

State Structure in Archaic Argos

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Abstract: The article considers state structure of archaic Argos. The basis of performed analysis of narrative sources and epigraphic data allows to argue the Argos polis was led by kings of Temenides dynasty whose only duties were restricted to military power. However after the end of the dynasty Kings power has transformed into eponymous magistrate, evidently for 1 year. Main institutions of power in the polis were Colleges of demiourgoi and Hieromnemones which appeared in Argos as a result of restriction of king power, functions of which were also included court procedures.

Key words: Argos • King • Hieromnemones • Demiourgoi

INTRODUCTION

Formation of polis structure in archaic period, in Argos and in all other cities of Ancient Greece, government institutions have formed. Today the issue about when magistrates appeared and what their functions were is matter of debates. That is why, when appealing to the history of archaic Argos, it would be very logical to consider its institutions of power.

Supreme power in Argos since ancient times belonged to king of Temenides dynasty. However after the finishing the dynasty, king's power transformed into eponymous magistrate, most likely of 1 year. This conclusion can be made on the basis of the title of Argos Decree of 450 B.C. on regulation of relationship with Knossos and Tylisson, Crete cities in the epoch of king Melant [1]. Besides that it is interesting that Plutarch mentioned someone, Egon by name, whom Argos people elected as their Tsar following the advice of Delphic oracle [2]. Herodotus argued that during Greece-Persian wars in 500-449 B.C. Argos people had their king but he only was a commander of the Army [3].

Argos had also magistrates with broad authorities- demiourgoi and college of Hieromnemones Aristotle wrote that in ancient times people appointed demiourgoi for long time [4]. The exact date of appearance of demiourgoi

is hard to identify. N. Hammond dates back their appearance to VII century B.C. [5]. J. Huxley believes that college of demiourgoi was formed after falling of Temenides and represented democratic and anti-Heraclide reaction in the polis [6]. College of demiourgoi appeared most likely after restriction of Medon power (or more probably, after dethroning of Temenides dynasty in VI century B.C.). And those researchers are right who believe that this college was intended for restriction of King's power. Some facts regarding its structure can be obtained from epigraphic materials. The most early one is an extract of first half of VI B.C. [7]. However F. Vollgraff, K. Murakava date this fragment of writing back to VII B.C. [8, 9]. Fragment contains information about the reign of 9 demiourgoi in Argos: Potamos, Sthenelas, Ipomedon, Charon, Adrastus, Orthagoras, Ctetus, Aristomachus, Ichonidas. It was differently interpreted by historiography scientists. T. Kelly believes that demiourgoi were important officials [10]. F. Vollgraff and J. Huxley saw the connection between demiourgoi with heroes which were awarded the titles of supreme officials [6]. N. Hammond argues that in Argos in VII B.C. there was a college of 9 eponymous magistrates, 3 from every Dorian phyle [5]. L. Jeffry assumes that after dethroning Meltas there came demiourgoi, from a number of which eponymous king were elected for period of 1 year and 9 names enlisted in

the fragment were the first king which during 9 years ruled one by one in Argos. She also admits that these 9 demiourgoi ruled in parallel [7]. The writing, first of all, must have meant not parallel but successive rule of demiourgoi. It is important that the names of some demiourgoi were the names of ancient Greek heroes: Sthenelas-the offspring of Perseus was Argos king [11], Ipomedon-local hero of Lerna, Charon - transporter of the dead to the Hades over the river of Stiks, Adrastus-is the King of Argos which was later honored in Sicyon [12, 3]. Ctetus in accordance with legends was killed by Heracles in Kleonas [11]. Aristomachus was an off-spring of Heracles who failed return to Peloponnese [12] and called himself the father of Temen [13]. Only names of Orthagoras and Ichonidas were not mentioned in Greek mythology. In general, we can argue that 9 demiourgoi enlisted in the writing are real number of Argos magistrates which were granted names of mythological heroes. On the other hand, the names of mythological heroes could be well-spread in Argos society and it can be proved by the fact that demiourgoi' names were followed by patronymic (Sthenelas, son of Echedamidae). Besides there is another fragment of one more writing referred to VI B.C. [7] where also the names of demiourgoi are mentioned: but there are 6 demiourgoi (Syleus, Eratyus, Polycor, Exacestus, Hagi, Erycoerus) and these names were not mentioned in mythology. The writing proves that the demiourgoi were probably supervising initiation of some hand-made items and money to Pallas Athena on Larisa, the acropolis of the city. If we consider that mentioned men ruled in parallel then we must admit that the number of demiourgoi was reduced: they were elected not by 3 but by 2 from every phyle. But the writing does not exclude another interpretation: document informs about initiation into the temple of quite real demiourgoi who ruled one by one in Argos. In this case the list of 6 demiourgoi can be considered as direct continuation of mentioned above Argos list of 9 analogous magistrates. The 3rd writing which dates back to VI B.C. contains data about punishments for the crimes committed against the polis-penalty to death and exile from the polis [14]. G. Rogers believes that a demiurge had priority in purchasing of confiscated property and if he wished it was added to divine treasures [15]. The next writing contains information about money penalty which was levied by demiourgoi as a result of some court procedure [14]. And all this allows to assume with some certainty that demiourgoi performed court duties.

Besides demiourgoi in Argos there were also magistrates in position of Hieromnemones. There are some writings describing this position. The writing of first quarter of V B.C. describes the names of Hieromnemones and the list of weapons. M. T. Mitsos believes that the writing corresponds to Polyen information which narrates about dedication of old weapon to the Gods in times of tyrant Archinos. And this means that college of Hieromnemones. was in Argos even in VI B.C. [16]. Besides that the writing demonstrates that the responsible people for weapon dedication were Hieromnemones related to the cult of Hera of Argos. The writing of the 1st quarter of V B.C. [7] mentions 4 Hieromnemones which made dedication from the profit obtained by Argos people on horse races. Then the names of Hieromnemones are enlisted. There is one more fragment of writing referred to the 1st quarter of V B.C. [17] which describes their relation of Hieromnemones to some phyle: (Heralion-Dimanes, Alkamenos-Hylleis, Aristodamus-Hyrnathia, Amthyktion-Pamphyloi) And this distinctly suggest that college of Hieromnemones consisted from 4 men: one representative of every phyle. R. Richardson believes that "Hieromnemon is ordinary name for college responsible for temple affairs [17]. The text of fragment points out that Hieromnemones fulfill court procedures while purchasing or selling property and Ch. Walldstein makes justified conclusion that Hieromnemones were responsible for negotiation conditions regarding money from selling or leasing of least part of temple property [18]. It is worth mentioning the writing which dates back to Roman times[14, 19]. It says that Hieromnemones of Hera had rights to set somebody free. L. Paltseva suggests that Hieromnemones in Argos were the servicemen in Temple of Hera and participated in the procedure of liberation of the slaves [20]. F. Vollgraff believes that the writings enlists the names of guarantors and then those who were liberated with mentioning of the county to which they were prescribed [19]. R. Richardson believes that this writing refers to the names of the people who were guarantors of Hieromnemones to other people in some bargains. They point out that the writing does contain the sign which probably symbolizes number system in Argolid [17, 18]. Survived fragments of the writing show that Hieromnemones gathered one representative from every phyle. But the duties of Hieromnemones are hard to identify. However we can suggest that Hieromnemones are responsible for operations in the Temple of Hera.

So, above mentioned material shows that originally the Head of Argos was king from Temenides dynasty acting only as a military commander. In the city there were also colleges of Hieromnemones and demiourgoi who most likely appeared in Argos because of restriction of King's power by Argos people. While A. Unzhakov believes that the reign in Argos was performed by demiourgoi, not by King [21]. The functions of the representatives of both colleges included court procedures which differed by their spheres of activity: demiurge college dealt with secular cases, college of Hieromnemones-religious cases.

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