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Becoming God 101: Processes of Deification in Classical and Early-Hellenistic Greece

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Becoming God 101

Processes of Deification in Classical and Early-Hellenistic Greece

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Introduction

Οὐδέν γὰρ ἔσται λοιπὸν ἔτι πλὴν θεὸν γενέσθαι.

“After all nothing more will remain except to become a god.”¹

These are the words of Isocrates to king Philip II of Macedon. In this letter, he writes to the king about Philip’s victory in the battle of Chaeronea. Isocrates believes that when Philip will have conquered the great king of Persia and placed him under his command, there will be nothing left for Philip but to become a god. Some scholars believe that Isocrates himself meant his remark about the deification in a hyperbolic sense. But regardless of whether Isocrates literally meant it or not, Philip II very likely did take it literally.² What is fascinating about this matter is that this deification of Philip II – metaphorical or not - was meant to happen during his lifetime and not after, as always had been usual. But when is a living mortal, a tangible person, believed to have successfully become a god and how does he remain a god?

Scholars have already issued a fair amount of research on the deification of living mortals. For example, H. Versnel in chapter six of his *Coping With the Gods*³ discusses ruler cults and whether the population actually believed in the divinity of their rulers. Here Versnel discusses what ‘believing’ means and if the word θεός means the same as our ‘god’. He also states that there is a distinction between acknowledging someone as a god and ascribing godlike qualities to them. According to Versnel the Greeks themselves had no problem with the seeming inconsistencies of deifying living mortals because they had various mechanisms and thinking strategies to cope with that. A. Chaniotis in ‘The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers’⁴ discusses ruler cults as well as the places of worship for the deified mortals and – more importantly for the purposes of this thesis - what a person needs to do to earn divine status. Chaniotis also discusses the hymn of Demetrios and researches if the so-called inconsistencies in the text concerning divinity might not be inconsistent at all but deliberate word choices of the author. In a work to be published in 2022, T. R. Martin in ‘Anchoring Religious Innovation: The Social Psychology of Deification in Athens 307 BCE’⁵ describes the deification of Demetrios in association with cognitive dissonance and the cognitive science of religion concerning the concept of divinity. According to Martin, deification and its consequences are a group experience and therefore should be examined through a sociopsychological lens. These works concern themselves with deification and the decree of divine cult after it has already successfully happened.

The objective of this thesis is to go beyond this to gain insight into why some deified persons in Classical and early Hellenistic Greece, more specifically in the 100-year period after the Peloponnesian war, received divine cult while others received hero cult. For the purpose of this research, I will be analyzing case studies of deifications concerning divine as well as heroic cults in order to determine what the criteria are for a divine cult and successfully becoming a god. What I deem successful is that the deified person in question is not viewed “as if a god” or on “godlike status” but is viewed as an actual god. For the purpose of this, the research question ‘why are some deifications of living mortals succesful, while others are not?’ has been formulated. To find an answer to this question, the following sub-questions have been drawn up: first, what are cults and what is

¹ Isocrates, *Letters to Philip*, 5. Translation by the author of this thesis. All further translations are by the author of this thesis unless stated otherwise.

² During the wedding of Philip’s daughter, which representatives from all over Greece attended, Philip campaigned for his crusade against Asia Minor. The guests bestowed Philip with official honours granted by their cities. For more information about Philip’s crusade see Ellis 2014, 211-234.

³ Versnel 2011, 439-492.

⁴ Chaniotis 2005, 431-445.

⁵ Martin 2022, chapter 14. This unpublished chapter ‘Anchoring Religious Innovation: The Social Psychology of Deification in Athens 307 BCE’ in L. Huitink, V. Glaveanu, and I. Sluiter (eds.), *Social Psychology and the Ancient World: Methods and Applications* was provided to me by prof. dr. I. Sluiter.

deification? Second, what are the criteria for deified, living mortals to receive divine cult? Third, what are the criteria for the worshippers?

In my research I am making use of the theory of cognitive dissonance. Dissonance is something that occurs frequently in all of our daily lives. When you for example bought a new type of cereal that you expect to taste great because it looks good, and then when you taste it and it actually tastes terrible, dissonance occurs. Your beliefs were not in accordance with the thing you experienced. Festinger in his *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* makes the following hypotheses: “1. The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance. 2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.”⁶ The way in which people try and reduce their dissonance is by either changing their behaviour or changing what they know. Quoting Festinger “This theory centres around the idea that if a person knows various things that are not psychologically consistent with one another, he will, in a variety of ways, try to make them more consistent. Two items of information that psychologically do not fit together are said to be in a dissonant relation to each other. [...] Such items can of course be changed. A person can change his opinion; he can change his behaviour, thereby changing the information he has about it; he can even distort his perception and his information about the world around him. Changes in items of information that produce or restore consistency are referred to as dissonance-reducing changes.”⁷ Your brain persuades you into believing something that is in accordance with the worldly situation so you can mentally cope with it. Your brain is then reducing the dissonance. Versnel refers to this as the winking method: “As for the Greeks: they share the common human tendency to prevent multiple registers from clashing. They may do so by a virtuoso winking process, well-known from (socio-)psychological reactions to cognitive dissonance or by means of other culturally ingrained strategies that control perception. Long before the word narratology even existed, every reader (listener) was unconsciously aware that you must not give free rein to everything you know while reading or listening to a story. The narrator focalizes, the reader should adapt, it is part of the game. While one aspect is dominant, others lose their relevance and become part of the background noise. It is all a matter of focus, of perception, of marked or unmarked positions. Evoking an undesired aspect at the wrong moment spoils the story and renders the message a mess: chaos. The good reader or perceiver applies the correct category while closing off the undesired one.”⁸ So coming back to the cereal, the two options you have is to either to change your opinion and now say that the cereal is bad and you stop eating it, or you can convince yourself it is good and keep eating. In this case the first option is the more feasible one. This is because when you keep on eating the terrible cereal you are constantly faced with the dissonance between your opinion that the cereal is good and the experience that it is not. Dissonance has a maximum possible value and when that value is reached the person in question either changes his opinion or his behaviour. Festinger notes that there is a way in which the contradictory statements coexist: “When there exists a strong dissonance that is less than the resistance to change of any of the elements involved, this dissonance can perhaps still be reduced for the total cognitive system by adding new cognitive elements. In this way, even in the presence of very strong resistances to change, the total dissonance in the system could be kept at rather low levels. [...] With these cognitions and others, he might succeed in rendering the dissonance negligible.”⁹

To gain insight into this subject and to answer the research question this thesis is divided into 4 chapters. The first chapter concerns itself with concept of deification among living mortals. In this chapter we first discuss the definitions of cults and deification. Secondly there is an examination of the differences between receiving religious or secular honours during one’s lifetime. Lastly there is a

⁶ Festinger 1962a, 3. Read Festinger’s *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* for an extensive explanation on the aspiration of human beings to reduce dissonance.

⁷ Festinger 1962b, 93; See also Versnel 1990, 7.

⁸ Versnel 2011, 148.

⁹ Festinger 1962a, 28.

study of the difference in wording of these different kinds of deification. Once we have established what deification is when it concerns religious honours and divine cult, we go into the next chapter. The second chapter deals with the criteria for a deified person. What does one need to do as a living god? To answer this question, we will look at two examples of deified persons who received divine cult, namely Lysandros of Samos and Agesilaos of Sparta. After this we will also investigate two deifications concerning secular honours and establish what the reasons for the attribution of secular - instead of religious honours - was. For this we will use the examples of Empedokles and Demetrios Poliorketes. The case studies mentioned above are chosen because Lysandros and Agesilaos are the first two Greeks to ever receive a divine cult which might give us an insight in what the original criteria for receiving divine cult were before Alexander the Great demanded a deification and changed the idea of deification forever. Empedokles and Demetrios are chosen based on the fact that they were deified in the same 100-year period as the first two case studies and still earned their deification based on their actions and not because they commanded it as Alexander did. At the end of the chapter, we can conclude what the requirements and pitfalls are for receiving divine cult in classical and early Hellenistic Greece. However, gods are nothing without their worshippers and those play an important role in attesting honours in cults. Hence in chapter three we discuss the criteria for the worshippers of the deified, living mortals who received divine cult. Do the worshippers only need to believe or is it also a necessity that they devote altars and bring offerings to the deified person? In this chapter we will also discuss what the worshippers expect of human-god since this also plays a big role in whether the people accept one's divine status. Lastly, we go into what role cognitive dissonance plays. Because living mortals cannot display some of the characteristic qualities of the gods such as immortality and omnipotence, there must be a coping mechanism the worshippers use to handle this contradictory matter. After we have determined what deification means, what deified living mortals and what worshippers need to do to realize a successful, religious deification, we can answer the research question 'why are some deifications of living mortals succesful, while others are not?' in the conclusion.

1. Deification

Deification is generally seen as the act of elevating someone or something to the status of a god. This act initially only occurred after the death of the person who earned this status. Lysandros of Samos was the first Greek said to have been deified during his lifetime after which many more followed. This chapter firstly gives an explanation of cults and what it means to be deified. Secondly the differences between deifications with secular and religious honours and hero cult and divine cult are discussed. Lastly this chapter goes over the language used to describe the act of deification during one's life in ancient texts and the focus will mainly be on the words used for 'god' and 'honouring'. More in-depth information about the deified persons and their way to deification will be given in the next chapter.

1.1 Cults and deification

A cult, according to Antonaccio, is "a pattern of ritual behaviour in connection with specific objects, within a framework of spatial and temporal coordinates. Ritual behaviour would include (but not necessarily be restricted to) prayer, sacrifice, votive offerings, competitions, processions, and construction of monuments. Some degree both of recurrence in place and repetition over time of ritual action is necessary for cult to be enacted, to be practiced. Such factors distinguish a cult of a god or hero from occasional rituals."¹⁰ It is the differences in rituals that distinguish the different cults from each other.¹¹ The cults I will mainly focus on in this research are the hero cult and the divine cult. A hero cult is a cult that is dedicated to someone who was superhuman during his lifetime. This can mean literally superhuman as in the case of Heracles who was a child of Zeus and therefore more than human but still less than a god. Superhuman can also refer to someone who performed amazing actions during his lifetime for the good of mortals and because of that he is honoured with a cult. These people were often commended for great military accomplishments or outstanding leadership. Hero cult was per definition something the recipient received in death. Later on, the living could also receive hero cult. A divine cult is a cult that is dedicated to a god. If a person is to receive a divine cult he must be deified.

The definition of deification that Taeger gives is as follows: "Mit Sicherheit ist die Vergottung überall dann erst gewährleistet, wenn der Kult einem durch seinen Namen als neuer Gott charakterisierten Menschen gilt, oder wenn dieser ausdrücklich als irdische Ersteigung eines alten Gottes bezeichnet wird, oder wenn der Geehrte, wie Alexander einst, einfach Gott genannt wird. Überall dort, wo dies nicht der Fall ist oder wo einschränkende Wendungen wie 'ὦς', gebraucht werden, haben wir keine Vergottung, sondern die äußerst häufige hybride Übertragung von kultischen Ehrungen auf einen bloßen Menschen vor uns."¹² As opposed to Taeger's definition, I will classify any attribution of divine honours as deification. Any acknowledgment of divine honours indicates an elevation of a human to a godlike status. Although it is not a transformation into a full god, any ascription of godly honours is a deification. The term I will assign to Taeger's definition of deification is the attribution of divine cult.

1.2 Divine honours and divine cult

There is not a distinct line between hero and divine cult. In the 5th century BCE Lysandros was the first person to receive divine cult during his life. There are also cases of people receiving cult with religious elements but that cannot be fully classified as divine. These cults are hero cults. To further illustrate this distinction, we might look at Ekroth's spectrum of gods, heroes, and deceased: "It is important to stress, however, that gods, heroes, and the dead are all linked to each other. Each group cannot be treated as a clear-cut, well-defined entity. Rather, a spectrum must be imagined,

¹⁰ Antonaccio 1994, 398.

¹¹ More on this in chapter 1.2.

¹² Taeger 1957, 258-259.

shifting from gods at one end to the dead at the other. The slide from one side of the spectrum to the other may be better understood, if each god, hero, and deceased person is imagined as being made up of two parts, not necessarily of the same size. Thus, it is possible to picture their relationship in the following manner.”¹³

When applying Ekroth’s system to the types of cults it is clear that the God/God category falls under

God/God
God/Hero
Hero/Hero
Hero/Deceased
Deceased/Deceased

the divine cult. When granting a divine cult, the deified person receives strictly religious honours. Religious honours belonging to divine cult are the following as stated by Taeger: “Der Gott oder der gottgleich Geehrte erhält eine Kultstätte oder einen heiligen Hain mit einem Altar und Kultbild. Opfers und regelmäßige, meist alljährlich veranstaltete Kulthandlungen agonalen Charakters finden ihm zu Ehren statt. Kultlieder werden auf ihn gesungen. Zeiteinheiten werden nach ihm benannt und unter seinen Schutz gestellt. Gelegentlich wird er auch zum Beschützer von ganzen Städten, die seinen Namen annehmen, oder von Untergliederungen der Gemeinden, eine Sitte, die bis tief in die Kaiserzeit sich erhalten hat.”¹⁴ In summary, the ritual practices in divine cult are a place of worship, cult image, regular sacrifices, cult songs and the naming after the deified person of a time unit.

Under the Hero/Hero category we classify the hero cult. In hero cult the living worshipped person receives secular honours. The honours and practices surrounding cult concerning a living person were automatically secular.¹⁵ Secular honours are honours that are not related to religion. This can for example be the construction of a τέμενος, a piece of land or a sanctuary dedicated to worshipping a mortal. When the hero cult is established after the hero has died there might be a tomb built for him.

The category God/Hero falls under the in-between class. In this in-between category there are variations of the distribution of the two parts. As can be seen in the ritual practice of the cults, some deified persons in this in-between category may receive only prayers as a religious honour but others may well have hymns sung for them and altars erected.¹⁶ This spectrum does not indicate that the divine cult is better than the hero cult with divine honours as such. It does indicate that the divine cult is further into the religious realm and consequently more difficult to attain for a mortal. The references to a hero or ruler being a ‘god’ are purely hyperbolic so long as the hero or ruler is only said to be god but is not in practice treated as a god. When the deified person in question is not only said to be a god, as is sometimes the case in hero cult, but is also treated as a god in accordance with Taeger’s qualifications, we speak of divine cult.

1.3 Literary research

In the literary accounts of the events of deification there are multiple ways in which the vocabulary of deification is described. The author may refer to the person in question as ‘god’ θεός, but he may also suggest the deified person is a god by describing the ritual practices performed for said person. There are instances in which the author describes the deified person as ‘god’ θεός in other cases the deified individual is described as receiving ‘godlike’ honours or honours ‘as if a god’ ὡς θεός. Let us

¹³ Ekroth 2002, 330.

¹⁴ Taeger 1957, 259. Taeger notes that these rituals find some overlap in the hero cult. However, the usual terms used for rituals in hero cults on tablets and in literary tradition differentiate from the terms used for rituals in divine cult. See for example the explanation of ναοί in chapter 1.3.

¹⁵ See Currie 2005, 8-9. Currie here raises the question if it is true that all honours given to a living person are automatically secular and suggest we should revise this idea.

¹⁶ More on ritual practices for deified persons in chapter 3.

first look at the first deified Greek that we know of and what description is given of his deification in literature.

The deification of the Spartan admiral Lysandros of Samos is described by the Greek historian Duris of Samos. His account of Lysandros' deification is handed down fragmentary by Plutarch in his *Parallel Lives: Life of Lysander*. The fragment states the following: **πρώτῳ μὲν γάρ, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Δοῦρις, Ἑλλήνων ἐκείνῳ βωμοὺς αἱ πόλεις ἀνέστησαν ὡς θεῷ καὶ θυσίας ἔθυσαν εἰς πρῶτον δὲ παιᾶνες ᾄσθησαν,**¹⁷ *"For indeed he was, as Duris records, the first one of the Greeks for whom the cities built altars and made sacrifices as to a god and the first for whom paeans were sung as well,"* Duris describes that Lysandros received divine cult and that sacrifices were made to him "as to a god", ὡς θεῷ. The exact wording here holds significant meaning. Duris reports that the Samian people sacrificed to Lysandros in the same way as they would sacrifice to a god, indicating that the people genuinely viewed him as being a god. This in contrast to descriptions of deifications where the sacrifices and honours were given "as if to a god" ὡς θεός. The difference might seem small but making sacrifices "as if to a god" suggests that the worshippers viewed the deified person as someone deserving the same honours as a god but not as someone who is a god.

Around the same time as Lysandros' deification, the Thasians wanted to bestow Agesilaos of Sparta with divine cult. Plutarch in his *Sayings of Spartans* states that the Thasians *"honoured him with temples and deifications"* **ναοὺς αὐτὸν καὶ ἀποθεώσεσι τιμησάντων.**¹⁸ Even though Agesilaos himself refused the deification, the Thesians who had decreed the divine honours must have deemed Agesilaos worthy of receiving them.¹⁹ As Plutarch said, the Thesians honoured him with temples, ναοὺς. Chaniotis in *'The Divinity of Hellenistic Rulers'* states that "An important difference between ruler cult and the cult of the gods is that temples (ναοὶ) were rarely dedicated to rulers, either living or dead."²⁰ Ναοί were reserved for gods only. For kings, a τέμενος was normally established. Because Agesilaos was specifically honoured with ναοί, temples for gods only, we must therefore assume that the Thasians saw him as a god. The most obvious marker for the Thasians' belief in Agesilaos' divinity is of course that Plutarch declares that the people honoured him with ἀποθεώσεις, literally "deifications".

Another person who received religious honours during his lifetime, but no divine cult is the Sicilian philosopher Empedokles. He as a matter of fact declared himself a god and this was supported by the Selinuntines.²¹ Diogenes Laertius reports that Empedokles stated the following: **ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητὸς πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα, ταινίαις τε περιστέπτος στέφεσιν τε θαλείοις**²² *"An immortal god to you am I, no longer mortal I roam among all bearing honour, just as is fitting, crowned with headbands and blooming wreaths."* Empedokles uses the predicative nominative noun θεός as a subject complement. A subject complement has the function of supplementing or describing the subject it belongs to. In the case of Empedokles this means that the word θεός describes the subject, which is ἐγώ, implying that the ἐγώ and the θεός are the same individual and that Empedokles therefore is a god. Diogenes Laertius also shares a report of Hippobotus who says **εἶτα παραγενόμενον ἐπὶ τοὺς κρατῆρας τοῦ πυρὸς ἐναλέσθαι καὶ ἀφανισθῆναι, βουλόμενον τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ φήμην βεβαιῶσαι ὅτι γεγόνοι θεός,**²³ *"Then, when he had arrived at the craters of fire, he leaped in and vanished, wanting to confirm the report about him that he had become a god."* Here again we see the use of the predicative nominative noun θεός as a subject complement of the 'he' subject that is Empedokles. A third account of Empedokles' deification comes from Diodorus of Ephesus, again through Diogenes Laertius. Diodorus is said to have stated the next sentence **Οὕτω δὲ λήξαντος τοῦ λοιμοῦ καὶ τῶν**

¹⁷ Plutarch, *Life of Lysander* 18.2.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Sayings of Spartans* 25.

¹⁹ More on Agesilaos refusal of divine cult can be found in chapter 3.

²⁰ Chaniotis 2005, 438-439.

²¹ See Currie 2005, 167-168 on the literary references to Empedokles' deification.

²² Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.62.

²³ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.69.

Σελινουντίων εὐωχουμένων ποτὲ παρὰ τῷ ποταμῷ, ἐπιφανῆναι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα· ἐπιφανῆναι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα· τοὺς δ' ἐξαναστάντας προσκυνεῖν καὶ προσεύχεσθαι καθάπερ θεῷ.²⁴ “When in this way the plague was terminated and the Selinuntines were once feasting by the side of the river, Empedokles appeared and after they rose up, they worshipped him and offered prayers exactly like to a god.” The adverb καθάπερ consists of the word καθά meaning ‘like’ and the enclitic particle περ meaning ‘exactly’. καθάπερ therefore not only means that Empedokles was worshipped *like* a god, but the worship for Empedokles is the exact same as the way of worship for gods.

In the 3rd century BCE Macedonian King Demetrios Poliorketes was deified and received some religious honours and thus semi-divine cult. For him, a hymn was written by Hermokles of Kyzikos, and this was passed down to us by Duris of Samos.²⁵ Lines 13-22 read the following: ὦ τοῦ κρατίστου παῖ Ποσειδῶνος θεοῦ, χαῖρε, κάφροδίτης. Ἄλλοι μὲν ἢ μακρὰν γὰρ ἀπέχουσιν θεοὶ ἢ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ὦτα, ἢ οὐκ εἰσὶν, ἢ οὐ προσέχουσιν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ ἔν· σὲ δὲ παρόνθ' ὀρώμεν, οὐ ξύλινον, οὐδὲ λίθινον, ἀλλ' ἀληθινόν. Εὐχόμεσθα δὴ σοι· πρῶτον μὲν εἰρήνην ποιήσον, φίλτατε· κύριος γὰρ εἶ σύ.²⁶ “Thou child of mightiest god Poseidon and Aphrodite. Other gods either keep off at length or do not have ears or do not exist or do not attend to us. But thee we see being present, no wood and no stone but real. We pray to thee, firstly make peace, most beloved, because thou hast the power.” In this hymn Demetrios is not specifically called a god but it is suggested that he is. Firstly, Demetrios is called ὦ τοῦ κρατίστου παῖ Ποσειδῶνος θεοῦ, χαῖρε, κάφροδίτης “Thou child of mightiest god Poseidon and Aphrodite” It goes without saying that being a child of two gods would automatically make the child a god too. In the next lines the hymn states that “Other gods keep off at length” Ἄλλοι θεοὶ ἀπέχουσιν. In contrast to this, the hymn declares “but thee we see being present” σὲ δὲ παρόνθ' ὀρώμεν. Saying that other gods are *not* present, but that Demetrios *is*, indicates that Demetrios is also part of the group of θεοί. Yet again the hymn does not literally say “Demetrios is a god”, but the former statements strongly allude to it.

After reviewing the used language for the deification and the persons who received religious honours, we can conclude that the wording focuses on underlining that the deified persons were not *like* gods and received *godlike* worship, but that they actually *were gods*. This is true for semi-divine as well as divine cult meaning that in use of language both types of cults are described in the same way. The differences of the cults are to be found in practice rather than in language.

²⁴ Diogenes Laertius 8.70.

²⁵ Versnel 2011, 445.

²⁶ Athenaeus 4.

2. Case studies

The purpose of analysing case studies is to determine what the deified persons did to make themselves worthy of a deification and what each of them did to deserve either a divine or a hero cult. In this chapter four deified persons are studied. The first two are cases of deified persons that received a divine cult and the last two are cases of deified persons that received a hero cult with divine elements. The aim of this chapter is to study what the first two case studies did in order to earn a divine cult and what the last two case studies did to fall short of earning a divine cult.

2.1 Receivers of divine cult

2.1.1 Lysandros of Samos

Little is known of the youth of Lysandros. He lived from about the middle of the 5th century until his death at the battle of Haliartus in 395 BCE. The majority of what is known has come to us from Plutarch's *Life of Lysander* and Xenophon's *Hellenica*. Bommelaer notes that although the literary sources about Lysandros and Sparta are not lacking, they are often coloured. He does however mention Plutarch as an exception: "En particulier la *Vie de Lysandre* de Plutarque présente des développements assez longs et un jugement d'apparence équilibrée sur les ambitions du personnage et sur l'évolution de ses projets."²⁷ Plutarch tells us that Lysandros is the son of Aristocleitus, a descendant of Herakles, and that he grew up in poverty.²⁸ He was the paragon of a Spartan citizen: manly and above the temptation of pleasures except for the honourable ones. Lysandros was able to remain indifferent to the arrogance of others as to focus on achieving his own goals. A trait beneficial for those who dream to pursue a political career.²⁹ However, Plutarch is not only positive about Lysandros. He claims that Lysandros damaged Sparta's admirable, uncaring attitude towards wealth by importing vast amounts of precious metals, even though he himself did not keep any of it.³⁰

The Peloponnesian war had been going on for a considerable amount of time with the Spartans threatening to obtain domination of the sea. However, when the Athenian statesman and general Alcibiades made his comeback after being exiled, the Athenians once again formed a threat to the Spartans. To match this new maritime power, the Spartans in 407 BCE chose to appoint a new commander of the fleet: Lysandros. Lysandros turned Ephesus into his base and promoted the economy which made Ephesus into the successful city it later became.³¹ Lysandros formed an alliance with Cyrus who provided him the requested money to raise his sailors pay for which Lysandros was greatly praised and because of which the Spartan moral was substantially strengthened.³² When Lysandros was enticed by Alcibiades' pilot Antiochus, he pulled out his fleet and a naval battle ensued that the Spartans won. After his victory Lysandros played into the minds of Greeks who he deemed outstanding and encouraged them to form oligargic political parties so that they could use their political power to obtain absolute rule of their countries once the Athenians had been defeated. Lysandros' other connections were promoted to manage important business. As a result of this he gained favour with many people and the belief was created that all would be well as long as Lysandros was in command.³³ After Lysandros' successor Callicratidas perished in the sea battle of Arginusae³⁴ the Spartans wished for Lysandros to return to command the fleet. The Spartans found a loophole in the law that stated that the same man could not be admiral twice and sent Lysandros out

²⁷ Bommelaer 1981, 2. Bommelaer has written one of the more extensive biographies on Lysandros' life.

²⁸ Aelian *Various Histories* 12 and Athenaeus 6 hand down that Lysandros rose up from being a slave.

²⁹ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 2.

³⁰ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 2.

³¹ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 3.

³² Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 4.

³³ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 5.

³⁴ 406 BC.

as the representative of the appointed admiral.³⁵ Lysandros conducted a plan to feed the confidence of the Athenians as to make them so self-assured that they would drop their guard. Lysandros used their inattentiveness to make an end to the war in a mere hour in the battle of Aegospotami in 405 BCE.³⁶ Lysandros ordered all Athenians to return to Athens and returned the occupied land to its former inhabitants, something for which the Samians were most thankful as will become clear in chapter 3. He made an agreement with the Athenians after which almost the entire fleet surrendered.³⁷ All the gifts the admiral received, which were many since he was deemed the master of all Greece, he gave away, **Ὁ δὲ Λύσανδρος ἀπὸ τούτων γενόμενος, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπὶ Θράκης ἐξέπλευσε, τῶν δὲ χρημάτων τὰ περιόντα καὶ ὅσας δωρεὰς αὐτὸς ἢ στεφάνους ἐδέξατο, πολλῶν, ὡς εἰκός, διδόντων ἀνδρὶ δυνατωτάτῳ καὶ τρόπον τινὰ κυρίῳ τῆς Ἑλλάδος,**³⁸ *“Lysandros after he had done these things, he himself sailed out to Thrace and he gave away the remnants of the money and as many gifts and crowns as he had gotten, after many people had given them, as is fitting, to the most powerful man and, in some way, to the master of Hellas.”*

Although Lysandros was reproached for his favouritism, his military accomplishments weighed heavier. He earned his deification by his sharing of wealth, his political cleverness but most importantly his military wit. Lysandros was the determining factor in the victory of the Spartans in the Peloponnesian war and secured a steady position of Sparta as the dominator of Greece.

2.1.2 Agesilaos of Sparta

Most of the information that has been handed down to us about Agesilaos comes from Plutarch and Xenophon. It is however important to note that Xenophon is not a very objective source when it comes to Agesilaos. “Xenophon, one of our main surviving narrative sources for all Greek history between about 410 and 360,” as Cartledge says, “was also a personal friend and political client of Agesilaos besides being his first ‘biographer’.”³⁹ It is therefore important that we put Xenophon’s and Plutarch’s accounts on Agesilaos’ life in juxtaposition as to gain a less biased view of his life.

Agesilaos was a Spartan peer of Lysandros and is said to have been deified around the time of Lysandros’ death.⁴⁰ The two were acquainted as well and Lysandros assisted Agesilaos on his way to the throne. The relationship between these two also influenced Agesilaos’ deification as will become clear in the next chapter. Agesilaos was, as Lysandros was, a descendant of Herakles but moreover he was a king’s son.⁴¹ Agesilaos was the second son of king Archidamus and because of the fact that he would not succeed his father, he received the normal, obedience-focused, Spartan education. Because of this Agesilaos formed traits that would later make him popular with his subjects. **διὸ καὶ φασιν ὑπὸ τοῦ Σιμωνίδου τὴν Σπάρτην προσηγορεῦσθαι “δαμασίμβροτον,” ὡς μάλιστα διὰ τῶν ἐθῶν τοὺς πολίτας τοῖς νόμοις πειθηνίους καὶ χειροήθεις ποιοῦσαν, ὥσπερ ἵππους εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς δαμαζομένους. ταύτης ἀφίησιν ὁ νόμος τῆς ἀνάγκης τοὺς ἐπὶ βασιλείᾳ τρεφομένους παῖδας. Ἀγησιλάῳ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο ὑπῆρξεν ἴδιον, ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄρχεῖν μὴ ἀπαίδευτον τοῦ ἄρχεσθαι. διὸ καὶ πολὺ τῶν βασιλέων εὐαρμοστότατον αὐτὸν τοῖς ὑπηκόοις παρέσχε, τῷ φύσει ἡγεμονικῷ καὶ βασιλικῷ προσκτησάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγωγῆς τὸ δημοτικὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον.**⁴² *“And because of this reason they say that Sparta is called as ‘mortal-taming’ by Semonides, because the customs make the citizens most obedient to laws and most manageable, just as horses that are tamed straight from the beginning. The law concerning this obligation exempts the children who are raised for kingship. But this was different in the case of Agesilaos as well, since he*

³⁵ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 7.

³⁶ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 11. It was believed by some people that the gods (specifically Castor and Pollux) must have had a hand in the matter for this feat was accomplished by a single man.

³⁷ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 14.

³⁸ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 16.

³⁹ Cartledge 1987, 5.

⁴⁰ Currie 2005, 160.

⁴¹ Xenophon *Agesilaos* 1.2.

⁴² Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 1.

was educated in being ruled before he went on to rule. Because of this, he was also the most in harmony with his subjects of many of the kings; Besides being authoritative and kingly by nature, he also gained popularity and benefaction by his upbringing.” The Spartan education must have been particularly challenging for Agesilaos since he was born with a deformed leg. This unfortunate circumstance toughened Agesilaos and made him that more driven to accomplish his aspirations but also more desiring of the approval of others. **Τὴν δὲ τοῦ σκέλους πῆρως ἢ τε ὥρα τοῦ σώματος ἀνθοῦντος ἐπέκρυπτε, καὶ τὸ ῥαδίως φέρειν καὶ ἱλαρῶς τὸ τοιοῦτο, παίζοντα καὶ σκώπτοντα πρῶτον ἑαυτὸν, οὐ μικρὸν ἦν ἐπανόρθωμα τοῦ πάθους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἐκδηλοτέραν ἐποίει, πρὸς μηδὲν πόνον μηδὲ πρᾶξιν ἀπαγορεύοντος αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν χωλότητα.**⁴³ “The youth of his body in bloom has hidden the disability of his leg and that he also carried such a thing easily and cheerfully, he being first to mock and joke about himself, was no small amelioration of his suffering but it made his ambition clearer, giving up neither labour and nor task because of his disability.” Although ambitious as he is thought to have been, no record survives of Agesilaos’ involvement in the Peloponnesian War, indicating that he either did not fight in the war or he did fight but it was not noteworthy.⁴⁴

Even though Agesilaos was not first in line for the throne after his brother’s death, the state decided in favour of his ascension over his nephew Leotychides. According to Xenophon this was because “The state, deeming Agesilaos to be more blameless in terms of birth as well as in excellence, appointed him as king.” **κρίνασα ἡ πόλις ἀνεπικλητότερον εἶναι Ἀγησίλαον καὶ τῷ γένει καὶ τῇ ἀρετῇ τοῦτον ἐστήσατο βασιλέα.**⁴⁵ Nevertheless Plutarch tells us that it was through the assistance of Lysandros that Agesilaos gained favour.⁴⁶ There was an oracle by Diopieithes that declared: **Φράζεο δὴ, Σπάρτη, καίπερ μέγαν λαὸν ἔοῦσα, μὴ σέθεν ἀρτίποδος βλάστη χωλὴ βασιλεία·** **δηρὸν γὰρ νοῦσσί σε κατασχέσουσιν ἄελπτοι φθισιβρότου τ’ ἐπὶ κύμα κυλινδόμενον πολέμοιο.**⁴⁷ “Beware, Sparta, even if you are very glorious, lest you, swift of foot, produce a lame kingdom. For all too long desperate plagues will restrain you as well as on-going waves of man-destroying war.” Initially the people interpreted the oracle as meaning that the oracle referred to Agesilaos since he had a lame leg. However, Lysandros convinced the Spartan assembly that the lameness of the oracle referred to a lame reign, meaning a reign by an illegitimate king that was not truly a descendant of Heracles id est Leotychides.⁴⁸ Roughly two years after Agesilaos ascended the throne, there was news that the Persians were assembling their naval army to threaten Greece.⁴⁹ Lysandros insisted that Agesilaos go to Asia Minor as general to settle his army there before the Persians would arrive. What Xenophon omits but Plutarch does say is that after some time Agesilaos felt insulted by Lysandros’ influence on him and in this campaign. Even though Agesilaos was the appointed general, all the real authority seemed to lie with Lysandros. The Spartan king seemed base next to the prestigious Lysandros. Agesilaos retaliated out of fear that all credits for the campaign would be ascribed to Lysandros instead of him. He decided to oppose any and all plans suggested by Lysandros. In 395 BCE Agesilaos devised a plan to trick Persian satrap Tissaphernes because of which

⁴³ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 2.

⁴⁴ As Hamilton 2019, 23 n.71 also remarks, it is remarkable that neither Xenophon nor Plutarch mentions anything about a military career during the Peloponnesian War. It is known that Xenophon, as a friend of Agesilaos, deliberately omits some parts of Agesilaos’ life, but Plutarch does not. This would indicate one of three things: Agesilaos did not achieve any military feats worth mentioning by Plutarch, Agesilaos accomplished so little that the information on it did not reach Plutarch or he did not accomplish anything at all.

⁴⁵ Xenophon *Agesilaos* 1.5.

⁴⁶ It was during the early years of the Peloponnesian War that Agesilaos and Lysandros met. They established a ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος relationship and Agesilaos was sponsored by Lysandros. For further information on their relationship, see Cartledge 1987, 28-29 and Hamilton 2019, 19.

⁴⁷ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 4.

⁴⁸ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 3-4; Leotychides is said to have been a bastard and therefore not a true son of the king.

⁴⁹ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 6; Xenophon *Agesilaos* 1.6.

he was able to stand victorious at the battle of Sardis.⁵⁰ After this, Agesilaos was the first monarch to have received command of the naval forces as well as the military forces. He was now **καὶ μέγιστος μὲν ἦν ὁμολογουμένως καὶ τῶν τότε ζώντων ἐπιφανέστατος, ὡς εἴρηκεν που καὶ Θεόπομπος**,⁵¹ “Commonly considered both the greatest and also the most remarkable of living men then, as Theopompus also recorded somewhere.”

Looking at Agesilaos’ life story up till his attempted deification in 394 BCE, he seems to have been a puppet of Lysandros for the first part of his career. Although Agesilaos had an ambitious character, he lacked the military wit and decisiveness for which Lysandros was known. The great reputation Agesilaos gained was because Agesilaos for the most part did what Lysandros told him to do. Without Lysandros, the Spartan king would have never even become the Spartan king.

2.2 Receivers of hero cult with religious honours

2.2.1 Empedokles

Empedokles lived from 494 BCE until 434 BCE and was therefore roughly one generation older than the former discussed persons. He was said to have been the son of Meton and named after his distinguished grandfather Empedokles who was known for keeping racehorses and his victory in the 71st Olympics.⁵² One thing that is for sure is that Empedokles was native to Agrigento because he himself claims that in his *Purifications*.⁵³ Aristotle, according to Diogenes Laertius, has called Empedokles **πρῶτον Ἐμπεδοκλέα ῥητορικὴν εὐρεῖν**, “the first to have discovered rhetoric” in his *Sophist* and ... **φησιν ὅτι καὶ Ὀμηρικὸς ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ δεινὸς περὶ τὴν φράσιν γέγονεν, μεταφορητικὸς τε ὢν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς περὶ ποιητικὴν ἐπιτεύγμασι χρώμενος** “... he says that Empedokles was both of Homeric level and also accomplished in expressions and being good with metaphors as well as in the use of other poetical advantages” in his *On Poets*.⁵⁴ Empedokles was not only admired for his wonderful diction but also for his inventiveness and his medical knowledge. Heraclides in his *On Diseases* relates that Empedokles taught Pausanias about the woman in a trance. It is said that Empedokles woke the breathless and lifeless woman after a coma of thirty days. It was after this event that Empedokles declared himself god **ἐγὼ δ’ ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητὸς πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα, ταινίαις τε περιστέπτος στέφεσιν τε θαλείοις**.⁵⁵ “An immortal god to you am I, no longer mortal I roam among all bearing honour, just as is fitting, crowned with headbands and blooming wreaths.” Xanthus and Timaeus related that kingship was offered to Empedokles, but that he declined because he preferred a more sober lifestyle.⁵⁶ Empedokles, an advocate of democracy, broke up the assembly of the thousand not long after it was set up. According to Diogenes Laertius this indicates that he was wealthy as well as a supporter of the popular cause.⁵⁷ After Empedokles had performed another medical miracle, namely ridding the Selinuntines of pestilence, they worshipped and prayed to him as to a god **τοὺς δ’ ἐξαναστάντας προσκυνεῖν καὶ προσεύχεσθαι καθάπερ εἰ θεῷ**.⁵⁸ “after they rose up, they worshiped him and offered prayers exactly like to a god.”

The admiration for Empedokles stems from a few fields: the poetic the political and the medical field. His poetic talent does not so much attribute to his reception of religious honours as his

⁵⁰ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 10.

⁵¹ Plutarch *Life of Agesilaos* 10. Theopompus of Chios was a Greek historian in classical Greece.

⁵² Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.51; Diogenes Laertius states that this information was conveyed by Hippobotus, Timaeus, Hermippus, Heraclides and Apollodorus. There are however many records that state otherwise. Since Empedokles himself was named after another Empedokles it is plausible that the many authors may be referring to various other Empedokleses.

⁵³ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.57; Aristotle *Sophist* Fr. 112D.

⁵⁴ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.57.

⁵⁵ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.62.

⁵⁶ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.63-64.

⁵⁷ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.2.66.

⁵⁸ Diogenes Laertius *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 8.70.

political and medical expertise. He was a well-liked politician because of his advocacy for democracy and his support of the popular cause. Most importantly the people of Selinunte deemed it fitting to honour him as a god because of the medical wonders he performed. In chapter 3 we will look more closely at who the Selinuntines were and what their relationship with Empedokles was.

2.2.2 Demetrios Poliorketes

Demetrios was born in 357 BCE and was the son of Macedonian-Greek nobleman Antigonos. There is however a dispute whether he was his biological son or his nephew that he adopted when he married Demetrios' mother who had but recently become a widow. Demetrios was a handsome, strong and dignified man.⁵⁹ His relationship with his father was trusting and loving, something that is not always self-evident in a royal family.⁶⁰ According to Plutarch his acts showed he was naturally inclined towards kindness and justice.⁶¹

Demetrios' first expedition was at the age of twenty-two, but because of his military inexperience due to his young age, he faced defeat.⁶² Because of this the enemy general Cilles started to underestimate Demetrios and attempted to drive him out of Syria. Cilles' underestimation cost him dear for Demetrios performed a surprise attack and captured all of Cilles' camps. This victory brought Demetrios much wealth, but what he valued most was the power he now had to do more just deeds.⁶³ After this, Demetrios subjected the Arabian Nabataean, invaded Babylonia, and saved Halicarnassus of an enemy siege.⁶⁴ All this led up to the most righteous war of all to release Greece from the subjection by Cassander and Ptolemy and to return freedom to all Greek citizens. Demetrios and his father commenced this war by sailing for Athens, the gateway to all Greece. On arrival he announced: *"that his father sent him with good fortune to free Athens and to overthrow the guard and to restore to them their laws and the constitution of their forefathers."* **ὅτι πέμψειεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατήρ ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἐλευθερώσοντα καὶ τὴν φρουρὰν ἐκβαλοῦντα καὶ τοὺς νόμους αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν πάτριον ἀποδώσοντα πολιτείαν.**⁶⁵ The people of Athens are said to have been overjoyed with Demetrios' arrival: **Ἀναρρηθέντων δὲ τούτων οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ παραχρῆμα τὰς ἀσπίδας θέμενοι πρὸ τῶν ποδῶν ἀνεκρότησαν καὶ βοῶντες ἐκέλευον ἀποβαίνειν τὸν Δημήτριον, εὐεργέτην καὶ σωτῆρα προσαγορεύοντες**⁶⁶ *"After the news broke out, many immediately threw down their shield before their feet and applauded and shouted and urged Demetrios to land, greeting him as a benefactor and saviour."* The overjoy of the Athenians may have been partly caused by great relief. This will be clarified in chapter 3 by looking at the political situation of Athens. Cassander, the leader of Macedonia, was an enemy of Demetrios. Because of this the Athenians on Demetrios' arrival initially presumed he had come to attack the city. However, when Demetrios proclaimed he had come to save it, the Athenians must have been extremely relieved for this sudden turn of events. Another factor that influenced the Athenians' mindset towards Demetrios is the fact the Alcibiades, exactly one hundred years before, sailed into the same harbour during the Peloponnesian War on the unluckiest day of the year.⁶⁷ It was after this day that Alcibiades' successes stopped and he met with the earlier discussed Lysandros.⁶⁸ Demetrios, arriving on the same unlucky day, did not meet an unlucky fate as Alcibiades did. He avoided this fate and managed to bring freedom to Athens, something that even the gods had not managed to do in the many years before. Hereafter Demetrios sailed for Megara and gave the city back its freedom just as

⁵⁹ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 2.2.

⁶⁰ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 3.1-3.

⁶¹ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 4.4.

⁶² Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 5.2-3.

⁶³ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 6.1-3.

⁶⁴ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 7.

⁶⁵ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 8.5.

⁶⁶ Plutarch *Life of Demetrios* 9.1.

⁶⁷ This day was the 25th of Thargelion (May/June), the day that the statue of Athena was cleaned.

⁶⁸ Martin 2022, page 8 of chapter 14.

he did for Munychia. It was because of this salvation that the Athenian assembly voted for Demetrios to be declared a saviour god.

The main objective for Demetrios' deification was liberation of the Greeks from under the oppression of Cassander and Ptolomy. The fact that the Greeks expected war but were met with salvation must have made the liberation that more awesome, especially since they got lucky on the unluckiest day of the year. Demetrios did what the gods could not: bring peace.

2.3 Why deification took place

After reviewing the deified persons there are a few similarities to be found in all cases. All men are from noble families and are involved in politics. Their involvement in politics is mostly military in the cases of Lysandros, Agesilaos and Demetrios. These men were also all said to have had a very strong character. However, the most important similarity between all cases is that all four have performed a 'miracle'. They accomplished something that was deemed (almost) impossible until they managed to achieve it. This is either ending a war in the cases of Lysandros and Demetrios, stopping a war from happening in the case of Agesilaos or bringing someone back from the dead and eradicating a plague in the case of Empedokles. It must be noted that Agesilaos was the extension of Lysandros and that was a factor that might have weighed heavily in his earning of a divine cult. Empedokles performed a medical miracle instead of a military miracle as the other three deified men did, which might have some influence on why he received hero cult and not divine cult. But when we compare Lysandros with Demetrios, it must be admitted that there is no significant difference to note in their achievements that could explain why Lysandros received divine cult and Demetrios hero cult. As a result of this we must assume that the explanation is to be found with the people who decreed the cult.

3. How deification took place

All four deified people received cult for their miraculous achievements. These men, however, did not decree their cult themselves. There were others who decided that they would receive a cult. Subsequently, these people were also the ones that decided if the deified person would receive a hero cult or a divine cult and with that what honours they would receive. To find the reasoning behind decreeing either divine or hero cult, we must examine who the ones were that decreed the cults and why they decreed them.

3.1 Samos

Lysandros only became Lysandros of Samos after he was deified by the Samian people. Before the Peloponnesian war, Samos was an autonomous state with a strong navy and an oligarchic constitution. In the summer of 440 BCE Samos and Miletus engaged in a war about Priene. Both these states were in an alliance with Athens and since Athens could not stand idly by while two of their allies were at war, they interfered. The Athenian general Pericles sailed to Samos and tried to stop the war, which resulted in the rebellion of the Samians. Eventually the Samians surrendered, accepted a democratic constitution, and paid Athens a war debt.⁶⁹ During the Peloponnesian war, Samos thus sided with Athens against Sparta since Samos was occupied by Athenian citizens and subjected under their laws. After the Peloponnesian war, Lysandros expelled the Athenians on Samos and returned Samos to the Samians. Besides the fact that Lysandros ended the Peloponnesian war for all, the Samians were also most grateful for the returning of their state. The Samians found themselves in an extraordinary situation after the Samian war and the Peloponnesian war and were in a highly emotional situation when their island was returned to them. For this, the Samians awarded Lysandros with divine cult and all the religious honours that belong to such a cult. A cult and thus religion is usually under the control of the polis and its rulers. As Sourvinou-Inwood shows in her *What is Polis Religion?* Greek religion is imbedded in the polis. “The polis is the fundamental framework in which Greek religion operated.”⁷⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood also mentions that “the polis anchored, legitimated, and mediated all religious activity.”⁷¹ In the case of Lysandros it seems to be that the citizens of Samos offered Lysandros divine cult independently of the polis. Lysandros’ divine cult was not legitimated and mediated by the polis but by the people. This would mean that the polis did not, as Sourvinou-Inwood claims, mediate all religious activity and that the decree of divine cult to a living person does not fall under the administration of the polis.

The report that Lysandros had become a god comes to us from Duris who is from the isle of Samos himself. There were multiple statues and pedestals erected with inscriptions about Lysandros. In the beginning of his research, Bommelaer mentions all but sixteen known dedications to Lysandros of which a couple are especially important when it comes to Lysandros’ praise and deification.⁷² A statue in Olympia stated the following: **Ἐν πολυθαήτῳ τεμένει Διὸς ὑψιμέδοντος ἔστηκε ἀνθέντων δημοσίου Σαμίων [...] Ἀθάνατον πάτρα καὶ Ἀριστοκρίτῳ κλέος ἔργων Λύσανδρ’, ἐκτέλεσας δόξαν ἔχεις ἀρετῆς.**⁷³ “In the much-admired temple of Zeus who rules from up high I am placed, publicly set up by the Samians. [...] Immortal fame for the fatherland and for Aristocratos because of your deeds, Lysandros, you achieved and you are renowned for your glories.” This inscription praises Lysandros’ glory and valour and highlights the fame he received for the things he did, namely stopping the war. Another inscription on a pedestal in Delphi, which he himself had ordered to be placed there, stated the following: **Εἰκόνα ἑὴν ἀνέθηκεν [ἐπ’] ἔργῳ τῷδε ὅτε νικῶν ναῦσι θαλαῖς πέρσεν Κε[χ]ροπιδᾶν δύναμιν Λύσανδρος, Λακεδαιμόνα ἀπόρρητον στεφανώσας[ς], Ἑλλάδος ἀκρόπολιν, κ[α]λλίχορον**

⁶⁹ Kagan 1989, 170-176.

⁷⁰ Sourvinou-Inwood 2000, 13. See Sourvinou-Inwood’s ‘What is Polis Religion?’ on any further information on this subject.

⁷¹ Sourvinou-Inwood 2000, 15.

⁷² Bommelaer 1981, 7-8.

⁷³ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 6.3.14.

πατρίδα. Ἐξάμο ἀμφιρύτ[ου] τεύξε ἐλεγείον ἰΐων.⁷⁴ “*Lysandros let the statue be placed because of these deeds when he was victorious and with fast ships laid waste to the Cecropidan power. Having crowned the unravaged Lacedaimonian, the acropolis of Hellas and the fatherland with fair dancing-ground. Ion of seagirt Samos made this inscription.*” This epigram applauds Lysandros for defeating the Cecropides, otherwise known as the Athenians. This statue is made, according to the epigram itself, by the Samian Ion. Lysandros is also mentioned in an inscription on a pedestal of Castor as well as on one of Pollux who have been said to have assisted Lysandros in his victory. Besides these inscriptions found on statues and pedestals, a start of a Paean has also been found: **Τὸν Ἑλλάδος ἀγαθέας στραταγὸν ἀπ' εὐρυχόρου Σπάρτας ὑμνήσομεν, ὦ ἰή Παιάν**⁷⁵ “*The general of most holy Greece has come from spacious Sparta and we will sing paeans of him, Oh ie Paean.*” This paean mentions the master of Greece who originally is from Sparta. The language used in this paean is very similar to the language in the formerly mentioned epigrams. Since no other person in this time is granted these descriptions, this paean must have been for Lysandros. The festival of Hera had also been transformed into the Lysandreia.⁷⁶ There is no evidence of the erection of a statue of Lysandros in Samos, but it is very probable there was one when looking at all the other dedications to Lysandros. There was however not a single dedication to Lysandros coming from Sparta.⁷⁷ Bommelaer in his *Lysandre de Sparte* asks the following “On remarquera que les manifestations les plus excessives sont aussi les plus éloignées de Sparte. Est-ce parce que « nul n'est prophète en son pays » ?” It may be the case that deifying a person descended from a different polis and from a different culture is easier because then you can more easily reduce cognitive dissonance, which is needed to cope with the deification of a living person.⁷⁸ Since Samos was its own independent state before the Samian war, the Samians and the Spartans definitely did not see themselves as being one people. Perhaps that is why Samians were able to deify this strange foreigner who miraculously stopped a war and gave them back their home.

3.2 Thasos

Thasos is an island in the north of the Aegean sea. In the 7th century BCE, it was colonized by Paros for its beneficial position for trading. Thasos founded strongholds and colonies on the mainland and quickly became a wealthy and powerful state that dominated trade routes. Thasos was also known for its strong fleet of which they made great use during the Peloponnesian war.⁷⁹ In 477 BCE Thasos was an ally of Athens and was part of the Delian League. The Thasians left the Delian League in 465 after disagreement on the mines on the mainland and the fact that the Thasian coin was being replaced by the one from Athens.⁸⁰ In 463 BCE, after two years of revolt, the Athenians defeated the Thasians and the ordered them to break down their walls, give up their ships and pay an annual fine on top of the fine they received right after their defeat.⁸¹ Thasos had originally asked Sparta for help but they could not hold their promise to besiege Attica due to the occurrence of an earthquake. A piece of inscribed marble found in the agora of Thasos also declares that the Thasians were allies of Sparta.⁸² On this same piece of marble a text was engraved about how Lysandros put to death all traitors to the Thasian polis. This event is confirmed by Polyaeus in his *Stratagems of War*: **Λύσανδρος ἐκράτησε Θασίων, παρ' οἷς ἦσαν ἀττικίζοντες πολλοὶ κρυπτόμενοι τοῦ Λάκωνος φόβῳ. ὁ δὲ τοὺς Θασίους ἐς τὸ τοῦ Ἡρακλέους ἱερὸν συναγαγὼν, φιλανθρώπους λόγους διεξήλθεν· ὡς δέον συγγνώμην ἔχειν τοῖς κρυπτομένοις ἐν τῇ μεταβολῇ τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ**

⁷⁴ FD, III 1, 51.

⁷⁵ Plutarch *Life of Lysander* 18.5.

⁷⁶ Bommelaer 1981, 7-24.

⁷⁷ Cartledge 1987, 82.

⁷⁸ For more information on cognitive dissonance, see the introduction.

⁷⁹ Agelarakis and Serpanos 2010, 45.

⁸⁰ De Boccard 1967, 10. De Boccard gives an overview of the history of Thasos in his *Guide de Thasos*.

⁸¹ De Boccard 1967, 11.

⁸² De Boccard 1967, 11-12.

θαρρεῖν αὐτοῖς προσῆκον ὥς μηδὲν δεινὸν πεισομένους, τῶν λόγων ἐν ἱερῷ γιγνομένων καὶ ταῦτα ἐν Ἡρακλέους πόλει τοῦ πατρώου. οἱ μὲν κεκρυμμένοι τῶν Θασίων πιστεύσαντες τῇ φιланθρωπία τῶν λόγων προῆλθον, Λύσανδρος δὲ διαλιπὼν ὀλίγας ἡμέρας, ὅπως ἀδεέστεροι γένοιτο, προσέταξε συναρπασθέντας ἀποσφαγῆναι.⁸³ *“Lysandros ruled over Thasians, among which there were many Athenian supporters who hid out of fear of the Laconian. He gathered the Thasians in the temple of Herakles and spoke benevolent words: that there was lenient judgement needed for those who hid because of the change of the situation and that it is proper to be confident that they will not undergo anything terrible, because this speech occurred in a sanctuary and because these events took place in the city of his ancestor Herakles. Those of the Thasians who hid trusted in the kindness of his words and came out. But Lysandros, after waiting for a couple of days a couple days, so that they might become more confident, ordered to seize them and have their throats cut.”*

Since the ancient sources about Agesilaos give no direct explanation as of why exactly the Thasians rewarded Agesilaos with divine honours, we can only give an educated guess as to what the reason was. Flower suggests the following three possibilities: Agesilaos voyaged through Thasos on his way back to Sparta and recognized their claim to certain profitable possessions. “One possibility,” as Flower says, “is that Agesilaos then acknowledged the Thasians' claim to their possessions on the coast of Thrace, possessions which historically had been a source of great wealth.”⁸⁴ Another possibility that does not necessarily exclude the first one is that Agesilaos restored the order on Thasos after the decarchy instituted by Lysandros fell. After Lysandros had taken control of Thasos and executed the rogue Thasians as stated by Polyaeus, he most likely founded a decarchy as he did in more states that he captured. This decarchy eventually fell by a decree of ephors. This sudden loss of a governing power might have left Thasos in a state of chaos. It is, in my opinion, very likely that Agesilaos had established a new government and made an end to the chaos on Thasos.⁸⁵ As for the relationship between Sparta and Thasos, the same can be said as for Sparta and Samos.⁸⁶ The Spartans and Thasians have a remarkable homonymy of aristocratic families which points to there being a close relationship between aristocrats in both *poleis*.⁸⁷ Moreover Thasians have a reputation of being pioneers when it comes to extraordinary honours in Greek religion. “The Thasians”, as Flower writes, “were breaking new ground in allowing private dedicants to inscribe their names on a sacred structure. It ought not to surprise us, therefore, that an early instance of ruler worship should come from Thasos.”⁸⁸ Agesilaos did not, however, perform something as miraculous as stopping the Peloponnesian war. So why did the Thasians, nevertheless, grant him divine cult? It is very probable that this has something to do with his status as a king. When Agesilaos had saved Thasos from its state of chaos, they naturally wanted to thank him for that. But since Agesilaos' inferior Lysandros had received divine cult on Samos, the Thasians could hardly grant a king less than that. On top of that, the Thasian aristocrats had a strong bond with the Spartans, and they did not shy away from granting extraordinary honours. Agesilaos was, just as Lysandros was, granted his divine cult by the citizens of Thasos and this cult therefore lies outside of polis religion. Another similarity with Lysandros is that Agesilaos also was a foreigner, descended from another country and that would make the reduction of cognitive dissonance easier. Agesilaos did however refuse the offer for a divine cult, so the cult was not decreed in practice, but the intention and offer were there. **Πάλιν δὲ τῶν Θασίων διὰ τὸ δοκεῖν μεγάλως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εὐεργετησθαι, ναοὺς αὐτὸν καὶ ἀποθεώσασαι τιμησάντων, καὶ περὶ τούτου πρεσβείαν ἀποστειλάντων, ἀναγνοῦς τὰς τιμὰς, ὥς αὐτῷ προσήνεγκαν οἱ πρέσβεις, ἠρώτησεν εἰ ἡ πατρίς αὐτῶν ἀποθεοῦν ἀνθρώπους δύναται· φαμένων δέ, “ἄγετ’,” ἔφη, “ποιήσατε πρῶτους ἑαυτοὺς θεοὺς· καὶ τοῦτ' ἂν πράξητε, τότε πιστεύσω ὑμῖν ὅτι**

⁸³ Polyaeus *Stratagems of War* 1.45.5.

⁸⁴ Flower 1988, 129.

⁸⁵ Flower, 1988, 129; Flower suggests a third option on p.130 that the divine honours could have been decreed in the 380's instead of the 390's. But this, as Flower also says himself, strikes me as less probable.

⁸⁶ See n. 64.

⁸⁷ Flower 1988, 131.

⁸⁸ Flower 1988, 128.

κάμὲ δυνήσεσθε θεὸν ποιῆσαι.⁸⁹ “Another time when the Thasians, because they felt like they had been greatly benefitted by him, honoured him with temples and deifications and sent an embassy concerning this. When he read the honours that the ambassadors attributed to him, he asked if their country had the power to deify people. After they had confirmed this, he said “go, first make yourselves gods. When you have done this, then I will be convinced that you can also make me a god.”” It is not clear whether Agesilaos wanted the Thasians to withdraw their deification with this statement or merely wanted to make known that he thought that a deification for a living person was ludicrous.

3.3 Selinunte

In the 5th century BCE Selinunte was a colony of Greece on the south-west coast of Sicily. It was situated near the mouth of the river which bore the same name as the colony itself. On the west-side of the colony the river Hypsas flowed. Sicily was colonised by the Greeks in the 8th century BCE. The most important colony on Sicily was Syracuse, but soon after that Selinunte and Akragas followed. Akragas, which lies west of Selinunte, is the city from where Empedokles is a descendant. Selinunte is a daughter colony of Megara.⁹⁰ The colonies started out small but soon grew bigger. Because of the fertile soil in this part of Europe, the island had a large carrying capacity. This creates the possibility for fast population growth.⁹¹ This explains why the colonies of Sicily grew considerably and why it has roughly 5 million inhabitants on this day. Although Sicily was not an island of millions yet, in Empedokles’ time Selinunte had grown into a colony of roughly 14.000 citizens.⁹² The 5th century was a turbulent time for Sicily and its colonies. There was a lot of discord between the Greeks, the Persians and Carthage and because of that Selinunte was involved in the Battle of Himera when Carthage launched an attack on Sicily.⁹³ According to Diodorus Siculus, Sicily has known a long history of tyranny. However, a long period of tyranny ended in the fifth century when the Tyrant Thrasydaeus of Himera was shunned by the inhabitants of Sicily. Thrasydaeus is said to have been so cruel that the citizens of Sicily revolted and overthrew him. [...] **Θρασυδαίου τοῦ Θήρωνος ἐπιστατοῦντος τῆς τῶν Ἱμεραίων πόλεως βαρύτερον τοῦ καθήκοντος, συνέβη τοὺς Ἱμεραίους ἀπαλλοτριωθῆναι παντελῶς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ.**⁹⁴ “[...]Because Thrasydaeus son of Theron ruled the city of Himera more severely than fitting, it happened that the Himerans were completely alienated from him.” Diodorus Siculus also mentions that Selinunte and Akragas along with Gela and Himera were allied in a plan to overthrow the tyrant Thrasibulus, and to liberate Syracuse. **Οἱ δὲ Συρακόσιοι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον μέρος τῆς πόλεως κατελάβοντο τὴν ὀνομαζομένην Τύχην, ἐκ ταύτης δὲ ὀρμώμενοι πρεσβευτὰς ἀπέστειλαν εἰς Γέλαν καὶ Ἀκράγαντα καὶ Σελινοῦντα, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις εἰς Ἱμέραν καὶ πρὸς τὰς τῶν Σικελῶν πόλεις τὰς ἐν τῇ μεσογείῳ κειμένας, ἀξιοῦντες κατὰ τάχος συνελθεῖν καὶ συνελευθερῶσαι τὰς Συρακούσας. πάντων δὲ προθύμως ὑπακουόντων, καὶ συντόμως ἀποστείλαντων τῶν μὲν πεζοὺς καὶ ἵππεῖς στρατιώτας, τῶν δὲ ναῦς μακρὰς κεκοσμημένας εἰς ναυμαχίαν, ταχὺ συνήχθη δύναμις ἀξίοχρεως τοῖς Συρακοσίοις.**⁹⁵ “The Syracusans first off seized a part of the city called Tyche, from there they started to send off ambassadors to Gela and Akragas and Selinus, and to those in Himera and to the cities of Siceli that lie in the inland, expecting them to join together as quickly as possible and liberate Syracuse. Because all eagerly answered, and some quickly sent land-forces and cavalries and soldiers, others long ships equipped for sea-battle, quickly a considerable force had been gathered to help the Syracusans.”

Besides many sources about tyranny, disease is also well attested on Sicily. Disease is often

⁸⁹ Plutarch *Sayings of Spartans, Life of Agesilaus* 25.

⁹⁰ De Angelis 2016, 33

⁹¹ Naerebout and Singor 2008, 146.

⁹² See Zuchtriegel 2011, 121 for an explanation for the calculation of the population growth of Selinunte.

⁹³ Naerebout and Singor 2008, 174-175.

⁹⁴ Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 11.6.

⁹⁵ Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 11.68.

called λοιμός, a “plague”.⁹⁶ The main source we have for this is the notion that Empedokles saved the Selinuntines from disease. Plutarch in his *On Being a Busybody* attests that Empedokles saved his country from λοιμός. **ὁ δὲ φυσικὸς Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ὄρους τινὰ διασφάγα βαρὺν καὶ νοσώδη κατὰ τῶν πεδίων τὸν νότον ἐμπνέουσιν ἐμφράξας, λοιμὸν ἔδοξεν ἐκκλεῖσαι τῆς χώρας.**⁹⁷ *“And the natural philosopher Empedokles, by blocking up some mountain gorge through which a grave and sickly south wind blows over the plains, was thought to have shut out the plague from the country.”* Diogenes Laertius also mentions Empedokles and his solution to the plague in Selinus. **Διόδωρος δ’ ὁ Ἐφέσιος περὶ Ἀναξिमάνδρου γράφων φησὶν ὅτι τοῦτον ἐξηλώκει, τραγικὸν ἀσκήν τυφὸν καὶ σεμνὴν ἀναλαβὼν ἐσθῆτα. τοῖς Σελινουντίοις ἐμπεσόντος λοιμοῦ διὰ τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ παρακειμένου ποταμοῦ δυσωδίας, ὥστε καὶ αὐτοὺς φθείρεσθαι καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας δυστοκεῖν, ἐπινοῆσαι τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα καὶ δύο τινὰς ποταμοὺς τῶν σύνεγγυς ἐπαγαγεῖν ἰδίαις δαπάναις· καὶ καταμίξαντα γλυκῆσαι τὰ ρεύματα.** *“Diodorus of Ephesus, when he was writing about Anaximander, said that he emulated him, exercising tragic pomp and wearing majestic clothing. When a plague fell upon the Selinuntines because of the foul smells of the adjacent river, so that they themselves died and the women miscarried, Empedokles observed it and he brought in two nearby rivers of his own expense: the streams became sweeter after being mixed together.”* Empedokles is said to have rid his country of this plague, which scholars nowadays assume was placental malaria.⁹⁸ It is of course true that Empedokles had some personal gain in ridding Selinunte of the plague since Akragas, his hometown, is Selinunte’s neighbouring colony. Would he not have helped Selinunte, Akragas probably would have been the plague’s next victim. Just as was the case with the Samians and the Thasians, the colonies of Selinunte and Akragas had a good relationship. The greatest difference here is that these colonies were situated only a couple kilometres apart on the same small island. The citizens of Selinunte and Akragas were people with the same culture and same beliefs. They may have been somewhat different just as nowadays no town is exactly the same, but broadly speaking Selinunte was not so different from Akragas. And since both are so similar, the reduction of cognitive dissonance would be that much harder. Because how can you sincerely declare and believe that someone who you regularly see on the farmers market is a god?

3.4 Athens

Demetrios was king of Macedon during the Hellenistic period. This period is most known for the rule of Alexander the Great. Alexander conquered lots of territory expanding from Macedon to Greece all the way to Persia. Alexander requested himself to be deified and because he was such a mighty man, the Greek *poleis* could hardly say no to that.⁹⁹ Under Alexander’s rule the Greek culture was spread wide over his whole imperium. Alexander’s goal was to make one unified kingdom. And while he aimed to make a unity, Alexander also valued other cultures and therefore let his conquered countries keep their own traditions. This would make his imperium a unified melting-pot. We do not know if Alexander would have succeeded in making a unified world because Alexander died at the young age of 33. After Alexander’s death the wars of the Diadochi started. Because of this war Alexander’s empire was divided into Ptolemaic empire, the Seleucid empire, and the Antigonid empire. After the fall of the Alexandrian empire the Athenians revolted against the Macedonian oppressor. At first, they performed fairly well, but soon they were defeated by the Macedonians in the Lamian war.¹⁰⁰ Antipater took control of Athens and was no friendly ruler. Plutarch quotes the following in his *Phocion* about Antipater’s rule: **Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι πρέσβεις ἡγάπησαν ὡς φιλανθρώπους τὰς διαλύσεις, πλὴν τοῦ Ξενοκράτους· ἔφη γὰρ ὡς μὲν δούλοις μετρίως κεχρησθαι**

⁹⁶ De Angelis 2016, 198.

⁹⁷ Plutarch *On Being a Busybody* 515c.

⁹⁸ For further information into the occurrence of malaria on Sicily, see ‘Malarial environments’ in R. Sallares *Malaria and Rome: A History of Malaria in Ancient Italy*.

⁹⁹ Naerebout and Singor 2008, 249.

¹⁰⁰ De Blois and Van der Spek 2017, 161.

τὸν Ἀντίπατρον, ὡς δὲ ἐλευθέρους βαρέως.¹⁰¹ *“The other ambassadors were certainly pleased that the solutions were humane, except for Xenocrates: because he said that it would be fair if Antipater treated them as slaves and it would be brutal if he treated them as free men.”* Antipater stripped the Athenian citizens of their rights and installed a Macedonian garrison. The Athenians felt like the gods had left them while they fought to protect their gods while being under foreign rule. As Plutarch says *“But now during the same ceremonies the most difficult sufferings of Hellas were being looked down upon by the gods”* νῦν δὲ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἱεροῖς τὰ δυσχερέστατα πάθη τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐπισκοπεῖν τοὺς θεούς.¹⁰²

In the previous cases I argued that one can only be deified in a *polis* of which you are no descendant and a culture where you are not from. As we have seen in the case of Empedokles, being neighbours makes the reduction of cognitive dissonance harder and because of that Empedokles did not receive divine cult. Demetrios, however, is not a descendant of Athens but did also not receive divine cult. But since Athens was under Macedonian control for a long time and the Greek culture also spread to Macedonia, Persia, and other regions, we can say that Demetrios lived in a similar cultural setting as the Athenian citizens. Athens had been under the Macedonian Alexander’s control during his reign in which he spread the Greek culture far and wide. After Alexander, more Macedonian rulers followed. Demetrios, although he had a more positive attitude towards the Athenians than his predecessor Antipater, was another Macedonian of which the Athenians had seen more of the last couple of decades. Because a Macedonian ruler was no unfamiliar phenomenon for the Athenians and the Macedonian culture had by then been heavily influenced by Greek culture, Demetrios might have been too close to the Athenians for them to easily reduce cognitive dissonance in this scenario. Demetrios received many honours for saving Athens as Diodorus Siculus notes: τῷ δὲ πολιτικῷ πλήθει συνεπιλαβόμενος τῆς οἰκοδομίας καὶ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἀποκαταστήσας τιμῶν ἰσοθέων ἔτυχε παρὰ τοῖς εὖ παθοῦσι· Δημητριάδα μὲν γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ὠνόμασαν, θυσίας δὲ καὶ πανηγύρεις, ἔτι δ’ ἀγῶνας ἐψηφίσαντο συντελεῖν αὐτῷ κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀπονέμειν τιμὰς ὡς κτίστη.¹⁰³ *“After he had helped the common citizens with house-building and re-establishing their freedom, he received godlike honours from those he had done good by: because they called the city Demetrias, they voted to organise sacrifices and festivals and games for him every year and voted to assign to him the other honours of a founder.”* Demetrios did not however receive a divine cult, although the religious elements in his heroic cult come very close to one. His cult was, as Diodorus says, a cult of a founder, and not of a god.

3.5 Case analysis

In the previous subchapters I have mentioned that the belief in a deified person as a god or not stands in relation to the cognitive dissonance theory. When applying this theory to the discussed case studies of deified persons, we can say several things. In the cases of persons receiving divine cult, that is Lysandros and Agesilaos, we deal with the people who are foreign from the *polis* that granted them divine cult. In Lysandros case it was the isle of Samos, which was an independent state before the Samian war. The isle was occupied by the Athenians who are also very different from Spartans. When after a turbulent period a foreign stranger from a faraway land comes to save your home, it is easier to grant that person a divine cult since the citizens can more easily reduce cognitive dissonance. The Athenians did not know Lysandros very well and the Spartan country and culture were nothing like Samos. When you know very little about a person or a place or at least know that it is different from yours, your mind has more room to justify strange occurrences such as a living human being a god. Lysandros was sort of a mythical creature like Santa Clause or the Tooth fairy who appears to bring joy and then vanishes to his strange, faraway land. That is why children believe in Santa Clause so easily. There is not much real information about him, and he only comes a few days a year so there is really no solid information to question or time to do so.

¹⁰¹ Plutarch *Life of Phocion* 27.

¹⁰² Plutarch *Life of Phocion* 28.

¹⁰³ Diodorus Siculus *The Library of History* 20.102.3.

For Agesilaos the same applies. He was a saviour that came out of the blue. A king from a foreign country. It is however true that Thasians might have chosen to grant Agesilaos divine cult since they did so for Lysandros, and you can hardly grant a king a lesser cult than his inferior. But nevertheless, they chose to honour him with that cult and the decision to do so might have been easier because he was a foreign saviour. Agesilaos and Sparta were things that stood very far from the Thasians and because of that the Thasians' minds had more room to cope with a human being a god.

This point is proven in the case of Empedokles. Empedokles saved Selinunte from a plague and gained the gratitude of the Selinuntines for that. Saving a people is exactly what Lysandros and Agesilaos did as well. The difference with Empedokles is that he saved his neighbouring town and did not afterwards go back to his faraway land but simply to his house a few kilometres west of Selinunte. The people of Selinunte must have known Empedokles or have been familiar with him. This man was born on the same island and was raised in the same culture. This is what makes the reduction of cognitive dissonance that much harder. These people understand what a god is, but they also know very well who Empedokles is. And since they know that Empedokles is human, they would have difficulty justifying giving him divine cult. The mind can up to a certain extent reduce dissonance, but in the case of claiming that your neighbour is a god, there is so much dissonance between those two things that your brain cannot convince itself to believe it anymore.

The case of Demetrios is a bit more difficult since he did not receive divine cult but was a saviour descended from a different country. But although Demetrios was a Macedonian who saved Athens, they are not unfamiliar with each other. Since Alexander the Great, Athens had already been under Macedonian control. Because it was Alexander's goal to spread Greek culture throughout his imperium, Macedonia also became increasingly more Greek. And because Greece had been under Macedonian rule, it must have also been influenced by Macedonian culture. Demetrios himself had also been Hellenised. So, when Demetrios came to save Athens, he indeed was a foreigner but no stranger. The Athenians were familiar with Macedonian rulers and this Macedonian saviour was not so strange and even fairly Greek. Because Demetrios was quite Greek and Macedon really familiar, the reduction of cognitive dissonance was harder to apply. This also shows because of the fact that Demetrios received many religious honours such as festivals named after him and *peploi* embroidered with his person next to Zeus, but just falls short of a fully divine cult. There was just a tad too much dissonance for the brain to be able to reduce.

Conclusion

After researching multiple case studies of deified persons who received either heroic or divine cult, we can give an answer to the research question 'why are some deifications of living mortals successful, while others are not?' Firstly a successful deification, meaning the reception of divine cult, is not dependent on the act the deified person performs. In studying the persons who received divine cult and the persons who received hero cult with religious honours, I found that there is no significant difference in acts that would gain the one group divine cult and the other group hero cult. The one thing all case studies have in common is that they all performed a miracle: they either stopped a war, solved a chaotic political situation, rid people of a plague or saved people from oppression.

The one thing that does set both groups apart is the relation between the deified and the deifier. The persons who received divine cult were both people who were foreigners to their worshippers and in some sense mythical, Santa Clause like figures. Because they stand so far from the world of the worshippers, the worshippers' minds are more easily able to reduce cognitive dissonance and with that to reduce the dissonance between the idea of a god and the idea of a certain person being a god. Because of the distance the mind can reduce the dissonance just enough that it can cope with the idea of a living, human god. The persons who received hero cult with religious elements were all cases of deified people who were too close to the deifier: they grew up in the same area or in the same culture as the place in which they were deified and therefore had lots in common with the people from that place. When the worshipper is too familiar with the deified person, the brain cannot cope with the competing ideas of a god and a person you know well being a god. There is simply too much dissonance for the brain to reduce and as a result of that the mind can not justify that person being an actual god and therefore receiving divine cult. So to answer the question 'why are some deifications of living mortals successful, while others are not?', some deifications of living mortals are successful while others are not because in those successful cases there is a possibility for the worshippers to reduce the dissonance of the contradictory statement that a living human is a god.

As stated in the introduction of this thesis, the deification of Alexander the Great - that he demanded himself - brought about a change in the process of deification. It now also seemed to be an option to not earn a deification but to take one. Further research on the deification of Alexander the Great and those who came after him might give better insight into the change of the process and criteria for deification. Furthermore the possibility of applying the theory of cognitive dissonance to other fields than religion, say for example ancient Greek politics, is a very interesting topic for future work.

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