

William S. BUBELIS

The Hero Klaikophoros: Responses to Democratic Accountability in the Hellenistic Peloponnese

A damaged Hellenistic inscription from Messene (*IG V (1) 1447*) has long presented an interpretive obstacle to the study of Greek religious sanctuaries, their administration, and role in political life. The problem centers on how to construe the particular recipient of a sacrifice: *teleon to(i) klaikophoro(i)* (l. 11), who is named at the end of a sacrificial calendar. What follows appears to be a set of instructions which mandate that priestly officers present their accounts publicly. Whether a magistrate's title or the name of a Peloponnesian hero, the figure Klaikophoros has been generally neglected (e.g. Edelstein and Edelstein (1945) 1998; Zunino 1997; Themelis 2000). What is at stake, however, is significant: if the figure is indeed a hero, why should he be mentioned at this juncture in the inscription, and how does his cult (and that of the other divinities) relate to public finance of one sort or another?

This paper argues that the Messenian Klaikophoros is the same as the Hero of that name in the Argolid, attested first in the 4th C. BC, although his origins and prior development are obscure. Given its special prestige and financial sophistication, the shrine of Asklepios at Epidauros likely served as an influential model for other Asklepieia, especially that of Messene. Moreover, the Hero Klaikophoros enjoyed prominent cult-status at Epidauros. Whether or not his cult was first promoted by sacred treasurers (*tamiai*) as their protector is unknown, but such officials typically faced the most severe penalties for real or alleged temple-robbery. Furthermore, his name ('Key-bearer') suggests a tangible connection with their own responsibilities, especially their tight control over access to the shrine's treasures. Whatever the character of his cult there, his presence at Messene lies in the special nature and history of Messenian institutions, where public accountability was certainly prominent (Fröhlich 1999), as perhaps at Epidauros itself. To the extent that their new *polis* lacked any deep political traditions and experience of its own, the Messenians were eager to acquire the substance of an already developed state. This was especially true in religious matters, as the numerous other Messenian hero-cults testify, particularly those centered around historical Messenians.

Hellenistic Messene also stands out as one Peloponnesian *polis* that maintained constitutional procedures of at least a partially democratic character, requiring financial officers of religious cults to present their accounts to the Boule or similar body. Messenian juries, moreover, were instructed not to lessen the heavy fines levied upon guilty magistrates (*IG V (1) 1390, ll. 48-52*). Although the political histories of Messene and Epidauros are not well known, the experience of Athenian *tamiai* under the democracy offers a meaningful comparison, as the Athenians also possessed large juries and demanded public accountability. Moreover, defendants in Athens at least might face readier conviction or heavier sentences in proportion to their high status and wealth, such as was typically required of *tamiai*. In contrast, there is no clear evidence that Athenian *tamiai* developed any cultic response similar to that of Messene and perhaps Epidauros, although fully subject to the same (and worse) pressures of democratic accountability.