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Reading ancient tradition: the rulers of Archaic Corinth

I Introduction

The history of Archaic Greek tyrants, the monarchs ruling in many poleis during the seventh and sixth centuries BC,[1] is known to us mainly through the mediation of later sources. Although the verses of Archilochos, Solon, Theognis and Alkaios give valuable insight into their contemporaries' views, in the case of Alkaios even on some particular rulers, the narrative evidence describing the rise and fall of the tyrants is given almost exclusively by the Classical or later writers. These accounts were based on oral traditions, which were often transmitted over many generations before being written down, and assumed an undeniably mythological shape in the course of transmission. This evidence has been approached in different ways. The historians trying to reconstruct the history of the Greek tyranny have usually assumed that the accounts contain a recognisable historical kernel which can be disclosed by removing the later additions and the obviously incredible elements. They have usually paid little attention to the mythological motifs except for discounting these as unreliable and therefore irrelevant.[2] Other scholars have focused on the stories as myths, discussing their general structure and details on a comparative mythological background, but are usually less concerned with the historical core, assuming perhaps that there is no possibility to find it.[3]

The tyranny of Kypselos and his son Periandros in Corinth is no exception. The evidence is given by the Classical or post-Classical writers – Herodotos, Aristotle, Nikolaos of Damascus (probably following the fourth century historian Ephoros), and some others[4] – relating stories with unmistakably mythological traits, which cannot

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[1] All the following dates are BC.

[2] See the standard treatises of the Greek tyranny: Andrewes 1956; Berve 1967; Mossé 1969; de Libero 1996; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2009; etc.

[3] Note especially Aly 1921; Ogden 1997.

[4] Herodotos: I 20. 23–24; III 48–53; V 92. 95. Nikolaos FGrHist 90 F 57–60; for Ephoros as the source see Jacoby 1926, 248; de Libero 1996, 139; Forsdyke 2005, 72f.; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2009, 103. Additional evidence is given by Ephoros FGrHist 70 F 178, 179. Aristotle: fr. 611. 19–20 Rose; Pol. 1284 a26–33; 1310 b15–30; 1311 a20–23; 1313 a36–b32; 1315 b23–30. Some scattered evidence of unknown provenance is given by still later sources, the most im-

be accepted as faithful descriptions of the historical truth. Despite this, the Corinthian rulers have been regularly considered as a key example for understanding the emergence of tyranny in Archaic Greece,[5] while on the other hand, the obviously legendary nature of the stories has attracted scholars to approach this evidence from the narratological point of view, as a mythology with no obvious relations to the real events.[6] Such historical and mythological approaches have largely stood apart.

There are of course exceptions. James McGlew pays due attention to the narrative logic and legendary nature of the accounts for revealing the nature of tyranny,[7] and Nino Luraghi analyses the discourse of tyranny in antiquity and the elements from the mythologically modelled traditions for understanding tyranny as historical phenomenon. Luraghi recognises the early origin of the narratives and the importance of this evidence for disclosing the attitudes developing from the Archaic period. He emphasises the hostility of the tradition (tyrant as hateful monster), but ignores the favourable implications and credits the traditions with next to no value for reconstructing the histories of particular rulers.[8] Carmine Catenacci on the other hand compares the ‹biographies› of tyrants, including the rulers of Corinth, to those of Greek heroes and states the question about the relationship between the mythologised traditions and historical tyranny, but does not propose any obvious answer.[9] Concerning the Corinthian tyranny, the historical and mythological approaches are combined by Winfried Schmitz and Maurizio Giangiulio considering the mythological features in Herodotos' account for illuminating the legitimation of the rule. However, Schmitz views the Herodotean evidence separately from the rationalising account of Nikolaos of Damascus, hardly asking about the possible connection between them, while Giangiulio focuses on only a part of the tradition.[10] Moreover, with the excep-

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portant of which concerns the foundation of the colonies in Syracuse and Korkyra (below with notes 93–104).

[5] Berve 1967, 14–27; Mossé 1969, 25–37; Drews 1972; de Libero 1996, 135–178; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2009, 102–104; 2015, 224–229 pay little attention to the mythic elements of the tradition, obviously considering them unreliable and worthless, but still rely on some details in the accounts. Kypselos' birth story and the connected oracles have been seen as giving an early view on tyranny (Will 1955, 450–460; Andrewes 1956, 46–48; Oost 1972; Salmon 1984, 186 f.), but the full implications of the mythological nature of the evidence are hardly noticed.

[6] Aly 1921, 152–155; Delcourt 1944, 16–22, 195 f.; Vernant 1982; Jameson 1986; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988; Ogden 1997, 87–94. Other scholars (see note 32 below) have considered the stories in Herodotos for discussing the historian's aims and world-view.

[7] McGlew 1993, the discussion of the Corinthian tyranny in 61–74.

[8] Luraghi 2013; 2014; 2015, 78: «sources on Greek tyranny do not provide elements necessary for a historical reconstruction of it».

[9] Catenacci 2012, the question posed in 22; see the review by Canali De Rossi 2014. Filippo Canali De Rossi's own books on Greek tyranny (Canali De Rossi 2012a; 2012b; 2013) discuss the possible reflection of historical reality in the traditions without focusing on the narrative patterns.

[10] Schmitz 2010 (see also 2014, 75–80); Giangiulio 2010; 2013. See also Ogden 1997, 148–151.

tion of SCHMITZ, the scholars have paid little attention to the stories concerning the dynasty of the Bakchiads who ruled Corinth before the Kypselid tyrants.

The present article attempts to bridge the gap between the historically and mythologically oriented approaches. It will discuss the ancient narratives for understanding to what extent and how the mythological patterning contributed to the transmission of historically relevant information. The article will be dealing mainly with the traditions, not history, and with the attitudes these accounts expressed, which cannot always be fully appreciated by modern readers. The patterning of the tradition will be viewed not only as a barrier between us and the original events (which it certainly is), but also as a medium for transmission, moulding the information into familiarly shaped and therefore easily remembered stories. It will appear as a key for understanding the origins and the development of the stories, contributing to the understanding of the realities the stories purport to describe.

II The ancient record of the early history of Corinth

The history of Dorian Corinth in our sources begins with Aletes the descendant of Herakles who founded the Dorian polis.[11] His descendants ruled as hereditary kings. His third or fifth descendant Bakchis was ugly and lame, but a good ruler having ten children and thus founding the dynasty of the Bakchiads.[12] The fifth Bakchiad king Telestes was killed by his relatives, c. 747 according to the traditional chronology,[13] and during the next 90 years the Bakchiads ruled collectively appointing one among them as annual πρύτανις.[14] In c. 657 the dynasty was overthrown by Kypselos, a Bakchiad on his mother's side, who established himself as the tyrant and reigned until his death 30 years later (c. 627).[15] His son Periandros reigned during the next 40 years and bequeathed the power to his nephew (c. 587) who was killed by the Corinthians after

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[11] The earliest record in Pind. Ol. XIII 14; the later standard account, probably deriving from the work of Ephoros (who mentions Aletes in FGrHist 70 F 18), is given in Theopompos FGrHist 115 F 357; Arist. fr. 554 ROSE; Duris FGrHist 76 F 84; Konon 26; Apollod. II 8. 3; Schol. Pind. Nem. VIII 155; Diod. VII 9. 2; etc. See KÕIV 2003, 227–229.

[12] Diod. VII 9 (giving the full list of the kings) and Paus. II 4. 4 placed Bakchis as the 5th descendant of Aletes. In Arist. fr. 611. 19 ROSE he was the 3rd descendant (ἐβασίλευσε δὲ καὶ Βάκχις τρίτος). See also Arist. fr. 554 ROSE (KÕIV 2003, 228 n. 70).

[13] The chronological schema, too complex to be considered here in detail, is reconstructed by JACOBY 1902, 150–155 and MOSSHAMMER 1979, 234–245. The slight difference of their results is not important for the present discussion.

[14] Diod. VII 9. 5; Paus. II 4. 4. Diodoros notes a king Automenes ruling during a year after Telestes, but the name Telestes clearly singles him out as the last king; Automenes might have been the first of the annual πρυτάνεις.

[15] Hdt. V 92 β–ζ; Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57.

three years of rule (c. 584). This marked the end of the tyranny and the establishment of an oligarchic constitution.[16]

The list of the Bakchiad kings given by Diodoros (including the names of all the kings from Aletes to Telestes), as well as the chronology of the events,[17] are obviously later constructions. Aletes the founder is clearly a legendary figure personifying the reputed origins of the Dorian polis, and Bakchis probably a fictional eponymous ancestor of the Bakchiads, placed suitably around the middle point between Aletes and the last king Telestes. The name Telestes clearly relates to τέλος – the end – and must be fictional.[18] We cannot tell how the other names in the list were arrived at, or when the list was put together, but it almost certainly is a construction with hardly any value for reconstructing the real history.[19]

Concerning the chronological framework, we know that the pan-Hellenic Isthmian Games hosted by the Corinthians were reputedly established in the years 584–581.[20] The fall of the tyranny (c. 584) was synchronised with this event, and the date assumed as the starting point for further calculations. Counting back from it, the 73 years of the Kypselid rule (30 years of Kypselos + 40 of Periandros + 3 of his successor) produced the date c. 657 for the beginning of the tyranny (584 + 73 = 657), and the previous 90 years of the Bakchiad oligarchy led to the dating of its start to c. 747 (657 + 90 = 747).[21] The 30 and 40 years assigned to Kypselos and Periandros are obviously average round figures, and the 90 years of the Bakchiads an expression of three generations, which shows that the whole chronology was based on a genealogical calculation.

This demonstrates that the ancient scholars had no documentary evidence for establishing the precise dates, thus no eponymous lists to be used for this purpose.[22] The literary evidence from early Corinth available to later writers was probably confined to three types of sources. First, there was the epic poetry ascribed to Eumelos, later dated to the time of the establishment of the Bakchiad oligarchy.[23] The fragments ascribed to

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[16]   Arist. Pol. 1315 b23–27 (where the 44 years for Periandros must be emended to 40 conforming with the total of 73,5 years the philosopher gave for the dynasty) and Diog. Laert. I 98 (giving Periandros 40 years of rule). The end of the tyranny and the following constitution is described in Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 60.

[17]   See notes 12, 13 and 21.

[18]   But see also below, with the notes 123 f.

[19]   On the worth of the account of the Corinthian kingship see especially DREWS 1983, 52–55.

[20]   Solin. VII 14 (Ol. 49 = 585–581); Euseb. Chron. 101 HELM (Ol. 49. 4 = 581).

[21]   The dates probably derive from the chronology of Apollodoros synchronising the fall of tyranny with the establishment of the Isthmian Games (JACOBY 1902, 150–155; MOSSHAMMER 1979, 234–245). Apollodoros might have arrived at that date based on a list of the Isthmian winners (JACOBY 1902, 154 f.; BELOCH 1913, 279 f.) or by assuming its rough synchronism with the foundation of the Pythian Games (a possibility suggested by MOSSHAMMER 1979, 243–245).

[22]   SALMON 1984, 56.

[23]   Paus. II 1. 1 believed that Eumelos was a Bakchiad; Clemens (Strom. I 21. 131. 8) synchronised him with Archias the founder of Syracuse; Eusebios (Chron. 89 HELM) dated him to Ol. 9 (744–741), immediately after the end of the Bakchiad kingship according to Diodoros (see

him, however, concern the legendary history of Corinth before the Dorian conquest, with no references to the subsequent period.[24] Second, there were some possibly early oracular verses related by Herodotos (discussed below), some verses in the Theognidean corpus mentioning troubles on the island Euboia and praying for annihilation of the Kypselids,[25] and a poem ascribed to the sixth century poet Stesichoros concerning a Corinthian tyrant, in all likelihood Periandros.[26] There might have been some epigraphic evidence, perhaps inscribed on the dedications of the rulers in Corinth or in the pan-Hellenic sanctuaries.[27] In addition, Aristotle reported an early Corinthian lawgiver called Pheidon regulating the system of land holding connected to citizen rights,[28] and we cannot exclude the possibility that some inscriptional evidence concerning this legislation was preserved into the Classical period. But as this Pheidon was never mentioned outside the short passage of Aristotle, we can suppose that no law-code of his had been preserved and all the information was deduced from narrative tradition.[29] There might of course have been some other scattered evidence, but all this could scarcely have allowed a chronologically ordered narrative, which means

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Kõiv 2001, 335–337; 2011, 362f.). West 2002 dates the poetry of Eumelos to the late 7th or the 6th century.

[24] Eumelos supposedly composed a Korinthiaka (fr. 1–10 Bernabé), an Europia (fr. 11–13 Bernabé), and a prosodion for the Messenians to be performed in Delos (Paus. IV 33. 2).

[25] Theogn. 891–894; see Selle 2008, 238f.; Gagné 2016, 74–76.

[26] Stesichoros fr. 278 PMG ap. Strab. VIII 3. 20; see below, with note 53. Some modern scholars have doubted the Stesichorean authorship and the Archaic dating of the poem, judging the romantic tale unsuitable for an Archaic poet (Rose 1932; Davies – Finglass 2014). The modern pre-concept, however, can hardly outweigh the clear statement of Strabo. The ascription to Stesichoros is defended by Lehnus 1975 and accepted by Bowie 2012. See also Zörner 1971, 33; Kõiv 2013, 332.

[27] Kypselos reputedly built a treasure house in Delphi (Hdt. I 14. 2; Paus. X 13. 5). At Olympia the tyrants dedicated a huge golden statue (Ephoros FGrHist 70 F 178; Arist. Oec. 1346 a31–b5; Agaklythos FGrHist 411 F 1; Strab. VIII 6. 20; Plut. Pyth. Or. 13; Paus. V 2. 3; Photius and Suda s.v. Kypselidon anathemata) with an inscription ascribing it to «the Kypselids» (Εἰ μὴ ἐγὼ χρυσοῦς σφυρήλατος εἰμὶ κολοσσὸς, Ἐξώλης εἴη Κυψελιδῶν γενεά, quoted with slight differences by Photius and Suda; I follow the reading of Gagné 2016, 69 who accepts the authenticity of the couplet). A fragmentary inscription from Olympia (IvO 650) mentioning Βοῶ[ν] Κυψ[έλου] may mark a Kypselid dedication (de Libero 1996, 149). For the archaeological evidence for the presumed tyrants' buildings see especially Salmon 1984, 59–62, 201f.; de Libero 1996, 169–173.

[28] Arist. Pol. 1265 b12–16. For the interpretation see Salmon 1984, 63–65; Link 1991, 49–54; Hölkeskamp 1999, 150–157; Kõiv 2003, 236f.

[29] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 35 mentions a certain Pheidon killed in the internal conflicts at Corinth, probably believing that this was the famous Argive ruler who tried to conquer Corinth (Plut. Am. narr. 2). Schol. Pind. Ol. XIII 17e, 21d states that the Pheidon who established a system of weight and measures, generally known as the Argive tyrant, was a Corinthian, or alternatively that the Corinthian measures were established by the Argive Pheidon. This indicates a confusion of the Corinthian lawgiver and the Argive tyrant (see Jacoby 1926, 234; Oost 1972, 13; Kõiv 2003, 237, 253f.), showing the lawgiver as a shadowy figure about whom no solid evidence had survived.

that the overall account of early Corinthian history, like most of the details woven into it, must be based on orally transmitted stories.

III The Kypselids: the hero and the lame ruling

The story of the rise of Kypselos is related by Herodotos. He has it narrated by a Corinthian called Sokles, who warned the Spartans against establishing tyranny in Athens,[30] and therefore told them about the Corinthians' own experiences with such a kind of rule.[31] Herodotos clearly gives an anti-tyrannical interpretation of the tradition,[32] showing the horrors a tyranny would inevitably bring.[33]

Sokles tells that Corinth was ruled by an oligarchy of the endogamous Bakchiads. One of them had a lame daughter called Labda whom no Bakchiad wished to marry, and who was given as wife to Aetion («Eaglelike»), a non-Dorian Lapith by lineage dwelling in a village called Petre («Rock»). As Aetion had no children with Labda he consulted the Delphic oracle, and Pythia announced: «Aetion, no one honours you although you are worthy of honour, but Labda is pregnant and will give birth to a rolling stone that will fall on the monarchic men and set Corinth aright (or punish Corinth)»:[34]

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[30] Hdt. V 92. The story has been repeatedly discussed in the research (the literature quoted in notes 2–10 and How – Wells 1912, 50–55; Strasburger 1955; Parke – Wormell 1956, I, 115–117; Andrewes 1956, 45–48; Waters 1971, 13–15, 19f.; Zörner 1971, 26–35, 47–49; Raaflaub 1979, 239–241; 1987, 23–25; Stahl 1983; Węcowski 1996; Gray 1996; Johnson 2001; Dewald 2003; Moles 2007; Giangiulio 2013). My primary intention here is not to establish the message Herodotos wished to convey, but to approach the tradition he relied on.

[31] Herodotos thus presents this as a Corinthian tradition, and although his immediate source was probably Athenian (the story was told as warning against overthrowing Athenian democracy – see Forsdyke 1999, 367f.), there is no need to question the ultimately Corinthian origin of the account.

[32] How – Wells 1912, 340; Catenacci 2012, 43f.; Canali De Rossi 2012b, 9. He might have contrasted the sympathy towards the child to the unavoidable evils of tyranny (Erbse 1992, 133–137; Moles 2007), or wished to show that absolute power corrupts even a good person (Stahl 1983), or pointed out the importance of action against a threatening tyranny (Johnson 2001), or implied the parallel between the tyranny in Corinth which the Bakchiads failed to avoid, and the future tyranny of the Athenian empire, which the Spartans could have avoided by restoring Hippias to power (Strasburger 1955; Raaflaub 1979, 239–241; 1987, 23f.; Węcowski 1996), or simply wanted to relate a good story (How – Wells 1912, 51; Waters 1971, 14f.).

[33] It conforms with Herodotos' belief that monarchy was unacceptable for the Greeks – see Lateiner 1989, 172–179; Lévy 1993, 9; Dewald 2003; Giangiulio 2013. The fact that Herodotos does not describe all tyrants in a uniformly stereotypical way (as pointed out by Waters 1971; Gray 1996) does not contest his negative attitude – it was not the evil personality of the tyrants that makes tyranny bad, but the inevitability of leading into the horror (Dewald 2003).

[34] The verb δικαιώζειν in the third line of the oracle can mean both, and was probably purposely ambiguous. Will 1955, 450f.; Salmon 1984, 187 prefer «setting aright», while Gray 1996 and Węcowski 1996 incline towards «punishing». McGlew 1993, 64–67, Schmitz 2010;

Ἠετίων, οὔτις σε τίει πολύτιτον ἐόντα.
Λάβδα κύει, τέξει δ' ὀλοοίτροχον· ἐν δὲ πεσεῖται
ἀνδράσι μουνάρχοισι, δικαιώσει δὲ Κόρινθον.

When the Bakchiads became aware of this oracle, it explained a previous Delphic utterance they had failed to understand, which stated that «an eagle is pregnant on the rocks and will give birth to a lion who will break the knees of many men; note this well, Corinthians, you who dwell by fair Peirene and beetling Corinth»:

Αἰετὸς ἐν πέτρῃσι κύει, τέξει δὲ λέοντα
καρτερὸν ὠμηστήν· πολλῶν δ' ὑπὸ γούνατα λύσει.
Ταῦτά νυν εὖ φράζεσθε, Κορίνθιοι, οἳ περὶ καλὴν
Πειρήνην οἰκεῖτε καὶ ὀφρυόεντα Κόρινθον.

The Bakchiads understood the danger, decided to kill the son of Aetion immediately after the birth, and sent ten of their own men to do this. When the men entered the house of Aetion, they asked for the child and Labda gave them her son without suspicion. The baby smiled by divine luck (θείη τύχῃ) to the man who first took him, arousing pity in the killer, the man gave the baby to the next, and the child was thus passed through the hands of all ten without any of them daring to accomplish the deed. They gave the child back to the mother, went outdoors to discuss the situation, and decided to return and kill the baby jointly. But Labda heard the talk and hid the child in a vessel (κυψέλη) where the men could not find him.[35] They decided to leave and say that everything had been done as required. The boy thus survived and was named Kypselos according to the vessel that had saved his life.

   When Kypselos grew up and went to consult the Delphic oracle the Pythia greeted him with these words: «Blessed is the man who enters my dwelling, Kypselos the son of Aetion, the king (βασιλεύς) of glorious Corinth, he and his children, but not his children's children»:

Ὄλβιος οὗτος ἀνὴρ ὃς ἐμὸν δόμον ἐσκαταβαίνει,
Κύψελος Ἠετίδης, βασιλεὺς κλειτοῖο Κορίνθου,
αὐτὸς καὶ παῖδες, παίδων γε μὲν οὐκέτι παῖδες.

Canali De Rossi 2012b, 10–13 and Giangiulio 2013 propose a combination (punishing in the name of justice, as put by Giangiulio). A parallel can be found in Theognis' warning that the «pregnant» polis would «give birth» to a monarch as «the corrector of our badness» (39–40: κύει πόλις ἥδε, δέδοικα δὲ μὴ τέκηι ἄνδρα / εὐθυντῆρα κακῆς ὕβριος ἡμετέρης), where the «corrector» (εὐθυντήρ) has an equally ambiguous meaning (the parallel noted by McGlew 1993, 65–67; Catenacci 2012, 44–47).

[35] The κυψέλη might have been a beehive (Roux 1963; Ogden 1997, 88 f.) or a corn-chest (Gray 1996, 379; Moles 2007, 253).

Having received this oracle Kypselos became the tyrant of Corinth, and proved to be a terrible ruler banishing many Corinthians, robbing many people of their goods, and killing even more of them.

His son Periandros was moderate at the beginning, but when his friend, the Milesian tyrant Thrasybulos, advised him to confirm the power by destroying the outstanding citizens, he became even worse, killing or expelling those who had survived the rule of his father. He even stripped all the Corinthian women of their clothes, to please his late wife Melissa with whom he had had sexual intercourse after her death and who now let him know through a death oracle that she was cold and naked in the underworld. Periandros thus called all the women of Corinth, the free and the slaves alike, to the sanctuary of Hera as if to a great festival for which the women put on their jewellery and the best clothes. He encircled the sanctuary with his soldiers, stripped the women and burned their adornment for Melissa.

Although Herodotos presented the tyranny as an odium, the story and the oracles clearly describe Kypselos as a divinely predestined glorious ruler.[36] We see here a usual account of the rise of founding heroes, famously exemplified by Sargon, Romulus and Kyros,[37] which appears in the Greek tradition as early as Hesiod's Theogony where the new-born Zeus, the future king of the gods, was threatened by his father and rescued by his mother hiding him in a cave, rather similar to what happened to Kypselos.[38] Similar tales were told about many Greek heroes,[39] other deities besides Zeus and a few historical rulers.[40]

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[36] This obvious implication of the story has been generally recognised: McGlew 1993, 62; Johnson 2001, 12 f.; Ogden 2008, 19; Catenacci 2012, 38–44; Giangiulio 2013.

[37] For the heroic ‹biographies› from different cultures see especially Raglan 1936 (in 178–189 including the motif of the exposed child); Propp 1984. For the motif of the exposed child see especially Redford 1967; Lewis 1980, 149–276.

[38] Hes. Theog. 453–506, 617–735.

[39] See especially Huys 1995 (focusing on Greek Tragedy); Wesselmann 2011, 201–226; Chiasson 2012, 221 f. Note e.g. Perseus (Pherekydes FGrHist 3 F 10–12; Apollod. II 4. 1–4), Amphion and Zethos (Asios fr. 1 Bernabé; Pherekydes FGrHist 3 F 41; Apollod. III 5. 5; Hygin. Fab. 8); Iamos (Pind. Ol. VI 25–55), Ion (Eurip. Ion); Telephos (Diod. IV 33. 7–2; Apollod. II 7. 4; III 8. 9; etc.), Paris (Apollod. II 12. 5; etc.), Herakles (Pind. Nem. I 39–51; Theokr. XXIV; Diod. IV 10. 1; Apollod. II 4. 8; Hygin. Fab. 30; etc.); Atalanta (Apollod. III 9. 2), Pelias and Neleus (Apollod. I 9. 8–9), Aiolos and Boiotos (Hygin. Fab. 186), Aigisthos (Hygin. Fab. 87–88), Hippothous (Hygin. Fab. 187), Miletos (Anton. Lib. Met. 30); Meleagros (Apollod. I 8. 2; Hygin. Fab. 171); Achilleus (Aigimios ap. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. 4. 816 = Hesiodos fr. 300 M–W; see Burgess 2009, 8–25; Holway 2012, 53–60). What matters in these stories is not necessarily the exposure of the child, but the attempt on his life (see Kõiv 2018, 628–630).

[40] Deities: Asklepios (Paus. II 26. 3–5), Dionysos (Paus. III 24. 3–5) and Attis (Paus. VII 17. 10–12). Historical rulers: Agathokles (Diod. XIX 2. 2–7); Ptolemaios Soter (Suda. s. v. Lagos); Pyrrhos (Plut. Pyrrhos 2). Kypselos' escape in the κυψέλη was probably inspired by his name. See the discussion in Catenacci 2012.

In the present case the narrative with the oracles conveys a similar meaning. The oracles are clearly connected to each other and organically woven into the narrative:[41] the rolling stone falling on the monarchic men in the first oracle (τέξει δ᾽ ὀλοοίτροχον· ἐν δὲ πεσεῖται ἀνδράσι μουνάρχοισι) presupposes the birth on the rocks stated in the second (Αἰετὸς ἐν πέτρῃσι κύει), because the rocks are from where the stone can roll down, while the eagle (Αἰετὸς) pregnant on the rocks (ἐν πέτρῃσι) obviously corresponds to Aetion from the deme of Petre in the story.[42] The Bakchiads on whom the rolling stone would fall were guilty of ruling alone – as ἄνδρες μουνάρχοι – which is paralleled by their endogamy in the narrative, implying a reproachable exclusiveness of the rule. They had thus deprived Aetion of the honour he deserved (Ἠετίων, οὔτις σε τίει πολύτιτον ἐόντα), which made his son the rightful avenger and rectifier of Corinth, as was stated by the first oracle (δικαιώσει δὲ Κόρινθον).[43] The second oracle warned that the punishment would be harsh: the purger equals a lion devouring raw flesh and would break the knees of many. The Corinthians apparently would share the responsibility and suffer with the rulers.[44] However, the punishment, although harsh, was still divinely sanctified and therefore just, indicated by the verb δικαιώσει. The metaphors of a rolling stone and a fierce lion have a glorifying effect besides a sinister connotation. The poet of the Iliad used these for describing the heroic anger and determination of Hektor in battle, which infers a similar implication in the oracles of Kypselos.[45] They indicate the heroic stature of the purger, which complies with the

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[41] Catenacci 2012, 39f. notes that the oracles were connected through the rhyme between πολύτιτον ἐόντα in the first and τέξει δὲ λέοντα in the second. There is no need to distinguish between the pro-Bakchiad and pro-Kypselid position of different oracles (as suggested by Will 1955, 450–454; Andrewes 1956, 47f.; Zörner 1971, 27; Drews 1972; Węcowski 1996; Moles 2007).

[42] It can be that the rocks were originally understood as Acrocorinth from where the stone could naturally roll down on Corinth (Roux 1963), and was developed into a separate place called Petre in the narrative tradition. On the other hand, as patronyms were important for the Greeks, we can suppose that the name of Kypselos' father was remembered, and the eagle in the oracle derives from the name Aetion, not vice versa. A close connection between the oracles and the narrative is pointed out by Andrewes 1956, 46f.; Salmon 1984, 186; Węcowski 1996; Johnson 2001; Giangiulio 2010; 2013; Kindt 2016, 35. For the embeddedness of the Delphic oracles into the narratives in general see Maurizio 1997.

[43] McGlew 1993, 64; Giangiulio 2013, 230. Μοναρχία clearly marked a reproachable rule for the Archaic poets. Solon viewed it as a rule enslaving the people (fr. 9 West); for Theognis it arose from internal conflicts as a punishment for the people (39–52); Alkaios marked with that term the reproachable rule of Myrsilos (fr. 6). See Barceló 1993, 92–102; de Libero 1996, 28–35; Parker 1998; Anderson 2005; Kõiv 2016, 17–19.

[44] One more oracular line was quoted by Oinomaos ap. Euseb. PE 5. 35 (Parke – Wormell 1956, II, n° 9), stating that Kypselos would bring many miseries to the Corinthians: Κύψελος, ὃς δὴ πολλὰ Κορίνθῳ πήματα τεύξει. This utterance would have suited Herodotos' message so well that he would hardly have left it unquoted had he known it. It may be a later forgery.

[45] McGlew 1993, 65; Catenacci 2012, 41; Giangiulio 2013 referring to Il. XIII 136–145 (Hektor as ὀλοοίτροχος) and XV 592–636 (comparison to lion). For the ambiguous meaning of the oracles see Maurizio 2001, 43; Kurke 2009; Schmitz 2010; Kindt 2016, 35.

third oracle blessing Kypselos as the legitimate ruler of Corinth, thus confirming what the first two had predicted. The godly favour Kypselos enjoyed is indicated, besides the oracles and the general story pattern, by divine luck (θείη τύχη) inspiring the life-saving smile of the child.[46]

The story and the oracles probably emerged in symbiosis. The oracles were surely composed with some narrative in mind, and must in turn have influenced the narrative tradition. There is no reason to think that the original story they were connected to was very different from what we know from Herodotos. The message of the whole complex is clear: Kypselos was, from his birth, chosen as a divine favourite destined to accomplish the oracular predictions, overthrow the unjust Bakchiads and set Corinth aright.[47]

The birth story requires a continuation describing the rise to the power, usual in such accounts. The oracles clearly state that Kypselos will do this: fall on the Bakchiads and become the king. The tradition could hardly have failed to describe this, and in fact we find the account in Nikolaos of Damascus (Ephoros).[48] Nikolaos, beginning with a variant of the birth story,[49] relates that the father brought Kypselos up in Olympia under the protection of the god. As a youth Kypselos consulted the Delphic oracle and returned to Corinth, where he soon became popular among the people because of his bravery and justice. He assumed the position of war-leader (πολέμαρχος) and was mild towards the debtors whom he was entitled to imprison. When he saw that the people hated the unjust Bakchiads, but had no champion, he put himself forward and became the leader of the people. He revealed the prediction that he would overthrow the Bakchiads, told how they had tried to kill him, thus gathering his followers, killed the hateful Bakchiad king and was himself proclaimed king by the people (κτείνει βασιλεύοντα Πατροκλείδην, παράνομον ὄντα καὶ ἐπαχθῆ. Ταχὺ δὲ ἀντ' ἐκείνου ὁ δῆμος αὐτὸν βασιλέα κατέστησεν). He expelled the Bakchiads and turned their properties into public property, founded many colonies, and was so popular among the people that he needed no bodyguard for protection.[50]

This is exactly the kind of story we must expect: Kypselos grew up abroad, suitably for a hero, returned home, became a popular leader, killed his unjust predecessor and

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[46] MOLES 2007, 258 f. The smile could have marked Kypselos as a ‹divine child› (IMMERWAHR 1966, 194 f.; JOHNSON 2001).

[47] Pointed out especially by MCGLEW 1993, 71; CATENACCI 2012, 38–46; see also GIANGIULIO 2013.

[48] FGrHist 90 F 57.

[49] According to Nikolaos FGrHist 90 F 56. 2 the Bakchiads sent their soldiers to kill the baby, and they revealed the plan to Aetion, while in Herodotos the would-be killers were men from among the Bakchiads, met only Labda and left without telling her anything.

[50] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57. 1–8. According to Polyainos V 31 Kypselos used a ruse to get rid of the Bakchiads: he sent them to consult the Delphic oracle and forbade their return. Aelianos Var. Hist. I 19 simply notes that the Bakchiads were overthrown because of their τρυφή.

was proclaimed king.[51] It supplies the part ignored by Herodotos, and completes an almost perfect mythological cliché that integrates all the elements – the divine prediction, the birth and the following rise to power – into a coherent whole, describing how the predicted doom for the Bakchiads was accomplished, and how Kypselos actually achieved the kingship. In all likelihood, Nikolaos has preserved for us, via Ephoros, a rationalised version of the traditional account about Kypselos' rise. The oracles in Herodotos clearly imply this or a similar narrative. Herodotos simply ignored this part of the story as unsuitable for his purpose to describe tyranny as an evil. The same account was probably followed by Aristotle when he characterised Kypselos as a tyrant-demagogue, thus accepting his popularity among the people.[52]

Unlike Kypselos, who is described in the tradition as a divinely supported hero, his son Periandros appears as a monster in most of the accounts. The earliest evidence may derive from an almost contemporary source. A poem ascribed to the sixth century poet Stesichoros related that a Corinthian tyrant, in all likelihood Periandros, murdered his bride called Rhadine, probably out of jealousy, when she was approaching Corinth on a chariot together with her cousin.[53] Among the later sources, Herodotos presents more data than he has Sokles report. Periandros allegedly killed his wife Melissa and quarrelled with his son Lykophron who was angry with his father because of his mother's death. He expelled the son from home and afterwards sent him to rule Korkyra, the people of which, however, hated Periandros so much that they murdered Lykophron when they heard that Periandros would come to rule the island instead of his son. The tyrant, seeking revenge, sent the sons of the Korkyreans to be castrated by the Lydian king Alyattes, but the boys were saved by the people of Samos.[54] Gruesome details concerning Periandros' sex life are added by Diogenes Laertios and Parthenios. Diogenes tells that Melissa was pregnant when Periandros trampled her to death, believing the gossip of his concubines, whom he later burnt alive for punishment for the slander. Diogenes also relates that Periandros had a secret liaison with his mother Krateia, while Parthenios supplements a full story of how Periandros' mother slept with her son in darkness, and committed suicide when her identity was discovered. This embittered Periandros and caused his subsequent harshness.[55]

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[51] For heroes' ‹biographies› see the literature in note 37.

[52] Arist. Pol. 1310 b15–30, particularly 29–30. Ephoros and Aristotle surely did not simply telescope the realities of their present (so e.g. DE LIBERO 1996, 142), but rationalised the tradition describing Kypselos as a popular hero. I agree with FORSDYKE 2005, 72, 74f. accepting some historical basis for the account, but doubt our ability to establish the exact reason for Kypselos' popularity.

[53] Stesichoros fr. 278 PMG. See note 26 above. The ancient chronographers dated Stesichoros ca 630–555 (Suda s.v. Stesichoros; Euseb. Chron 98 HELM; see MOSSHAMMER 1979, 218–225; KIVILO 2010, 79–82), which seems more or less reliable (PODLECKI 1984, 154–163).

[54] Hdt. III 48–53.

[55] Diog. Laert. I 94 (killing the wife and the concubines); 96 (incest with mother) quoting the work on ancient luxury ascribed to Aristippos of Cyrene; Parthen. Erot. 17.

Nikolaos of Damascus and Aristotle consequently contrasted Kypselos as the popular hero to Periandros as a hateful tyrant. Both stated that Periandros inherited the kingship (βασιλεία) from his father, acquired a bodyguard and turned the rule into tyranny (τυραννίς).[56] Aristotle described him as the inventor of tyrannical measures for maintaining power and noted, like Ephoros,[57] that Periandros forbade the people to live in the city. According to Nikolaos he forbade the citizens to employ slaves, compelled them to work and even fined them for talking to each other on the agora, fearing that the people might plot against him.[58] The Corinthians hated the tyrants, and when Periandros died, the people revolted against his successor. They were so angry that besides killing the ruler they dug up the remains of the Kypselids and threw them out of their land.[59]

Aristotle however was somewhat milder compared to Nikolaos. He noted Periandros' modesty and justice, and acknowledged his measures for restricting luxury and expenditure, and Nikolaos, despite his negative appraisal, acknowledged the military power of Periandros.[60] This probably reflects a favourable tradition, which was suppressed by Nikolaos and Herodotos, but traces of which can be found in the stories in which the tyrant laudably demonstrates his wisdom. Herodotos mentioned the valuable advice Periandros gave to Thrasybulos the tyrant of Miletos, helping to save the city from the Lydian threat.[61] He noted Periandros' mediation in the conflict between Athens and Mytilene,[62] and told a story about his just and clever resolution of the attempted murder of the famous poet Arion.[63] Periandros clearly appears as a wise ruler in these accounts, which explains his inclusion among the Seven Sages, reputed for their political wisdom and moderation.[64]

However, despite this favourable tradition, the negative judgement of Periandros clearly predominates, and the contrast between him and his heroic father is obvious. No stories about the outrages of Kypselos have survived, and even Herodotos had to

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[56] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 58. 1; Arist. fr. 611. 20 Rose.

[57] Arist. Pol. 1313 a36–b32; Diog. Laert. I 98 (the prohibition to live in the city) quoting Ephoros (FGrHist 70 F 179) and Aristotle (fr. 516 Rose).

[58] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 58. 1; besides that, Nikolaos mentioned Periandros' sexual intercourse with his dead wife, and dwelt on his problematic relations with his sons (F 58. 2; 59).

[59] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 60. 1. The name of the last ruler is given as Psammetichos in F 59. 4 and as Kypselos in F 60. 1. Diog. Laert. I 96, on the other hand, tells a story of how Periandros cunningly concealed his burial place for posterity by having himself anonymously killed and secretly buried, and the men who dug his grave were killed as well. The story obviously contradicts the account of Nikolaos.

[60] Arist. fr. 611. 20 Rose; Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 58. 3.

[61] Hdt. I 20.

[62] Hdt. V 95. 2.

[63] Hdt. I 23–24.

[64] Plat. Prot. 343a; Pol. 336a (who, like other writers, protested against this inclusion); Diog. Laert. I 94–100; etc. On the wisdom of tyrants in traditions see Catenacci 2012, 156–195; on Periandros among the Sages see Engels 2010, 45–47.

contend with the rather hapless declaration of his cruelty. He probably would have been more specific, had he known some details, which suggests that the tradition simply had preserved no relevant account. The cruelties of Periandros, on the other hand, were vividly described by the tradition.

However, although Kypselos was divinely blessed and destined to purge Corinth, this rectification equates to punishment and had an obviously sinister meaning. It predicted Periandros' horrible deeds implied by the oracle's warning for the Corinthians (ταῦτά νυν εὖ φράζεσθε, Κορίνθιοι). Moreover, it involved a motif of ominous lameness woven into the story.

Marie Delcourt, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Michael Jameson have demonstrated a remarkable similarity between the tradition concerning the Corinthian rulers and the stories of the legendary Theban kings Labdakos, Laios and Oedipus,[65] noting in both cases an ominous lameness shaping the destiny of the dynasty. Labda the mother of Kypselos was lame, as indicated by her name, the meaning of which could derive from the ‹lame› letter lambda (Λ or λ), implying either twisted legs or legs of unequal length.[66] The name Labdakos, and Labdakidai for his descendants, contains the same root and implies limping as an inherent trait, inherited by his son Laios («left» or «left-handed») and grandson Oedipus («swollen foot») with maimed feet.[67] Lameness was understood as an ominous feature, marking an imbalance of movement, thus morally deranged behaviour, and illegitimate birth.[68] It was used as invective against opponents as early as Alkaios.[69] In the traditions discussed here it foreshadowed the abnormal acts of the rulers and a catastrophic end for the dynasties.

[65] Delcourt 1944, 16–22, 195f.; Vernant 1982; Jameson 1986; elaborated further by Ogden 1997, 87–94 and accepted by Said 2002; Moles 2007; Schmitz 2010; Catenacci 2012; Frass 2013.

[66] Etym. Magn. s.v. βλαισός states that the feet of Labda were twisted outwards in the shape of the letter Λ, the interpretation accepted by Ogden 1997, 90. But the name could derive its meaning from the different length of the stems of the letter, as it was drawn in many local scripts, including the script of early Corinth (Jameson 1986, 3f.; Garland 2010, 98). See Frass 2013.

[67] See Bremmer 1987 (who in 44 however considers the limping as a secondary trait of the myth); Ogden 1997, 29f.; Garland 2010, 13. For the meaning of λαιός see Wirth 2010, 24. For the interpretation of the Labdakid legend see Bethe 1899b; Lamer 1924; Delcourt 1944; Vernant 1982.

[68] For the ominous meaning of lameness see Plat. Pol. VII 535d–536d; Vernant 1982; Ogden 1997, especially 29–37; Yche-Fontanel 2001; Schmitz 2010, 31–35. The quasi-equation of lameness with bastardy is demonstrated by the dispute between Agesilaos and Leotychidas over the succession in Sparta, when an oracle warning against the «lame kingship» implied an illegitimate birth (Plut. Lys. 22. 6–13; Paus. III 8. 7–10; Xen. Hell. III 3. 1–4) – see especially Flaig 2006, 49–54.

[69] Alkaios fr. 429 berating his opponent Pittakos: Τοῦτον Ἀλκαῖος … ἀποκαλεῖ … χειροπόδην δὲ διὰ τὰς ἐν τοῖς ποσὶ ῥαγάδας. Pittakos was also κακόπατρις (of bad parentage) – fr. 348. See Kurke 1994 and Luraghi 2014, 81 for the connection between the reputed physical deformity of tyrants and the blasphemy of Alkaios.

The ‹lameness› of the Labdakids became manifest in the excessive homosexual passion of Laios who abducted and raped Chrysippos, the young son of Pelops.[70] Chrysippos committed suicide, Pelops cursed Laios, and an oracle destined him to have children who would kill him. When his son Oedipus was born, he was exposed, but survived, fulfilled the prediction and married his mother. Afterwards he quarrelled with his sons and cursed them, inducing war between the brothers, disastrous for the dynasty and the polis.[71] In the Corinthian story the lameness began with Bakchis the Bakchiad ancestor, and continued with his limping descendant Labda. Kypselos was thus the offspring of a lame mother descending from a lame ancestor, and his own birth was ‹lame› in the sense of illegitimacy, because the truly legitimate marriages among the Bakchiads were endogamous.[72] Like in the case of Oedipus, the oracles warned of his birth, and he survived the attempt on his life. The consequent evils, manifest through the crimes of Periandros, involved sexual recklessness and perversion: the intercourse with his murdered wife and the incest with his mother. Like Oedipus, Periandros quarrelled with his son, which ultimately led to the dynasty's fall. The similarity of the narratives is obvious, suggesting an impact of the pan-Hellenically famous Theban legends on the Corinthian traditions.

Both these traditions took shape early. The main lines of the Theban story were probably established in the epic cycle – Oidipodeia, Thebais and Epigonoi – during the Archaic Age.[73] In the Corinthian tradition, the lame ancestry of Kypselos and most

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[70] I follow Vernant 1982 in his interpretation.

[71] Oedipus' incest with his mother was first mentioned in the Odyssey (XI 271–280), the curse of the sons described in the epic Thebais (fr. 2 Bernabé) and the resulting destruction of Thebes in the Epigonoi (see Huxley 1969, 39–50; Torres-Guerra 2015; Cingano 2015a). Oedipus' birth story was indeed popular in Attic drama (see Daly 1937), and a compact account involving Chrysippos' death and the curse on the family is given in Hypoth. Eurip. Phoin. and schol. ad 1760 quoting Peisandros (FGrHist 16 F 10; the curse of Pelops is given also in Hypoth. Aesch. Sept.; see also Athen. XIII 602–603; Hygin. Fab. 85; the more detailed account in Apollod. III 5. 5–7. 4 misses this point). Peisandros might have been an Archaic epic poet (so e.g. Lamer 1924; Daly 1937; but Jacoby 1923, 494 assumed this as a pseudonym for a Hellenistic prose author) and his account can derive from the Oidipodeia (Bethe 1891, 4–28, especially 27; 1899b, 2499; Bernabé quotes it as the argumentum for this epos; see especially the discussion and bibliography in Lloyd-Jones 2002; also Cingano 2015b). Chrysippos' death was certainly told in Euripides' Chrysippos, and there is no need to assume that it was his own invention (Robert 1921, 883). See also note 73.

[72] Gernet 1968, 350. Vernant 1982, 27 and Schmitz 2010, 35 n. 68 suggest that the lameness of the Kypselids was further emphasised by their alleged descent from the Lapith hero Kaineus (Hdt. V 92 β), who was turned from a woman into a man (see Robert 1921, 10f.).

[73] See the literature in note 71. The name of the Labdakids is first mentioned in Pind. Isthm. III 16. Its ‹lame› implication cannot date before the adaption of the Phoenician alphabet (if the meaning derives from the different length of the stems of Λ, it cannot derive from the early Boiotian alphabet where the letter was written stems upwards, see Lamer 1924, 473; Delcourt 1944, 21; Jameson 1986). However, the story of the lame family could have emerged earlier, and Labdakos inserted later as a suitably named ancestor.

of the ‹lame› acts of his son were known to Herodotos. The tragic tale of Rhadine murdered by the tyrant can derive from Stesichoros, suggesting that the stories of Periandros' cruelty were well known in the Archaic era. The tale of Periandros' liaison with his mother was ascribed by Diogenes to Aristippos, which suggests its circulation in the late fifth or early fourth century at the latest.[74] We cannot tell whether Herodotos did not know or simply ignored the incest.[75] However, he surely knew of the fall of the Kypselids, inferred by the oracle (the rule of Kypselos and his children, but not the grandchildren), which was crucial as the fulfilment of the doom, but chose not to mention this, and he presented the conflict with Lykophron, which deprived Periandros of an heir and sealed the catastrophe, in an unrelated context, explaining the beginning of the enmity between Samos and Corinth.[76] He thus knew all the elements of the story, but did not present them as an entity, which demonstrates that the narrative of the rise, lameness and fall of the tyranny was not framed by him. In every likelihood it predated Herodotos.

This tradition reveals a controversial attitude towards the Kypselids: Kypselos, although heroic rectifier, founded a ‹lame› dynasty bringing suffering for Corinth. This ambiguity was implied by the ambiguous significance of the motifs of deformity, bastardy and postnatal exposure (deformed and illegitimate children were in practice most frequently abandoned after their birth). On the one hand, lameness or imbalanced feet (including appearing with one shoe – μονοσάνδαλοι or μονοκρηπῖδες)[77] characterises many heroes (note Philoktetes, Bellerophon, Telephos and Jason in the Greek legendry),[78] and disability, illegitimate birth or exposure could have indicated

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[74] Diog. Laert. I 96. Döring 1998, 250 however dates the περὶ παλαίας τρυφής, from which the account allegedly derives, to the Hellenistic period.

[75] Whether or not Herodotos knew the story of Rhadine has no special significance, if its early date is testified by Stesichoros.

[76] Pointed out by Waters 1971, 14f.; see Froehlich 2013, 116f. According to Węcowski 1996 Herodotos expects his public to understand the dramatic connection between his two accounts of Periandros (III 50–53 and V 92), but did not introduce Lykophron into Sokles' speech to avoid repetition.

[77] The connection between the μονοσάνδαλοι / μονοκρηπῖδες and limpers is suggested by Ogden 1997, 32. For the μονοσάνδαλοι and μονοκρηπῖδες see especially Brelich 1955; Loos-Dietz 1994. The μονοσάνδαλοι / μονοκρηπῖδες appear as highly ambivalent, and include, besides glorious heroes, a number of malefactors who received well-deserved punishment: Lykurgos the king of the Edonians harassing Dionysos; Erysichthon insulting Demeter (Robertson 1972).

[78] Philoktetes was described as limping by Sophokles (see Yche-Fontanel 2001, 73–75), and Bellerophon in the lost tragedy of Euripides (see Bethe 1899a, 249). Telephos (see note 39) entangled his foot in a vine-branch (again a sign of imbalanced feet) and was hence lamed by a wound in his thigh inflicted by Achilles; his ‹biography› contained all the elements from the predictions and consequent exposure to the assumption of power (see Schwenn 1934; lameness in Aristoph. Acharn. 410–430; Pax 146–148; Batr. 842, 846, 1063–1064; see Ogden 1997, 31f.). Achilles himself had imbalanced feet, as one of his ankles was fatally vulnerable (see Bur-

the rise of a heroic founder.[79] Such stories contrasted the initial danger and helplessness to the eventual success, which marked divine help for the hero, thus legitimated his rule,[80] and implied a new beginning comparable to resurrection after a symbolic death.[81] On the other hand, they could also indicate the birth of a dreadful and dangerous creature,[82] of which the inacceptable violence and the disastrous end of several heroes appears as a manifestation.[83] These seemingly contradictory sides clearly appear in the Kypselid tradition where the favourable aspects implied by the birth story were ascribed mainly to Kypselos and the horrors to his son.

IV *The lameness, guilt and punishment of the Bakchiads*

The lameness, however, began with the Bakchiads. Bakchis the ancestor was an ambivalent figure. According to Diodoros his father was called Prymnis,[84] but according to another version he was a son of Dionysos,[85] as implied by his very name being related to Bakchos. This implies a story of double conception by a mortal man and a god, analogous to the parentages of Herakles and Theseus,[86] suitable for heroic ancestors. On the other hand, Bakchis was lame and ugly (χωλὸς καὶ εὐτελὴς τὴν ὄψιν),[87] and it is hardly a coincidence that the dynasty he founded was brought to the end by an equally lame Labda, the girl whose limping caused her marriage outside the clan and consequently the fall of the dynasty. Lameness was crucial at both the rise and the fall of the Bakchiads, and must have been significant in the story.[88]

GESS 2009, 9–15). The most famous μονοκρήπις is probably Jason the Argonaut (Pind. Pyth. IV 72–100, μονοκρήπις in 75; Apollod. I 9. 16; etc.).

[79] Pointed out especially by OGDEN 1997 who gives several examples. LURAGHI 2014, 81 notes physical deformity as a frequent element in the ‹biographies› of the Greek tyrants, comparing them to the tricksters from various mythologies.

[80] MURRAY 1980, 142f.; WESSELMANN 2011, 264f.; KÕIV 2018, 631.

[81] This has been plausibly connected to liminality and rituals of initiation (BRELICH 1955, 480–483; LOOS-DIETZ 1994, 193–195; for symbolic rebirth imagined in the initiation context see PROPP 1984, 95–106; WESSELMANN 2011, 197–226, 252–269; comparative evidence in GENNEP 1960; ELIADE 1995; see also VERSNEL 2014).

[82] See GARLAND 2010; OGDEN 1997, 9–46. SCHMITZ 2010, 35 argues for an interpretation by Herodotos, but the ambivalence was probably given by the tradition.

[83] Note e.g. Kyros (Hdt. I 204–214), Herakles (Eurip. Heracl. 815–1015; Soph. Trach. 1191–1279; Diod. IV 38. 3–8; Apollod. II 7. 7; Hygin. Fab. 36; etc.), Bellerophon (Pind. Isthm. VII 44–47), Oedipus (Soph. Oid. Kol.) and Theseus (Plut. Thes. 35; Apollod. Ep. I 24). For similar examples from other mythologies see PROPP 1984. CATENACCI 2012 points out the same ambiguity in the ‹biographies› of the Greek tyrants.

[84] Diod. VII 9. 4.

[85] Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1212.

[86] BERNABÉ 2013 and DEBIASI 2013; 2015, 160f., suggesting that the Dionysian ancestry was stated in the poetry of Eumelos.

[87] Arist. fr. 611. 19 ROSE.

[88] As pointed out by SCHMITZ 2010, 24.

This lameness might have been manifest in the imbalanced exclusiveness of the Bakchiad power, indicated by their endogamy and the ‹sole ruling› depriving Aetion among others of the honour he deserved. But this was surely not the only fault. There are three incidents which could have exemplified the malignancy and incriminated the family.

The first incident concerns a violent conflict with neighbouring Megara, reputedly a Corinthian foundation during the Dorian invasion and a Corinthian dependency after that.[89] A certain Bakchios, probably identical with Bakchis the ancestor,[90] was married to the daughter of the Megarian king Klytios, and after her death required the Megarians to come to Corinth to publicly mourn his late wife as a sign of submission. The Megarians refused, and when the Corinthian envoys came to Megara to repeat the request, they hardly escaped the angry people. This led to a war during which the Megarians successfully asserted their independence.[91] The story thus describes the loss of the consanguine and previously friendly Megara as a result of the haughtiness of the first Bakchiad ruler, probably manifesting the hubris of the family from the very establishment of their rule.

According to the traditional chronology, internal conflicts arose a few generations later which led to the murder of the last Bakchiad king Telestes. Telestes was allegedly a child when his father died, and for sixteen years his uncle Agemon ruled as the regent. Then a certain Alexandros usurped the power, but was killed by Telestes who was himself murdered by his own relatives Arieus and Perantas. After that the Bakchiads ruled jointly.[92] This account is too detailed to be mere filler in the chronological sequence of Diodoros, and the fact that Pausanias was able to provide the killers' names suggests that it was based on a traditional story. The internecine murders could manifest the ‹lameness› of the family, and the murderous rearrangement of power could have foreshadowed a gloomy end.

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[89] According to the tradition, Megara was founded by the Dorians from Corinth during their venture against Athens: Hdt. V 76; Strab. VIII 1. 7, XIV 2. 6; Paus. I 39. 4–5. The dependent status of Megara emerges from the following story.

[90] Besides the similarity of the names, the identification is suggested by the circumstance that Paus. VI 19. 13–14 dated the war between Corinth and Megara to the generation after Bakchis. In Olympia Pausanias saw a Megarian dedication of Corinthian spoils taken in a successful battle, and dated the battle to the time of the Athenian archon for life Phorbas. The standard genealogy (Kastor FGrHist 250 F 4) places Phorbas into the generation which falls after Bakchis when compared to the Corinthian stemma, which suggests that the Megarian victory was dated soon after Bakchis' reign (see Kõiv 2003, 329 f.).

[91] Zenob. V 8 (mentioning Bakchios and Klytios' wife); Demon FGrHist 327 F 19; Schol. Plat. Euthyd. 292e; Schol. Aristoph. Ran. 439. Plut. QGr 17 may also pertain to this war. The story might or might not reflect some real conflicts between Corinth and Megara during the Bakchiad rule (see Hammond 1954; Legon 1981, 54 f., 60–70; Salmon 1984, 179–192; Tausend 1992; Kõiv 2003, 229–232; van Wees 2003, 62 f.).

[92] Diod. VII 9; Paus. II 4. 4.

Even more significant is the story of the murder of the beautiful youth Aktaion, causing a curse to be placed on the Bakchiads.[93] Aktaion was the son of an Argive immigrant named Melissos, who, or whose father, had once saved the lives of many Corinthian men.[94] Aktaion was desperately loved by a Bakchiad named Archias who, being drunken after a party, tried to abduct him. In the ensuing brawl the boy was dragged in opposite directions by his family and the men of Archias, and torn to pieces.[95] The Corinthians failed to punish Archias for this crime. Melissos consequently took the body of his son, climbed to the top of the temple of the god during an Isthmian festival in honour of Poseidon, reminded the Corinthians of the merits of his father, cast curses on the Bakchiads (κατεβόα τῶν Βακχιαδῶν) and jumped down onto the rocks together with Aktaion's corpse. A drought followed as divine vengeance, and the Delphic oracle ordered the expulsion of those guilty of Aktaion's death.[96]

The account clearly blamed the Bakchiads:[97] according to Plutarch they were publicly cursed by Melissos, and Maximos of Tyros called the murder a Bakchiad crime.[98] The Hellenistic poet Alexander of Aitolia mentioned the death of Aktaion as the cause of pain for the violent Bakchiads (βριαροῖς ἄλγεα Βακχιάδαις),[99] and the scholiast of Apollonios stated explicitly that the Bakchiads were expelled from Corinth because of this crime (οἵτινες ἐξεβλήθησαν ἐκ Κορίνθου διὰ τὸν Ἀκταίωνος θάνατον).[100]

According to Plutarch, the incident led to the emigration of Archias and the foundation of Syracuse, while the scholiast of Apollonios Rhodios' Argonautika states that the expelled Bakchiads emigrated to Korkyra, which was founded by a Bakchiad named Chersikrates,[101] reputedly almost at the same time as Syracuse.[102] However, the foundations of Syracuse and Korkyra can hardly have been understood as a serious retribution – ἄλγεα Βακχιάδαις as stated by Alexander of Aitolia – nor as symptoms of

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[93]   The main sources are Plut. Am. Narr. 2 and Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1212; but note also Max. Tyr. 18. 1; Diod. VIII 10; Parthen. Erot. 14.

[94]   Plut. Am. narr. 2. According to the scholiast of Apollonios (ad 1212) the benefactor was Melissos.

[95]   Schol. Ap. Rhod 1212: συνέβη διασπασθῆναι τὸν Ἀκταίωνα.

[96]   Plut. Am. narr. 2.

[97]   As acknowledged by Broadbent 1968, 52.

[98]   Max. Tyr. 18. 1.

[99]   Parthen. Erot. 14.

[100]   Ovid. Met. V 407–408 describes Syracuse, founded by Archias, as a Bakchiad foundation. There is no reason to contest the Bakchiad ancestry of Archias because Marmor Parium FGrHist 239 A 31 named him a descendant of Temenos, and to assume that he was of Argive origin (so Bernstein 2004). The notice of the Parian chronicler may result from a mistake (Jacoby 1904, 158–162; but see Kõiv 2001, 343–346; 2003, 261–264), or simply indicate Archias' position in the genealogical chronology. Archias considered to be a Bakchiad: Andrewes 1949, 70; Will 1955, 297; Salmon 1984, 65; Stein-Hölkeskamp 2009; Debiasi 2015, 164.

[101]   Plut. Am. narr. 2; Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1212 and 1216 quoting Timaios (FGrHist 566 F 80).

[102]   The synchronism stated in Strab. VI 2. 4.

the full expulsion of the Bakchiads from Corinth, because the family reputedly ruled the city for three more generations. The true punishment was executed by Kypselos when he overthrew and banished his predecessors.[103] The tradition thus assumed two distinct Bakchiad emigrations: the first immediately after the event, resulting in the foundation of the western colonies, and the second three generations later, when the dynasty was finally overthrown. This final banishment of the clan must have been, like the expulsion of Archias, caused by Aktaion's death, as stated by the scholiast whose short statement simply merged these instances.[104] Aktaion's murder appears as the crime of the Bakchiads that caused the fatal curse to be placed upon them, and Kypselos performs the role of the executor, fulfilling the curse and avenging the crime.

The belief that descendants would have to pay for the crimes of ancestors was indeed current both in the Archaic age and the later periods.[105] In particular, two other accounts can be noted as analogies, revealing the same narrative logic as the Bakchiad and Kypselid story. There was a tradition about the establishment of tyranny in Archaic Sikyon as the punishment for the murder of a Kleonaian boy called Teletias at Delphi. Teletias was about to receive the crown of the Pythian Games, but was torn to pieces during a riot which broke out between the Sikyonians and the Kleonaians who both claimed the boy as their own. Pythia announced that the Sikyonians would be punished for this by subsequent tyranny, predicting that the first son born to a Sikyonian present on the occasion would execute the punishment. The Sikyonians apparently tried either to prevent the birth of the ominous child or to kill the newborn, but somebody (the name is lost in the fragmentary text) disregarded the oracle and the child survived. He was named Orthagoras and established the tyranny which proved to be a necessary cure for the Sikyonians.[106] Here, as in the case of the Corinthian Aktaion, the sacrilegious death of a youth torn to pieces by envious parties had to be rectified by the forthcoming tyranny – in Sikyon by the Orthagorids and in Corinth by the Kypselid tyrants. In both cases the tyranny appears as a harsh but necessary purgative for the polis. The Sikyonian tyranny put an end to licentiousness and was

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[103] Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57. 7.

[104] WEISSENBORN 1844; ANDREWES 1949; ZÖRNER 1971, 68–70 have suggested that Aktaion's death was imagined to have taken place immediately before the expulsion of the Bakchiads by Kypselos. But all the sources link the story to the western colonisation (Plut. Am. narr. 2; Schol Ap. Rhod. 1212; the excerpt of Diod. VIII 10 appears immediately before the account of Agathokles, suggesting that the story of Aktaion marked the beginning of Syracusan history) and never mention it in the context of the rise of Kypselos (Kõiv 2003, 252 f.).

[105] Note especially Solon fr. 13. 25–32, and the famous story of the Lydian dynasty told by Herodotos (I 6–91), describing how Kroisos had to pay for the deeds of his ancestor Gyges.

[106] Plut. De sera num. vind. 7 (553a–b); Diod. VIII 24; and P.Oxy. IX 1365 = FGrHist 105 F 2. For discussion see KUNSTLER 1991; OGDEN 1997, 105–107; Kõiv 2019. The intention to kill the child is implied by FGrHist 105 F 2 stating that since somebody disregarded an oracle and ignored what the Pythia had said about the coming tyranny, the child was reared and became the tyrant.

for the good of the people,[107] and the name of the future tyrant Orthagoras can be translated as the one speaking in a straight way, thus a rectifier. In Corinth Kypselos was indeed destined to be a harsh rectifier of his city. The message of the stories is the same: a sacrilegious death of a youth required retaliation, which was executed by the tyrants purging and curing their respective states.[108] In Sikyon the tyranny arose a generation after the crime (Orthagoras was the first son born to the Sikyonians returning from Delphi, which means that he could have established the tyranny in the next generation). In Corinth the retaliation followed when three generations had passed.

We can further observe a striking similarity between the Bakchiad narrative and the Theban Labdakid tradition. Laios the son of the ‹lame› Labdakos abducted, raped and caused the death of Chrysippos, and was therefore cursed by Pelops, Chrysippos' father, which led to the subsequent troubles and hence the eventual disaster. Similarly, Archias the descendant of the lame Bakchis tried to abduct Aktaion, thereby causing his death, and Melissos cursed the Bakchiads which led to their eventual fall. In both cases the inherent lameness was actualised through an excessive homosexual passion destroying an innocent boy and evoking the fatal curse predicting the vengeance in the future.

All this infers that not only the story of the Kypselids but also that of the Bakchiads was modelled similarly to the legend of the Labdakid house. Compared to the Kypselids, the ‹lameness› of the Bakchiads is even more strongly pronounced, and the similarity to the Labdakids even closer, because the dynasty both begins and ends with a physically lame figure, and the crime which made the doom irreversible almost coincides with the Theban analogue.

V Aktaion, the Boiotian traditions, and the Isthmian cult

There is reason to suppose that the tradition about the death of Aktaion, and by implication the whole Bakchiad story, was linked to the cult of Isthmian Poseidon. It was during the Isthmian festival that Melissos the father of Aktaion cursed the Bakchiads and committed suicide, to which Poseidon responded by causing the drought. A connection to the cult is further suggested by the curious similarity between Aktaion's death and the foundation legend of the Isthmian Games, reputedly established as the funerary games in honour of another dying boy – Melikertes-Palaimon. The mother of Melikertes – Ino – was driven mad by Hera, killed her son, and hurled herself into the sea together with the son's body, similar to how Melissos threw himself down with the corpse of Aktaion. A dolphin carried Melikertes to the Isthmian shore where

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[107] According to Diod. VIII 24 the Pythia prescribed a hundred years of whipping for the Sikyonians, and Andreas, the father of the future tyrant, served as a whip-bearer (μαστιγοφόρος). Plut. De sera num. vind. 7 notes the salutary cure by the tyrants.

[108] The parallel noted by McGlew 1993, 73 f.

Sisyphos, the legendary Corinthian king, buried him and founded the games in his honour. Melikertes was hence worshipped at Isthmia under the name of Palaimon as the mortal partner of Poseidon.[109] Plutarch reports a nocturnal τελετή – a ritual of initiation – in honour of Palaimon-Melikertes, perhaps connected to an orgiastic encounter with the hero in the Palaimonion where a subterranean ἄδυτον could have represented his tomb.[110]

The connection between Aktaion and the Isthmian cult is further implied by the similarity of the names of Melikertes and of Melissos, the father of Aktaion, both deriving from «honey» (μέλι) or «bee» (μέλισσα). It is moreover suggested by a curious link between Melikertes and another Aktaion, known from the Boiotian tradition, who was torn to pieces, similarly to his Corinthian namesake, in this case by his own dogs as punishment for his intention to marry his aunt Semele, the mother of Dionysos,[111] and who, remarkably enough, belonged to the same family as Melikertes the hero of the Isthmian Games. The Boiotian Aktaion was a son of Aristaios, a god of beekeeping[112] – again a curious connection with bees – and of Autonoe, who was a daughter of Kadmos, the legendary founder of Thebes, while Ino, the mother of Melikertes, was also a daughter of Kadmos, and thus a sister of Semele and Autonoe.[113] This Boiotian complex of legends moreover contained the story of Pentheus being punished by Dionysos because of his hostility to the god, for which he was torn to pieces by his mother Agaue who was another daughter of Kadmos and sister of Se-

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[109] Apollod. III 4. 3, (see note 115); Paus. I 44. 7–8; Schol. Pind. Hypoth. Isthm. C; the earliest evidence comes from Pindar fr. 5. 3 Snell. For the full evidence for the story of Melikertes and the Isthmian rituals see Lesky 1932; Will 1955, 169–180; Kerényi 1958, 233–234; Burkert 1983, 197 f.; Adshead 1986, 61–63; Gebhard 1993a, 74; 1993b; Reichert-Südbeck 2000, 171–177; Pache 2004, 135–180; Larson 2007, 59 f.

[110] Plut. Thes. 25. 4; Paus. II 2. 1. The account of Schol. Ap. Rhod. 1212 that Melissos threw himself from the altar into a steep ravine (στὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ βωμοῦ ὁ Μέλισσος … εἰς τὸν ὑποκείμενον κρημνὸν ἑαυτὸν ἔβαλεν) may refer to this underground ἄδυτον. The connection between the story of Aktaion and the Isthmian cult is pointed out by Will 1955, 180–187; Broadbent 1968, 50–53; for the archaeological evidence see Broneer 1976; Gebhard 2002 (74 proposing the connection of the dining caves in the sanctuary with the worship of Melikertes-Palaimon).

[111] Hesiod fr. 217A M–W; Stesichoros fr. 236 PMG; the story was probably also given in an Archaic poem (P.Oxy. XXX 2509) which has been ascribed to the Hesiodic Catalogues (fr. 103 Hirschberger) or to Eumelos (Debiasi 2015, 151–183). Later versions viewed Aktaion's death as the vengeance of Artemis for accidentally having been seen naked (see Wentzel 1894). The similarity of the stories of the Boiotian and the Corinthian Aktaion was already recognised in antiquity (Plut. Sert. 1. 4; Max. Tyr. 18. 1), and the moderns have viewed the Corinthian story as a variant of the Boiotian myth (Andrewes 1949; Broadbent 1968, 44; Salmon 1984, 72). See also Bernstein 2004 and especially Debiasi 2015, 164 who observes a more complex relationship between the traditions.

[112] Arist. fr. 511 Rose; Apollon. Rhod. IV 1128–1133; see Hiller von Gaertringen 1895, 853, 856; all this is pointed out by Will 1955, 183 and Broadbent 1968, 50.

[113] Hes. Theog. 975–977; Diod IV 81; Apollod. III 4. 2; etc.

mele, Autonoe and Ino.[114] The Boiotian Aktaion, Melikertes, Pentheus and Dionysos were thus cousins according to these legends. Pentheus and Aktaion were indeed torn to pieces, like the Corinthian homonym of the latter, which indicates a significance of such a manner of death in this legendry. The whole complex was strongly focused on Dionysos (Semele as his mother, Ino as his nurse in various accounts,[115] and Pentheus destroyed by the god), which suggests that the cruel death in the stories reflects the σπαραγμός ritual (dismembering a sacrificial victim) practiced in the Dionysian cult, and the honouring of the god as Anthroporrhaistes («render of men»).[116]

Significantly, references to the σπαραγμός ritual appear in an alternative foundation legend of the Isthmian Games, describing the establishment of the festival by Theseus. The hero founded the games to celebrate his victory over the malicious Sinis who murdered people at Isthmia by tearing them into pieces between two pine-trees, and whom the hero executed using the same method.[117] This suggests that σπαραγμός, for which the story of Sinis served as an aetiology, was practised in the Isthmian cult (although no hard evidence for this has survived). The story of the death of the Corinthian Aktaion can be seen as a reflection of this.

The stories implying ritual σπαραγμός were thus prominent in both the Boiotian legends and the traditions of the Isthmian cult. Ino with Melikertes from the Boiotian traditions threw herself into the sea, similarly to how Melissos with Aktaion perished at Isthmia, and Melikertes receiving cultic honours at Isthmia clearly connects the two cycles. The connection between the Isthmian and the Boiotian legendry is obvious.

Melikertes was honoured at Isthmia with the rituals of initiation,[118] and many stories in the related legends may have an initiatory background. This is implied by the names Melikertes and Melissos alluding to honey, a stuff which could signify death and marginality.[119] This conforms with the tales about the dying youths, perishing during the encounter with sexuality, like the Corinthian Aktaion harassed by Archias or his Boiotian homonym desiring Semele. Such tales have been reasonably connected to the initiation rituals,[120] which is supported by the similarity between the story of the Corinthian Aktaion and the Cretan customs of ritual pederasty described by Epho-

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[114] The most famous version of the Pentheus story can be found in Euripides, Bacchae.

[115] Apollod. III 4. 3 describes this as the reason for Hera's wrath causing the madness of Ino who consequently killed Melikertes. See also Paus. III 23. 3–4. The evidence in Kerényi 1958, 230–234.

[116] The common Dionysian background and the reflections of σπαραγμός in the stories of Aktaion and Pentheus are pointed out by Debiasi 2015, 151–183 (σπαραγμός in 155, 164). For σπαραγμός and ὀμοφαγία in the Dionysian ritual, and Dionysos Anthroporrhaistes see Burkert 1985, 164f.; Mikalson 2005, 96–98; Georgoudi 2011.

[117] Plut. Thes. 25. 5. This method of killing by Sinis is stated in Diod. IV F 59. 3; Paus. II 1. 4; Schol. Pind. Hypoth. Isthm.; Ovid. Met. VII 440–442. See Schmidt 1929; Burkert 1983, 198f.

[118] See above, with notes 109 f.

[119] Graf 1980.

[120] See Eliade 1995, 13–20, 30–35; Versnel 2014, 105–120; the discussion of numerous examples from Greek mythology in Sergent 1984, 77–308.

ros, showing that abduction of youths and a ritual fight over them was a traditional element of the initiation into adulthood in some parts of Greece.[121] This suggests that although Plutarch mentions only an initiation into the cult at Isthmia,[122] initiation into adulthood may also have been involved and contributed to the formation of the tradition.

Moreover, the figure of Telestes, the king murdered by the Bakchiads, may also derive from the Isthmian cult context. The name Telestes can be associated not only with the end (τέλος), suitably for the last monarch, but also with initiation (τελετή). It can be compared to Teletias, the murdered boy in the Sikyonian story referred to above. Death was the crucial point in the traditions concerning both Telestes and Teletias, and also Aktaion, while in the cases of Teletias and Aktaion it was presented as the sacrilegious crime predicting tyranny, thus having a similar structural function in the respective accounts. The murder of Aktaion, on the other hand, was later synchronised with the reign of Telestes,[123] which implies a connection of their deaths in the tradition. BROADBENT can be right that Telestes' death, like the story of Aktaion, was linked to the Isthmian cult and reflects some local ritual.[124]

VI The origins and the development of the tradition

To recapitulate, we have the account of two sequential dynasties – the Bakchiads and the Kypselids – woven into a complex narrative involving lameness, crime and punishment. The story begins with the lame Bakchis whose prosperous clan unjustly monopolised the rule depriving other worthy men from power. The Bakchiads committed crimes by murdering Telestes and Aktaion, were cursed and three generations later expelled by Kypselos, the son of the limping girl whose lameness was destined to break the exclusiveness of the family and consequently its power. Kypselos, the hero overthrowing the unjust Bakchiads and purging Corinth, founded the next lame dynasty, the evils of which became manifest with the crimes of his son Periandros, and which was violently overthrown by the people. This narrative was shaped according to the mythological pattern analogous to the Boiotian legends concerning the Labdakid kings. The murder of Aktaion, inflicting the fatal curse upon the Bakchiads according

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[121] Ephoros FGrHist 70 F 149, for which see DAVIDSON 2007, 300–315; SEELENTAG 2015, 459–495. The parallels between the Cretan ritual and the stories, and the initiatory background of these, have been considered in detail by JEANMAIRE 1939, 561 f.; BROADBENT 1968, 44–52; SERGENT 1984, 263–271.

[122] For the difference between the initiation into a cult and into adulthood see GRAF 2003, 9–15.

[123] Telestes was the 9th from Aletes according to Diod. VII 9, and Archias the 10th from Temenos according to Marmor Parium FGrHist 239 A 30. Since Aletes supposedly conquered Corinth one generation after Temenos, the 10th generation from Temenos equals the 9th from Aletes. See KÕIV 2003, 37 f., 227–229; 2001, 341–343.

[124] BROADBENT 1968, 51 f.

to the story, and perhaps the murder of Telestes, were tied to the legendry and the cult of the Isthmian Poseidon and to the related Boiotian traditions centred around Dionysos the Bakchiads' divine ancestor.

This complex of traditions probably emerged gradually during the Archaic period. The link between the Boiotian and the Isthmian traditions was probably established during the period of the Bakchiad rule. Close contacts between Corinth and Boiotia are suggested by the story that a Bakchiad Philolaos legislated at an early date in Thebes.[125] We can assume that as descendants of Dionysos, the Bakchiads were interested in the Boiotian legends concerning Kadmos and Semele,[126] but also in the closely related traditions about the Labdakid descendants of Kadmos.[127] The fascination with the Dionysian themes is indicated by the popularity of Dionysian imagery in seventh century Corinthian vase painting, and the tradition that the Corinthians invented the dithyramb.[128] This interest in the Boiotian legends concerning Dionysos explains why Melikertes-Palaimon, the founder of the Isthmian cult, was identified as the son of Ino the nurse of the vine-god, and as a grandson of Kadmos. The poetry of Eumelos, which can date from the Bakchiad time,[129] included the epic Europia which dealt with Dionysos the son of Semele, and perhaps the other descendants of Kadmos including the Labdakid family.[130] It certainly dealt with the Isthmian mythology, describing the death of Sisyphos at Isthmia,[131] and is likely to have mentioned how Sisyphos buried Melikertes and founded the Isthmian Games. This suggests that the complex was already tied together in the poetry of Eumelos. The familiarity with the myth of Ino and Melikertes in Archaic Isthmia is indeed demonstrated by a sixth century jumping-weight from the sanctuary, with an inscription referring to Melikertes as Inoides (the son of Ino).[132]

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[125]   Arist. Pol. 1274 a32–b5 noted a story about a love affair between Philolaos and a Corinthian Olympian winner Diokles whose victory was dated to Ol. 13 at 728 (Euseb. Chron. I 196 Schöne).

[126]   For this argument see especially Debiasi 2013; 2015, 151–183.

[127]   Kadmos the grandfather of Dionysos was also the grandfather of Labdakos (Apollod. III 5. 4–5 and others), connecting the Dionysian legendry with the circle of the Labdakids.

[128]   Dionysian imagery in the Corinthian vase-painting: Carpenter 1986, 15–19, 66; Corinthians as inventors of the dithyramb in Pindar Ol. XIII 18–19. Hdt. I 23 ascribed this invention to Arion residing at the court of Periandros. The presence of the Dionysian elements in story of Kypselos has been pointed out by Moles 2007 .

[129]   Eumelos was dated to the time of the establishment of the Bakchiad oligarchy and might have been a member of the clan. See note 23.

[130]   Eumelos fr. 11 Bernabé. For the significance of the Theban and Dionysian themes in Eumelos see Huxley 1969, 75–77; Jameson 1986, 6 f.; and especially Debiasi 2013; 2015, 151–183, connecting this with the reputed Dionysian descent of the Bakchiads.

[131]   Eumelos fr. 6 Bernabé = FGrHist 451 F 4. Sisyphos is also mentioned in fr. 5 and 7 Bernabé. See Huxley 1969, 74.

[132]   Broneer 1976, 52.

The archaeological evidence shows a growth of dedications and the erection of the first architectural structure in the Isthmian sanctuary from the middle of the eighth century, which indicates a reorganisation of the cult in this period.[133] This probably took place under Bakchiad auspices and stipulated the formation of the corresponding mythology arranged to confirm their power. Manipulating connections between the Isthmian legends and the Boiotian traditions concerning Dionysos the divine ancestor of the Bakchiads could perfectly serve this purpose. Moreover, the vicissitudes of that period led to the emigration and the foundation of the western colonies, and it was natural to integrate the relevant stories into the legendry connected to the Isthmian cult. The Bakchiads surely could not have presented themselves as guilty of Aktaion's death, but the story of his tragic fate causing the emigration probably took shape during the period of their rule.

The Isthmian sanctuary and the related legends must have been equally important for the Kypselids. Kypselos built the first monumental temple at Isthmia, or finished the building if it had been started under the Bakchiads,[134] and we can assume that this development of the sanctuary shaped the related traditions. This probably led to the interpretation of Aktaion's death as the sacrilegious crime of the Bakchiads. Bakchis could have become lame and ugly at that time, and it was probably then that the Bakchiad cycle from the lame ancestor through the murder of Aktaion to the vengeance executed by Kypselos took shape, inspired by the similar tradition about the Theban Labdakids already popular in Corinth. The story of Kypselos' birth and rise to power, with the oracles sanctifying his rule and casting blame on the Bakchiads, was probably also shaped by the Kypselid tyrants,[135] who might have compared themselves to the famous Near Eastern kings, shaping the narrative according to the Sargonic tradition popular in the eastern states.[136] The Bakchiad guilt

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[133] Cult activity at Isthmia is recorded during the whole Early Iron Age, but the 8th century witnessed, besides the notable increase of dedications, the erection of a relatively big structure, perhaps a communal dining hall. See Gebhard 1993b, 156–159; Morgan 1999, 373–375, 392–399, 402–406; 2002; Bookidis 2003.

[134] According to the archaeological evidence the temple was built c. 650 (Salmon 1984, 59–62; Gebhard 1993b, 159–163; Morgan 1999, 428f.; 2017; Bookidis 2003, 48–50; Tasinos 2013, 16).

[135] It has been generally accepted that the birth story and the oracles date from the time of the tyranny or immediately after it (Andrewes 1956, 47f.; Zörner 1971, 27, 31f.; Oost 1972; Salmon 1984, 187; McGlew 1993, 62; Parker 1996; Ogden 1997, 150; Wallace 2009; Schmitz 2010; Catenacci 2012, 44; Giangiulio 2010; 2013). We cannot tell when the story was connected to the Corinthian λάρναξ in Olympia, reputedly the chest where Kypselos was hidden (Paus. V 17. 2–18), probably a Kypselid dedication from the first half of the 6th century (see Maddoli – Saladino 1995, 293f.; Splitter 2000, 50f.; Ibba 2005; Cossu 2005; Debiasi 2015, 47–53).

[136] Giangiulio 2013. For the Sargonic tradition in the Near East, and its use in the royal propaganda, see Schaudig 2001; Rollinger 2014; Foster 2016, 273–279; Kõiv 2018, 627f. This might have influenced the orientalising Greek elite.

thereby became crucial for showing the new rulers as the establishers of justice in Corinth.[137]

The overthrow of the Kypselids two generations later was again followed by a reorganisation at Isthmia, including the foundation of the pan-Hellenic games, probably celebrating the establishment of the collective rule. The recent reign of the Kypselids must have been hotly discussed at that time. The demonization of Periandros and the emphasis on the lameness of the dynasty, which obviously must date from a time after its fall, probably coincided with the reorganisations at Isthmia. Even if this tradition emerged in anti-Kypselid circles before that event, the whole story including the disastrous end as the punishment for the crimes could have been framed when the tyranny was overthrown. The fresh memories were moulded into a coherent and easily remembered account which was adapted to the earlier traditions transmitted in connection to the Isthmian legendry. The resulting narrative was probably not very different from that transmitted by our sources.

The sanctuary of Isthmian Poseidon thus appears an important place of memory for the Corinthians,[138] the rituals of which, and the related legendry, provided models and context for arranging and transmitting the accounts about the past. On the other hand, this reconstruction suggests that the anti-Kypselid modelling of the tradition after their fall did not produce a completely new narrative, but re-shaped the existing tradition rooted in popular memory. The demonization of the Kypselid dynasty was made easy by the story of Kypselos' birth and the oracles, which could indicate the rise of both a hero and a dangerous creature. The features of the myth of Labdakos, Laios and Oedipus shaping the Bakchiad tradition were extended to their successors, which produced two fairly analogous cycles describing both dynasties as morally lame and deserving the consequent punishment.

VII The tradition and history

The early formation of the tradition does not suggest an early date for all the details, still less a historically accurate narrative. However, it shows how the memory was structured soon after the events had taken place, when reliable recollection was still possible. Although the lack of contemporary evidence precludes checking the historical reliability of the account even in the most general terms, we can hardly doubt the rise and fall of the two sequential dynasties – the Bakchiads and the Kypselids – which

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[137]   The Bakchiad circle must have emerged when their rule was still meaningful for the Corinthians. The Kypselids were surely interested in incriminating them, while later there could have been less motivation for this. The silence of Herodotos proves nothing, because he focused on the crimes of the Kypselids and had no reason to dwell on the Bakchiad tradition.

[138]   For places of memory see Stein-Hölkeskamp – Hölkeskamp 2010; Haake – Jung 2011.

present the core of the tradition. Accepting this means accepting a basic reliability of the tradition.

The patterning of the narrative reveals both the temporal scope of the memory, and the nature of the remembered information. The period into which the memory extended is hardly indicated by the ancestor Bakchis, a legendary figure of an unspecified past. But Telestes and Aktaion, the murders of whom incriminated the Bakchiads in the story, were firmly placed into the eighth century context and imply the preservation of memories from that time. The archaeological record describes the eighth century as the crucial era of Corinthian state formation, indicated by a rapid settlement growth in the town centre, the formalisation of cemetery areas, and the emergence of sanctuaries, not least at Isthmia where a remarkable increase of dedications and the construction of the architectural structure indicate a reorganisation.[139] These formative processes, perhaps equitable to the establishment of the Bakchiad power, must have left behind memories, which could have been naturally tied to the legendry of the Isthmian cult reorganised by the rulers. These accounts obviously cannot give an adequate description of the course of events, and it would be hopeless to look for the historical prototypes for Telestes and Aktaion. The mythological nature of the story of Aktaion is obvious, and the fictionality of Telestes is indicated by his very name being invented or adjusted for the reputed last king. This virtually discredits the account of the kingship and its end. As not even the name of the last ruler was remembered, we cannot expect any authentic tradition concerning the prehistoric monarchy. The whole concept of the early kingship can be a later construction.[140] But the stories of the murders can reflect the real developments in so far as transmitting mythologically shaped and ritually tied memories of the vicissitudes related to the formation of the Corinthian polis and the establishment (or confirmation) of the Bakchiad rule.[141]

On the other hand, the tradition does not indicate the exact nature of the subsequent Bakchiad government, nor state a clear difference between the Bakchiad and the Kypselid rule. Herodotos indeed called the Bakchiad rule an oligarchy, in accordance with the plural – ἄνδρες μούναρχοι – in the oracle, but his statement could have been predicted by the narrative context demanding a distinction between the Kypselid tyrants and their predecessors.[142] The oracles he quoted do not support the distinction. The Bakchiads, although referred to in the plural, were accused for their monarchy. In the early Greek literature μοναρχία was synonymous to tyranny, an unjust mo-

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[139] Burial and settlement: Salmon 1984, 39–46; Morgan 1999, 395–397, 406–409; Koursoumis 2013, 44. For the developments in Isthmia see note 133. Besides this, a flourishing sanctuary emerged at Perachora: Tomlinson 1977; Salmon 1977, 161–178; Fagerström 1988, 39; Sinn 1990; Morgan 1999, 410–412; Bookidis 2003; Pliatsika 2013.

[140] Drews 1983, 52–55; Kõiv 2016, 58f.

[141] See Kõiv 2003, 339–344.

[142] Gray 1996, 376f. rightly points out that Herodotos wished to depict oligarchy as less murderous than tyranny.

nopolisation of power that enslaved the people.[143] Tyranny on the other hand could have been seen as the rule of a dominant family, thus the power of a narrow group.[144] According to Nikolaos, Kypselos had four sons, and Periandros at least as many.[145] The oracle calling Kypselos the βασιλεύς of Corinth speaks in the plural about his children inheriting the βασιλεία, and about the grandchildren – again in the plural – to whom it was denied (αὐτὸς καὶ παῖδες, παίδων γε μὲν οὐκέτι παῖδες). Both the Bakchiads and the Kypselids were described as ruling families.

The later sources were by no means unequivocal about the Bakchiad oligarchy. The Bakchiads were surely believed to have been numerous: the ten children of Bakchis stated by Aristotle (conforming with the ten Bakchiad men sent to kill the infant Kypselos according to Herodotos) indicate a numerous prodigy,[146] and may suggest that the Bakchiads were reputedly divided into ten households or branches.[147] But this does not indicate the supposed power organisation within the group. When Diodoros states that the eldest among the descendants of Aletes always held the kingship until the tyranny of Kypselos (μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτου τελευτὴν ὁ πρεσβύτατος ἀεὶ τῶν ἐκγόνων ἐβασίλευσε μέχρι τῆς Κυψέλου τυραννίδος) he is clearly describing a hereditary monarchy until the dynasty's end.[148] And when Nikolaos reports that Kypselos killed the last Bakchiad βασιλεύς and was himself proclaimed βασιλεύς by the people (κτείνει βασιλεύοντα Πατροκλείδην ... Ταχὺ δὲ ἀντ᾽ ἐκείνου ὁ δῆμος αὐτὸν βασιλέα κατέστησεν) his narrative implies an overthrow of the previous monarch.[149] Ephoros, Nikolaos and Aristotle explicitly state that Kypselos continued the βασιλεία taken over from the Bakchiads, while Periandros turned the rule into a tyranny.[150] When Aristotle

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[143]　See note 43.

[144]　Sancisi-Weerdenburg 2000, 13f.; Canali De Rossi 2012b, 23; Mitchell 2013, 91–118 (on the Bakchiads and Kypselids 93f.).

[145]　Nikolaos (FGrHist 90 F 57. 7–8) states that Kypselos had three illegitimate sons besides Periandros. Periandros supposedly had two sons with Melissa (Hdt. III 50: Lykophron and his anonymous brother; Diog. Laert. I 94 gives the names as Kypselos and Lykophron), while Nikolaos (FGrHist 90 F 59. 1) speaks about four (Euagoras, Lykophron, Gorgos and Nikolaos) without indicating the mother(s). See Schachermeyr 1937, 711f.

[146]　Arist. fr. 611. 19 Rose.

[147]　According to Diodoros (VII 9) the Bakchiads numbered more than 200, which accords strangely with the statement of Strabo (VIII 6. 20 quoted in note 152) about 200 years of the Bakchiad rule, for which there is no reasonable explanation (Diod. VII 9 gives 234 years). These numbers may be connected and derive from a common misunderstanding.

[148]　Diod. VII 9. 3. See Broadbent 1968, 40; Canali De Rossi 2012b, 24f. Diodoros can scarcely have thought that the Bakchiad retained a position of hereditary kingship besides the annual πρύτανις (as suggested by Zörner 1971, 153f.).

[149]　Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57. 6. Nothing suggests that either Nikolaos or the tradition he followed meant an annual magistracy (ἄρχων βασιλεύς). See above, with note 50.

[150]　Diog. Laert. I 98 quoting Ephoros (FGrHist 70 F 179) and Aristotle (fr. 516 Rose): Οὗτος [Περίανδρος] πρῶτος δορυφόρους ἔσχε, καὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰς τυραννίδα μετέστησεν; Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 58. 1: Ὅτι Περίανδρος ὁ Κυψέλου υἱός, τοῦ βασιλέως Κορινθίων, τὴν βασιλείαν

said that Periandros was the first after Bakchis to change the constitution, he obviously assumed that Kypselos continued the βασιλεία without altering the constitution.[151] As Kypselos, according to Aristotle, certainly was a monarch, the philosopher must have believed that the Bakchiads also ruled as monarchs. Strabo called both the Bakchiads and Kypselos tyrants.[152] The title πρύτανις allegedly held by the Bakchiads could originally have meant simply the ruler, synonymous to the Bakchiad βασιλεύς in the account of Nikolaos.[153] Diogenes Laertios reports that the tomb epigram of Periandros called him πρύτανις,[154] which implies the belief that the Kypselids used that title.[155]

The tradition thus allowed different conclusions concerning the nature of the Bakchiad rule. The Bakchiad oligarchy with annual magistrates described by Pausanias and Diodoros was not stated by the tradition, but appears to be a secondary conception, perhaps owing greatly to the authoritative account of Herodotos.[156] The tradition rebuked the Bakchiads for their exclusiveness and injustice, and contrasted them to Kypselos the popular hero, but hardly specified the constitutional character of the rule. The Bakchiads and the Kypselids appear simply as two successive dynasties monopolising the power.

However, if the Bakchiads were clearly denounced, probably resulting from the Kypselid shaping of the account, the attitude towards their successors was ambiguous. The Kypselids were of course condemned as a lame dynasty, but Kypselos retained the position of a hero, albeit with an ominous significance for the future. Herodotos' account excepted, there is no sign of a negative appraisal of him. The tradition con-

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παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς κατὰ πρεσβεῖον παραλαμβάνει, καὶ ὑπὸ ὠμότητος καὶ βίας ἐξέτρεψεν αὐτὴν εἰς τυραννίδα, καὶ δορυφόρους εἶχε τριακοσίους.

[151] Arist. fr. 611. 19–20 Rose: ἐβασίλευσε δὲ καὶ Βάκχις τρίτος ... Περίανδρος δὲ πρῶτος μετέστησεν τὴν ἀρχὴν δορυφόρους ἔχων. For Aristotle, a bodyguard was a sign that distinguished tyranny from βασιλεία (Pol. 1285 a25–28).

[152] Strab. VIII 6.20: καὶ οἱ Βακχιάδαι τυραννήσαντες, πλούσιοι καὶ πολλοὶ καὶ γένος λαμπροί, διακόσια ἔτη σχεδόν τι κατέσχον τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὸ ἐμπόριον ἀδεῶς ἐκαρπώσαντο· τούτους δὲ Κύψελος καταλύσας αὐτὸς ἐτυράννησε.

[153] Diod. VII 9; Paus. II 4.4 (πρύτανις); Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57.1, 6 (βασιλεύς). Πρύτανις and its derivatives were often used in the generic sense of «leader» or «ruler» (the examples in Gschnitzer 1973, 812–815). Charon of Lampsakos in Πρυτάνεις ἢ ἄρχοντες οἱ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων (FGrHist 262 T 1) apparently called the kings πρυτάνεις (note the King Prytanis in the Spartan royal list – Hdt. VIII 131. 2; Paus. III 7. 2).

[154] Diog. Laert. I 97.

[155] Kypselos the πολέμαρχος in Nic. Dam. FGrHist 90 F 57. 5 probably meant simply «war-leader», suitable for the hero, and the reputed use of this position for helping the poor was probably simply a convenient story about his justice.

[156] This can hardly have been based on an eponymous list, which in all likelihood simply was not available. See above, with note 22. Moderns have accepted the later account, assuming either that the Bakchiads ruled through three magistracies: πρύτανις, βασιλεύς, and πολέμαρχος (Lenschau 1924; Will 1955, 299 f.), or identified πρύτανις with βασιλεύς, but viewing πολέμαρχος as a separate office (Busolt 1893, 631; Oost 1972; Salmon 1984, 57; see also Carlier 1984, 398 f.; Parker 1996, 179 f.; de Libero 1996, 139, 141 f.).

trasted Kypselos to Periandros who exemplified the inherent lameness of the house. This contrast does not necessarily indicate an essential difference in the reality. It may of course reflect a growing resentment against monarchy and an increasing repressiveness of the rule, but on the other hand, the difference between the heroic founder and his malicious successor was surely enhanced by the tradition. It is usual for the oral traditions to ascribe the positive features to the dynasty founder and the negative traits to the last famous representative ruling before the eventual fall and the retribution by the following regime.[157] Moreover, the demonization of Periandros was by no means complete, testified by the survival of a positive view of him and his inclusion among the Seven Sages. The Kypselids were remembered as the restorers of justice, contributing to the internal organisation of the polis, and Periandros particularly as a mighty ruler with high international renown. This favourable appreciation almost certainly reflects the glory that the city achieved under Kypselid rule. Rather than indicating a clear difference between Kypselos and Periandros, the contrast between them reflects a twofold attitude towards their reign. It infers, on the one hand, the popularity of the tyrants who could, in reality, rely on relatively broad communal consent and brought Corinth to the apex of glory and might,[158] while on the other hand, it indicates a strong resentment against the monopolisation of power by a single family. The polarisation between the rulers was a useful pattern for structuring memory when positive and negative attitudes had to be reconciled.[159]

VIII Conclusion

This discussion hopefully illuminates the way oral traditions shaped and transmitted information, converting it into mythologically patterned stories easily remembered by the people. This patterning is no embellishment that can be removed to disclose the kernel behind it, but the mould into which the memory was cast and in which it was transmitted. The resulting cliché-likeness of the stories implies genuinely traditional accounts not yet rationalised by later scholars trying to extract a ‹true history›. The accounts were shaped stereotypically, organised according to the logic of storytelling, and not always, and certainly not exactly, in accordance with past events. However, the narrative patterns were not applied voluntarily, but were at least to some extent prescribed by historical reality. They transmitted recollection from the times when the traditions crystallised, which usually took place relatively soon after the

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[157] A parallel is given by the Akkadian kings in the Mesopotamian tradition: Sargon the founder appears as the great hero, and his grandson Naram-Sin as his arrogant descendant causing the eventual disaster (see Chavalas 2006, 22–40; Liverani 2014, 148–152; Foster 2016, 245–286). For this narrative pattern see Kõiv 2018.

[158] The consensual basis of Greek tyranny has been pointed out by Mitchell 2013, 126–132.

[159] On the effects of structuring narrative accounts of the past see especially Vansina 1985, 165–173 pointing out that it is easier to remember the clichés than the concrete items (171) and showing how the juxtaposition of historical figures helps in remembering (166f.).

events,[160] and can show how the past was remembered when an adequate memory was not yet extinct. The narrative mould grants a degree of stability to the tradition, while the particulars not fixed by it could be changed relatively freely.

The Corinthian traditions discussed here were probably shaped from the early Archaic period onwards and crystallised after the fall of the Kypselid rule. From early on they were linked to the cult of the Isthmian Poseidon emerging as the most important sanctuary of the Corinthian state. The resulting narrative implies that the memory extends until the eighth century polis formation, and indicates that Corinth was henceforth ruled by two dynasties – the Bakchiads and the Kypselids – who were both demonised by their successors. They were accused of excessive concentration and abuse of power, and the traditions about them were shaped according to a pattern involving lameness, crimes and vengeance. The tradition hardly allows any constitutional specification of their rule. The differentiation between the Bakchiad oligarchy and the Kypselid monarchy derives from a secondary interpretation rather than from the genuinely traditional account. However, the persisting presentation of Kypselos as the hero avenging his predecessors' crimes implies a real popularity of the Kypselids, while the distinction between Kypselos the hero and Periandros the monster, a usual description of dynasty founders and their successors in oral traditions, reflects a controversial view on tyranny, remembered on the one hand as a heroic rule that punished the unjust, ordered the polis and brought it to the pinnacle of its glory, and on the other hand as a dangerously lame government ultimately intolerable to the people and fateful for the rulers themselves. Everything suggests that this view on tyranny derives from the Archaic era.

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[160] Vansina 1985, 168 suggests that oral traditions tend to be structured during the first two generations after the events, while the subsequent transmission is likely to be relatively stable. On the quick mythologisation e. g. of the stories of the Persian Wars see Gehrke 1994, 248 f.

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