



THIASOS

RIVISTA DI ARCHEOLOGIA E ARCHITETTURA ANTICA

2026, n. 15

«THIASOS» Rivista di archeologia e architettura antica

Anno di fondazione: 2011

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Elisa DAGA, *Multiple Prize Dedications in Orthia's Sanctuary.*

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Edizioni Quasar di Severino Tognon s.r.l., via Ajaccio 41-43, 00198 Roma (Italia)

<http://www.edizioniquasar.it/>

ISSN 2279-7297

Tutti i diritti riservati

Come citare l'articolo:

E. DAGA, *Multiple Prize Dedications in Orthia's Sanctuary.*

Remarks on Dedication Timing and Obligation in Greek Agonistic Practice, *Thiasos* 15, 2026, pp. 361-376

Gli articoli pubblicati nella Rivista sono sottoposti a referee nel sistema a doppio cieco.



MULTIPLE PRIZE DEDICATIONS IN ORTHIA'S SANCTUARY. REMARKS ON DEDICATION TIMING AND OBLIGATION IN GREEK AGONISTIC PRACTICE

Elisa Daga*

Key Words: agonistic prizes, Artemis Orthia, sickle stelae, prize dedication, votive obligation

Parole chiave: premi agonistici, Artemis Orthia, stele con falcetti, dedica del premio, obbligo votivo

Abstract:

This article examines the multiple sickle dedications in the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia. The sickles were the agonistic prizes dedicated by young victors in the competitions held within the sanctuary. By reading the stelai as complete monuments, inscriptions and sickles or their remaining grooves together, and by comparing them with the literary and epigraphic evidence for the rules governing prize dedication in the Greek world, the article distinguishes between the dedication of a prize to a god, and its display on an inscribed support. The Orthia stelai show that display could be selective and cumulative and therefore deferred with respect to the victories it commemorates. The expression ὄμηρα λαβών in AO 8 is discussed in detail and interpreted as describing the prize as an object held only temporarily by the victor. On this reading, dedication was not a voluntary gesture but a restitution, subject in several Greek communities to prescriptions, time limits, and sanctions that were locally specific.

Il contributo analizza le dediche multiple di falcetti nel santuario spartano di Orthia, i premi agonistici dedicati dai giovani vincitori delle competizioni che lì avevano luogo. Leggendo le stele come monumenti nella loro interezza, considerando insieme iscrizioni e falcetti, o gli incassi che li ospitavano, e confrontandole con alcune testimonianze letterarie ed epigrafiche sulle norme che regolavano la dedica dei premi nel mondo greco, il contributo distingue tra la dedica del premio alla divinità e la sua esposizione su un supporto iscritto. Le stele di Orthia mostrano che l'esposizione poteva essere selettiva e cumulativa e, dunque, differita rispetto alle vittorie commemorate. Se nel frattempo i premi restassero nelle mani dei vincitori o fossero già depositati nel santuario non può essere stabilito sulla base della documentazione superstite; il contributo sostiene che la seconda ricostruzione, suffragata dal decreto pergameno, sia la più economica, pur riconoscendo che la prima non può essere esclusa. L'espressione ὄμηρα λαβών in AO 8 è discussa in dettaglio e interpretata come descrizione del premio quale oggetto custodito solo temporaneamente dal vincitore. Secondo questa lettura, la dedica non era un gesto volontario ma una restituzione, soggetta in diverse comunità greche a prescrizioni, termini e sanzioni di carattere locale.

This paper examines the practice of dedicating multiple agonistic prizes in the Spartan Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia¹. While the dedication of agonistic prizes is attested across the Greek world, the phenomenon of recording multiple dedications on a single stele emerges as a defining feature of the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia, a theme that has so far never been investigated in light of the available evidence on the prescriptions governing prize dedication. By analysing six epigraphic monuments recording multiple dedications in the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia (AO 1, 2, 16, 19, 46, 55)², the paper asks how soon after victory winners were expected to dedicate their prizes, and what significance should be attached to the term *homera* in AO 8³. Accordingly, the paper argues that prize dedication could be regulated by prescriptions which varied across the Greek world, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of the different forms of regulation within Greek legal traditions.

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¹ From here onwards the deity will be referred to only by the theonym Orthia, taking into account the history of scholarship on the question, for which see Nafissi 2024, pp. 15-24 with previous bibliography. The association between Orthia and Artemis is first attested in the sanctuary in a dedication of late Tiberian date (STEINHAEUER

2022 II, no. 3, p. 172); before that moment the dedications are always addressed to Orthia, in the variants in which the name appears (on which NAFISSI 2024, p. 17 note 8). On the identity of Artemis and Orthia, see instead JOHANNESSEN 2021.

² Cf. IG V 1, 255, 256, 267, 269, 289, 301.

³ Cf. IG V 1, 258.

1. Introduction

This paper will explore the practice of displaying multiple prizes on a single votive stele, considering a specific aspect of the phenomenon: the timing of prize dedication, through the case study documented by the sanctuary of Orthia at Sparta⁴. Orthia's sanctuary, located near the banks of the Eurotas in the district of Limnai, from which it derived the name *Limnaion* (Strabo 8.4.9; 5.3; Pausanias 3.16.7), has been investigated comprehensively through the excavations undertaken by the British School at Athens in the early 20th century⁵. These investigations revealed continuous cult activity from at least the 9th or early 8th century BCE onward. The earliest monumental phases of both the temple and the altar belong to the Archaic period, with the first temple structure dating to around 700 BCE. The theatre that enclosed the temple façade represents a much later addition, probably constructed after the mid-3rd century CE. Fortuitously, its construction incorporated earlier monuments and inscribed blocks as building material, thereby ensuring the preservation of a large number of inscriptions, including the dedicatory texts associated with the so-called *paidikoi agones*⁶.

The recovery of a large corpus of dedicatory inscriptions has substantially increased the available evidence for cultic activity at the sanctuary, shedding light on other contests beyond the famous *diamastigosis*, the “whipping contest” which, during the Roman period, evolved into a spectacle attracting prominent personalities (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.34; 2.46; 5.77)⁷.

From the Classical to the Roman period (3rd century CE) the sanctuary of Orthia also hosted, besides the *diamastigosis*, the so-called *paidikoi agones*. These competitions are attested in the epigraphic record (see below § 3.1). These inscriptions are carved on stone stelai that originally bore the dedicated objects, iron sickles, the prizes awarded to the young victors⁸. Nowadays the stelai mostly display the grooves designed to receive and secure the iron sickles once affixed to the stone. Indeed, in most cases, the sickles themselves have disappeared, leaving only their grooves; however, in a few fortunate cases, sickles (*AO* 7 = *IG* V 1, 257 and *AO* 29 = *IG* V 1, 280) or part of them (*AO* 64 = *IG* V 1, 304) are still preserved *in situ*, while in other cases we can recognize the attachment marks left by the objects on the stone (*AO* 25 = *IG* V 1, 277).

As we read in the dedications, the young Spartans, divided into age classes⁹, competed in different *agones*, whose names are attested from the late 2nd century BCE: *kaththeratorion*, *keloia* and *moa*; some of them disappeared after the 1st century CE, as *eualkes* or *eubalkes*, *kynaetas* and *deros*¹⁰.

The sickles stelae were first published in 1906-1907 by H.J.W. Tillyard and subsequently by A.M. Woodward between 1907 and 1909¹¹. The inscriptions were later included in *IG* V.1 (nos. 255-356), and in 1929 Woodward republished them (nos. 1-135) as part of the edition of the archaeological investigations at the sanctuary edited by R. M. Dawkins, which remains the most complete and up-to-date edition available. In 2022, two additional stelae bearing dedications of sickles were added to the corpus in the volume on Julius Eurycles edited by Steinhauer (nos. 3-4).

Before turning to these materials, a brief section on the dedication of the prize will be introduced to provide the necessary context for discussing Spartan practice.

The Spartan sanctuary of Artemis Orthia offers epigraphic evidence related to multiple prize dedication, raising questions about the timing of prize dedication and, more broadly, about the regulation of the obligations imposed on victors. This evidence also invites a reassessment of Spartan local practice within the wider Greek context. One of these inscriptions, namely *AO* 8, a dedication dated on palaeographical grounds to the 2nd century CE, provides particularly valuable evidence for the study of prize dedication.

⁴ The practice of dedication at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, including the nature of the *agones* and the epigraphic form of the dedications, has recently been examined by Massimo Nafissi (NAFISSI 2024, pp. 64-81), within a broader study of the Orthia *agones* and the history of Spartan education. His discussion of the single dedications intersects at several points with the questions addressed here concerning multiple dedications. The present study, however, situates the Orthia material within a broader reflection on the dedication of agonistic prizes across the Greek world and, on some points, arrives at different conclusions. I am grateful to Prof. Nafissi for his generous and insightful comments on this topic.

⁵ DAWKINS 1929.

⁶ On the *paidikoi agones* NAFISSI 2024, pp. 63-94; previously MASSARO 2018, pp. 115-119; DUCAT 2006, espec. pp. 249-260; KENNELL 1995, pp. 28-69.

⁷ For a historical reconstruction of the various phases of the competition, in which distinct stages of development have been identified, see the monograph by M. Nafissi (NAFISSI 2024), especially pp. 25-61. Different interpretations have been advanced by Nigel Kennell (KENNELL 1995) and Jean Ducat (DUCAT 2006), particularly considering

changes in the Spartan institutional system. For an overview of the historiographical debate on the subject, see NAFISSI 2024, pp. 124-132.

⁸ The dedicated objects are in fact described as ἄθλον or ἔπαθλα in the inscriptions: cf. *IG* V 1, 264 = *AO* 298, no. 4 = MASSARO 2018, pp. 129-130 no. 5; *IG* V 1, 257 = *AO* 299-300, no. 7 = MASSARO 2018, pp. 131-132, no. 7; *IG* V 1, 258 = *AO* 301-302, no. 8 = MASSARO 2018, pp. 132-133 no. 8. See KENNELL 1995, p. 28; DUCAT 2006, p. 210 note 42; NAFISSI 2024, p. 76, note 170.

⁹ On the Spartan age classes see NAFISSI 2024, pp. 73-76 with previous bibliography.

¹⁰ The *paidikoi agones* comprised several distinct events. The most commonly attested are the *kaththeratorion*, associated with hunting, and the *keloia* and *moa*, both apparently vocal or song competitions; three further contests (*eu(b)alkes*, *kynaetas*, *deros*) are only sporadically documented and had vanished by the first century CE. On the nature of these competitions, see KENNELL 1995, pp. 51-55 and MASSARO 2018, pp. 115-169; a reanalysis of the evidence on the *paidikoi agones* is in NAFISSI 2024, pp. 68-73, with previous bibliography.

¹¹ This edition of the inscriptions will be abbreviated as *AO* throughout the paper.

2. Prescriptions governing Prize Dedication

The dedication of prizes is a practice of considerable antiquity¹². It is attested from the Archaic period, and its earliest literary account is given by Hesiod, who recounts how, having crossed to Chalcis for the funeral games of Amphidamas and won the contest there with a hymn, he dedicated the tripod he had received as his prize to the Muses of Helicon (*Works and Days* 654-659). The episode already discloses the essential logic of the act: the prize won in competition is not retained by the victor but transferred to a deity, in the place where the god's claim is acknowledged: the sanctuary. Such dedications of prizes belong to the wider category of votive offerings, whose epigraphic regulation concerning custody, the officials responsible for them, and the norms governing them, has been studied by P. Lombardi¹³, notably through a dossier of cases concerning the 'obligation to dedicate'¹⁴.

The present discussion focuses on one specific class within this category: the regulation of agonistic prize dedications. Although these regulations have never been studied as a coherent body of evidence, bringing them together raises a question: how far the regulation of prize dedication followed shared Greek patterns, and how far it took locally specific forms, a question to which the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia offers a privileged case.

A word on terminology is needed at the outset, since the Greek sources use ἀνατιθέναι and ἀνάθεσις for the whole of what I shall treat as a process in several stages. A victor first receives his prize (λαμβάνειν: so Herodotus 1.144 and the Beroia law, l. 67). He then makes it over to the god: this transfer, which the sources call ἀνάθεσις, I refer to as 'dedication'. A further stage, the only one directly attested by the Orthia stelai, is the setting-up of the prize as a votive monument, fixed to an inscribed support: this I call 'display'. In its strict sense ἀνατιθέναι names a gesture, that of taking up an object and placing, setting up, or hanging it in a consecrated place, where it then remains; the transfer of the object into the god's ownership is expressed by the verbs καθιεροῦν or ἀνιεροῦν¹⁵. In ordinary votive practice the two coincided in a single act, and the sources accordingly use ἀνατιθέναι for the whole; but the vocabulary itself does not require that they should always coincide. Nor was the setting-up of a votive ever simply the dedicant's affair. It required a place, assigned by the sanctuary, and it could be regulated, refused, or subsequently altered by the authorities in charge; and where the object had to be fixed to a support or a wall, it entailed labour and expense¹⁶. My argument is that in prize dedicatory practice the two stages could accordingly come apart, sometimes by years and sometimes by a change of agent, and that a Pergamene decree examined below is a case in point. The distinction I propose here is therefore between two obligations of different weight: what the victor owed the god, which was the prize itself, and what he, or a kinsman or a benefactor, might later choose to make permanently visible in the sanctuary. Whether the Spartan evidence examined here supports this reading is the question of the following sections.

The surviving evidence for the normative regulation of prize dedication takes a variety of forms and reveals temporal constraints¹⁷, as the following cases show.

The historian Herodotus (1.144) preserves a passage that illustrates the gravity with which prize dedication could be regarded. In his account of the Dorian pentapolis, Herodotus reports that the city of Halicarnassus was expelled from the confederation because of the impiety of one of its citizens¹⁸, Agasicles, who had won a bronze tripod in competition at the sanctuary of Apollo Triopius¹⁹, but failed to dedicate it. Instead of leaving it in the sanctuary, he carried it home and hung it up there, keeping the prize for himself; in so doing, as Herodotus puts it, "having won, he scorned the rule" (νικήσας τὸν νόμον κατηλόγησε).

¹² ROUSE 1902, pp. 151-160.

¹³ LOMBARDI 2009.

¹⁴ LOMBARDI 2009, pp. 112-124.

¹⁵ RUDHARDT 1958, pp. 214 and 223, observes that a scholion to Aristophanes (*Ploutos* 845 b) and one to Aeschines (3. 108) equate ἀνατιθέναι with ἀνιεροῦν. The prize itself belongs to the same lexical field: θέμα means both 'deposit' and 'prize set for a contest' (Chantraine, *DELG* s.v. τίθημι, cited by PATERA 2012, p. 19 note 14). On the inalienability of votives once placed in a sanctuary see van Straten 1992, 272: the sacred law of Loryma (*LSAM* 74 = *IRb.Peraia* 3) forbids removing or damaging ἀναθήματα and, if the restoration is correct, rearranging them παρὰ τάξιν without the priest; the principle is reaffirmed by LOMBARDI 2009, p. 108, and discussed, with the qualifications imposed by the cities' use of sacred treasuries, by PATERA 2012, pp. 83-91.

¹⁶ VAN STRATEN 1992, pp. 271-272, and SOSIN 2005, pp. 132-133 with notes 12-16 collect such regulations: Rhodes, *Asklepion*, 3rd c. BCE (*LSS* 107), banning requests for the ἀνάθεσις of statues or other votives in the lower part of the *temenos* or wherever they would ob-

struct the walks; Miletus (*Milet* I.3 32 = *LSS* 123), forbidding the fixing of *pinakes* to the woodwork of the new stoa; Athens, 2nd c. BCE (*LSCG* 43), authorizing (even if the inscription is damaged) the priest to remove votive tablets that block the cult image and forbidding any new ἀνάθημα without his consent; Paros (*IG* XII.5 129, ll. 43-48), requiring that a new statue be set up without damaging existing ἀναθήματα; Laodicea by the Sea, 174 BCE (*IGLS* IV 1261, ll. 11-13, 21-25), where a request τόπον εἰς ἀνάθεσιν εἰκόνοσ ἐνταῖς a fee, on which see SOSIN 2005. On the practical consequences of installation ('cutting, drilling, digging, pinning') SOSIN 2005, pp. 132-133; on the initial placement of votives, subject to the permission of the sanctuary personnel, and their subsequent relocation, VAN STRATEN 1992, p. 254.

¹⁷ I am developing research devoted to this topic.

¹⁸ As has been noted, the exclusion of the city from the confederation was probably connected to the fact that in the fifth century BCE Halicarnassus had a mixed Greek and Carian population and chiefly used the Ionian calendar and dialect; the date of the expulsion, however, is unknown. See ASHERI 2007, p. 175.

¹⁹ A tripod dedication, presumably to be connected with the Triopi-

Indeed, Herodotus reports that:

ἐν γὰρ τῷ ἀγῶνι τοῦ Τριοπίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἐτίθεσαν τὸ πάλαι τρίποδας χαλκέους τοῖσι νικῶσι, καὶ τούτους χρῆν τοὺς λαμβάνοντας ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ μὴ ἐκφέρειν ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ ἀνατιθέναι τῷ θεῷ.

“In the contest in honour of Apollo Triopian anciently they conferred bronze tripods to the victors, and those who received them were required not to carry them away from the sanctuary but to dedicate them there to the god”.

The penalty recorded by Herodotus, expulsion from the confederation, indicates the seriousness with which the obligation to dedicate prizes was conceived and represented, even if it was not always enforced²⁰. In Lysias' *On a Charge of Taking Bribes* (21.2-4), the defendant, cataloguing his choregic services, records that in 410/409 BC, during the archonship of Glaucippus, he dedicated the tripod he had won, spending five thousand drachmae on the dedication²¹.

Other inscriptions, however, provide further evidence for the prescriptions governing prize dedication.

A decree from Pergamon (*MDAI(A)* 33 (1908) 375,1; 138-133 BCE)²², honouring a citizen for a series of generous services to the community and, in particular, for his activity as gymnasiarch, records another benefaction performed during his service to the city (ll. 23-27)²³:

θεωρ[ῶ]ν δὲ καὶ τῶν νενικηκότων πολιτῶν λαμπάσιν Λακίνια τὰ ἔπ[αθλα οὐ] τ[ε]τευχότα ἀναθέσεως, ἀλλὰ παρεριμμένα ἀφθονία[ι τῶν στεφάνων οὐ] μόνον ἐπιτήδειον τόπον ἐφ' οὗ τεθήσονται ἐπενόησε[ν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τήν] | δαπάνην τὴν εἰς τὴν ἀνάθεσιν παρ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐποίησατο μεγαλομέρηαν

“Seeing that the prizes won by his fellow citizens in the torch-races at the Lakinian festivals had not yet been put on public display but were lying neglected because of the abundance [of victory crowns], he not only devised a suitable place for their display but also, with characteristic generosity, bore at his own expense the cost of setting them up.”

The wording deserves attention. Gauthier and Hatzopoulos (p. 115) render ἀνάθεσις here as *consécration*; Jacobsthal (p. 379) glossed the gymnasiarch's action with *aufstellen*. The two renderings need not be opposed, since ἀνατιθέναι can cover both the cultic and the physical act (above); what matters is what the decree says the honorand actually provided. It names a suitable place on which the prizes ‘will be set’ (τόπον ἐφ' οὗ τεθήσονται) and the expense of their ἀνάθεσις, met from his own funds. Place and expense are the two requirements that the setting-up of a votive imposed on any dedicant, as the contemporary decree of Laodicea by the Sea makes explicit, where those who ask the city for a τόπος εἰς ἀνάθεσιν εἰκόνης must pay a fixed sum (*IGLS* IV 1261, ll. 11-13)²⁴. The ἀνάθεσις that the gymnasiarch financed at Pergamon is, in this sense, an installation.

At line 24 the editors read οὐ] τ[ε]τευχότα ἀναθέσεως, ‘not having obtained their setting-up’. The prizes, apparently crowns, though the word too is restored, were in the gymnasiarch's charge and παρεριμμένα, lying neglected

on sanctuary, is attested by a Cnidian inscription (*IKnidos* I, 163): Πα]τροκλῆς ἀνέθηκεν |] Λατοῖδαι τρίποδα. The Pan-Dorian sanctuary of Apollo at the Triopion has left no archaeological traces, but some coins from Cos have been considered related to the festival on account of their iconography (see ASHERI 2007, p. 175). Blümel takes the evidence of *IKnidos* 163 to support the possibility that the Triopion was located at Cnidus (commentary on *IKnidos* I, 163).

²⁰ WILSON 2000, pp. 199-201 comments on the relevant passage (Hdt. 1.144) and argues that the Herodotean episode does not represent a complete picture of Greek practice regarding tripod dedication. Citing, for instance, Pindar's *First Isthmian* (vv. 18-20), he proposes that “there were alternative models of tripodic dedication to the strict practice of the Pentapolitai” (p.200), suggesting that a prize tripod need not always have been dedicated at the site where it was won: a private home, or a sanctuary in the victor's own city, could equally serve as the place of dedication.

²¹ Isaeus 5.41 likewise attests to the practice of victorious *choregoi* dedicating tripods. In his commentary on the speech, however, Kapellos (KAPELLOS 2014, p. 67) argues, in line with Wilson's position (WILSON 2000, pp. 199-201), that the dedication of the tripod was not obligatory. A scholion on Aeschines' *Against Timarchus* (1.10) states: ὁ δ' οὖν νικήσας χορὸς τρίποδα λαμβάνει, ὃν ἀνατίθῃσι τῷ Διονύσῳ (“the victorious chorus receives a tripod, which it dedicates to Dionysus”; cf. DILTS 1992). This claim deserves closer scrutiny in light of the prescriptions governing prize dedication discussed in this study.

²² The inscription has been recently considered by A. Dhenain (DHENAIN 2024, espec. p.182 note 80). Dhenain considers the obligation

to consecrate victory prizes and the interdiction of sale of the prizes as factors that limit the possibility of becoming wealthy through prize winnings (pp. 130-133), mentioning both the Herodotean and the Pergamene case, in a chapter in which he discusses the limited economic value of Greek athletic prizes and argues that participation in contests was driven primarily by the pursuit of honour and social prestige rather than financial gain.

²³ A series of parallels to this formulation can, I would suggest, be recognized in other Pergamene inscriptions: in particular, a decree for the gymnasiarch Metrodoros contemporary with this one, *MDAI(A)* 32 (1907) 278, 11, reads, at ll. 32-35: [— — — — —] — — — — —]ας παραχρῆμα θεωροῦντες ἑαυ[τοὺς — — — — —] — — — — —] τ[ε]τευχότας τῶν ἐπιβαλλόντων ἐπά[θλων — — — — —] οἱ ἐπιστ[α]τοῦντες αὐτῶν παιδευταὶ [...]. Whereas in an inscription recording the honors bestowed on Diodoros Paspasos, dated to 69 BC (on the date, cf. CURTY 2015, p. 335 note 3), *MDAI(A)* 29 (1904) 152, 1, l. 41, a comparable reference may likewise be observed to the honorand's generous action in setting up the prizes: καὶ συντελέσας μεγαλομέρως καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῇ τῶν ἐπάθλων θέσει. Regarding this inscription, the commentary on l. 41 in *IGR* IV takes the dative to refer to the exedra, which would thus be the place designated to house the displayed prizes. Note too the case of the gymnasiarch Menas, whose setting-up of the arms awarded as prizes to the young men in the gymnasium of Sestos is likewise publicly recorded (*IK Sestos* I, ll. 79-81).

²⁴ On the decree, SOSIN 2005. The Laodicean fee is a civic tax on statues, and the objects are εἰκόνες; the parallel is lexical and institutional, not one of prize dedication.

in their abundance; they were no longer in the victors' hands, and the intervention that the decree records concerns their visible arrangement, not their transfer to the sanctuary. If the restoration [οὐ] is right, the decree attests prizes that had left their winners but had not yet been set up. On this reading, what the benefactor supplied was display, and the decree presupposes an interval, of unknown length, between the receipt of the prize and its setting-up. The inscription does not state that either was mandatory; it shows, however, that the process leading from victory to a visible monument could be interrupted, and completed by someone other than the victor²⁵.

The Pergamene case will be reconsidered below (§ 5), when the timing of prize dedication in Orthia's sanctuary will be analysed.

An explicit temporal requirement is attested in an inscription from Beroia in Macedonia (*I. Beroia* 1; *SEG* 27.261, 1st third of the 2nd century BCE)²⁶. On side B of a stele bearing gymnasium regulations, lines 67-69 prescribe:

τὰ δὲ ἄθλα, ἃ ἂν λαμβάνωσιν οἱ νικῶντες, ἀνατιθέτωσαν ἐπὶ τοῦ εἰσιόντος γυμnasiάρχου ἐν μηνὶ ὀκτώ· εἰ δὲ μή, ζημιούτω αὐτοὺς ὁ γυμnasiάρχος δραχμαῖς ἑκατὸν.

"The prizes, which victors receive, they shall dedicate under the gymnasiarch entering office within eight months; if they do not, the gymnasiarch shall fine them one hundred drachmae."

This regulation establishes the obligation to dedicate within a fixed period of eight months; the dedication must be made within this period, under penalty of a fine of one hundred drachmae in case of non-compliance with the norm. Gauthier and Hatzopoulos, in their edition of the text from Beroia (above), observe that the dedication entailed considerable expense for the setting-up of the prizes, and this may well have been one of the reasons for the victors' reluctance to dedicate the prizes they had won²⁷. A regulation of prize dedication is also found in an inscription from Kardamyli (*SEG* 65.245) concerning the foundation of the festival of the *Badesieia*²⁸. In this case, however, although the obligation to dedicate the prize is not accompanied by any specified time limit, the text, as restored, specifies that the dedication must be carried out in accordance with certain prescriptions on the matter, which are unfortunately not otherwise known to us (ll. 11-12): διδόμεν δὲ εὐοπ[λ]ίας τῷ νικάσαντι θυρεὸν καὶ ἀνατιθέμεν τὸν νικάσαντα κα[θ]άπερ γέγρα[π]ται.

A case recorded in [Aristotle]'s *Oeconomics* (2.1349a) provides a comparison for the enforcement of dedicatory obligations. The Syracusan tyrant Dionysius sought to raise funds by claiming to have received a divine vision from Demeter commanding that women dedicate their jewellery at her temple. He declared that those who refused to do so would be liable to a charge of *hierosylia*. While this case involves a tyrant's manipulation of religious authority for financial gain, it is nonetheless instructive: this episode suggests that the threat of *hierosylia* charges was a recognized (if susceptible to abuse) mechanism for enforcing sacred dedications. The gravity of the *hierosylia* charge underscores the cultural weight placed on the obligation to dedicate items to the gods.

Taken together, these sources attest a set of concerns that recur in different contexts and in different forms: (1) the obligation itself, that prizes be dedicated and not retained by their winners, which Herodotus presents as a νόμος of the Triopian sanctuary and the Beroia law states as a rule of the gymnasium; (2) a time limit, explicit only at Beroia; and (3) consequences for non-compliance, which range from the political sanction recorded by Herodotus to the fine of Beroia. The Kardamyli foundation adds that prize dedication could be governed by written prescriptions whose content is lost to us. The episode of the *Oeconomics* belongs to a different category, since the objects Dionysius demanded were not prizes; however, it is relevant as evidence that a charge of *hierosylia* could be brandished against those who withheld what a god was said to claim.

The Herodotean and the Beroian cases differ in one respect that matters for what follows. Agasicles not only failed to dedicate his tripod but carried it out of the sanctuary and hung it up at home; the offence was the removal from the sanctuary of an object that, by the local νόμος, was to be dedicated on the spot, and it was punished as a breach of that rule. At Beroia the fine of one hundred drachmae punishes the delay in handing over a prize that the vic-

²⁵ Pergamon is not an isolated case. A Milesian regulation of the *Rhomaia* orders that the arms set as prizes be dedicated 'for the present in the gymnasium of the *neoi*, and, once the temple of Roma is completed, in the *Rhomaion*' (*Milet* I 7, 203 = *LSAM* 49, ll. 18-22 B: τὴν δὲ τῶν ὀπλῶν ἀνάθεσιν γείνεσθαι τῶν τιθεμένων ἐν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις κατὰ μὲν τὸ παρὸν ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ τῶν νέων, ἐπὶ δὲ συντελεσθῇ τὸ ἱερὸν τῆς Ῥώμης, ἐν τῷ Ῥωμαίῳ): the prizes are dedicated at once, but in a place the decree itself declares provisional, and their transfer to the intended sanctuary is a second, foreseen step. The same objects, ὅπλα set as prizes, appear in the decree of Messene of 14 CE establishing contests on the emperor's birthday, which prescribes that the ὅπλα of

the victors be dedicated at the expense of the priest of the year (*SEG* 41.328, ll. 34-36: ἀνατίθεσθαι τῶν νικησάντων ὅπλα ἅ]πλ[ο]ς τοῦ καθ' ἑστὸς ἱερέως). In the festivals of the late Hellenistic and early imperial period the dedication of prizes could thus be regulated concerning both place and agent. On the Milesian text see also DHENAIN 2024, p. 182 note 80.

²⁶ See also *SEG* 54.602.

²⁷ GAUTHIER, HATZOPOULOS 1993, pp. 114-117.

²⁸ THEMOS 2015 for the first edition of the document with a detailed commentary.

tor still holds; *hierosylia* is reserved, in the same document (B, ll. 99-101), for the theft of objects from the gymnasium, which the editors explain by the sacred status of the gymnasium and of what it contained²⁹.

The dossier of multiple dedications from the sanctuary of Orthia can help to shed light on the rules governing the timing of prize dedication, and on how an undedicated prize was perceived.

3. Multiple Dedications in Orthia's Sanctuary and Dedication Timing

3.1 The Epigraphic Corpus

In the following section I will analyse the dossier of multiple prize dedications on a single stele, considering the epigraphic monuments as wholes, not only the inscriptions but, above all, the grooves for housing the sickles³⁰, which constitute the crucial evidence to be discussed in the light of the texts that accompany them. The analysis will show both that different circumstances lie behind the presence of multiple dedications on a single stele and that these monuments provide evidence for the timing of prize dedication or display in the case study of the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia.

The stelai with multiple dedications from the sanctuary of Orthia, which will be presented in chronological order and discussed in the next section, are the following³¹: *IG V*, 1 255 = *AO* 1; *IG V*, 1 256 = *AO* 2; *IG V*, 1 267 (*AO* 16); *IG V* 1 269 = *AO* 19; *IG V*, 1 289 = *AO* 46; *IG V*, 1 301 = *AO* 55.

The earliest multiple dedication is also the earliest dedication within the corpus of sickle dedications from the Spartan sanctuary of Orthia: the votive monument of Arexippos.

4th century BCE

1. *AO* 1³²:

Ἑωρθείαι τάδ' Ἀρ[ή]ξιππος
νικῶν ἀνέστηκε
ἐν συνόδοις πα[ι]δῶν
παῖδιν ἡορῆν φανερά.

To Orthia, Arexippos dedicated these (sickles), having won in the boys' gatherings, plain for all to see

Of the two surviving portions of the stele (fig. 1), the smaller was found in 1906 and the larger in 1908, during the BSA excavations. The reassembled stele is housed in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta, like all the next inscriptions presented below³³. The monument consists of a marble stele with a pediment, within which is a panel bearing the inscription. The surviving portion of the stele is the upper section, corresponding to the pediment and to the beginning of the lower part, on which the grooves that once held the five sickles won by the dedicant, and attached to the stele for the goddess, are visible. The measurements of the object are as follows: height 40 cm, width 46 cm, thickness 6 cm. The letters are about 1 cm high. The epigraphic field is a rectangular panel within the pediment, and its measurements are unknown.

The elegiac couplet composing the inscription is arranged over four lines which break at the main *caesurae*; in the first of them it may be noted that at about its midpoint the line of writing shifts upwards.

The stone bears the sockets that once held the five sickles and, in their upper section, four holes (the socket of the first sickle is not as well preserved as the others), the marks of the pins that fastened the objects to the stone. Through the demonstrative τᾶδε and the adjective φανερά, the inscription draws attention to the prizes as objects present and visible, underscoring the exceptional character of the multiple victories and the prominence that their display was intended to secure³⁴. In this case, however, the information that can be drawn from the inscription does not allow us to determine either the *athlemata* in which Arexippos was victorious or whether these victories were achieved within a short period of time or months or years apart. As will become clear, this is not true of all the inscriptions from the sanctuary. Taken together, they document a practice spanning several centuries and suggest that the customs governing multiple prize dedications underwent diachronic developments.

²⁹ GAUTHIER, HATZOPOULOS 1993, pp. 129-134.

³⁰ The separation of votive and support is common in Greek dedicatory practice, and it is usually the support that carries the inscription and the support that survives: van Straten 1992, p. 250. The Orthia stelai are unusual in preserving, through grooves and pin-holes, the trace of the object itself. Fixing a votive to a support or a wall was a material operation with its own cost: SOSIN 2005, pp. 132-133; for votives hung from walls, rings, and ceilings, PATERA 2012, p. 110, and VAN STRATEN 1992, pp. 250-253.

³¹ A treatment of the material aspects of these inscriptions, together

with an epigraphic commentary, is currently in preparation.

³² Cf. *IG V*, 1 255. See also DUCAT 2006, pp. 210-213; MASSARO 2018, p. 127 no. 2; NAFISSI 2024, p. 87 fig. 4 and *ivi*, p. 64.

³³ The measurements given below for the inscriptions of this group are those recorded in *AO*; where none are given, none are recorded in the previous publications. I have obtained authorization from the Ephorate of Antiquities of Lakonia to study these inscriptions and will take the necessary measurements in the course of that work. The inventory number of this inscription is M.Σ. 1541.

³⁴ For this aspect of the dedication, cf. NAFISSI 2024, p. 64.



Fig. 1. Sparta, Archaeological Museum, inv. M.Σ. 1541. AO 1 = IG V 1, 255: pedimented stele with sockets for five sickles, dedication of Arexippos. Creditline: Ephorate of Antiquities of Lakonia – Regional Office © Copyright Hellenic Ministry of Culture / Organization of Cultural Resources Development.



Fig. 2. Sparta, Archaeological Museum, inv. M.Σ. 1505. AO 2 = IG V 1, 256: stele with relief of a distyle temple *in antis*, with sockets for three sickles, dedication of Xenokles. Creditline: Ephorate of Antiquities of Lakonia – Regional Office © Copyright Hellenic Ministry of Culture / Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

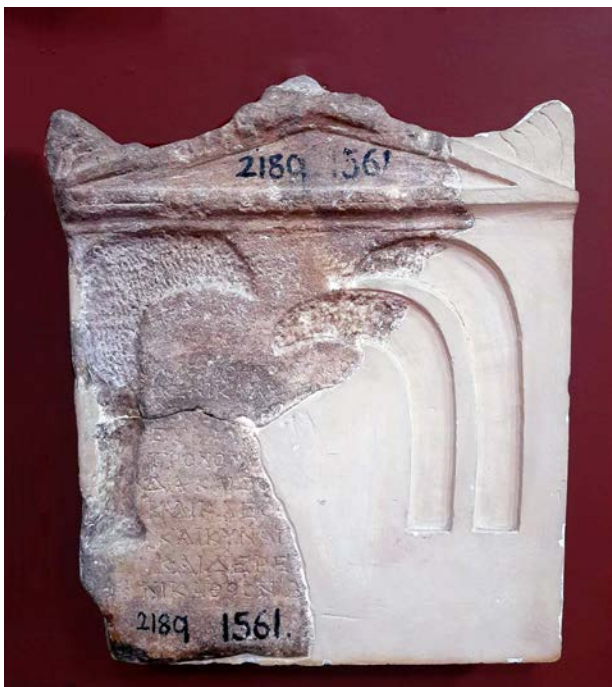


Fig. 3. Sparta, Archaeological Museum, inv. M.Σ. 1561. AO 16 = IG V 1, 267: *naiskos* stele with three sockets for sickles. Creditline: Ephorate of Antiquities of Lakonia – Regional Office © Copyright Hellenic Ministry of Culture / Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

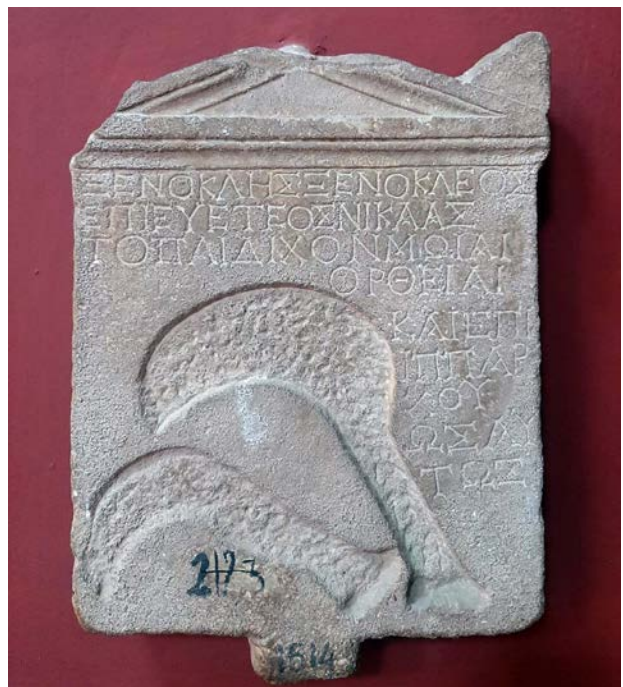


Fig. 4. Sparta, Archaeological Museum, inv. M.Σ. 1514. AO 19 = IG V 1, 269: *naiskos* stele with two sockets for sickles of different shape. Creditline: Ephorate of Antiquities of Lakonia – Regional Office © Copyright Hellenic Ministry of Culture / Organization of Cultural Resources Development.

2nd/1st century BCE

2. AO 2³⁵:

Υἱὸς Ἀριστοκρίτω Ξενοκλῆς μῶας με ἀ[νέθηκε].

Ξενοκλῆς Ἰληλόχοι κάσεν Ἰμικιχιδδόμενος Ἰπρατ[οπάμ]παις Ἰ[ἀτροπάμπαις(?)].

Xenokles, son of Aristokritos, dedicated me, (the prize, *scil.*) of the *moa*. Xenokles, *kasen* of Leilochos, (when) *mikichid-domenos*; (when) *prat[opam]pais*; (when) *[hatropam]pais(?)*.

This marble stele (fig. 2), broken in six pieces, bears a relief depicting a distyle temple in *antis*. In the intercolumniations are the grooves intended to house three sickles, which were originally fastened to the stele. The stele is preserved mostly in its upper part: the pediment and the Doric frieze of the temple (with triglyphs and metopes) survive almost in full, except for a small portion on the left side. Below the frieze, the first intercolumniation from the right is preserved for about half, except for a triangular section in the central part; of the second intercolumniation the upper portion is preserved, corresponding to about a third of its surface, as also of the third, which however breaks off on the right shortly after its midpoint. The stylobate, which in Woodward's photograph was still visible along the whole section beneath the first intercolumniation and for part of the second, is now preserved only minimally. The stele is datable to the 2nd century BCE or the beginning of the 1st. The measurements of the support are as follows: height 60 cm, width 51 cm, thickness 3-4.5 cm; the letters are about 1 cm high. The inscription runs along the architrave for its first line, and for the rest in the lower parts of the intercolumniations.

The text specifies that the victory was achieved in the competition known as the *moa*. It also records the age classes in which the victor competed³⁵. This indicates that Xenokles won in three different years, each time as a member of a different age class.

Reign of Augustus (31 BCE – 14 CE)

3. AO 16³⁷:

Λαχάρης Λαχάρελος νικάας τὸ π[αιδι]χὸν κελέα[ι καὶ (?)] ἢ εὐβάλκ[ει (?)] ἐπὶ πα[τρ]ονόμ[ω Σωκλεί]δα καὶ Σο[ιξιάδα] καὶ Κλεο[ξένου] καὶ κυναγ[έται --] καὶ δερει[-----] νικάθρον Β[ορθεία].

Lachares, son of Lachares, having won the *p[aidi]chon*, in the *kele[a]* and in the *eubal[kes]*, under the *pa[tr]onome* of [...]
das and So [...] and Kleo[...], and (having won) in the *kynag[etas]*, and in the *deros*[...], (dedicated, *scil.*) the victory-prize to B[ortheia].

The monument (fig. 3) is a *naiskos* stele, broken horizontally into two sections at the level of the fourth line but reassembled; it is damaged primarily on its right side. The measurements of the support are as follows: height ca. 36 cm, width ca. 32 cm; letters about 1 cm high. In the upper and central parts of the monument, the groove for one sickle can be recognized in the well-preserved left-hand section of the support, while the right-hand part preserves the curved beginning of a second sickle housing and portions of the blades of two further sickles. The inscription, though fragmentary, retains a single dating formula, referring to a patronome that cannot be precisely identified. Although the dating formula survives only in part, the traces of letters surviving on the stone make it possible to identify the names of four competitions: namely the *keloia*, the *eubalkes*, the *kynagetas* and the *deros*.

1st century CE

4. AO 19³⁸:

Ξενοκλῆς Ξενοκλέος ἔπὶ Εὐέτεος νικάας ἢ τὸ παιδικὸν μῶια ἢ Ὀρθεία καὶ ἐπὶ Ἰππάρχου ὥσαύτως.

Xenokles, son of Xenokles, having won the *paidikon* in the *moha* under the patronome of Euetes, (he dedicates *scil.*) to Orthia; likewise, under the patronome of Hipparchos.

The monument is a *naiskos* stele (fig. 4), damaged at the upper left corner and at the tip of the *acroterion*; two sockets for the sickles occupy much of the epigraphic field, on its left side. The measurements of the stele are as follows: height 43 cm, width 31 cm, thickness 6 cm; the letters are 2 cm high. The dedication records two victories of

³⁵ Cf. *IG V*, 1 256. MASSARO 2018, pp. 127-128 no. 3. See also NAFISSI 2024, p. 88 fig. 5. Inventory number M.Σ. 1505.

³⁶ Woodward's restoration at l. 6 rests on the hypothesis that the three victories were obtained in directly successive years; however, it cannot be excluded that the last victory occurred at a greater distance in time from the others, not necessarily when Xenokles was *hatropampais*.

³⁷ Cf. *IG V* 1, 267; MASSARO 2018, pp. 136-137 no.14. My reading follows here the reading hypothesis of Steinhauer (STEINHAUER 2022, p. 197) concerning the integration of the name of

the *patronomoi*. Woodward at line 7 reads a ξ and restores the following lacuna as the name of Kleoxenos. Kolbe in *IG V*, 1 267 offers a reading partially different from Woodward's text: Λαχάρης Λαχάρελος νικάας τὸ π[αιδι]χὸν κελέ[αν ἐν τῷ] ἢ εὐβαλ[κεῖ] ἐπὶ πα[τρ]ονόμ[ου -- --]δα κ[-- --] καὶ κλεο[-- --] καὶ κυναγ[έται] καὶ δερει[-- --] νικάθρον Β[ορθεία]. A detailed examination of the stone has not yet been possible (see note 33). Inventory number M.Σ. 1561.

³⁸ Cf. *IG V*, 1 269; MASSARO 2018, p. 139 no.17; see also NAFISSI 2024, p. 92 fig. 9. M.Σ. 1514.

Xenokles, son of Xenokles, both in the *moha* competition but in two different years, as indicated by the references to two different patronomates, that of Euetes and that of Hipparchos. The two sickle sockets, partially overlapping, are quite different from each other: the first, oriented more vertically, has a blade with an almost lunate profile, very broad in relation to the handle of the object; the socket standing out below the first, at the lower left, shows only part of a blade less arched than the first, with a slight crescent curvature and a handle almost as wide as the blade. The marked differences in the shape of the two sickles are consistent with their belonging to different victories recorded under different patronomates.

Reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 CE)

5. AO 46³⁹:

Εὐδόκιμος Δ (Εὐδοκίμω) κελλοίῃ καὶ Εὐδόκιμον Δαμοκράτεω | ὁ καὶ Ἀριστείδας κασισηρατόριοι νεικάαντερ ἐπὶ Ἀ<λ>κάστῳ βουαγοὶ | μικιχιζδομένων Φωρθέῃ.

Eudokimos, (son of Eudokimos), in the *keloia*, and Eudokimos son of Damokrates, also called Aristeides, victors in the *kattherathorion*, during the patronomate of Alkastos, being *bouagoi* of the *mikichizzomenoi*, (they dedicate, *scil.*) to Orthia.

The stele, measuring 45 cm in height, 49 cm in width and 9 cm in thickness, with letters 2 cm high, is crowned by a decorated pediment and acroteria and represents a *naiskos* which features the sockets for two sickles, arranged symmetrically on the stele with their tips almost touching, framing the inscription, which runs, for the first five lines, within the epigraphic field delimited by the sickle grooves. The text of the inscription then unfolds for two further lines in the remaining space of the epigraphic field, below the ends of the sickles. The names recorded are those of Eudokimos, son of Eudokimos, and of Eudokimos, son of Damokrates, also called Aristeides, *bouagoi* of the age class of the *mikichizzomenoi*.

The stele records victories obtained in two competitions, the *keloia* and the *kattherathorion*, during a single patronomate, that of Alkastos.

Post 160 CE.

6. AO 55⁴⁰:

[— — καὶ — —]ος καὶ Νεικηφόρος οἱ Νεικηφόρου | νεικάαντερ κασισηρατόριν μῶαν καιλο[ῖ]αν Ἀρτέμιδι Βωρθέῃ ἀνέθηκαν ἐπὶ πατρονόμου Μάρ(κου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Σωσινείκου | τοῦ Νεικάρωνος φι[λοκαί] | σαρ[ος καὶ φιλοπάτριδος].

[...] and Nikephoros, sons of Nikephoros, having won in the *kattherathorion*, the *moha*, and the *keloia*, dedicated to Artemis Orthia under the patronomate of Marcus Aurelius Sosineikos, son of Neikaron, *philokaisar* and *philopatris* [...]

The upper and lower portions of the stele are lost. It measures 25 cm in height, 40 cm in width and 4 cm in thickness, with letters measuring ca. 2 cm; the dedicatory inscription can only be partially reconstructed. Nevertheless, the grooves for two sickles can still be identified, one to the right and the other to the left of the inscription. The end of the handle groove of the left-hand sickle is still visible, aligned with the first and last letters of νεικάαντερ in the third line. The monument appears to record the joint dedication of two brothers. Only a single *patronomos* is mentioned.

3.2 Mechanics of Multiple Dedication at Sparta

The epigraphic evidence presented above now permits a number of observations on the practice of multiple dedication (Table 1)⁴¹.

In inscription no. 1 (fig. 1), the grooves for the sickles show no distinctive features, and the content of the epigraph does not make it possible to determine when they were dedicated, that is, how far apart in time from one another, nor in which competitions.

³⁹ Cf. *IG V*, 1 289; Massaro (MASSARO 2018, p. 151, no. 33) suggested that it is possible to identify two cousins among the victors mentioned, noting that they could share the name of their grandfather. NAFISSI 2024, p. 90 fig. 7. Inventory number M.Σ. 1525.

⁴⁰ Cf. *IG V*, 1 301. MASSARO 2018, pp. 154-155 no. 38. Inventory number M.Σ. 221.

⁴¹ The inscriptions of the dossier were annotated using the *Recogni-Studio* software, and the data obtained from my manual tagging were then collected and processed, to enable a systematic comparison of the formulaic elements. The following tags were applied, in order to highlight the formulas contained in the texts and to lay

the groundwork for their classification and for tracing their possible evolution: name of the dedicant; patronymic; reference to the *paidikon*; name of the competition; name of the goddess (dative); dedication verb; dating formula; together with further elements recorded where present (age class, office, victory verb, dedicated object, alias, honorific titles, lacunae). The textual tags were then combined, for each monument, with contextual data (the date of the stele and the number of sickles inferred from the surviving sockets) and with the sequential position of each element within the inscription, so as to produce a synoptic overview of the dossier, set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Synoptic overview of the sequence of formulaic elements in the multiple-dedication stelai from the sanctuary of Orthia.

Inscription	Date	Sickles	Dedicant	Patron.	Victory	<i>Paidikon</i>	Competition	Goddess (dative)	Dedic. verb	Dating	Other elements (with position)
<i>AO 1 = IGV 1, 255</i>	4th c. BCE	5	3	X	4	X	6 (gen.)	1	5	X	ded. object τὰδ (2); visibility πᾶσιν ἡορῇν φανερά (7)
<i>AO 2 = IGV 1, 256</i>	2 nd -1st c. BCE	3	2, 6	1	X	X	3	X	5	X	ded. object με (4); <i>kasen</i> Ληλὸχοι κάσεν (7); age classes (8-10)
<i>AO 16 = IGV 1, 267</i>	Augustus Reign	3	1	2	3	4	5, 6, 9, 10	12	X	7	ded. object νικαθρον (11); lacuna (8)
<i>AO 19 = IGV 1, 269</i>	1st c. CE	2	1	2	4	5	6	7	X	3, 8	iteration ὡσαύτως (9)
<i>AO 46 = IGV 1, 289</i>	Antoninus Pius Reign	2	1, 4	2, 5	8	X	3, 7	12	X	9	alias ὁ καὶ Ἀριστείδαρ (6); office βουαγοὶ (10); age class (11)
<i>AO 55 = IGV 1, 301</i>	post 160 CE	2	1, 2	3	4	X	5, 6, 7	8	9	10	honorific φιλοκαίσαρ κτλ. (11)

The numbers indicate the sequential position of each element within the text, in reading order; a X marks the absence of an element from the inscription.

AO 2 is the only inscription of the dossier without a theonym in the dative. The number of sickles attested by the surviving grooves does not match the number of contests recorded: four contests but three sickles in AO 16; three contests but two sickles in AO 55. The dative of the goddess (highlighted column) occupies the opening position in AO 1, a medial one in AO 19 and 55, and the closing position in AO 16 and 46; there is therefore no fixed formulaic position. Only AO 19 carries two dating formulae, joined by the iteration marker ὡσαύτως, and so documents a demonstrably diachronic dedication. The category ‘competition’ lists the names of individual contests; the generic reference to the agonistic context (AO 1 ἐν συνόδοις παίδων) is marked ‘gen.’. Compiled from the digital annotation of the six texts.

No. 2 (fig. 2), by contrast, records victories in one and the same competition, but obtained while the dedicant belonged to different age classes, and therefore presumably more than a year apart.

Inscription no. 3 (fig. 3) presents the following features: on the left, the complete groove for a sickle, set vertically on the stela; to its right, the partially preserved grooves for the tips of two further sickle blades. Three sickle grooves are therefore preserved on the stela overall. The text of the inscription, although difficult to read because of the lacunae, and certainly deserving of autoptic analysis⁴², records the victories of a single individual, Lachares son of Lachares⁴³, in four competitions of the *paidikoi agones*, all achieved during the same patronomate.

If the dedication commemorates victories won, within the same year, in all the competitions of the boys’ contests, the presence of only three prizes is significant: it suggests that the victor made a deliberate selection in choosing what to display.

Stele no. 4 (fig. 4) preserves the grooves for two sickles of different shapes, and the dedication records the victories of Xenokles son of Xenokles during two patronomates, that of Euetes and that of Hipparchos; both victories were won in the *moha*. In this case, M. Nafissi suggests that the second sickle was added at a later stage, as suggested on the ground that the name of the goddess is placed at the end of the first dedication and that the subse-

⁴² I received authorization to undertake an autoptic study of these materials after this article had been accepted for publication.

⁴³ On this see the comment of Woodward in *AO 16*, who identified the dedicant as Lachares II, brother of the celebrated Eurykles, Octavian’s ally at Actium. This identification was later revised by Chrimes

(CHRIMES 1949, p. 204), who recognized the dedicant instead as Lachares III, son of Lachares II, and thus Eurykles’ nephew, whose own brother, Lakon II, held the patronomate in AD 75. See now STEINHAEUER 2022.

quent formula indicating the victory (ὥσαύτως, ll. 8-9) is rather concise⁴⁴. This interpretation cannot be excluded. However, the variability of the dedicatory formulae at Orthia also allows an alternative explanation. The position of the dative of the deity in inscription no. 6 of this dossier (*IG V 1, 301, l. 5*) shows that no fixed formulaic position can be identified for multiple dedications. The position of the dative in the present inscription may therefore reflect a compositional choice rather than a two-stage process of display. Moreover, the position of the larger sickle alongside the inscription would have left a considerable portion of the epigraphic field empty. A more plausible explanation is that both victories were monumentalized together only after the second had been achieved. The differing shapes of the two sickles would then reflect a retrospective dedication rather than successive additions to an existing monument. By 'retrospective dedication' I mean a display of prizes through a monument carried out at a single, later moment, one that gathers together victories already won and displays them together, thereby recording, in effect, a career rather than a single victory. Stele no. 5 records the joint dedication of two sickles. It commemorates a joint victory by two *bouagoi*, achieved during the same patronomate.

On stele no. 6, the dedication records the victories of two brothers, Nikephoros and another youth whose name is lost, both sons of Nikephoros. Their victories, all achieved within the same year, were won in three different competitions: the *kattherathorion*, the *moha*, and the *keloia*. In this case, each brother dedicated a single sickle, perhaps deliberately choosing to monumentalize only one of the prizes he had received.

Several observations may now be drawn from this evidence. First, the practice of multiple prize dedication was not uniform. It encompassed situations differing primarily in their temporal structure. The dossier attests both synchronic dedications, bringing together prizes won within a single patronomate (nos. 3, 5, 6), and diachronic ones, commemorating victories won in different years and age classes (nos. 2, 4); in no. 1 the temporal relation between the prizes remains beyond recovery. One and the same monumental form, a single stele bearing several sickles, could therefore commemorate either an exceptional agonistic season or the cumulative record of a career. Second, the number of sickles displayed does not necessarily coincide with the number of victories won. In no. 3, four victories correspond to three sickles; in no. 6, the dedicants, victorious together in three competitions, each chose to dedicate a single sickle. Display thus entailed selection: not every prize was commemorated by a permanent monument, and it was the dedicant, or his family, who decided which, and how many, victories deserved lasting visibility in the sanctuary. The dedicated monument is therefore not a mechanical record of the prizes received, but the outcome of a deliberate strategy of self-representation, in which a single object could stand for a broader success.

Third, the actors behind multiple dedications varied. Alongside individual victors (nos. 2-4), the dossier includes the joint dedication of two *bouagoi* (no. 5), perhaps cousins⁴⁵, and that of brothers (no. 6): the single stele could thus serve both individual and familial strategies of commemoration, bringing together, within a single monument and at a single location in the sanctuary, the success of a group. Fourth, for diachronic dedications two scenarios can be outlined: the progressive addition of prizes to an existing monument, and a single retrospective act commemorating victories won over time, as argued above for no. 4. In the two metrical texts (nos. 1-2) the position of the individual elements, including the goddess's name, is governed by the verse; in the four prose dedications no fixed pattern emerges either. The position of these elements cannot therefore, in itself, establish whether a monument was assembled in a single stage or through successive additions. Material and visual indicators, the shape of the sickles, the layout of the stele, and the use of the epigraphic field, may instead provide a firmer basis for interpretation.

These cases show that multiple prize dedication served different purposes in the sanctuary of Orthia through a variety of strategies, celebrating an exceptional year, summarizing a career, displaying the success of a family or of a pair of office-holders, or concentrating visibility on a single, cost-effective monument, while employing the same monumental medium.

The Spartan practice raises several questions about the mechanics of accumulation and dedication timing. How were victories accumulated? Did a single victor dedicate all his winnings at once, or were dedications spread across multiple occasions? When exactly was the stele inscribed and set up in the sanctuary? The epigraphic evidence provides some clues. The presence of multiple sockets on single stelai, combined with the fact that most stelai bear metrical inscriptions or standard dedicatory formulae suggests that these monuments were conceived as comprehensive dedications: a victor, having won multiple times, commissioned a single stele bearing an inscription and multiple sockets, and displayed all his prizes at the same time. The metrical character of some of these dedications (nos. 1-2) supports this interpretation: it would be unusual to compose and incise different verse texts for each successive victory, whereas a single, carefully crafted verse dedication would be expected to accompany all the accumulated prizes

⁴⁴ NAFISSI 2024, p. 80 and no. 54.

⁴⁵ See MASSARO 2018, p. 151.

4. AO 8: Prizes as 'hostages'⁴⁶

AO 8 is a marble stele discovered on 27 March 1907 during excavations conducted by the British School at Athens (1906-1910) at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia⁴⁷. The stele is now kept in the storerooms of the Archaeological Museum of Sparta (inv. no. 218a). It is composed of six fragments and is incomplete in the lower portion; the upper corners are also lost. Of particular interest is a gap visible at line 3, between letters *eta* and *gamma* (in the word ἡγαθέωι), which corresponds exactly to the space where the handle of a sickle was inserted⁴⁸. The stele measures 50 cm in height, 45 cm in width, and 5 cm in thickness. Letters are 2 cm high. Palaeographically, the inscription is datable to the second half of the 2nd century CE on the basis of letter forms: apexes and prolongations of upper terminals on triangular letters; the vertical stroke of *phi* extends both above and below forming a shared boundary with neighbouring letters; theta is divided into two by a central horizontal stroke; *kappa* displays oblique strokes of equal length reaching the baseline at top and bottom; and *nu* exhibits greater regularity of form. Overall, the ductus is carefully executed and the modular spacing of letters is consistent, indicating a skilled hand.

The inscription is composed of elegiac couplets. The text reads as follows:

[--- Ὀρθεῖ]ηι δρεπάν[ην] | [τὰ κελ]οῖα κρατήσα[ς] | [χώρ]ωι ἐν ἡγαθέωι [θῆκ]εν ὄμηρα λαβών.

The opening lines of the inscription (ll. 1-4) present the name of the dedicant (in lacuna), the object of dedication, and the formula used to describe the act of dedication. The restoration of the name of the dedicant remains uncertain⁴⁹. The object dedicated is explicitly named: δρεπάν[ην], 'a sickle'. The victory commemorated is specified: victory in the *keloia*, a musical competition held at the sanctuary. And the place of dedication is sacred: 'in a good/divine place' (χώρωι ἐν ἡγαθέωι), clearly referring to the sanctuary itself. The most striking element, however, appears at line 4: ὄμηρα λαβών.

The construction of λαμβάνω with ὄμηρος/ὄμηρα in the sense of 'to take as hostage' is widely attested in literary sources, in military contexts and with reference to persons: cf. e.g. ὀμήρους λαμβάνειν (Hdt. 6.99); ὀμήρους ... παῖδας λαβών (Hdt. 1.64); καὶ Λοκρῶν τῶν Ὀπουντίων ἑκατὸν ἄνδρας ὀμήρους τοὺς πλουσιωτάτους ἔλαβον (Thuc. 1.108); ἔλαβε παρὰ τούτων ὄμηρα τοὺς υἱεῖς τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων ἀνδρῶν (Plb. 3.98).

ὄμηρος is also applied, in the sense of 'hostage', to things: τὴν γῆν ὄμηρον ἔχειν (Thuc. 1.82.4), where Archidamus advises the Spartans to treat the Athenians' land as a hostage and therefore to spare it, so as to keep the Athenians tractable. The lexicographer, beside 'hostage', the values 'pledge' and 'surety' for the neuter ὄμηρον and its plural ὄμηρα (*LSJ* s.v. ὄμηρος; *DGE* s.v.), and Plato uses the word in this sense of the examples that serve as a guarantee of an argument (*Theat.* 202e: ὥσπερ γὰρ ὀμήρους ἔχομεν τοῦ λόγου τὰ παραδείγματα). The plural ὄμηρα with reference to a single person or thing is likewise attested: *IG* IX,1² 3, 706, l. 17, μὴ πεμψάτω ὄμηρα τῶν Αἰαντείων μηθένα, and 1 Macc. 1.10, ὃς ἦν ὄμηρα.

Massaro, in his Italian translation, rendered ὄμηρα λαβών as 'receiving guarantees', a rendering that registers the difficulty without resolving it: what the victor could have received as a guarantee, and of what, is not explained. On the reading proposed here, ὄμηρα is predicative of an object supplied by the main clause: the victor 'set up (θῆκεν) the sickle, having received it as a hostage'. This is the construction of the historians' ὄμηρα λαμβάνειν, in which the noun is predicated of the persons taken (Plb. 3.98: ἔλαβε ὄμηρα τοὺς υἱεῖς), and it requires no further complement. A close parallel to this construction is found within the corpus of Orthia's sickle dedications: AO 7, an isopsephic dedication, ends with τάδε ἔπαθλα λαβών, 'having received these prizes'⁵⁰; in AO 8 ὄμηρα occupies the same syntactic slot. Secondly, the pairing of λαβών with θῆκεν reproduces the sequence that the texts examined above describe as the victor's obligation: τοὺς λαμβάνοντας ... ἀνατιθέναι in Herodotus, ἃ ἂν λαμβάνωσιν ... ἀνατιθέτωσαν at Beroia. The epigram says, in the victor's own voice, that he received and then set up, and ὄμηρα qualifies what he received. The third consideration concerns the participle κρατήσας, whose martial connotations have supported a martial reading of the epigram, although the verb is also well established in agonistic language; in Pindar it is used absolutely, with the discipline in the dative (κρατέων πάλα, *Ol.* 8.20; ἵπποδρομίᾳ κρατέων, *Isthm.* 3.13) or with the accusative of the victory (*Nem.* 10.25), elsewhere with the accusative of the

⁴⁶ M. Nafissi partially anticipated some of these conclusions in his monograph on the contests of Orthia (NAFISSI 2024), with the agreement of the present author; see NAFISSI 2024, p. 77 no. 171.

⁴⁷ Cf. *IG* V 1, 258; MASSARO 2018, pp. 182-183 note 8.

⁴⁸ The information on the find comes from R. Dawkins's notebook no. 13, which I consulted on 4 May 2026 in the archive of the BSA.

⁴⁹ The name of the dedicant has been restored as Iamos both in AO 8

and in *IG* V 1, 258, though the beginning is fragmentary and the restoration uncertain; others (CHRIMES 1949, pp. 105-107) reject this proposed restoration of l. 1. I am working elsewhere on a re-reading of this inscription.

⁵⁰ Ὀρθεῖη δῶρον Λελοντεὺς ἀνέθηκε βοαγὸς, βψλ | μῶαν νικήσας | καὶ τάδε ἔπαθλα | λαβών, βψλ | καὶ μ' ἔστεψε πατήρ εἰσαρίθμοις | ἔπεσι, βψλ.

contest (κρατεῖν στάδιον, Bacch. 6.15; ὁκτὼ νίκας, Eur. *Epigr.* 1; τὸν ἀγῶνα, Dem. 21.18; cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 1016-1017⁵¹); τὰ κελοῖα κρατήσας belongs to this usage⁵². The two-step articulation of the couplet, κρατήσας in the hexameter and λαβῶν in the pentameter, has a Pindaric precedent in *Pyth.* 10. 23-24, where the victor who has prevailed (κρατήσας) then takes the greatest of prizes (τὰ μέγιστ' ἀέθλων ἔλη): winning and receiving are two moments, and ὅμηρα attaches to the second moment. Where the language of conquest would lead one to expect the vocabulary of spoils, the author of the epigram speaks of a hostage. A hostage is held for a time, on behalf of someone else, and must be returned; applied to a prize, the word says that the object is in the victor's hands without being his.

The disagreement in number between δρεπάνην and ὅμηρα is in the first place a matter of metre. The phrase closes the pentameter of the couplet ([χώρ]ωι ἐν ἡγαθέωι [θῆκ]εν ὅμηρα λαβῶν), where the second hemistich requires - - - - after θῆκεν; ὅμηρα supplies it, whereas the singular ὅμηρον, with its final syllable long before λ-, would not. The plural is thus imposed by the verse, and a neuter plural used of a single referent is, as shown above, unexceptional.

If the reading proposed here is accepted, the dedicant of *AO* 8 describes the prize as an object held in temporary custody and owed to its rightful owner.

5. The Timing of Dedication: Between Prescription and Practice

The gymnasiarchal law of Beroia (*I. Beroia* 1, ll 67-69) imposes an explicit temporal requirement: prizes must be dedicated within eight months of being awarded. This is the clearest statement we possess of a temporal requirement on prize dedication. But does this norm hold across the Greek world? And how does the Spartan evidence relate to this standard?

The Spartan epigraphic record preserves no temporal prescription comparable to Beroia's. It preserves the outcome of the process: stelai on which prizes won in different years and age classes were displayed together (nos. 2, 4), and stelai on which fewer sickles were affixed than victories recorded (nos. 3, 6). These monuments show that the display of prizes could be cumulative and selective, and therefore deferred with respect to the victories they commemorate. They do not show, by themselves, where the prizes were kept in the meantime, and two reconstructions of that interval are possible.

On the first, the sickles remained in the victor's hands until the stele was set up. A boy who won in successive age classes would have kept his prizes for a year or for several and dedicated and displayed them in a single act. On this reading, the interval between victory and dedication is precisely what a rule such as that of Beroia sought to limit. Spartan practice may have been more permissive, or any comparable rule may have been less strictly enforced.

On the second, each sickle was handed over to the sanctuary soon after the victory, as the ritual norm presumably required, and kept there in some provisional arrangement, hung from a wall or set in a place assigned by the sanctuary, as small votives commonly were; the inscribed stele was commissioned later, on an occasion that cannot now be recovered (the end of an age class, the close of a career, a family event), in order to give permanent form to prizes that already belonged to the goddess⁵³. On this reading the interval lies within the sacred space, between deposit and display, and no deadline of the Beroia type would be affected by it; a rule such as Beroia's would then have required that the prize be handed over within eight months, in the same provisional form.

The Pergamene decree favours the second reconstruction (above, § 2). The prizes of the torch race are described as παρερειμμένα, lying neglected in their number; what the gymnasiarch supplied was a place for them and the expense of their setting-up. The objects were already out of the victors' hands; what they lacked was a visible form, and this was provided by a third party. Greek sanctuaries could accumulate more offerings than they could display, and the authorities dealt with the surplus by regulating placement, relocating older votives, and on occasion refashioning them under formal procedures⁵⁴. What the Pergamene text adds is that the same could happen to agonistic prizes, and that a benefactor could intervene on the victors' behalf. Applied to Orthia's multiple-dedication stelai, this makes it possible that not every sickle won was ever mounted on an inscribed stele: some may have remained in the sanctuary, dedicated but never displayed, for reasons of cost, timing, or circumstance that escape us. This would also account for

⁵¹ ἐγὼ δ' ἀγῶνας μὲν κρατεῖν Ἑλληνικοὺς / πρῶτος θέλοιμι' ἄν.

⁵² *LSJ* s.v. κρατέω; Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar*, s.v.

⁵³ For the provisional placement of small votives, subject to the permission of the sanctuary personnel and liable to later relocation, VAN

STRATEN 1992, p. 254; for objects hung from walls, rings and ceilings, PATERA 2012, p. 110 and note 70.

⁵⁴ VAN STRATEN 1992, 254, pp. 270-274; SOSIN 2005, pp. 132-133; PATERA 2012, pp. 91-95.

the mismatch between sickles and victories observed in nos. 3 and 6 without necessarily assuming that prizes were always withheld when they were not displayed.

Unfortunately, nothing is known of the custody of the sickles between victory and display. *AO* 8, discussed above, is compatible with both hypotheses: its wording defines the status of the prize while it is in human hands, without specifying the length of time for which it was held.

6. Conclusion: The Practice of Regulated Restitution

The study of multiple prize dedications in Orthia's sanctuary has shed light on the different ways in which the dedication and monumental display of agonistic prizes could be related. On the reading proposed here, the prize was never fully the victor's property: victory conferred temporary possession of an object whose rightful destination remained the sanctuary.

Herodotus' account of Agasicles and the gymnasiarchic law of Beroia converge on one point: in the contexts they document, the transfer of the prize from victor to deity was a matter of civic and sacred concern, and could be subject to time limits and to sanctions. Yet the very existence of deadlines and fines reveals something further: these norms do not regulate a single interval but two distinct ones. Beroia sets a term between the victory and the dedication of the prize: it regulates the length of the victor's custody before the prize is handed over to the sanctuary. Pergamon documents a different interval, one that opens only after dedication: the prizes had already been consecrated, but awaited a proper arrangement for their display.

The dossier of multiple dedications from the sanctuary of Orthia provides material evidence for this interval. If read as complete monuments, considering together the inscriptions and the sockets for the prizes, the six stelai show that the interval could be closed in different ways and at different speeds (Table 1). Synchronic dedications gather on a single support the prizes of one exceptional year (nos. 3, 5, 6); diachronic ones accumulate victories won in different years or age classes (nos. 2, 4). The number of sickles affixed, moreover, does not always match the number of victories recorded: display entailed selection, and therefore decision, expense, and strategy. No fixed formulaic pattern governs these texts; what they share is the function of giving the victories and their prizes a visible and permanent commemoration.

Where the prizes were kept while the cycle remained open is a question the stelai cannot answer, and § 5 has set out the two possibilities. If the sickles stayed with the victors until the stele was made, Spartan practice was either more permissive than Beroia's or less strictly policed. If they were handed over at once and displayed later, the interval lay within the sanctuary, between deposit and display, and the goddess's claim was satisfied from the start; what could be deferred, accumulated, and entrusted to others was only the visible closure of the cycle. The Pergamene decree shows that this second sequence existed, and that the cycle opened by a victory could be closed by a third party. The Orthia dossier is compatible with both sequences: it documents the variety of ways in which the cycle was closed, not the place where the prizes were kept in the meantime.

It is against this background that *AO* 8 acquires its significance. Agasicles' story and the Beroia regulation both distinguish the prize before and after its dedication, though they draw the line differently: at Beroia, withholding an object not yet handed over incurs a fine, whereas removing an object already under the god's protection is theft of sacred property; in the Triopian νόμος the prize was to be dedicated on the spot, so that it never left the sanctuary, and to carry it home was a breach grave enough to cost Halicarnassus its place in the confederation. In *AO* 8, if the reading defended above is correct, the dedicant describes the prize as ὄμηρα, a hostage held in temporary custody and awaiting restitution to its rightful owner, and thereby presents the object as the goddess's property from the moment he received it, whatever the length of his custody. The hostage metaphor would thus name, in the victor's own words, the status of the prize during the interval: not a possession but something held in trust, a conception compatible with the reconstruction proposed in § 5, on which every human holder of the prize, victor or benefactor, is only its keeper. To retain a prize would then already be to withhold sacred property, and the gravity that the normative sources attach to non-dedication would become intelligible. Dedication, on this conception, is not a gift but a restitution.

The conception is not peculiar to agonistic prizes: Greek reflection on offerings treats the omission of what is due to a god as the withholding of divine property, liable to punishment by the gods or, failing them, by men⁵⁵. What the sources on prize dedication add is that this general principle could be given the form of a written rule, with a deadline and a fine. How widespread such written rules were, and whether they followed a common model or were framed

⁵⁵ PATERA 2012, pp. 79-83.

anew by each community, are questions that the present dossier can raise but not settle, and that a systematic survey of sanctuary and festival regulations may in future be able to answer.

Open questions remain. How were violations detected and punished in practice? Where, and in whose custody, were prizes kept between deposit and display, and did sanctuary personnel keep track of them, as they did of the more valuable votives recorded in the inventories? Future research might profitably pursue the comparative analysis of sanctuary regulations and the diachronic study of how the practice adapted to changing political circumstances. What the evidence assembled here supports, however, is that the dedication of competition prizes was a regulated institution of Greek civic life, whose shared concerns took locally specific forms; that the multiple dedications of Orthia's sanctuary show a community managing, over centuries, the interval that this institution presupposed; and that one Spartan victor, if the reading of ὄμῖρα proposed here is correct, articulated the principle on which the whole system rested: the prize belongs to the god, and the victor is only its custodian.

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