The Inscriptions of Dodona and a New History of Molossia

Alte Geschichte

Franz Steiner Verlag

Elizabeth A. Meyer

HABES 54

Elizabeth A. Meyer
The Inscriptions of Dodona and a
New History of Molossia

H A B E S

Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien

Herausgegeben von Angelos Chaniotis und Christian Witschel.

Band 54

Elizabeth A. Meyer

The Inscriptions of Dodona and a New History of Molossia

Franz Steiner Verlag

Umschlagabbildung: Detail of sword hilt, third century BC, Ioannina Museum 1373. Drawing by SeungJung Kim, after Katsikoudis (2005) plate 23.

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Druck: Laupp & Göbel, Nehren
Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier.
Printed in Germany.
ISBN 978-3-515-10311-4

for my friends in Heidelberg

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

This is not a book I was aware I wanted to write when in the course of another project I first started to investigate the date and meaning of the slave-manumission plaques from the great sanctuary at Dodona, Epirus's preeminent oracular shrine. But northwestern Greece exerts it own particular spell, its rough history introducing me to issues – of kingship, of federalism, of great sanctuaries and their administration, of regional alliance – that had not caught my interest before. It also introduced me to archaeologists and historians previously unknown to me whose hospitality and helpfulness were unsurpassed. I have many to thank.

My trip to the Ioannina Museum was a particular adventure, since at the time the museum was closed and most of the finds were stored on a local army base: here Georgia Pliakou and Christos Kleitsas were exceptionally helpful to me, and I was also delighted to be in the company of my friend Molly Richardson, an invaluable companion on any epigraphical outing. In Athens the Dodona metal plaques are stored or on display in the National Museum, and here I have Photeini Zapheiropoulou, Nomiki Palaiokrassa, and Vassilis Barkas to thank for making it so easy to work there. The process of obtaining permission to see what I wanted was overseen by Maria Pilali at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and to her, Bob Bridges the School Secretary, and the School's Director, Jack Davis, I am very grateful, as I am also to the British School and to Robert Pitt, its Assistant Director, for accommodation in the School and for many illuminating epigraphical conversations.

No travel would have been possible without the generous two-year grant awarded to me by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung and the two-year leave granted to me by the University of Virginia. My home base during these two years was the Seminar für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik at the University of Heidelberg. Kai Brodersen (now President of the University of Erfurt) and Angelos Chaniotis (now at the Institute for Advanced Study) were instrumental in finding me this German home, while Christian Witschel, as the head of the Seminar, ensured that all its magnificent resources were available to me; Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner and Marion Süfling gracefully untangled some of the mysteries of life in Germany for a foreigner, and became friends as well.

Many friends, old and new, also helped with the manuscript. Pierre Cabanes supplied two photographs for the epigraphic appendix; Chrissy Mysko did the formatting and book lay-out; George Skoch drew the maps; SeungJung Kim designed the cover and drew its Dodona eagle; Bill Furley and Christian Mileta (and his wide circle of epigraphic savants) helped with some readings of texts; Coulter George provided wise advice on matters of northwest dialect; John Camp, Thomas Corsten, and Michael Lendon read the manuscript; Angelos Chaniotis read the manuscript twice (and made crucial epigraphic suggestions as well); and Tony Woodman helped with a final proofreading. I have Angelos Chaniotos, the late Géza Alföldy,

and Christian Witschel to thank for accepting this book in the *HABES* series. Finally, Ted Lendon kept the book comprehensible when it threatened to become too technical, applauded all efforts at fluid narrative, and always pushed for The Big Picture. I owe him, as always, more than I can say.

Elizabeth A. Meyer
Charlottesville, Virginia
January, 2012

INTRODUCTION

With its rushing waters, rich Alpine pastures, and wood-cloaked mountains, ancient Molossia, in the northwest of Greece, was one of the nature's loveliest places. At least in summer: in winter it was one of nature's hardest – *frigida, dura, aspera*, as Livy bluntly characterized its northernmost reaches: subject to crushing cold and deep snows that blocked mountain passes, froze fingers, and isolated the Molossians from the outside world.[1] The most famous son of this mountain realm was Pyrrhus, the powerful warrior-king named for fire, who in his towering goat's-horn helmet fought so brilliantly against the Romans in the south of Italy. But the history written for this kingdom of Molossia and its wider region, Epirus – although it nods to the blaze of Pyrrhus's glory in the wider Greek and south Italian worlds of the third century BC – prefers to concentrate on Molossia's constitutional development, mostly in the century before Pyrrhus. The story of this development is based on the inscriptions of Dodona, and two of the consequences of the way it has been written, depending as it does on unexamined epigraphical criteria for dating, are curious: Molossia in the fourth century BC is presented as constitutionally in advance of the rest of Greece, and Molossia in Pyrrhus's century has virtually no inscriptions and therefore no internal history. These are striking and suggestive discrepancies. This study, after a rapid traverse of the history of Molossia and Epirus as it is now understood (I), re-examines dating criteria for, in particular, inscriptions of the fourth and third centuries BC and adjusts the dates of most of them downwards (II), then applies the consequences of that readjustment to examine seven basic tenets of Molossian history in the fourth and third centuries (III) and rewrites that history (IV). The redating of many inscriptions to the third century from their current fourth-century placement thus permits a history of Molossia and Epirus to be written that correlates the Molossians' epigraphic habits with their undoubted historical achievements, and places Pyrrhus and his son Alexander II in a context that can both explain them and, when both were away hunting glory and the former achieving immortality, function successfully without them.

1 Waters, Pliny *HN* 4.1 (Theop. *FGrH* 115 F319). Meadowland: Hes. *Eoiai* fr. 115.1 (Hirschberger), πολυλήϊος ἠδ' εὐλείμων, of a land he called 'Hellopia' (=240 MW). Wooded mountains and springs: *montes vestiti frequentibus silvis sunt, iuga summa campos patentes aquasque perennes habent*, Livy 32.13.3. Cold: *frigida haec omnis duraque cultu et aspera plaga est*, Livy 45.30.7, and Hammond (from whom these passages are culled, 1967, 39–40) reported (1967, 17) that in the winter of 1940–1 the Greek army in northern Epirus "had more casualties through frostbite than it had in battle throughout the entire campaign."

I. THE ESTABLISHED VIEW

The history of Molossia and the Epirote *koinon* that has become standard was crafted by Nicholas Hammond (in 1967) and Pierre Cabanes (in 1976), subsuming or superseding earlier work by Martin Nilsson (1909), Geoffrey Cross (1932), and Peter Franke (1955). It is now enshrined in the second edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* and admiringly recapitulated, and even extended, in several recent works.[2] This history resolutely pushes the Molossian kings into the background and divides the history of Epirus into three phases: the Molossian *koinon* (ca. 400–330/328 BC), the 'Epirote Alliance' or 'Symmachy' (328 – 232 BC), and the Epirote *koinon* (232–167 BC). In this account the development of federalism is the key theme, and here Molossia is regarded as a pioneer, a signal contributor to this important Greek invention.[3]

In this now standard telling, the Aeacid Tharyps was the first non-mythical Molossian king after Thucydides's dimly perceptible Admetus to become known to the city-states of the south by name, and was Hellenized to such an extent that he was given Athenian citizenship, and was said to have been educated in Athens.[4] During his reign (variously dated – ending either ca. 400 BC or somewhat later)[5] the Molossians took control of the sanctuary of Dodona away from the Thesprotians to the west, in the mountains on the edge of the central Molossian plain (see **MAP 1**).[6]

2 Beck 1997, 135–45; Davies 2000; S. Funke 2000a; Moustakis 2006, 60–90; see also Sakellariou 1997, 74–89. For *CAH*², see Hammond 1994a and Franke 1989.

3 "[T]he crucible of Greek political creativity," Davies 2000, 258. In S. Funke 2000a, 219 the three phases are different types of "monarchischer Bundesstaat" ("monarchic federal state"), the first of which replaced the "königlich geführter Stammstaat" ("*ethnos*-state led by the king") before the end of the fifth century BC, with Alcetas I (ca. 385–370 BC) re-establishing the (constitutional) monarchic federal state after a brief period of "republican government" (127).

4 Admetus: Thuc. 1.136–7 (the Themistocles digression). Mythical kings included Neoptolemus, son of Achilles. Hellenized: in giving citizenship to Arybbas II in 343/2 the Athenians note that they had given it to his father [restored] and grandfather (Arybbas I=Tharyps) as well, Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 348–55 no. 70 *ll*.3–7 (=*IG* II² 226, *GHI* no. 173, and *Syll*.³ 228); educated, Justin-Trogus 17.3.11, but Nilsson (1909, 44–5) is doubtful. S. Funke (2000a, 113–18, 123–6) additionally argues for a long-standing Hellenization of Molossia so strong that Thucydides's classification of the Molossians among the barbarians (2.80.1) and the archaic flavor of Molossia conveyed through his "clichéd" Admetus episode have historical value only as artefacts of a fifth-century Athenian mindset.

5 Hammond 1967, 508 (citing Cross: 400 BC); S. Funke (2000a, 127) argued for 390 BC.

6 Dodona is still Thesprotian in the time of Pindar (Strabo 7.7.11 [C328]=fr. 263 Bowra), Aeschylus (*PV* 829–31), and Euripides (*Phoin*. 982, ca. 410 BC); Paus. 1.17.5 also called it Thesprotian. Cross (1932, 6–7 n.2) and Hammond (1967, 491–2) thought these references merely 'traditional,' while Dakaris (1971a, 21) and Cabanes (1976a, 113–14) see them as reflecting historical reality, and place the Molossian seizure of the sanctuary in the early fourth century.

Map 1: Molossia and the Northwest.

By the time of his grandson Neoptolemus, son of Alcetas, ruling as sole king between (probably) 370 and 368 BC, the Molossians have constructed for themselves a federal *koinon* – their coins read "of the Molossians"[7] – of which their king (who, it is alleged, had been a child like Tharyps, or weak like his son Alcetas I, or in some other way compromised when it was founded)[8] was titular head. This *koinon*, firmly oriented towards the Greek states to the south and west, in the next forty years expanded and contracted in its membership and extent as circumstances changed.[9] At one time the *koinon* controlled even a stretch of the Thesprotian coast opposite Corcyra and a share of the northern coastline of the bay of Arta (Ambracia), while after 342 it achieved, with the help of Philip II of Macedon, dominion over three northwestern *poleis* in Thesprotia, although losing control of some of the northern tribes closer to Macedonia itself.[10]

Either after 343/2, when Philip placed his brother-in-law Alexander I on the throne of Molossia, or after 331/0, when that Alexander died on campaign in south Italy, the Molossian *koinon* ("a well-knit egalitarian tribal state" with a "common citizenship" that had shown itself "capable of expansion")[11] transformed itself, in this interpretation, into a larger entity. The previous coinage "of the Molossians" disappeared, to be replaced by that "of the Apeirotes" (*Apeirotān*). The *koinon* was renamed "Apeiros" or "the Molossians and their allies"[12] around 330/328 BC – and (by the end of the century) "those of the Apeirotes who are allied" – and was characterized in particular by the incorporation of all of the Thesprotians into the new state.[13] Pyrrhus, as king of the Molossians, titular head of the new state, and

7 Franke 1961, 99–106.

8 S. Funke 2000a, 127–53: a *Bundesstaat* created under the youthful Tharyps, re-established by the weak Alcetas I; Hammond (1967, 533) opts for the opportune moment when Alcetas I was in exile.

9 "Lock[ed] . . . into the power struggles of Balkan Greece," Davies 2000, 245 and drawn into Greek interaction, e.g., Beck 1997, 140 and Davies 2000, 244; the Molossian kings were allies of the Athenians in the Second Athenian Naval League, Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 92–105 no. 22 *ll*. 109–10=*SVA*^{2} 2.257 B13-14.

10 Hammond 1967, 512–24, 527, 529–33 (at 531 and 533, *koinon* founded ca. 386/5 but the "enlarged" state sometime before 386; also 1994a, 431), 538–40; Cabanes 1976a, 113–14, 130–2, 163–72; Davies (2000, 237) sees a concerted policy of predominance and expansion within the region.

11 Hammond 1994a, 436 and 1967, 557; also Cabanes 2004, 31 on the relationship between *koinon* and expansion.

12 "Apeiros," *SEG* XXIII.189 I *l*.11; "Molossians and their allies," *IG* IX^{2} 1.4.1750=Carapanos 1878a, 39–40 and pl. XXII. See Cabanes 1976a, 151–5 (summarizing earlier views as well), 172–83; Hammond (1967, 534 and 1994a, 441) also suggests that the phrase "Molossians and their allies" points to a league with a bicameral system of hegemonic state and allies in council.

13 Franke (1955, 36–7), Hammond (1967, 560) and Cabanes (1976a, 172) all agree that Aristotle's lost *Politeia* of the Epirotes shows conclusively that the new state "Apeiros" (*SEG* XXIII.189 I *l*.11) was in existence by 326/5; the phrase "those of the Apeirotes who are allied" is used in *SGDI* 1336 (although I doubt this translation: see below pp. 67–9), and scholars refer to the entity as "the Epirote Alliance" or "the Epirote Symmachy." See Hammond 1967, 537, 541–6, 549–51, 557–71 (560, in the "Epirote League" the Molossians do not have a special position, but are merely one among many); Franke (1955, 43) thought that Olympias of Macedon was responsible for the new state's creation; Hammond (1967, 559) attributed it

hegemon of a wider alliance (which also included Chaonians, Acarnanians, and Athamanians),[14] led it to great military achievements abroad, including two costly victories over the Romans and the (temporary) expulsion of the Carthaginians from all but one city of Sicily. He also expanded Epirote dominion (northwest, northeast, south) at home,[15] a dominion fought for, and mostly maintained, by his son and successor Alexander II.[16] Both were kings whose powers were "set . . . within relatively narrow confines" by "the constitution" – constitutional checks of various sorts – with most powers held instead by the Epirote Alliance and, if the *koinon* of the Molossians survived into this century, by that *koinon*.[17] The decade after Alexander II's death (ca. 240–232 BC) was more troubled, however, as allies to the north were raided by the Illyrians, whose piratical forays also interrupted overseas trade. This dark decade culminated in the deaths of both of Alexander's sons, Pyrrhus and Ptolemaeus; the revolt of the city of Ambracia from Molossian control; the terrifying mob-driven murder of the great Pyrrhus's grand-daughter, Deidameia, at the altar of Artemis Hegemonē in Ambracia; and the vindictive scattering of the great Pyrrhus's ashes from his Ambraciot tomb.[18]

The death of the last Aeacid, the destruction of monarchic rule, and continued other troubles form (in this interpretation) the backdrop of the last phase of Epirus (232–167 BC), that of the 'Epirote *koinon*' led by a *strategos*, in which all adult males "had a common citizenship" as Epirotes.[19] The sack of Phoenikē, chief city of the Chaonians and "the richest and most powerful city in Epirus,"[20] by the Illyrians in 230, further Illyrian depredations along the coast, and subsequent Roman intervention prompted Epirus's western and northern friends and allies – Corcyra, Apollonia, Epidamnus, the Atintani, eventually Orikos – to seek and receive Roman protection.[21] The Epirote *koinon*'s alliance with Philip V of Macedon involved

to Antipater, and (1967, 562–3 and 1994a, 441, 442) argued that this cunning maneuver froze Molossian growth; S. Funke (2000a, 185) identifies Alexander I as the 'founder' of the new state. Thesprotians, Cabanes 1976a, 175–6.

14 DH 20.1, Plut. *Pyrrh*. 28.2, 30.2, 30.5.

15 Hammond 1967, 568–71, 586–8.

16 Hammond 1967, 588–90; Cabanes 1976a, 75–93.

17 Quotation, Franke 1989, 459; Franke (*ibid*.) and Hammond (1967, 564–7) argued (*contra* Nilsson 1909, 61) that the *koinon* of the Molossians continued to exist within the League (at 561 Hammond argued that the powers of the 'Alliance' were only financial – taxation – and military); Cabanes (1976a, 176) and S. Funke (2000a, 179 n.329) do not accept this prolongation of the life of the Molossian *koinon* and instead see a transformation of the entire state.

18 Justin-Trogus 28.1, 28.3; Polyaen. *Strat*. 8.52 ("daughter of Pyrrhus," interpreted as "daughter of Pyrrhus son of Pyrrhus"), S. Funke 2000a, 216–18; discussed Hammond 1967, 591–2. Family examined by Cabanes 1976a, 39–74.

19 Hammond 1967, 648 (quotation); constitution of the *koinon*, Cabanes 1976a, 353–89 (he discusses sub-*koina* as well); complicated events of 232–228 BC, discussed Cabanes 1976a, 198–216.

20 Pol. 2.6.8.

21 Pol. 2.11.5; discussed Hammond 1967, 595–602; Orikos in 214, Hammond 1967, 609. Cabanes (1976a, 354) also speculates that 'Epirus' lost Kelaitha (to independence within Thessaly) and the Athamanes because they received Delphic *theorodokoi* in a list dated 230–220 BC (Plassart 1921, 65–7; date, Hatzopoulos 1991), as (he argues) only independent entities did.

Epirus in war against the Aetolians and the Romans on and off between 228 and 205, one devastating consequence of which was the sack of Dodona by the Aetolians in 219.[22] Between 205 and 197 the alliance with Macedon became more difficult to sustain, the relationship with the Romans closer as the Romans pursued Philip across Epirote territory without ravaging it, and both paid the Epirotes to supply Roman armies in Thessaly and took Epirote volunteers into battle.[23] After the battle of Cynoscephalae, Rome and Epirus were allied, if at times uneasily, but in 170 BC the Epirote *koinon* split into pro- and anti-Roman factions over Rome's third Macedonian war against Perseus, and in the year after Pydna Aemilius Paullus's soldiers destroyed seventy cities in Molossia and took 150,000 Epirotes as slaves, thus effectively ending the history of the Epirote *koinon*.[24]

22 This complicated period discussed in Hammond 1967, 602–13; Cabanes 1976a, 216–31.

23 Oost 1954, 40–53; Hammond 1967, 613–20; Cabanes 1976a, 241–78.

24 An alliance with Rome when or on what terms is debated, see Hammond 1967, 621; at 621–35 he narrates the story of Epirus down to the destruction of Molossia in 167; see, too, Cabanes 1976a, 279–308. The Epirote *koinon* itself appears four last times after 167 BC, twice as "the *koinon* of the Epirotes around Phoenikē" honoring a man in *Syll.*[3] 653A (=*I.Alexandreia Troas* no. 5) and 653B (Delphi; after 165 BC); and twice as the "*koinon* of the Epirotes," honoring a man in *Syll.*[3] 654A (Delphi) and at Oropos, *I.Oropos* 433 *l.*4 (154–152 BC). "The Molossians" and "the Molossians' *ethnos*" appear once again as well, honoring Thessalian judges in 130/129 BC (*SEG* LVII.510=Tziafalias and Helly 2007, 424 *l.*57; 425 *ll.*63, 66, 68, 69, 72, 73–4; discussed 455–6); the heading (redacted by the Thessalians) refers to "a *psephisma* of the *koinon* of the Molossians," so the redactors saw the Molossians as a *koinon* even if the Molossians did not officially call themselves that (Tziafalias and Helly 2007, 456).

II. THE DATING OF INSCRIPTIONS FROM DODONA

This received narrative relies on close reading of the ancient sources: hints and scattered remarks in Polybius, Livy, Appian, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Justin-Trogus; itineraries in Strabo and other geographers; Plutarch; coins; and, above all, the epigraphical record. The inscriptions, deriving chiefly from Dodona and for the most part not firmly dated,[25] are particularly important to Epirus's fourth-century history and for the reconstruction and dating of the internal developments of Molossia and the Epirote *koinon*. Most attention has focussed on the 'political' inscriptions – grants of privileges (like *proxenia*, *politeia*, and *ateleia*) – and less has been given to the manumissions and dedications.[26] Yet dating problems affect all types of inscription pretty much equally: the epigraphical criteria for dating have never been examined closely and the attribution (decreed in the nineteenth century) of certain letter-forms to certain centuries has never been systematically justified for this area, or even subsequently questioned.[27] In this chapter, the manumissions and a handful of dated dedications are used to refine the epigraphical dating criteria. The result is that the probable dating of fourteen of the earlier inscriptions changes significantly: four manumissions and ten grants of privilege previously assigned to the fourth century most likely belong in the third century BC instead.[28] Given the degree to which the area's internal history has been deduced from inscriptions, this redating has substantial consequences for the Molossian kingdom's internal history, the relationship of this internal history to the dynamic of its outward expansion under the kings, and Molossia's relationship with Thesprotia and Chaonia in particular.

The twenty-seven surviving slave-manumissions from Dodona have been dated on the basis of a combination of 'strong' and 'weak' dating criteria. 'Strong'

25 Now mostly in the National Museum in Athens, in the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina, or lost. For permission to examine metal plaques now in the National Museum, I thank Photeini Zapheiropoulou, Nomiki Palaiokrassa, and Vassilis Barkas; for permission to examine material in Ioannina and exceptional assistance while there (in 2007 the Ioannina Museum materials were kept in trailers on the local army base while the museum was being renovated), Georgia Pliakou and Christos Kleitsas.

26 The planned *IG* volume for this northern area was never published. As a consequence, I follow custom and cite by *SGDI* number (for those inscriptions found before 1900), and by C(abanes) number (inscriptions in his Epigraphical Appendix: 1976a, 534–92) for those published more recently. In *my* Epigraphical Appendix I have re-edited all the manumissions, and therefore these inscriptions are also cited with their appendix number (in **bold**). Of the manumissions dated before 232 BC, C(abanes no.)72 (=**no. 11**) and C73 (=**no. 12**), two fragmentary inscriptions that may not be manumissions, could not be located in spring 2007. The inscribed votives are gathered and studied as a group for the first time by Dieterle 2007, 85–102, although she accepts all attributed dates and does not concern herself with the epigraphy.

27 Thus Katsikoudis (2005, 48–53) gives an overview of letter-forms based on the dates already given, and does not make distinctions between media.

28 The proposed changes from Cabanes's now standard dating (1976a, 158–61 on grants and 456–7, a chart of manumissions) are summarized in Chart 2, below pp. 42–4.

criteria for dating are dating formulae that clearly refer to one or another epoch in Molossian/Epirote political history: dating by Aeacid kings; dating by *strategos* of the (*koinon* of the) Epirotes (after the extermination of the monarchy in 232); and dating by other officials, like agonothetes or naiarchs, only known (or thought to have existed) at certain times. (Dating by the official called the *prostatas* has not helped in the past, since this official appears in all periods.) 'Strong,' too, is dating by the identification of persons named in the inscriptions when they are otherwise known from historical sources like Polybius or Livy.

'Weak' criteria for dating are those of letter-form alone. The use of this never entirely straightforward method of dating is further complicated by the propensity at Dodona to inscribe public documents on bronze and copper plaques in addition to stone:[29] as inscribed material clearly from the period of the Epirote *koinon* (after 232) shows, letter forms from the same epoch can be different in different media, forms on stone being slower to adopt lunate or cursive forms.[30] Indeed, there

29 Of a total of sixty-one inscriptions of all types from Dodona in Cabanes 1976a, 534–92, and not including two inscribed vases (C31) or six oracular lamellae (C20-25), forty-six are on bronze and fifteen are on stone; fourteen more fragments, on bronze, were published in Carapanos 1878a (five of which also appeared in *SGDI*: 1342, 1345, 1364, 1366, and 1367) but were not republished by Cabanes. Four more (non-oracular) inscriptions have appeared since the mid-seventies. (1) A bronze fragment in Dakaris 1972 [1974] 97 and pl. 71γ (not in *SEG*), perhaps a grant of privilege: [–]ω[–] | [– δόμ]εν γᾶ[ς ἔγκτασιν? –]||[–] Ἀρκτ[ᾶνος –]||[– E]ὐρυμ[εναίων –]||[–]τουτ[–]||[– Παυσ]ᾳνία [–] (Dakaris's restorations). The city of Eurymenai (or of the Eurymenaioi) mentioned (if the ethnic derives from the place) was plundered by the Macedonians in 313 BC (Diod. 19.88.6), but rebuilt and then destroyed by the Romans in 167 BC (Hammond 1967, 685), so the history of the place provides no helpful dating criterion for the letters, which vary in size (small omicron and gamma), tilt right, curl (epsilon), and 'swing' (mu). (2) Cabanes 1987a, 109–10 (=1997, 103; *SEG* XLVII.823), a third-century bronze fragment from Dodona in which only the words [β]ασιλεύς and [Ἀ]πειρωτᾶ[ν] are legible. (3) Dakaris 1989 [1992] 179–80 (=*SEG* XXXVIII.457 and *SEG* XLIII.317), a stone base honoring an unknown person [– μα]ντείας ἕνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας τᾶς εἰς αὐτούς, made by Melissos, son of Epikrates, the Corcyraean, which from its find-spot in the sanctuary is dated to the end of the third century, with photograph now in Katsikoudis 2005, pl. 10 and a description of the letters at 2005, 76; Ma (2008) suggests [ἀν]δ̣ρείας ἕνεκεν (=*SEG* LV.628). (4) Souli *et al*. 2003 [2006] 69=*BE* 2006.228 and *SEG* LIII.571 (suggesting letter forms of the early third century BC: large, upright letters, including pi with a short second hasta, open sigma, and large omega on the line), a stone fragment found in a reused context (my restorations): -Ạ̣NIO- | [– ἐμαρ]τ̣ύρησε ἐν τῶι δ[ημοσίωι? δήμωι? Δατυίωι μηνί?] | [– Μολο]σσῶν αὐτοῦ παρε[– | – ἐ]γ̣ τᾶι ἀγορᾶι κριθῆμ̣εν[– | –] Λ̣ιμναίας καὶ Α[– (or possibly Ạ̣I)] μνε̣ίας καὶ ἀ[ρετᾶς | –]ε̣̣ἰ̣μ̣ε̣γ̣[–]. Of these seventy-nine total (non-oracular) inscriptions from Dodona, then, the proportions (bronze:stone) are 62:17, or 3.6:1.

30 The honors, grants of privileges, and manumissions on stone during the Epirote *koinon* (after 232 BC) are conservative, using large, upright letters; see (below pp. 31–2) the discussion of C14, C16, C17, C18, and C75 (=**no. 24**), which all have large omicron and omega. Only the very last stone inscription before 167 BC, the proxeny-decree *SGDI* 1339 (at latest, ca. 170 BC), has lunate epsilon, sigma, and omega; but such lunate forms were already characterizing bronze documents inscribed in the *pointillé* style as many as thirty-five years earlier, see C34 (ca. 205 BC, lunate epsilon and omega only) and the second-century manumissions *SGDI* 1349 (=**no. 22**), C71 (=**no. 23**), C76 (=**no. 25**), *SGDI* 1352 (=**no. 26**), and *SGDI* 1350 (=**no. 27**), all illustrated in the Epigraphical Appendix.

are differences of technique even in bronze-inscribing (and consequences deriving from the fineness of the implement used to inscribe and the thickness of the bronze) that can influence the shape of contemporary letters.[31] Moreover, excavations at Dodona have produced more than 4200 oracular lamellae,[32] which record mostly questions posed to the oracle on lead sheets by visitors. These, written in a variety of dialects and documentary hands, may have altered their letter-forms faster and earlier than inscriptions on other metals or stone (as might perhaps be expected of writing by non-professionals), and may have influenced letter-forms in the bronze inscriptions starting in the third century BC; but very little here is certain.[33] The consequence is that the existing assumptions – that large, straight letters on stone or bronze date 'early,' to the fourth century BC but no later, and that lunate letters (epsilon, sigma, and omega), alpha with broken bar, and pi with hastae of equal length date late, after 232 BC – are at best over-simplifications, although the *regular* use of lunate letters does indeed seem to be a phenomenon of the late third century and after.[34]

31 Fraser 1954, 57 n.13. This is also shown by bronze plaques from the time of the Epirote *koinon*: *SGDI* 1338 (illustrated in Carapanos 1878a pl. XXIX.2) is inscribed in the *repoussé* style (hammering from the back with a modelling tool), with the large and upright letters that style favors; but the other contemporary bronze documents (like those listed in the preceding note) engraved in the *pointillé* style (using dots driven from the back of the plaque) use lunate letters. The result is that the first looks like most of the stone inscriptions, the others like cursive handwritten documents.

32 Méndez Dosuna 2006, 277; Dakaris *et al*. (1993, 55) had announced 1600.

33 Fixed points in the dating of lamellae are few, see Lhôte 2006, 15–21 (although most lamellae are fourth and third century, Lhôte 2006, 335 and 425–6; Mylonopoulos 2006, 201). The dating of letter forms is controversial. Thus Lhôte (2006, 17–18) accepts the arguments of others that the lunate sigma (in other media a criterion of late dating, see below nn.34 and 36) was used in the oracular lamellae by the end of the fourth century BC, thus appearing on these lead sheets one hundred years before it appeared on bronze. Yet this conclusion depends on the dating of *SEG* XV.397=Lhôte 2006, 59–61 no. 11, a question from "the city of the Chaonians" about whether they should move (ἀγχωρίξαντας) their temple of Athena Polias. Dakaris *et al*. (1993, 58) – as well as others cited by Lhôte 2006, 17 and 60 – dated this lamella to ca. 330–320 BC (although in 1971a, 89 Dakaris had dated it to the third century) on the basis of a comparandum from the Athenian Kerameikos dated ca. 330 BC (but which uses both lunate and non-lunate sigmas), thus dating the Dodona lamella to the *earliest* appearance of a form of a letter rather than to some point later in that letter's extensive life. *BE* 1993.345 understandably questioned this rationale for dating, and Lhôte is uncomfortable with this date but accepts it because he accepts the (unfounded) historical argument that the Chaonian city of Phoenikē *could not* ask a question after 300 BC because it had been subsumed into the Molossian state. Its letter-forms (the lamella also uses Π with a full-length second hasta, for example, and M and Λ are curved) fit better a century later (see below pp. 31–2) – and because Phoenikē was sacked in 230 BC, that question posed to the oracle might have even greater relevance then than earlier. In this case, therefore, the postulation that letter-forms on lamellae follow a much more advanced trajectory of development is not well-founded; but it is nonetheless possible that other letter-forms in the lamellae could be more 'advanced' than they are on stone or bronze; see the discussion of Y below n.58.

34 Lunate letters, in general after 232 BC, Evangelides 1935, 250; after 170 BC, Dakaris 1968 [1970] 98 n.1; lunate sigmas specifically, Cabanes 1976a, 454 (on *SGDI* 1352, 1357, and 1358), and (in general) Guarducci 1987, 82–4. That these forms at Dodona may start to occur *regu-*