

The community of the Hellenes

A phenomenon that is closely linked to federalism among the Greek city states is the development and definition of the Hellenic community. As regional and local identities were taking shape, also by at least the mid sixth century the peoples of the Greek peninsula had also developed another, supra-identity, to such a degree that they began to give themselves the collective name of the ‘Hellenes’. Those who claimed to belong to the Hellenes felt that they shared things in common, which they expressed, for example, in the formulation of genealogies, such as the *Catalogue of Women*, which set out for communities the lines of descent from Hellen the son of Deucalion, and in the establishment of the specifically ‘panhellenic’ stephanitic festival circuit, comprising Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea. In the late fifth century, Herodotos had the Athenians confidently declare that Hellenicity (*to Hellenikon*) resided in ‘common blood, common language, common sanctuaries of the gods and festivals, and a common way of life’ (8.144.2).

Yet, despite these apparent certainties about the nature of Hellenicity, the boundaries of belonging for this shared community were not readily determined. Genealogies represented an imagined kinship that shifted and changed according to current needs.¹ So too sanctuaries were often dominated by individual *poleis*, undermining the sense in which they were ‘shared by all’.² Furthermore, far from the sense that there was a clearly defined community of language, it was controversial whether some, such as the Epirote tribes, spoke a dialect of Greek, and whether this at some level qualified them for ‘Greekness’ (Th. 2.68.5).

However, the stories told by the community asserted that it was a community. Irad Malkin has recently offered a subtle new model for how the idea of Hellenic identity first came into being in the context of the colonial movement, and how it emerged from the

¹ On the creation of genealogies in ancient Greece, and the representation of the past according to the present, see Thomas (1989) 155-95.

² The case is put forcefully by Scott (2010), esp. 250-73.

multiplicity of ‘small’ network connections between colonial communities.³ It was surely in these ‘colonial’ contexts that questions of inclusion and exclusion must first have been voiced,⁴ and through the many networks which existed between communities that this sense of something shared, the stories of belonging, must have been dispersed. As a result we find the idea of Hellenic consciousness being realised at a number of different locations around the Greek world at around the mid sixth century.⁵ Further, that around this time the limits of the community were being defined and tested (even if only on an *ad hoc* basis), and distinctions were being made about who might and might not belong, the community had at least on one level acquired a political nature, even if it did not have a political centre or political machinery.⁶

In this chapter, we will begin by looking at the role of the sanctuaries in creating a shared identity for the Hellenes. As arenas where one could share cult, demonstrate kinship, and take part in communal activities, they provided spaces in which the boundaries for inclusion could be tested on a number of different levels. In the second section, we will then turn to the explicitly political activities for which this political will towards community and commonality could be utilised. In the final section, in considering why these ventures enjoyed only limited success (whether or not they were later fabrications or exaggerations of earlier events), we will discuss how the accounts of panhellenic enterprises of various kinds fed back into the story-telling of the community, strengthening and maintaining its very existence.

1. The Hellenic community and the panhellenic sanctuaries

³ Malkin (2011) 4-64.

⁴ See Mitchell (2005); id. (2007) 44-63.

⁵ See also Mitchell (2007) 63-5.

⁶ See esp. Mitchell (2007) 39-75.

The relationship between cult and the political community of the Hellenes is a complex one. It is often said that the sense of community of the Greeks as a whole arose out of their shared activities at major sanctuaries. This has been illustrated from passages in our sources such as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* where (in the context of the final years of the Peloponnesian War) Lysistrata reproaches the Greeks for destroying each other even though they sprinkle altars from one bowl like kinsmen at Olympia, Thermopylae and Delphi and as many other places as she could name (1128-1134). Yet, it has also frequently been noted, following Christianne Sourvinou-Inwood, that Greek religion was *polis* religion, and that even the so-called 'panhellenic' centres were dominated by individual *poleis*,⁷ although over extended periods of time it was not always the same *polis*. The struggle between Elis and Pisa over Olympia provides one example (Elis did take control of Olympia and Pisa just after the first quarter of the sixth century, although tensions re-emerged in the fifth and fourth centuries),⁸ and the varying influences brought to bear on the sanctuary of Kalapodi in Phocis, and the resulting changes in its focus, is another.⁹

Nevertheless, Sourvinou-Inwood and others have argued that these individual *polis*-based locations of cult collectively were all part of a system of cult, which stretched across the Greek world, creating a 'sacred landscape'. Central to this sense of a shared cultic map were the panhellenic sanctuaries. Catherine Morgan argues that the establishment of the Isthmian Games in 582/1 by the Corinthians in imitation of those at Olympia was a self-consciously panhellenic move.¹⁰ That the move to express an explicitly Hellenic identity was self-conscious is also demonstrated by the nomenclature of officials at the sanctuaries. At Olympia the officials, known as *diatitēs* in a late sixth century inscription, were renamed

⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood (1990).

⁸ Roy (2004) 500; id (this volume); Nielsen (2007) 30-45.

⁹ Morgan (1997); id. (2003) 113-20; McInerney (this volume).

¹⁰ On the stephanitic festival circuit: see Morgan (1990) 16, 39, 212-23; id. (1993) 33-7.

hellanodikai, ‘Hellenic’ judges.¹¹ This must have been achieved at least by 476 BCE, when Pindar refers to an ‘Aetolian’ *Hellanodikas* (*Ol.* 3.10-15), and an inscription from Olympia gives the enforcing official the title *hellanozikas* (Buck no. 61).¹² Nemea also introduced these ‘Hellenic’ officials at some stage, though they are not attested before the end of the third century BCE.¹³

The ‘panhellenism’ of these sanctuaries seems to have resided in the fact that they were places where Hellenes could participate communally, especially in the games, but also in the sacrifices, even if no one sanctuary appealed to or catered for all the Hellenes at any one time. For example, Michael Scott has talked about the ways that even the major sanctuaries of Delphi and Olympia could have different catchment areas, or offered shifting roles in the cultic landscape.¹⁴ Yet at the level of the stories that were told about these sanctuaries, and the way the sanctuaries themselves presented themselves, the picture tends to be one of commonality. Pindar says that the periodic *panagyria* were places for the Panhellenes to compete (*Isthm.* 4.28-9), and associates Delphi with Panhellas (*Paeon* 6.62-5). Nevertheless, it is probably significant in the general development of the community, and the fact that it did not consistently formalise political structures, that no single sanctuary could provide a unifying focus for Hellenic cultic activity.

Outside the circuit created by Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and Isthmea, other sanctuaries also opened their doors to ‘all Hellenes’. Isocrates says that the sanctuary of Zeus Hellenios at Aigina was ‘common for the Hellenes’ (*koinon tōn Hellēnōn: Evag.* 15; cf. Paus. 1.44.9 [*tōi Panellēniōi Diū en Aiginēi*], 2.29.8, 30.3), and Dodona, regarded as the most ancient of the oracular sanctuaries (Hdt. 2.52.2), was said by Euripides to speak ‘to those who were

¹¹ For the *diaitatēs*: Siewert (1992) 115; Nielsen (2007) 20-21.

¹² For date of the *Hellanozikas* (475-450 BCE): Jeffery (1990) 220 no. 15.

¹³ Volgraff (1916) III = Moretti (1967) 1.41; for the date: Amandry (1980) 226-7 n. 30.

¹⁴ Scott (2010).

willing in Hellas' (*Mel. Dep.* fr. 14.15-17 Jouan and van Looy), although it seems it was also prepared to speak to Kroisos of Lydia. In fact, Kroisos made representations to a number of Greek oracles, made sacrifices and dedications at Delphi (Hdt. 1.56), and dedicated at least three columns for the Artemision at Ephesus (Tod 1.6). At the end of the fifth century, the Athenians invited all Hellenes to bring first fruits to Eleusis (supported by a Delphic oracle: ML 73.14-34). Herodotos says that any Athenian who is willing (*ho boulomenos*) or any of the other Hellenes may be initiated at Eleusis (8.65.4). Isocrates, on the other hand, says that all barbarians were banned from the mysteries because of the hatred induced by the Persian wars (4.157).¹⁵

The claim that a sanctuary was common for Hellenes presupposes that Hellenicity was a definable quantity, and that it was possible to know who belonged to the community and who did not – that is, who were Greeks, and who barbarians. To some degree, the issue of belonging was determined by the sanctuaries, by whom they allowed or invited to participate. Although it is not clear when the practice started, a number of the major sanctuaries sent out officials (variously called *spondophoroi*, *presbeutēs* and *theōroi*) to declare a sacred truce.¹⁶ At least by the mid fourth centuries, in addition to the four periodic sanctuaries, the Asclepieion at Epidauros also sent out *theōroi* (*SEG* 11.410 [Perlman E. 1];

¹⁵ Mylonas (1961) 247-8. A late tradition also suggests that those who spoke in a language unintelligible for Greeks could not take part (Libanius 13.1), and in the Roman period non-Greeks could be made initiates.

¹⁶ On heralds and the sacred truce: Rougemont (1973); Dillon (1997), 1-20. An inscription from the second century BCE gives a list of the cities invited to the games at Delphi: Plassart (1921). See also Parker (2004) for the phenomenon of mobility generated through festivals. For a 'panhellenic' declaration of a sacred truce at Eleusis, the Argive Heraion and the Epidaurian Asclepieion, as well as the four stephanitic festivals, See Boesch (1908) 101; Perlman (2000) 14-16.

IG IV 1504 [Perlman E. 2]), as did Eleusis to announce the Mysteries (Aeschin. 2.133).¹⁷ In this way, they made a positive, although general, statement about who might belong, since it seems the declaration of the truce did not necessarily aim to be comprehensive.

The fact that one entered the games at all could be seen as indicative of one's willingness to be considered one of the Hellenes. Herodotos suggests the Persians at least thought competing for honour rather than financial reward was an odd Greek custom (8.26). Nielsen, however, has shown how the specifically *Hellenic* nature of athletic events was part of the way that the Greeks constructed their identity.¹⁸ To the Greek mind, then, participation in athletics itself, which was also a ritual event,¹⁹ was a statement of inclusiveness both by participants and the games' organisers, and marked a difference from those non-Greeks like Kroisos, who made dedications but did not compete.

However, what is striking is that the emphasis of the summons to join the common festivals was inclusive rather than exclusive. In fact, it appears that the rubric for inviting participants to Olympia was largely self-defining: Herodotos says that the Eleans told the Egyptians that the games were open to Eleans and to any of the Greeks who wished to take part (2.160), *hoi boulomenoi*. An obvious objection to the claim of a rather *laissez-faire* attitude to participation is the so-called exclusion clause, for which Olympia is famous. Herodotos gives an account of Alexander I of Macedon, who was allowed to compete in the games, which were restricted to Greeks, because he could prove he was Argive (Hdt. 5.22). Nevertheless, it is not clear from Herodotos or from other sources how formal the rules for exclusion were at Olympia. Alexander had to prove his Hellenic credentials because the other competitors objected, although it was the *Hellēnodikai* who resolved the dispute. So it seems

¹⁷ At least by the end of the fourth century, the Argive Heraion was also sending *theōroi*: Perlman (2000) 16 & A 1.

¹⁸ Nielsen (2007) 12-17.

¹⁹ Burkert (1985) 105-7; Nagy (1986).

there was a general ‘inclusion’ clause, and then this was only tested if others objected.

Alexander’s evidence for belonging was apparently based on a mythical and folkloric story of three brothers descended from Temenos, the Heraclid king of Argos, who fled from Argos and came eventually to Macedon (Hdt. 8.137-8). As Buxton has so eloquently written, ‘myths function like shoes: you step into them as they fit’,²⁰ and even in the fourth century not everyone was convinced of Macedonian pretensions to be Hellenes. Demosthenes was still objecting in the *Third Philippic* of 341 BCE that as a barbarian Philip was organising the Pythian games, ‘a contest common for Hellenes’ (*Phil. III* 31-2). Tellingly, however, there is no recorded opposition to the participation of the Molossians in the games (the fourth-century Arrybas had victories at Delphi and Olympia (RO 70)), despite their ambivalent Hellenicity.²¹ Philip II of Macedon had Olympic equestrian victories in 356 BCE (Plut. *Alex.* 3.5), and perhaps also 352 and 348.²² The Macedonian Archelaos appears to have won a victory at the Nemean games in the mid fifth century (*SEG* 29.652).²³

That the boundaries of belonging could be quite unclear, and that exclusions were not always rigorously tested, seems also to be suggested by the Etruscan involvement in the sanctuaries. The Agyllaioi of Etruria certainly consulted the oracle and also probably built a treasury (Hdt. 1.167.1-2; Strabo 5.2.3), as did the Etruscans from Spina (Strabo 5.1.7, 9.3.8; Pliny *NH* 3.120).²⁴ Herodotos thinks that the Agyllaei were Etruscan (interestingly, Herodotus also says the oracle instructed them to establish games in expiation for stoning the Phocaeen prisoners), though Strabo thinks they were originally a Pelasgian foundation from Thessaly which was attacked by the Etruscans. Strabo also thinks that the people of Spina

²⁰ Buxton (1994) 196; see also Hornblower (1991-2008) 2.63-4 with n. 146.

²¹ Malkin (2001); Hall (2002) 165-6; Mitchell (2007) 205.

²² Borza (1982) 13.

²³ Engels (2010) 92-3.

²⁴ Treasury of the Argyllaioi: Jacquemin (1999) 72-4.

must have been a Greek foundation because they had a treasury, and Pliny says the city was founded by Diomedes. There is also evidence that Etruscans made dedications at Olympia, and may have even participated in the games there.²⁵

In fact, because of the fluid and discursive ways in which the Greeks constructed kinship, descent was nearly meaningless in practice as a basis for excluding individuals or cities from membership of the group. Aischylos' *Suppliants* of the 460s demonstrates how ambivalent the boundaries could be between Greeks and non-Greeks (in this case the Egyptians) in the mid fifth century,²⁶ just as even earlier the *Catalogue of Women* had included Asiatic elements connecting Hellenes to Egypt and Asia (Aigyptos, Belos and Arabos, for example: fr. 127, 137 Merkelbach/West) in the Inachid stemma.²⁷ The versatility of genealogies also had a bearing on participation at sanctuaries. When the Spartan Kleomenes was refused entry to the temple of Athena at Athens because he was Dorian, his rejoinder was that he was not Dorian but Achaean (Hdt. 5.72.3).²⁸ It is not clear whether the implication is that only Dorians were excluded, or that Kleomenes' Achaean heritage made him also Ionian!

Further, exclusions at the major sanctuaries were usually aimed not at keeping non-Greeks out but at scoring political points against other members of the Greek community. The Spartans were excluded by the Eleans from the temple, the sacrifices and the Olympic games at least in 420 for failing to pay a fine for the alleged breach of the Olympic truce (Th. 5.49-50). There are suggestions that the ban on participation lasted down to 400 BCE,

²⁵ Camporeale (2004) 98-9.

²⁶ Mitchell (2006).

²⁷ West (1985) 76-8, cf. 132.

²⁸ Cf. Parker (1998).

although Hornblower argues against this.²⁹ Likewise, while Lysias in his *Olympic Oration* urged unity at the Olympic Games of either 388 (Diodoros' date) or perhaps 384 BCE,³⁰ he also called for a common war against the King of Persia and the so-called 'tyrant', Dionysios I of Syracuse. Dionysios had also sent a lavish contingent to the festival, though the crowd turned against them (Diod. 14.109, 15.7-2-3). In this way, Lysias used the festival symbolically to cut the Syracusan out of the Greek community by aligning him and his 'tyranny' with barbarism.³¹

All this is not to say that cult could not be exclusive. There are a number of examples of Greek cults which excluded people because they were *xenoi*, outsiders, or on the basis of tribal or *polis* affiliations.³² However, at the panhellenic level it was the conceptual boundaries which were important. Benedict Anderson has talked about how the boundaries of the symbolic community are imagined, because it is impossible to know everyone who could belong.³³ Unlike the more realistically face-to-face societies of individual *poleis*, many of which had total populations of no more than 10,000 in the mid fifth century (Morris estimates that Athens was probably the largest with a total population of about 25,000 in 450),³⁴ Hansen has calculated that the total Greek population in the mid fourth century was between

²⁹ Hornblower (2000); Hodkinson (2000) 311 accepts the ban was in place until 400 or even 396.

³⁰ See Lewis (1994) 139 n. 82.

³¹ Dionysios, however, was very careful to represent himself as a legitimate ruler, and rejected claims of tyranny. In his own poetry he says that *tyrannis* is the mother of injustice (fr. 4 *TGF* Snell).

³² See esp. Butz (1996); see also Hall (2007) 84.

³³ Anderson (1991) 5-6.

³⁴ Morris (1991). Hansen thinks that in the fourth century, *poleis* of 10,000 would not have been exceptional: (2006) 30.

7.5 and 10 million.³⁵ For this reason alone the Hellenic community had an abstract existence as a symbolic identity rather than one that was, or needed to be, closely defined.

Cult was an important way in which the political nature of the community could be expressed, especially at the sanctuaries which declared that they were for all Greeks. However, as with kinship, language and culture, there were no hard edges. The major sanctuaries were not places where membership was being defined by keeping people out. Instead, at least in the earlier periods, these were the places where people were let into the community, by the sharing of cult. Lysistrata's exhortation that the Greeks remember their shared libations was an inclusive declaration of unity through cult (like that of kinsmen): it invited Hellenes to remember (or discover) they were Hellenes. The major sanctuaries were places for imagining the Hellenes into being, even if the details of what that might mean were rather vague.

2. 'Panhellenic' activities

However unclear the boundaries, the political community of the Hellenes had developed a strong and self-conscious sense of its identity by about the middle of the sixth century. Once this sense of community had crystallised, the political nature of the community was reinforced by the possibility of joint activities and ventures. For example, some of the cities of Asia Minor (Chios, Teos, Phocaea, Clazomenai, Rhodes, Cnidos, Halicarnassos, Phaselis, and Mytilene: Hdt. 2.178.2) collaborated in order to found the Panhellenion at Naucratis in about 570 BCE, where cult was offered 'for the gods of the Hellenes' (*tois theois tōn Hellēnōn*).³⁶ It seems that at least the rhetoric of community was also used to power the Ionian revolt. As Herodotos tells the story, when Aristagoras of Miletus came to Sparta and

³⁵ Hansen (2006) 1-34, esp. 28.

³⁶ On the inscriptions: Hogarth (1898/9) 44-5; Lloyd (1988) 3.224. For the doubts about the identification of the Hellenion, however: Bowden (1996).

Athens in 499 BCE, he tried to invoke the community to encourage the two cities to join the revolt against the Persians. In his speech at Sparta Herodotos says Aristagoras called on the Spartans by the ‘gods of the Greeks’ to ‘rescue the Ionians, men of the same blood, from slavery (*rhusasthe Iōnas ek doulosunēs, andras homaimonas*: 5.49.3)’,³⁷ only adding at Athens that the Milesians were colonists of the Athenians (Hdt. 5.97). In the event the Athenians and the Eretrians joined the Ionians, although the Spartans did not. Typically, even explicitly ‘panhellenic’ ventures (just like panhellenic sanctuaries) did not necessarily capture the whole community.

A significant milestone for the Hellenic community was the invasion of the Persians at the beginning of the fifth century. The discussions regarding joint resistance focussed on a sanctuary, this time probably Isthmia, although Herodotos is vague about the location of the original meeting of the Greeks in 481 BCE ‘who had concerns for the better interests of Hellas’ (Hdt. 7.145.1, 172.1), where they exchanged a pledge of faith (*pistis*), as *synōmotai*, ‘joint oath-takers’, against the Persians (Hdt. 7.145.1, 148.1).³⁸ While Pausanias does give another later tradition of the Greeks meeting at the Hellenion in Sparta (3.12.6), we have no independent evidence for the Hellenion at this early date, and it probably makes more sense as a result of the victory celebrations for the Persian wars than as ante-dating them.³⁹

Herodotos does say that the later meeting of what was now the common alliance met at the Isthmos (Hdt. 7.175.1), and so it is not improbable to assume that the first was held there also. Herodotos does not tell us how representatives from the cities were summoned, though

³⁷ See Alty (1982) for the power of claims of tribal kinship, and Hornblower (1991-2008) 66-80 for the importance of kinship ties in classical Greek politics, especially in the Peloponnesian War as Thucydides describes it.

³⁸ On the sanctity, power and importance of oaths, see Parker (1983) 186-8.

³⁹ Cartledge (2006) 99-103. Peter Brunt (1953) argues in favour of Pausanias’ account at 148 & n. 2.

we might imagine that a general call had been made (possibly by the Spartans who set themselves up as the leaders of the resistance movement at an early stage) on a network not dissimilar to that used for the *epangelia*. Possibly the summons was made to coincide with the Isthmian games themselves, either as part of the announcement of the sacred truce or during the games themselves (cf. Hdt. 6.126, where Cleisthenes of Sicyon used his victory at Olympia as a platform to announce the wedding contest).⁴⁰

Later accounts suggest a relatively strong and formal council of this alliance, especially Plutarch in his *Life of Aristides*.⁴¹ Yet from our fifth-century sources it would appear that the council struggled to produce a coherent or unified policy.⁴² For example, in Herodotos' account the Thessalians had originally made representations to the council at the Isthmos that the pass at Tempe should be defended, but when the council changed its mind and decided pull back to Thermopylae, the Thessalians went whole-heartedly to the Persian side (Hdt. 7.172-4, cf. 8.27-31). There are also stories of Themistocles bribing the Spartan commander, Eurybiades, to stay to fight the Persians at Artemision (Hdt. 8.5), and in the arguments over whether the fleet should fight at Salamis or withdraw to the Isthmos, Themistocles acting on his own forced the issue by tricking the Persians into fighting (Hdt. 8.74-83).

Herodotos' account, in particular, also presents us with a Greek world which was disunited in the bickering over the leadership, and, except for a few key players, largely uninterested in resisting when Persian victory seemed to be assured. Gelon of Syracuse refused take part unless he could have control of the Greek forces, or at least the command by

⁴⁰ For the Isthmian games as a venue for important announcements: Kyle (2007) 140.

⁴¹ Rhodes (2010) 17 doubts the value of these later sources, though Kienast (2003) and Jung (2006) place higher value on them because of the assumption they are based on Ephoros.

⁴² Cf. Cartledge (2006) 106-7.

sea, because of arguments over the leadership (Hdt. 7.157-62).⁴³ The Corcyraeans, on the other hand, promised to send help, but then did not because they were sure that the Persians would win (Hdt. 7.168). The Kretans also refused to join forces because of advice from Delphi (Hdt. 7.169). In fact, the role of Delphi in campaigning against resistance suggests that there was a feeling that much could be gained in the event of what must have seemed an inevitable Persian victory by appearing to suppress any attempts to oppose Persia (cf. Hdt. 7.148).⁴⁴ The betrayal of the Thessalians itself suggests something about the weakness of the ties that bound the Greeks together, as did the later suggestions by the Peloponnesian members of the council only to defend the Isthmos (Hdt. 8.40, 49.2, 56-63, 71-2, 74-5, 78-83, 9.7-9, 15.1). Boiotian medising became legendary (cf. Hdt. 9.2, 17.1). In fact, we know independently that very few states took part in the resistance, and there were some notable exceptions. Of the estimated 1000 or so Greek cities in the classical period, only 31 had their names on the victory dedication erected at Delphi after Plataia.⁴⁵ Herodotos says that a number of Peloponnesian cities were not concerned about invasion, and offered no assistance to the rest (8.72).

⁴³ Herodotos gives two versions of why the Argives refused to take part: the first that they declined to be involved if they could not share the honours of leadership with the Spartans; and the second (though Herodotos found this story unlikely) that the demand concerning leadership was a ruse to cover the fact that they felt themselves bound to the Persians by bonds of kinship, and so wanted to remain at peace with them (7.148-52).

⁴⁴ Elaborate stories were told about how the sanctuary defended itself with divine aid when the Persians did attack (Hdt. 8.36-9), but these accounts probably were invented to explain why the sanctuary's treasures were not in fact plundered by the invaders: Hignett (1963) 439-47; Burn (1984) 425-6; Cartledge (2006) 101.

⁴⁵ On the number of Greek *poleis* in classical Greece, see *IACP* 53-4. Victory dedication at Delphi: ML 27 with commentary. Other dedications were made at Olympia and the Isthmus (Hdt. 9.81). Pausanias (5.23.1-2) describes the dedication at Olympia, and lists the names of the cities involved in the conflict, although he only records 27.

Further, the so-called ‘Hellenic League’ was actually only a temporary association, and it is likely that the ‘oath-takers’ ceased to meet soon after the end of the conflict, though there are other views.⁴⁶ Plutarch says that, after the Greek victory at Plataia, there was a meeting of the joint council at which a decision was taken to meet annually, to raise a confederate army and to celebrate the *Eleutheria* every fourth year (Plut. *Arist.* 21; cf. Diod. 11.29). Jung thinks both that the alliance took on a more formal shape after Plataia, acting under the leadership of Sparta as an interstate forum for resolving conflicts, and that there was a confederated army as Plutarch claims.⁴⁷ However, Herodotos says Pausanias, the Spartan regent, who had laid siege to Thebes by agreement of the council (9.86.1), disbanded the coalition army once the Thebans handed over their leaders (9.86-8). Herodotos gives no indication of any further discussions at Plataia, apart from the dedications to be made at the sanctuaries from the spoils (9.81). Decisions were made in Asia Minor about the fate of the Ionians, though the Athenians seem to have taken a firm lead rather than a decision being made by decree of the council (Hdt. 9.106). Further, after 478 a joint council effectively had no real practical purpose, especially since the Delian League had taken over the principal functions of its predecessor. There is also little sign of a joint army, except perhaps at Ithome in 462 (Th. 1.102.1), where the Athenians were sent away.⁴⁸ Doubts have also been raised

⁴⁶ Jung (2006) 276-9 thinks that there may have been a number of meetings of the council, until 462/1, while Kienast (2003) argues for continuous activity of the council until after the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BCE. Most of their examples are difficult to pin down, though it is possible that the accusations against Pausanias and Themistocles emerged from such a council (cf. Diod. 11.47.1). Thucydides seems to indicate the indictments against them arose from Sparta and Athens respectively, though 1.130.2 may suggest a meeting of the council.

⁴⁷ Jung (2006) 271-81.

⁴⁸ See Hornblower (1991-2008) 1.158, though note Kienast (2003).

about the establishment of the festival of the *Eleutheria* before the fourth century,⁴⁹ although some now see a fifth-century festival as an appropriate performance context for Simonides' *Plataia Elegy*.⁵⁰ Whether there were meetings of the council or not, the alliance of cities seems to have continued in principle down to 462 BCE, although at that point it was dissolved by the Athenians as a reaction to Spartan mistrust (Th. 1.102.4).⁵¹

Apart from this temporary alliance, there do not seem to have been any other formal attempt to provide political structures for the Hellenic community, especially not a federated structure, although models did exist for other kinds of permanent political formations. For example, from the late sixth century the Peloponnesian League met in council to decide on joint actions (e.g., Hdt. 5.91-3 [cf. 5.75-6]; Th. 1.66-87). Some commentators think that the Hellenic League was an extended version of the Peloponnesian League, although as Jung points out what we see in 481 looks like the start of something new.⁵² The Peloponnesian League itself continued into the fourth century, despite the foundation of the Delian League out of the Hellenic League (although as we have noted the Hellenic League retained a separate existence, at least in theory, until the 460s).

Also in the sixth century, the Ionians had established a common council at the Panionion at Mt Mycale, which was limited in membership, and determined by the twelve cities who participated in the festival of the Panionia. The Ionians probably first developed political institutions with Kyros' invasion of Asia Minor. Rubenstein argues that there must have been political institutions prior to this since Herodotus says that Kyros opened negotiations with the Ionians for submission before his invasion of Asia Minor (Hdt.

⁴⁹ Étienne and Piérart (1975).

⁵⁰ Boedeker (1995).

⁵¹ See Hornblower (1998-2008) 1.158-9.

⁵² Jung (2006) 276.

1.76.3).⁵³ However, this conclusion is not inevitable, and one could understand Herodotos to mean that the Ionians only became galvanised into an explicitly political institution as a result of Kyros' defeat of Lydia (Hdt. 1.141.1-4, esp. 4). Certainly it appears that they did not have a building for meetings, since Thales is said to have suggested at some unspecified time before the defeat of Ionia itself that they should establish a single *bouleutērion* at Teos and reduce the status of the cities to those of demes (Hdt. 1.170.3). Thales' model, however, would have produced not a federal state as such, but as Asheri has pointed out a synoikism on the model of Athens.⁵⁴ When Thucydides describes the synoikism of Athens by Theseus he says that he dissolved the *bouleuteria* and magistracies of the separate *poleis*, 'creating one *bouleuterion* and *prytaneion*' (Th. 2.15.2).⁵⁵ It has recently been recognised that political autonomy was not a defining feature of a *polis*.⁵⁶ Yet what Thucydides (and Thales) suggest is symbolically important in supplanting and replacing local political identities altogether with a single-tiered and unified identity.

Yet the Hellenic community never again attempted to formalise its structures or procedures. By the fourth century, some of the major sanctuaries had provided a focus for debate, especially Olympia, although this was not always part of the official organisation of the games. For example, important orations were delivered by important speakers at the games (such as Gorgias or Lysias) but did not form part of the official competitive programme, which at Olympia were only athletic. Nevertheless, such performances (which Kokolakis thinks may have happened between the athletic contests)⁵⁷ could have quite powerful effects – as Lysias' tirade against Dionysios makes evident. Nevertheless, the

⁵³ Rubinstein (2004) 1056.

⁵⁴ Asheri in Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007) 191.

⁵⁵ See Hornblower (1991-2008) 1.262.

⁵⁶ Hansen (1995).

⁵⁷ Kokolakis (1992).

informality and lack of formal structures for conducting these debates are important. Large numbers attended the Olympic games: Nielsen gives the number as 45,000 in the classical period based on the seating capacity of the mid fourth-century stadium, though significantly less at other stephanitic sanctuaries – 4,000 at the Isthmian sanctuary, for example.⁵⁸ Those who attended the games could be viewed as representative of the whole community (cf. Aristoph. *Peace* 583-6), and the sanctuary was used as a location of public declarations in the form of inscribed dedications, decrees, treaties and alliances.⁵⁹ Likewise, Hieron of Syracuse used the occasion of his Pythian victory in 470 BCE to announce the foundation of his new colony, Aetna (Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.29-33). However, it is significant that the games themselves, though a place where views could be aired about the community and its activities, provided no mechanisms for proper debate or collective decision-making. The Hellenic community remained an abstraction.

3. Telling the story of the Hellenes

Nevertheless, there was a strong narrative for the community. Despite their relatively small numbers and the in-fighting amongst council members, the Greek coalition founded in 481 BCE did eject the Persians and the story of the united Greek defence became part of Greek legend, and an essential part of their story-telling about the community of the Hellenes. The altar of Zeus Eleutherios at Plataia to commemorate the victory was inscribed:

The Hellenes, by the might of Nike, by the work of Ares,
having driven out the Persians, common for free Hellas (*eleutherai Helladi koinon*),

⁵⁸ Nielsen (2007) 56.

⁵⁹ See Nielsen (2007) esp. 55-83.

built this altar of Zeus Eleutherios. (Plut. *Herod. malig.* 873b, *Arist.* 19.7)⁶⁰

Thus, despite Herodotos' more complicated and acerbic account, at a very early stage the Greeks who took part wanted to see the victory over the Persians as a victory *common to Hellas*. However, alongside this emphasis on common action, there was still the need, pulling in other directions, to show that individual states predominated in the struggle. It has been argued, for example, that the *Plataia Elegy* was commissioned by the Spartans to show-case Sparta's role in the war and elevate their position among the other Greeks.⁶¹ Pausanias' alleged inscription on the Delphic monument (though erased by the Spartans: Th. 1.132.2-3) certainly makes such claims look plausible. It is notable, however, that even Pausanias apparently tried to present himself as the leader of a specifically *Hellenic* force (*Hellēnōn archēgos*) – though of course this position would have redounded greatly to his personal glory and prestige – and there was a constant tension between the desire to promote the glory of individual cities and that of the collective. Beck has in fact argued that the relationship between the individual cities in promoting their part in the war and the promotion of the war as a panhellenic venture was inextricably interlinked.⁶²

The Persian Wars provided significant impetus for the sense of commonality and unity of the Hellenes, and became an essential element in the story-telling of the Hellenic community. The initial response to the war, the Delian League, was represented as a Hellenic offensive to carry on the war against Persia (Th. 1.96.1, cf. 3.10.2-3), whose officials were called *Hellēnotamiai*, Hellenic stewards (Th. 1.96.2), even though the Peloponnesians were

⁶⁰ Molyneux (1992) 197 and 209 n. 101 accepts this as written by Simonides, although Page (1981) 212 rejects the attribution on the basis of metre and quality of composition. A slightly different text is also preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* 6.50.

⁶¹ Aloni (1997); id. (2001); Jung (2006) 237-41.

⁶² Beck (2010).

not involved in the league or its project. Heading in another direction, Aristophanes, in the *Lysistrata* of 411, amid the turbulence of the final phase of the Peloponnesian War, has the Spartan ambassador call on Remembrance (*Mnamōn*), the Muse who knows the deeds of the Spartans and the Athenians at Artemision and Thermopylai (1147-61) to celebrate the peace they have just agreed. The memory of past action was important, and became increasingly so, in the call to put aside differences and be at peace, even if the alleged desire for peace was itself spun around with ideas of ambition and imperialism.

Nevertheless, the story of joint action was a powerful one, even if the interval between what happened and how it was recorded could be complex. It was especially in the disappointment of interstate rivalry and fracture that there was a need to perpetuate the idea of a shared community. For example, the refoundation of Sybaris at Thurioi certainly seems to have been promoted in panhellenic terms (Diod. 12.11.2-4). Diodoros says that the colonists were summoned from Hellas, and the ten tribes were named for the peoples who comprised them: Arkas, Achais, Eleias, Boiotia, Amphiktyonis, Doris, Ias, Athenais, Eubois. There was respectability, and even prestige, in representing the foundation as a panhellenic event, even if it was in truth a thinly disguised gloss for Athenian imperialism.⁶³

Likewise, the so-called Congress decree (for which the only evidence is Plut. *Per.* 17), demonstrates the need to tell stories of the shared will of the community. The Congress Decree also purports to belong to the 440s, and is said to have been initiated by the Athenians for the purpose of deliberating jointly for ‘the peace and common action of Hellas’ (17.3). Significant doubts have been raised about the historicity of the decree, and many consider it to be a fourth-century forgery.⁶⁴ Whether or not the decree is fabricated, the fact that the

⁶³ Andrewes (1978); Lewis (1992) 141-3; Hornblower (2011) 59. Rutter (1973) argues that Athens role in the foundation has been exaggerated; see also *IACP* no. 74 at 304-5.

⁶⁴ Seager (1969) [who argues it was a forgery dating to 346 BC]; Bosworth (1971) [who would place the fabrication after the battle of Charoneia in 338]. There are, however, some

memory of it was preserved as an attempt at joint action and peace into the second sophistic, where such stories had a particular significance, emphasises the way in which the Greeks wanted to tell stories of Greek unity, and to maintain them. By telling stories of joint action, the possibility of commonality was in some sense actualised, and the community of the Hellenes was given a shared heritage. So whether or not the Congress decree was actually proposed in the fifth century, or whether the idea of it was invented in the fourth, there was a need to tell a story of the possibility of the Hellenes acting together, just as it was necessary to perpetuate the idea that the Hellenes collectively *as Hellenes* acted together to save Hellas from the Persians.

It was in the various kinds of story-telling about the community that the Hellenes were imagined into being. Pindar wrote poems declaring that the Hellenes existed in the games at common sanctuaries, just as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* declared that it was shared libations that drew them together. Some stories may have been mythical genealogies which formed the basis for claims of kinship, such as the *Catalogue of Women*, even though genealogical details could be taken up, left aside, or adapted as the current need required. In this way, the Hellenic community existed in its stories of commonality and belonging, even if the stories were sometimes idealistic, contradictory, or intended to promote the interests of one city over another. At their base, they still assumed the existence of that community, even to critique it, and in that way they maintained it.

The purpose of this volume is to examine the nature of Greek federalism, and Walbank recognised long ago that the story of the Greek community was linked to that of Greek

who believe in the authenticity of the decree, notably Griffith (1978), and Rhodes (2010) 55-6.

federalism.⁶⁵ The Greek community was not a political community in the sense that it had shared political structures and machinery. During the Persian Wars the joint council was fumbling and because of rivalry, ambition and distrust, seems to have fallen into disuse at an early stage. Even if Perikles' Congress decree is authentic, it is significant that it was rejected. The community felt no need for such structures in order for the community to have an existence, if not a politically federated existence.

However, we should not think about the imagining of the community, as it sometimes has been, as something that was incomplete, as a struggle for unity that was never achieved. The Hellenes as a community existed in the political imaginations of those who saw themselves as belonging to it. For them, it was possible to tell stories of commonality in terms of cult, blood, language, and way of life, even if it was harder to say who did not belong. However, the fact that there were imagined boundaries was important. The political nature of the community resided in the fact that these boundaries were asserted, even if the testing usually resulted in inclusions rather than exclusions, and there were shifts and changes in where the boundaries were imagined to be.

From the fifth century, war in the Greek world was endemic, generated to a large degree by the competitive values of envy and ambition. Yet war between cities in the community could be represented as civil war (*emphylos stasis*: Hdt. 8.3.1), which gives added point and poignancy to Herodotos' accounts of the effort against the Persians – he was more than well aware of the difference between the rhetoric of a freedom common to all, and the infidelities and ambitions of individual states. So far from damaging the integrity of the community, it was at the moments of greatest stress that the community was most vigorously asserted. Just before the Peace of Nicias in 421, Trygaeus in Aristophanes' *Peace* summons the Hellenes to lay aside petty politics and war to drag Peace out of the pit, and the Chorus

⁶⁵ Walbank (1951).

comes to help, declaring themselves to be Panhellenes (292-5, 301-3). Lysias, in his oration at Olympia attacking Dionysios in the 380s, opens by declaring that Herakles established the Olympic games so that by meeting together ‘there might be a beginning for the Hellenes of friendship (*philia*) with each other’ (33.1-2). Hellenicity did not always have a similar valency across the Greek world at the same time. Not all Greek states saw the importance or need for resisting the Persians in 481. Even the Spartans drew back from the Hellenic League in 479/8, as the Athenians were keen to establish a new ‘panhellenic’ league in the form of the Delian League. Yet many Greeks were willing to listen to stories of panhellenic actions, and some were also prepared to act on them, even if for their own ends. However, being able to tell the story of the Hellenic community, asserting that it did exist despite the particularism of interstate relations, gave the idea of the Hellenic community, the idea of a shared Hellenic identity, potency and power. It did not need to create centralised political and federated structures, or a political centre, in order to exist in the political imaginations of its constituents.

Thus the community of the Hellenes, while not a Greek federal state, can tell us quite a lot about Greek federalism, even if more by what the Hellenic community did not desire or need to do than what it did. It was possible to call the community a *koinon* (Plato, *Menex.* 242d), but it was a *koinon* ‘of the imagination’, even ‘of the heart’. It did not develop a federal structure because the need for that was not as great as the need to express ambition and rivalry. Even pressure from outside in the form of the Persian invasion was only just enough to create for a time a common council, but even then only for a small number of states. In addition, there was no real focus for truly communal activities. Olympia was important as a location for display for some Hellenes, Delphi for others. However, for the Hellenic community the diversity of foci, variable forms of expression, and adaptability of the boundaries of inclusion brought vibrancy, flexibility, and longevity.

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