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DELPHI THROUGHOUT THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS: HONOURS AND PRIVILEGES IN DELPHIC DECREES*

by

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The chief purpose of my dissertation was to re-examine the history of the Delphic city by means of considering an abundant body of post-classical epigraphic evidence, that is, honorific decrees granted by the citizens of Delphi. My study on Delphic decrees uncovered many previously unknown aspects of the history of this extraordinary place. A relatively small Greek city-state with an undersized population, Delphi's fame nonetheless rivalled that of Athens, Sparta or Thebes. Well-known as the site of a famous oracle of Apollo, Delphi is known as a treasure trove of preserved epigraphic material, with almost 5,000 pieces of evidence recorded: indeed, no other Greek *polis*, save for the largest and the best explored, Athens, produced more inscriptions than Delphi. The Delphic material yielded almost a thousand honorific decrees, those who received them being honoured for their services to the city and its citizens. Developed and improved throughout the centuries, the Delphic scheme of bestowing honours and privileges upon public benefactors ran remarkably smoothly. My PhD thesis offers a new perspective on the Delphic decree culture and on the practice of bestowing honours and privileges in Delphi.

The scope of this dissertation was to investigate the Delphic *polis* and the honorific decrees and privileges awarded by its people. Nevertheless, at this point I should stress that the Delphic territory comprised three centres: the Delphic *polis*

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with its citizens, the sanctuary of Apollo with its oracle, and the Amphictyony, whose role was to administer and watch over the sanctuary. These three centres had much shared history; in fact, they greatly influenced one another and one would not be what it was without the other two. Those studying the history of the Delphic *polis* cannot exclude concurrent developments in the Amphictyony and the sanctuary: accordingly, although this dissertation concentrates on the Delphic city-state, occasional references to the Amphictyony or sanctuary do appear in the text.

The chronological span of the dissertation covers the Hellenistic and Roman periods, starting from the mid-fourth c. BC and ending with the late second c. AD, although I occasionally went beyond these dates. The mid-fourth c. BC *terminus* was chosen for the following reasons. Firstly, M. MUSIELAK devoted her work to the Delphic *polis* in the 4th c. BC (380–280 BC)¹; my dissertation is, after a fashion, a continuation and extension of MUSIELAK's research. Secondly, the interim period between 360–320 BC was labelled by French scholars as a “période de comptes”², as mid-fourth century Delphi, destroyed by the earthquake of 373/372 BC, was being extensively rebuilt and refurbished³. At approximately the same time, the sanctuary was occupied by Phocians wishing to assert their claim on Delphi, thus bringing about the start of the Third Sacred War⁴. When the war came to an end and the rebuilding work was finished, Delphi and the temple entered a new era, beginning with Philip II's victory at Chaeronea and his subjugation of the Greek city-states: the analysis of the said period constitutes the bulk of my dissertation. In turn, after the late second c. AD Delphic honorific decrees disappear from the body of epigraphic evidence: pertinently, this period constitutes the *terminus ad quem* for the scope of this dissertation.

To date, no book or paper has comprehensively discussed the Delphic decree culture and honorific practice. In my dissertation, I aimed to achieve three

¹ M. MUSIELAK, *Miasto-państwo Delfy w IV w. p.n.e. Studium z historii społeczeństwa greckiego*, Poznań 1989.

² A. JACQUEMIN, D. MULLIEZ, G. ROUGEMONT, *Choix d'inscriptions de Delphes, traduites et commentées*, Athènes 2012, p. 24.

³ On the rebuilding effort, see e.g.: P. AMANDRY, E. HANSEN, *Le temple d'Apollon du IV^e siècle*, Paris 2010 (Fouilles de Delphes II: Topographie et architecture 14); M. MAASS, *Das antike Delphi*, München 2007, pp. 87–94; M. MUSIELAK, *Rola Delfijczyków, Amfiktionów, Hellenów w budowie świątyni Apollina Pytyjskiego*, Eos LXXI 1983, pp. 309–316; H.W. PARKE, D.E.W. WORMELL, *The Delphic Oracle*, Oxford 1956, vol. I, p. 227; P. SÁNCHEZ, *L'Amphictionie des Pyles et de Delphes: recherches sur son rôle historique, des origines au II^e siècle de notre ère*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 128–151.

⁴ F. DELTENNE, *La dotation du débout de la troisième guerre sacrée. Retours sur l'interprétation des comptes de Delphes*, BCH CXXXIV 2010, pp. 97–116; M. SCOTT, *Delphi: A History of the Center of the Ancient World*, Princeton 2014, pp. 149–162; J. BUCKLER, *Thebes, Delphi and the Outbreak of the Third Sacred War*, in: P. ROESCH, G. ARGOU (eds.), *La Béotie antique*, Paris 1985, pp. 237–246; J. BUCKLER, *Philip II and the Sacred War*, Leiden 1997; M. MUSIELAK, *Wojna fokejska (356–346) – ideologia i propaganda*, in: L. MORAWIECKI, P. BERDOWSKI (eds.), *Ideologia i propaganda w starożytności. Materiały konferencji Komisji Historii Starożytnej PTH, Rzeszów 12–14 września 2000*, Rzeszów 2004, pp. 125–135.

main goals. Firstly, I sought to examine Delphi's external and internal relations. Scanning the texts of honorific decrees for personal references to specific awardees, I could trace contacts between Delphi and Hellenistic monarchs, the Roman state, other Greek city-states and *koina*, as well as other Mediterranean states; in addition to tracing connections between Delphi and foreigners, I investigated interactions between the Delphic *polis* and its own citizens. As a result, my research showcased the manner in which the Delphic *polis* cultivated relations with the dominant powers of the Hellenistic and Roman world, and what kind of impact the contacts with other Greek *poleis* had on Delphi and its citizens. Secondly, the aim of my research was to explore honours and privileges bestowed by the people of Delphi on the city's benefactors. What mattered most were the questions about the actual value and meaning of the honours that were granted. What kind of gain did they bring to the personal, political and material awardees? Was there any discernible regularity in the practice of bestowing honours in Delphi – and if so, did it evolve in time? Which privileges were the most desired ones and why? Who received the best honours and what was the reason for bestowing them upon these people? In the process of looking for answers to the aforementioned questions, I was able to study the practice of granting honours and privileges in Delphic decrees throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Lastly, the final aim of this dissertation was to investigate the Delphic decree culture. Almost a thousand preserved honorific decrees from Delphi provide one with fascinating source material for such inquiries. Briefly speaking, Delphic decrees can be classified into three types: full, abbreviated and semi-abbreviated documents. Within the dissertation I examined the formulae of decrees, standard patterns, core formulaic elements, the evolution of patterns over time etc.

As mentioned before, the period under scrutiny spans over 500 years, including both the Hellenistic and Roman epochs. In the diachronic context, one of my objectives was to answer the following questions: Does the Roman context bring about any changes in the source material – and if so, what kind of difference does it make in the recording of Delphic honours, as seen in the inscribed decrees at Delphi? Are changes in honorific practice discernible in the long run and can they be ascribed to specific historical developments?

Due to the vast number of honorific decrees of Delphi that have been preserved, it was not the purpose of my work to analyse other types of Delphic inscriptions, for instance *tituli honorarii* or manumission records. Furthermore, the entire body of Amphictyonic documents had to be excluded from my analysis, as they tend to deal with matters that were beyond the scope of my dissertation.

The dissertation opens with a chapter devoted to honorands, divided into four sections. In the first one, I explore contacts between Delphi, Hellenistic monarchies, the Roman state and Roman emperors; in the second section, I deal with relations between Delphi and other Greek *poleis* and *koina*, for instance the Aetolian League, Thessaly, Athens and other regions. These two sections

constitute an investigation into Delphic international policy in the period under discussion; in contrast, in the third section I look at internal relations, or the practice of granting honours and privileges to citizens of Delphi. In the last section, I focus on honorands who were awarded for their contributions to or participation in Delphic festivals – for example, participants and organisers of the Pythian Games and the Soteria festival. Proceeding further, in chapter two of my dissertation I consider honours and privileges awarded in Delphic honorific decrees. The first 53 pages are devoted to analysing particular privileges, their order within the chapter being based mainly on their appearance in the formulation. After that part a “General overview” follows, a section in which I jointly analyse and compare all the honours which were bestowed, also delving into the issues of the inheritance and renewal of privilege. The next part of my dissertation is chapter three, in which I discuss the generalia of Delphic decree formulae, with the motivation clause – containing the rationale for granting honours and privileges in the first place – discussed separately in chapter four, first the general motives and then specific reasons. The thesis ends with the conclusions section and two appendices: Appendix one contains Delphic full pattern and semi-abbreviated decrees, whereas Appendix two is devoted to abbreviated documents. In every chapter, the main conclusions were summarised in a short section at the end; furthermore, I collected and reanalysed general research results at the end of my dissertation, drawing general conclusions. These are as follows:

In comparison to their heyday in the Archaic and Classical period, the Delphic sanctuary and *polis* experienced a decline in the post-classical period, but – in contrast to some scholars’ views – they were emphatically not abandoned⁵. Granted, royal donations to Delphi in the Hellenistic period were quite small (with the significant exception of the Attalid dynasty), reflecting their general disinterest in that *polis*; nonetheless, it was in this very period that the number of granted honours and voted decrees reached its highest level ever. Indeed, the body of evidence attests to the fact that Delphi cultivated relations with almost the entire Mediterranean region, refuting SCOTT’s unsubstantiated assertion that Delphi was reduced in its status to a parochial sanctuary. The inhabitants of the Greek and Mediterranean worlds continued to visit Delphi, participate in Delphic festivals and sponsor the city, coveting the honour of being awarded one of highly-sought Delphic honours and privileges. The data show that the citizens of Delphi willingly bestowed over thirty different types of privileges on meritorious foreign benefactors. Furthermore, the citizen body granted *asylia* to sanctuaries in Smyrna, Teos, and Chalcedon⁶, recognized new festivals – such as

⁵ E.g. SCOTT, *op. cit.* (n. 4), p. 174; PARKE, WORMELL, *op. cit.* (n. 3), p. 244.

⁶ *FdD* IV 153 (246 or 242 BC) Smyrna; *FdD* II 134c (c. 205/204–203/202 BC) Teos; *FdD* IV 372 (230–200 BC) Chalcedon.

Panathenaia and Eumeneia⁷ – and guarded the sanctuary of Apollo, bestowing *promanteia* on selected people.

In the Hellenistic period, Delphi's hard-won political independence came to an end and was never regained in the period under analysis. The Macedonians controlled the city from the 350s onwards; after several decades the Aetolian League seized Delphi from the Macedonians and ruled it for over a century, establishing its own officials (*epimeletai*), reorganizing the Soteria festival and holding sway over the Amphictyonic council. After Antiochos III's defeat in the battle of Magnesia, the Aetolian League lost their supremacy over Delphi to the Romans. Consequently, despite the Roman Senate's guarantee of nominal freedom given to Delphi, neither Delphi nor any other Greek city was truly free under the Romans.

Nevertheless, Delphic honorific decrees of the Hellenistic period suggest that the city attempted to win back a measure of its former independence. Through decreeing an immense number of privileges and honours to foreigners (citizens of other Greek *poleis* and non-Greek states), the people of Delphi strove to establish and maintain relations with the representatives of the Greek world without any external interference, engaging in the international politics of the day on their own terms. Accordingly, through the award of honorific decrees, Delphi forged ties with other Greek *poleis*, *koina*, Hellenistic monarchs and their *philoï*, as well as with the Roman state. The award system could be used offensively – for instance, to morally support a state in war and rally friends against a common enemy: for a case in point, while under Macedonian oppression, the citizens of Delphi awarded collective *promanteia* to the Aetolians allied with the Thebans against Alexander the Great. Arguably, the most interesting use of the Delphic decree was as independence propaganda: the city bestowed a relatively small number of honours on its overlords, Aetolians and Thessalians, and thus projected an image of self-reliance by overtly snubbing citizens of those *poleis* who formally ruled it.

My theory that Delphi consciously supported or opposed political factions through honorific decrees is validated when we link the country of origin of honours with their administrative positions and professions. Contacts between Delphi and Macedonia, Aetolia, Thessaly and Rome were utilitarian and strictly political in nature: consequently, the uncommon awardees from these states were almost always public officials and magistrates. As soon as the political climate changed and Delphi passed from hand to hand, the city decrees no longer honoured its former overlords, instead showing a tendency to give lip service to their new masters. However, no matter if they were under the Macedonians or the Aetolians, Delphi issued only the bare minimum of decrees honouring the officials, continuing the snubbing tactics I described before. The powers of the day

⁷ É. WILL, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, Nancy 1967, vol. II, pp. 291 f.

that did not oppress Delphi at the time were honoured, although I believe that honours given to their representatives were an expression of careful sycophancy rather than noble sentiment. In contrast, among the honorands from Athens, Thebes, Ionian and Arcadian cities one prevalingly finds many professional artists, entertainers, religious thinkers, philosophers and intellectuals, a trend which suggests that the Delphic community genuinely appreciated and acknowledged their cultural contributions to the oracular *polis* and its festivities.

The advent of Rome brought about a number of changes in Delphic decree culture. The number of enacted decrees significantly decreased in comparison to the third and second centuries BC. The preserved documentation of the Imperial period shows an increase in *tituli honorarii* and a sharp decline in the number of decrees; the regression continued into the Imperial period, when the formulae of full decrees were reduced and simplified. Under Hadrian and Plutarch, the Delphic sanctuary and *polis* entered a second period of prosperity, with the number of granted honours and privileges increasing after centuries of decline: artists, erudites and philosophers associated with the Second Sophistic movement flocked to the city, beautified through generous donations from Herodes Atticus, a prominent philanthropist and patron of public works. Nevertheless, the body of evidence indicates that even in that period the number of decrees never again rose to the peak numbers of the third and second centuries BC.

The Hellenistic period was not only the *floruit* of Delphic decree culture, but also the heyday of its democratic system. In the third and second centuries BC, the democratic culture in Delphi rapidly developed, an advance reflected by the fact that the majority of decrees were passed only after the community put them to the vote. The third century BC was the age in which the Delphic decree culture issued the largest number of them, whereas in the next century decree formulae achieved previously unattainable standards of literary quality. The decrees of the second century BC reached the most complex stage of their development: the standard pattern featured the largest number of additional elements, whereas the formulae took on their most extensive and informative form.

The honorific decrees of Delphi demonstrate the important role played by the Delphic assembly, as the majority of decrees were enacted by the *demos*. Judging by honorific decrees only, it is impossible to fully comprehend the role of Delphic *boule* within the democratic system of the *poleis*; nonetheless, it appears that the Delphic council was of far less importance than the Delphic assembly.

To conclude, my PhD thesis constitutes but an introduction to Delphic honorific culture in post-classical times: I intend to continue my research, which will hopefully shed new light on the history of this extraordinary *polis*.