was the ninth day of the month when the request was made.<sup>37</sup> Spartan religiosity is well attested,<sup>38</sup> and there is no need to doubt this story. Plato may well have overlooked, or not known, that the Spartans had a more than legitimate religious reason for not attending the battle, and he might (incorrectly) have seen the helots as the only reason why the Spartans did not participate in the battle. Strabo 8.4.10 (362) writes loosely of four Messenian Wars, which makes it possible to postulate a revolt in 490. Diodoros (15.66.3–4), however, mentions not four but three wars: the First and Second Messenian Wars, in which Messenia was subdued, and the third war, involving the well known siege at Mt. Ithome dealt with by Thucydides, which broke out in the 460s (cf. Thuc. 1.101–103).<sup>39</sup> Pausanias (4.23.5–10) records that Messenians were offered asylum in Sicily, but this is not to be associated with the Second Messenian War.<sup>40</sup>

The only possible piece of evidence in Herodotos which might confirm such a revolt in 490 relates to Kleomenes. Herodotos notes that after the Spartans deposed Kleomenes for bribing the Pythia at Delphi, he went to Arcadia and united the Arcadians against the Spartans and made them take oaths that they would follow him wherever he led them.<sup>41</sup> It has been argued that the troubles with helots as attested to by Plato are part of these

L. Garland, *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Socrates*, London & New York 1994, pp. 252, 254, 256, 261–62, 264, 266–67.

<sup>37</sup> Hdt. 6.106.3–107.1, 120; W. K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War I*, Berkeley 1971, pp. 119–120.

<sup>38</sup> For campaigns prematurely broken off or cancelled for religious purposes, see A. J. Holladay & M. D. Goodman, “Religious Scruples in Ancient Warfare,” *CQ* 36, 1986, pp. 152–60; E. W. Robinson, “Oracles and Spartan Religious Scruples,” *LCM* 17.9, 1992, pp. 131–32. Omens were taken at Sparta’s borders before the army crossed them (the diabateria): unfavourable diabateria could result in the Spartan army not marching out (Thuc. 5.54.2, 55.3, 116.1); for favourable diabateria, see: Xen. *Hell.* 4.7.2. See M. H. Jameson, “Sacrifice Before Battle,” in V. D. Hanson (ed.), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, London 1991, pp. 202, 222 n. 12, 223 n. 17; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans*, Berkeley 1983, tr. P. Bing, p. 40 with n. 22; W. R. Connor, “Early Greek Land Warfare as Symbolic Expression,” *P&P* 119, 1988, p. 13. See also Pritchett, *The Greek State at War I*, pp. 122–23.

<sup>39</sup> The precise date for the revolt of the helots and perioikoi in the 460s is also uncertain, see A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. I, Oxford 1939, pp. 401–402; R. A. McNeal, “Historical Methods and Thucydides I.103.1,” *Historia* 19, 1970, pp. 306–25.

<sup>40</sup> L. Pearson, “The Pseudo-History of Messenia and its Authors,” *Historia* 11, 1962, p. 401 n. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Hdt. 6.74.1–75.3.



intrigues with the Arcadians.<sup>42</sup> But Herodotos might be expected to mention any actual revolt of the helots at this time.<sup>43</sup> The evidence of Plato and Strabo is simply not sufficient to support the idea of a revolt, and the evidence for Messenian troubles in 490 has accordingly been rejected by several scholars.<sup>44</sup>

Another possible dating for the dedication has also been raised recently. O. Hansen suggests that Medes instead of Messenians be read at Paus. 5.24.3 (thus Μήδοις for Μεσσηνίοις). The couplet would thus commemorate the victory over the Persians and have been erected after the successful conclusion of the Persian Wars, i.e. in 479 B.C.<sup>45</sup> There are some objections to this view. There was a monument – a bronze statue of Zeus (Hdt. 9.81.1; Paus. 5.23.1) – erected at Olympia by the Greeks in common to commemorate this victory and Herodotos does not mention a separate Spartan dedication. His silence would be less compelling were it not that he mentions also the statue of Poseidon which was erected at the Isthmus by the Greeks. A separate Spartan dedication might well have attracted his interest. It can also be noted that Herodotos also describes the offering made at Delphi: the “Serpent Column” with the names of various Greek states which had repelled the Persians in 480–479.<sup>46</sup> But more importantly, the reason advanced by Hansen for this emendation is weak: that the “Persians were engaged in warfare with the Greeks twice, as were the Messenians with the Lacedaemonians, and Pausanias’s source might well have confused the two series of wars with each other”.<sup>47</sup> Firstly, of course, the Spartans did not engage the Persians twice in the sense of the two campaigns of 490 and 480–479. A second possibility raised by Hansen is that the dedication was made after the defeat of the Persians as a ‘general’ memorial: having defeated the mighty Persians they decided to thank Zeus for all of their previous victories as well. He mentions that the Athenians made a dedication at Delphi along similar lines; presumably he is referring to Meiggs & Lewis 25 (the dedication of the Athenian portico at Delphi), but this certainly refers to a single war (which one is debated). Hansen’s arguments are not sufficient to place the dedication in the context of the second defeat of the Persians, not withstanding the fact that it is unnecessary to tamper with Pausanias’ text.

Jeffery also argues that the dedication belongs to 490, and accepts the evidence for

<sup>42</sup> Wallace, “Kleomenes, Marathon, the Helots, and Arcadia,” pp. 32-35.

<sup>43</sup> Thuc. 1.132.4 in fact specifically mentions this in connection with Pausanias, who was reported to be intriguing with the helots.

<sup>44</sup> W. den Boer, “Political Propaganda in Greek Chronology,” *Historia* 5, 1956, pp. 168–74, esp. p. 173; Pearson, “The Pseudo-History of Messenia and its Authors,” p. 401; D. M. Lewis, “Mainland Greece, 479–451 B.C.,” in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 5, Cambridge 1992, second edition, p. 102; cf. S. Hornblower, *The Greek World 479–323 BC*, London 1983, p. 24. V. Parker, “The Dates of the Messenian Wars,” *Chiron* 21, 1991, p. 43 notes also a passage in Diogenes Laertius 1.116, but argues that this cannot be trusted as an indication that Messenia was still independent in the early sixth century. See also C. G. Starr, “The Credibility of Early Spartan History,” *Historia* 14, 1965, pp. 257–72.

<sup>45</sup> O. Hansen, “The Date of the Archaic Dedication of the Lacedaemonians to Olympian Zeus,” *Kadmos* 29, 1990, p. 170.

<sup>46</sup> Hdt. 9.81; Thuc. 1.132.2; Paus. 5.23.1–3; Jeffery, *LSAG* p. 104, pl. 13 no. 15; Meiggs & Lewis 27.

<sup>47</sup> Hansen, “The Date of the Archaic Dedication of the Lacedaemonians to Olympian Zeus,” p. 170.

troubles with the helots in 490, placing the dedication in this context. She argues that Pausanias 5.24.3 is referring to the second *revolt* of the Messenians (i.e. she considers the first revolt to be the Second Messenian War, when the Messenians revolted against their Spartan overlords) and that a second revolt in 490 is attested by Plato, Strabo, and Pausanias.<sup>48</sup> But it is certain that no revolt took place in the 490s and any second revolt would need to be that of the helots and perioikoi in the 460s, which is too late considering the archaic nature of the lettering and the dedication itself. Pausanias clearly places the dedication in the context of the Spartan victory in the Second Messenian War, not the helot revolt of the 460s, and the inscription must therefore belong to the mid-seventh century.

In conclusion, the Second Messenian War provides an acceptable historical context for the dedication by the Lakedaimonians to Zeus (i.e. the mid-seventh century), and the letter forms do not present a problem with regard to this dating. Certainly, this dedication cannot be used as a further piece of evidence for a helot revolt in 490. The Spartan victory over the Messenians in the seventh-century was a hard-fought and difficult campaign, as the poems of Tyrtaeus indicate: it was a fitting act of piety to dedicate a twelve-foot statue of Zeus with an inscription of thanksgiving.

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<sup>48</sup> Jeffery, "Comments on Some Archaic Greek Inscriptions," pp. 27–28, *LSAG* p. 196.