

Megara and Tripodiscus

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IN THE TIME of emperor Hadrian, according to Philostratus, the Megarians had some grievance against Athens serious enough to cause them to prohibit Athenian citizens from attending their festival the Lesser Pythaea; but the sophist Marcus of Byzantium, an acquaintance of the emperor, interceded and somehow mollified the Megarians, so that Athenians were once again welcome.¹ Now it is well known from the authors, inscriptions, and coins that Apollo Πυθαεὺς was the chief god of Megara, and students of Apolline and of Megarian cult have duly registered this incident among their testimonia.² They have not, however, remarked on an implication of this passage of Philostratus. If there were Lesser Pythaea, then there were also Greater, Πυθάεια τὰ μεγάλα. Typically in Greek civic religion, the greater games would be held every fourth year and with greater éclat and more elaborate competitions, so designated to distinguish them from the intervening annual celebrations.³ From Megara itself, moreover, we have a further testimony for a distinction of Pythian games.

In the second century B.C. a Megarian boxer was honored with a statue erected in his native city; the base survives, inscribed with the names of various festivals in which he had been victorious.⁴ His vic-

¹ Philostr. *VS* 1.24.5: οὐκ ἐδέχοντο σφᾶς ἐς τὰ Πύθια τὰ μικρὰ ἤκουτας. On Marcus see Schissel, *RE* 14.2 (1930) 1853–56 s.v. “Markos (2).”

² Most explicit is *Syll.*³ 653.22 (τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ τῆς πόλεως ἀρχηγέτου: II B.C.), cf. Theog. 773f (and indeed his invocation, 1ff) and Paus. 1.42.1 (Apollo built the city walls). See L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* IV (Oxford 1907) 439; E. L. Highbarger, *History and Civilization of Ancient Megara* (Baltimore 1927) 32f, and in *TAPA* 68 (1937) 99–111; K. HANELL, *Megarische Studien* (Lund 1934 [hereafter ‘Hanell’]) 84–91. I must note that the articles “Pythaios” and “Pythios (1–3)” in *RE* 24 (1963) are antiquated in documentation and scope; and that *RE*, followed by *Kleine Pauly*, has omitted an article on the (many) Pythian games.

³ So e.g. the Athenian Panathenaia (L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* [Berlin 1932] 23) and the Trojan (Sokolowski, *LSAM* 10.29ff), the Mysteries at Eleusis (Pl. *Grg.* 497c; *IG* I² 313.144, etc.; G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* [Princeton 1961] 239ff), the Haleia at Rhodes (*Syll.*³ 1067.14). Cf. L. Moretti, *I.agon.gr.* p.118.

⁴ *IG* VII 48, cited without comment by Farnell (*supra* n.2) 394, Hanell 94. Dittenberger in *IG* reports the stone as lost. A squeeze is at the Institute for Advanced Stud-

tories, each inscribed within a crown, were mostly regional, in cities of Peloponnesus, Attica, and Boeotia—as well as in his native Megara. In one crown we read Πυθάρεια πύγμην, in another Πυθάρεια [τὰ ἐν ἄ]στει[ι π]αγκράτιον. Certainly Megara had only two Pythaeia, not four (Philostratus' Lesser and by implication Greater plus the boxer's Pythaeia and City Pythaeia). In distinguishing Lesser from Greater, Philostratus used terms for Greek games that would be intelligible to all readers; the inscription shows us the official usage by which the distinction was drawn at Megara. Of the two celebrations, one was held in the city and the other, simply the 'Pythaeia', in the country: but which was the lesser and which the greater? Apollo's temple in the city was on the western acropolis (Paus. 1.42.5), where there can have been little open space; we might expect the great concourse to have been held at some more open site in the country that could accommodate the crowds and the competitions. Again, the unqualified Πυθάρεια might more naturally indicate the great festival, the one requiring geographical specification the lesser version.⁵ But these are inconclusive arguments; in Athens the Διονύσια (= Διονύσια τὰ ἐν ἄστει = Διονύσια τὰ μεγάλα) stood in contrast to the several minor Dionysia in the demes (κατὰ κώμας, Pl. *Resp.* 475D).⁶ More decisive evidence, I believe, comes from a distant quarter.

Greater fame attached to the Apollo of the Chalcedonians, Megarian colonists. Oracular by the beginning of the Hellenistic age, this god came to enjoy a far-flung reputation and clientele.⁷ In the Hellenistic period Chalcedon received signal honors in the name of its patron Apollo, as we know from two inscriptions. In a text from Delphi of the last third of the third century B.C., the Amphictyony declares the temple inviolable: [τ]ὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἄπολλωνος το[ῦ] Πυθαίου τὸ ἐν τῇ Καλχαδονίᾳ ἄσυλον καὶ φύκτιμον εἶμεν.⁸ And on a stone from Chalcedon itself, of the end of the third century or the beginning of the second, decrees of Phocaea and Tenedos declare the city inviolable in honor of

ies in Princeton: from this I can confirm the readings quoted here but not improve on them; also the date in the second century B.C., probably its second half.

⁵ One thinks of the Eleusinion versus the lesser Ἐλευσίνιον τὸ ἐν ἄστει; testimonies in R. E. Wycherly, *Athenian Agora* III (Princeton 1957) nos. 206, 208, 225, 227, 228. Compare *I.Cret.* III iii 3.B.11f (Lyttus), ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τ[ῷ] Ἄπολλωνος καὶ ἐμ πόλει ἐν Ἀθηναίαι: the chief temple, Apollo Δεκαταφόρος in the countryside (versus Athena Polias: *I.Cret.* III iii 9), needed no specification.

⁶ A. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford 1968) 40, 55.

⁷ *SEG* 24.1091; Arrian *FGrHist* 156F20; *Anth.Pal.* 9.551; Luc. *Alex.* 10; Soc. *HE* 4.8. Cf. Farnell (*supra* n.2) 398, 402f; Hanell 165. The Pythian games of Chalcedon were panhellenic by Imperial times: *IGR* I 802, IV 161, *MAMA* VIII 521.

⁸ *FD* III.4 372 (*Syll.*³ 550).

Apollo: ἀποδείξει τὴν πόλιν τὴν Καλχηδ[ονίων ἱερὰν καὶ ἄ]συλον, the city having been declared “his own” by Ἀπόλλων Χρηστήριος.⁹

Scholars have labored without success to discover why the god bears different epithets in these two inscriptions. Laurent assumed that the two declarations were contemporary, deriving from a single occasion, as is typical of declarations of *asylia*, and concluded that the grantors themselves picked what epithet to call the god; this however would be unparalleled and highly unlikely—one repeated the terms of the request in such decrees. Klaffenbach preferred to assign the two inscriptions to separate occasions, deducing that the god became oracular and changed his epithet between the dates of the two; this was excluded when an inscription older than both was discovered invoking an oracle of Apollo Chresterius of Chalcedon (*SEG* 24.1091). No one, it seems, has noticed the geographical import of the two inscriptions. The Amphictyony speaks expressly of the temple “in Chalcedonian territory” (ἐν τᾷ Καλχαδονίαι)¹⁰ rather than what would have been the usual and geographically ambiguous ἐν Χαλκαδόνι or παρὰ Χαλκαδονίοις:¹¹ it was in the country and not in the city. The Phocaeans and Tenedians, by contrast, declare the inviolability of the *city*, not the usual “city and country.” There is no overlap in geography; and in general, the two texts share very little in their terminology and organization. The conclusion must be not only that they derive from different occasions but also that they address themselves to different temples of the Chalcedonians: first Apollo Πυθαῖος¹² in the country, later Apollo Χρηστήριος in the city.¹³

We have then a pertinent fact about the worship of Apollo at Chalcedon: as at Megara, it was split in two. The temple that retained the original Megarian epithet was in the countryside. The oracular temple, whose epithet reflected the power its god had achieved at some time (Apollo of Megara was not oracular), was in the city proper, where the

⁹ V. Laurent, *EchO* 27 (1928) 24–44; G. Klaffenbach, *AbhBerlin* 1958.2, 10–14 [*SEG* 17.540]; *I.Kalchedon* 5.

¹⁰ Such adjectives are normal usage for a civic territory; for an instance of the extensive territory of Chalcedon, see Hdt. 4.85.1 (τῆς Καλχηδονίης: Darius on the Bosphorus).

¹¹ Thus we find, applied to temples in the countryside, ἐν Κῶι (*etc.*) at Cos (*SEG* 12.371ff), Boeotian Coroneia (*Staatsvertr.* III 463.a.5), Memphis (Paus. 1.18.4); παρὰ ὑμῶν for example of the Milesians’ temple of Apollo at Didyma (*I.Didyma* 493.4).

¹² I repeat the spelling of the one extant record, the Amphictyonic decree, without knowing whether this divergence from the original Megarian Πυθαεὺς reflects the passage of time or an error at Delphi.

¹³ Chalcedon will not be the only city to obtain *asylia* on two occasions for different cults: so Pergamum for Athena Nicephorus and Asclepius, Stratonicea for Hecate and Zeus.

inscribed decrees of Phocaea and Tenedos were in fact found. Its fame, resulting from the oracle's popularity, has eclipsed that of the country temple, which has left no trace in our literary evidence. But it seems clear from the palaeography of the two inscriptions that the Chalcedonians first sought inviolability in honor of Apollo Πυθαῖος in the countryside and only later made the same gesture for the city temple of Apollo Χρηστήριος. The country temple, then, was evidently regarded by the Chalcedonians as their chief cult deserving of first honor. I suggest that this relationship replicated that at Megara. There too the chief temple will have been in the country, the seat of the 'Pythaeia', while the urban temple was an offshoot and surrogate where the 'City Pythaeia' were held, Philostratus' lesser games.

The specific geography of these matters is only partly in doubt. The literary sources make clear that the temple of Apollo Chresterus was in the city proper of Chalcedon. And the stone bearing the decrees of Phocaea and Tenedos was found (though not in situ) at Moda, the seaward side of the peninsula of Kadıköy, thought to be the oldest part of Chalcedon city.¹⁴ If I am right, there was a senior temple of Apollo Πυθαῖος in the country, not known to us from the literary sources. But the interior of Chalcedon's vast territory is little spoken of and little excavated. One can say only that the country temple was not on the Bosporan coast, on which we are richly informed by the *periplus* literature.¹⁵ If the example of Megara held (see *infra*), it probably stood in the hills within a few hours' walk of the city.

As to the mother-city, Pausanias tells us plainly that the temple of Apollo was on the western acropolis of Megara city. He reports only one fact about it: it had recently been rebuilt by Hadrian, who gave the god a marble temple to replace the ancient brick structure (1.42.5). Here is further reason to think that Philostratus' 'Lesser Pythaeia' were the city games. Philostratus does not tell us how the Megarians were placated in Hadrian's time; I suggest that they were satisfied by the emperor's rebuilding this temple—the city temple—from which his fellow Athenians were being excluded. Perhaps the Megarians' grievance was some damage or despoliation in the old temple committed by an Athenian.

Where then was the country seat of the god, his primary temple? Apart from the harbor Nisaea, there was only one famous place in Megara's mainland territory. This was Tripodiscus in the western hills, some three hours' walk from Megara city.¹⁶ Here on the slope of

¹⁴ R. Janin, *EchO* 21 (1922) 354; cf. Laurent (*supra* n.9) 44.

¹⁵ Cf. Oberhummer, *RE* 3.2 (1899) 742–57 s.v. "Bosporos (1)."

¹⁶ Cf. E. Meyer, *RE* 7A.1 (1939) 201f s.v. "Tripodiskos." One account of the origin of comedy held that its inventor came from here: Σουσαρίων λέγει τὰδε υἱὸς Φιλίνου

Mt Gerania, the high road out of Peloponnesus divides, one way leading north to Phocis and Delphi, the other northeast past Megara city into Attica. Any road capable of bearing carts must pass this way. Here was the obvious staging area for invaders from the south, and so we find Tripodiscus used (Thuc. 4.70). The Megarians held a market at Tripodiscus (Strab. 394), a testimony to its convenience for transportation. But the fame of the place rested on its cult of Apollo.

We might guess that the name of Tripodiscus derives from the meeting of the three roads. But its story is told by Pausanias and some other late sources.¹⁷ The daughter of the queen of Argos bore a son to Apollo; the infant was exposed and killed, and the monster Poine was sent against the Argives in retribution. The hero Coroebus came and killed Poine, but a plague occurred in retribution for his act. He went to Delphi to receive punishment and lift the plague, and was told by Apollo to take a tripod from the temple and carry it until it should slip from his hands: there he should settle, not returning to Argos, and build a temple to Apollo. The slip occurred at Tripodiscus. Coroebus was buried, however, in the agora of Megara: evidently the Megarians came to regard him as a founder of sorts. Over his tomb Pausanias saw what he believed to be the oldest statue in Greece, Coroebus killing Poene. Pausanias clearly considered him a Megarian—he killed Poine “as a favor to the Argives.” The Argive version, known from Conon, differed considerably, making Tripodiscus an Argive colony in Megarian territory. In Pausanias we have the Megarians’ account, which made Coroebus of Tripodiscus a Megarian hero.

Leake saw at Tripodiscus “the evident vestiges of an ancient town, exactly on the shortest route from Delphi to the Isthmus”; there has been surface surveying of the terraces here, though no excavation, with brief report in the literature.¹⁸ The site, once located precisely, deserves study. Pausanias does not state the epithet of Apollo at Tripodiscus; but he was never at this village,¹⁹ rather learning its story in Megara. It seems to me obvious, however, that this must be the country temple of Apollo Pythaeus, patron of Megara. This temple, with its

Μεγαρόθεν Τριποδίσκιος (M. L. West, *Iambi et elegi* II [Oxford 1972] 145; cf. A. Körte, *RE* 4A.1 [1931] 973 s.v. “Susarion”).

¹⁷ Paus. 1.43.7f, to be contrasted with Conon *FGrHist* 26F19. For references see J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias’s Description of Greece* II (London 1898) 536f; Eitrem, *RE* 11.2 (1922) 418–20 s.v. “Koroibos (1)”; and especially Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* V.2 108–13.

¹⁸ W. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece* IV (London 1835) 410f; M. Sakellariou and N. Parakas, *Megarais, Aigosthena, Ereneia (Ancient Greek Cities* 14 [Athens 1972]) App. II 2f, 22f.

¹⁹ See A. Muller, *BCH* 106 (1982) 105–07.

claim of Delphian origin, six miles into the hills from Megara city, will be the site to which the people resorted for the great games, the Πυθάρια, as distinct from the Πυθάρια τὰ ἐν ἄστει.

The implication is that Tripodiscus held a special place in the organization of Megara. It was the original site of the city's tutelary divinity, just as Coroebus himself was appropriated from Tripodiscus to Megara city. Ritual may well have emphasized this ancient primacy, for example a procession linking Megara city and Tripodiscus on the occasion of the Pythaeia—one thinks again of Eleusis and Athens. But the point is chronological: inasmuch as the divided cult is replicated at Chalcedon, the special standing of Tripodiscus in the constitution of Megara must be older than the foundation of that colony in the seventh century B.C.

Here then is a *terminus ante quem*, ca 700 B.C., for the primacy of Tripodiscus in the constitution of Megara. A *terminus post quem* of sorts may be discerned in the Homeric poems: Homer, who names so many cities, does not know Megara. His silence is doubtless a weak argument, but it is consistent with the ancient claims that Megara was colonized late, whether from Athens or from the already-Dorian south. However one dates the various matter in the poems, most scholars have reckoned Megara a relative newcomer.²⁰

The special rôle of Tripodiscus in the organization of Megara seems to me certain, its explanation less so. In theory there are two ways in which Tripodiscus can have become a subordinate but privileged part of the Megarian state. Either an existing city Megara conquered independent Tripodiscus in the western hills and annexed it, placating its ruling families and its god by granting extraordinary honor to Apollo and to Coroebus; or several independent cities, of which Tripodiscus was most influential, came together in a *synoikismos* to form a new city called Megara, whose constitution reflected the early primacy of Tripodiscus. Of these two explanations, the first seems the less likely. The analogy of Eleusis and other annexed cities, in which the god is given a secondary site in the conquering city and his priestly family given special privileges, is unconvincing for Megara, where the god of Tripodiscus became the chief divinity of the city: this seems to have no

²⁰ References in W. R. Halliday, *The Greek Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford 1928) 96–98. Both V. Burr, ΝΕΩΝ ΚΑΤΑΛΟΓΟΣ (= *Klio* Beih. 49 [1944]) 111, and R. Hope Simpson and J. F. Lazenby, *The Catalogue of the Ships* (Oxford 1970) 155, list Megara among important cities not mentioned by the Catalogue; cf. D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley 1959) 120. Against the idea that the Nisa of *Il.* 2.508 (among Boeotians) is Megara (e.g. Hanell 23, 55; Burr 27f) see G. Jachmann, *Die homerische Schiffskatalog und die Ilias* (Cologne/Opladen 1958) 28–30; Page 157.

parallel in such cases of annexation. The toponym ‘Megara’ itself suggests a neologism, ‘the great hall’, designating a new site for a numerous citizenry. These things point to the second explanation: at some time in the Dark Ages, the small cities of the region underwent a *synoikismos* and found a new site for their combined city, calling it ‘Megara’. The most influential of those towns will have been Tripodiscus, whose god and whose founder received first honors in the new polity.

Plutarch reports the tradition that “in ancient times” the Megarid was made up of villages, the citizens being divided among five:

κατὰ κώμας, εἰς πέντε μέρη νενεμημένων τῶν πολιτῶν. ἐκαλοῦντο δ’ Ἡραεῖς καὶ Πιραεῖς καὶ Μεγαρεῖς καὶ Κυνοσουρεῖς καὶ Τριποδίσκιοι.²¹

That villages played an unusually important rôle in the constitution of Megara is clear from its oldest extant decree: late in the fourth century honors are promised to anyone who is of service “to the city or the villages” (ὕπερ τῆς πόλιος ἢ ὑπερ τῶν κωμῶν).²² But is Plutarch’s list credible? Apart from Tripodiscus, only Cynosura is attested independently, as a *ἐκατοστύς*, a territorial subdivision, of Hellenistic Megara.²³ It seems unlikely that one of the five villages of Megara was named ‘Megara’.²⁴ Historians have made much of Plutarch’s Heraeans and Piraeans, taking them to be the famous temple of Hera and its neighbor Peiraeus—that is, the Perachora peninsula of the Corinthia—and deducing that this region originally belonged to Megara and was only subsequently lost to Corinth. The geographical imbalance of these distant but adjacent places making up two of the five villages of early Megara provokes suspicion.²⁵ Plutarch’s omissions are also dis-

²¹ *Mor.* 295B, probably from Aristotle: Highbarger, *Civilization* (*supra* n.2) 92; cf. T. J. Figueira, *Theognis of Megara* (Baltimore/London 1985) 114.

²² *IG* VII 1.17 [*Syll.*³ 331].

²³ *IG* IV² 42.18–20 (in 221/0 B.C.). The term *ἐκατοστύς* is found also at Megara’s colony Byzantium, see Hanell 142.

²⁴ Admittedly, however, at Dyme there was a tribe *Δυμαῖα* (*SGDI* 1614.32), at Ephesus a tribe *Ἐφεσεύς* (listed *I.Ephesos* VIII.2 p.74).

²⁵ Since the early nineteenth century scholars have emended Plutarch to *Πειραεῖς* and taken him to mean these, so that at some early date Megara is reckoned to have owned this peninsula far to the west, later the religious heartland of the Corinthia: H. Reingamun, *Das alte Megaris* (Berlin 1825) 96; E. Curtius, *RhM* n.s. 4 (1846) 202; C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland* I (Leipzig 1862) 372; E. Meyer, *RE* 15.1 (1931) 168f s.v. “Megara”; R. P. Legon, *Megara: the Political History of a Greek City-State* (Ithaca/New York 1981) 47f. The excavators of Perachora, believing in its earlier Megarian history, looked for some evidence of a break in material culture, but in vain: Humphrey Payne, *Perachora* I (Oxford 1940) 20. The common answer has been that, as Megara was under Corinthian influence, Megarian and Corinthian remains will be indistinguishable: e.g., J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* (London 1977) 86; Figueira (*supra* n.21) 267.

concerting—the harbor town Nisaea, perhaps too (though his concern is ἡ Μεγαρίς) the most famous possession of early Megara, the island Salamis, where the Aeacids formerly had their palace.

There are reasons, therefore, for doubting Plutarch's list. We have however another, far older. A famous textual dispute concerned the Athenian section of the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.546ff). At 2.556f the text that became normative has the forces of Ajax of Salamis follow upon the Athenians, in these terms:

Αἴας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν δυοκαίδεκα νῆας,
στῆσε δ' ἄγων ἵνα Ἶ Αθηναίων ἴσταντο φάλαγγες.

Many readers felt that this implied the subordination of Salamis to Athens (modern scholars have not always agreed) and attributed the couplet to sixth-century Athenian tampering;²⁶ and certainly Athens invoked the text for their claim. The Megarians' version of the *Iliad* was different:²⁷

Αἴας δ' ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν νέας ἐκ τε Πολίχνης
ἔκ τ' Αἰγειρούσσης Νισαίης τε Τριπόδων τε.

Thus in the train of Salamis come Polichne, Aegirusa, Nisaea, and Tripodiscus. One may suspect that the author of this couplet lived before the foundation of Megara: a Megarian forger motivated by his city's claim upon Salamis in the face of an Athenian threat should not have spoiled his case by failing to name Megara.²⁸

The Megarian couplet in effect gives us a roster of the kingdom of Telamonian Ajax. Though the question is difficult, it seems to me more credible than Plutarch's list as a portrait of the land that had been the kingdom of Ajax and would become the city-state Megara.²⁹

²⁶ Hope Simpson and Lazenby (*supra* n.20: 59f) doubt that the lines imply subordination. For the opposite view see Leaf (*Iliad* I² [London 1900] 92): "The fact that the line cannot be original is patent from the fact that Aias in the rest of the *Iliad* is not encamped next the Athenians. . . . Indeed, the way in which the great hero is dismissed in a couple of lines, without even his father's name, sounds like a mocking cry of triumph from Athens over the conquest of the island of the Aiakidai." So too Jacoby *ad FG̃rHist* 328F107 (II 333f n.25).

²⁷ Strab. 9.1.10 (394), *cf.* Arist. *Rh.* 1375b, Plut. *Sol.* 10; further references in T. W. Allen, *Homeri Ilias* II (Oxford 1931) 58; *cf.* Hanell 21f; Jacoby *ad FG̃rHist* 328FF14–16 and 207 (II 210 n.103, 470 n.13); M. van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad* II (Leiden 1964) 519; L. Piccirilli, *Μεγαρικά* (Pisa 1975) 133f.

²⁸ Figueira (*supra* n.21) 265–69 is most recent to suggest that Nisaea might be "an archaism for Megara"; but Nisaea was a real place, the harbor town, and to be expected in a roster of the Megarid. Bursian (*supra* n.25) thought that Polichne might be Megara. Figueira holds the couplet to be accurate for the late seventh and sixth centuries, Plutarch before.

²⁹ The lines are dismissed as fraud by (*e.g.*) M. P. Nilsson, *Cults, Myths, Oracles, and Politics* (Lund 1951) 29. *Cf.* A. Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* (Opladen 1970) 30, 97–102; G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary* I (Cambridge 1985) 207–09.

It names the three places we know to have been important—Salamis, Nisaea, and Tripodiscus; as to Aegirusa, an Aegirus is on record as a village of historical Megara.³⁰ Polichne alone is unique, though this is a common enough name for a fortified hill town, and the Megarid has several of these to show.³¹ Plutarch's list, by contrast, is confirmed in only two of its elements; and its political geography, with two places adjacent to each other and far from the traditional Megarid, seems to me most dubious. Perhaps Plutarch's list represents an attempt by classical Megara to demonstrate an early possession of Perachora. I am inclined to recommend the authority of the epic couplet over that of Plutarch. But perhaps it is enough here to observe that the two lists do share one place, Tripodiscus.

If I am right in deducing the primacy of Tripodiscus at the beginnings of the city-state Megara, we may glimpse a political event of the Dark Ages. An epic couplet gives us a portrait of a territorial state, the kingdom of Ajax of Salamis; the territorial state that succeeded it, Megara, had its center on the acropolis north of Nisaea harbor but gave special honor to Tripodiscus in the western hills. The transformation of the one into the other perhaps occurred after the matter of epic was largely set. What is the nature of the transformation?

It will be clear that a fundamental shift in orientation has taken place. The seat of the Aeacid kings was Salamis; surely their place was the sea and they held the mainland by conquest as a *peraia*. Strabo (393) says that in his day the town on Salamis was on the north coast, facing Athens, but that the old town (he does not say how old) was on the south, looking toward Aegina.³² By contrast, historical Megara, while watching over its harbor on the Saronic Gulf, felt its roots to be in the west—at Tripodiscus on Mt Gerania with its easy access to Peloponnesus and its mythic link to Delphi; Salamis was an outpost, held, we know, with difficulty. In the Megarid, the passage from Mycenaean kingdom to Iron Age city-state was embodied in what must have been a conscious and pointed transformation of political geography. It appears that towns that had been under the sway of the island kings banded together, led by the Tripodiscians, to form a new city Megara, 'the great hall'. Salamis was among the towns, the king reduced to a magistrate,³³ but the focus of the new polity was on the land and its

³⁰ Theopompus *FGrHist* 115F241 (equated with the epic place by Stephanus of Byzantium or his source); Plut. *Mor.* 304E. Cf. N. G. L. Hammond, *Studies in Greek History* (Oxford 1973) 442f.

³¹ E. Kirsten, *RE* 21.2 (1952) 1366–76 s.v. "Polichna." For fortresses of the Megarid see Hammond (*supra* n.30) 417–46; J. Ober, *AJA* 87 (1983) 387–93.

³² Whence Telamon had migrated to Salamis: Apollod. 3.12.7.

³³ For the *basileus* at historical Megara see Hanell 145–48; for the *Αἰάντρεια* on Salamis in Hellenistic times see Deubner (*supra* n.3) 228. The Megarians held Ajax's

routes out of Isthmus. This was no gradual or evolutionary process. The island past was rejected, and the new city Megara ostentatiously gave itself a new physical and architectural setting on the mainland. This transformation lends weight to the ancient claim that Megara was a late establishment from the already Dorian south.³⁴

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mother to be the daughter of Alcathous king of Megara: Apollod. 3.12.7. An Athenian tradition made her Athenian (Xen. *Cyn.* 1.9, Diod. 4.72.7); for Athenian claims to have ruled the primitive Megarid (first met at Hdt. 5.76) see Nilsson (*supra* n.29) 56f and Piccirilli (*supra* n.27) 111.

³⁴ A version of this paper was read at the International Congress of Classical Studies in Dublin in August 1984. My particular thanks to Professors Domenico Musti and Michael Sakellariou.