

Eleusis and the Union of Attika

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THE FIRST STEP in the creation of classical Athens was the *Synoikismos*, or union, of the small regions of Attika into a single state. The evidence for the manner and period in which this was accomplished is by no means great. Yet most students of the early period of Athenian history have agreed that the *Synoikismos* was not a single act, but rather a series of acts, probably stretching over several centuries.¹ The number of steps needed to accomplish the union varies in the mind of each historian, but almost all conclude that the final step was the incorporation of Eleusis into the Athenian state. M. Cary, writing in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, places the ending of Eleusinian independence in the early eighth century B.C.² G. de Sanctis, V. Ehrenberg and C. Hignett conclude that a date *ca.* 700 B.C. best fits the facts.³ K. J. Beloch, F. Noack, S. Solders, Allen, Halliday and Sikes, E. Kornemann, M. P. Nilsson, F. R. Walton, G. E. Mylonas, and most recently G. Alföldy, argue that Eleusis became part of Attika only during the course of the seventh century B.C.⁴

Against the massive weight of scholarly opinion on this issue few have stood apart. As long ago as 1848, however, K. O. Müller⁵ concluded that Eleusis had in fact formed part of the Athenian state even before the period of the Ionian migrations. His opinion was ignored

¹ The most important recent studies of the *Synoikismos* have been: S. Solders, *Die ausserstädtischen Kulte und die Einigung Attikas* (Lund 1931); E. Kornemann, "Athen und Attika," in *Staaten, Völker, Männer* (Leipzig 1934) 30–51; J. Sarkady, "Attika in 12 bis 10 Jahrhunderte," *Acta Classica Univ. Scient. Debreceniensis* 2 (1966) 9–27; G. Alföldy, "Der attische *Synoikismos* und die Entstehung des athenischen Adels," *RBPhil* 44 (1969) 5–37.

² *CAH* III, 592–93.

³ G. de Sanctis, *Atthis*² (Turin 1912) 35; V. Ehrenberg, *From Solon to Socrates* (London 1968) 48–49; C. Hignett, *History of the Athenian Constitution* (Oxford 1952) 35–37.

⁴ K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte*² I.1 (Berlin/Leipzig 1924) 207; F. Noack, *Eleusis* (Berlin/Leipzig 1927) 45–48; S. Solders, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 104; T. W. Allen, W. R. Halliday, E. E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*² (Oxford 1936) 111–14; E. Kornemann, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 47–48; M. P. Nilsson, *Cults, Myths, Oracles and Politics* (Lund 1951) 37–39; F. R. Walton, "Athens, Eleusis and the Homeric Hymn to Demeter," *HThR* 45 (1952) 105–14; G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961) esp. p.63; G. Alföldy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 16–19.

⁵ *Kleine deutsche Schriften* II (Breslau 1848) 257.

by all later writers on the subject, with the exception of L. R. Farnell.⁶ Farnell himself, while essentially noncommittal on Müller's own view, argued that the evidence "oblige[s] us to relegate that important event [the union of Athens and Eleusis] to the prehistory or at least the dawn of the historic period of Attica." More recently Sterling Dow wrote:⁷ "But the evidence is far from being decisive in favor of the view that Eleusis was independent as late as 700 B.C., and there is, I think, some reason for believing that a thorough and unbiased study would move the date of the union of Attika back indefinitely." J. Sarkady argued briefly in favor of this conclusion also.⁸ These opinions are a reminder that the evidence upon which the standard view of Eleusinian independence is based is by no means as conclusive as most of its proponents would have us believe.

No full and unprejudiced study of the subject has yet appeared, and most of the prevailing opinions are based on a string of mere assumptions which have rarely been given a factual basis. In the remainder of this essay I intend to provide a thorough study of the arguments which have been used by various scholars to date the union of Eleusis and Athens. Such a study will enable us to determine with greater exactness the period in which the union in fact took place. It will also throw some light upon the *Synoikismos* in general, since much of the evidence for that event (or series of events) involves Eleusis.

I. *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*

The major piece of evidence supporting the theory of the late date of the union of Athens and Eleusis is the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. The poem, it is argued, contains not a single reference to Athens or to Athenian control of the Mysteries. As F. R. Walton has pointed out, later Athenian writers never refer to the Homeric Hymn, precisely because Athens had no part in it.⁹ It is also claimed that the poet was an Eleusinian, familiar with Eleusinian topography (lines 297-98), who composed an Eleusinian version of the myth of Demeter and Kore. In this version, for example, Triptolemos and Eumolpos, so important in later Athenian mythology, play noticeably minor rôles

⁶ *Cults of the Greek States III* (Oxford 1907) 154 and n.b.

⁷ "The Aigaleos-Parnes Wall," *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 198.

⁸ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 12.

⁹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 105ff.

(lines 153–54, 477), and Iacchos is totally absent.¹⁰ These omissions indicate, the argument runs, that the poem was composed before Athenian absorption of Eleusis.

Of greater importance than these considerations, and apparently conclusive in the minds of most commentators, is the historical setting of the poem. The Hymn envisages an independent Eleusis, with its own king, Keleos, and royal palace (lines 90ff). From Grote¹¹ onward scholars have argued, on the basis of this consideration, that Eleusis must have been independent at the time the poem was composed. Since the poem was composed at some time in the eighth or seventh century B.C.,¹² Eleusis was independent at least until then.

Thus, according to the normally accepted view, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* demonstrates the existence of an independent Eleusis down at least until some time in the early Archaic period. This view is, however, open to serious doubt. More than half a century ago Farnell noted, with respect to the absence of reference to Athens, that “it was obviously the cue of the poet to refrain from any, for he is dealing solely with the remote origins of Eleusinian things.”¹³ De Sanctis, while supporting the traditional view, nevertheless saw the basic weakness of its case. The *Hymn to Demeter*, he writes, envisages an independent Eleusis, but “this does not prove that Eleusis was independent when it was composed, but only that the memory of Eleusinian independence was still alive.”¹⁴ This is, in fact, fatal to the traditional view. For as soon as it is realized that the Homeric Hymn can reflect far earlier conditions than those extant at the precise moment of composition, it ceases to be of great relevance to the question of Eleusinian independence. At most it can confirm that Eleusis was at one time independent, but can tell us nothing about the period at which its independence ceased. The supporters of the traditional view cannot fall back, with de Sanctis, upon the argument that the poem reflects a vivid and recent memory of independence, for there is no

¹⁰ Walton, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 105–08; J. H. Oliver, *Hesperia* 4 (1935) 26; Farnell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 151.

¹¹ *A History of Greece*⁴ II (London 1872) 445.

¹² On the date of composition, see Allen, Halliday and Sikes, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 111–14; Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 3 n.2; *idem*, *The Hymn to Demeter* (Wash.Univ.Stud., n.s. 13, St Louis 1942) 10–14; A. Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*² (New York 1966) 86.

¹³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 154–55. Cf. Mylonas, *Hymn* (*supra* n.12) 11; Sarkady, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 12.

¹⁴ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 35. Cf. Beloch, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 207.

evidence to support that. In fact, the poem appears to reflect the late Mycenaean world rather than later periods. The palace of King Keleos, for example, and the temple of Demeter described briefly in lines 297–98, are both Mycenaean. G. E. Mylonas goes so far as to claim that the description of the temple actually fits the remains of a structure of the Mycenaean period recently discovered at Eleusis.¹⁵

The general political and social background of the poem are clearly 'Homeric', that is, they reflect a situation which existed in Greece no later than the late Mycenaean period or early Dark Ages.¹⁶ The similarities with the world of Homer are not accidental. Like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, at least some of the Homeric Hymns are probably the product of an oral tradition, whose origins reach back into the late Mycenaean world.¹⁷ The probable oral character of the *Hymn to Demeter* has not yet been fully accepted by scholars, but it is of the utmost importance for the present problem. The Hymn, containing formulae and other elements from many periods, had (like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) only its final composition at a late period. This means that it is absurd to claim that either the events mentioned or the general background of the Hymn must be contemporary with its poet, or even that they need be a memory of recent events. They almost certainly reflect, rather, a far earlier state of affairs.

II. The Wars of Athens and Eleusis

Among the events which played an important rôle in the early history of Athens as it appears in mythology and the Atthidographers were the wars of Athens and Eleusis. The large number of references to these wars which survive from antiquity demonstrate their great importance in the minds of writers of the classical and later periods.¹⁸

¹⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 29–54. Cf. Mylonas, *Hymn* (*supra* n.12) 15.

¹⁶ Cf. T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer*² (London 1964), and M. I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (London 1956) ch.2.

¹⁷ See J. A. Notopoulos, "The Homeric Hymns as Oral Poetry," *AJP* 83 (1962) 337–68. Cf. A. Hoekstra, *Mnemosyne* 10 (1957) 193–225; P. G. Preziosi, *HSCP* 71 (1966) 177–204; M. L. Lord, *CJ* 62 (1967) 241–48. G. S. Kirk, "Formulaic Language and Oral Poetry," *YCS* 20 (1966) 153–74, points out that it is impossible to be *certain* that the Hymns are oral, but his criticisms involve mainly the shorter poems.

¹⁸ For the references, see Frazer's commentary to Paus. 1.38.3 and his commentary to Apollod. 3.15.4 (Loeb). On the tradition, see J. Toepffer, *Attische Genealogie* (Berlin 1889) 41–44; Jacoby, *FGrHist* IIIb Suppl., index s.v. ATHENS, WARS WITH ELEUSIS; Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 24–29; C. Picard, *RHist* 166 (1931) 1–77.

F. Jacoby notes that “the war between Eleusis and Athens is *the* great event of the period of the kings, and the explanation is that a really historical memory of it was preserved.”¹⁹ The tradition as preserved refers to wars between Athens under Erechtheus and Eleusis under either Eumolpos or his son Immarados. There are also references to Ion’s involvement on the side of Athens as well as to aid rendered by Thracians and others to the Eleusinian cause. The tradition is complicated and tainted by a certain amount of confusion as to chronology and details. We need not review these problems here, for the significant fact is that nowhere in this tradition, one of such great interest to ancient writers, is there even a hint that the wars belonged to any period other than the remote mythical era, which we may equate with the late Mycenaean period.

Since the Athenian tradition was quite consistent in placing these events in the mythical period, they cannot be used to prove a late union of Attika.²⁰ If anything they are evidence for the opposite view. The fact that ancient tradition knew of no wars between Athens and Eleusis in the early Archaic period is significant. Is it likely that had Athens conquered Eleusis at so late a date as the seventh century B.C. no memory of this act would have been preserved? The Athenians had no difficulty in recalling other events of this or slightly later periods, including the struggle with Megara for Salamis. Some of those who support a late date for the union of Athens and Eleusis have indeed claimed that Herodotos 1.30.5 provides evidence of just such a memory of late wars.²¹ The passage appears in the record of the exchange between Solon and Kroisos. A certain Athenian, Tellos, was, according to Solon, the most blessed of men because he died fighting for his country when *γενομένης γὰρ Ἀθηναίοισι μάχης πρὸς τοὺς ἄτυγείτονας ἐν Ἐλευσίνι*. The words *μάχης πρὸς τοὺς ἄτυγείτονας ἐν Ἐλευσίνι* have been interpreted to mean “a battle with the neighboring town of Eleusis.”²² This is, however, a most awkward interpretation of the passage. A more natural translation would be “a battle at Eleusis against their neighbors,” (presumably Megarians or Boiotians). This

¹⁹ *Atthis* (Oxford 1949) 124–25.

²⁰ Nor can they be shown to represent a date during the Dorian invasions, which Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 24ff, and Alföldy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 34, support.

²¹ Grote, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.11) 445; L. Weber, *Klio* 21 (1927) 245–69. Cf. Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 63.

²² The translation is that of A. de Sélincourt (Penguin, London 1954), but the interpretation is shared by Grote and others.

is the way in which it is taken by Farnell and by How and Wells.²³ It is, in fact, unlikely that Herodotos would have spoken of a war against Eleusis in this manner. Had he meant to do so, the passage would most likely have read *μάχης πρὸς Ἐλευσινίους*, and at some point Herodotos would probably have had a digression on this otherwise unmentioned battle. It is hard to imagine Herodotos (and even less so Solon or any Athenian source) calling the Eleusinians 'neighbors' of the Athenians without explanation. The passage from Herodotos is, therefore, not a reference to a war of Athens against Eleusis. Even if it were, there is no certainty as to the period to which it refers. It might as easily refer to the prehistoric period as to the Archaic period.²⁴

The remains of an old fortification wall (the 'Dema Wall') along the Aigaleos-Parnes line between the Athenian and Eleusinian plains have also been claimed by several scholars as an indication of late wars between Athens and Eleusis.²⁵ These scholars dated the wall to the eighth or seventh century B.C. in large measure on the basis of their pre-existing belief in Eleusinian independence. Dow, in his 1942 article on the subject, had already gone far toward discrediting the connection of the wall to struggles between Athens and Eleusis, but the 1957 survey of the wall by Jones, Sackett and Eliot is fatal to the theory. This survey proved conclusively, on sound archaeological grounds, that the wall belongs to the fourth century B.C. The wall cannot therefore be evidence for wars between Athens and Eleusis in the Archaic period.

III. The *Synoikismos*

The Athenian tradition regarding the early history of Attika is relatively clear. Under the early kings, beginning with Kekrops, the various areas of Attika were more or less autonomous, at times even making war against the king at Athens, as Eleusis did under Eumolpos. This situation was ended by Theseus, who brought all the regions of Attika together into a single state, through an act called the *Synoikismos*. The tradition is a consistent one in all the sources which have

²³ Farnell, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 154; How and Wells, note *ad loc.*

²⁴ Cf. Nilsson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 37; L. Weber, *Philologus* 82, N.F. 36 (1927) 154-66.

²⁵ Beloch, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 207; de Sanctis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 36; Kornemann, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 47; Nilsson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 37. For other references and full discussion see Dow, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 193-211, and above all J. E. Jones, L. H. Sackett, C. W. J. Eliot, "Τὸ Δέμα: A Survey of the Aigaleos-Parnes Wall," *BSA* 52 (1957) 152-89.

it.²⁶ The earliest and most reliable of the sources, Thucydides 2.15.1–2, makes it quite clear that Eleusis was included in the *Synoikismos*. As Gomme puts it in his commentary to this passage, “It is clear that whatever may be the truth of the matter, Thucydides did not think that Eleusis, any more than the rest of the Attic communities, retained any independence after the reign of Theseus, the generation before the Trojan War.”²⁷

Plutarch (*Theseus* 10.3) introduces a slight complication when he writes, “It was not, they say, when Theseus first journeyed to Athens, but afterwards, that he captured Eleusis from the Megarians, having circumvented Diocles its ruler, and slew Sciron” (Loeb transl.). The tradition that Megara had once controlled Eleusis is echoed in the *Atthis* as well.²⁸ Jacoby believed that a Megarian claim to Eleusis, which survived into the seventh or sixth century and possibly even later, is reflected in these passages.²⁹ This might be taken to mean that possession of Eleusis was still an open question in the Archaic period, as was possession of Salamis. This is, however, unlikely. It is uncertain whether or not Megara ever actually claimed Eleusis in any serious manner. More likely, the Megarian claim to Eleusis was part of a purely literary contest involving the rôles of Megara and Athens in the mythical period and in Homer, which began at the time of the wars over Salamis. Athens claimed that Megara had formed a mere portion of the kingdom of Pandion, and presumably therefore could never have possessed Salamis in the Heroic age. Megara neatly (but ineffectually) turned the tables by claiming not only independence but control of neighboring Eleusis as well, probably on the basis of an Athenian tradition which made Megara and Eleusis part of the share of Pandion’s kingdom given to his son Nisos.³⁰ There is certainly no

²⁶ Thuc. 2.15.1–2; Isoc. 10.35; Theophr. *Char.* 26.6; Philochoros, *FGrHist* 328 F 94 (=Strabo 9.1.20); Parian Chronicle, *FGrHist* 239 A 20; Anon. *Periegete*, *P.Haw.* 80/1=*FGrHist* 369 F 1 par. 6; Diod. 4.61.8; Charax, *FGrHist* 103 F 4; Plut. *Thes.* 24–25, 32; Euseb. *Chron.* 798. Cf. Jacoby’s commentary to the *FGrHist* passages.

²⁷ *Commentary on Thucydides II* (Oxford 1956) 49.

²⁸ Strabo 9.1.6, C 392=*FGrHist* 10 F 14, 328 F 107, 329 F 2.

²⁹ *Commentary to FGrHist* 328 F 107. For the survival of the tradition into the fourth century, see *FGrHist* 328 F 155; *IG II²* 204; Dem. 13.32.

³⁰ Strabo 9.1.5–6, C 392; cf. Paus. 1.39.4, 1.42.2. De Sanctis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 36–37, reviews some of the evidence and rejects the idea of an early political connection between Megara and Eleusis. See *FGrHist* 486 F 1–2,4 (with Jacoby’s commentary) for the Megarian literary anti-Athenian tradition.

evidence which would connect the passage from Plutarch with the Archaic period.

In Athenian tradition therefore Eleusis, like all of Attika, was definitely tied to Athens by the time of Theseus. Once again there is no memory of any later union.³¹ Hignett, in opposing this view, writes: "If the union had taken place so early, why was the tradition of the original disunion still so clear in the fifth century, reflected in the persistent stories of the early wars between Athens and other communities in Attica? Plutarch's statement (*Thes.* 13.4) that there was no intermarriage in the classical period between the demes of Pallene and Hagnon seems to indicate that the time was not far distant when Attica had been divided into a number of little states, each quarrelling with its neighbors."³² Hignett presents little evidence upon which to base so broad a conclusion. That the tradition of the early disunion and *Synoikismos* was clear in the fifth century is, of course, no proof that it went back only 300 years to the eighth century, rather than 800 years to the thirteenth. There were many other vivid mythic memories in the fifth and later centuries, and it would be foolish to claim that all (or any) of these belong to the eighth century. The lack of intermarriage between Pallene and Hagnon, attested to only by Plutarch (with reference presumably to his own age, not the classical period) is impossible to explain or date, but even this is referred back to the period of Theseus for its origins. Again there is no more reason for it to have been a memory of one period rather than another. With this, Hignett's argument collapses.³³

Some confirmation for the Athenian tradition of an early date for the *Synoikismos* is to be found in the *Iliad*. In the Catalogue of Ships,

³¹ H. T. Wade-Gery, "Eupatridai, Archons, and Areopagus," *CQ* 25 (1931) 9–10, argues that the ancient accounts of the *Synoikismos* were merely derived from the Athenian festival of the *Synoikia*. This may or may not be correct—it does not ring true to me—but it does not alter the basic point that the Athenians preserved no memory of a union later than Theseus. For the few details known of the *Synoikia*, see L. Deubner, *Attische Feste*⁸ (Darmstadt 1969) 36–38.

³² Hignett, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 36; cf. Solders, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 117–18, for a similar argument with respect to Pallene and Hagnon.

³³ Nilsson's rather bizarre view (*op.cit.* [*supra* n.4] 37) that the division of Attika into two states in 403 B.C. was in some manner a remembrance of a recently independent Eleusis may be dismissed summarily. Surely the division of 403 was dictated purely by current political and military considerations. Also invalid is the argument made by certain scholars that the existence of an independent 'Eleusinian' coinage in the fourth century is proof of a recently remembered union. See most recently M. Thompson, "Coins for the Eleusinia," *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 213–29, where the coins are correctly shown to be mere festival issues.

Iliad 2.546ff, 'Athens' and the 'demos of Erechtheus' alone appear. There is no mention of Eleusis or Marathon or any other region of Attika. Menestheus, king of Athens, is said to have brought as many as fifty ships to Troy, a number he could have collected only had he been king of all Attika. This is significant, for the Catalogue of Ships may well go back as far as the late Mycenaean period,³⁴ and thus provides support for the traditional Athenian account of the early date of the *Synoikismos*. Additional evidence is provided by *Odyssey* 3.278, where Sounion is called the 'headland of Athens', and by the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo* (line 30), where the 'demos of Athens' is mentioned, implying that Attika was already united when the formulaic material of these poems was created. These references do not, of course, *prove* an early date for the union, nor do they provide firm evidence for Eleusis in particular, but they do add to the weight of the evidence of this section.

IV. The Administration of the Mysteries

In the historical period the Eleusinian Mysteries were closely linked to the Athenian state. The nature of the Athenian administration has served as the basis of several arguments regarding the union of Athens and Eleusis.

a. The Rôle of the Archon Basileus. The Archon Basileus at Athens was responsible for the general celebration of the Mysteries (*Arist. Ath. Pol.* 57). The Basileus, Aristotle writes, was in charge of the "ancestral" rites at Athens, that is, those which were in existence before the fall of the monarchy at Athens at the end of the Dark Ages. With respect to the Mysteries, this statement appears to be correct. The Basileus handled elements of the celebration which are clearly archaic, while the Archon Eponymos handled those aspects which are known to have been relatively late additions.³⁵ On the basis of this, it has reasonably been argued that the annexation of Eleusis must have been the work of the kings.³⁶ To this conclusion K. O. Müller added

³⁴ See D. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1963) 118-77; and R. Hope Simpson and J. F. Lazenby, *The Catalogue of Ships in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford 1970) 56-60, 153-75. Cf. A. Heubeck, *Gnomon* 21 (1949) 197, 27 (1957) 40; *Gymnasium* 66 (1959) 397ff; V. Burr, *Klio Beiheft* 49 (1944).

³⁵ Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 251.

³⁶ Müller, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 257; M. Cary, *CAH* III, 592-93.

the argument that the union must have taken place before the Ionian migrations to Asia Minor: Strabo (14.1.3, C 633) reports that the Basileus at Ephesos also had superintendence of the rites of Eleusinian Demeter, and this aspect of the cult must have been copied from Athenian practice before the foundation of Ephesos from Athens. Unfortunately little more is known about the cult of Eleusinian Demeter at Ephesos or when it was established, or about the relationship between Ephesos and Athens, its supposed metropolis.³⁷ Nevertheless, the general argument, that the Basileus received his powers of supervision over the Mysteries before the end of the Dark Ages and that this proves that the union of Eleusis and Athens took place before then, has considerable merit, even if Müller's addition is at present debatable. A date for the union at some time in the era of the monarchy, a period stretching from the mythical reign of Kekrops to the end of the Dark Ages, emerges on the basis of this argument.

b. The Absorption of the Cult by Athens. By the classical period the Eleusinian Mysteries had been completely absorbed by the Athenian state. Not only did the Archon Basileus supervise the general operations of the Mysteries, but a separate Eleusion, duplicating on a small scale the sanctuary at Eleusis, had been constructed near the Agora at Athens no later than the middle of the sixth century B.C.³⁸ The Mysteries were themselves broken up into Greater Mysteries and Lesser Mysteries, with the Lesser Mysteries, held exclusively at Athens, serving to prepare participants for the Greater Mysteries.³⁹ The Greater Mysteries themselves began with a four-day celebration in Athens, for which the sacred cult objects were brought from Eleusis.⁴⁰ Finally, in the sacred state calendar of Athens, published shortly after 403/2 (but with most of its contents taken from earlier sources), many old Eleusinian sacrifices were included⁴¹ and were thereby assimilated to other Athenian rites.

The thorough absorption of the Mysteries among the Athenian cults demonstrated by these considerations has been claimed by some as evidence for the date of the union of Athens and Eleusis. The ab-

³⁷ Cf. Farnell, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.6); J. M. Cook, "Greek Settlement in the Eastern Aegean and Asia Minor," *CAH* rev. ed. II, ch.38, p.12 (of the fascicle ed.).

³⁸ Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 246–48 with references; Paus. 1.14.1–4.

³⁹ *ibid.* 239–43.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* 245–52. Cf. M. P. Nilsson, *JdI* 31 (1916) 313–14.

⁴¹ *Hesperia* 4 (1935) 21, lines 62ff.

sorption of the cult does appear to be late—the building of the Eleusinion in the sixth century, for example, shows this. This has been taken to indicate a late date for the union itself.⁴² Thus Mylonas suggests that the Lesser Mysteries “may have been instituted by the Athenians when Eleusis came under their control.”⁴³ Nilsson claimed that the transference of the cult objects from Eleusis to Athens at the time of the Greater Mysteries “was not only a visible expression of the union of the two states, but in all probability represented an unsuccessful attempt to detach the Mysteries from Eleusis and establish them in Athens itself.”⁴⁴ These claims are little more than guesses, as Nilsson himself admitted in a later work.⁴⁵ There is no reason to connect the absorption of the Mysteries with the union of Athens and Eleusis. As the Athenian state grew in power in the Archaic and later periods, it was natural for it to bring all aspects of civic life in Attika, including religion, under its control. The process in fact began as early as the period of the kings, since, as we have seen, it was the Basileus who was in charge of the Mysteries. The process continued long after any possible date for the absorption of Eleusis and is reflected in the state calendar of cults around 400 B.C.

Even in the classical period and later, when the Mysteries had long since become tied to Athenian cult, local elements continued. The most important of these was the partial control exercised over the rites by the Eleusinian families of the Kerykes and Eumolpidai.⁴⁶ Ferguson claimed that “the Kerykes were an association from which residents of the Thriasian plain were excluded, organized or reorganized after the conquest of Eleusis to give other Athenians a worthy share in the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries.”⁴⁷ This claim is based on a disputed tradition which gives the Kerykes an Athenian

⁴² See Solders, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) esp. 103–29, for the most complete statement of this kind of argument for the whole of Attika. Cf. Kornemann, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 47–48, on Eleusis. The argument that one can put together the history of the *Synoikismos* by using the meager evidence of cult history is, in general, not convincing; cf. Sarkady, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 16–18.

⁴³ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 240; cf. Deubner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.31) 70.

⁴⁴ Quoted by Walton, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 110.

⁴⁵ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 39.

⁴⁶ Toepffer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 24–112; Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 229–35. Cf. de Sanctis, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 37, who remarks that the idea that the privileges of the Kerykes and Eumolpidai were a memorial of the late independence of Eleusis is incorrect: many local noble families all over Attika had similar privileges.

⁴⁷ *Hesperia* 7 (1938) 42.

origin, and on the fact that no Keryx in the period after Kleisthenes is known to have had an Eleusinian demotic.⁴⁸ That the Kerykes were originally non-Eleusinian cannot be proven by this evidence—although it may seem likely—and that their origin is somehow connected with the union of Athens and Eleusis is a mere assumption. The details of their origins are obscure, and there is no reason why, if in fact we accept their Athenian origin, they should not have appeared during the early part of the period when Athens was attempting to make the Mysteries pan-Attic. No connection with the ending of Eleusinian independence is necessary.⁴⁹

V. Athens and Salamis

Ferguson argued that “it was only at the annexation of Eleusis that the possession of Salamis became a sort of geographical necessity for Athens. To be sure the island had formed theretofore a bridge between Megara and the basin of the Kephissus, but it had not cut off completely from the open sea a valuable part of Attica. In fact, the struggle did not open till the end of the seventh century B.C. at the earliest.”⁵⁰ Ferguson would presumably date the union of Eleusis and Athens to the later seventh century.

The argument is once again an assumption. Athens may have lived for centuries with Eleusis “cut off from the open sea” and not have cared in the least. It was only with the growth of Athenian power towards the end of the seventh century that it would have seemed necessary for Athens to possess Salamis. The Megarians were also more active in this period, and probably only then presented a strong naval threat from Salamis.⁵¹ Obviously too little is known of the relations between Athens, Salamis and Megara in this or earlier periods for definite conclusions to be drawn, but there is surely no need to connect the conquest of Salamis with that of Eleusis.

It is noteworthy, however, that once Salamis had been conquered, it was not treated like the rest of Attika. Rather, cleruchs were settled

⁴⁸ Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 234. Cf. Toepffer, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18) 80–92.

⁴⁹ The old idea that the building of the first telesterion at Eleusis could be dated to the end of the seventh century and was connected to the union with Athens has now been disproved: there is a continuous building tradition at Eleusis from the Bronze Age forward. See Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 29–54.

⁵⁰ *Hesperia* 7 (1938) 42; cf. L. Weber, *Klio* 21 (1927) 268–69.

⁵¹ Cf. N. G. L. Hammond, *History of Greece* (London 1963) 135.

on the island, and its old inhabitants were not made citizens of Athens.⁵² It was therefore in a quite different position from Eleusis and every other region of Attika. This may indicate that Eleusis, far from having been annexed just before Salamis, was incorporated considerably earlier. For otherwise, we may ask, why was there a difference in treatment between the two? The argument is, admittedly, not a strong one and cannot be pressed very far, but it does serve to reinforce previous conclusions.

VI. Summary and Conclusions

The arguments of those who support a late date for the incorporation of Eleusis into Athens have been shown to lack substance. In general, these arguments were either circular or based upon unsupported assumptions. Once the original assumption of a late date of incorporation was made, every possible event dating to the early Archaic period was in some way connected. Many of these erroneous conclusions are due to the lack of adequate source material for the entire period before Solon. This lack continues to render it difficult to assign a correct date to the union of Athens and Eleusis, but some conclusions can nevertheless be drawn.

We have seen that the Athenian tradition on early Attic history was in general a consistent one. A period of independence, or perhaps autonomy,⁵³ was followed by the permanent union of Attika, including Eleusis, by Theseus. From this point in the mythical period forward Attika was a united entity. Most scholars have agreed with the opinion of G. Busolt and H. Swoboda with respect to the ancient tradition that "as a whole, the reconstruction is unhistorical, but it contains historical elements."⁵⁴ The problem is to extract these elements. The view that the mythical tradition is too confused and mechanical to form the basis of a true history of Attika is surely correct. But it must be recognized that without it there is hardly any

⁵² *Ath. Pol.* 54.8; Meiggs and Lewis, *GHI* 25 no.14. Cf. G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griech. Staatskunde*² II (Munich 1926) 871, 1124 n.1.

⁵³ Alföldy, *op.cit.* (supra n.1) 16–19, claims that the tradition does not at all speak of independent regions of Attika, but rather of autonomous ones. This may be true for some regions, although even that is debatable, but it is certainly not valid for Eleusis, which had its own kings and made war upon Athens.

⁵⁴ *op.cit.* (supra n.52) 775.

positive evidence at all for the *Synoikismos* and similar events. There is the ancient tradition on the one hand, and on the other there are negative arguments of the sort we have for the most part dealt with in this study which can show what did *not* occur. Therefore we are forced to rely on the mythological accounts for at least some basic information.

The negative arguments have shown, I believe, that the union of Attika and Eleusis did not occur in the way most historians have imagined, and that there is not a scrap of evidence to support a late date for that event. When these arguments are combined with the consistency of the ancient tradition, which assigns a date in the late Mycenaean period, it becomes probable that the union of Athens and Eleusis was completed at least as early as the thirteenth century B.C. Some positive support is given to this conclusion by the Homeric epics, by the position of the Basileus with respect to the Mysteries, and by the variance in treatment between Salamis and Eleusis. This conclusion is also not incompatible with the archaeological evidence from the site of Eleusis.⁵⁵ Thus far we can go with the tradition. Given its nature as a source, greater specificity is impossible.

What is true of Eleusis is likely to be true of the rest of Attika as well. Some scholars, among them E. Meyer and G. Alföldy,⁵⁶ have already accepted an early union of Attika but excluded from it Eleusis and the Marathonian Tetrapolis. There is no reason, however, to exclude any region from a *Synoikismos* which took place in the late Mycenaean period, as S. Dow, G. Huxley and J. Sarkady almost alone of recent scholars have argued.⁵⁷ Above all it must be stressed that the archaeological evidence from Mycenaean Attika is not at all incompatible with an early date for the *Synoikismos*.⁵⁸ In fact, aside from Eleusis, the only region for which serious evidence of late incorporation was brought forward was the Marathonian Tetrapolis. The evidence for that area was basically an inference, as Hignett puts it, "partly from its geographical position and partly from the fact that it had special representation in Athenian embassies to Delphi."⁵⁹

⁵⁵ See Mylonas, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 23–54. Cf. *infra* n.58.

⁵⁶ E. Meyer, *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte* (Halle 1899) 516; cf. his *Geschichte des Altertums*³ III (1937) 311–12. Alföldy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

⁵⁷ Dow, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.7); G. Huxley, *BICS* 3 (1956) 22–23; Sarkady, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1).

⁵⁸ See Huxley, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.57). See also R. Hope Simpson, *A Gazetteer and Atlas of Mycenaean Sites* (*BICS* suppl.16, 1965) 101–10. Cf. V. R. D'A. Desborough, *The Last Mycenaean* (Oxford 1964) 112–19.

⁵⁹ *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 36; cf. Kornemann, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 44–47.

The geographical position of the Tetrapolis is not a strong argument. The same assumption could be made for Sounion, for example, with the same total lack of evidence. The existence of independent *theoriai* from the Tetrapolis to Delphi is more serious.⁶⁰ Jacoby argues: "In view of the age and importance of the cult of Apollo in that region, we may confidently assume that [the *theoriai*] reach back to the time before the union of Attika; even in later times they continued to exist independently beside the two Athenian *theoriai*."⁶¹ Once again, however, the argument does not appear to be convincing. The precise date of the establishment of the *theoriai* is impossible to specify, but there is nothing against their having been created after the union of Attika at a period of considerable local autonomy with regard to cult and other matters, that is, before the seventh or sixth century B.C. That the *theoriai* survived so long into the Hellenistic period is merely an anomaly in the general state absorption of local cults. It is in fact unlikely that had Marathon been absorbed only at a late date, Athens would have permitted so clear a reminder of local autonomy to survive.⁶² This too bespeaks a far earlier date for the union.⁶³

For the Tetrapolis too, therefore, there is no reason not to accept the Athenian tradition. The *Synoikismos* of all Attika must be pushed back into the Mycenaean period. The unity then created lasted into the Dark Ages and later periods. There is not even a recognizable hint in the source material that Eleusis or any other part of Attika ever again possessed anything approaching real independence. That there was localism and that the local aristocracy considerably improved its position at the expense of the Wanax, whose successors were eventually replaced by the nobility at the end of the Dark Ages, seems undeniable. Local feeling continued to exist as late as the sixth century. This consisted basically of a jockeying for power among the local nobility. The process by which an overarching Athenian state

⁶⁰ See A. Boëthius, *Die Pythais* (Upsala 1918), esp. 43–51, 26 n.2, and 38–39. Cf. W. Wrede, *RE* 5A (1934) 1086–89 s.v. TETRAPOLIS.

⁶¹ Commentary to *FGrHist* 328 F 75, with references.

⁶² Cf. Solders, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 124, for examples of cult unity between Athens and late conquests. At Oropos and Eleutherae, when these were absorbed, an Athenian character was immediately given to the cults.

⁶³ That the Marathonian area had its own history is not to be denied. The existence of the Tetrapolis as well as a certain independence in cult matters (cf. also *IG* II² 1358; S. Dow, *BCH* 92 [1968] 174–75) demonstrate that. But that history can as easily be accommodated within the framework of union with Athens as outside of it.

slowly arose again to replace the power of this nobility—a process which Alföldy and Sarkady go so far as to identify as the *Synoikismos* itself⁶⁴—is beyond the scope of this study. The main point is that what enabled the Athenian state eventually to assume its classical position was that Attika had remained a unified whole since the Mycenaean period.

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⁶⁴ In the works cited in n.1 *supra*.