

AUGUSTUS AND EURYCLEES

The importance of the Euryclids for the study of imperial Greece has long been recognised by scholars. The first famous representative of this family of magnates was C. Iulius Eurycles, who has been the subject of a detailed study by G. W. Bowersock¹). While Bowersock's article provides many interesting insights into the career of Eurycles, the purpose of this article is to challenge his dates for Eurycles' trials and death. Bowersock places the trials in the period 7–2 B.C. The lower of these *termini* cannot in fact be established on the basis of the evidence he adduces, and I hope to show that his death may have occurred some years later.

Plutarch gives our earliest account of Eurycles, with a colourful role on the Caesarian side at the battle of Actium. Eurycles had no reason to love Antony, since his father Lachares had been involved in a charge of piracy, and was beheaded on Antony's orders²). Thus Eurycles joined Octavian to avenge the death of his father.

In the aftermath of Actium Eurycles' own history was somewhat chequered. His name shows that he received the Roman citizenship, probably as a reward for his contribution to Octavian's cause at Actium³). This battle also won him the position of dynast at Sparta⁴), as has been deduced from the fact that his coins start in the period 31–27 B.C.⁵). But later in life his friendship with Augustus was subjected to the strain of two trials before the em-

1) G. W. Bowersock, Eurycles of Sparta, JRS 51 (1961) 112–118. To his bibliography (p. 112), add PIR²I 301 with stemma; G. W. Bowersock, Augustus and the Greek World, Oxford 1965; A. S. Bradford, A Prosopography of Lacedaemonians 323 B.C. – A. D. 396, Munich 1977, 178–179; R. Baladié, Le Péloponnèse de Strabon, Paris 1980, especially p. 12 n. 52; pp. 291–293. For a stemma exploring the relationship of the Euryclids to the dynasty of Commagene see A. J. S. Spawforth, ABSA 73 (1978), opposite p. 260.

2) Plut. Ant. 67. The charge of piracy is not entirely convincing, and we may think of RG 25: *mare pacavi a praedonibus*; see further Baladié, op. cit. 292.

3) For the significance of this award as an indicator of Eurycles' contribution at Actium see Baladié, op. cit. 292; L. Robert, AC 35 (1966) 408. 418. Augustus was cautious over awards of citizenship (Suet. Aug. 40.3–4). See J. M. Carter, Suetonius Divus Augustus, Bristol 1982, 153–154.

4) On his title see Bowersock, art. cit. 112; Baladié, op. cit. 293 n. 53.

5) R. Weil, Die Familie des C. Julius Eurykles, Ath. Mitt. 6 (1881) 10–20.

peror himself. Josephus' narrative of these events attributes a fickle, conniving personality to the dynast, which would have done little to improve his relationship with the emperor⁶).

The influential role given to Eurycles was something new for the Euryclid family. No coin bears the name of his father, Lachares, although he was a man of some local significance in Greece⁷). With the advent of Eurycles Sparta gains a new prominence, and Bowersock is no doubt right in associating Spartan management of the refounded Actian games with Eurycles' favour in the eyes of Augustus⁸). Another important factor was that the Spartans had provided a refuge for Livia and her child during the Perusine war⁹). Sparta gained extra territory under Eurycles' rule, in the form of the island of Cythera, and the towns of Thuria and Cardamyle¹⁰). The emergence of this parvenu was promoted by Augustus for the same economic reasons which had led to the concentration of power within the Peloponnese in a small number of hands since the time of Nabis. Eurycles himself did well out of the arrangement at an economic level to judge from the surviving evidence. He appears to have had interests in the marble and purple trades; as well a number of his public benefactions are recorded¹¹). From Augustus' point of view control over the east was largely dependent on a small number of *amici* who owed their position to his patronage. This enabled him to maintain good di-

6) Jos. BJ 1.531 (the trials). For the character of Eurycles see BJ 1.513 ff. There is some literary embellishment in Josephus' description; this led Oliver to reject Josephus' evidence on the banishment of Eurycles. See J.H. Oliver, *The Ruling Power*, Philadelphia 1953, 956. But while it is clear that Josephus exaggerates Eurycles' role as the villain of the piece (Antipater's role is played down), the substance of his narrative should be retained.

7) A statue at Athens reveals that Lachares must have been a man of substance (IG II² 3885 = SIG³ 786).

8) Bowersock, art. cit. 112. For the Actia see Strabo 7.7.6 = C325. This refers to the Augustan renewal. The games had been held previously. See RE I (1893) 1213.

9) Dio 54.7.2; cf. Suet. Tib. 6.2. For an account of Spartan loyalties in the Civil war period see Baladié, op. cit. 291 f.

10) Dio 54.7.2 (Cythera), recorded under 21 B.C. Strabo does not mention Cythera as a gift from Augustus (Strabo 8.5.1 = C363). Paus. 4.31.1 (Thuria); Paus. 3.26.7 (Cardamyle). E. Kjellberg rejected Dio's date for these donations. He thought that 27 B.C. had a better claim. See Klio 17 (1921) 44–58. For further discussion see below. Dio places the donations at the time of a visit to Sparta during which Augustus did conspicuous honour to ancient Spartan institutions (Dio 54.7.1 f.).

11) See Baladié, op. cit. 193. For the extent of Eurycles' holdings see *ibid.* p. 329 f. For his interests in the marble and purple trade see Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* 91. For the benefactions see PIR² I 301.

plomatic relations with the cities in the east, while allowing local communities a nominal independence¹²). Eurycles was one such *amicus* who proved untrustworthy, but Augustus did everything in his power to try to obtain his loyalty.

Sometime during the Augustan period, the Laconian League was released from Spartan control¹³). Strabo associates this development with the fall of Eurycles, but the connections in his narrative are probably not chronological¹⁴). Pausanias also placed the release of the Laconian League in the Augustan era, but his notice is not more precise than that. He does, however, enumerate the 18 member cities of the League as they were in his own day, commenting that the League originally incorporated 24 members¹⁵).

Strabo could be right in associating the liberation of the League with Eurycles' overweening ambitions. If so the date of release might be established on the basis of the date of Eurycles' disgrace or one of the trials. But a stronger case can be made for including this measure in the Augustan reorganisation after Actium.

At this time Augustus reorganised various old institutions such as the Amphictyonic League, the Thessalian Confederacy, the Panachaeian League, and the Laconian League, as part of a programme of 'freedom' for Greece under Roman patronage. The Augustan scheme, as J. A. O. Larsen has pointed out, was for the emperor to appear to the Greeks "not as a foreign conqueror, but as a patron of things Greek, and as a statesman under the special protection of Apollo"¹⁶). This was why the refounding of the cult of Actian Apollo was given so much prominence.

12) E. W. Gray, JHS 75 (1955) 196. This theme is central to Bowersock's book.

13) For a discussion of the nomenclature of this league see K.M.T. Chrimes, *Ancient Sparta*, Manchester 1949, 435–441. Augustus was apparently responsible for changing the name from the Laconian League to the Free Laconian League, as it is found in Strabo (8.5.5 = C366). The League had its origin in the time of Nabis. See Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* 91.

14) Strabo 8.5.5 = C366.

15) Paus. 3.21.6–7. For the date of the change see Chrimes, *op. cit.* (n. 13) 435–436.

16) See J. A. O. Larsen, *The Policy of Augustus in Greece*, *AClass* 1 (1958) 123–130. For the Augustan reorganisation of the Amphictyonic League see Paus. 10.8.3–5. For the other Leagues see his comments in *Greek Federal States*, Oxford 1968, especially pp. 293–294. For the role of Apollo note the importance assigned to him in the foundation of Nicopolis. See Strabo 7.7.6 = C 325. The encouragement of these leagues is probably the reason why the imperial cult is not evident in Greece until the time of Claudius. See Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World*

The exact date of these antiquarian measures is disputed. Dio gives 21 B.C. as a significant date for arrangements in Augustan Greece, and some changes certainly did take place at this time, but they were in all likelihood only minor modifications to a settlement in 27 B.C.¹⁷⁾ It was in 21 B.C. that Eurycles obtained the extra territory for Sparta, perhaps as Bowersock suggests, in compensation for the loss of the League a few years earlier¹⁸⁾. Up to this point there is no sign of any rift in the relationship with Augustus.

More than 10 years later he is found at the court of Herod. Eurycles is depicted by Josephus as an interloper wreaking havoc at the Judaeian court through his intrigues¹⁹⁾. Why he was there in the first place is a mystery, but Bowersock suggests that he could have been returning a visit by Herod to Sparta on one of his trips to Rome²⁰⁾. The second of Herod's visits to Rome had been in 12 B.C. to sort out the first of the family squabbles which marred the last years of Herod's life²¹⁾. Trouble had started in about 13 B.C. when Antipater, Herod's son by his first wife, Doris, a commoner, had been allowed to return to court²²⁾. Eurycles' activities should be placed some years later when Herod's suspicions against his sons by Mariamne were so successfully aroused that the sons were imprisoned and eventually strangled at Caesarea in about 7 B.C.²³⁾.

According to Josephus it was financial greed which brought about Eurycles' fall. When he arrived at Herod's court he lost no time before ingratiating himself with the Judaeian monarch, and indeed his entire family. Feigning friendship with Alexander, when in fact under an obligation to the ignoble Antipater, he allowed both Alexander and Aristobulus separately to vent their grievances against their father in his presence, before denouncing the pair to Herod. For these activities he was richly rewarded by Antipater, as well as obtaining 50 talents from Herod himself. Moreover Josephus alleges that Eurycles escaped to Cappadocia before the

91. For the secular nature of the leagues see J. A. O. Larsen, *Representative Government in Greek and Roman history*, Berkeley 1955, 112–113.

17) Dio 54.7.1 f. See above n. 10.

18) Bowersock, art. cit. 113 n. 11.

19) Jos. BJ 1.513 ff.

20) Bowersock, art. cit. 115.

21) Herod's first visit to Rome had been in 40 B.C. (Jos. AJ 14.379–389). See E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 55. For the second visit in 12 B.C. see Jos. AJ 16.6–11; 66–127. The family quarrels are discussed by Smallwood, op. cit. 100. The visit of 12 B.C. is also recounted in BJ 1.445–454.

22) BJ 1.433.

23) See Bowersock, art. cit. 115–116.

truth came out, and extorted further monies from Archelaus on the pretext that he had brought about a reconciliation between Herod and Alexander, who was Archelaus' son-in-law²⁴).

Eurycles' visit to Archelaus must have been just before the death of Alexander became common knowledge, and indeed a major part in Alexander's fall had been an alleged plan to seek assistance from Archelaus. Shortly after her husband's execution Archelaus' daughter Glaphyra was returned to her father, in about 6 B.C. Eurycles timed his arrival cunningly²⁵).

For Josephus Eurycles' interference in Greece is merely a continuation of these treacherous deeds. He maintains that this evil *δραματούργος* as he calls him, returned to Greece and used his ill-gotten gains for similar treachery there²⁶). It is a pity that Josephus does not elucidate this point more fully, but we are left to understand that he continued with a career of low cunning. He does add that Eurycles was twice brought before Augustus for spreading sedition in the province of Achaea and for plundering the cities, and that these crimes resulted in his exile²⁷). Josephus is not really interested in these points except as an illustration of the working of divine justice, and may be guilty of some compression. But his version fits in with Strabo's statement that Eurycles took advantage of his friendship with the emperor during his rule²⁸).

It is a passage in the geographer Strabo which has caused some debate about the circumstances of Eurycles' fall²⁹). As a contemporary, Strabo should have had reliable information about this eastern dignitary³⁰). Bowersock has solved the textual crux in this passage through minor emendation to the Vatican palimpsest of

24) See R. D. Sullivan, *The Dynasty of Cappadocia*, ANRW II.7.2 (1980) 1161–1164 for Glaphyra, and Archelaus' involvement in Judaeian politics.

25) On all this see Jos. BJ 1.530–531.

26) Jos. BJ 1.530.

27) Jos. BJ 1.531. See Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* 59–60 for a brief summary of the damage caused by Eurycles.

28) Strabo 8.5.5 = C366.

29) Strabo 8.5.5 = C366.

30) But Strabo may not have returned to Rome after 2 B.C. until the time of Tiberius. The uncertainty over where Strabo spent the intervening years makes it impossible to assess how well informed he would be about Spartan politics. For these problems see J. G. C. Anderson, *Some questions bearing on the date and place of composition of Strabo's Geography*, *Anatolian Studies* presented to Sir W. M. Ramsay, Manchester 1923, 1–13.

Strabo³¹), which dates from c. 500 A.D.³²) The text in emended form reads:

νεωστὶ δ' Εὐρυκλῆς αὐτοὺς ἐτάραξε, δόξας ἀποχρήσασθαι τῇ Καίσαρος φιλίᾳ πέρα τοῦ μετρίου πρὸς τὴν ἐπιστασίαν αὐτῶν, ἐπαύσατο δ' ἡ ταραχὴ ταχέως, ἐκείνου μὲν παραχωρήσαντος εἰς τὸ χρεῶν, τοῦ δ' υἱοῦ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἀπεστραμμένου τὴν τοιαύτην πάσαν. Bowersock translates: 'Recently Eurycles stirred up trouble among the Spartans by seeming immoderately to abuse his friendship with the emperor in the exercise of his authority over them, but the tumult came to a swift end when Eurycles died and his son rejected all such ambition'³³).

This restoration enables us to accept the gist of Josephus' account as outlined above. What Strabo adds is Eurycles' breach of his *amicitia* with the emperor. An episode related by Plutarch helps to fill out the picture. Eurycles had embroiled himself with the ancient aristocracy of Sparta to such an extent that a descendant of the famous Brasidas numbered amongst his accusers³⁴). Augustus, however, seems to have been very unwilling to accept the negative testimony provided by this aristocrat³⁵). Strabo clearly considered that Augustus' trust had been abused by Eurycles. His account of the rebellions alluded to by Josephus is even more compressed than that of the Jewish historian, and he omits Eurycles' banishment from this brief summary, in all likelihood because he sees no relevance in it to his main geographical theme³⁶). All we learn is that there was a disturbance followed by Eurycles' death.

Finally there is the enigmatic statement that Eurycles' son Laco renounced all such φιλοτιμία. Are we to conclude that at the time of writing Strabo believed that Laco had no political ambi-

31) art. cit. 114.

32) The text has been transcribed by W. Aly, *De Strabonis codice rescripto cuius reliquiae in codicibus Vaticanis Vat. Gr. 2306 et 2061A servatae sunt*, Vatican City 1956, p. 9 = fol. 205.1. 5–20. The only older texts which have survived are three papyri of 2nd–3rd century date. See P. Oxy. XLIX (1982) no. 3447 (early 2nd century); P. Oxy. inv. 17 2B 57/Ea (ed. D. Hughes, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, London 1972, 154–168); P. Colon. inv. 5861 (ed. B. Krebber, ZPE 9 [1972] 204–221) (both late 2nd–early 3rd century).

33) art. cit. 113–114.

34) Plut. Reg. et Imp. Apophtheg. 207F, elucidated by Chrimes, op. cit. 179. For the suggestion that there was conflict with established families see also Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* 105.

35) Plut. *ibid.*

36) Bowersock suggests that Strabo omitted to refer to the banishment out of tact towards the emperor. But we need not bring in this complication. See Bowersock, art. cit. 114.

tions? If so, this is critical, since the Gytheum decree shows that by A.D. 15 Eurycles was dead, his rehabilitation had taken place, and Laco held power at Sparta³⁷). But the term φιλοτιμία is often used in a pejorative sense to refer to overweening ambitions, and I suggest that Strabo here means that Laco gave up the revolutionary ambitions of his father, rather than that he gave up politics altogether. Thus Strabo's testimony may not be inconsistent with Laco's tenure of Spartan overlordship.

The date at which Strabo wrote the Eurycles passage is relevant to this chronological puzzle. Indeed, the whole question of the date and method of composition of the *Geography* is crucial³⁸). Bowersock accepts an old theory that the geographer completed his work in a first version c. 2 B.C.³⁹). But severe doubts have been cast upon this by the work of W. Aly, who suggests that the work was composed continuously from 15 B.C. until the time of Strabo's death in about A.D. 24 (although with interruptions)⁴⁰). Bowersock supposes that the present passage was an element of the alleged earlier redaction. On this view Strabo wrote before Laco became overlord at Sparta. The argument relies on Strabo's silence about Eurycles' posthumous rehabilitation, and Laco's appointment in his place.

It can be seen that the *terminus ante quem* of 2 B.C. for Eurycles' death is far from secure. The two main sources, Josephus and Strabo, have no real interest in the details, and probably compress events occurring over an extended period. All that is certain is that by A.D. 15 Laco had retrieved his father's reputation to the extent that he could approach the emperor with a view to establishing a festival in Eurycles' honour⁴¹).

Thus Eurycles' rebellion in Greece, his two trials, and subsequent death occurred sometime between 7 B.C. and A.D. 15. It has become traditional to attribute any event, known from other sources, but not datable, to that section of Dio's text which is most defective (i. e. 6 B.C.–A.D. 4). This process should be resisted, and the comprehensiveness of Dio's coverage should not be

37) AE 1929, 99 = EJ² 102.

38) See above note 30.

39) Anderson, op. cit. (n.30), originated the theory that the *Geography* appeared in an early edition soon after 2 B.C. This was an improvement on the theory of E. Pais that the work was composed towards 7 B.C. (Ancient Italy, Chicago 1908, 379–430).

40) W. Aly, *Strabon von Amaseia*, Antiquitas 1.5, Bonn 1957, 18. A similar view is emerging from the Budé edition of Lasserre and his collaborators.

41) This is discussed by Chrimes, op. cit. 171 f.

taken for granted. It is simplest to assume that Dio never treated Eurycles' rebellion⁴²).

Laco soon restored the fortunes of the family, and married his son into an influential Mytilenean family⁴³). The long term prospects of the Euryclids were unaffected by the faux-pas of their first representative with imperial patronage.

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42) Bowersock resorts to this line of argument (art. cit. 116).

43) See Bowersock, *ibid.* 117–118.