ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE OLYMPIAN REGISTER.¹

THERE seems a sort of general agreement among modern historians of Greece to accept the 1st Olympiad (776 B.C.) as the trustworthy starting point of solid Greek chronology. Even Grote, so sceptical about legends, and so slow to gather inferences from them, accepts this datum. There is only one exception, I think, to be found in Sir George Cox, who evidently rejects the Olympiad register, who will not set down in his chronology any figure higher than 670 B.C., and even that under the protest of a query.

When we come to inquire on what authority so early a date can be securely established, we find a sort of assumption, not supported by argument, that from 776 onward the Eleians kept a regular record of their great festival, and as a matter of fact such a record is extant. It was generally acknowledged and cited by the later historians of Greece, who determined events according to it. Above all, the critical doubts of philologists are soothed by the supposed authority of Aristotle, who is reported to have made researches on the question, and to refer to the list as if authentic; he even mentioned a discus at Olympia with Lyeurgus' name inscribed upon it, but in what work, and for what purpose, is unknown. I know that Aristotle is considered an infallible authority by modern philologists, so much so that those who are ready enough to deny even general inspiration to other authorities, seem almost to attribute verbal inspiration to this philosopher. One other Greek authority shares with him this pre-eminence—the historian Thucydides. And it so happens

¹ I must acknowledge some valuable hints and corrections from Dr. Hirschfeld of Königsberg, and Dr. Th. Kock

of Berlin; both of whom agree with my main results.

that in his Sicilian *Archæology* (book vi.) Thucydides gives a number of dates, with precision and without hesitation, which reach back to 735 B.C., and therefore persuades his commentators that accurate dates were attainable up to a period close to the 1st Olympiad. These are apparently the silent reasons which have determined the general consent of modern historians.

But neither Grote, nor E. Curtius, nor even Sir George Cox have analysed the evidence for the authenticity of the older portion of this register. I cannot find in Clinton's *Fasti*, where it might well be expected, any such inquiry. In Mure's *Greek Literature* (iv. 77-90), a work far less esteemed than it deserves, and here only, do we find even a fair statement of the evidence. The negative conclusions reached by Mure have made no impression on the learned world, and are now well nigh forgotten. It is the object of this paper to take up the question where he left it, and to add some positive evidence to corroborate his argument—that the list of victors at Olympiads handed down to us by Eusebius is, at least in its earlier part, an artificially constructed list, resting on occasional and fragmentary monumental records, and therefore of no value as a scientific chronology. We will also endeavour to determine when the victors began to be regularly recorded, and when the extant list was manufactured. Such an inquiry must be of great importance in determining the amount of credence to be given to the dates of events referred to in the eighth and first half of the seventh centuries B.C.—for example, Thucydides' dates for the western colonies of the Hellenes.

Let us first sketch the correct tradition about the Register as we find it implied in Diodorus, Strabo, the fragments of Timæus, and other late historians. We fortunately find in Pausanias a very considerable amount of detail, and a sketch of the general history of the feast as then accepted. All admitted, and indeed asserted, a mythical origin for the games. The declarations of Pindar and other old poets were express, that Herakles had founded them, that Pelops and other mythical heroes had won victories at them—and victories of various kinds, including chariot races. Another account ascribed their foundation to Oxylus. But a long gap was admitted between these mythical glories and the revival of the games by Iphitus, king of Elis. 'This Iphitus,' says Pausanias

(v. 4, 5), 'the epigram at Olympia declares to be the son of Haemon, but most of the Greeks to be the son of Praxonides, and not of Haemon; the old documents (*ἀρχαῖα γράμματα*) of the Eleians, however, referred Iphitus to a father of the same name.' Iphitus, in connection with the Spartan Lycurgus, re-established the games, but (as was asserted) only as a contest in the short race (*στάδιον*), and in this first historical Olympiad Coroebus won, as was stated in an epigram on his tomb, situated on the borders of Elis and Arcadia (Paus. viii. 26, 4). The quoit of Iphitus, on which Lycurgus' name was engraved in some inscription, was at Elis in the days of Aristotle. This 'discus of Iphitus,' says Pausanias (v. 20, 1), 'has the truce which the Eleians announce for the Olympiad, not inscribed in straight lines, but the letters run round the discus in a circular form.' He alludes to the list again and again: *ex. gr.* (v. 8, 3) 'ever since there is a continuous record of the Olympiads (*ἐξ οὗ τὸ συνεχὲς ταῖς μνήμαῖς ἐπὶ τοῖς Ὀλ. ἐστὶ*); prizes for running were first established, and the Eleian Coroebus won.'

Pausanias proceeds in this passage to give an account of the successive additions of other competitions to the sprint race, 'according as they remembered them,' that is, according as they recollected or found out that they had been practised in mythical days. In the 14th Ol. the *δίαυλος*, or double course, was instituted, and Hypenus the Pisaeon won, and next after him Acanthus. In the 18th they remembered the pentathlon and the wrestling match, in which Lampis and Eurybatus respectively won, both Lacedaemonians. In the 23rd came boxing, and Onomastus of Smyrna, which then already counted as Ionian, won. In the 25th the first chariot race was won by the Theban Pagondas. In the 28th came the pancration, and the monument of the first victor, Lygdamis, was at Syracuse. . . . The boys' contests were based on no old tradition, but the Eleians established them of their own good pleasure. The boys' wrestling match was accordingly instituted in the 37th Ol. I need not pursue the account further, but will return to the passage in connection with the other arrangements of the feast.

We find that other authorities, such as Polemo, quoted by the Scholiast on Pindar (Ol. v.), agree with Pausanias as to some of these details. Strabo quotes from Ephorus the double

foundation by Oxyllus and again by Iphitus. So does the account of Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian, who wrote a work on the Olympian festival, and gave a list of victors, probably from the same source as Eusebius' list. Phlegon notes indeed the difficulty of making Lycurgus and Iphitus contemporary with Coroebus in 776 B.C., and fixes the date of Iphitus twenty-eight Olympiads earlier (at 887 B.C.) But he introduces Iphitus again in the 6th registered Ol., inquiring about the crowning of victors, and states that Daicles of Messene was first crowned with wild olive at the 7th contest. The only other point of interest in Phlegon's fragments is the full catalogue of the 177th Ol. (frag. 12 in Müller's *Frag. Hist.* iv. 606), which gives the winners in seventeen events; some of them thrice successful in the competitions.

We may therefore take it for granted that the account of Pausanias, which now passes current in all the German and English works on Greek athletics, was, in the main, that established or adopted by Timaeus and by Aristotle, the latter of whom seems to have first given the Olympiads their prominent position as the basis of Greek chronology. Whether he adopted it as genuine from the beginning or not, his isolated remark about the quoit of Iphitus is not sufficient to inform us. Indeed we have rather negative evidence concerning his opinion than any positive information.

It is of far more importance to examine what evidence there was for this theory of the gradual rise and progress of the festival, its regularity, and the prominence of the *stadion*, or short race, in giving the name of its victor as the index of the date. We have two kinds of authority to consult—the older literature; and the monuments, either at first hand, or as described for us by former observers. As regards the literature, our review need be but very brief.

(1) The twenty-third book of the *Iliad* seems composed without any reference to the earliest Olympian games as Pausanias describes them. The nature of this perhaps special competition is quite different. There are events, such as the armed combat, which never made part of the historical games; there are others, such as the chariot race, which are expressly asserted to have been later innovations at Olympia. The giving of valuable prizes, and several of them in each competition, is quite against

the practice at Olympia. The Phaeacian games in the *Odyssey* (θ 120, ς 7) contain *five* events, running, wrestling, leaping, discus, and boxing. Those who believe that the epics were composed before 776 B.C., or those who believe them to be the much later compilation of antiquarian poets, will find no difficulty in this. The one will assert that the poet could not know, and the other that he would not know, what was established at Olympia. The latter will also hold that the accounts of the mythical celebrations by Herakles, Pelops, &c., were invented in imitation of the Homeric account. But still if Lycurgus indeed promoted the knowledge of the Homeric poems, why did he and Iphitus found a contest without the least resemblance to the heroic models? And if, as I hold, the Homeric poems were growing into shape about the time of the 1st Olympiad, and after it, the silence of the *Iliad*, and its contrast to the Olympian festival in its games, are difficult to explain, unless we assume that the old Eleian competition was not a mere sprint race, but a contest similar in its events to that in the *Iliad*, or at least to that in the *Odyssey*.

(2) This view is strongly supported by the statements of Pindar, who is the next important witness on the subject. In his Tenth Olympic Ode (*vv.* 43 *sq.*) he tells of the foundation by Herakles and gives the names of *five* heroes who won the various events of the first contest. And there is no hint that there was any break in the tradition, or that these five events had not remained in fashion ever since. In fact he does mention (*Isth.* i. 26 *sq.*) that the *pentathlon* and *pancratation* were later inventions, thus making it clear that the rest were in his mind the original components of the meeting. Nor does he anywhere give any priority or special dignity to the *stadion*; only the last of his Olympian odes is for this kind of victory, his Thirteenth for the *stadion* and *pentathlon* together. He never mentions, as we should have expected, that these victors would have the special glory of handing down their names as eponymi of the whole feast. The other contests, the chariot race, the *pancratation*, and the *pentathlon*, were evidently far grander and more highly esteemed, and we find this corroborated by the remark of Thucydides (*v.* 49), 'This was the Olympiad when Androsthenes won for the first time the

pancratation.' Thucydides therefore seems to have marked the Olympiad, not by the stadion, but by the pancratation.

(3) This historian indeed, as well as his contemporaries, Herodotus and Hellanicus, gives us but little information about the nature of the games, except the remark that 'it was not many years' since the habit of running naked had come into fashion at Olympia. Such a statement cannot be reconciled with Pausanias' account, who placed the innovation three centuries before Thucydides' time. But in one important negative feature all the fifth-century historians agree. None of them recognise any Olympian register, or date their events by reference to this festival. Thucydides, at the opening of his second book, fixes his main date by the year of the priestess of Hera at Argos, by the Spartan ephor, and by the Athenian archon. In his Sicilian *Archaeology*, to which we will presently return, where it would have been very convenient to have given dates by Olympiads, he counts all his years from the foundation of Syracuse downward. We know that Hellanicus, Antiochus and others had made chronological researches at that time, and the former treated of the list of the Carneian victors. All these things taken together are conclusive against the existence, or at least the recognition, of the Olympian annals down to 400 B.C.

In the next century Ephorus wrote in his earlier books concerning the mythical foundation of the festival, but we hear nothing from him at all like the history set down by Pausanias. It is nevertheless about this time that the newer and more precise account came into existence, for Aristotle and Timaeus, the contemporaries of Ephorus, evidently knew and valued the register. Its origin in literature would have remained a mystery but for a solitary remark of Plutarch. At the opening of his *Life of Numa*, in commenting on the difficulty of fixing early dates, he says: τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους ἐξακριβᾶσαι χαλεπὸν ἐστὶ, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ὀλυμπιονίκων ἀναγομένους, ὧν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ὀψέ φασιν Ἰππίαν ἐκδοῦναι τὸν Ἡλείου, ἀπ' οὐδενὸς ὁρμώμενον ἀναγκαίου πρὸς πίστιν.

What does this mean? Does it mean that Hippias first *published* or edited in a literary form the register, or does it mean that he *both compiled and edited* it? The former is the implied opinion of the learned. 'Dieser Zeit,' says E. Curtius,

Hist. I. 494 (viz. 'die Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts'), 'gehören ja auch die Listen derer an, welche in den Nationalspielen gesiegt'; and in the note on this at the end of the volume, he indicates, together with the *ἀναγραφαί* of the Argive priestesses, which Hellanicus published, two references to Pausanias, and adds: 'wissenschaftlich bearbeitet zuerst von Hippias dem Eleer, dann von Philochorus in seinen *Ὀλυμπιάδες*.' Now of the latter work we know nothing more than the name; of the former nothing but the passage just cited from Plutarch. Does it justify Ernst Curtius' *wissenschaftlich bearbeitet*? Or does our other knowledge of Hippias justify it? The picture of him drawn in the Platonic dialogues called after his name, and in Philostratus, though perhaps exaggerated, makes him a vain but clever polymath, able to practise all trades, and exhibit in all kinds of knowledge. But we do not expect anything 'wissenschaftlich' from him. Indeed, in this case there was room for either a great deal of science, or for none. If there was really an authentic list at Olympia, Hippias need only have copied it. But is this consistent with Plutarch's statement? Far from it. Plutarch implies a task of difficulty, requiring research and judgment. And this, no doubt, was what the Sophist wanted to supply. Being an Eleian, and desirous to make himself popular in the city, he not only chose Olympia for special displays of various kinds, but brought together for the people a history of their famous games. And in doing this he seems to have shown all the vanity, the contempt of ancient traditions, and the rash theorizing which we might expect from a man of his class. We have too, fortunately, a single case quoted by Pausanias which shows us both that this estimate of the man is not far from the truth, and what licence the Eleians gave him when he was reconstructing the history of the festival. Pausanias (v. 24, 2 *sqq.*) tells a pathetic story about the loss of a choir of boys and their teacher on the way from Messana in Sicily to Olympia, where they were commemorated by statues. τὸ μὲν δὴ ἐπίγραμμα ἐδήλου τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀναθήματα εἶναι τῶν ἐν πορθμῷ Μεσσηνίων χρόνῳ δὲ ὕστερον Ἰππίας ὁ λεγόμενος ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων γενέσθαι σοφὸς τὰ ἐλεγεία ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ἐποίησεν. Here, then, we have some kind of falsification, and apparently one in favour of the Messenians of the Morea, if we may judge from the form of Pausanias' remark. In more than one case this sort of thing

appears to have been allowed, and I think we can show in Hippias a decided leaning to the Messenians, whose restoration to independence he probably witnessed.

But were there really no registers, *ἀναγραφαί*, from which Hippias could have copied? If there was certainly no single complete list, of undoubted authority, may there not have been partial lists, affording him suitable materials? This we must endeavour to answer from the passages of Pausanias referred to by E. Curtius, as well as from others, which he has not thought it necessary to quote.

The first is the opening passage of the sixth book, where the author says that as his work 'is not a catalogue of all the athletes who have gained victories at Olympia, but an account of votive offerings, and especially statues, he will omit many who have gained victories, either by some lucky chance, or without attaining the honour of a statue.' Though this passage may imply that there was such a catalogue—of course there was in Pausanias' day—it says not a word about an old and authentic register. It is indeed a capital fact in the present discussion, that neither does Pausanias, in this elaborate account of Olympia, nor, as far as I know, does any other Greek author, distinctly mention *ἀναγραφαί*, or *παραπήγματα*, or any equivalent term for any official register at Olympia. Pausanias speaks of τὰ τῶν Ἑλλείων γράμματα, and also says of certain an-Olympiads: ἐν τῷ τῶν Ὀλ. καταλόγῳ οὐ γράφουσιν—not that they were erased, or noted in any official register. In Pausanias the absence of such mention appears to me decisive.

Let us pass to the second passage indicated by E. Curtius, viz. vi. 6, 3. 'There stands there also the statue of Lastratidas, an Eleian boy, who won the crown for wrestling; he obtained also in Nemea among the boys, and among youths (ἐν τε παισὶ καὶ ἀγένοιον) another victory.' Pausanias adds: that Parabolon, the father of Lastratidas, won in the δίαυλος, ὑπελείπετο δὲ καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἔπειτα φιλοτιμία, τῶν νικησάντων Ὀλυμπίᾳσι τὰ ὀνόματα ἀναγράφαι ἐν γυμνασίῳ τῷ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ. Here, at last, we have some definite evidence, and I will add at once another passage—the only other passage I can find where any register is alluded to—as it expounds the former. In vi. 8, 1, we find: Euanorides the Eleian gained the victory for wrestling

both at Olympia and Nemea: *γενόμενος δὲ Ἑλλανοδίκης ἔγραψε καὶ οὗτος τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ τῶν νενικηκότων*. It appears then that if an Eleian had distinguished himself at the games, he was likely to be afterwards chosen as one of the judges—a reasonable custom, even now prevailing amongst us. It also appears that such *ἑλλανοδίκαι* had the right of celebrating their year of office by inscribing the names of the victors, and doubtless their own, in the gymnasium.

But fortunately, the date of these inscriptions is fixed by two facts. In the first place both came after the establishing of boys' contests, which Pausanias expressly calls an invention of the Eleians, and fixes at the 37th Olympiad. Again the son of Paraballon, and Euanorides himself, won prizes at Nemea—a contest not established, according to E. Curtius, till about 570 B.C., but to my mind a little earlier, and near to 600 B.C. I do not for a moment deny the existence of some kind of register from this time onward; in fact there are some probable reasons to be presently adduced in favour of it. But the very form of the note about Paraballon seems to imply some novelty, an exceptional distinction in his inscription; and what we are here seeking is evidence for an *early* register, in fact a register of the contests down to 600 B.C.

What evidence does Pausanias afford of this? As I have said, there is not a word about a register or catalogue, but there are several notes of old offerings and inscriptions, which show us what sort of material existed, at least in Pausanias' day. And there is no reason whatever to believe that many ancient monuments or inscriptions had been injured, unless Hippias carried out his work of falsifying them on a large scale. There were indeed several monuments antedated by mere vulgar mistakes. Such was the *stèle* of Chionis (vi. 13, 2), who was reported to have won in four successive contests (Ols. 28–31), but the reference in the inscription to *armed* races as *not yet introduced*, proved even to Pausanias that it was a public record set up long after Chionis' period. There was again the monument of Pheidolas' children, whose epigram Pausanias notes as conflicting (vi. 13, 10) with τὰ Ἡλείων ἐς τοὺς Ὀλυμπιονίκας γράμματα. ὁ γδοή γὰρ Ὀλ. καὶ ἐξηκοστῇ καὶ οὐ πρὸ ταύτης ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς Ἡλ. γράμμασι ἡ νίκη τῶν Φ. παίδων. These γράμματα—a word quite distinct from ἀναγραφαί—are probably

nothing but the treatise of Hippias, preserved and copied at Elis. Other cases I need not mention.

But as regards genuine early monuments, Pausanias tells us that Coroebus had no statue at Olympia, and it seems there was no record of his victory save the epigram on his tomb at the border of Elis and Arcadia. Then comes the case of the Spartan Eutelidas (vi. 14, 8), who conquered as a boy in the 38th Ol., the only contest ever held for a pentathlon of boys. *ἔστι δὲ ἡ τε εἰκὼν ἀρχαία τοῦ Εὐτ., καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῷ βάρβρῳ γράμματα ἀμυδρὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου.* But this statue cannot have been so old even as the 38th Ol. For in vi. 18, 7, he tells us that the first athletes' statues set up at Olympia were those of Praxidamas the Aeginetan, who won in boxing at the 59th Ol., and that of the Opuntian Rexibios the pancratiast, at the 61st. 'These portrait statues are not far from the pillar of Oenomaos, and are made of wood, Rexibios' of fig-tree, but the Aeginetan's of cypress, and less decayed than the other.' Just below this we have a mention of a treasure-house, dedicated by the Sicyonian tyrant Myron in the 33rd Ol. In this treasure-house was an inscribed shield, 'an offering to Zeus from the Myones.' *τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ τῇ ἀσπίδι γράμματα παρῆκται μὲν ἐπὶ βραχύ, πέπονθε δὲ αὐτὸ διὰ τοῦ ἀναθήματος τὸ ἀρχαῖον.*

These exhaust the oldest dated monuments found by Pausanias. He mentions indeed an ancient treasury of the Megarians, dating from a time before either yearly archons at Athens or Olympiads (vi. 19, 13).¹ Thus the antiquarian traveller, who revelled in the venerable in history and the *pre-Raffaelite* in Greek art, could find no dated votive offerings older than the 33rd Ol., and these he specially notes as of extraordinary antiquity, decayed and illegible with age. We may feel almost certain that he omitted no really important extant relic of old times in his survey.

Such then were the materials from which Hippias proceeded, somewhere about the year 400 B.C., or probably later, to compile the full and authentic register of the Olympiads. There may have been some old inscriptions which Pausanias overlooked, or which had become illegible and had disappeared under the soil with time. Doubtless there were many old traditions at Elis,

¹ The recent excavations have refuted this very early date for the treasure house

which the Eleian sophist would gather and utilise. There were also throughout Greece, in the various cities he visited, traditions and inscriptions relating to victors who had been natives of these cities. But that these formed an unbroken chain from Coroebus down to Hippias' day is quite incredible.

His work is so completely lost that we can only conjecture his method of proceeding from the general character of his age, and from the critical spirit we can fairly attribute to it. He had before him the history of the Pythian festival, which began in historical times (Ol. 48), if we omit the old contest in a hymn to the gods. The various innovations and additions were well known, and it is certain that at Olympia too the range of contests had been enlarged by the pentathlon, the pancration, the hoplite race, &c. But it is likely that Hippias carried out this analogy too far. He found no traditions for the other events as old as Coroebus, and he assumed that the games had begun with a simple short race. *Accordingly as he found the first record of each competition*, he set down its first origin. He was thus led to make the *σπάδιον* the 'eponymous competition,' if I may coin the expression, though it is more than probable that the early festivals were known by the victor in the greatest feats and—had there been a real register—by the Hellanodicae who had presided. For it is certain from Pausanias that the umpire did inscribe his name with those of the victors.

Hippias' work, the *γράμματα* of the Eleians in after days, was thus a work based upon a problematical reconstruction of history. It rested for its earlier portions on scanty and broken evidence; as it proceeded, and monuments became more numerous, its authenticity increased. After Ol. 60, when the fashion came in of setting up athlete statues, we may assume it in the main to have been correct; though even here there were not wanting discrepancies with other evidence, and possibly some *mala fides* on the part of the compiler.¹

There remain, therefore, three points of interest connected with the theory thus proposed. Have we any evidence of the date at which the Hellanodicae first made it a matter of ambition to inscribe their own names, and those of victors in

¹ Cf. the case of Oebotas, supposed to have won the 6th Ol., but also asserted to have fought in Plataea in

Ol. 75. His statue and epigram, be it observed, dated from about Ol. 80.—Paus. vi. 3, 8; vii. 17, 13.

the gymnasium, at Olympia? Are there traces of a fictitious schematising in the extant list of victors previous to this date? Why and for what reasons did Hippias fix on the year 776 B.C. as the commencement of his list? The question of the an-Olympiads I must postpone, owing to the length of the present paper.

(1) There are several probable reasons for fixing the origin of registering the victories at about the 50th Ol. It was about this time that the Eleians finally conquered the Pisatans, and secured the complete management of the games. From their spoils they built the magnificent Doric temple lately excavated, and no doubt increased the splendour of Olympia in other ways. For in addition to their increase of power they were stimulated by a new and dangerous competition—that of the Pythian games, established in the third year of the 48th Ol., and this may have been one of the reasons why they determined finally to crush the Pisatans. It is likely that the Nemean and Isthmian games were instituted about the same time, and these rival games were perhaps connected with some complaints as to the management of the Olympian festival, for no Eleian was admitted to compete at the Isthmian games (Paus. v. 2, 2). The Eleians were accordingly put upon their mettle, both to keep their contest unequalled in splendour, and beyond suspicion in fairness. To obtain the first, they lavished the spoils of Pisa, as already mentioned. As to the second, we have a remarkable story told us by Herodotus (ii. 160), and again by Diodorus (i. 95), that they sent an embassy as far as Egypt to consult the Pharaoh as to the best possible conduct of the games. This king told them *that no Eleian should be allowed to compete*. Herodotus calls him Psammis (Psammetichus II.), who reigned 594–87 B.C.; and he is a higher authority than Diodorus, who calls him Amasis, and so brings down the date by twenty-five years. Herodotus' story has never been much noticed, or brought into relation with the other facts here adduced, but it surely helps to throw light on the question. And there is yet one more important datum. Pausanias tells us that in Ol. 50 a second umpire was appointed. If the practice of official registering now commenced at Olympia, as it certainly did at Delphi in the Pythian games, we can understand Pausanias' remarks about Paraballon and others having

esteemed it a special glory to leave their names associated with the victors'. For it was a new honour. From this time onward, therefore, I have nothing to say against the register which we find in Eusebius.

(2) But as regards the first fifty Olympiads, is there any appearance of deliberate invention or arrangement about the list of names? Can we show that Hippias worked on theory, and not from distinct evidence? It is very hard to do this, especially when we admit that he had a good many isolated victories recorded or remembered, and as he was a good antiquarian, and no doubt worked out a probable list. Thus the list begins with victors from the neighbourhood, and gradually admits a wider range of competitors. This is natural enough, but I confess my suspicion at the occurrence of eight Messenians out of the first twelve victors, followed by their total disappearance till after the restoration by Epaminondas. For the sacred truce gave ample occasion for exiled Messenians to compete at the games.¹ I also feel grave suspicions at the curious absence of Eleian victors. Excepting the first two, there is not a single Eleian in the list. How is this consistent with Psammis' remark to the Eleians? For how could they have avoided answering him that their fairness was proved by the occurrence of no Eleian as victor eponymous for 170 years? Many Eleian victors are indeed noticed by Pausanias in the other events. It is hardly possible that they could not have conquered in the *stadion*, but for some deliberate intention to put forward foreigners. I have suspicions about Oebotas, placed in the 6th Ol. by Hippias, but about the 75th by the common tradition of the Greeks. It is curious, too, that Athenian victors should always occur in juxtaposition with Laconian. But all these are only suspicions.

(3) I come to the last and most important point; indeed it was this which suggested the whole inquiry. On what principles, or by what evidence, did Hippias fix on the year 776 B.C. as his starting-point? We need not plunge into the arid and abstruse computations of years and cycles which make early chronology so difficult to follow and to appreciate. For one general consideration is here sufficient. Even had we not shown from Plutarch's words, and from the silence of all our

¹ Hippias' false epigram on the Sicilian Messenians (above mentioned) shows that the Messenians exiled from Messene were eligible.

authorities, that Hippias *could* not have determined it by counting *upwards* the exact number of duly recorded victories, it is perfectly certain that he *would* not have followed this now accepted method. All the Greek chronologists—logographers they are sometimes improperly called—down to Hippias' day made it their chief object to derive historical families and states from mythical ancestors, and they did this by reasoning *downwards* by generations. They assumed a fixed starting-point, either the siege of Troy, or the return of the Herakleids. From this the number of generations gave the number of years. Thus we may assume that Hippias sought to determine the date of the 1st Olympiad by King Iphitus; he found that he was in the generation which brought him down to the period 400 years before himself. He thus fixed the date of both Iphitus and Lycurgus. The Spartan chronologers would not accept such a date for Lycurgus. His place in the generations of Herakleids put him fully three generations earlier. They therefore sought means to accommodate the matter, and counted twenty-eight nameless Olympiads from Lycurgus (and Iphitus) to Coroebus. Others imagined two Iphiti. But all such schemes are to us idle; for we may feel certain that the number of Olympiads was accommodated to the date of Iphitus, and not the date of Iphitus to the number of Olympiads.

Unfortunately the genealogy of Iphitus is not extant; in Pausanias' day he already had three different fathers; and we cannot, therefore, follow out the *a priori* scheme of Hippias in this instance; but I will illustrate it by another, which still plays a prominent figure in our histories of Greece—I mean the chronology of the Sicilian and Italian colonies, as given by Thucydides in his sixth book. He speaks with the greatest precision of events in the latter half of the eighth century B.C.; he even speaks of events which happened 300 years before the arrival of the Greeks in Sicily. As Thucydides was really not inspired, he must have drawn these things from some authority; and the researches of the Germans have made out with tolerable clearness that his source was here the work of Antiochus of Syracuse. This man was evidently an antiquarian no wiser or more scientific than his fellows; he betrays their method by dating all the foundations *downwards* from that of Syracuse. He was obliged to admit the priority of Naxos, but grants it

only one year; then he starts from his fixed era. But how was the date of the foundation of Syracuse determined? Not, as is often implied, from city registers and careful computations of years backward from the fifth century. Such an assumption is to my mind chimerical, and the source of many illusions. The foundation of Syracuse was determined as to date by its founder, Archias, *being the tenth from Temenos*. The return of the Herakleidae was placed before the middle of the eleventh century B.C.; hence Archias would fall below the middle of the eighth century. The false date of Pheidon of Argos, 747 B.C., was fixed in the same way by his being the tenth Temenid, and hence the 8th Ol. was set down as his celebration. He is now brought down nearly a century (to 670 B.C.) in date.

I will sum up in conclusion the results of this long discussion. When we emerge into the light of Greek history, we find the venerable Olympian games long established, and most of their details referred to mythical antiquity. We find no list of victors recognised by the early historians, and we have the strongest negative evidence that no such list existed in the days of Thucydides. Nevertheless about 580 B.C. the feast was more strictly regulated, and the victors' names recorded, perhaps regularly, in inscriptions; from 540 B.C. onward the practice of dedicating athlete statues with inscriptions was introduced, though not for every victor. About 500 B.C. we find many inscriptions (that of Hiero is still extant), and there was ample evidence from which to write the history of the festival; but this was never done till the time of the archaeologist and rhetorician Hippias, who was a native of Elis, with influence and popularity there, and who even placed new inscriptions on old votive offerings. This man (about 390–70 B.C.) constructed the whole history of the feast, partly from the evidence before him, partly from the analogy of other feasts. He fixed the commencement of his list, after the manner of the chronologers of his day, by the date of the mythical founder. Hence neither the names nor the dates found in Eusebius' copy of the register for the first fifty Olympiads are to be accepted as genuine, unless they are corroborated by other evidence.

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