

The Functions of the Delphic Amphictyony before 346 BCE¹

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Despite a long tradition of scholarship, the development and early history of the Delphic Amphictyony has remained frustratingly obscure.² In this paper I want to suggest a new way of approaching the Amphictyony, and to suggest new interpretations of its function and composition in the period before 346 BCE. Traditionally the Amphictyony has been treated as a political body, albeit with important religious functions.³ Scholars have placed emphasis on the formal meetings of the members and on questions of who belonged to the body and who was excluded. This is hardly surprising, as it reflects the way that the council is presented in the epigraphic record,⁴ in the speeches of Aeschines and in the accounts of the origins of the Amphictyony found in Strabo and Pausanias.⁵ The Amphictyony is considered to be like other groupings of Greek states that met at a common sanctuary 'to deliberate concerning common affairs' as Strabo puts it.⁶ There is no doubt that this was what its members came to believe the Amphictyony had always been, but it has long been recognised that there are difficulties with this idea. The most obvious is the near invisibility of the Amphictyony in accounts of the history of Greece between the end of the Persian Wars in 479 BCE and the outbreak of the 'Third Sacred War' in 356 BCE.⁷ In this paper, instead of comparing the Amphictyony with other leagues or alliances, I want to compare its functions with those of other bodies with responsibility for sanctuaries and festivals. This will reveal the extent to which the

¹ A version of this paper was given at the thirtieth conference of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies at Bar-Ilan University on 5 June 2001. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the conference organizers for inviting me to speak, and to friends and colleagues at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and in particular to Professor Dwora Gilula, for their hospitality during my time in Israel.

² Study of the Delphic Amphictyony has been transformed by two recent excellent and exhaustive studies, Lefèvre 1998 and Sánchez 2001, and by the publication in 2002 of the fourth volume of the *Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes: documents amphictioniques* (henceforward CID 4). Although some of my conclusions differ from those of Sánchez and Lefèvre, I remain indebted to their monumental scholarship.

³ E.g. Roux 1979; Forrest 1982, 312-8; Hornblower 1992; Tausend 1992; Hall 2002, 134-54.

⁴ Documents collected in CID 4.

⁵ Strab. 420; Paus. 10.8.1.

⁶ Strab. 420: περί ... τῶν κοινῶν βουλευσόμενον. It is necessary here to draw a distinction between groups that simply met at a sanctuary on a regular basis, and those that had responsibility for the sanctuary. The former would include the 'Delian League' (Th. 1.96.2) and the group of states that met at the Panionion to plan resistance first to Lydia and then to the Persians (Hdt. 1.141.4, 170.1). This group was not identical to the twelve Ionian *poleis* which were said to have set up the Panionion, as it initially did not include the Milesians (Hdt. 1.141.4), and later at least did include non-Ionians such as the Lesbians (Hdt. 6.8.2).

⁷ Cf. Hornblower 1992 for the fifth century.

Amphictyony was genuinely a religious body, whose political activities, such as they were, developed out of its obligations towards the sanctuaries with which it was concerned.

The Pylaea

Central to a new understanding of the Amphictyony is a reconsideration of the twice-yearly Pylaea. Rather than thinking of the Pylaea as primarily the occasion of the meetings of the Amphictyonic Council, we should think of it as a festival attended by a group of neighbours (ἀμφικτύονες).⁸ We are told little in any sources about what happened at this festival, but certain words get their meaning from it: *πυλαιασταί* is a word for buffoons, according to Photius and the Suda, so named because such figures were regularly found at the Pylaea; Plutarch uses the expression ὄχλαγωγίας πυλαϊκή to mean ‘nonsense intended for the crowd’, and *πυλαία* itself to mean a farrago.⁹ The image these words bring to mind is of a lively festival that provided entertainment for those who attended.¹⁰ In its earlier days it presumably differed somewhat from festivals such as the Olympic and Pythian games, where the local elites had a more prominent role.¹¹ It took place at Anthela, around the temple of Demeter (called Demeter Amphictyonis by Herodotus) where there was an area of open ground and seats for the amphictyons, that is presumably the organizers of the festival, referred to elsewhere in Herodotus as the *pylagorae*.¹² Exactly what the organizers were responsible for is not attested, but it is possible to draw parallels with other festivals. At Olympia we know of the *hellanodikai* who were responsible for the running of the games.¹³ After the Eleusinian Mysteries each year, the Athenian *boule* met at the Eleusinion to confirm that everything had gone well, and in particular held the *gene* of the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes responsible for the correct running of that festival.¹⁴ Such a meeting, with the primary purpose of making sure that the festival had been correctly run, but with the possibility of considering other issues of relevance, would be the likely origin of the kind of meetings of the amphictyons depicted by Aeschines.

The pattern at Eleusis also gives a possible explanation for the way the officials functioned at the Pylaea.¹⁵ The sources refer to two kinds of officials sent by the members of the Amphictyony, *pylagorae* and *hieromnemes*. By the middle of the fourth century each member appears normally to have sent two *pylagorae* and one *hieromnemon*, and at meetings it was only the *hieromnemes* who voted, indicating that they

⁸ Though see Hall 2002, 148-51.

⁹ Plut. *Pyrrh.* 29, *Art.* 1, *Mor.* 2.924d.

¹⁰ Sánchez 2001, 475 refers to ‘des marchés qui avaient lieu pendant les panégyries’, or to ‘foires’. Cf. de Ligt & de Neeve (1988).

¹¹ Morgan 1990.

¹² Hdt. 7.200.2 (Anthela); 7.213.2 (*pylagorae*). This is translating the term as ‘those who meet together at the Pylaea’ (Sánchez 2001, 497: ‘ceux qui ... se réunissent ... à la pylée’) — and if the *pylagorae* did not organize the festival it is not clear who did.

¹³ Hdt. 5.22.1; Paus. 5.9.5.

¹⁴ Andoc. 1.110-16; Clinton 1980, 280. Cf. Parker 1996, 293-7; Aeschin. 3.18. with Parker 1996, 124-5.

¹⁵ Full discussion of the evidence in Sánchez 2001, 496-509.

were the formal representatives of the members. At Athens at least the *hieromnemon* was chosen by lot, while the *pylagorae* were elected, and this was a common pattern for religious deputations, where officials chosen by lot were accompanied or advised by recognised experts.¹⁶ Aeschines, who was *pylagoras* in 340/39 BCE, clearly presents himself as an expert on amphictyonic matters. The *hieromnemes* are hardly mentioned in literary sources, while the *pylagorae* are frequently referred to, while the pattern is reversed in the epigraphic record. It would have been the *pylagorae*, as experts, who were responsible for the actual administration of the festival, just as at Eleusis it was the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes who were responsible for the Mysteries. The role of the *hieromnemes*, on behalf of the members, was to confirm that the festival had been administered correctly, just as the *bouleutai* at Athens, appointed by lot, confirmed that the Mysteries had been correctly performed. Sánchez's suggestion that the *hieromnemes* acted as impartial judges of a sort, while the *pylagorae* (translating the title as 'ceux qui parlent à Pylaia/à la pylée') were equivalent to advocates, responsible for denouncing infractions, but also for defending their own people, is rather different, but it makes the same distinction between the two types of official.¹⁷

Festivals provided ideal opportunities for representatives of different Greek communities to meet together, for major announcements to be made, and for treaties to be reaffirmed.¹⁸ The members of the Peloponnesian league met after the Olympic games, and it was there that they were addressed by Mytilenean ambassadors in 428 BCE; the alliance made between Athens and Sparta in 421 BCE was to be renewed at the Dionysia in Athens and the Hyacinthia in Sparta.¹⁹ A number of events associated with the Pylaea can be understood according to this pattern. Herodotus mentions that the *pylagorae* of the Greeks meeting at the Pylaea put a price on the head of Ephialtes for his betrayal of the Greeks at Thermopylae.²⁰ Ephialtes' offence cannot be directly linked to the sanctuary at Anthela and indeed it is not clear that he had committed any religious offence at all; however the Pylaea provided an ideal opportunity for the communities in the area around Anthela and Thermopylae to be told about him. According to Plutarch, Themistocles argued at a Pylaea against a Spartan proposal for the expulsion from the Amphictyony of medizing states,²¹ and this episode may be related to a proposal mentioned by Herodotus that the central Greek states that medized should be thrown off their land — perhaps to make it available to migrating Greeks from Asia Minor.²² The states listed by Herodotus all appear on later lists of members of the Amphictyony, so it

¹⁶ E.g. [Arist.] *Ath.* 54.6 (*hieropoioi* chosen by lot assisted by *manteis*); *IG* 1³ 40.64-9 (three men from the *Boule* assisted by Hierocles). Bowden 2003, 266.

¹⁷ Sánchez 2001, 506-7.

¹⁸ Whether treaties could actually be negotiated on these occasions is less clear. Although in the modern world negotiations usually occur at conferences where the treaties are then signed, and can therefore carry on until the last possible moment, ancient ambassadors tended to have more limited powers than their modern equivalents, and treaties could be repudiated by *poleis* that did not like their ambassadors' actions (e.g. Hdt. 5.73).

¹⁹ Peloponnesians: Th. 3.8; treaty: Th. 5.23.4.

²⁰ Hdt. 7.213.2.

²¹ Plut., *Them.* 20.3-4.

²² Hdt. 7.132.

is possible that the two stories refer to the same event — which in any case came to nothing.²³ Plutarch's version would make the issue one of whether members of those communities who had medized could attend the Pylaea, just as on occasion states might be forbidden to attend the Olympic Games by the Eleans:²⁴ it would thus be precisely the kind of business a meeting held after the festival would need to discuss. Herodotus does not mention the Amphictyony at this point. In 457 BCE Athens made an alliance with a number of central Greek states and the details of the alliance are recorded on a rather fragmentary inscription.²⁵ This has in the past been interpreted as an alliance between Athens and the Amphictyony — an odd view given that Athens is generally thought to have been a member of the Amphictyony in this period. Sánchez, the most recent commentator on the inscription, suggests that the document actually records 'une alliance conclue entre Athènes et certains peuples de Grèce centrale à l'occasion d'une panégyrie célébrée à Pylaia ou à Delphes, mais en marge des activités du Conseil'.²⁶ Just as with the alliance of 421 BCE, the festival provided the opportunity for Athenian delegates to meet those with whom they were exchanging oaths.

At some point, it is generally accepted, the amphictyons also took responsibility for the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. This must have happened by 548 BCE since the amphictyons took responsibility for organizing the rebuilding of the temple at Delphi, which had burned down that year.²⁷ The change is sometimes associated with the 'first sacred war',²⁸ which will be discussed below, but it cannot be firmly dated.²⁹ The responsibilities of the amphictyons at Delphi will also be considered later, but it is clear that they are concerned primarily with the fabric of the sanctuary and the associated land. The pattern of the amphictyons' activities in the fourth century, going first to Anthela/Pylae for the festival, and then moving on to Delphi for a further meeting to discuss matters to do with that sanctuary, fits clearly with the role I have suggested for the Amphictyony.³⁰

Membership of the Amphictyony

Who the 'dwellers around' who celebrated the festival of the Pylaea were in the archaic period is not clear. We need not assume that they were exactly the same as the canonical list that appears in the fourth century sources.³¹ It is usually assumed that the

²³ Cf. Frost 1980, 179-80.

²⁴ Th. 5.49-50.

²⁵ *IG I³* 9.

²⁶ Sánchez 2001, 111: he adds, in my view with unnecessary caution, 'Je n'insisterai pas sur cette hypothèse, car elle n'est pas plus démontrable que les autres'.

²⁷ Hdt. 2.180.

²⁸ Lefèvre 1998, 14 n. 26.

²⁹ Sánchez 2001, 58-80 has the fullest discussion.

³⁰ Aeschin. 3.126 gives the Athenian formula: τὸν ἱερομνήμονα τῶν Ἀθηναίων καὶ τοὺς πυλαγόρους τοὺς αἰεὶ πυλαγοροῦντας πορεύεσθαι εἰς Πύλας καὶ εἰς Δελφοὺς ἐν τοῖς τεταγμένοις χρόνοις ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων, 'the hieromnemon and the pylagorae of the Athenians who are in office at the time will proceed to Pylae and to Delphi at the times established by our ancestors'. Cf. Lefèvre 1998, 193-6.

³¹ Londey 1994, 28.

organization of twenty-four or twelve members is an ancient one, but there is no actual evidence for membership before 346 BCE. It used to be thought that since members are described as *ethne* rather than *poleis*, the institution must date back to a period before the emergence of the *polis*, but this will not work: in most of the member *ethne* the *ethnos* rather than the *polis* remained the principal political unit throughout the classical period.³² The various lists of the original members of the Amphictyony found in the literary sources are not consistent; attempts can be made to reconcile the differences, but they are of questionable value.³³ The possibility should not be ruled out that the idea of twelve *ethne* providing 24 delegates only became fully realized in 346 BCE when the Amphictyony was reorganized and Philip of Macedon was incorporated into it,³⁴ and that the different writers, all of whom were writing after that event, finding more than twelve names mentioned in the various accounts they read, each produced their own canonical list.³⁵ We may note that there were other groups of twelve Greek states associated with a common sanctuary, and that in some of those cases the arithmetic was problematic. Herodotus mentions that the Ionians of Asia Minor, who met at the Panionion, maintained their own membership at twelve cities, and also claims that they came there from Achaea, which was also made up of twelve cities.³⁶ There were, he also claims, originally twelve Aeolian cities, when they too were settled on the mainland.³⁷ The case of Smyrna however complicates the issue. According to Herodotus Smyrna had been one of the original twelve Aeolian cities, and had been captured by the Ionians, and presumably repopulated with Ionians,³⁸ but nonetheless the Smyrnaeans were not permitted to join the Ionian *koine*, despite their wish to.³⁹ Little if any of this account can be trusted for its historicity, but it does suggest that in the fifth century the Greek cities were trying to produce groupings of twelve with pseudo-historical claims to antiquity, even when the number twelve did not correspond to the situation on the

³² Daux 1957. Morgan 1990, 185, notes an ongoing contrast between the *sanctuary* at Delphi, which she sees as a focus for *ethne* (notably Thessaly), and the *oracle*, which was the focus of *polis* activity. The picture of the Amphictyony for which I am arguing, composed mainly of local *ethne* and concerned with aspects of the sanctuary, but not, as far as we can tell, with the oracle, would fit into such a pattern.

³³ The lists are Aeschin. 2.116, Paus. 10.8.2, Theopompus *FGH* 115 F63. Although Theopompus and Aeschines both refer to twelve members, each lists only eleven, and Pausanias lists ten; the combined lists produce a total of fourteen names: Thessalians, Phocians, Delphians, Dorians, Ionians, Perrhaebians, Dolopes, Boeotians, Locrians, Phthiotians, Magnetes, Aenianians, Oetaeans, Malians. Cf. Sánchez 2001, 37-41, 518 (this table does not quite correspond to the texts).

³⁴ D.S. 16.60. Cf. Lefèvre 1998, 47 n. 187.

³⁵ The different attempts to produce twelve members resemble the inconsistencies in lists for example of names of the disciples of Jesus in the gospels (Sanders 1993, 291 lists fourteen names), the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 49.3-28 and Num. 1.5-15 also produce a total of fourteen names), or of course the names of the twelve Olympian gods (Burkert 1985, 125).

³⁶ Hdt. 1.142-5.

³⁷ Hdt. 1.149.1.

³⁸ Hdt. 1.149.2-150.

³⁹ Hdt. 1.143.3.

ground. A group of neighbouring states meeting twice a year to organize a festival did not need to have a fixed number, and quite possibly did not have one. Over time however the participants might have felt that it was appropriate to have a membership of twelve, without it necessarily being clear who the twelve members were. On this hypothesis the membership might vary throughout the period, only finally to be fixed in 346 BCE.⁴⁰

Responsibilities of the Amphictyons at Delphi

The major issue that has led scholars to argue that the Amphictyony had a larger political role than this account has so far allowed is the sequence of so-called ‘sacred wars’ that took place between the early sixth century and 338 BCE. In order to make sense of these we must look at what we know of the amphictyons’ responsibilities at the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.

A fragmentary Athenian inscription of 380 BCE contains the oath sworn by the *hieromnemes* when they took up their office.⁴¹ The end is missing, but the surviving portion has six headings. The first two deal with the ‘sacred land’ and will be considered below. The third is apparently concerned with the adornment of a statue, and an associated sacrifice;⁴² the fourth concerns repairs to the fabric of the sanctuary, and the fifth the upkeep of the roads and bridges leading to the sanctuary;⁴³ the last surviving heading is concerned with the sacred truce for the Pythian games. These have all to do with the maintenance of the sanctuary itself, and safe access to it, but not with the formal administration of the sanctuary or with the oracle.⁴⁴

The most interesting clauses for our purposes are the first two, which concern the ‘sacred land’: the first forbids cultivation of the land, and lays down punishments for offenders, and also for those *hieromnemes* who fail to enforce the ban; the second forbids anyone from staying in the sacred land for more than thirty days, and also forbids the use of equipment for grinding grain (to make bread).⁴⁵ The terms of the first clause are followed closely by Aeschines in his account of the events leading to the outbreak of the ‘fourth sacred war’ in 340 BCE.⁴⁶ Aeschines associates the sacred land with the story of the ‘first sacred war’ early in the sixth century, but there is reason to question this link.

⁴⁰ Sánchez 2001, 467-8 argues for the number twelve being fixed by the early sixth century, with very little change in membership between then and 346 BCE. Hall 2002, 151-3, using different arguments, would see the process as complete by the middle of the seventh century. The evidence remains difficult to interpret.

⁴¹ CID 1.10 = CID 4.1. Both commentaries are valuable. Cf. Sánchez 2001, 153-63.

⁴² CID 1.10 (4.1) 26-34. Cf. Hdt. 2.180.

⁴³ CID 1.10 (4.1) 34-43.

⁴⁴ On the role of the Amphictyons in the Pythian games: Helioid. *Aeth.* 4.1; *P. Pyth.* 4.66 with scholion; Paus. 10.7.4; Fontenrose 1987, 137.

⁴⁵ CID 1.10 (4.1) 15-26.

⁴⁶ Aeschin. 3.109-110.

The Sacred Land⁴⁷

The possession of sacred land that was to remain always uncultivated was not unique to Delphi. The most obvious other example is the sacred *Orgas* on the border between Attica and Megara, sacred to Demeter and Kore. The land was known as γῆ ἀορίστος ('land without marker stones'), and traditionally did not have its boundaries marked, and its sanctity was reinforced in the fourth century by an oracle from Delphi affirming that it was not to be cultivated.⁴⁸ Thucydides may be referring to a third such piece of land when he describes a war between the Argives and the Epidaurians ὑπὲρ βοταμίων.⁴⁹ The meaning of the word βοταμία is uncertain, and Thucydides' account is very brief, but one interpretation is that this is a reference to pasture land belonging to the temple of Apollo Pythaeus at Asine, which was looked after by a group of states (an Amphictyony as at Delphi) led by Argos: the Epidaurians were permitted to graze their animals there, in return for a regular offering of some kind, which for some reason was not made on this occasion.⁵⁰ The land was presumably located on the uplands between Epidaurus and Asine, and it is quite likely that, like the land at Delphi and Eleusis, it had no marked boundary. Other examples include the sanctuary of Protesilaus at Elaeus and an uninhabited island sacred to Apollo at Pordoselene.⁵¹

Various aetiological stories have been associated with these areas of uncultivated land,⁵² but I want to argue for a general explanation for what I suspect to have been a relatively common phenomenon. In his discussion of extra-urban sanctuaries Irad Malkin has provided a persuasive explanation for why so often areas of land owned by the gods are to be found on the edge of the territory of *poleis*. He focuses on colonies, where the process can be most clearly visualised, but it seems to me that it has application in old Greece as well. Malkin states:

In founding colonies, both men and gods were settlers on the land. The 'same land' was divided up among the gods and men by similar criteria. Both received plots of land, decided upon by the human founder, the *oikistês*. Human beings were allotted agricultural plots, *klêroi*; the gods received sacred precincts, *temenê*. In my view, the question of the 'division of the same' may be seen as parallel to the relationship between humans and gods existing in Greek sacrifice, where gods and men shared the 'same' animal. When

⁴⁷ The extent of the sacred land at Delphi is not entirely certain. Kahrstedt (1953 with map p. 754) and Rousset (1991), following hints in the epigraphic record and the results of archaeological investigation, suggest that it was a large area south of the territory of Delphi, including the whole of the Desphina peninsula. Ancient authors refer to the Cirrhaean (or Crisaeian) plain (πεδίου), which would seem to imply a much smaller area, the fertile land on the coast west of the Desphina peninsula. In all probability the distinction was not all that significant. It was only the plain itself that was suitable for planting crops, so the exact location of the eastern boundary of the sacred land was never likely to be cultivated. It was the western boundary that was the cause of trouble in 340 BCE, because the people of Amphissa appear to have had a claim on part at least of the plain.

⁴⁸ *IG* II² 204; Th. 1.139.2.

⁴⁹ Th. 5.53.1

⁵⁰ Gomme, Andrewes & Dover 1970, 72. Cf. Billot 1998, 41.

⁵¹ Hdt. 9.116; Strab. 13.2.5. Cf. Horden and Purcell 2000, 428.

⁵² On the *Orgas*: L'Homme-Wéry 1996.

good lands were initially distributed, both to settlers and to the gods, the gods received the fat, but not the meat. They got relatively small *temenê* in the 'centres' of cities and broad, excellent lands in the most dangerous and inconvenient places.⁵³

We know too little about the distribution and redistribution of *polis* land in the earlier archaic period, but it seems likely that the same kind of understanding led to the same kind of division of land in old Greece, and that this explains why it is so common to find land owned by the gods on the borders of the territory of *poleis*. There were basically three things that could be done with these tracts of land. They could be built on, and it is the cases where this happens which have been of concern to scholars like Malkin and above all François de Polignac:⁵⁴ the Heraion at Argos is one of the most obvious cases of a major sanctuary located at the edge of the territory of a *polis*. Alternatively the land could be leased out, and the income so generated used to support the cult of the god in the *polis*. Or the land could be left deliberately untilled.⁵⁵ Given the close relationship in Greek thought between agriculture and civilisation, the decision to leave land deliberately uncultivated would have had a profound impact.⁵⁶ In the case of the sacred *Orgas* the decision can be clearly explained. Demeter was the goddess who had revealed the secrets of agriculture to mortals:⁵⁷ leaving an area of her land uncultivated made it a representation and reminder of what the world was like before agriculture. The land left uncultivated might well be fertile, and thus potentially very productive, as is the case with several of the examples mentioned earlier, including the Crisaean plain, and this reinforces the symbolic effect of leaving such land uncultivated: 'Religious behaviour and explanation can delineate the degree of marginality in the productive environment ... it is worth noting how *not* cultivating has sometimes been an expression of the sanctity of production'.⁵⁸

Given the association between Apollo, and in particular Apollo Pythios, and the gifts of civilisation in general, a similar message can be read into the uncultivated condition of the Crisaean plain. Theognis of Megara, writing around 600 BCE, describes his political opponents in terms that deliberately contrast them with the 'proper' city-dwellers:

Cyrnus, this city is still a city, but the people are changed;
men who before now knew neither justice nor laws,
but wore the skins of goats about their bodies,
and lived like deer outside the city.
Now these men are the nobles, Polypaïdes.⁵⁹

Eating grass, not bread, wearing skin, not woven cloth, and living in the open rather than in a house within the city, are symbols of a life without agriculture,⁶⁰ and are linked

⁵³ Malkin 1996, 78-9

⁵⁴ De Polignac 1995.

⁵⁵ Rousset 1991, xvi indicates that territory belonging to Apollo was handled in all three ways at Delphi.

⁵⁶ Vidal-Naquet 1981.

⁵⁷ Cf. Richardson 1974, 195-6.

⁵⁸ Horden and Purcell 2000, 428.

⁵⁹ Theog. 53-7. Cf. H. *Od.* 9.106-15.

here to an absence of *dikai* and *nomoi*. In the same way an area of uncultivated land represents the extreme opposite of a city. This is made all the clearer by the regulations in the second clause of the Athenian inscription discussed earlier. Men, perhaps shepherds, were permitted to camp on the land temporarily, but not to build permanent houses, and they were forbidden to grind flour, so they could not make bread.⁶¹ When Isocrates has the Thebans in 404 threaten ‘to enslave the city (of Athens) and to leave its territory as pasture like the Crisaean plain’,⁶² the force of the threat comes from this opposition between city and wilderness, and does not need to be explained with reference to any shared knowledge of an earlier war.⁶³

If this interpretation of the origins of the sacred land is correct, it follows that Aeschines’ story, linking the sacred land to the ‘first sacred war’, must be dismissed. Furthermore, as Noel Robertson was correct to argue, we have no mention of the ‘first sacred war’ in any literary sources from before 346 BCE.⁶⁴ Even if Isocrates’ Thebans were thinking about the war as an explanation for the state of the Crisaean plain, it would not follow that the war had actually taken place: the story of the war could have developed later to explain the condition of the land.⁶⁵ Although it is impossible to prove that the ‘first sacred war’ did not take place, there seems very little reason to maintain the reliability of a tradition found in late and conflicting sources against the deafening silence of Herodotus and Thucydides.⁶⁶

The ‘Second Sacred War’

The first war over Delphi that we know to have been referred to as a ‘sacred war’ was the pair of campaigns waged by Sparta and Athens in 450-449 BCE over the autonomy of Delphi.⁶⁷ These campaigns appear to repeat an earlier pair of campaigns in 457 BCE, although there are doubts about their historicity.⁶⁸ The position of Delphi was still an

⁶⁰ Cf. Vidal-Naquet 1981.

⁶¹ Sánchez 2001, 475 associates the ban on ‘des instruments de boulangerie’ with the economic regulation of the fairs at the Pylaea. This assumes however that the Pylaea was celebrated as a festival at Delphi as well as Anthela, for which there is no evidence. Such an aim also seems out of place given the other concerns of the law.

⁶² Isoc. 14.31.

⁶³ Pace Càssola 1980, Lehmann 1980.

⁶⁴ Robertson 1978.

⁶⁵ For an example of a specific historical event being used to explain the origin of a (far from unique) religious phenomenon see Hdt. 3.48.

⁶⁶ On the current state of the debate see Davies 1994, esp. 200-6; Lefèvre 1998, 14-6; Sánchez 2001, 67-73.

⁶⁷ Th. 1.112.5; Plut. *Per.* 21.

⁶⁸ Thucydides mentions a Spartan campaign to aid Doris against the Phocians in this year (1.107.2). According to Plutarch (*Cim.* 17.3) the Spartans liberated Delphi from the Phocians during this campaign, and according to Diodorus (11.91) they set up the Thebans as the dominant *polis* in Boeotia. All these actions are compatible, since they serve to weaken Phocian power. Later in the same year the Athenians gained control of Boeotia, Phocis and Opuntian Locris after the battle of Oenophyta (Th. 1.108.3). Although accounts of the Oenophyta campaign do not mention Delphi it is safe to assume that the Athenians

issue of dispute at the time of the Peloponnesian War, since Delphic autonomy was guaranteed in the terms of the Peace of Nicias in 421 BCE,⁶⁹ and it remained a source of tension at the time of the ‘third sacred war’ of 356-346 BCE.

The point at issue here was whether Delphi should be independent (τὸ δ’ ἱερόν καὶ τὸν νεῶν τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖς τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Δελφούς αὐτονόμους εἶναι καὶ αὐτοτελεῖς καὶ αὐτοδίκους καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς τῆς ἑαυτῶν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια),⁷⁰ or whether Delphi should be part of the Phocian *koinon*, and therefore subject to the common institutions of the Phocians.⁷¹ Various explanations have been given for why the Amphictyony is never mentioned in connection with this issue in the fifth century. It has been suggested that the Amphictyony had been temporarily dissolved, or that it was effectively powerless since its more powerful members had conflicting interests, or that it was involved, and that Thucydides deliberately suppressed any mention of its role.⁷² Another possibility needs to be taken seriously, and that is that the amphictyons are not mentioned because the political position of Delphi and the administration of the sanctuary were not part of their responsibilities. As we have seen, the ‘amphictyonic oath’ of 380 BCE refers to the sacred land and to the fabric of the sanctuary. The most detailed account of how the amphictyons became involved in a war, that is Aeschines’ account of events in 340 BCE, puts repeated emphasis on the terms of that oath.⁷³ We have already seen that other events mentioned in connection with the Amphictyony, such as announcing the reward for the capture of Ephialtes and the alliance of 457 BCE, were not necessarily the formal business of the amphictyons. In this case, where none of the sources refer to the Amphictyony, it seems unnecessary to claim that it ought to have been involved. It is perhaps the Amphictyony’s apparent involvement in the other ‘sacred wars’ that has made scholars reluctant to allow that it had no part in the ‘second sacred war’. We have already considered the problems with the ‘first sacred war’. As we will see, accounts of the ‘third sacred war’ also need reconsidering.

The ‘Third Sacred War’

The ‘third sacred war’ lasted ten years, and ended with the intervention of Philip II of Macedon, who devastated the cities of Phocis. At the end of the war the Phocians were expelled from the Amphictyony and their seats on the council were given to Philip.⁷⁴ As I have suggested earlier, this might have been the occasion for a more fundamental reorganization of the organization. Although the war clearly had significant

would have returned it to Phocian control as part of the settlement. Cf. Zeilhofer 1959, 43-50; Sánchez 2001, 106-9 esp. n. 141.

⁶⁹ Th. 5.18.2.

⁷⁰ Th. 5.18.2: ‘The sanctuary and the temple of Apollo at Delphi and the Delphians are to have their own laws and taxes (or perhaps more generally, financial and administrative arrangements) and courts both for themselves and their territory in accordance with ancestral custom’. This clause would appear to contradict the view that the Amphictyony ‘administered’ the sanctuary, found in e.g. Morgan 1990, 18; McInerney 1999, 9.

⁷¹ On the Phocian *koinon* see McInerney 1999, esp. 154-185.

⁷² Dissolved: Sordi 1958. Powerless: Sánchez 2001, 114. Suppressed: Hornblower 1992.

⁷³ Aeschin. 3.109-13, 119-22. See below.

⁷⁴ D.S. 16.60.

consequences for the Amphictyony, the question of how far the amphictyons were involved in the war itself is more problematic.

Diodorus Siculus and Pausanias claim that the Phocians were accused at a meeting of the Amphictyony of cultivating the sacred land, and that this accusation was the principal cause of the war.⁷⁵ This explanation has been accepted by modern scholars,⁷⁶ but there are a number of problems with it. Neither Pausanias nor Diodorus makes any mention of the 'fourth sacred war', when the Locrians of Amphissa were accused at a meeting of the Amphictyony of cultivating the sacred land. Their versions of what happened in 357 BCE can in part be explained as a conflation of these two separate wars. Given that in the aftermath of the 'third sacred war' the Phocians were vilified for impiety, it would hardly be surprising if the impious actions of the Locrians were attributed to the Phocians instead. At the same time the silence of contemporary writers would be inexplicable if Phocian cultivation of the sacred land had taken place. Aeschines, discussing the Amphissan cultivation in 340 BCE, makes no reference at all to a recent cultivation by the Phocians, although it would strengthen his case enormously; he relies instead on ancient history. Xenophon, who took religious issues seriously, and was writing while the war was still in progress, saw the central issue as the autonomy of Delphi in the wake of the Phocian capture of the sanctuary, and shows no awareness of any Phocian impiety.⁷⁷ Aristotle says that the war resulted from a dispute about an heir-ess involving the father of the Phocian general Onomarchus.⁷⁸

The notion that 'the Phocians' as a whole would have been guilty is also puzzling. In 340 BCE the accusations are made against a specific city, Amphissa, whose territory bordered the sacred land. If a similar situation had arisen in 357 BCE we should expect an accusation to be made against a specific Phocian city, such as Anticyra or Ambrysos, which were considered in the Hellenistic period at least to border the sacred land.⁷⁹ However there is considerable hill country between these *poleis* and the part of the sacred land that might be suitable for cultivation, so any such act would have to be one of deliberate provocation, rather than accident. Given the long-standing claim of the Phocians that they should control the sanctuary, it seems implausible that any Phocian city might deliberately engage in sacrilege.⁸⁰ The view that Phocian cultivation of the sacred land was the cause of the 'third sacred war' must therefore be rejected. The alternative explanation would be that the Phocians took control of the city and sanctuary at Delphi without clear external provocation. Aristotle's near-contemporary explanation indicates

⁷⁵ D.S. 16.23.2-3, 29.2; Paus. 10.15.1. Elsewhere, however, referring to what is apparently the same fine, Pausanias (10.2.1) claims that he was not able to find out why a fine was imposed and Justin (8.1.5) claims that it was a punishment for the Phocian ravaging of Boeotian territory.

⁷⁶ Buckler 1989, 15-21; Sánchez 2001, 173-81

⁷⁷ *Vect.* 5.8-9. Pace Cartledge 1997, 228 n. 9, *Vect.* 4.40 (ἐν τῷ νῦν πολέμῳ) refers most probably to the Social War of 357-5, but that does not prevent 5.8 (διὰ τῆν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι παραχῆν) from referring to the Phocian War.

⁷⁸ *Politics* 1304a10-3.

⁷⁹ Kahrstedt 1953, 754.

⁸⁰ Cf. D.S. 16.24.5.

that internal rivalries amongst leading Phocians may have triggered this move. It would essentially repeat the Phocian action of 449 BCE and possibly also 457 BCE.

It is not clear that any of the Phocians' actions during the war were sacrilegious either. The occupation of a sanctuary by an army was considered acceptable if the occupiers behaved correctly:⁸¹ in a speech which Thucydides puts into the mouth of an Athenian after the Battle of Delium we are given a clear statement of what an occupying army might do with a sanctuary in an emergency, and there is no reason to assume that the Phocians behaved worse than this.⁸² Even the Phocians' use of temple treasures to fund their military activities could be justified in time of war as long as the debt was paid off later.⁸³ The lurid picture of Phocian behaviour found in Diodorus is clearly the result of the vilification of the Phocians after their defeat, and cannot be considered reliable.⁸⁴

All of this makes it less likely that the war was of concern to the Amphictyony. Although Diodorus believed that the amphictyons were involved in the war from the start it can be argued that his own narrative does not give strong support for this, and that his sources may not have taken the same line. Diodorus has two descriptions of the decision of the other states to go to war with the Phocians, which he places in consecutive years. In the first version the other Greeks react in very different ways to the Phocian action, and the Boeotians declare war on the Phocians on their own initiative.⁸⁵ In the second there is a vote of the Amphictyons for war against the Phocians.⁸⁶ In the account of the actual events of the war the two sides are consistently referred to as Phocians and Boeotians, not as Phocians and amphictyons.⁸⁷ Although the possibility that there were two declarations of war cannot be ruled out, this looks like a doublet perhaps resulting from Diodorus' use of two sources, one of which gave a more detailed account of the war, and presented it as being essentially between the Phocians and the Boeotians, not involving the Amphictyony, while the other mentioned the cultivation of the sacred land, the amphictyonic fine and the declaration of war by the Amphictyony, but gave no detail of the events of the war.⁸⁸ This second narrative looks suspiciously like a summary of the 'fourth sacred war', with Phocians taking the place of Locrians. While the Boeotians were the main enemies of the Phocians, Diodorus mentions campaigns to the north-west of Phocis too, most importantly in 353 BCE, when Onomarchus was killed at the battle of the Crocus Field against Philip II.⁸⁹ The Phocians' enemies could

⁸¹ The Athenians in the Marathon campaign occupied two sanctuaries of Heracles, at Marathon and at Cynosarges (Hdt. 6.108.1, 116).

⁸² Th. 4.98.

⁸³ Th. 1.121.3; Hornblower 1991, 197-8. Cf. D.S. 16.27.4.

⁸⁴ Cf. D.S. 16.61-3.

⁸⁵ D.S. 16.23-7.

⁸⁶ D.S. 16.28-30.

⁸⁷ Amphictyons are mentioned at 16.28.4, 31.1, then at 16.60. Boeotians versus Phocians: 16.30.1, 31.3, 32.1, 34.2, 35.3, 37.5, 37.6, 38.4, 38.7, 39.8, 40.1, 40.2, 56.1, 56.2, 58.1, 58.4, 59.1.

⁸⁸ Buckler 1989, 158-76 discusses this problem in detail, demonstrating convincingly that there is a doublet but adding that 'the accompanying details are so confused that no principle of composition can account for them' (175).

⁸⁹ D.S. 16.35.4-6.

claim that they were fighting on behalf of Apollo, and that they were avenging sacrilege, as Philip appears to have done on this occasion⁹⁰ — although, as we have seen, such claims may not have had a strong basis at the start of the conflict — but that does not necessarily mean that they were responding to any amphictyonic decisions.⁹¹ We have already seen that the events of 450-449 BCE could be labelled a ‘sacred war’ without any amphictyonic involvement.

During the course of the war the religious matters for which the amphictyons were responsible still continued. The festivals of the Pylaea took place, although they must have been essentially Phocian occasions.⁹² The rebuilding of the temple carried on, under the supervision of the amphictyonic college of *naopoioi*.⁹³ The Phocian action that was of inevitable concern for the Amphictyony was their use of temple treasures. Diodorus identifies two separate issues here. Phalaecus, the last Phocian commander, and his associates were accused of stealing from Delphi, and a number of men, most notably Philon, though not Phalaecus himself, were tried and executed for this by other Phocians.⁹⁴ This was clearly a religious offence — assuming that the charges against Phalaecus were correct — but it was handled by the Phocians themselves.⁹⁵ The other issue was the use of Delphic money by Phalaecus’ predecessors, Onomarchus and Phayllus, to pay for mercenary troops.⁹⁶ As has been said, borrowing money from the sanctuary was considered allowable at times of emergency, but the scale of the Phocian expenditure, which Diodorus claims was in excess of 10,000 talents, and their inability to pay it back, made their behaviour a matter for the amphictyons to deal with.

According to Diodorus, at the beginning of 346 BCE the Boeotians asked Philip for help against the Phocians; Phalaecus however made terms with Philip and withdrew his army, while the Phocians surrendered to Philip. It was only after this, he says, that Philip decided to turn matters over to a meeting of the amphictyons.⁹⁷ It would appear from Demosthenes however that the military campaign was being presented as an amphictyonic one, and the Athenians avoided committing their own troops to it by calling on the Phocians to surrender the temple at Delphi ‘to the amphictyons’.⁹⁸ In either case, the events of 346 BCE mark a change, perhaps caused by the dissension between the Phocians that led to the trial of Philon. It is only at this point that we can clearly see the Amphictyony involved in the conflict.

At the meeting of the Amphictyony in the summer of 346 BCE a series of decisions are taken, some of which can be seen as being of direct concern to the amphictyons,

⁹⁰ D.S. 16.35.6; Justin 8.2.3. Cf. Sánchez 2001, 196.

⁹¹ In Diodorus’ account the Boeotian decision to go to war in defence of the oracle (16.25.1, 27.5) precedes the amphictyonic declaration.

⁹² Implied by D. 19.318.

⁹³ CID 2.31.33-70 of 353 BCE lists *naopoioi* (referred to as τοῖς ναοποιοῖς τοῖς ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ, ‘wartime temple-builders’) in 353-1 BCE from Delphi, Athens, Locris, Megara, Epidaurus, Sparta, Corinth, Phocis, Sicyon and Phlius: cf. Sánchez 2001, 193-4; Bousquet 1988, esp. 24-7 with CID 2; Lefèvre 1998, 260-8; Sánchez 2001, 12-152.

⁹⁴ D.S. 16.59.3-4, 7-8.

⁹⁵ Cf. Th. 4.118.3; Hornblower 1996, 364-5.

⁹⁶ D.S. 16.59.5-6.

⁹⁷ D.S. 16.59.

⁹⁸ D. 19.49.

while others might not be.⁹⁹ It was a matter strictly for the amphictyons whether they expelled the Phocians and admitted Philip in his place; similarly they could impose a tribute on the Phocians to refund the sacred monies they had used up, and perhaps forbid them to bear arms or keep horses until the debt was repaid. Other decisions, such as the destruction of the Phocian cities, would have been as much a concern for Philip as for the amphictyons — and at this point Philip was presumably not yet a member of the Amphictyony.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen, the Pylaea was an occasion when issues of concern to those in the region, but which were not strictly amphictyonic business, could be brought up. This is arguably what happened in 346 BCE. Diodorus does not distinguish between the two kinds of business, and the circumstances were such that the amphictyons themselves may not have done.

The ‘Fourth Sacred War’

The ‘fourth sacred war’ of 340-338 BCE is in effect the exception that proves the rule. It is the only war that we can be certain was launched by the Amphictyony and involves the only clear example of amphictyonic military action. As it turned out, the campaign itself was ineffective, and the events that preceded it were rather chaotic, which suggests that the amphictyons were not really prepared for fighting a war.¹⁰¹

The causes of the war need some discussion.¹⁰² As Aeschines describes it, it was sparked by his claims that the people of Amphissa were cultivating the sacred land, erecting permanent buildings and pottery works on it, and farming out the port-dues of the harbour.¹⁰³ The cultivation and building were certainly against the terms of the ‘amphictyonic oath’, and industrial activity would presumably fall under the same heading. The surviving part of the oath has nothing to say about the sacred harbour. What is not certain is whether the Amphissans were actually guilty of any sacrilege. According to Demosthenes the Amphissans claimed to be cultivating their own land,¹⁰⁴ and, as we have seen, the sacred land bordered the territory of Amphissa.

Aeschines’ account, in which his outburst against the Amphissans is presented as pre-empting an Amphissan accusation against Athens (behind which stood the Thebans), might lead one to see the war as the result of inter-state rivalries and diplomatic manoeuvrings.¹⁰⁵ However, there is another explanation. As the evidence from archaeological survey has shown, the classical period was a time of expansion of settlement, and marginal land was coming increasingly under cultivation. Inevitably this would put increasing pressure on the land at the borders of territory, especially if that

⁹⁹ D.S. 16.60. Cf. Sánchez 2001, 203-3.

¹⁰⁰ The Athenians, who were not present at the meeting, were invited to vote Philip into the Amphictyony afterwards (D. 19.111).

¹⁰¹ Aeschin. 3.122-3 (chaotic proceedings at Delphi), 128-9 (ineffective campaign).

¹⁰² The most recent discussion is Sánchez 2001, 227-43.

¹⁰³ Aeschin. 3.119.

¹⁰⁴ D. 18.150

¹⁰⁵ Aeschin. 3.116. Cf. Sánchez 2001, 239-43.

land was particularly fertile.¹⁰⁶ In the 430s BCE, and again in the 350s, the *Hiera Orgas* on the border between Attica and Megara became a cause of conflict between Athens and Megara, when the Athenians accused the Megarians of cultivating it.¹⁰⁷ Under these circumstances accidental cultivation of the sacred land at Delphi — or even the mistaken perception that it was happening — is only too possible. It is clear that this was the explicit justification for the decision of the amphictyons to go to war with Amphissa, and that the terms that they imposed after the campaign were specifically related to the sacrilege.¹⁰⁸ It is also clear that, although he was by this time a member of the Amphictyony, Philip had no role in these events.¹⁰⁹ It was only after the failure of the first campaign that he became involved,¹¹⁰ and his subsequent movements, culminating in the battle of Chaeronea, were not claimed to be amphictyonic actions.

Therefore the ‘fourth sacred war’, brief and ineffective as it was, was carried out strictly in accordance with the terms of the ‘amphictyonic oath’, and needs no ulterior explanation. Of all the so-called sacred wars, it appears to be the only one explicable solely in religious terms.

Conclusion

The year 346 BCE represented a turning point in the history of the Delphic Amphictyony.¹¹¹ The change was made visible in the fact that it is only from this period onwards that we have inscriptions recording the names of the *hieromnemes*.¹¹² Even after 346 BCE however, as Sánchez demonstrates, the activities of the amphictyons stay close to the responsibilities laid down in the ‘amphictyonic oath’.¹¹³ The presence of Philip and his successors as members of the Amphictyony gave it a formal significance that it did not have before, and whether or not a city sent its delegates to the Pylaea might have symbolic force in this period, but it was not really a tool of Greek or Macedonian foreign policy.

Before 346 BCE its importance was even more limited. We have seen that there is no reliable evidence for the involvement of the Amphictyony in any military activity before that date. Its responsibilities were limited to a festival held twice a year, and to the fabric — not the actual administration — of two sanctuaries. The amphictyons,

¹⁰⁶ Attica: Lohmann 1993, 204, 292-3; Argos: Jameson, Runnels & van Andel 1994, 392-4; Methana: Mee & Forbes 1997, 66-7; Laconia: see *AR* 1985, 24 (I have not yet seen Cavanagh et al. 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Th. 1.139.2; Philochorus, *FGH* 328 F 155; Androtion, *FGH* 324 F 30.

¹⁰⁸ Aeschin. 3.124-9; D. 18.150.

¹⁰⁹ Sánchez 2001, 227 n. 31, 235-9.; Lefèvre 1998, 170: ‘Philippe ... a sans doute mieux à faire qu’étaler sa puissance face à Amphissa’.

¹¹⁰ Aeschin. 3.129. Even Demosthenes (18.151) makes it clear that Philip was not behind these events.

¹¹¹ Sánchez 2001, 219.

¹¹² CID 2.36, 2.43-4 etc.

¹¹³ Sánchez 2001, 220-68.

mostly drawn from politically insignificant communities near the sanctuaries,¹¹⁴ carried out these straightforward responsibilities in the period down to 346 BCE largely unnoticed, because there was so little to notice. Attempts to claim a larger, political role for the Amphictyony in this period fail to convince because the evidence cannot support them.

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¹¹⁴ The earliest certain reference to Athenian membership dates to no earlier than 423 BCE: Ar. *Nub.* 623-4. As we have seen, it is not certain when the Athenians first became involved in the Amphictyony.

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