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ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΙΑ ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΙΚΑ AND THE “LIBERATION” OF ATHENS

Abstract:

The paper centres on the historical background in which Athens was “liberated” in c. 255. The first part explores the tenability of the assumption that the “petitions” mentioned by Diogenes Laertios in his biography of Arkesilaos should indeed be placed in the context of the “liberation” of Athens. The analysis of the chapter, as well as the particular phrase, points towards a rather different conclusion – that we are dealing with private petitions, and therefore the information should not be associated with the “liberation” of Athens; consequently, that there is no correlation with the question for the date of the battle of Kos. The second part focuses on the causes for Antigonos’ decision to “liberate” Athens; i.e., the conjecture that this decision stemmed from the victory at Kos. The analysis of the sources shows that even though the conjecture cannot be ruled out, it cannot be proven either. Lastly, an alternative context for the “liberation” of Athens is offered.

Keywords: Antigonos Gonatas, Arkesilaos, ἐπιστόλια παρακλητικά, Athens, battle of Kos.

At the end of the Khremonidean War in 263/2,¹ Macedonian garrisons were installed in a number of places throughout Attika, while the city itself was probably placed under the direct control of Antigonos Gonatas.² Yet, less than a decade later, c. 255, Antigonos “liberated” Athens (Euseb. *Chronica*, ii.120, ed. A. Schöne)³ – the garrisons were withdrawn from the city (i.e., from the Mouseion hill), and from most of the forts in Attika (Habicht 2003, 52f.); while at the same time, at least outwardly, the control and interference in the political life of Athens lessened. The discussion in this paper is focused on the question whether the “petitions” mentioned by Diogenes Laertios should be placed in the context of the “liberation” of Athens; and irrespective of that, why did Antigonos decide to give Athens back its “freedom”.

1. In the biography of Arkesilaos, Diogenes Laertios in one chapter briefly describes the attitude of the famous philosopher towards Antigonos Gonatas: Πολλῶν δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀντίγονον θεραπευόντων καὶ ὅτε ἤκοι ἀπαντῶντων αὐτὸς ἡσύχαζε, μὴ βουλόμενος προεμπίπτειν εἰς γνῶσιν. φίλος τε ἦν μάλιστα Ἰεροκλεῖ τῷ τὴν Μουνησίαν ἔχοντι καὶ τὸν Πειραιαῖ· ἐν τε ταῖς ἐορταῖς κατῆι πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐκάστοτε. καὶ δὴ καὶ πολλὰ ἐκείνου συμπεῖθοντος ὥστε ἀσπάσασθαι τὸν Ἀντίγονον, οὐκ ἐπέισθη, ἀλλὰ ἕως πυλῶν ἐλθὼν ἀνέστρεψε. μετὰ τε τὴν Ἀντιγόνου ναυμαχίαν πολλῶν προσιόντων καὶ ἐπιστόλια παρακλητικὰ γραφόντων αὐτὸς ἐσιώπησεν. ἀλλ’ οὖν ὅμως ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος εἰς Δημητριάδα ἐπρέσβευσε πρὸς Ἀντίγονον καὶ οὐκ ἐπέτυχεν. τὸ πᾶν δὴ διέτριβεν ἐν τῇ Ἀκαδημίᾳ τὸν πολιτισμὸν ἐκτοπιζῶν (4.39).

As can be expected, the information that the Athenians went to Antigonos after a certain naval battle garnered a lot of attention, especially the “petitions” (ἐπιστόλια παρακλητικὰ) that were sent. Indeed, a number of scholars have placed the “liberation” of Athens and the withdrawal of the Macedonian garrison precisely in the context of these petitions and the Athenians that went to see Antigonos personally. (e.g., Ferguson 1911, 191f; Buraselis 1982, 149f.; [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 597f.). If this interpretation is correct, then we do indeed have a

¹ All dates are BC. For the year of Antipater, during whose archonship the Khremonidean War ended, v. Dorandi 1991, 23-26; Osborne 2009, 90 n.29.

² The text is lacunose, and in some places uncertain. Different restorations have been proposed by Dorandi 1990, 130 and Dreyer 1999, 171 n.238. This does not concern us much however, for the second part of the sentence is somewhat clearer, and infers that everything in Athens was done by the will of one man. Though various solutions have been proposed concerning the interpretation of this information, the most likely one is that Antigonos himself is meant here. v. Gabbert 1997, 78 n.52; Oetjen 2000; Habicht 2003, 53-55; Tracy 2003, 57f.; Waterfield 2021, 179. Summary of the different opinions and reconstructions in Worthington 2021, 122-24.

³ According to the Greek version of the text, Athens was liberated in 256/5, while according to the Armenian one in 255/4.

solid argument for the date of the battle of Kos.⁴ However, unsurprisingly, things are not that simple.

First of all, the sentence is not as precise as it may seem, as evidenced by the different solutions by the translators. For example, the old translation of C. D. Yonge⁵ runs as follows: "And after the sea-fight of Antigonos, when many people went to him and wrote him letters to comfort him for his defeat, he neither went nor wrote." The translation differs radically from the usual ones, and obviously stems from the translator's understanding that Antigonos suffered a defeat in the naval engagement. However, the only such an example we know of is dated c. 280, when Antigonos was defeated in the naval battle against Ptolemy Keraunos (Mem. *BNJ* 434 8.4-7; Heinen 1972, 64). Since at the time Athens was free from Macedonian control, Athenians going to see Antigonos or sending him letters makes little sense in that particular historical context,⁶ and the translation should therefore be rejected.

The translation by R. D. Hicks⁷ is more intriguing: "And after the battle at sea, when many went to Antigonos or wrote him flattering letters, he held his peace;" similarly M. Gigante:⁸ "E dopo la battaglia navale in cui Antigono fu vincitore, molti gli andavano incontro e scrivevano lettere adulatorie, egli invece tacque." Admittedly, this version is far more appealing, for, as we shall see, it matches the tone and the theme of the chapter quite well. However, the translation is somewhat loose, and this meaning of *παρακλητικός* is not supported by other similar examples.⁹ On the contrary, the meaning of the adjective is quite clear, and in this context should undoubtedly be translated as "petitions" or "supplications"¹⁰ (cf. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1881, 229 n.61). On the other hand, in contrast to the other translations, Hicks' is more precise in the sense that

⁴ Unlike the date of battle of Andros, for which there now seems to be a consensus, the dating of the battle of Kos remains unresolved. Some scholars place the battle in context of the ending of the Khremonidean War, c. 262 (Bikerman 1938; Heinen, 1972, 193-197; Will 1979, 224-226; Walbank 1982, 220f.; Reger 1985[1993]), while others in context of the II Syrian War, c. 255 (Ferguson 1911, 188-191; Tarn 1928, 713f.; Peremans 1939; Buraselis 1982, 146-151; [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 290-293, 595-599).

⁵ Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (translated by C. D. Yonge), London, 1853.

⁶ Interesting to note is the suggestion of Buraselis (1982, 170f.) that Antigonos was defeated by the Ptolemaic fleet c. 250. If the conjecture is accepted (cf. the reservations of [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 295), then Yonge's old translation should not be unreservedly discarded.

⁷ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (translation by R. D. Hicks), Harvard UP, Cambridge, 1972 (First published 1925).

⁸ Diogene Laerzio, *Vite dei filosofi* (a cura di M. Gigante), Editori Laterza, Bari, 1962.

⁹ Neither LSJ⁹, nor Montanari *BDAG*, s.v. *παρακλητικός*, 3, list any examples where the adjective could be construed as "flattering" or something similar.

¹⁰ Favored for example by Ferguson 1911, 191 (supplicatory letters).

it leaves the question concerning the battle itself open; for the expression *μετά τε τὴν Ἀντιγόνου ναυμαχίαν* does not specify whether Antigonos won or lost the battle. As mentioned before, the historical setting, and the context of the whole passage favours the first rather than the second possibility; still, the vagueness of the original text should not be ignored.

The imprecision of the text notwithstanding, with certain reservations we can accept that we are dealing with a naval victory by Gonatas, and with petitions/supplications sent to him afterwards. However, it would seem that by focusing on *παρακλητικός*, the scholars are ignoring the second part of the expression - *ἐπιστόλιον*, a diminutive of *ἐπιστολή*, which denotes rather short letters. This is reason enough already to doubt the correctness of the proposed suggestion – surely these short letters were not a suitable form for asking something as important as the liberation of Athens and the withdrawal of the Macedonian garrisons.¹¹ Indeed, from the context and the meaning of the sentence, we can infer that the short letters imply and reflect a spontaneous reaction from a substantial number of Athenians at the news of Antigonos' victory, rather than an official request. This interpretation is supported by the fact that, in contrast to the next sentence, in this case Diogenes makes no mention whatsoever of an official delegation.¹²

If we are actually dealing with a spontaneous reaction, then what did the Athenians want from Antigonos? Needless to say, certainty is impossible, yet from the subject and the tone of the chapter as a whole, one may sense the reasoning behind the decision to go to Antigonos, and thus, for the contents of the letters. Essentially, the theme of the whole chapter is a comparison in the behaviour between Arkesilaos and a large number of Athenians – a dichotomy perceptible in a couple of instances (*πολλῶν θεραπευόντων - αὐτὸς ἡσύχαζε κτλ., πολλῶν προσιόντων - αὐτὸς ἐσιώπησεν*). After all, this is quite clear from the very first sentence of the chapter: „Πολλῶν δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀντίγονον θεραπευόντων καὶ ὅτε ἦκοι ἀπαντῶντων αὐτὸς ἡσύχαζε, μὴ βουλόμενος προεμπίπτειν εἰς γνῶσιν“, with the verb *θεραπεύω* being particularly important. The point of the sentence, and therefore of the whole chapter, is that contrary to the multitude of Athenians who were courting and flattering Antigonos, Arkesilaos stood aloof, declining to meet the Macedonian ruler. The following sentences serve as an illustration,

¹¹ Plutarch gives one such an example of a short letter (*Ages.* 13.5): „φέρεται γοῦν ἐπιστόλιον αὐτοῦ πρὸς Ἰδριέα τὸν Κάρα τοιοῦτο: Νικίας εἰ μὲν μὴ ἀδικεῖ, ἄφες· εἰ δὲ ἀδικεῖ, ἡμῖν ἄφες· πάντως δὲ ἄφες.“ Some may object that this example in fact proves that important matters could be asked in a short letter. However, on that occasion the addresser is a Spartan king who could afford to be short; while in our case we are dealing with the opposite – the “subjects” are addressing the ruler, therefore we would expect a more formal tone in the short letters, especially considering the significance of the “favor” they were asking.

¹² This makes the interpretation of Ferguson (1911, 191) all the more curious and untenable. He speculates that the Athenians asked Arkesilaos to lead the delegation, but he refused. However, as pointed out, Diogenes makes no mention of an Athenian request, or of an official delegation for that matter.

i.e., confirmation, of Arkesilaos' behaviour. It becomes apparent that the official delegations and petitions simply do not fit in well in this context. On the contrary, if the purpose of the delegations and the short letters was a request to liberate Athens, then not only does the sentence make no sense in the context of the whole passage, but it could also be construed as a serious criticism of Arkesilaos. For in the next sentence we learn that „ἀλλ' οὖν ὁμως ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος εἰς Δημητριάδα ἐπρέσβευσε πρὸς Ἀντίγονον καὶ οὐκ ἐπέτυχε.“ Does this mean that Arkesilaos was willing to make the “sacrifice” of meeting Antigonos for the sake of his native Pitane, but not for Athens, even though he spent most of his life there? Moreover, the refusal to participate in an official delegation, or simply to take part in the request for the liberation of Athens, would have undoubtedly triggered reactions from the Athenians themselves.¹³ On the other hand, if accepted that the principal verb in the whole chapter is *θεραπεύω*, things become more coherent and intelligible. The Athenians who either went to see Antigonos, or sent him the short letters, did so for personal reasons and ends, and thus Arkesilaos' behaviour remains consistent. The turning point that in fact confirms this interpretation comes in the beginning of the next sentence - „ἀλλ' οὖν ὁμως“; an emphatic phrase that expresses clearly the contrast with what was said before (cf. Reger 1985[1993], 166). Furthermore, it is in this sentence that we finally encounter the expected “official delegation” (*ἐπρέσβευσε*), which is in fact the object of the contrast – even though he did not wish to meet Antigonos, nor did he seek personal benefits from the potential friendship with him, nevertheless, for the sake of his native Pitane, Arkesilaos did indeed go as an official envoy to Demetrias where he met the king.

Considering the precious few sources at our disposal, it is hard to resist an opportunity to connect the various fragments into a unified context. Yet, the brief discussion on the previous pages shows that resist we should, at least until some new and independent source comes to light. The petitions cannot be linked unequivocally with the request for the “liberation” of Athens (cf. Dreyer 1999, 416 n.189), while the context of the chapter rather points towards private petitions/supplications. Subsequently, not only could the battle of Kos be dated at any period after the fall of Athens and the end of the Khremonidean War, but at least in theory, even the battle of Andros cannot be excluded as a possible context for the petitions (cf. Reger 1985[1993], 161).

2. The short letters notwithstanding, the fact remains that c. 255 Antigonos did indeed “liberate” Athens. Though the extent of this “liberation” should not be overestimated, in comparison to the period after the end of the Khremonidean War, the concessions to Athens were substantial. This decision of Antigonos is placed in the context of the battle of Kos as well. In short, as a result of the victory at Kos, the threat from the Ptolemaic fleet was reduced, and therefore Antigonos

¹³cf. Diog. Laert. 4.40: καὶ ποτε δὴ καὶ {Αθήνησιν} ἐν τῷ Πειραιεῖ πρὸς τὰς θέσεις λέγων ἐχρόνισεν, οικείως ἔχων πρὸς Ἱεροκλέα· ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ πρὸς τινῶν διεβάλλετο.

could allow himself to be generous towards the Athenians (Ferguson 1911, 188-192; Buraselis 1982, 149f.; [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 293, 596-598).

Once again, the interpretation seems attractive and convincing, and dating the battle of Kos c.255 appears to offer the best context for the partial “liberation” of Athens (e.g. Worthington 2021, 126). However, it should be pointed out that we are unable to fully appraise the consequences from the battle; that is, we do not know whether this defeat resulted in such a degree of disintegration of the Ptolemaic positions, so that Antigonos could afford to reduce the military presence in Attika. The sources are scarce, which is why a complete and convincing reconstruction of the situation in the 250s is impossible. What seems certain is that despite the victory in the Khremonidean War, and the battle of Kos afterwards (irrespective of the date), Antigonos neither established, nor tried to establish a complete control over the central Aegean (Will 1979, 231-233; Walbank 1982, 221f.; Errington 1990, 171; Reger 1994, 41). On the other hand, there is no doubt that the defeats in the Khremonidean War, and especially in the II Syrian War (Will 1979, 234-243; Grainger 2010, 117-136), weakened the Ptolemaic position in the Aegean considerably (Heinen 1972, 208-211). Nonetheless, the Ptolemaic power was not broken altogether ([Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 293-295), and Ptolemy II still controlled a number of important places, some of them in close proximity to the Antigonid possessions – Thera, Arsinoe-Koresia and Arsinoe-Methana on the Peloponnesos¹⁴ (Bagnall 1976, 123-136, 141-145). Obviously, the threat of a Ptolemaic counter-offensive was greater than it may seem (cf. Reger 1994, 51). Indeed, though the Ptolemies were unable to reestablish the thalassocracy they had enjoyed in the previous decades (Reger 1994, 40, 43-47), towards the end of the 250s Ptolemy II managed once again to reassert his control over parts of the Kyklades (pace Tarn 1928, 715; Buraselis 1982, 146f., 170-172) – a temporary success that ended with the battle of Andros at the latest. Regardless of the final outcome, all of these activities are clear indication of the continued Ptolemaic interest in the Aegean (Marquaille 2008, 48). So, by all accounts, the Ptolemies were not driven back at a safe enough distance so that Antigonos could afford to be generous.

If the “liberation” of Athens was not due to the victory at Kos, then what were the reasons behind Antigonos’ decision, and why then? Perhaps the answer lies with a Delian inscription from 255, that mentions [ὑγίεια εὐε]τηρία εἰρήνη ἐγένετο (IG XII 2. 116). Peace between whom?¹⁵ For the proponents of 255 as the date for the battle of Kos, the most likely candidates are Ptolemy II and Antigonos Gonatas (Buraselis 1982, 150f., 164f.; [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 598; Dreyer 1999, 416f.) – an assumption based on the supposed intervention of Antigonos in

¹⁴ To these, we should probably add Hydrea – the island off the Argolid’s southeast shore (Habicht 1992, 88-90).

¹⁵ Since the II Syrian War ended in 253 (Hölbl 2001, 44), the inscription cannot be referring to a peace between Ptolemy II and Antiokhos II. The fact that the war has not yet ended, argues against the conjecture of Buraselis (1982, 151) that the inscription reflects a general peace in the Aegean. cf. Reger 1985[1993], 162f.

the II Syrian War. Though accepted by a fair number of scholars, the assumption is not supported by even a single source, except the aforementioned peace.¹⁶ But this in essence constitutes a vicious circle – the assumed peace between Antigonos and Ptolemy II reinforces the notion that the Macedonian ruler took part in the II Syrian War, and vice versa (Will 1979, 238f.).

Therefore, if we are dealing with a formal peace at all (*cf.* Will 1979, 239; [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 598), it would most likely have been concluded between Ptolemy II and Rhodes (Bikerman 1938, 381f.; Reger 1985[1993], 163). For the friendly relations dating back to the end of the IV century were interrupted when Rhodes, for reasons unknown to us, intervened in the II Syrian War on the side of Antiokhos II (*Lind. Chron.* 37). The Rhodians helped Antiokhos capture Ephesos (Front. *Strat.* 3.9.10), and led by Agathostratos defeated the Ptolemaic fleet under the command of the renegade Khremonides (Polyaen. 5.18).¹⁷ Assuming a few Delian inscriptions mentioning Rhodian nauarkhoi have been correctly dated to the middle of the 250s, they indicate that in the years following the battle of Ephesos, Rhodes managed to expand its influence to the central Aegean (Reger 1994, 41-43). Therefore, the assumption that the peace of 255 mentioned on the Delian inscription was concluded between Ptolemy II and Rhodes seems most likely. Admittedly this conjecture, like the one that assumes a peace between Antigonos Gonatas and Ptolemy II, is not supported by direct evidence. But at the very least, it presupposes a peace treaty between two parties that we do know for certain were at war at this time.

The rapprochement between Rhodes and Ptolemy II – two great maritime powers that usually had extremely close relations,¹⁸ was certainly not in Antigonos' interest. Of course, this does not mean that there was a threat of combined Rhodian-Ptolemaic operations, but if nothing else, it did open up the possibility for freer and more energetic activities of the Ptolemaic fleet in the Aegean. Considering the defeats suffered in the previous years, it was to be expected that sooner or later, Ptolemy II would try to rectify and improve his position in the area. Nor was Ptolemy II the only cause for concern, for we should

¹⁶ According to [Hammond &] Walbank (1988, 598), the fact that there is no indication of Antigonos' participation in the II Syrian War poses no insurmountable problem, since the sources for this period are extremely fragmentary. However, this assumption rests on the notion that the battle of Kos should be dated c.255, which is a problematic methodological approach indeed. A possible motive for Antigonos' intervention in the war could be the possibility that he received help from Antiokhos I during the Khremonidean War (e.g. [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 291). But this conjecture is based on an inscription that has been erroneously dated and interpreted, and a few indirect allusions that can easily be explained without insisting on help sent by Antiokhos I during the war (*v.* Panovski 2015). Therefore, at least for the present, the assumption that Antigonos intervened in the II Syrian War is completely unsubstantiated.

¹⁷ For the Rhodians' motives, and the battle of Ephesos, usually dated c. 258, *v.* Seibert 1976; Will 1979, 234f., 236f.; Berthold 1984, 89-92.

¹⁸ For the relations between the Rhodians and the Ptolemies *v.* Gabrielsen 2013.

not forget the problems arising from the gradual expansion of the Aitolians ([Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 289; Scholten 2000, 61ff.), which potentially could have had significant ramifications for Antigonos' position in central Greece. The roughly simultaneous¹⁹ consolidation of the Macedonian control of Euboia, which was of key strategic importance for the Antigonids and their possessions in southern Greece since the Aitolians controlled the Thermopylai, shows that he was indeed concerned about the situation in Greece.

Under such circumstances, we can offer an alternative context for Gonatas' decision. Long gone were the days when Athens was a first-rate power, demonstrated yet again in the Khremonidean War; however, this did not mean that she could not be a source of troubles. Antigonos surely remembered well, how after the battle of Ipsos, and again after the expulsion from Macedonia, the Athenians promptly seized the opportunity to desert his father Poliorketes, and tried to regain their independence (Wheatley & Dunn 2020, 258-260, 394-406). Considering the stern measures after the end of the Khremonidean War, the Athenians would have undoubtedly tried to rid themselves from the Macedonian presence at the first sign of weakness or troubles for Antigonos - they had nothing to lose since the conditions could have hardly gotten any worse. Understood in this context, the "liberation" of Athens was a deliberate political decision and a conscious concession, rather than a sign of generosity or relaxation of the Macedonian control and vigilance. After all, as already mentioned, the "liberation" of Athens should not be overestimated - the traditional constitution was not completely restored, Antigonos continued to meddle and influence the political situation in the city (Tracy 2003a, 20-25), while the Macedonian garrisons were still present in the Peiraieos, Mounikhia, Sounion, and Salamis (Plut. *Arat.* 34.5-6; Paus. 2.8.6).

In other words, though still firmly in control of the situation, Antigonos gave the Athenians just enough "freedom" (cf. Waterfield 2021, 182) to make them wonder, whether what they had gained was worth jeopardizing in the future. It was a shrewd "gift" that bore fruit, as the events in the subsequent decades demonstrate - the Athenians remained loyal to the Antigonids during the revolt of Alexander son of Krateros; and afterwards, when Antigonos lost Korinth, and Attika was exposed to attacks from the Akhaian League; as well as during the War of Demetrios (Habicht 1997, 162-166).²⁰ Perhaps most importantly, the ties were

¹⁹If the archonship of Emmenidas, during whose service we encounter a hieromnemon from Histiaia for the last time (*Syll.*³ 431), is correctly dated to 255/4. v. Scholten 2000, Appendix A. Unfortunately F. Lefèvre, *Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes. Tome IV, Documents amphictioniques*, De Bocard, Paris, 2002, was unavailable to me. [Hammond &] Walbank (1988, 271f.) believes that the strengthening of the Macedonian control of Euboia resulted from the battle of Kos. This is certainly possible, but after the victory in the Khremonidean War, and considering the engagements of the Ptolemaic forces in the II Syrian War, surely Antigonos could have captured Histiaia and reinforced his control over Euboia irrespective the dating of the battle of Kos.

²⁰For the revolt of Alexander son of Krateros, and the subsequent war with the Akhaian

severed between Athens and the Ptolemies, who transferred their support and financial aid to the Akhaians, Aitolians, or Sparta (Habicht 1992, 73f.). Only after the death of Demetrios in 229, while Macedonia was facing a severe crisis, did the Athenians finally freed themselves, though not with an armed insurrection, but by paying off Diogenes, the commander of the Antigonid forces in Attika (Habicht 1997, 173f.).

3. Obviously this conjecture cannot be substantiated by any primary or tangible source. It is a theoretical reconstruction and an attempt what little we know to place is some sort of coherent and “logical” context. However, the same observation holds true for the notion that the “liberation” of Athens stemmed from the battle of Kos. Once the “petitions” mentioned by Diogenes Laertios, as well as the idea of Antigonos’ participation in the II Syrian War and the peace of 255, are removed from this context, all that is left is just another theoretical model. The problem is that our approach to these questions is out of necessity backwards. Ideally, the context, i.e., the causal links, would emerge from the multiple sources and the well-established facts. But, since there are desperately few sources pertaining to these issues, we are forced to start from the end – starting from the assumed contexts or causes we try to explain the very few facts know to us.²¹ After all, we must not forget that we know next to nothing about Antigonos’ activities in the period between the end of the Khremonidean War and the “liberation” of Athens. Even if accepted that the battle of Kos was fought c. 255, that is just one year in an almost a whole decade that is “lost” to us. That is why any explanation of the causes, i.e., the context for the “liberation” of Athens, must be understood as nothing more than a possible conjecture or reconstruction.

I have no doubt that this brief discussion will not change anyone’s stance regarding the date of the battle of Kos. After all, that was not the aim of this paper – that issue is far more extensive and complex than one might get the impression from these few pages. What I do hope to have shown is that the “petitions” mentioned by Diogenes Laertios should not be placed in the context of the “liberation” of Athens, and thus should not be used in the debate concerning the date of the battle of Kos; and consequently, that the arguments for the synchronization of the “liberation” and the battle are not as sound as it may seem. As for the dating of the battle of Kos itself, we must wait for the appearance of a new source; until then, the question will remain open, and the scholars will simply choose the date that seems more convincing and logical to them.

League after the loss of Korinth, *v.* [Hammond &] Walbank 1988, 296-303, 310-313; Waterfield 2021, 187-192, 200-202. For the War of Demetrios, Scholten 2000, 131-163.

²¹As Heinen (1972, 193) points out, the new attempts at answering these questions are based on new interpretations and conjectures, and not on new sources. Under such circumstances, a definitive and final answer is impossible.

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