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Making up Delphic history – the 1st Sacred War revisited

Like a series of sandcastles being steadily eroded away by an unforgiving sea, Archaic Greek history has been taking a battering lately. Historians have looked with increasing skepticism at stories woven together by modern writers out of stray scraps of often much later source material. Memory studies have made us realise that stories are not passed intact from generation to generation, but are constantly reshaped to meet the needs of new storytellers. No longer is it easy to believe the idea that oral traditions, whether within communities or families, may preserve accurate accounts of past events over several generations until such time as a historian hears them and rescues them from oblivion by writing them down. In the case of Greek history all this is made worse, if anything, by the growth in historical consciousness in the 5th century BC, the idea that an accurate account of past events (rather than a historically-minded but fictional account, such as Homer's) was worthwhile both as an intellectual exercise and as a form of literature. The unrecorded past was now an enormous gap, which many were eager to fill. Even the best historians could be sucked in: Thucydides disparages Athenians' inaccurate memories of the end of the Peisistratid tyranny, less than a century before he is writing (Thuc. 1. 20. 2; 6. 54. 1), yet is happy to treat a range of events from movements of peoples following the Trojan War to the Lelantine War between Chalkis and Eretria as historical (Thuc. 1. 12–15.).

J. K. Davies' formulation might easily be applied to most of early Greek history:

> our information is the production of a continually changing tradition which is at least semi-oral, owes a great deal more to poetic utterance and mythic modes of thought than to anything else, and is generated more by the changing needs of a continually shifting present than by a scholarly urge to reconstruct a static but receding past.[1]

Consequently, modern historians have become increasingly skeptical, and treated with increasing suspicion Greek accounts of migration, colonisation, early law-givers, the Trojan and Lelantine Wars, and so on. Yet an event which suffers from many of the

I would like to thank Doug Kelly and Graeme Clark of the Australian National University, Stephen Hodkinson and other members of the audience at ASCS 35, Christina Spittel, and the editors of Chiron for valuable comments on earlier versions of this article.

[1] Davies 1994, 200 (writing specifically on the sources for the 1st Sacred War).

same problems of evidence has survived to maintain its place in modern textbooks: that event is the 1st Sacred War over Delphoi. This is despite a thorough and convincing attack on the war's historicity by Noel Robertson in 1978 (Robertson 1978).

In this article I will briefly survey the earliest and most important sources for the war and summarise Robertson's arguments against its historicity, before discussing the reasons why scholars have been so reluctant to follow his lead and consign the war to the category of later Greek fantasy. In particular, I shall argue that scholars are reluctant to let go of the war because it seems to be a useful explanatory device for certain peculiarities of the Delphic scene: the existence of a large swathe of uncultivable sacred land in the plain below Delphoi, and the lack of a city controlling that territory; the excision of Delphoi from the territory of the Phokians; and control of the sanctuary by the Delphic Amphiktyony. I will argue that the war is not in fact a particularly useful mechanism for explaining any of these circumstances, and that we will understand early Delphic history better once we get rid of the war altogether. Finally I will review the question of when and why the story arose in later centuries.

1. The 1st Sacred War as it appears in the sources

The chief extant sources for the war are: Speusippos, Letter to Philip 8; Aischines 3. 107–112; Demosthenes 18. 149–150; Kallisthenes of Olynthos, FGrH 124 F1 (= Athenaios 560bc); [Hippokrates] 27 Presbeutikos; Strabo 9. 3. 4, 10; Plutarch, Solon 11; and Pausanias 10. 37. 4–8. They tell a sometimes detailed, but also confusing and mutually inconsistent story of a ten-year war against the people of Krisa or Kirrha, who in some way have transgressed against the sanctuary at Delphoi. The names Krisa and Kirrha, as Robertson shows in detail, are interchangeable.[2]

Leaving aside the supposed references to the war in the Homeric Hymn to Apollon and by Isokrates (I will discuss both below), the earliest writers known to have written about the war are Kallisthenes of Olynthos and Antipatros of Magnesia. According to a notice in Athenaios, Kallisthenes made mention of the war in his monograph On the Sacred War (Περὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ πολέμου), which was a short history of what we know as the 3rd Sacred War, of 356–346. There can be no proof, but this work was very likely written soon after 346.[3] In this version, the Kirrhaians fought not the Amphiktyons (as in all later versions) but the Phokians in a ten-year war occasioned by the Kirrhaians' seizing a Phokian woman, Megisto, and some Argive women on their way home from Delphoi. The war was known as the Κρισαικὸς πόλεμος.[4]

[2] Robertson 1978, 40–48.

[3] For some discussion on the likely date, see Robertson 1978, 59, suggesting that drafts may even have circulated during the war.

[4] Kallisthenes of Olynthos FGrH 124 F 1, quoted at Athenaios 560bc.

Kallisthenes came back to the Krisaian war in his and Aristotle's joint work, the Register of Pythian victors.[5] Again the date cannot be certain, but must be sometime before 327/6 when the Delphic ταμίαι paid to have parts of the work inscribed,[6] but may be somewhat earlier.[7] Plutarch cites this work, and from his account almost every detail in it about the war seems to have differed from Kallisthenes' version in On the Sacred War. The war is now between Kirrha and the Amphiktyons; the Kirrhaians are accused of committing outrage against (ὑβρίζοντας) the oracle; and the Athenian Solon is credited with a key role in urging the Amphiktyons to take action (Plut., Solon 11. 1).

Other people were also «researching» the war, as we know from Speusippos' Letter to Philip, dated to 342, which refers to the researches of Antipatros of Magnesia.[8] We know nothing about Antipatros beyond what we can infer from Speusippos: he was from Magnesia (one of the perioikic regions of Thessaly), he wrote some sort of Greek history, and probably spent time in Athens as well as visiting Makedonia.[9] Antipatros, who was also the deliverer of the letter, had discovered that various enemies of Delphoi had over time been destroyed: the Phlegyans by Apollo, the Dryopes by Herakles, and the Krisaians by the Amphiktyons. All these groups had formerly been Amphiktyons, but had had their Amphiktyonic votes taken away and given to others. Thus, it was quite appropriate that in 346, at the conclusion of the 3rd Sacred War, Philip himself had received the two votes of the Phokians, who had then been expelled from the Amphiktyony. We might regard Antipatros as somewhat reckless in his mixing of legend and «history», but it is at least clear that his version was more akin to that in the Register of Pythian victors than that in Kallisthenes' earlier work on the 3rd Sacred War.

The first real account we have of the war itself comes from Aischines, in his speech On the crown, delivered in 330 BC. Aischines has to defend his actions as an Athenian πυλαγόρας at Delphoi in 340/39,[10] when he accused the Lokrians of Amphissa of tilling sacred land, an accusation which led indirectly to Philip II's arrival in central Greece and the battle of Chaironeia. For the benefit of his Athenian audience, Aischines gives a potted history of why the sacred land was sacred. Prompted by an oracle, and urged on by the Athenian Solon, the Amphiktyons had attacked two lawless groups, the Krisaioi and the Kragalidai, who were committing sacrilege against the Delphic sanctuary and against the offerings, and in unspecified ways also transgressing against the Amphiktyons themselves. Collecting «a great force of Amphiktyons», they enslaved

[5] For detailed discussion of this work, see Robertson 1978, 54–60. Robertson suggests (on the basis of the Delphic inscription referred to below and Plut., Solon 11. 1) that the proper title was ἡ τῶν Πυθιονικῶν ἀναγραφή.

[6] CID II 97. 42–43.

[7] Robertson 1978, 59, is inclined towards the period 345–340, but only on the basis that this was the period when its contents might have been most useful to Philip.

[8] Antipatros of Magnesia FGrH 69 F 2 = Speusippos, Letter to Philip 8.

[9] S. Sprawski, Antipatros of Magnesia (69), Brill's New Jacoby, Brill Online, 2014.

[10] The Amphiktyonic meeting in question may belong to autumn 340 or spring 339; see Londey (1990) 241 for arguments for the former.

the offending groups, destroyed «their harbour and their city» and, in accordance with the oracle, dedicated their land to Apollo, Artemis, Leto and Athena Pronaia, to remain untilled (Ais. 3. 107–112). Demosthenes in his response accused Aischines of weaving «specious and fictional stories» (λόγους εὐπροσώπους καὶ μύθους) to throw the wool over the eyes of the ill-educated Amphiktyons (Dem. 18. 149). Yet Aischines does not in fact say that he related the story of the 1st Sacred War at Delphoi in 340. His account of what he said to the ἱερομνήμονες on that occasion begins at 3. 118, where he takes the uncultivable nature of the sacred land as a given and moves straight on to his accusations against the Amphissans. The digression on the 1st Sacred War seems designed chiefly to get the Athenian jury in 330 in the mood to forgive Aischines' attack on Amphissa, despite its disastrous consequences: if Solon had defended the sanctuary, why should Aischines not equally do so.

Later sources elaborate the story in various ways; the details need not detain us. There is a long and convoluted account in [Hippokrates], Presbeutikos 3–4, an ambassadorial speech supposed to be delivered by Hippokrates' son Thessalos. The date is quite uncertain: it could be as early as the 4th century, but may well be later.[11] In this account the Krisaians live near Delphoi, occupying the land now dedicated to Apollo. Powerful and arrogant, they are impious towards Apollo, «enslaving Delphi, plundering its neighbours, robbing visitors to the temple, carrying off people's wives and children, and violating their persons» (trans. Smith). An Amphiktyonic army, commanded by Eurylochos of Thessaly, conquers the Krisaians, lays waste the land, sacks cities, and settles down to besiege the last stronghold, a fortress near the present site of the hippodrome. The Amphiktyonic army itself suffers from plague, but after an oracle, with the help of an ancestor of Hippokrates, they poison the fortress' water supply, and the fortress eventually falls. The Amphiktyons build a temple to Apollo, set up the Pythian contests, and dedicate the Krisaian land to Apollo. There is much here that is not in Aischines' brief account, but some of it, such as the connection with the foundation of the Pythia, may derive from Aristotle and Kallisthenes' Register of Pythian victors. The *hypotheseis* to Pindar's Pythians provide similar details, including the role of Eurylochos and the foundation of the Pythia, presumably from the same source.[12]

Strabo too, mentions Eurylochos' role and the institution of the Pythia after the war. He also tells us the Krisaians' offence was to level tolls on travellers to Delphoi, and explicitly draws the parallel with the behaviour of the Amphissans which led to the 4th Sacred War (Strab. 9. 3. 4; 10). Pausanias has a different version, in which the Amphiktyonic commander was Kleisthenes of Sikyon, though with Solon as an advisor (Paus. 10. 37. 4–8). The question of who commanded the Amphiktyonic forces was evidently a live issue in antiquity: Plutarch (Solon 11. 2) says that Hermippos quoted the otherwise unknown Euanthes of Samos as claiming that Solon was actually the commander of the Amphiktyonic troops. Presumably this is Hermippos

[11] For discussion, see Smith 1990, 2–4.

[12] Discussion at Robertson 1978, 55.

of Smyrna, who flourished at the end of the 3rd century, and who has himself been described as «having few scruples about fabricating information when needed to satisfy his readers' curiosity».[13] Plutarch then proceeds to claim that Delphic ὑπομνήματα list the Athenian Alkmaion as commander.

2. The historicity of the 1st Sacred War

Robertson's arguments

All this has been bundled up by modern scholars into a story of how a coalition of states, including Thessaly (or some Thessalians), Athens and Sikyon came to the rescue of the sanctuary when it was in some way under the thumb of Krisa or Kirrha, an Archaic city which controlled the plain between Delphoi and the Korinthian Gulf.[14] But did this war actually ever happen? The summary of sources above might already give one pause for doubt; and to invent a coalition of states by simply adding together individuals nominated by different sources seems like very poor historical method. In fact a generation ago Robertson comprehensively demolished the war's claim to be a historical event.[15] Robertson's very detailed arguments are readily accessible, so I will give only a brief summary here, with page numbers referring to Robertson's discussion:

- The numbering conventionally assigned to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sacred Wars at Delphoi is no help, because it is a purely modern innovation. What we call the «1st Sacred War» was generally referred to as the «Krisaian war» or something similar (p. 38 n. 3).
- There is no archaeological evidence for an Archaic city (Krisa/Kirrha) in the plain below Delphoi or on the ridges leading up to the sanctuary. There is a Mycenaean fortress on a spur at Agios Georgios, and Archaic and Classical remains of Delphoi's small harbour town; but no great Archaic city as required by the story (pp. 40–48).
- The argument from silence: there is no mention of the war before the 340s. Most notably, authors such as Herodotos and Thucydides fail to mention it. Yet Herodotos has much to say about Kleisthenes of Sikyon, Solon, and Alkmaion, all supposed commanders in the war, while Thucydides denies earlier coalition wars apart from the Lelantine War (pp. 48–51).[16]

[13] Peseley 1988, 32.

[14] For a summary, see Davies 1994, 195–197.

[15] Robertson 1978.

[16] We might add that if Thucydides had been aware of an earlier war, with Athenian involvement, for control of the sanctuary then it would surely have been relevant to his (admittedly brief) notice of the mid-5th century «so-called Sacred War» (our «2nd Sacred War»), when Sparta and Athens supported respectively Delphic claims to autonomy and Phokian claims to control of the sanctuary (Thuc. 1. 112. 5): exactly the issues over which modern scholars assume the 1st Sacred War was fought. Robertson also discusses the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, which I will return to below.

- Indeed, Aischines himself, so eager to tell his audience about the war in 330, makes no mention of it in his speech On the false embassy in 343, despite relating (2. 114–116) a lengthy history lesson he gave Philip in 346 on the history of the Amphiktyony and its means for dealing with those who did harm to the sanctuary (pp. 53–54).[17]
- The 340s, in the aftermath of the 3rd Sacred War, provide a plausible context for the story of the war to have been made up. In 356 the Phokians had seized the sanctuary, and subsequently plundered the treasures to pay for mercenaries. In 346 the Makedonian king Philip II had finally settled the war, frightened the Phokians into abandoning Delphoi, and been rewarded by becoming a member of the Amphiktyony, taking the place of the Phokians (who were expelled) and wielding (we are told) the two votes which had been theirs. Philip's intrusion into the affairs of such a Greek institution as the Amphiktyony was unpopular enough to benefit from some historical precedents, duly supplied by Makedonian partisans like Kallisthenes and Aristotle. The name of Eurylochos, as Thessalian commander, may have been a reference to Philip's general (and ἱερομνήμων) (pp. 51–54, 64–65).[18]
- Finally, Robertson argues, there were local legends at Delphoi which fed into the myth. The visible remains of the Mycenaean fortress at Agios Georgios naturally called forth stories, and the springs further up the spur might lead to the stories of the poisoned water-supply. Other elements in the Hippokratic version reflect local aetiological myths explaining a hero shrine near the hippodrome, and privileges of προμαντεία granted to the Nebridai (a group within the Asklepiadai of Kos) and (separately) to people of Kalydon. Much of this may have been drawn together in the Register of Pythian victors, though some parts, such as the Kalydonian role, must have been fed into the story later (pp. 68–72).

Disbelief

Robertson's arguments might (and, to me, do) seem overwhelming, yet they have failed to gain traction, and the 1st Sacred War has remained on the books. The attack on Robertson's views began almost immediately. Within two years, both G. A. Lehmann and F. Càssola argued that Robertson had overlooked a critical source, which showed that the 1st Sacred war was known much earlier in the 4th century.[19] In the Plataikos of 371, Isokrates in the course of a concerted attack on the Thebans

[17] G. A. Lehmann (on whom see below) feels that Aischines' description of his remarks to Philip at 2. 114–116 presupposes the destruction of Krisa (Lehmann 1980, 244–245), but in fact Aischines' remarks here are singularly ill-adapted to trying to fit in the war: the sources accuse Krisa of many things, but razing Amphiktyonic cities and cutting off their water supply were not among them (though the Krisaians are themselves claimed to have suffered both).

[18] Robertson also conjectures that Aristotle and Kallisthenes' *Register of Pythian victors* in effect superseded an earlier work by Menaichmos, which gave a different dating for the first Pythia and did not link them with the war (Robertson 1978, 56–57).

[19] Lehmann 1980, 245–246; Càssola 1980, 420.

asserts that in 404 they had urged the enslavement of the Athenian population and that τὴν χώραν ἀνεῖναι μηλόβοτον ὥσπερ τὸ Κρισαῖον πεδίον («the country should be left for grazing like the Krisaian plain»; Isok. 14. 31). Lehmann regards this as «eine sehr bedeutsame literarische Notiz zum ‹Heiligen Krieg› gegen Krisa»;[20] in reality it is nothing of the sort. For a start, this would only move knowledge of the war back to 371: other sources (Andok. 3. 21; Plut., Lysandros 15. 2) which mention the proposal to turn Attika over to grazing make no mention of the Krisaian plain; the latter may well be Isokrates' own gloss. That the Krisaian plain was uncultivated, but rather used for grazing, was a (striking) fact and was well known long before this: Sophokles could refer to it without comment at Elektra 180–181 (using the word βούνομος). The idea that a reference to the μηλόβοτος plain must also carry a reference to the 1st Sacred War depends on the apparent parallel between Amphiktyonic treatment of Krisa and Peloponnesian treatment of Athens, each at the end of a war. But Isokrates only extends the Krisaian analogy as far as the fate of the Attic χώρα, not to the ἀνδραποδισμός proposed for the polis. Given that in Aischines' version, at least, the Krisaians were enslaved (Ais. 3. 108–109), this suggests that Isokrates was not thinking of the supposed war at all, but was simply reaching for a striking and familiar example of a large swathe of uncultivated land.

Nevertheless, many historians seemed willing to believe that Lehmann and Càssola had successfully defended the war against Robertson's attack. As sober a commentator as S. Hornblower asserted that Robertson had been «refuted in his extreme position» by Lehmann.[21] In general, historians have proved reluctant to give up the 1st Sacred War. It still appears in standard works, even in a textbook as consistently skeptical about source traditions as J. Hall's A history of the Archaic Greek world. In the current edition, Hall opens with a demolition of the Lelantine War, yet after several pages of careful argument declares himself agnostic about the 1st Sacred War.[22] R. Neer, in the Cambridge companion to archaic Greece (2007), simply describes the war as established fact, and draws inferences from it about «the depth of state involvement at Delphi»; he makes no reference to Robertson's arguments.[23] C. Morgan, while acknowledging that sources for the war are «deeply problematic», nevertheless rejects Robertson's «extreme suggestion» that the war was a fiction, and over several pages tries to fit it into Delphic history.[24] J. McInerney, in his work on Phokis, believes in the war: «it is wrong to dismiss it as a fiction.»[25] He goes further, and confidently analyses it as «a local affair, rooted in conflicts between the communities that lay south and east of Mt. Parnassos», which ended with Amphictyonic con-

[20] Lehmann 1980, 245.
[21] Hornblower 1992, 177.
[22] Hall 2014, 1–8; 312–317; «agnosticism» at 315.
[23] Neer 2007, 227.
[24] Morgan 2003, 124; more general discussion at 114, 123–131.
[25] McInerney 1999, 171.

trol of Delphoi.[26] Finally M. Scott, in his fascinating book about the spatial development of the Delphic and Olympic sanctuaries, is content to note that the existence of the war «has now generally been accepted», though he is willing to adopt the view that a local conflict of the 6th century was enlarged to something greater in the 4th century; nevertheless, the war should «clearly» play a part in the interpretation of the archaeological evidence at Delphoi.[27]

F. Lefèvre concludes that it is impossible to sort myth from history in the accounts of the war, but finds it hard to believe that Aischines would have used a made-up story in an Athenian law-court.[28] Despite his cautious approach, Lefèvre still wants to use the war to explain the entry of southern Greek states, such as Athens and the cities of the Peloponnese, into the Amphiktyony.[29] While admitting that much remains unknowable, P. Sanchez is convinced by Lehmann that the Theban proposal to leave Attika for grazing (Isok. 14. 31) is enough to show that the Krisaian plain was «probably» («sans doute») similarly consecrated after a military campaign to liberate the sanctuary, and the remainder of his discussion assumes the destruction of Krisa as a real event.[30] K. Tausend also adopts a cautious approach, but believes the Isokrates passage sufficiently undermines Robertson's position. Yet he accepts that the story of the war has been elaborated out of recognition, and doubts many of the supposed participants. In fact, on the basis of Kallisthenes, he is inclined to see the war as between Krisa and the Phokians, specifically, Panopeus given the mythological genealogy which made Krisos and Panopeus both sons of Phokos, a relationship already evident at Hesiod, fr. 58.[31] V. Parker rehearses earlier arguments against Robertson, and adds some new ones, for example that the term, regularly used by authors such as Thucydides, Κρισαῖος κόλπος for the Korinthian Gulf must imply a significant Archaic town Krisa parallel to Korinth: there is too much etymological determinism here. In general Parker attempts to reassemble the story of a war from a range of most likely incompatible sources, and in particular places excessive weight on the exact wording of oracles, such as that at Paus. 10. 37. 6.[32]

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[26] McInerney 1999, 166.

[27] Scott 2010, 51–53.

[28] This ignores the fact that nobody is suggesting that Aischines himself made the story up: if he knew of Kallisthenes' and Aristotle's work, then he no doubt felt he had the story on the best academic authority. In point of fact, I suspect that it was quite possible to tell an Athenian jury a story that was new to them, if the speaker could carry off the right air of authority.

[29] Lefèvre 1998, 14–16.

[30] Sánchez 2001, 58–80. See especially 75, and n. 80: «Les conclusions de N. Robertson doivent être abandonnées, mais son interprétation de la tradition reste fondamontalement valable.»

[31] Tausend 1986; cf. Càssola 1980, 436–437. This seems to me to be placing excessive weight on the symbolic significance of such genealogies.

[32] Parker 1997. See 18–20 on the Krisaian Gulf, 20–22 on oracles (ignoring the cautionary stance of Fontenrose 1978, still in my view to be taken seriously), and 23–36 on other aspects of the story. There is not space here to deal in detail with these conjectures; the problem with

One of Robertson's most compelling arguments is the lack of archaeological evidence for Krisa/Kirrha, but some have been reluctant to accept this. K. Brodersen puts his faith in the remains of the town having been dragged away for building works in the 19th century,[33] but the evidence – if not masonry, then at least pottery – of a town site of any size would not escape a modern survey, even if the more prominent stone had been removed.[34] Since Robertson wrote, Greek archaeologists have surveyed the Pleistos valley, with the aim among other things of trying to locate the site of Archaic Krisa.[35] They have identified a 6th century site, Agia Varvara, between Agios Georgios and Delphoi, which D. Skorda has argued exactly matches the description of Krisa at Homeric Hymn to Apollon 282–285.[36] The site was surveyed in 1981 and 1993, and a limited excavation conducted in 2005.[37] From these explorations it seems certain that there was a 6th century sanctuary on the site, but it would be much too early to suggest that there is an urban site here sufficient to underlie the much later story of the 1st Sacred War.[38]

In summary, Robertson's central arguments have not been touched, yet historians have failed to be convinced. The reason for this, I would argue, is not that the arguments themselves are weak, but a reluctance to let go of the war's perceived usefulness as an explanatory device. Let us now consider three particular problems to which scholars have seen the war as a solution.

3. Reasons for wanting the war to exist

The war as explanation: the sacred land

In the classical period it was a striking fact, referred to (as noted above) by Sophokles and Isokrates, that the Delphic sacred territory in the plain behind modern Itea was left uncultivated, and was given over to grazing.[39] D. Rousset has exhaustively assembled and analysed the evidence for the sacred land, but unfortunately the evi-

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them is that they have to take as their starting point the assumption that Robertson is wrong, in order to make this sort of analysis of the often much later sources valid.

[33] Brodersen 1991, 3 n. 8.

[34] Parker's «zwar spärliche Reste» of a settlement in the Krisaian plain, citing works published in 1944 and 1960 (Parker 1997, 18), carries little weight against the more recent archaeological work cited below.

[35] Skorda 1992, 39.

[36] Skorda 1992, 50–53.

[37] http://www.chronique.efa.gr/index.php/fiches/voir/754/ (accessed 15.12.14); cf. Morgan 2003, 126.

[38] For a recent summary of the problem, see Rousset 2002, 43–44, concluding that, after 150 years of looking, Agia Varvara is currently the only candidate. See also McInerney 1999, 309–312.

[39] Soph., Elektra 180–181; Isok. 14. 31. See discussion above.

dence is all from the 4th century or later.[40] The inscriptions which allow some precise delimitation of the sacred land are from the 2nd century BC and later.[41]

In 330, Aischines uses the story of the war precisely to explain the origins of this sacred land. We should not follow him. Aischines has his own reasons for making such a lengthy historical digression, and it is likely that by the 4th century the origins of the sacred land were unknowable. For our part, we can postulate two factors which may have favoured the sacralisation of this land. First, J. McInerney suggests that pastoralism may well have been important, even dominant within the archaic economy of Phokis and neighbouring areas, and that this may help explain a surprising paucity of archaic sites.[42] In this situation, we should perhaps not be surprised if agricultural settlement was in any case slow to develop in the Krisaian plain; by way of analogy, it now appears that parts of the Eurotas valley in Lakonia were not closely settled until the mid-6th century.[43] Secondly, the rapidly growing popularity of the Delphic sanctuary from the 8th century onwards will have produced a huge local demand for sacrificial animals. One might well see this as economic opportunity for neighbouring peoples, rather than the economic burden Morgan seems to assume.[44] T. Howe has highlighted the extensive need for grazing land, both for flocks belonging to the god and to provide agistment for animals brought by others, created by the large number of sacrifices at Delphoi.[45]

It may well be, then, that the economic demand generated by the sanctuary encouraged pastoralism to continue as the dominant activity in the Krisaian plain. That by itself might be enough to explain the references in Sophokles and Isokrates. Nevertheless, it is clear that at some point before the Amphiktyonic Law of 380 the situation was formalised, with a prohibition on agriculture (with the penalty of a fine) and no doubt the god's right to charge fees for grazing established.[46] Howe implies that, on analogy with other cases, such a formalisation could only happen at the hands of an «exploitative elite»,[47] presumably in this case either the Delphic priests or the Amphiktyony. That is a very long way from requiring a war to make the change. There is perhaps a hint of 6th century debate over the issue at Homeric Hymn to Apollon

[40] Rousset 2002. For the 5th century, there is the brief reference by Sophokles, noted above, and a reference at Strab. 9. 3. 15 to the 5th century boundary between Delphoi and Phokis being set at Anemoreia: not actually a reference to the sacred land at all, but rather to political boundaries.

[41] Texts at Rousset 2002, 71–115.

[42] McInerney 1999, 86–108; cf. Howe 2003, 131–137. McInerney (89–91) counts only 16 Archaic sites, compared with 40 in the 5th and 4th centuries. Hom., Il. 2. 517–523 lists only eight Phokian towns; only Krisa could possibly occupy the Krisaian plain, and if the identification with Agia Varvara were accepted then it was high above it.

[43] Catling 2002, especially 157–160.

[44] Morgan 2003, 126.

[45] Howe 2003.

[46] CID I 10. 15–17.

[47] Howe 2003, 132.

526–537, where Apollon's newly recruited Kretan priests wonder how they will feed themselves in the harsh environment of Delphoi. The god promises that they just have to wait there and the tribes of men will bring them sheep in abundance to slaughter. We might be able to read into this a certain amount of community disagreement over controls exercised over the sacred land, told here from the point of view of those in favour. For this to have a point in the poem it would need to be a reasonably current debate, implying that greater control was being exercised over the sacred land in the 6th century. But that is all: nothing here demands a sacred war.

The war as explanation: Delphoi and Phokis

The excision of Delphoi from the surrounding territory of Phokis is a mirage, cooked up by the Phokians themselves, probably in the 5th century, and inherited credulously by modern scholars. In 356, the Phokian leader Philomelos waved the nationalist flag and asserted the antiquity of Phokian control over Delphoi, in a self-serving campaign to convince his fellow Phokians to seize the sanctuary.[48] This interpretation of Delphic-Phokian relations was very likely, however, at least a century older, since it suggests the sorts of debates we might imagine happening around the mid-5th century 2nd Sacred War, when Sparta and Athens disputed precisely over whether Delphoi should be controlled by Phokis (Thuc. 1. 112. 5).

The fact that a claim is used as propaganda does not, of course, make it true. We actually have no way of knowing whether Delphoi was traditionally part of Phokis. The west flank of Parnassos was a borderland between Phokians and Lokrians; in 395 it seems both groups were using the area for grazing, and coming into conflict.[49] In 340, the group accused of cultivating sacred land were the Lokrians of Amphissa, not Phokians (Ais. 3. 117–124). In the archaic period, Morgan notes that for a long time the area south of Parnassos, later considered part of Phokis, remained archaeologically distinct from the Phokian heartland in the Kephisos valley.[50] We may go further, however, and ask whether the question, «Was Delphoi part of Phokis?» actually has any meaning for most of the 6th century. McInerney has argued persuasively that Phokian identity, far from being innate and ancient, actually came into being contemporaneously with and to support the development of a formalised Phokian *koinon* at the very end of the 6th century.[51] Once the *koinon* came into existence, then of course the question of whether Delphoi should be part of it may have come into focus. Until then, there is no reason to believe that Delphoi had ever been anything but independent, a community which survived in troubled times by being just far enough up the

[48] Diod. 16. 23. 4–24. 5. For full discussion, see Londey 2010.

[49] Hell. Oxy. 18. 2–3, though Xen., Hell. 3. 5. 3–4 believes this conflict was with the eastern Lokrians.

[50] Morgan 2003, 24–25.

[51] McInerney 1999, 154–157: «the *ethnos* was the shared fiction that made possible the emergence of a federal state» (154).

Pleistos valley to be out of sight of the sea, but eventually began attracting large numbers of visitors. If anything, Thucydides' account of the 2nd Sacred War (Thuc. 1. 112. 5) implies that the Phokian *koinon* did, by the middle of the 5th century at any rate, incorporate Delphoi. It is hard to know when this might have happened. Herodotos' account of the arrival of the Persians in 480 treats the Phokians and the Delphians in effect as separate groups, though acting in concert: both, for example, evacuate some of their people to Amphissa (Hdt. 8. 32–39). But the incorporation of Delphoi into the Phokian *koinon* cannot have happened before the *koinon* existed.

We are left, then, with no role for the Sacred War in this case. In 1990, Morgan took the view that, «If the war did not take place, it was necessary to invent it in order to cover the disjunction between the demands of regional and sanctuary activity.»[52] More recently she takes as a starting point «that early in the sixth century the sanctuary and the plain were removed from Phokian control»,[53] and goes on to paint a detailed scenario: «the handing over of all sanctuary affairs of any importance to an amphictyony, and the creation of a Delphic polis with limited powers, left the Phokians as victims twice over – political outsiders, yet outsiders upon whom considerable economic demands continued to be made despite the loss of a large and important area of territory.»[54] Sadly, this is largely a modern fantasy; once again there is no place in any explanatory model for the Sacred War.

The war as explanation: the Amphiktyony and Delphoi

The question of how the Amphiktyony came to control the sanctuary at Delphoi is indeed somewhat perplexing. The Amphiktyony had a second sanctuary, that of Demeter at Anthela, and it has often been noted that the 12 Amphiktyonic *ethne*, which first become visible to us in the 4th century, were geographically clustered around Anthela rather than Delphoi. It has become natural, therefore, to assume that at some point a pre-existing amphiktyony, based at Anthela, extended its control to Delphoi as well.[55] This must presumably have happened by the late 6th century, when Herodotos tells us the Amphiktyony was involved in rebuilding the temple at Delphoi (Hdt. 2. 18. 1).

The sources, while linking the war with the dedication of the sacred land and with the establishment of the Pythia, do not, in fact, support the view that it was the event which led to Amphiktyonic control of Delphoi. On the contrary, they take the Amphiktyons' desire to protect Delphoi as unremarkable, with the clear implication that Delphoi was already under Amphiktyonic protection. Like the excision of Delphoi from Phokis, this use of the war is a purely modern fantasy, and to some extent

[52] Morgan 1990, 135.
[53] Morgan 2003, 125.
[54] Morgan 2003, 126.
[55] See discussion at Lefèvre 1998, 16.

reflects sadly on modern preconceptions about how change occurs. A most reasonable man, J. Hall, regards as a «reasonable supposition» that «amphictyonic control of Delphi almost certainly involved hostilities against a resistant local population which could well have lasted a number of years.»[56] Not every change has to be occasioned by war (as anybody who lived through the period around 1989 should realise).

If we accept the idea of a pre-existing Anthelan Amphiktyony,[57] we simply cannot know when that amphiktyony stretched its reach to incorporate Delphoi. But let me make one suggestion of a non-warlike occasion which might have led to this result. In 548 BC, the temple of Apollon burnt down, in a fire so intense that it partly melted Kroisos' gold lion (Hdt. 2. 180; 5. 62. 2–3; Paus. 10. 5. 13). Four decades later, in about 506, the temple was finally completed (with a little generosity from the Athenian Alkmaionids: Hdt. 5. 62. 2–3). The long delay did allow a major remodelling of the site, with a grand new terrace for the temple, faced by the magnificent polygonal wall,[58] but this work did not require forty years. The problem, most likely, was money. If we were to assume that Delphoi was still an independent sanctuary at this point, then it is easy to see how raising the necessary money will have been slow and daunting. In such a situation, perhaps the intervention of a wider group of states, represented by the Anthelan Amphiktyony, might not have been the occasion for «chagrin»,[59] but rather a welcome solution to an intractable problem. According to Herodotos, even when the Delphians had to contribute only a quarter of the cost, the collecting effort took them as far afield as Egypt (Hdt. 2. 180).[60]

A related use of the war by modern authors is to explain and provide a vehicle for the extension of Thessalian power into central Greece,[61] attested towards the end of the 6th century (that is, many decades after the supposed date of the war) in Herodotos' account of Thessalian conflict with Phokis (Hdt. 7. 176; 8. 27–30). Certainly the Thessalians had some form of pre-eminence at Delphoi in the later 4th century (their ἱερομνήμονες are, for example, always listed first in inscriptions). How far back this position went, we actually have no way of knowing; but it certainly makes a Thessalian commander in the war an understandable 4th century invention.[62]

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[56] Hall 2014, 317.

[57] Morgan 2003, 129–130 is skeptical.

[58] For a recent discussion, Scott 2010, 56–59.

[59] Scott 2014, 94: «we can only imagine the chagrin this must have caused the inhabitants of the city of Delphi as *their* sanctuary was now rebuilt by an international committee.»

[60] For what it is worth, the period after 548 saw not only the remodelling of the temple site itself but major changes across much of the sanctuary, and to some extent an obliteration, it has been suggested, of some areas important to the cult of Ge; and in the same period major changes were made to the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia: Scott 2010, 56–72.

[61] E.g. Szemler 1991, 108–110.

[62] There is no need to turn this around, as Morgan 2003, 131, does, and suggest that the tradition of Thessalian leadership in the war helped justify their later pre-eminence at Delphoi.

4. *The Homeric Hymn to Apollon*

I have left to one side the issue of the 6th century Homeric Hymn to Apollon. The Hymn tells a strange story of Apollon's travels which bring him to Delphoi (lines 216–284), where he supervises the building of his temple (285–299), before shooting the she-serpent which has been occupying the site (300–374). Then as priests for the temple he does not choose from among the «teeming peoples» who have helped build the temple, but instead in the form of a dolphin hijacks a Kretan ship on its way to Pylos and sets the crew up as his priests, to live well off the offerings which men will bring to the sanctuary (388–539). Finally, there are four lines addressed by the god to his Kretan priests:

> But if on your part anything wanton is said or done, then you shall have other men as your masters, under whose compulsion you will be subjugated for ever. (540–543, trans. M. L. West)

Some have seen this as an ex post facto warning, perhaps written later than the rest of the poem.[63] But a warning to whom, and of what? The lines do read as though they are intended to carry some specific reference, but it would be very hard to make them refer to the 1st Sacred War. The warning is addressed to the Kretans, who are conceived of as the ancestors of the Delphians (or at least the Delphic priests), not of the Krisaians. The sources on the war never suggest Delphic complicity in the Krisaians' actions.[64] Indeed, at line 282 the name «Krisa» appears simply to stand in for Delphoi itself.[65] Nor does Apollon's recruitment of his Kretan priests seem to result from hostility to the local people at Delphoi, who help him build his temple (298–299) and mark his feat in killing the monster with the epithet Πύθιος (372–374).

It is just possible to make the lines quoted above refer to the coming of the Amphiktyony to Delphoi, and in that case they would certainly imply a more hostile takeover than I have suggested above; but it is not very much to go on.[66] What is interesting about the rest of the poem is the absolute absence of any hint of the existence of the Amphiktyony. Apollo does arrive at Delphoi by a roundabout route which passes through the territory of a number of Amphiktyonic *ethne* (216–243 takes him as far as Haliartos in Boiotia), but the geography, especially at the start, seems random and

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[63] Chappell 2006, 332, with references to earlier literature at n. 6. Chappell himself is suitably cautious about accepting such an interpretation and hesitantly supports the lines' being a later addition; discussion at 333–334.

[64] Forrest 1956, 44–46, does argue for this, but on the grounds that everything in the sources is contaminated by «allied» propaganda after their victory in the war.

[65] Skorda 1992, 62–63, on the other hand, argues that the description of «Krisa» at lines 282–285 accords very well with the site discovered at Agia Varvara (on which see above).

[66] Forrest 1956, 44, suggests that the ἄλλοι … σημάντορες at 542 «can only be the Amphiktions»; but it is a surprisingly hostile reference if these lines represent the post-Amphiktyonic view of affairs; cf. Chappell 2006, 333.

confused.[67] Major later players in the Amphiktyony, such as Thessaly and Sparta, are never mentioned. The Kretan priests, coming from an area outside the Amphiktyony, would make little sense. It would be most logical to conclude that the Hymn was written before the Amphiktyony took over management of the sanctuary.[68] It is a pity, then, that the Hymn is not easily datable on linguistic grounds.[69] Dating has often proceeded from an assumption that lines 540–543 refer to the 1st Sacred War, and should be written soon after it, or that other datable references are discernible within the poem.[70] None of these are convincing, and the best that we can say is that the Hymn dates from somewhere in the 6th century;[71] this may at least imply a late date for the arrival of the Amphiktyony. But, to return to the main question, the Hymn provides no support for the story of the 1st Sacred War.

5. Conclusions

In my view, then, Robertson was right to argue that the 1st Sacred War never happened, and that the story of it was made up in the centuries following its supposed date. But when exactly was the story made up, and why? Robertson concludes that there was originally a local legend «of a great war over the sanctuary», which in the mid-340s was taken up and «made into a moral tale which prefigured Philip's intervention in Thessaly and Phocis».[72] But, as Robertson himself points out, it is mere chance that we have references, in Speusippos, Plutarch and Athenaios, to some of these early writings on the war. Perhaps the story was told in earlier sources, now lost to us. In a careful article, J. K. Davies has pointed out that there are a number of other possible «horizons» before the 340s when the story might plausibly have been invented:[73]

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[67] The first part (216–218) is more or less just a collection of exotic names from northern Greece, perhaps names which have significance for Apolline cult, but not the description of a possible journey: Pieria is north of Olympos, Lektos unknown (apart from the south-western tip of the Troad), Ainis is far to the south in the Spercheios valley, Perrhaibia north again, on the southern slopes of Olympos opposite Pieria. Yet the poet does seem interested in describing a journey, for the geography from Iolkos on is far more coherent (218–230).

[68] Indeed, Chappell 2006, 335–348, argues that the poem also predates the delivery of oracles by the Pythia (as against priests' interpreting external signs, perhaps from a laurel tree comparable with the oak at Dodona).

[69] R. Janko, who has studied the language of the Hymn in great detail, concludes that its «combination of post-Homeric modifications with interesting archaisms» (Janko 1982, 124) makes it impossible to date accurately on linguistic grounds, except relatively with other Homeric Hymns and the Shield of Herakles (125); he therefore falls back, like everybody else, on trying to date it on historical grounds (127–129, 132).

[70] Chappell 2006, 332–335. Chappell rightly, I think, rejects all these hypotheses.

[71] Chappell 2006, 335, would also allow the later 7th century.

[72] Robertson 1978, 73.

[73] Davies 1994, 201.

- the 510s, when Athenians became seriously interested in Delphoi, and when there was significant conflict in central Greece involving Thessaly
- the 470s, in the aftermath of the Persian War, when there were indeed proposals (we are told) to expel the medizers from the Amphiktyony
- the period of the 2nd Sacred War, in the 440s
- the period of the composition of Hellanikos' Atthis in the late 5th century
- around 380, when a new Amphiktyonic Law was ratified by Athens (presumably all member states had to ratify it: a normal procedure[74])

In fact most of these fail to solve the problem of Herodotos' and Thucydides' silence. Nevertheless, the approach is sound. There are indeed some better «horizons» than those noted by Davies, presumably ignored by him because they postdate Isokrates' Plataikos. One could be around 370 when Iason, the tyrant of Pherai, announced his interest in Delphoi. He was at the high point of his power when he announced a plan to preside over the Pythia of 370, and ordered his allies to supply a vast number of sacrificial animals for the festival. His intentions remain very unclear, and before his plans came to fruition he was assassinated (Xen., Hell. 6. 4. 28–32). But fears over the threat he posed to the independence of the sanctuary might easily have sparked tales of earlier coalitions which had defended it. The presence of a Thessalian commander in some versions could reflect the widespread Thessalian opposition to Iason's dominance of Thessalia.

Another, perhaps more tempting, instance might be the fairly shadowy occasion in or just before 363 when a group of prominent Delphians, led by Astykrates, were expelled from Delphoi by the Amphiktyony, and subsequently were honoured at Athens. We know very little about this event (the only evidence is IG II^2 109, an inscription at Athens honouring the group), but it might have spawned justificatory stories about past defences of the sanctuary, with perhaps competing, politically interested versions nominating different Amphiktyonic commanders and advisors. Finally, the period before and during the 3rd Sacred War could well have spawned such stories.

However, there is one piece of evidence which suggests that we can go just a little further. As noted above, Kallisthenes' original account of the war, while making it a grand, ten-year affair, differs from every later account by making it a war between the Krisaians and the Phokians, not a coalition of Amphiktyons (Kallisthenes of Olynthos FGrH 124 F 1, quoted at Athenaios 560bc). Here, surely, in this one brief quotation by Athenaios, we catch a glimpse of the development of the story. Very possibly, as Robertson argues, there were local myths around Delphoi of earlier conflicts, partly spawned by the visible Bronze Age ruins at Agios Georgios.[75] At some point, I would

[74] See Londey 1990, 251–254.

[75] Robertson 1978, 68–72; see also Davies 1994, 202, though the attempt (202–203) to bring Herakles' and Apollon's fight over the tripod and the final lines of the Homeric Hymn into the argument seem to me less convincing.

suggest, this story was taken up and moulded by the Phokians into a tale to justify Phokian control over Delphoi. Perhaps this is the point at which the absence of a polis controlling the sacred plain became a critical issue. If the Phokians could show that this absence was occasioned by their own defence of the sanctuary against the impious «Krisaians», presumably imagined as occupying Agios Georgios, then that would help justify the control they claimed over Delphoi. This story would have had a useful purpose as early as the 2nd Sacred War, and may thus be a product of the mid-5th century. In this form, the story would escape many of the objections based on Herodotos' and Thucydides' silence, especially given Thucydides' very brief notice of the 2nd Sacred War at 1. 112. 5. But it will have been useful once again in 356, when Philomelos was claiming ancestral Phokian power and προστασία over the oracle (Diod. 16. 23. 5–6). It was only one plank of Philomelos' argument (he also quoted Homer, according to Diodoros), and it would seem that the story was well enough in circulation to blind Kallisthenes to its propagandist origins. It is difficult to say whether this version of the story had a 5th or 4th century origin. In any case, the story reached Athens – perhaps with Kallisthenes himself – and was taken up to be reshaped once again by supporters of Macedon as an *aition* for Philip's sudden intrusion into Delphic affairs. And it was this third and last form which was taken up by Aischines and all the other writers who provide our sources for the so-called 1st Sacred War.

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