

WAS SOPHOCLES HEROISED AS DEXION?*

I. INTRODUCTION

SINCE the late nineteenth century it has been almost universally accepted that Sophocles gave lodging to the cultic snake or statue of Asclepius when it was brought to Athens in 420 BC, that he raised an altar or altars for the god, and that in recognition for these services as the so-called 'Receiver' of Asclepius he was heroised after his death under the name Dexion. This story derives chiefly from a Byzantine dictionary article, the earliest known form of which dates from the second half of the ninth century. Stephan Radt's critical text of this article at *TrGF* 4 T69 reads:

Δεξίων· οὕτως ὠνομάσθη Σοφοκλῆς ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων μετὰ τὴν τελευταίην· φασὶν ὅτι Ἀθηναῖοι τελευταῖσαντι Σοφοκλεῖ βουλόμενοι τιμᾶς αὐτῷ περιποιῆσαι ἡρώιον αὐτῷ κατασκευάσαντες ὠνόμασαν αὐτὸν Δεξίωνα, ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δέξεως· καὶ γὰρ ὑπεδέξατο τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οἰκίᾳ καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρύσατο· ἐκ τῆς αἰτίας οὖν ταύτης Δεξίων ἐκλήθη.¹

Until the late nineteenth century the story of Sophocles' reception of Asclepius was considered to be legendary, but the possibility that it was true received considerable support in 1896 when Alfred Körte published two inscriptions now referred to as *IG* ii².1252 and 1253, which were uncovered at a site in Athens that had once been the precinct of a healing cult.² The inscriptions, which date from some time after the middle of the fourth century BC, are honorific decrees set up by a private religious association which styled itself 'the *orgeones* of Amynus, Asclepius and Dexion'.³ A connection between these decrees and the Byzantine dictionary entry is certainly attractive: the two inscriptions and the article all speak of an otherwise unattested hero, or deity, Dexion, in association with Asclepius, and the date of the inscriptions is encouragingly close to the time of Sophocles' death. The inscriptions have in fact been accepted as corroborative evidence by almost everyone who has written on Sophocles and Asclepius. Friedrich Pfister dissented when he asserted that the reception story was a legend based on a false interpretation of the name Dexion;⁴ but, to my knowledge, his was the only expression of disbelief in the story until the publication in 1981 of Mary Lefkowitz's book, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*.⁵ Following her usual method, Lefkowitz argues that much of the information about Sophocles' life is probably Hellenistic invention based on the author's own works. She wonders whether the stories connecting Sophocles with Asclepius were not created in Hellenistic times in order to explain references by the poet to himself in his lost ode to Asclepius, and she asserts that 'behind the idea

* I am grateful to Professors E.I. Robbins, M.B. Wallace, J.S. Traill and G.H.R. Horsley, to Mr R. Hankey and to the Journal's anonymous readers for having read drafts of this article and having offered many valuable suggestions.

¹ 'Dexion: So Sophocles was named by the Athenians after his death. They say that the Athenians, wanting to secure honours for Sophocles when he had died, provided a heroum for him and named him Dexion because of his reception of Asclepius. For he received the god in his house and set up an altar. For this reason, therefore, he was called Dexion'.

² A. Körte, 'Die Ausgrabungen am Westabhang der Akropolis, IV. Das Heiligtum des Amynos', *MDAI(A)* 21 (1896) 287-332, with pl. 11. Körte had already identified the site as the precinct of a healing god in 'Bezirk eines Heilgottes', *MDAI(A)* 18 (1893) 231-56, with pl. 11, esp. 235-42.

³ Both inscriptions refer to τὰ κοινὰ τῶν ὄργων τοῦ Ἀμύνου καὶ τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ καὶ τοῦ Δεξιῶνος (lines 3-4 and 5-7 respectively). 1252.14-17 refer to a τερὸν of Dexion separate from that of Amynus and Asclepius, but 1253.10-11 imply the existence of only one τερὸν for all.

⁴ F. Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum* (Gießen 1909; reprinted Berlin 1974) 1, 121.

⁵ Cedric Whitman, *Sophocles: A Study of Heroic Humanism* (Cambridge, Mass. 1951) 11, questioned the consensus view of the story's significance as evidence for Sophocles' piety, but accepted its historicity.

of Sophocles being worshipped as the hero Dexion lies the plot of the *Oedipus at Colonus*.⁶

Lefkowitz's scepticism has caused some to speak with more caution about Sophocles' religious life, but in general the weight of tradition, fortified, it has seemed, by contemporary documentary evidence, has counted for more than the rule of thumb that ancient biographical material is unreliable. The story of his close association with the cult of Asclepius is still commonly repeated in works on literature or religion, though often now there is an accompanying caveat about the general unreliability of ancient biographical information.⁷ Reconsideration of all the evidence, however, will show that Lefkowitz's scepticism ought to have been taken more seriously. I shall argue below that there is good evidence for Sophocles' having written a paean to Asclepius, but that the reception was of a supernatural, not a cultic, nature, that the story of the reception is probably biographical invention inspired by the paean, and that it is unlikely that Sophocles was heroised as Dexion or heroised at all before the later fourth century at the earliest.

II. SOPHOCLES' PRIESTHOOD AND PAEAN

We have evidence both that Sophocles held the priesthood of a cult that may have been connected with Asclepius, and that he wrote a paean for Asclepius. The evidence for the priesthood occurs in *Vita Sophoclis* §11 (= *TrGF* 4 T1 lines 39-40): ἔσχε δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ Ἄλωνος ἱερωσύνην, ὃς ἦρωσ μετὰ Ἀσκληπιοῦ παρὰ Χείρωνι***ἰδρυθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἰοφῶντος τοῦ υἱοῦ μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν.⁸ Nothing more is known about this alleged priesthood. As for the paean, we can be sure that in the early third century AD there was a widely held belief that a paean to Asclepius then sung at Athens was by Sophocles. This is assured by a passage in Philostratus the Elder's *Vita Apollonii*: in describing the rituals of the Indian sages, Philostratus says, 'They sang an ode like the paean of Sophocles that they sing to Asclepius at Athens.'⁹ Whether or not this paean was still being sung at the end of the century, the younger Philostratus was able to allude to it and to some kind of visitation as if they were well known in *Imagines* 13, which is a description of a real or imaginary painting of Sophocles. The conclusion of that description reads:

Ἀσκληπιὸς δὲ οἶμαι οὗτος ἐγγὺς παιδῶν που παρεγγυῶν γράφειν καὶ "κλυτομήτης" οὐκ ἀπαξιῶν παρὰ σοῦ ἀκοῦσαι, βλέμμα τε αὐτοῦ πρὸς σὲ φαιδρότητι μεμιγμένον παρὰ μικρὸν ὕστερον ἐπιξενώσεις αἰνίττεται.¹⁰

⁶ Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore 1981) 84.

⁷ Sophocles' participation in the arrival of Asclepius has been restated most recently by Robert Parker in *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford 1996) 184-5, and by Kevin Clinton in 'The Epidauria and the arrival of Asclepius in Athens', in Robin Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regnis Suecae*, Series in 8°, 13 (Stockholm 1994) 17-34. Emily Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica (BICS Suppl. 57, London 1989) 154-5*, expressly rejects Lefkowitz's objections to acceptance of the Sophocles-Dexion story.

⁸ 'And he held the priesthood of Halon, who was a hero with Asclepius in the presence of Chiron ... [a statue?] having been set up by his son, Iophon, after (his) death'. As the hero Halon is otherwise unknown, and as there is divergence among the manuscripts between Ἄλωνος and Ἄλωνος, there have been various emendations of the text here. Meineke's Ἄλκωνος was widely accepted until recent times. On the possible identification of Halon with Halirrhothius see Kearns (n.7) 20. The numerous attempts to fill the lacuna, first postulated by Bergk, are given by Radt. Many have suspected that the subject of ἰδρυθεὶς was a statue or painting of Sophocles. Paul Foucart (*Le Culte des héros chez les Grecs* (Paris 1922) 124) and W.S. Ferguson after him ('The Attic orgeones', *HThR* 27 (1944) 87 n.35, and 91) thought it probable that Iophon was responsible for the establishment of his father's cult.

⁹ Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 3.17 (= *TrGF* 4 T73a): οἱ δὲ ἦιδον οἰδῆν, ὁποῖος ὁ παιδῶν ὁ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους, δὴν Ἀθήνησι τῶν Ἀσκληπιῶν διδουσιν.

¹⁰ Philostratus junior, *Imagines* 13 (= *TrGF* 4 T174 lines 12-15): 'And here is Asclepius at hand, I think, bidding you write a paean, no doubt, and not thinking it unworthy to hear himself called by you "famous for skill",

It is commonly supposed that we have some fragments of this paean preserved in the remains of a third-century AD inscription from Athens.¹¹ A paean attributed to Sophocles was written on one face of a three-sided monument, known as the Sarapion monument, which has a complex history including three phases of inscription.¹² The monument was first erected to record a choregic victory that occurred around 100 AD, but the paean of Sophocles was probably inscribed at the same time as a list of paeanistae on another face of the monument. The list was inscribed in the archonship of Munatius Themison, that is, some time between 200 and 210 AD.¹³ A few fragmentary lines from the paean have been pieced together and they appear as no. 737(b) in *Poetae Melici Graeci*. The first three lines are given by Page as follows:

ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ [ΠΑΙ]ΑΝ
 (ὦ) Φλεγύα] κούρα περιώνυμε μάτερ ἀλεξιπό[ν]ο[ιο] θεοῦ
 () . . .] . ς ἀκειρεκόμασ [] ενάρξομαι [ὕμ]νον ἐγερσιβόαν

Dittenberger argued that the Sophocles named in the heading could not be the famous tragedian because it was the custom in Imperial times to write in larger letters at the top of such inscriptions the name of the person who had made the dedication; the name Sophocles, which was not rare at Athens in the period, was therefore not that of the ancient poet. Kaibel countered more persuasively that in many cases the name of the poet is indeed inscribed at the beginning of such texts and that, precisely because there were many people named Sophocles at Athens, the absence of the father's name and the demotic indicated that we should understand the name of the famous poet.¹⁴

Absolute certainty is impossible, of course, especially given the gap of over six hundred years between Sophocles' death and the first evidence for the paean. The continued use of a paean for Asclepius over a long period is paralleled, however, by the history of the so-called paean of Erythrae, which must have been written before c. 360 BC and has been found in several inscriptions whose dates reach down to at least the late second century AD.¹⁵ Even if

and his glance at you, mixed with joyfulness, hints at hospitable relations only a little later.' The wording could imply two events, one when Asclepius is present to bid the poet write the poem and the other involving the ἐπιξενώσεις, but the separation could result from the non-narrative pictorial inspiration for the passage. The *Demosthenis encomium* which, although it is attributed to Lucian, ought probably to be dated to the first half of the fourth century AD, also seems to refer in a corrupt passage in chapter 27 to Sophocles' paean as if it were well known. For a restored text see James H. Oliver, 'The Sarapion monument and the paean of Sophocles', *Hesperia* 5 (1936) 113-14. For the dating see M.D. MacLeod, *Lucian* 8 (*Loeb Classical Library*, 1967) 237 and 147. On the problem of authorship see now C.P. Jones, 'Greek drama in the Roman empire', in Ruth Scodel (ed.), *Theater and Society in the Classical World* (Ann Arbor 1993) 41-2.

¹¹ For text, photograph and discussion see Oliver (n.10) 91-122, esp. 109-122. The text is reprinted by D.L. Page at *PMG* 737(b).

¹² Although individual fragments of the monument had been published previously, Oliver (n.10) was the first to assemble and publish it as a whole. The monument has been discussed most recently by Sara B. Aleshire, *Asklepios at Athens: Epigraphic and Prosopographic Essays on the Athenian Healing Cults* (Amsterdam 1991) 49-74.

¹³ For the dating of Munatius Themison see Elias A. Kapetanopoulos, 'The family of Dexippos I Hermeios', *Ἀρχαιολογική Ἐφημερίς* 1972 157-8 nos. 27 and 27a, and S. Follet, *Athènes au II^e et au III^e siècle: Études chronologiques et prosopographiques* (Paris 1976) 101-2. The contemporaneity of the list and the paean depends mainly on restoration of a declaration above the list so that it refers to the paean. Two alternative restorations were proposed by James Oliver ('Paeanistae', *TAPhA* 71 [1940] 309), either of which would point to the paean.

¹⁴ W. Dittenberger, commenting on *IG* iii.1 Add. 171g (p. 490), and G. Kaibel, 'Supplementum Epigrammatum Graecorum ex lapidibus conlectorum', *RhM* 34 (1879) 207. Of the 38 men named Sophocles who are listed in M.J. Osborne and S.G. Byrne (eds.), *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* 3, *Attica* (Oxford 1994), only six are dated as late as 'the Imperial period' or I or II AD.

¹⁵ This paean may have been composed in the later part of the fifth century (see Oliver, n.10, 114-16). It survives in four copies: from Erythrae (380-360 BC), Athens (I-III AD), Ptolemais in Egypt (AD 97) and Dium in Macedonia (late II AD). The texts can be found respectively at H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften*

the paean of Sophocles was not used continuously, the history of the Erythrae paean's use shows that old songs could stay in fashion, and so the revival of Sophocles' work would not have been impossible. Given the literary testimony, therefore, of the existence of a paean to Asclepius by Sophocles the tragedian, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the one on the Sarapion monument is it. This paean is a credible link between Sophocles and the cult of Asclepius, and the report of Sophocles' priesthood of Halon, if true, would be a further connection. But can we say that Sophocles' involvement was deeper?

III. SOPHOCLES' ALTAR(S)

The altar mentioned in the Byzantine article on 'Dexion' has been linked by some scholars since the mid-nineteenth century with an epigram transmitted as *Anthologia Palatina* 6.145 (= *TrGF* 4 T182), which purports to record Sophocles' establishment of some altars:

βωμοὺς τοῦσδε θεοῖς Σοφοκλῆς ἰδρύσατο πρῶτος,
δς πλεῖστον Μούσης εἶλε κλέος τραγικῆς.¹⁶

Some scholars have been willing to accept this epigram as a record of a genuine inscription, either by Sophocles or by others who were renovating altars that he had built previously.¹⁷ Other scholars, however, have regarded the epigram as a Hellenistic literary forgery. W. Crönert thought it possible that Lobon, a Hellenistic literary forger, had been the author.¹⁸ More recently D.L. Page has argued that probably it was 'specially composed to suit the context in a *Life* or some other fiction' about Sophocles: 'It is not likely that Sophocles recorded, on a number of altars dedicated to a number of gods, his pride in his supremacy as a tragedian'.¹⁹ Page's objections do not deal with the suggestion that the epigram records, not Sophocles' own foundation, but the renovation of altars; but against this suggestion it may be objected that benefactors who pay for such renovations usually cause themselves to be mentioned in the inscription which records their munificent act.²⁰ Because the epigram has not been found inscribed, we cannot be sure that it

von Erythrai und Klazomenai 2 (Bonn 1973) no. 205; *IG* ii².4509; E. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine* (Paris 1969) no. 176; and G.P. Oikonomos, 'Ἐπιγραφαὶ τῆς Μακεδονίας 1 (Athens 1915) no. 4. Paul Bülow ('Ein vielgesungener Asklepiospaean', in *Xenia Bonnensia* (Bonn 1929) 35-49) argues persuasively that an Athenian paean from the first century BC (*IG* ii².4473) was dependent on an Athenian version of the Erythrae paean (see esp. 39 n.1).

¹⁶ 'Sophocles first set up these altars for the gods, | (Sophocles,) who won the greatest glory from the tragic Muse'. The text is uncertain; Radt's apparatus reads: 'πρῶτος C: πόρου vel πόνου P; epitheton θεοῖς pertinens (πομποῖς?) latere suspicatus est Waltz | εἶλε C: εἶδε P.' A connection between *AP* 6.145 and Asclepius was made as early as Bergk, 'Commentatio de Vita Sophoclis', in T. Bergk (ed.), *Sophoclis tragoediae* (Leipzig 1858).

¹⁷ F.R. Walton, 'A problem in the *Ichneutae* of Sophocles', *HSCPh* 46 (1935) 173, seems to have believed that the epigram was Sophocles' own; for the view that it stems from a renovation see Bergk (n.16) §6, L. von Sybel, 'Asklepios und Alkon', *MDAI(A)* 10 (1885) 99, and U. von Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen* (3rd ed., Darmstadt 1956) 2, 222 n.1. Cf. Ferguson (n.8) 90-1, who speaks vaguely of an affirmation by 'other writers' of Sophocles' construction of altars. Ferguson reconciles the one altar of the lexicon article with the plural altars of the epigram by assuming that Sophocles set up one altar in his home and another in the sanctuary of the hero Amynus, of whom Ferguson believes Sophocles to have been a priest. For Amynus see below.

¹⁸ W. Crönert, 'De Lobone Argivo', in Χάρπις *Friedrich Leo zum 60. Geburtstag dargebracht* (Berlin 1911) 145.

¹⁹ D.L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge 1981) 146; cf. 124 and 129.

²⁰ Consider the following epigram from the base of a statue of Asclepius (*CEG* 2.847[i] from Lisus on Crete, c. 300 BC?): Θυμίλος ἴσσατο τόνδ' Ἀσκληπιὸν ἐνθάδε πρῶτος, | Θαρσύτας δ' υἱὸς τόνδ' ἀνέθηκε θεῶν ('Thymilus set up this Asclepius here first; | Tharsytas his son dedicated this to the god'). Or again consider this much earlier epigram (*CEG* 1.313 (= *IG* i³.1014), from near modern Chaidari in Attica, before c. 460 BC), which, it should be noted, found its way into the *Anthologia Palatina* in a slightly different form as *AP* 6.138: πρῶτον μὲν Καλλιτέλες ἠδρύσατο· [τόνδε δὲ ἐκέν]ο | ἔργονοι ἐστέσαν[το] τοῖς χάριν ἀντιδίδο ('Calliteles

is the record of a real dedication and not an invention. On the other hand, there is no convincing reason for rejecting the possibility that it may actually have been inscribed. We cannot know whether *AP* 6.145 attests to a real dedication or not and it would be unwise to take it as solid evidence for any act of Sophocles'; but it does point to the existence in antiquity of a story, true or false, that Sophocles had built some altars. Nor can we be sure of any connection, real or imaginary, between these altars and the one mentioned in the dictionary article.

IV. THE MEANING OF 'DEXION'

It is quite possible that the name Dexion may have suggested the idea of receiving, but the reception referred to need not have been Sophocles' reception of Asclepius. Mary Lekowitz has suggested not implausibly that the name 'expresses the kindly aspect of the dead hero', thereby implying, it seems, that it refers, not to a past eponymous event, but to the hero's present attitude towards his worshippers.²¹ More importantly, however, it is possible that 'Dexion' did not refer to receiving at all, but rather to the right hand. Although Friedrich Bechtel derives most names built on the *Δεξι-* stem from the aorist stem of *δέχομαι*, he derives some from **δέξις* (which he postulates on the basis of *δεξιτέρος* or *δεξιός*).²² He lists an example of the personal name *Δεξίων* (*IG* v.1.1402.4, Messenia, II BC) as a hypocoristic name (a *Kosename*) deriving from *δέχομαι*, but notes that 'Die Grenze zwischen dieser Sippe und der nächsten [sc. **δέξις*, *δεξιός*] ist nicht immer mit Bestimmtheit zu ziehen, zumal bei den Koseformen.'²³ *Δεξίων* might therefore have been more immediately connected with the right hand. Otto Weinreich argues for a connection of the hero Dexion with the right hand on the basis of the association between hands, especially the right one, and healing. He cites the name of Chiron, which is clearly related to *χείρ*, the by-name *Epaphios* ('Toucher') used of Dionysus in an Orphic healing context, the name *Epaphos* given to the son of Io, for whom Zeus was both healer and midwife by his touch, and the association of Asclepius, Hygieia and Apollo with gentle hands.²⁴ On the basis of the connection between the right hand and healing, and in view of the healing-cult context in which the name 'Dexion' is attested, Weinreich claimed that 'Dexion' was originally the name of a healing god and that the link with the reception of

established (it) before; but his descendants set this up; give them your thanks'). To judge from a perusal of *CEG* 2, *πρώτος* seems to be used more commonly to describe a notable achievement such as an athletic victory (e.g. nos. 794, 795, 849, 862 and 879) than to refer to a first dedication. For other parallels of usages found in *AP* 6.145 see *CEG* 2.767 and 837 (dedications to *θεοῖς*), and 526 and 701 (epitaphs with *ὄς* introducing a pentameter describing an antecedent in the previous line).

²¹ Lefkowitz (n.6) 84 n.37. Her parallels, however, are by no means compelling (the mythical king Dexamenus, Hypodectes in *IG* ii².2501 and Pindar, *Pythian* 8.5 and 19, and 9.73). An Imperial-age bronze tablet from Pergamum (C. Habicht, *Die Inschriften des Asklepieions, Altertümer von Pergamon* 8.3 (Berlin 1969) no. 71) records the dedication to Asclepius Soter and Hygieia of τὸν δεξιόμμενον δράκοντα (which presumably was a representation of a snake). Habicht thought the snake was greeting Asclepius and Hygieia, but it might equally have been greeting worshippers.

²² Friedrich Bechtel, *Die historischen Personennamen des Griechischen bis zur Kaiserzeit* (Halle 1917) 118-20.

²³ Bechtel (n.22) 119. Cf. Otto Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder* (Gießen 1909) 39 n.4: 'Wie mich H. Osthoff gütigst belehrte, ist es sehr schwer, und in manchen Fällen unmöglich, bestimmt zu sagen, ob ein Name des Stammes *Δεξι-* zu *δεξιά* oder *δέχομαι* zu stellen ist'. Parallel formations from aorist stems are more plentiful (e.g., 'Αγασίων from *ἀγάσασθαι*, Τιμασίων from *τιμῆσαι*, and Βλεψίων from *βλέψαι*), but alternative parallels are not lacking: see Bechtel for 'Αρηξίων (from *ἀρηξίς*), 'Ασίων (from **Ἄσις*) and 'Ερξίων (from **Ἐρξίς*), and for Αἰσίων (from *αἰσιος*), Θεωρίων (from Apollo *Θεῶριος*), 'Ιδίων (from *Ἰδῖος*) and 'Ομολώτων (from Zeus 'Ομολώτος). Fritz Graf, *Nordionische Kulte, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana* 21 (Rome 1985) 125 and 356, treats *δεξίων*, wrongly in my view, as an adjective modifying *ἦρω*ς and not as a personal name.

²⁴ Weinreich (n.23) 27-8 (Chiron and *Epaphios*), 18-27 (*Epaphos*), 38 (Asclepius, Hygieia and Apollo).

Asclepius was secondary.²⁵ Likewise, Friedrich Pfister thought that the true Dexion had taken his name from the healing power of the right hand.²⁶

We cannot be sure which derivation of the name, and so which denotation, might have been intended by fifth- or fourth century Athenians using the name, if indeed there was any need to connect it exclusively with one or the other.²⁷ Accordingly, I think we should leave open the question of the meaning of the name. The purpose of this inconclusive treatment, however, is to raise the possibility that the hero Dexion attested by the inscriptions did not derive his name from a past reception and that he was not the heroised Sophocles.²⁸

V. THE RECEPTION IN PLUTARCH

The dictionary entry tells us that Sophocles was renamed Dexion ‘because of his reception of Asclepius’ (ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δέξεως²⁹) and explains this by saying that Sophocles ‘received the god in his house and set up an altar’ (ὑπεδέξατο τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ οἰκίᾳ καὶ βωμὸν ἰδρύσατο). The wording does not reveal what kind of reception the author imagined had taken place. Clinton believes that Sophocles hosted some kind of cultic reception of Asclepius’ statue and cites as a parallel a customary reception of *Kore* in the house of her priest at Mantinea, referred to in *IG* v.2.265.21-23 (late 60s BC), an honorific decree for a woman, Nicippa: [ὕ]πεδέξατο | δὲ καὶ τὰν θεὸν εἰς τὰν ἰδίαν οἰκίαν, καθὼς ἔστιν ἔθος | τοῖς [ἀ]ε[ῖ] γνυμένοις ἱερεῦσιν (‘She received the goddess into her own house, as is the custom for those who are priests for the time being’).³⁰ The verbal similarities to the dictionary entry are striking, but two passages in Plutarch point, not to a cultic event, but to a supernatural visitation by the god. And although it is not clear in Philostratus the Younger’s ‘Picture’ of Sophocles (quoted above) what is meant by ἐπιξενώσεις, the representation of Asclepius in human form—could the ‘glance ... mixed with joyfulness’ have been portrayed otherwise?—is consonant with a supernatural appearance by the god himself. The story is referred to by ancient authors only in these three passages, but the allusiveness of all three is evidence that the story was well known to the writers’ audiences.

The first of the Plutarch passages occurs in *Numa* 4 in connection with the story that Numa shared the bed of the nymph Egeria. Plutarch argues *a fortiori* that if gods have had frivolous dealings with ‘warbling poets and lyre-players’ such as Pindar, Archilochus, Hesiod and Sophocles, one should not doubt that they have had serious converse with rulers and law-givers such as Zaleucus, Minos, Zoroaster, Numa and Lycurgus. Of Sophocles he says: Σοφοκλεῖ δὲ

²⁵ Weinreich (n.23) 38-40.

²⁶ Pfister (n.4) 121. One of the Journal’s readers has drawn my attention to Εὐώνυμος, the eponymous hero of the Attic deme of Εὐώνυμον, whose name would refer to the *left* hand. On this hero see A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia* Part 1, *Acheloos to Hera* (*BICS Suppl.* 38.1, London 1981) 223.

²⁷ Weinreich (n.23) 40 n.1, cites a sentence from Artemidorus 5.92 as evidence for ancient play on the etymological connection: ἀρθείσης γὰρ τῆς δεξιᾶς ἔτοιμος ἦν παραδέξασθαι αὐτὸν ὁ Κέρβερος (‘For with his right hand raised Cerberus was ready to receive him’). For the etymological link between δέχομαι and δεξιός/δεξιό (both deriving from an Indo-European root *dek-*) see Hjalmar Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* 1 (Heidelberg 1961) s.v. δεξιός and δέχομαι.

²⁸ It may be worth noting that whereas names ending in -ίων usually keep the long \bar{o} in the oblique cases (as is the case in the Byzantine dictionary entry), the two decrees of the *orgeones* always have Δεξιόνος with no confusion elsewhere of omega and omicron. Is the dictionary article referring to the same name?

²⁹ Radt prints the reading of the *Etymologicum genuinum*, δέξεως; the other texts read δεξιώσεως.

³⁰ Clinton (n.7) 26. Clinton also argues (at 25-6) that the Reception of Asclepius became an annually enacted event: in *IG* ii².3195 (late I AD) an official at the Asclepieum in Athens recorded in a dedication that he paid for τὴν ὑποδοχὴν καὶ μύησιν; Clinton assumes that this refers to an annual Reception and Eleusinian pre-initiation of Asclepius.

καὶ ζῶντι τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν ἐπιξενωθῆναι λόγος ἐστὶ, πολλὰ μέχρι νῦν διασώζων τεκμήρια, καὶ τελευτήσαντι τυχεῖν ταφῆς ἄλλος θεὸς ὡς λέγεται παρέσχεν.³¹ Plutarch elsewhere relates stories concerning four of the five law-givers mentioned here that involve extraordinary converse with the gods,³² and the poets referred to all benefited from miraculous displays of divine affection.³³ The supernatural or miraculous tenor of *Numa* 4 is further suggested by Plutarch's constant concern here with the theme of credibility. This theme is specifically emphasised in connection with the story of Asclepius' visit to Sophocles: the λόγος is described as 'preserving many proofs to the present', as if it were otherwise unbelievable. If, therefore, Plutarch was thinking here of a reception by Sophocles of Asclepius' snake or statue, it would not have been a very apposite parallel to Numa's relationship with Egeria. It may also be remarked that Plutarch opposes serious converse with law-makers to frivolous converse with poets: Sophocles' reception of the cultic symbol of Asclepius would not fit in easily with this rhetoric.

If Plutarch does not have in mind the arrival of the cult of Asclepius in Athens, what kind of visitation is he thinking of? The second passage from Plutarch will throw some light on this. In chapters 20-23 of the dialogue *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* Aristodemus argues that good men who believe that the gods can influence human affairs are dear to the gods and can enjoy the gods' favour and providential care. Lycurgus, Socrates, Pindar, Phormio and Sophocles are offered as examples of believers whose piety was rewarded with some sign of divine favour. Of Phormio and Sophocles he says: ἡ Φορμίων [sc. μετρίως ἔχαιρε] τοὺς Διοσκόρους ἢ τὸν Ἀσκληπιὸν Σοφοκλῆς ξενίζειν αὐτὸς τε πειθόμενος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὕτως ἐχόντων διὰ τὴν γενομένην ἐπιφάνειαν.³⁴ As in *Numa* 4, divine favour is marked by some kind of crossing of the divide which separates mortals from immortals, either by means of oracular revelation (Lycurgus and Socrates), or in the adoption by Pan of one of Pindar's songs, or by some kind of visitation (Phormio and Sophocles). Since the stories of Phormio and Sophocles are alluded to in the same words—both Phormio and Sophocles must

³¹ Plutarch, *Numa* 4: 'And there is a report (for which many proofs have survived to the present) that when Sophocles was alive, Asclepius was entertained by him; and when he died, another god, it is said, saw to it that he received burial'. The story of Sophocles' burial to which Plutarch is alluding is clearly the account of Dionysus' intervention on behalf of the deceased poet told in the *Vita* and by other writers (see *Vita Sophoclis* §15, Pliny, *NH* 7.109, Solinus 1.118 and Pausanias 1.21.1, which are *TrGF* 4 T1 lines 63-70; T92; T93 and T94).

³² Zaleucus claimed that Athena had often appeared to him (*De se ipsum citra invidiam laudando* 543A); Homer called Minos ὀρειστήν Διός (*Theseus* 16.3; cf. *Od.* 19.179); Numa was the lover of Egeria; and Lycurgus was declared by the Pythia to be dear to Zeus and all the Olympians and more a god than a man (*Lycurgus* 5.4 and *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1103A). As far as I am aware, Plutarch does not elsewhere comment on communication between Zoroaster and the divine, but reports of Zoroaster's supernatural experiences were current among other Greek authors (see J.D.P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 159-60) and Plutarch himself refers to Heraclides Ponticus' *Zoroaster* in *Adversus Colotem* 14.

³³ Archilochus was honoured by the divine when the man who slew him in battle was refused a response by the Pythia and was only instructed how he might propitiate the soul of the poet after importunate prayer (*De sera numinis vindicta* 560D-E). Divine favour was shown to Hesiod when his Locrian murderers were detected and punished after a school of dolphins marvellously carried his body to Rhium where the Locrians were conducting a sacrifice (*Septem sapientium convivium* 162C-E). The story about Pan's love for Pindar to which Plutarch is here referring, though not told elsewhere by Plutarch, is presumably the one we find sketched in the life of Pindar known as the *Vita Ambrosiana*. There we read that Pan appeared between Cithaeron and Helicon singing a paean by Pindar and that the poet returned the favour by composing a song in the god's honour. See *Vita Ambrosiana* in A.B. Drachmann (ed.), *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina* 1 (Leipzig 1903; reprinted Amsterdam 1964) 2, lines 2-6. Cf. the similar story told in the *textus vulgatus* of the *Vita Thomana* (Drachmann 1, p. 5 n. ad 10-11) and in the metrical life of Pindar (Drachmann 1, p. 7, lines 19-20).

³⁴ Plutarch, *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 1102F-1103B: 'Or was Phormio or Sophocles only moderately pleased, when each of them, because of the epiphany that had occurred, was convinced, as were the rest, that he had entertained one the Dioscuri, the other Asclepius?'

be taken as subjects of *πειθόμενος* and the dependent infinitive—we may expect that they share some similarities of content.

The story of Phormio is found only in Pausanias 3.16.2-3. Pausanias is speaking of a house in Sparta once occupied by the Dioscuri.³⁵

τὸ δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς φασιν αὐτὴν οἰκῆσαι τοὺς Τυνδάρεω παῖδας, χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον ἐκτήσατο Φορμίων Σπαρτιάτης. παρὰ τοῦτον ἀφίκοντο οἱ Διόσκουροι ξένοις ἀνδράσιν εὐκότεις· ἦκειν δὲ ἐκ Κυρήνης φήσαντες καταχθῆναι τε ἡξίουσιν παρ' αὐτῷ καὶ οἴκημα ἡτιοῦντο ὧι μάλιστα ἔχαιρον, ἠνίκα μετὰ ἀνθρώπων ἦσαν. ὁ δὲ οἰκίας μὲν τῆς ἄλλης ἐκέλευεν αὐτοὺς ἐνθα ἂν ἐθέλωσιν οἰκῆσαι, τὸ δὲ οἴκημα οὐκ ἔφη δώσειν· θυγάτηρ γὰρ ἔτυχεν οἱ παρθένος ἔχουσα ἐν αὐτῷ δίαταν. ἐς δὲ τὴν ὕστεραίαν παρθένος μὲν ἐκείνη καὶ θεραπεία πᾶσα ἢ περὶ τὴν παῖδα ἠφάνιστο, Διοσκούρων δὲ ἀγάλματα ἐν τῷ οἴκηματι εὐρέθη καὶ τράπεζά τε καὶ σίλφιον ἐπ' αὐτῆι.³⁶

This story fits in well with the context of supernatural converse found in the second Plutarch passage above and is clearly a case in which the question of credibility is involved. It is more likely, therefore, that Plutarch is alluding there to some similar story about Sophocles than to the unmiraculous lodging of Asclepius' cultic symbol. The contexts of both passages in Plutarch suggest a supernatural event and there is nothing in Philostratus' 'Picture' or in the Byzantine dictionary article that weighs against this view.

The presence of a supernatural element in the story of Sophocles and Asclepius known to Plutarch is further supported by closer consideration of the final words of the second passage from Plutarch, 'because of the epiphany that occurred' (*διὰ τὴν γενομένην ἐπιφάνειαν*). When Plutarch uses *ἐπιφάνεια* of a divine manifestation, the word denotes the revelation of a divinity's powerful presence.³⁷ So in the passage about Phormio and Sophocles he is speaking of supernatural events that revealed the presence and power of the respective gods. In the case of Phormio the identity of the visitors is confirmed by the miraculous disappearance of the daughter and the presence of the silphium.³⁸ It seems reasonable to suppose that Plutarch believed Sophocles to have received some similar visitation from Asclepius, perhaps having provided a stranger with lodging only to discover his divine identity later through a miraculous sign. The story of Phormio also provides a parallel for the detail in the dictionary article on

³⁵ See Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.31 for an earlier reference to this house.

³⁶ Pausanias 3.16.2-3 (ed. M.H. Rocha-Pereira (Leipzig 1989)): 'They say that originally the sons of Tyndareus inhabited it, but later Phormio the Spartan bought it. The Dioscuri came to this man in the likeness of foreigners. Having said that they had come from Cyrene they asked to be lodged with him and they requested the room that they used especially to like when they had been among men. He told them to stay wherever they wished in the rest of the house, but said he would not give them that room; for his daughter, who was unmarried, happened to have her quarters in it. On the following day that girl and all the attendants around her had disappeared, but there were found in the room statues of the Dioscuri and a table with silphium on it'. Phormio is the subject of another story of miraculous visitation preserved in the *Suda*, s.v. Φορμίων, and discussed by Bolton (n.32) 161-65.

³⁷ Word searches for the several forms of *ἐπιφάνεια* in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* text of all Plutarch produce seventy attestations. Of these only four, besides the one in this passage, were certain instances of its use to signify manifestations of divinities, but in all of these cases the manifestation is clearly of a supernatural kind. These four are: *Themistocles* 30.6 (manifestation of the divine foreknowledge and saving power of the Mother of the Gods in Phrygia), *Camillus* 6.3 (Rome's rise to power would have been impossible 'without a god's assisting at every moment with many great manifestations'), *De Pythiae oraculis* 409A (Apollo was manifested in a miraculous productivity of milk herds), and *De defectu oraculorum* 412D (prophecies whose fulfilment demonstrated gods' presence and power).

³⁸ On the connections between Cyrene, silphium and the Dioscuri see N.D. Papachatz, in Pausanias, 'Ελλάδος Περιήγησις 2, Κορινθιακὰ καὶ Λακωνικά, trans. N.D. Papachatz (Athens 1976) 366, and A. Furtwängler, 'Dioskuren', in W.H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (1884-90) 1, 1166.

Dexion that Sophocles received the god ‘in his house’.³⁹

If we understood what Plutarch meant when he described the λόγος about Sophocles and Asclepius as πολλὰ μέχρι νῦν διασώζων τεκμήρια, we might have some further clue from which to reconstruct the story as he knew it.⁴⁰ We cannot know, but the evidence most likely to have been available to Plutarch is surely the paean. As the paean was in use at Athens a century later and was well known to Philostratus the Elder’s readers, it is not unreasonable to assume that it was also known in Plutarch’s time. Furthermore, Philostratus the Younger mentions the paean and the visitation together. This would fit with the theory that the story of the visit was inspired by the existence of the paean. Lefkowitz has pointed out that stories about divine visitation grew up around Pindar’s *Hymn to Demeter* and has wondered whether Sophocles’ priesthood of Halon may have been ‘created to explain references to himself’ in the paean to Asclepius.⁴¹ Comparison with the two surviving stories about Pindar, however, can perhaps tell us more about the reception of Asclepius than about the priesthood. One occurs in the *Vita Pindari* and the other, preserved in the scholia on Pindar, *Pythian* 3, is a fragment of Aristodemus (second century BC) from what Jacoby believes was a commentary on Pindar. The two passages read:

Vita Pindari:

ἦν δὲ οὐ μόνον εὐφυῆς ποιητῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνθρώπος θεοφιλῆς. ὁ γοῦν Πάν ὁ θεὸς ὤφθη μεταξὺ τοῦ Κιθαιρώνοσ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλικώνος αἰδῶν παιάνα Πινδάρου. ... ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Δημήτηρ ὄναρ ἐπιστάσα αὐτῷ ἐμέμψατο, ὅτι μόνην τῶν θεῶν οὐχ ὕμνησεν· ὁ δὲ εἰς αὐτὴν ἐποίησε ποίημα οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ· Πότνια θεσμοφόρε χρυσάνιον. ἀλλὰ καὶ βαμῶν ἀμφοτέρων τῶν θεῶν πρὸ τῆς οἰκίας τῆς ἰδρύσατο.⁴²

Schol. in Pindar. *Pyth.* 3.137b (= *FGrHist* 383 F*13):

ἀλλ’ ἐπεύξασθαι μὲν ἐγὼν ἐθέλω ματρὶ] Ἀριστόδημός φησιν Ὀλυμπίχου αὐλητοῦ διδασκομένου ὑπὸ Πινδάρου γενέσθαι κατὰ τὸ ὄρος, ὅπου τὴν μελέτην συνετίθει, καὶ ψόφον ἱκανὸν καὶ φλογὸς καταφορᾶν· τὸν δὲ Πίνδαρον ἐπαισθόμενον συνιδεῖν Μητρὸς θεῶν ἀγαλμα λίθινον τοῖς ποσὶν ἐπερχόμενον, ὅθεν αὐτὸν συνιδρύσασθαι πρὸς τῆ οἰκίᾳ Μητρὸς θεῶν καὶ Πανὸς ἀγαλμα. τοὺς δὲ πολίτας πέμψαντας εἰς θεοῦ πυθάνεσθαι περὶ τῶν ἐκβησομένων· τὸν δὲ ἀνειπεῖν, ἱερὸν Μητρὸς θεῶν ιδρύσασθαι. τοὺς δὲ ἐκπλαγέντας τὸν Πίνδαρον διὰ τὸ προειληφέναι τὸν χρησμόν, ὁμοίως τῷ Πινδάρῳ ἐκεῖσε τιμᾶν τὴν θεὸν τελεταῖς.⁴³

³⁹ Certainly this would be the only case of theoxeny involving Asclepius, compared with a whole tradition of theoxeny associated with the Dioscuri, but the sources point towards such an interpretation. The epiphanies for curative purposes so characteristic of Asclepius, some of them involving the confutation of disbelief, might have made a story of Asclepian visitation more credible, if this were necessary.

⁴⁰ Sybel (n.17) 98-9 believed that the τεκμήρια must be the paean and the altar mentioned in the Byzantine dictionary. Wilamowitz (n.17) 222 n.1 mused that one thought first of the epigram about the altars, *AP* 6.145, but admitted that the connection was unprovable. Otto Kern (*Die Religion der Griechen* (1935; reprinted Berlin 1963) 2, 313 n.5) preferred to think that Plutarch had in mind an inscription—to be discussed shortly—which recorded the introduction of the cult into Athens; Sophocles, however, is not mentioned in any extant portion of this text. Robert Flacelière (‘Sur quelques passages des *Vies* de Plutarque, II. Lycurgue-Numa’, *REG* 61 (1948) 413-14) thought that the τεκμήρια must have been the cult of Dexion and the paean to Asclepius.

⁴¹ Lefkowitz (n.6) 60-1 for Pindar and Demeter, and 84 for Sophocles and Asclepius.

⁴² *Vita Pindari Ambrosiana* at Drachmann (n.33) 2, lines 1-10: ‘He was not only a gifted poet, but also a man loved by the gods. For the god Pan at least appeared between Cithaeron and Helicon singing a paean by Pindar. ... And then again Demeter stood over him in a dream and chided him, saying that he had not celebrated in song her alone of the gods. So he wrote a poem for her which begins, “Law-giving Mistress, golden-reined”. Furthermore he set up an altar for both gods in front of his own house’.

⁴³ A.B. Drachmann (ed.), *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina* (Leipzig 1910; reprinted Amsterdam 1964) 2, 80-1: ‘But I wish to pray to the Mother’: Aristodemus says that when Olympichus the flautist was being taught by Pindar, there occurred on the mountain where he was organising the practice a great noise and downpour of flame; and when Pindar had recovered his senses, he perceived a stone statue of the Mother of the Gods approaching on its own feet; and because of this he set up near his house a statue of the Mother of the Gods and Pan together; and when the

Although the passages seem to have had different purposes, one to explain the origin of the *Hymn to Demeter*, the other to explain why Pindar is honoured in rites for the Mother of the Gods at Thebes, they both relate how Pindar received a supernatural visitation from the goddess—I take Demeter and the Mother to be equivalent in this context—and responded by making a dedication both to her and to Pan.⁴⁴ Taken together they have several elements that have close parallels in the Sophocles-Dexion story, namely, the supernatural visitation from the goddess, the writing of a hymn for her, the establishment of an altar near the poet's house, and the honouring of the poet in cult by his fellow citizens. It is also interesting that Aristodemus' story casts the poet as a precursor of his fellow citizens in the introduction of an apparently new cult. The details of the stories about Pindar look like inventions that grew up around the poet's work, and their similarities with the stories about Sophocles lead me to conclude that the latter had similar origins in the paean for Asclepius.

It is clear, therefore, that our ancient and Byzantine sources speak only vaguely of a reception of Asclepius by Sophocles and that Plutarch thought of this event as a supernatural one. I am not the first to have noticed this, however, and even some scholars who look upon the reception as an historical cultic event have observed that Plutarch and the Byzantine lexicographer had a miraculous visitation in mind.⁴⁵ How, then, have more recent scholars come to treat it as a datable historical fact in the life of Sophocles, and how did the snake slither in?

VI. MODERN REINTERPRETATION OF THE RECEPTION

In the 1880s Ludwig von Sybel and F. Deneken both argued that the reception story reported by Plutarch and the Byzantine lexicographer was a mythologised version of Sophocles' introduction of the cult into Athens.⁴⁶ But it was revealed in 1888 by the full publication of *CIA* 2.1649 (= *IG* ii².4960, discussed below) that Sophocles could not have been principally responsible for the importation of the cult because, according to this early fourth-century description of the foundation of the temple of Asclepius in the Upper City, in the late summer of 420 the god had been brought to Athens and a sanctuary established for him by a certain Telemachus. What, then, had Sophocles done for the god that was recognised in the cult name Dexion? A highly influential answer was given in 1896 when Alfred Körte published some finds from the excavation of a precinct, arguably of some antiquity, at the western end of the south slope of the Acropolis in Athens.⁴⁷ Among these finds were the two decrees of the *orgeones* of Amynus, Asclepius and Dexion discussed above and four other inscriptions mentioning Amynus and Asclepius.⁴⁸ Körte argued that since Amynus was mentioned before Asclepius in three of the texts, Amynus must have been the original divine occupant of the precinct and Asclepius a newcomer.⁴⁹ Körte then forged a link between Amynus and Sophocles: where the *Vita* tells us that Sophocles held the priesthood of the unknown Halon or Alon (τοῦ Ἐάλωνος

citizens had sent to the house of the god they inquired about what would follow, and he proclaimed that they should establish a shrine for the Mother of the Gods; and amazed at Pindar because of his anticipation of the oracle they honour the goddess with rites there equally with Pindar'.

⁴⁴ On the probable equivalence of the Mother and Demeter in Pindar, *Pythian* 3.77 see William J. Slater, 'Pindar's house', *GRBS* 12 (1971) 145-6.

⁴⁵ See L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford 1921) 259, Foucart (n.8) 122-1, and Flacelière (n.40) 415-17.

⁴⁶ Sybel (n.17) 97-100, and Deneken, 'Heros', in W.H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* (1884-90) 1, 2536-37.

⁴⁷ Körte (n.2, 1896) 287-332.

⁴⁸ The six relevant inscriptions are: *IG* ii².1252 and 1253, 4365, 4385, 4424 and 4457.

⁴⁹ This may be so, but the earliest of the datable inscriptions (*IG* ii².4365) puts Asclepius first.

or Ἄλωνος), Körte proposed to read τοῦ Ἀμύνου.⁵⁰ From there it was only a short step to a description of Sophocles' role in the introduction of Asclepius to Athens. According to Körte, Sophocles, 'the priest of the old healing hero',

received the new arrival into his own house and into that of his god; the sanctuary of Amynus became that of Amynus and Asclepius and here probably stood the altar that the poet set up to the new god. From this we can also understand that the orgeones of the hero called 'Receiver' could feel at home in the sanctuary in which their hero had worked as a priest in his lifetime and had granted a space for Asclepius.⁵¹

Körte further determined that Sophocles had received the god in the form of a snake on the basis of his restoration of *IG* ii².4960. The most recent publication of this text is Clinton's, where lines 9-17 (= *IG* ii².4960.2-10) read as follows:⁵²

	[.....ἄ]νελοθῶν Ζεόθ[ε]–	ΣΤΟΙΧ. 19
10	[ν Μυστηρ]τοῖς τοῖς μεγά–	
	[λοις κατ]ήγετο ἐς τὸ Ἐλ–	ΣΤΟΙΧ. 18
	[ευστίνιο]ν· καὶ οἴκοθεν	
	[μεταπεμ]ψάμενος δια[κ]–	
	[όνος ἦγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' ἄ–	
15	[ρματος] Τηλέμαχο[ς] κα[τ]–	
	[ἄ χρησιμ]ός· ἄμα ἦλθεν Ἰγ–	
	[τεία·] κτλ ⁵³	

The centre of interest for the present discussion is lines 13 to 14, where Clinton has restored δια[κ|όνος] (= the plural διακόνους). Clinton's restoration had been anticipated by Stephanos Dragoumis who in 1901 suggested διὰ[κ|ονον];⁵⁴ but Dragoumis' restoration received little serious consideration. The reason for this seems to be that a restoration proposed by Körte in 1896 had already thoroughly captured the imaginations of scholars. Körte argued that a snake had been brought in a chariot and restored δ<ρ>ἄ[κ|οντα ἦγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' ἄ|[ρματος], correcting the stone's ΔΙΑ to Δ<P>Α.⁵⁵ Körte argued confidently that there were epigraphic parallels showing that the phrase ἄγειν ἐφ' ἄρματος was 'the usual expression for the transportation of sacred symbols or implements from one sanctuary to another'. Although the three parallels he advanced are far from cogent—only two refer to the transportation of a cultic object and only one is a clear parallel for his restoration—nevertheless the restoration of [ἦγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' ἄ|[ρματος] is a neat fit and I accept it.⁵⁶ The restoration of

⁵⁰ Körte's discussion of Sophocles' connections with Amynus and Asclepius can be found at Körte (n.2, 1896) 309-13. Wilamowitz (n.17) 225, described this emendation as a 'gewaltsame Änderung' and rightly concluded that, though the name Halon might be corrupt, it was not possible to correct it. Yet this tenuous connection between Sophocles and Amynus has been accepted by many. The emendation has recently been endorsed as 'a highly probable correction' by Clinton (n.7) 31 n.61.

⁵¹ Körte (n.2, 1896) 312-13.

⁵² Clinton (n.7) 21.

⁵³ Lines 9-17: '... having come up from Zea at the time of the Great Mysteries he lodged at the Eleusinium, and having sent for servants from home [or "at his own expense"?] Telemachus brought (him) here in a chariot in accordance with oracles. At the same time Hygieia came'. Doubt remains about whether we have the nominative or genitive of Telemachus' name in line 15, and so whether Asclepius or Telemachus is the subject of the finite verbs and nominative participles in lines 9-14 (the colon in line 12 is, of course, an editorial addition). Parker (n.7) 177-8 suggests that Telemachus was an Epidaurian and that *he* lodged at the Eleusinium and sent for a snake from home (i.e. Epidaurus).

⁵⁴ Stephanos N. Dragoumis, 'Ὁ Ἀσκληπιὸς ἐν Ἀθήναις', Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερὶς (1901) 97-112.

⁵⁵ Körte (n.2, 1896) 316-17.

⁵⁶ The clear parallel is found in an inscription of late II BC from Delphi published by Louis Couve in 'Inscriptions de Delphes', *BCH* 18 (1894) 90-93. It records the granting of a proxeny to an Athenian because he had

δ<ρ>ά[κ|οντα], however, is unconvincing.⁵⁷ Körte adduced three passages in which new foundations of the cult of Asclepius were brought about by the transportation of a snake from Epidaurus to the new site, namely, Pausanias 2.10.3 (for Sicyon), 3.23.6 (for Epidaurus Limera), and Livy, *Epitome* 11 (for Rome). But he unpersuasively justified the necessary correction of ΔΙΑ by asserting that the cutting of a mere hasta for a rho was an ‘especially frequently occurring error’.⁵⁸ Parker defends the correction as a bold but necessary change: the restoration διὰ[κ|ονον] ‘gives an absurd prominence, in a sacred narrative every detail of which should bear meaning, to a mere ancillary. Snakes, by contrast, regularly feature in accounts of the introduction of Asclepius’.⁵⁹ There is plausibility in this. But even though it is likely that the transportation of a snake was involved, it is not necessary that the snake should have been mentioned *here* rather than, say, in the earlier lost portion of the text, if it was mentioned at all: the parallel accounts of Asclepian introductions occur in later literary sources (Livy and Pausanias), not in inscriptions. Interpretations that preserve the clear readings of the stone are in principle preferable, and we need stronger evidence than we have to support Körte’s correction. Clinton was right, therefore, to reject the adoption of it as ‘a violation of proper editorial method’.⁶⁰

If, however, it was not a snake that was sent for, but one or more *diakonoi*, were they, or he, the grammatical object of ἤγαγεν? Or put another way, what was ‘brought here’? Dragoumis regarded διὰ[κ|ονον] as a reference to an Epidaurian cult official and as the object

transported a tripod in a chariot in a fitting manner (ἀγαγῶν δὲ καὶ τὸν τρίποδα ἐφ’ ἄρματος). In his brief commentary on the text Couve observes of the expression ἄγειν τὸν τρίποδα ἐφ’ ἄρματος: ‘Elle paraît nouvelle [sc. in late II BC]; je ne l’ai, du moins, trouvée dans aucun autre texte épigraphique.’ Consequently we should beware of accepting Körte’s restoration *exempli gratia* as if it were a common phrase, still less the usual one. Another inscription from Delphi, dating probably from the first decade of I BC (Couve, ‘Inscriptions de Delphes’, 87-90), describes a similar event without using the expression ἄγειν ἐφ’ ἄρματος. The other parallel of cultic transportation is Pausanias 2.10.3 where, speaking of the introduction of the cult of Asclepius into Sicyon, Pausanias says: φασὶ δὲ σφισιν ἐξ Ἐπιδαύρου κομισθῆναι τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ ζεύγος ἡμιόνων, δράκοντι εἰκασμένον, τὴν δὲ ἀγαγούσαν Νικαγόραν εἶναι Σικυωνίαν (‘They say that the god, in the likeness of a snake, was conveyed from Epidaurus for them using a team of mules, and the one who brought (him) was Nicagora, a Sicyonian woman’). Here certainly we find a part of ἄγω used in a context which implies a wagon or a chariot, but we do not have ‘the usual expression’ itself. Körte’s third parallel is taken from a lacunose section of a record of cures at Epidaurus (see P. Cavvadias, ‘Ἐπιγραφαὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ ἀνασκαφῶν’, *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερὶς* (1885) 1-30, at lines 69-73 of no. 80). Körte claims to find a parallel in the appearance in one cure story of the words [ἐ]ώρα ἐφ’ ἀμάξας ... (‘... he saw on a wagon ...’) and ... ΟΙΟΔΡ[(restored by E.F. Benson, *CR* 7 (1893) 185-6, to read οὐ ὁ δρ[άκων]). Even if the restoration of δρᾶκων is correct, this text is far too lacunose to provide an illustration of the transportation of sacred snakes by wagon.

⁵⁷ The word δρᾶκων itself, however, is quite normal in Asclepian contexts, perhaps more so than ὄφις. For examples of δρᾶκων, see Pausanias 2.10.3 and 3.23.6 and *IG* iv².1.88.10, 122.118 and 130, 123.1 and 94. For examples of δρᾶκων and ὄφις used interchangeably, see *IG* iv².1 121.113-119 and 122.69-82. For ὄφις used exclusively, see the Epidaurian accounts at *IG* iv².1 102.236, 240, 279.

⁵⁸ Körte (n.2, 1896) 317. Körte’s assertion about the incomplete cutting of rho can be shown to exaggerate its frequency. Starting from two earlier lists (see W. Lademann, *De titulis atticis quaestiones orthographicae et grammaticae* (Kirchhain 1915) 129 and Leslie Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions* 1, *Phonology* (Berlin & New York 1980) 484-5) and with the generous help of Professor J.S. Traill, who through computer searches and casual discovery has turned up several further instances not known to me, I have assembled twenty-one sure or uncertain instances, in twenty different texts, of a simple hasta standing in the place of a rho. From these twenty-one cases it is clear that the error is certainly attested in and around the period of the Telemachus monument, and that it is found in documents of a public nature and in ones laid out in the stoichedon format. But even if we accept all of the twenty-one instances as certain cases and assume that there are more to be found, twenty-one is not a large number to have drawn from a pool of some fourteen thousand Attic inscriptions spread over about seven centuries. This mistake is not an especially common one.

⁵⁹ Parker (n.7) 178.

⁶⁰ Clinton (n.7) 23.

of both μεταπεμψόμενος and ἤγαγεν.⁶¹ Clinton on the other hand argues that the *diakonoi* were the hired servants of Telemachus and that, having sent for them, what Telemachus brought was the image of the god. He transported it to the Asclepieum in a chariot from the Eleusinium, where, Clinton infers, it had been deposited by Epidaurian officials. Clinton argues that, if the *diakonoi* had been Epidaurian cult attendants, Telemachus would not have passed silently over a detail so serviceable for his own self-advertisement, and that the servants were mentioned to show that Telemachus carried out the removal without the help of other Athenians.⁶² Clinton's interpretation requires the reader to cope with several points of linguistic awkwardness that raise some doubts about it.⁶³ My own inclination is nonetheless to agree with Clinton, though I am sceptical that in this catalogue of movements οἴκοθεν means 'at his own expense' rather than 'from his own house(hold)' and therefore that μεταπεμψόμενος denotes hiring. Foucart suggested that Telemachus had set up the record of the foundation because he wished to assert his claim to having been the first to introduce the cult of Asclepius into Athens against the spreading belief that Sophocles had introduced it.⁶⁴ He based this suggestion on two fourth century inscriptions in which a Telemachus declares that he was the first, πρῶτος, to establish a temple and an altar for Asclepius.⁶⁵ It seems to me, however, that other disputes are more likely, in particular one that is mentioned in the inscription itself. We are told at *IG* ii².4960.13-16 (= Clinton lines 20-23) that the Ceryces raised a dispute that prevented certain unspecified things from happening.⁶⁶ Since the Ceryces were important in the management of the Eleusinian mysteries and Asclepius had arrived in Athens at the time of the Mysteries, had visited the Eleusinium, and had also, according to Philostratus the Elder, been inducted as an initiate, it could be that the Ceryces were laying claim to having been the founders of Asclepius' cult in Athens.⁶⁷

⁶¹ The possibility that one or more cult officials are mentioned in the inscription receives some support from the first century BC text from Delphi mentioned above. In it the archon is said to have brought, not only a tripod, but also τὴν πυρφόρον, presumably an Athenian priestess responsible for sacred fire. It must be admitted, however, that references to *diakonoi* in non-Christian inscriptions are rare and late. The only instances known to me occur in six texts from western Greece, Asia Minor and Troezen, all referring to cult officials. The earliest datable text is from III BC. See *CIA* 2.1800 and *LSJ* s.v. δῖόκονος I.2 for the other five. *Diakonos* is not a category of attendant mentioned in Alice Walton, *The Cult of Asklepios* (Ithaca 1894; reprinted New York 1965), nor in Kevin Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Philadelphia 1974).

⁶² Clinton (n.7) 23-4.

⁶³ Telemachus is not mentioned in this clause until line 15, but the reader must supply him for an understanding of οἴκοθεν, μεταπεμψόμενος and ἤγαγεν; the reader must supply the object of ἤγαγεν (i.e., Asclepius in the form of a statue); and μεταπέμπειν seems an unusual word to use for obtaining the services of hired labourers.

⁶⁴ Paul Foucart, *Les Grands mystères d'Éleusis: Personnel et cérémonies (Mémoires de l'Institut National de France, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres 37.2, Paris 1904) 116-17* (= *Les Mystères d'Éleusis* (Paris 1914) 318-20) and Foucart (n.8) 124-5. Foucart's idea of competing claims was taken up by Walton (n.17) 173-4 who saw the use of πρῶτος in *AP* 6.145 as a sign that some people considered that Sophocles had a claim to the honour of having introduced Asclepius. So also Ferguson (n.8) 90-1.

⁶⁵ One of these inscriptions is *IG* ii².4355, in which the name of Telemachus is only restored. Since Foucart wrote, Luigi Beschi has argued that the other, *IG* ii².4961, forms part of one text with *IG* ii².4960a and b, and that they are all fragments of a pilaster that supported a double-sided pinax displaying reliefs. Beschi dubbed his reconstruction of the whole the 'Telemachus monument'. See L. Beschi, 'Il monumento di Telemachos, fondatore dell'Asklepieion ateniese', *ASAA* n.s. 29-30 (1967-68) 381-436, and 'Il rilievo di Telemachos ricompletato', *AAA* 15 (1982) 31-43.

⁶⁶ The relevant portion of lines 20-23 of Clinton's text reads: 'Ἀρχεῆας· ἐπὶ τοῖς οἴκοθεν οἱ Κηρύκες ἠμφεσβήθησαν τὸ χωρὶο καὶ ἐνια | [ἐπεκώλ]υσαν ποήσασα ('Archeas: in his archonship the Ceryces raised a dispute over the land and prevented some things from being done').

⁶⁷ Clinton (n.7) 28-9 and 32-3 sees in the wording of the inscription evidence of competition between Telemachus and the Eleusinian priestly clans. For the initiation of Asclepius see Philostratus senior, *Vita Apollonii* 4.18. Walton (n.17) 172, suggested that the Ceryces may have wished Asclepius to remain in the Eleusinium rather than have a temple of his own.

Foucart also suggested that Asclepius had lodged in Sophocles' house because his temple was not yet built.⁶⁸ F.R. Walton rang a variation on this theme by suggesting that Asclepius was at first housed in the Eleusinium, but when the dispute with the Ceryces arose, could no longer remain there and stayed with Sophocles 'during the course of the litigation'.⁶⁹ Clinton, however, supposes that Sophocles' role in the introduction of the cult was to provide at his own house only a reception (not lodging) for Asclepius, as 'a ξένος arriving from abroad', and that Sophocles' paean was probably sung on this occasion.⁷⁰ He suggests that Sophocles was on excellent terms with the Eumolpidae and argues that he was chosen to be the Receiver because he was a great poet and a priest of Amynus.⁷¹ It is entirely plausible that Sophocles composed the paean for Asclepius at the time of the introduction of the cult, but insofar as speculations about his role in this event go beyond the composition and involve some kind of reception of a cultic snake or statue, they must rest on the assumption that our sources for the reception refer directly or indirectly to a cultic event. Such an assumption is quite unjustified. It is far more likely that the Byzantine article on 'Dexion' reflects the story of Asclepius' supernatural visit to Sophocles, which in turn probably arose as biographical elaboration around the paean. There is no good reason for making Sophocles a priest of Amynus in support of an equation of the Dexion of the inscriptions with that of the Byzantine dictionary article, and there is no independent evidence that Sophocles participated in a cultic reception of Asclepius.

VII. SOPHOCLES ON THE TELEMACHUS MONUMENT?

It is necessary to consider one final piece of evidence allegedly linking Sophocles to the cult of Asclepius. In his reconstruction of the Telemachus monument Luigi Beschi offers an interpretation of one very badly damaged scene from the relief-work on the pilaster. On the reverse faces of Athens National Museum nos. 2490 and 2491 there are what look like the remains of a funeral-banquet scene.⁷² Beschi argues on two grounds that a figure on the right of the scene, who is drinking and must have been reclining on a couch, is a portrayal of Sophocles-Dexion. The first is that a lyre near the position where the reclining figure's lower legs must have been identifies the figure as a poet and may allude to the portrait of Sophocles that was said to have been displayed in the Stoa Poikile showing him in the title role of his own *Thamyris*. The second is that a 'vaguely circular' shape in the centre of the scene may be a tragic mask being held up towards the drinker by a young man on the far left (an *oinochoos*) as a sign that the former was a tragic poet.⁷³ There is no reason to suppose, however, that the young man on the left was holding this object, and the identification of it as a mask is speculative. Beschi believes that there is insufficient space for any seated female figure of whom this shape would be the head, but this judgement seems doubtful to me and the possibility for accommodation of such a figure deserves further consideration. Furthermore, it is highly

⁶⁸ Foucart (n.64, 1904) 116.

⁶⁹ Walton (n.17) 172-3. Alphonse Dain argues in Sophocles, *Les Trachiniennes, Antigone* (Paris 1955) xiii n.2 that Sophocles lodged Asclepius' statue in his house for one or two nights until the god, who had arrived in Athens too late to attend the beginning of the Eleusinian Mysteries, could be inducted in a second ceremony. For an illustration of how far the process of biographical elaboration can go, see Ferguson's delightful improvisation on the lodging at Ferguson (n.8) 90. Cf. Parker (n.7) 185.

⁷⁰ Clinton (n.7) 25.

⁷¹ Clinton (n.7) 31.

⁷² For a full description and interpretation of the scene see Beschi (n.65, 1967-68) 422-28 with figs. 8 and 11 (on 401 and 403).

⁷³ Beschi (n.65, 1967-68) 423, interprets the remains of the shape as a full crown of hair framing a low and wrinkled forehead.

questionable that the lyre need signify that the person nearby had been a famous human poet. It may simply be an attribute of the sympotic context of the banquet; or if the figure is Asclepius, might it also be a reference—unparalleled, I admit—to his education by Chiron? In any case, as the drinker cannot actually be holding the lyre (his right arm is raised in the air and his left could not be made to reach the lyre), it is possible that the lyre is being held by some other figure, who was perhaps sitting in front of the drinker.⁷⁴

One might expect *prima facie* that the reclining figure was Asclepius himself, but sure instances of Asclepius in this position are few.⁷⁵ Even so, there is evidence that Asclepius and similar healing deities could be shown reclining at a banquet.⁷⁶ But if the figure on the Telemachus monument is not Asclepius, it is less likely to have been Sophocles than a hero or deity whose association with Asclepius was well established, such as one of the Asclepiadae. The internal evidence for an identification with Sophocles is decidedly weak and the external evidence comprised of the reception story and the heroisation is no better. For, as I have shown, there is good reason to reject the historicity of the reception, and, as I shall argue now, the heroisation of Sophocles should also be doubted.

VIII. THE HEROISATION OF SOPHOCLES

Sophocles' heroisation is attested in the Byzantine dictionary entry and the Hellenistic *Life*. The former tells us that the Athenians made a heroum for Sophocles and called him Dexion, implying that the reception was at least one reason for the heroisation. The *Life* records the Alexandrian antiquarian, Ister, as saying that the Athenians passed a decree requiring that sacrifices be offered to Sophocles every year, which I take to signify worship of the poet as a hero.⁷⁷ The *Life*, however, says nothing of Dexion or a reception, though it is possible that reference to those things has dropped out of the text, perhaps in the lacuna after the mention

⁷⁴ Although I have suggested that the sympotic context of the funeral banquet might explain the presence of the lyre, I have been unable to find a convincing parallel among the many funeral-banquet reliefs collected by Jean-Marie Dentzer, *Le Motif du banquet couché dans le Proche Orient et le monde grec du VII^e au IV^e siècle avant J.-C.* (Rome 1982). Dentzer (466-68) follows Beschi's interpretation of the scene on the Telemachus monument without adding any new information. F.T. van Straten, *Hierà kalá: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden 1995) 70-71, finds the identification with Sophocles-Dexion convincing because of the lyre and the tragic mask.

⁷⁵ Bernard Holtzmann, *LIMC* 2.892, says of the nineteen known banquet reliefs found in sanctuaries of Asclepius: 'L'identification avec A., ..., est loin d'être assurée: il peut s'agir d'un mort héroïsé placé sous la protection d'A. ou d'un hommage rendu par la famille du défunt à son dieu tutélaire'. Cf. Parker (n.7) 183 n. 109.

⁷⁶ A marble relief, probably of Attic origin and dating from the fourth century BC (*LIMC* 2, s.v. 'Asklepios' no. 42 = Venice, Mus. Arch. 165), has Asclepius reclining on a *kline* with a knotted stick in his left hand and in his right a dish from which a snake is feeding. A Boeotian red-figure crater of c. 400 BC (*LIMC* 2, s.v. 'Asklepios' no. 41 = Athens, Nat. Mus. 1393) may show Asclepius, reclining and feeding a snake from a *kantharos* held in his outstretched right hand, but the figure may also be another healing deity, such as Amphiaraus or Trophonius. With these we should compare a relief from the Amphiareum at Oropus of mid-IV BC (*LIMC* 1, s.v. 'Amphiaraos' no. 66 = Athens, Nat. Mus. 3405) depicting Amphiaraus reclining, a *rhyton* in his outstretched right hand, a *phiale* in his left, with a woman (Hygieia?) sitting at his feet, a serving-boy standing at his head and a family of worshippers approaching from the left; and also a Boeotian red-figure bell-crater of late V BC (*LIMC* 1, s.v. 'Amphiaraos' no. 83 = Athens, Nat. Mus. 1393) showing a figure (Amphiaraus?) reclining with an egg in his left hand and in his outstretched right hand a *kantharos* towards which a snake bends down.

⁷⁷ *Vita* §17 (= *TrGF* 4 T1 lines 74-5): "Ιστρος δέ φησιν Ἀθηναίους διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν ψήφισμα πεποιηκέναι καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος αὐτῷ θύειν ('Ister says that the Athenians, because of the man's excellence, had passed a decree to sacrifice to him each year'). From the six fragments attributed to Ister in the *Vita Sophoclis* (see *FGrHist* 334 F33-38, which cover origins, education, innovations, death and *Nachleben*) it is clear that Ister himself wrote a biography of the poet. For descriptions and assessments of Ister's work see Lionel Pearson, *The Local Historians of Attica* (Philadelphia 1942) 136-44, and *FGrHist* 334.

of Asclepius in §11.⁷⁸ Ister's reported view is that the Athenians passed the decree because of Sophocles' excellence, but this tells us nothing about what kind of ἄρετή earned the reward. The reception, therefore, need not have been tied to the heroisation when Ister was writing in the mid-third century BC. But how likely is it that Sophocles had actually been heroised by this time for any reason?

Attached to the end of this article is a list of heroised 'historical' persons who died after the heroic age but before 336 BC.⁷⁹ My list is based on the one published by L.R. Farnell in his book, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, under the heading 'Cults of real and historic persons'. His list comprises ninety-three entries and includes persons from all periods.⁸⁰ From this list I have extracted forty-one items and added twelve more.⁸¹ My fifty-three items include eight group heroisations, two paired ones and forty-three single ones. It is unlikely that this list is exhaustive, but, as it stands, the list may support some useful general observations about the heroisation of post-heroic-age persons. The list shows that heroisation of historical persons who lived in the Classical and pre-Classical periods was widely practised in Greece.⁸² The dates of decease of these heroised persons can be distributed in a chronological table in the following way:⁸³

Early	VII	VI	V	IV	Uncertain	Total
2	4	17	22	6 ⁸⁴	2 ⁸⁵	53

⁷⁸ Lefkowitz, who does not seem to accept the lacuna—see her translation at Lefkowitz (n.6) 161—, comments on the report of heroisation: 'The original account by Ister may have referred to the cult of Sophocles as Dexion, but the biographer records only the information needed to show that by the Hellenistic age Sophocles had attained heroic status' (87). This may be true, or it may not be: Lefkowitz does not demonstrate that this biographer or others handled their sources according to the principle of redaction implied in her suggestion.

⁷⁹ By the term 'historical person' I mean a person whom the *Greeks*, or at least many Greeks, believed actually lived. I exclude the heroes of the 'heroic' age, who may have been historical in the view of Greeks, because I wish to investigate the likelihood that Greeks would have heroised a person like Sophocles: the Greeks themselves from Homer on made a distinction between the great men and women of the heroic age and the people of later, degenerate times. My choice of 336 as the cut-off date is a practical one based on a conventional division, rather than a distinction clearly justified by the history of Greek religion. Nevertheless, since I am investigating the heroisation of Sophocles, the evidence for religious practices before and shortly after his death is *prima facie* more significant. On the continuity of Athenian religious practices and beliefs into the third century and beyond see Parker (n.7) 256-81.

⁸⁰ See Farnell (n.45) 420-26. Farnell has double entries for two persons, so that the total may be reduced to ninety-one.

⁸¹ The heroes included in Farnell's list but not in mine were excluded from my list because their dates of death were too late (most cases) or too uncertain (Farnell nos. 243a, 257), or because there was insufficient evidence from which to infer either heroisation (244, 275, 280, 292, 295, 318, 320) or the historical existence of the person (323). The twelve added by me are the Tegean law-givers, Archilochus, Zaleucus, Timaratas, Aristas, Battus, Pixodarus, Athenodorus, the Rhegian Pythagoreans, the Megarians killed at Plataea, Themistocles and Hagnon. Farnell mentions the Megarians at his no. 242. I am grateful to Professor M.B. Wallace for bringing Battus and Aristas to my attention.

⁸² We find cases in Attica and the Athenian colonies of Amphipolis and the Chersonese, in Ionian cities throughout the Aegean and in Magna Graecia, in Dorian communities in the Peloponnese and Sicily and at Cyrene, in Elis and Arcadia, and in Boeotia and central Greece. The areas wholly unrepresented or only poorly represented are Western Greece (including Aetolia), Thessaly, Doris, Crete, Euboea, Greek Cyprus and Aeolis. The Magnesian colony of Magnesia on the Meander provides the only instance of heroisation in a city with roots in northern Greece. That the list does not accurately reflect regional and tribal differences, however, may be inferred from the distribution of the cases among the authors. Pausanias provides thirteen items in the list and is often the only witness for the existence of any cult at all in some cities and even in some districts. Yet the *Descriptio* only covers Attica, the Isthmus, the Peloponnese and central Greece. How much we may be missing is suggested by the fact that we happen to learn about four hero cults in Sicily, an area not covered by Pausanias, from a writer with local knowledge, Diodorus.

⁸³ Lysander is said to have received divine honours, albeit briefly, shortly *before* his death.

⁸⁴ These six include the Spartan kings as a group. Whether they were honoured in a single group or by royal house or as individuals is uncertain. As a group they include kings dating from legendary times down to at least the

It would be unwise to insist that our sources have preserved a reliably representative sample of pre-Hellenistic heroes, and so it is difficult to attach any firm significance to the bulge in the number of heroes from the sixth and especially the fifth centuries. Yet the number of heroes from the fifth century is large enough to prompt the question whether there are so many of them because *post-Classical* Greeks were inclined to heroise famous persons from what was already for them a classical period, or because *Classical* Greeks themselves established numerous hero cults.

An answer to this question depends on our knowing the dates of the establishment of cults. Fourteen of the cults in the list are mentioned in pre-Hellenistic sources ranging in date from Pindar to Aristotle, and so have *termini ante quos* in the Classical period.⁸⁶ These instances attest the worship in Classical times of historical persons who were heroised because of their activity as legislators, kings and tyrants, founders, fallen military 'heroes' or enemies to be appeased.⁸⁷ They make it likely that many of the cults attested in later sources did exist in Classical times. For example, Thucydides' description of the cult for the Greeks who fell at Plataea makes it plausible that there were cults in the Classical period both for the Greek dead of Marathon and for Alpheus and Maron, heroes of Thermopylae, at Sparta. The granting of heroic honours to Lycurgus recorded by Herodotus makes the heroisation of other early legislators plausible, and so on. Furthermore it is clear that several of the cults were established soon after the decease of the heroes: Gelon of Syracuse, Brasidas, and Euphron of Sicyon were heroised, it seems, immediately upon their deaths; the Persian noble, Artachaeës, was being worshipped within about fifty years of his death; and the Greeks who fell at Plataea were heroised within seventy years of the battle.

From the list as a whole and from the fourteen cases in the Classical sources it is apparent that there had long been a variety of motives for heroisation. This is a point of some significance because it suggests that the common emphasis in discussions of heroes on those of the type that must be appeased is somewhat misplaced. Most of the persons on the list were heroised as benefactors to their communities. This is good news, I think, for those who would like to believe in the early heroisation of Sophocles. Three things, however, reduce the likelihood that Sophocles was heroised as Dexion in the late fifth or the fourth century. The first is that, if we accept the reason for his heroisation given in the Byzantine dictionary article, we should place him in a class that has no other members, the class of those who have received a divine visitation, or, if one accepts the story of his association with the introduction of the cult of Asclepius, the class of those who established new cults. So far we have no Classical parallel for the heroisation of such a benefactor.⁸⁸

Second, if we ignore the dictionary article and include him instead among his fellow poets, we find that the evidence for the heroisation of poets before the Hellenistic age is very slight: all of the sources, except those for Archilochus, are late; the sources for Sappho and Pindar do not point unequivocally to heroic honours; and the only source for Aeschylus is his *Life*, which

time of Xenophon, and so attest to the heroisation of persons from the whole of the period under consideration. Consequently I have chosen to include them here in the fourth century in order to weight the table in favour of heroisation in the time soon after Sophocles' death.

⁸⁵ These are Polycritē, whose story appears to have been known to Aristotle, and the Tegean law-givers.

⁸⁶ Those fourteen are: Lycurgus, the Lacedaemonian kings, Timesius, Battus, Miltiades, the Phocaeans murdered at Agylla, Harmodius and Aristogiton, Philippus, Onesilus, Artachaeës, the Greeks killed at Plataea, Hagnon, Brasidas, and Euphron.

⁸⁷ The reasons for the heroisation of Artachaeës and his worship by Greeks are unclear.

⁸⁸ Sophocles' singularity emerges in a comment by Parker (n.7) 257-8, when, speaking of Athenian debate over worship of Alexander in 324, he observes: 'There was in fact no tradition at Athens of treating historical mortals even as heroes, if we except the two tyrannicides and the war-dead on the one hand, and on the other the poet Sophocles, host of a god'.

is likely to be quite unreliable.⁸⁹ The case for Archilochus is strong: we have unequivocal epigraphic evidence of a cult founded in the mid-third century BC, and the existence of a fourth-century tomb for the poet suggests that he was at least on the way to being heroised, if he had not been already. But we should not forget that Archilochus died two centuries before Sophocles did and that legends grew up around him, as they also clustered around Homer and Hesiod. The case for the early heroisation of fifth century poets seems weak to me.⁹⁰ Alternatively, we might understand Ister's statement that the Athenians voted Sophocles an annual sacrifice 'on account of his *arete*' as referring to, or including, excellence in fields other than poetry. The evidence for Sophocles' service as a *strategos* and as a magistrate is not negligible, but there seems to be no evidence, except the possibility that Sophocles was heroised, for thinking that his service earned him special recognition.⁹¹ If we set the relative obscurity of Sophocles' public career beside the Athenians' esteem for those who fought at Marathon or their affection for the Tyrannicides, it seems unlikely that he would have been heroised for this alone.⁹² Since I also regard the early heroisation of fifth century poets as unlikely, I believe that the combination of public service and poetic prowess would not have been sufficient cause for Sophocles' heroisation soon after his death.

Finally, the worship of an historical person under a new name (such as Dexion for Sophocles) may be unparalleled in the Archaic and Classical periods. Foucart explained the second name given to Sophocles by suggesting that, because 'la possession d'un Héros était attachée à celle de son corps' and because Sophocles had actually been buried eleven stades outside the city, the *orgeones* of Amynus could not install a hero called Sophocles in their shrine. 'Ils eurent l'idée,' thought Foucart, 'de le dédoubler et de tirer de lui une personnalité fictive qu'ils désignèrent, comme on le fit souvent pour les Héros, non par son nom, mais par un surnom'.⁹³ It is not clear to me what heroes Foucart had in mind as parallels for such appellations. W.S. Ferguson, who follows Foucart on this question, cited the deified Ptolemies as parallels, but the later date and different circumstances make them poor analogies.⁹⁴ Only two possible cases of name-change connected with heroisation are known to me. Vitruvius records that a shepherd named Pixodarus discovered the source of marble from which the Ephesians rebuilt the temple of Artemis in the mid-sixth century.⁹⁵ He brought news of his

⁸⁹ *Vita Aeschylis* §11 (= *TrGF* 3 T1, lines 46-7) says εἰς τὸ μνήμα δὲ φοιτῶντες ὅσοις ἐν τραγωδίαις ἦν ὁ βίος ἐνήγχιζόν τε καὶ τὰ δράματα ὑπεκρίνοντο ('coming to his memorial, all who made their living through tragedies would make offerings and perform [his] plays'). As one of the Journal's readers observed, those referred to in the words ὅσοις ἐν τραγωδίαις ἦν ὁ βίος may have been the Hellenistic Artists of Dionysus. If they were, the offerings alleged here would be unlikely to antedate the early third century. For the beginnings of the Artists of Dionysus see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (2nd ed., rev. J. Gould and D.M. Lewis, Oxford 1988) 279-82 and J.K. Davies, *CAH* 7.1 (2nd ed., Cambridge 1984) 319.

⁹⁰ Deneken (n.46) 2541-43, argues that the heroisation of Sophocles is alluded to as early as Aristophanes' *Frogs*: the description of Sophocles as εὐκόλος at *Frogs* 82 is alleged to be an indication that he had already been heroised, because the adjective εὐκόλος is used of deities with chthonic associations and of heroes (*viz* Asclepius, Hermes and an otherwise nameless hero; *cf.* the by-name Εὐκολίνη used of Hecate). I do not find the evidence for such a usage of εὐκόλος compelling. Rather, as one of the Journal's readers remarked, the absence from the *Frogs* and from Phrynichus, *Musae fr.* 32 of any clearer indication of Sophocles' immediate heroisation tells against it.

⁹¹ On Sophocles' military career see Leonard Woodbury, 'Sophocles among the generals', *Phoenix* 24 (1970) 209-24.

⁹² Those heroised in connection with military affairs were usually liberators or saviours (and often therefore quasi-founders), and almost all of them died in battle. Those heroised for political service were founders, law-givers or tyrants. Sophocles' military and political service falls short of these standards.

⁹³ Foucart (n.8) 125.

⁹⁴ Ferguson (n.8) 87 n. 35. Neither the need to distinguish homonymous rulers nor a desire to link them with positive attributes for the purpose of propaganda seems relevant in Sophocles' case.

⁹⁵ Vitruvius 10.2.15. For the dating see W.B. Dinsmoor, *The Architecture of Ancient Greece: An Account of*

discovery to the city just as the Ephesians were debating from what city they ought to purchase the necessary marble and they immediately decreed honours for him and changed his name to Euangelus; in Vitruvius' day monthly sacrifices were offered to him at the site of the discovery. Since it is highly unlikely that Pixodarus was heroised before his death, it seems that the name-change was not connected directly with heroisation. Perhaps the change to a Greek name accompanied a grant of citizenship, or manumission if he was a slave.⁹⁶ The second case is that of the runaway Chian slave turned bandit-leader, Drimacus, who, according to Nymphodorus of Syracuse, was heroised by the Chians after his death as the Kindly Hero (ὁ ἥρωας εὐμενής).⁹⁷ But even if the story is true, Drimacus is probably to be dated to the third century.⁹⁸ Neither of these cases provides a secure parallel for name-change associated with heroisation during the Classical period, or at all.⁹⁹ To judge from the evidence for the Classical period, Lefkowitz appears to be correct in saying that adult heroes were worshipped under their own names and did not acquire new identities.¹⁰⁰

The evidence of the phenomenon of heroisation, therefore, seems to me to be equivocal. On the one hand, the heroisation of prominent men who died in the fifth century is not as uncommon as one might first think; on the other, those men who were heroised in the Classical period seem to have been prominent in fields other than those in which Sophocles excelled. I myself am reluctant to accept that Sophocles was worshipped as a hero soon after his death. Ister's statement shows, however, that by the mid-third century it was not preposterous to say that Sophocles had been heroised. Furthermore, the possibility that Ister was dependent upon actual epigraphic evidence (as could be inferred from the reference to a ψήφισμα and the wording διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρετῆν) deserves to be borne in mind.¹⁰¹ We must weigh against this, however, the consideration that just as Hellenistic biographers could fabricate epitaphs and epigrams, they could also invent or imaginatively interpret decrees.¹⁰² But if Ister's report is correct, perhaps the cultic rites of which he speaks originated in the honours paid to the three great fifth-century tragedians at Athens in the 330s, when reverence for all

its Historic Development (3rd ed., 1950; repr. London 1975) 127 n.2.

⁹⁶ On the related phenomenon of double names see G.H.R. Horsley, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 4 (New York 1992) 1011-17.

⁹⁷ Nymphodorus apud Athenaeus 265D-266E.

⁹⁸ Jacoby (*FGrHist* 572) and Laqueur (*RE*, s.v. 'Nymphodoros' no. 6) place Nymphodorus towards the end of the third century BC. For a very rough attempt to date the start of Drimacus' career to the 270s or 260s see Alexander Fuks, 'Slave wars and slave troubles in Chios in the third century BC', *Athenaeum* n.s. 46 (1968) 102-11, esp. 105-7. Graf (n.23) 121-5 argues that the romantic story of Drimacus may have an historical core, but may equally be an aetiological tale. He looks to Sophocles and Pixodarus for evidence of the plausibility of Drimacus' name-change and historical existence. The story has been treated most recently by Guido Bonelli, 'La saga di Drimaco nel sesto libro di Ateneo: ipotesi interpretativa', *QUCC* 46 (1994) 135-42.

⁹⁹ Deneken (n.46) 2528-29 argues that the cults in these two cases did not originate from heroisations of historical persons.

¹⁰⁰ Lefkowitz (n.6) 84.

¹⁰¹ Compare the wording, for example, in one of the decrees of the *orgeones* of Amyntus, Asclepius and Dexion discussed above: ἐπαινέσαι αὐτοὺς | ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνη(ς) εἰς τοὺς | θεοὺς καὶ περὶ κοινὰ τὰ τῶν ὀργεῶνων ('to praise them for their excellence and justice towards the gods and concerning the common affairs of the *orgeones*': *IG* ii².1252.6-8). Ferguson (n.8) 87 n.35 thought that the Byzantine lexicographer and Ister had mistakenly interpreted a decree of these *orgeones* as a decree of the Athenian state.

¹⁰² See Janet Fairweather, 'Fiction in the biographies of ancient writers', *Ancient Society* 5 (1974) 231-75, esp. 249-56. One of the Journal's readers suggested that the heroisation story could have arisen from comic hyperbole, such as that put into the mouth of Aeschylus at *Frogs* 1039, where without derision he calls Lamachus ἥρωας (cf. the sarcastic ὦ Λαμοῦχ' ἥρωας of *Acharnians* 575 and 578). A comic situation could even have provided the starting point for belief in a decree: for examples of mock ψήφισματα in comedy see *Birds* 1032-44 and *Ecclesiazusae* 1012-20.

three as ‘classical’ authors and state treasures was expressed in the erection of bronze statues of them in the theatre and the preparation of standard texts of their works.¹⁰³

IX. CONCLUSION

Not only is it unlikely that Sophocles received heroic honours before the 330s, but it is entirely plausible that he was never heroised at all and that the report of heroic honours was a Hellenistic biographical invention. Whether or not this reported heroisation existed in fact, the connection of it with a story about a reception of Asclepius was surely Hellenistic fabrication. This story related some kind of supernatural visitation by the god and there is no reason to think that Sophocles lodged the snake or statue of Asclepius in his house or participated in the introduction of the cult to Athens in 420, except perhaps by composing his paeon to the god for that occasion. How the story of Asclepius’ supernatural visitation arose, we cannot say for sure, but given the now well established observation that literary biographers in the Hellenistic period frequently inferred biographical information from their subjects’ works, it is likely that the story of the reception was inspired by the existence or the content of the paeon. What then of Dexion? As a change of name upon heroisation is almost wholly unparalleled, I believe that the ‘heroised’ Sophocles was speculatively linked on the basis of the reception story with an already existing and entirely separate hero called Dexion, perhaps the one attested by *IG* ii².1252 and 1253 (identification with this Dexion being an obvious step because of his shared association with Asclepius).¹⁰⁴ A further encouragement for such a process of connection of Sophocles with Dexion could well have been descriptions of the poet as δεξιός, such as we find in Phrynichus and Ion of Chios.¹⁰⁵ When such a link might have been made we cannot say. No mention of the reception or the name Dexion is to be found in the Hellenistic *Life* of Sophocles, nor does Plutarch or Philostratus the Younger use any word related to δέχομαι to describe Sophocles’ reception of the god. Nothing conclusive can be argued from the latter observation, but it could be taken as a sign that Plutarch and Philostratus were ignorant of the connection between Sophocles and the name Dexion, or did not accept it. If it was unknown to them, perhaps the connection was made after their time, or perhaps it had been made earlier but by an obscure author whose speculations nevertheless survived to be discovered by the Byzantine lexicographer.

ANDREW CONNOLLY

University of Otago

¹⁰³ [Plutarch], *Vitae decem oratorum* 841F (= *TrGF* 4 T156). Cf. Pausanias 1.21.1 (= *TrGF* 4 T161).

¹⁰⁴ For it to have been an obvious step, of course, some Hellenistic or later scholar must have had knowledge of some of the more obscure details of Attic cult. Reference by an author to a minor deity associated with a major one is not at all unlikely. We know that in this case a real Dexion was available for such mention.

¹⁰⁵ See Phrynichus, *Musae fr.* 32 K-A (μάκαρ Σοφοκλέους, δε χρόνον βιοδος | απέθανεν εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ καὶ δεξιός) and Ion of Chios *FGrHist* 392 F6 (ἀνδρὶ παιδιώδει παρ’ οἴνον καὶ δεξιῶι and τοιαῦτα πολλά δεξιῶς ἔλεγεν τε καὶ ἐπρήσσειν). I owe this suggestion to one of the Journal’s readers.

APPENDIX: A List of Heroised Historical Persons Who Died Before 336 BC¹⁰⁶

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of death</u>	<u>Place of cult</u>	<u>Sources</u>
Homer	?	Ios, Smyrna, Notion Argos	see <i>RE</i> 8, s. v. 'Homereon' Ael. <i>VH</i> 9.15
Lycurgus	?	Sparta	Hdt. 1.65-6
Polycritē	?	Naxos	Plut. <i>Mul. Virt.</i> 17; Parthenius 9
Tegean law-givers	?	Tegea	Paus. 8.48.1
Lacedaemonian kings	VIII?+	Sparta	Xen. <i>Resp. Lac.</i> 15.9
Hesiod	VII?	Orchomenus	Paus. 9.38.3; Proclus, <i>Vita Hes.</i> 4
Archilochus	VII	Paros	<i>SEG</i> 15 no. 517; <i>Fond. Hardt</i> 10; <i>cf.</i> Arist. <i>Rhet.</i> 1398b
Zaleucus	mid-VII?	Epiz. Locri	Iambl. <i>VP</i> 30
Timaratas	mid-VII?	Epiz. Locri	Iambl. <i>VP</i> 30
Charondas	c. 700	Catana	Iambl. <i>VP</i> 30
100 Oresthasians ('Logades')	659/8	Phigalea	Paus. 8.41.1
Aristomenes	600?	Messene	Paus. 4.32.3
Aristeas of Proconnesus	VI?	Magna Graecia	Celsus ap. Origen, <i>Contra Cels.</i> 3.26; Apollonius, <i>Hist. Mir.</i> 2; <i>cf.</i> Hdt. 4.15
Oebotas	VI?	Dyme, Achaea	Paus. 7.17.13-14
Timesius	VI?	Abdera	Hdt. 1.168
Bias	VI	Priene	D.L. 1.88
Sappho	VI	Mytilene	Coins: B.M. Cat., pl. 39 no. 11; <i>cf.</i> Arist. <i>Rhet.</i> 1398b
Battus	early VI	Cyrene	Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 5.85-95
Chilon	mid-VI	Sparta	Paus. 3.16.4; <i>cf.</i> Arist. <i>Rhet.</i> 1398b
Miltiades	mid-VI	Chersonese	Hdt. 6.38
Pixodarus/ Euangelus	mid-VI?	Ephesus	Vitruvius 10.2.15
Phocaeen captives	c. 540	Agylla, Italy	Hdt. 1.167
Harmodius and Aristogiton	514	Athens	Demosth. 19.280; Athen. 15.695
Athenodorus	c. 510	Sparta	Paus. 3.16.4
Philippus	c. 510	Segesta	Hdt. 5.46-7
Rhegian Pythagoreans	late VI?	Rhegium?	Iambl. <i>VP</i> 30
Euthymus	V	Epiz. Locri; Olympia?	Plin. <i>NH</i> 7.47
Polydamas	V	Olympia	Luc. <i>Deor. Con.</i> 12
Theagenes	V	Thasos	Paus. 6.11.2-9
Onesilus	c. 497	Amathus	Hdt. 5.114
Cleomedes	492	Astypalaea	Paus. 6.9.6-8; <i>cf.</i> Plut. <i>Romulus</i> 28.
Greeks killed at Marathon	490	Marathon	Paus. 1.32.4
Alpheus and Maron	480	Sparta	Paus. 3.12.9
Artachaeës	c. 480	Acanthus	Hdt. 7.117
Greeks killed at Plataea	479	Plataea	Thuc. 3.58.4; Plut. <i>Arist.</i> 21
Megarians killed at Plataea	479	Megara	<i>CIG</i> 1051 (= Sim. <i>fr.</i> 107); <i>cf.</i> Paus. 1.43.3
Gelon	478	Syracuse	D.S. 11.38.5
Theron of Acragas	471	Acragas	D.S. 11.53
Themistocles	c. 469/459	Magnesia on M.	Coins: <i>MDAI(A)</i> 21 (1896) 18-26; <i>cf.</i> Thuc. 1.138.4-5
Hieron of Syracuse	467	Catana-Aetna	D.S. 11.66
Aeschylus	456	Gela	<i>Vita</i> , ll. 46-7 Radt
Cimon	449	Citium	Plut. <i>Cimon</i> 19.5
Pindar	438	Delphi	Paus. 9.23.3
Anaxagoras	c. 428	Lampsacus	Ael. <i>VH</i> 8.19; <i>cf.</i> Arist. <i>Rhet.</i> 1398b
Hagnon	c. 425	Amphipolis	Thuc. 5.11
Brasidas	422	Amphipolis	Thuc. 5.11
Diocles	412+	Syracuse	D.S. 13.35
Sophocles	405	Athens	<i>Vita</i> ll. 74-5 Radt; <i>Et. Mag.</i> 256.6
Cynisca (d. of Archidamas I)	IV?	Sparta	Paus. 3.15.1
Hippocrates	early IV	Greece	<i>Vita</i> : Westermann, Βιογράφοι 450; Plin. <i>NH</i> 7.37; <i>cf.</i> Luc. <i>Philops.</i> 21
Lysander	395	Cities; Samos	Plut. <i>Lys.</i> 18; Athenag. <i>Leg.</i> 14
Euphron	365	Sicyon	Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 7.3.12
Podares	362	Mantineia	Paus. 8.9.9

¹⁰⁶ The evidence for the heroic status of all those listed here is not equally secure. The most doubtful cases seem to me to be Polycritē, Timaratas, Sappho, the Rhegian Pythagoreans and Pindar. The historicity of some of the persons is also in doubt (notably Homer, Lycurgus, Timaratas and the one hundred Oresthasian warriors).