Connecting the Greeks: festival networks in the Hellenistic world

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Abstract

Panhellenic festivals were central to the ancient Greek world since archaic times, with places such as Delphi and Olympia defining the essence of a Greek ‘imagined community’. In the Hellenistic period, several Greek cities began to organize large-scale festivals of their own at their main sanctuaries, thereby anchoring their position in a newly expanded Greek world in traditional cultural practices. As Rome became dominant in the eastern Mediterranean, it was able to use these existing festival connections to anchor its own hegemony, making them thereby even stronger.

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1 This article presents some preliminary results of the research project Connected Contests based at the University of Groningen. The project is part of the Anchoring Innovation initiative of the Dutch research school OIKOS and is directed by Onno van Nijf and Christina Williamson; Sam van Dijk, Esther van der Berg and Caroline van Toor were research assistants in 2015 and 2016. International partners include: Mark Depauw (Leuven), Andrew Farrington (Komotini), Christian Mann and Sofie Remijsen (Mannheim). For more information see website https://ancientathletesonline.wordpress.com.
Through case studies of festivals at Magnesia on the Maeander, Stratonikeia, and Oropos we explore ways that network theory can help interpret this phenomenon.2

One of the most enduring features of ancient Greek civilization was the development of a highly complex festival culture that took the form of athletic and cultural competitions, open to all Greeks.3 These are generally associated with the archaic and classical period, but their popularity and importance grew in the Hellenistic period and came to a climax under the Roman emperors. The most famous manifestations are of course the great games of Delphi, Olympia, Isthmia and Nemea that were open to participants from the entire Greek world. Parallel to these great games we find an ever-growing number of locally based events that shared in the same festival culture. Most of these festivals may not have had more than a local or regional appeal - but some festivals had a catchment area spanning large parts of the Greek world. The Athenian Panathenaia are a good example, they attracted athletes from a wide area, even though they did not receive the same appreciation as the traditional four.4 The number of festivals increased significantly from the third century BCE onwards, with a wave of new festivals designed to appeal to an audience that now included the newly founded cities throughout the Hellenistic Kingdoms.

Most often these new festivals centred on contests that were set up in direct emulation of the Olympic or Pythian games. Such so-called Is-Olympic or Iso-

2 All of the maps were created by Sam van Dijk, integrating data drawn from epigraphical sources with the geospatial-network software tool Palladio (http://palladio.designhumanities.org). Versions of this paper were presented at the EPHE, Paris, The Netherlands Institutes at Athens and Rome (KNIR), the University of Oldenburg, the University of Freiburg, the national research school OIKOS and in Groningen. We would like to thank our hosts and audiences at these occasions for their comments, in particular Nicole Belayche, Michael Sommer, and Sitta von Reden and the OIKOS group.

3 This article draws in part from van Nijf 2010, 2012 a, b, 2013, Williamson 2012a and Williamson 2012b. Other articles that present this project include: van Nijf and Williamson 2014 and van Nijf and Williamson 2015. There is some unavoidable overlap between these articles.

4 Shear 2001.
Pythian games claimed to apply the same age categories or rules as their more illustrious namesakes. Like their namesakes, they offered crowns as prizes, from which they took their title: stephanitic or crown games, but more important was the fact that victors at such games could expect similar privileges upon their return home, as did the victors of the traditional four games. This feature was an important element in symbolically linking the Greek cities – those that accepted the stephanitic status of a festival implicitly adhered to the same set of values, sharing in a common symbolic system that is at the core of trans-local competition. Another important feature was the formal announcement of these festivals to other Greek cities. They did this by sending formal envoys, known as theoroi. It is not completely clear that theoroi were only sent out by stephanitic festivals: most festivals must have sent theoroi around - if only for practical reasons - but recognition as a crown game did not automatically follow.

Such games were not simply founded from a love of sport: their founders could be Hellenistic rulers, who used the festival in their bid for hegemony. The Ptolemaic regime, for example, initiated the Ptolemaia of Alexandria, for which they sought isopythian status in 283-282 BCE. Its catchment area seems to have been restricted to the eastern Mediterranean - with a particularly strong base in the Nesiotic league. Other festivals could be organised in commemoration of a major event in the collective history of the Greek commonwealth. A famous example includes Soteria games that were set up in Delphi after the Greek victory over the Gallic invaders, and that were heavily promoted by the Aetolians. While the games celebrated Greek identity on the one hand, they also formed a base of support for the Aetolian league, the then dominant power in central Greece.

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5 The best discussion of the topic: Remijsen 2011.
6 See now Rutherford 2013.
7 Syll², 391 with Parker 2004.
8 Nachtergael 1977 presents the material.
Local events were also reasons to create festivals. Divine epiphanies, for example, were an increasingly common phenomenon in the turbulent Hellenistic period and were often used by cities to gain grants of *asylia*, or inviolability. Declaring such a status, however, was not enough. Public acknowledgment by other cities was required and festivals with contests proved an excellent medium for these negotiations. This already indicates at least some degree of reciprocity in these inter-civic interactions.

From the end of the third century this innovation was adopted by individual cities and sanctuary sites in their bid for panhellenic recognition. A famous example that we shall discuss here is provided by the city of Magnesia on the Maeander, where a spectacular epigraphic dossier was set up that records the process of arranging the great festival in honour of Artemis Leukophryene. A second wave of festival foundation began in the second century BCE, when festivals were (re)organized to put relations with Rome on public display, while following the traditional mould of Greek contests. We shall discuss two more examples in this context: the Hekatesia-Romaia put on by the city of Stratonikeia and the Amphiaraia-Romaia organised in Oropos. In this process we shall see that festivals had become a common language through which Greeks and Romans could set out their political relations. By the early imperial period Roman support became a crucial factor in the development of festival networks.

Network theory and festival networks

Interaction and reciprocity was key to the success of these festivals, as the examples mentioned above already indicate. A good way to analyse these relationships is...
through network theory. This approach has become a new paradigm in studying the ancient Mediterranean world, with Social Network Analysis (SNA) as principle methodology.\textsuperscript{10} Social Network Analysis focuses on the spread of knowledge and innovation through individual contacts and is thus concerned with the assessment of people as nodes, or hubs, and the evaluation of their relationships as ties in a connected network. Networks can consist of ties that are dense, or strong, where everyone in the network knows each other (e.g. family), or weak, where contacts are more sporadic (e.g. acquaintances).

A central tenet of network theory is that the entire world is connected via contacts in personal networks. This builds on the hypothesis of the ‘six degrees of separation’, first launched in 1929 by Frigyes Karinthy who postulates that no more than six intermediary contacts are needed to connect any two people in the world. In 1967 this was tested and confirmed by Stanley Milgram.\textsuperscript{11} A second tenet in network theory pertains to ‘information cascades’, or the spread of ideas throughout connected networks via single individuals, or agents.\textsuperscript{12} Mark Granovetter has shown how weak-tie networks are especially powerful paths of innovation.\textsuperscript{13} The random links of weak-tie networks are critical shortcuts to otherwise distant networks, thereby strongly reducing the number of hubs needed to spread new ideas from one end of the chain to the other.

\textsuperscript{10}Horden and Purcell 2000 explore this through their concept of connectivity. Irad Malkin has made network theory a principle focus in his recent work, in Malkin 2005 and more recently in Malkin 2011, and the valuable contributions that he brought together in the 2007 volume of Mediterranean Historical Review. Tom Brughmans especially applies a more quantitative social network analysis (SNA) in Brughmans 2010 and Brughmans 2012. A recent overview of the application of network theory in archaeology is given in Collar and Coward, et al. 2015.

\textsuperscript{11} Milgram 1967. A recent analysis of Facebook reduces this number to 3.46, at least for the United States, see Jonah Bromwich in the New York Times (04.02.2016). The problem for Milgram and followers came down to the question of how information could be spread across the different networks, if they were all fairly closed groups. Granovetter addressed this problem in his article ‘The strength of weak ties’, Granovetter 1973.

\textsuperscript{12} Watts 2003, 206.

\textsuperscript{13} Granovetter 1973 and Granovetter 1983; Watts and Strogatz 1998. For a good overview of network theory and its development, see Kadushin 2012.
In this paper we will suggest ways in which network theory can help show how festivals served to connect Greek cities through ties of cult. We will discuss how sanctuaries were in this way exploited by cities as nodes in this festival network to establish or even expand their own position, particularly through panhellenic festivals. But we will also examine the role of the network producers, or agents, who created the ties between cities and between their festivals. Close attention is particularly given to the role of the civic delegates, particularly the theoroi who announced the festivals, and the athletes who travelled from festival to festival, creating a circuit.

In his studies of theoroi, Ian Rutherford was an early advocate of the use of network theory to analyse this panhellenic festival culture, as it was built in part on the role of the theoroi, who observed and participated in festivals as delegates of their own poleis.\textsuperscript{14} Theoria can be seen as a sequence of reciprocal acts involving ever-larger circles of participants. Some time before a particular edition of a festival was actually held, organizing cities or sanctuary sites sent out envoys to announce the celebrations (epangelia) and to invite Greek cities to participate. Cities would then respond by sending their theoroi as official spectators, but also to take part in the festivities, conduct ritual acts, or to accompany the contestants in the name of their polis, and of course to announce their own upcoming festivals. The theoroi were hosted by the theorodokoi, who were often theoroi in turn for other festivals. Theoroi were thus important as network agents, their role can be illustrated with the famous case of Magnesia on the Maeander and the festival network of Artemis Leukophryene.

\textsuperscript{14} Rutherford 2007. In Rutherford 2013, however, he raises some caveats and does not engage in formal network analyses, see below. Also Ma 2003. On the phenomenon of the theoroi and theorodokoi, see Perlman 2000.
Magnesia on the Maeander and the festival network of Artemis Leukophryene

One of the best documented cases of a panhellenic festival that was turned in to a ‘global event’ is the festival of the Leukophryeneia of Magnesia on the Maeander. The process can be followed via an exceptional epigraphic dossier that was published by Otto Kern in 1900 in Die Inschriften von Magnesia. Magnesia on the Maeander had been founded as a colony of Thessalian Magnesia. Around 400 BCE the city was relocated to the area of Leukophrys, where a famous temple stood for the city’s archegetis Artemis. In the third century it joined other Greek cities in a bid for panhellenic recognition, with a reorganisation of the Leukophryeneia. After a manifestation of the goddess Artemis Leukophryene, and after having sought and obtained the advice of Delphic Apollo, the Magnesians aimed to secure asylia for their city and territory, and recognition of their Leukophryeneia as a stephanitic festival by their peers. This would have established their status as at the forefront of the Greek cities in Asia, but they met with a lukewarm reception. Although the Aetolians recognised the asylia (but apparently not the festival), other Greek cities seem to have ignored their request. ‘Fobbed off’ (l. 24) the Magnesians abandoned their effort for the time being. However, some years later when their neighbours -and rivals- in Miletos were launching a similar plan, the Magnesians must have felt the heat. Keen to prove that they were the ‘first in Asia’ to have done so, they let it be known that ‘they established a crowned contest, equal to the Pythia, offering a crown worth fifty gold staters’. Not relying on the prestige -or the monetary value of the crowns- alone, they launched an impressive diplomatic offensive. They sent at least twenty teams of theoroi to all parts of the Greek world from Sicily to Iran. They certainly did succeed in the end, as some 100 letters of acceptance were received from

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15 The following two paragraphs take up points also discussed in van Nijf and Williamson 2014.
16 The texts are now conveniently presented in Rigsby 1996; cf. Slater and Summa 2006, The foundation history is discussed in I.Magnesia 16, with a crucial new reading in Thonemann 2007.
18 Cf. I.Magnesia 16, II.16, following the reading in Thonemann 2007.
Greek cities, leagues of cities, Hellenistic rulers, and an association of dramatic performers, without whom the musical contests could not have gone ahead (Figure 1).

Even a superficial examination of the documents reveals that there was more at stake than the polite exchanges of invitations and acceptance letters. The teams of theoroi went out of their way to claim Magnesia’s rightful place among the other Greeks, on the basis of extended documentary and literary ‘evidence’ designed to prove to their kinship (syngeneia), friendship (philia), and familiarity (oikeiotes), as well as to the services done by their ancestors to Delphi and to the other Greeks.\textsuperscript{19} The acceptance decrees show that in each case these claims were considered and deliberated by the political bodies all over the Greek world. Cities and leagues passed decrees that did not simply accept the Magnesian invitation, but also accepted the claims of the Magnesians about their place in the Greek world. Moreover, the acceptance of the invitation also implied recognition of the fact that the authors of the degrees themselves shared a common Greek identity with the Magnesians -and with the other participating cities in the festival- and that they accepted the mutual obligations that membership of this Greek community brought with it. In this way the Magnesian theoria must have contributed to a Panhellenic process of reflection on what it meant to be Greek in the contemporary world. This shared sense of Greek identity, which we may describe as a shared social imaginary, was further strengthened at the festival itself, where the participating communities were gathered by proxy via their theoroi. The ritual occasion, as well as the physical setting will have promoted awareness and mutual recognition of a shared Greek identity.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} Stavrianopoulou 2013.
\textsuperscript{20} For a discussion of this process from the perspective of the notion of rational ritual and common knowledge, see van Nijf 2013.
The letters of acceptance were engraved on the walls of the stoas that surrounded the great agora of Magnesia. These were engraved in places high enough to be protected, yet large enough to still be read from the agora, and between doors where there would have been traffic. As John Ma states:

“The asylia dossiers, inscribed at length in sites of high visibility ... are maps of relations between one place and a plethora of other, similar places: civic self-esteem is mapped out across an imagined homogeneous world of appreciative peers.”

The epigraphy ensured public awareness of the event and the retention of its memories. Anyone visiting the agora during the festival or any other time would surely have been impressed by the magnitude of the attraction that Magnesia had on the rest of the Greek world, through their cult of Artemis. Perhaps even most importantly, they served to remind the Magnesians themselves on an everyday basis that they were indeed an important hub in a wider network of Greek cities (Figure 1). The case of Magnesia is exceptionally well documented but it was not at all unique. The many cases of theoria discussed by Rutherford in his magisterial study of the phenomenon of theoria, or the examples of asylia gathered by Rigsby show how widespread this phenomenon was, and further underline the importance of the festival culture for the creation and maintenance of a (pan)Hellenic identity.

Stratonikeia and the Hekatesia at Lagina

Stratonikeia in Karia presents another case, illustrating especially how a city on the rise can use a festival network to improve its overall position. Stratonikeia was a

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21 von Hesberg 2009.
22 Ma 2003.
23 Rutherford 2013; Rigsby 1996.
Seleucid colony founded in the third century BC near the Marsyas valley. Although Strabo labels it as a Macedonian colony,24 it has been shown to be made up of numerous indigenous settlements that became demes in the new polis.25 The sanctuary for Hekate at Lagina was located near one of these settlements to the north. It seems to have had somewhat of a regional standing but Stratonikeia quickly adopted Hekate as a protective goddess and she appears on the earliest coinage from the mid-second century BCE.26 Her shrine at Lagina was turned into a great civic sanctuary and thus became an important sacred node in the local network of this new polis. At the same time, however, it also played a major role in the international political network of the polis.

In the second century BCE, Stratonikeia became an ally of Rome and remained loyal during the Mithridatic wars of the early first century. The city paid a heavy price for their loyalty and endured occupation and heavy oppression at the hands of Mithridates Eupator. In the aftermath, a delegation was sent to Rome to raise awareness of their sufferings with Sulla and the senate. Their reward was a senatus consultum, in which Sulla showed the gratefulness of Rome by granting Stratonikeia privileges that included a major expansion of territory, down to the Gulf of Keramos, making Stratonikeia one of the largest cities in the region.27 Equally significant was the precious grant of asylia for the sanctuary of Hekate at Lagina and for her festival, the Hekatesia. This privileged status immediately boosted the reputation of Stratonikeia among her peers and the city responded by adding the cult of Thea Romē in the festival, now named the Hekatesia-Romaia. This inclusion ensured that this festival would have at least three faces: one for the community of the Stratonikeians, ensuring their safety while bolstering their sense of pride of place;

24 Strabo 14.2.25.
26 Meadows 2002.
27 I.Stratonikeia 505 is the Senatus consultum de Stratonicensibus, discussed in Sherk and Viereck 1969, 105-111, no.18 and Sherk 1984, no.63.
one turned to Rome, consolidating the connection between the polis and the superpower; and finally one directed to the wider Greek world, seeking witnesses for the premier position of Stratonikeia among her peers. It is especially this last aspect that concerns us here in the context of this research.

Similar dynamics are at work in Stratonikeia as at Magnesia on the Maeander, but now with the inclusion of Rome as a third tier. As with the Magnesians, the Stratonikeians wished to gain international recognition corresponding with their new formal standing as ally of Rome. They too sent out embassies across the Greek world, as we can deduce from the end of a civic decree concerning the recognition gained by kings, dynasts, and the Greek cities listed at the end, of which at least 57 responded (Figure 2). However, this list was not on display at the center of town, as at Magnesia, but on the walls of the temple of Hekate at Lagina. The list appears to be geographically compiled, beginning with Karia and Asia Minor, then turning towards ‘Old Greece’ with Delphi, Olympia and Elis, Athens, Argos (all renowned festival sites), and finally some of the new Seleucid cities in the Greek East: Damascus and Seleukeia in Pieria. Like Magnesia, Stratonikeia was using this list and the sanctuary of Hekate to put itself on display at the centre of its own world. However, Stratonikeia was able to take this to another level with Rome as bargaining chip – by acknowledging the grant of asylia, these cities were acknowledging Rome’s recognition of Stratonikeia and the strong bond between the two. At the same time, they were implicitly acknowledging the right of Rome to bestow such privileges and their recognition was surely interpreted as a positive gesture towards Rome. Stratonikeia was thus able to deploy the festival of the Hekatesia-Romaia for multiple

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28 I.Stratonikeia 507; the cities are listed in I.Stratonikeia 508.
29 Most likely on the side opposite the tribune, as Riet van Bremen suggests, van Bremen 2010, where it would have been the perfect backdrop for the civic ceremonies that must have taken place. A summary of the traditional placement along the northeast wall is provided by Baumeister 2007, 35-40 and 219-227.
30 See also Ma 2003.
purposes of its own, but the festival also had an appeal for the cities throughout the rest of the Greek world. The question is how durable this was.

Does a node make a network?

To what extent can we actually see the festival of the Hekatesia-Romaia as a hub in a real network? Ian Rutherford, who pioneered the network approach of festivals in his 2007 article, is more reluctant to push this in his book on the *theoria* of 2013, where he warns that the documentation for theoric networks is often one-sided, making it hard to establish with any precision how a network functioned in practice. His discussion mainly focuses on the theoric networks of sanctuaries, such as that of Samothrake, but his caveats are well heeded in the case of other festival networks too.31

As in Magnesia, the list of Stratonikeia indeed presents only one side of the picture: the list of invitations is not complete, but more importantly, we do not seem to have clear confirmation that the addressees actually sent delegates to the festival. The theoric list represents not so much a web of connections as a series of individual relationships between these cities and Laguna (i.e. Stratonikeia). In order to see this as a fully interactive network we would need more evidence of true reciprocity, i.e. evidence that these cities actually participated in the games and contests at Laguna, and vice-versa, that Stratonikeians were also involved in festivals of other cities in turn. We should, therefore not only focus on the linked nodes, but also question how (and by whom) these links were established and maintained. We should be on the look-out for ways that knowledge and innovation were shared, and for the agents (network specialists) who serviced the network. In our analysis we need to include another category of network agents, that of the athletes and performers. These

31 Rutherford 2013. It is fair to say that Rutherford is more concerned with establishing the long-term history of the phenomenon, than with the way that the *theoria* contributed to the increased connectivity of the Hellenistic world.
groups were of course crucial in creating networks as they travelled from festival to festival, not only reinforcing the core activity, the contests, but also acting as interstate diplomats, typically receiving honours for bringing public recognition to their city on a larger scale.\[^{32}\] Focusing on athletes as network agents, linking one festival to the next, is a prime avenue of investigation with regard to network analysis. Which festivals and festival circuits did they connect, how strong or weak were their ties, e.g. which festival circuits were more regular and which were more loosely connected? Did they together serve to create a small world of contests in the Hellenistic period?

The evidence for their activities consists largely of victory lists, and honorific inscriptions for athletes and dedications recording their victories in the festivals, as well as the various honours and privileges they had obtained. Over time monuments for individual athletes and artists not only became more numerous, but their inscriptions grew longer and more detailed, as more significance was attached to each achievement and distinction – besides the social capital that they generated for the individual athlete, they were also expressions of civic pride. Victories were listed with great care and there was a marked tendency to rank them, either in chronological order or according to the relative standing of the festivals themselves. As the athletes and performers became more important to the emerging networks, their status changed accordingly. Such honorific monuments and victory lists contain a wealth of information on links and linking patterns that is waiting to be analysed.

The potential is clear, but we still need to operate with caution: in the case of Stratonikeia the epigraphic record only seems to yield two athletes who record their participation in Stratonikeia: an honorific text for a local athlete, Euboulos son of Iason, who had competed as a boy in a pankration contest, and in pankration and

wrestling as an adult. The other attestation comes from Kos from the end of the first century BCE. The text lists the accomplishments of a successful young athlete, presumably from Kos, who was twice victorious in the ‘Hekatesia in Stratonikeia’. He also lists the other festivals where he had been victorious which were, except for Megalopolis and the Isthmia games, were mostly in the same region: Kolophon, Metropolis, Nysa, Halikarnassos, Myndos, and of course his hometown Kos (Figure 3).

This small sample provides a good illustration of some of the issues and may well be indicative of how the system worked in reality. Stratonikeia appealed to a panhellenic community and the festival at Lagina was widely known, but the most active part of its network may have been much closer to home. Kos may not have been among the 57 cities that initially recognized the asylia of Lagina in the early first century BCE, yet here we find a Koan athlete taking part in the Hekatesia among many other local festivals, probably as part of a regional circuit. The real relevance of Lagina as a central festival node may well have been more limited in scope than the ambitions of the initial organizers. The list of 57 cities may have been a starting point for the expansion of Stratonikeia’s panhellenic network, but as the festival developed it was probably most effective among its direct peers, i.e. the communities in the immediate region.

The Amphiaraia before and after Sulla

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33 I.Stratonikeia 547.
34 Iscr. Cos EV 203 (=Syll. 1066).
35 In fact the Koan inscription is the only known attestation outside Stratonikeia of the games at Lagina, although Strabo (14.2.25) mentions Lagina as ‘drawing great festal assemblies every year’ (trans. Jones 1928). He also lists Lagina as a midway point in Karia, thereby assuming a general knowledge of the shrine (Strabo 14.2.29).
Our last case study concerns Boiotia on mainland Greece. This was one of the regions where a relatively large number of new panhellenic crown festivals were organized in the Hellenistic period. After this creative phase in the fourth/third century, Boiotia fell into a slump after the turmoil of the mid second century BCE. A revival, however, is visible at the beginning of the first century BCE, not in the last place due to incentives given by the Roman commander Sulla. In this paragraph we shall focus on the sanctuary site of the Amphiareion at Oropos, where we can follow the developments over a longer period. As with Stratonikeia and Lagina, it shows that the support of Rome could be crucial for the success of a festival, but it also shows the potential of including the athletes in our study of the festival network.

Oropos, located more or less on the border of Boiotia and Athens, had a long history of innovating religious and agonistic traditions. It is most famous for its oracle and healing cult for Amphiaraos, already popular in the fifth century BCE. The sanctuary of Amphiaraos acquired a festival that included athletic, equestrian and cultural disciplines.

The fortunes of the sanctuary and its festivals were of course closely linked to the political entanglements of the city.\textsuperscript{36} For much of the fourth century Oropos fell under Athenian influence. Between 387 and 338 BCE the sanctuary and its contests were re-organised. The festival seems to have been held annually, but once every 4 years they were celebrated as the Megala Amphiaraia, drawing contestants from over a larger region.\textsuperscript{37} A fourth century catalogue of victors gives us an idea of this catchment area, which was predominantly regional: although some competitors had to travel quite far, around 60\% of the victors came from a city within 50 km of

\textsuperscript{36} Petrakos 1995.
\textsuperscript{37} IG VII 412.
Oropos (Figure 4). Also, despite the fact that Oropos was at the time independent, the majority of the known victors were from Athens.

The shrine continued to flourish in the third century, when Oropos was a member of the Boiotian League, but as elsewhere in Boiotia, the lights almost went out at the end of the second century BCE. A series of unfortunate political choices in the Achaean revolt led to punitive measures by the Roman pro-consul Mummius, including apparently the loss of territory to Eretria. The games also seem to have suffered as next to nothing is known about victors or their celebrations between the mid second to early first century BCE.

The Amphiaraia, however, underwent a revival of the agonistic tradition in the early first century, apparently at the hands of the Roman dictator Sulla, who endowed the sanctuary and granted exemption from Roman taxes. The evidence for his intervention is found in a *senatus consultum* that confirmed the privileges, and that was proudly displayed in the sanctuary. Archaeological evidence shows that buildings were restored, and that old statue bases were re-used for new honours for Roman senators and other dignitaries. The list of honorific inscriptions reads like a roll call of the senatorial elites of the age, and forms a neat row of monuments culminating in a double statue of Sulla and his wife Metella at the end, overlooking the entire sacred complex. Surely this was intended to create a sense of Sulla’s pervasive blessing at all of the events and festivities. Most important is that the Amphiaraia were revived as the Amphiaraia-Romaia. The range of events was expanded to include the full array of traditional Greek contest events.

The most striking—and politically astute—innovation was the addition of the mysterious εὐαγγέλια τῆς Ρωμαίων νίκης: ‘the good tidings of the Roman victory’

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38 *I.Oropos* 520 (329-328 BC).
39 Petrakos provides prosopographical information for *I.Oropos* 520, on p.414-415.
40 Rigsby 1996, 77 with reference to: line 6 of the *senatus consultum*, *I.Oropos* 308.
(presumably a reference to the Mithridatic war, but probably also understood in a more general sense), that must have been directed as much at the Romans as at the assembled Greek ‘friends of Rome’ who had come for the celebrations. This phrase was often included at the end of a victory list, leading Schachter to suggest that it was not a competition in its own right but a privilege given to the victor in the prestigious event, the *apobasis*, which concluded the games.\(^{41}\) More recently, however, Strasser has compellingly argued that we should understand this as a reference to a special footrace reserved for Oropian athletes, which served as a token of recognition that the success of the festival was due to Rome.\(^{42}\)

Like their contemporaries in Stratonikeia, the Oropians used Roman patronage as a claim to status in the contemporary world. In contrast with Stratonikeia, however, the re-foundation appears to have drawn large numbers from across the Greek world. Not only is there evidence of *asylia*, which was a reflection of the ‘international’ status of the site, but epigraphic evidence allows us to gauge the actual catchment area of the restored and enlarged Amphiaraia-Romaia (Figure 5).

Our most important source consists of a number of victor lists that were set up in the sanctuary in 85 BCE and between 80 and 50 BCE.\(^{43}\) Moreover, these texts can be supplemented by inscriptions that commemorate the successes of individual athletes. The total numbers are small and we should perhaps be wary of drawing very strong conclusions, but some trends are clear nonetheless. We now see that in the first century BCE large numbers of athletes and performers found their way to the sanctuary. Taken alone this increase may of course be explained in relation with the increase in the overall number of inscriptions, but it is significant to see that the catchment area seems to have widened, as well as the field of contestants. Even

\(^{41}\) Schachter 1994, 26-27.
\(^{42}\) Strasser 2001, 299-301.
\(^{43}\) *I.Oropos* 521 is the first victor list of the restored Amphiaraia-Romaia (85 BCE); the other documents are *I.Oropos* 522-534 dated between 80 and 50 BCE.
though many of the contestants still came from Boiotia and Attica, the Athenian dominance that we saw in the fourth century was now a thing of the past. Moreover, the number of cities that supplied contestants had also increased significantly, which was a reflection of the international status of the festival. Also, it would appear that the appeal of the sanctuary was recognised further afield. Not only were there more contestants, they also came from further away, with the average distance travelled by athletes and performers nearly double that what it was in the fourth century BCE. Furthermore, whereas in the fourth century, roughly 60% of the victors came from a town no more than 50 km away, in the first century this number had declined to 40%, while a similar proportion (39%) originated from a city over 200 km away from Oropos. Figure 5 shows that the Amphiaraia-Romaia were to a certain extent a 'global' event.

Another question is who these athletes were, and where else they went. If the Amphiaraia were indeed part of a closely integrated agonistic network, we would expect to see contestants travelling from site to site. This is something that we can check, as we can actually follow the movements of a number of victors at the Amphiaraia. In the fourth century BCE, the victors were less mobile; there was one (likely) Olympic victor, Satyros from Elis, who was also mentioned by Pausanias.44 The great majority of the other victors were, however, Athenians, who cannot be identified with other victories at other games.45 The lists of the first century BCE are slightly more informative, and give the impression of increased mobility between sites.46 Our information is limited, but some of the victors in the victor lists are known to have obtained victories elsewhere. Moreover, a handful of testimonials from outside Oropos record the victories of individual athletes at Oropos.

44 I.Oropos 520, ll. 22, 25, Pausanias 6.4.5; Moretti 1957, nos. 462, 466 places a question mark here.
45 I.Oropos 520, with comments on individual victors by Petrakos.
46 We expect that this situation was common in Boiotia. Preliminary analyses of the epigraphic record in Boiotia have shown that inter-site mobility was much lower in the fourth century than in the first century BCE. We will return to this in a future publication.
Figure 6 visualizes the sites and other contests where victors at the Amphiaraia were known to have won. In this sense this figure gives us the athletes’ view of Amphiaraia as one event on a circuit of festivals, putting it into context. It may not be possible to reconstruct a fixed itinerary, but it seems obvious that -whatever their origins- most victors at the Amphiaraia were also active at other contests. The majority of the victories were indeed won on mainland Greece, but there are sufficient outliers to show that the Amphiaraia were part of a wider -and global- network of festivals. These are, however, only tentative results and a much more detailed analysis is needed before we can draw any wider conclusions. This will require the collection of a much larger set of data than has been possible for the scope of this article.

After the first century AD the contest at Oropos slides into relative obscurity. The festival was still celebrated in the context of the Athenian ephebeia, but we do not know of any outside visitors. The contest may have suffered from the intense competition offered by the new wave of (prize) contests that were set up in honour of Roman emperors and local benefactors, especially in the cities of Asia Minor. The changing political climate may also have been detrimental to the festivals, as the civil wars in Rome of the later first century BC certainly left their footprint in the region.

As a postlude, it is interesting to look in network terms at what happened when Rome became the dominant power in the Mediterranean. In the imperial period Greek contests and festivals increasingly revolved around Rome: the associations of athletes joined and settled in Rome as is discussed by Fauconnier in this volume; the emperor kept a close watch on the organisation and planning of local festivals, and many of these festivals were even connected to the imperial cult. It would seem that the regional athletic networks of the later Hellenistic period were welded together

47 IG II-III², 2196 and 2203.
under Roman influence, and perhaps even at the behest of the emperor himself. It seems possible to view the Greek festival world in the imperial period as a connection of networks (i.e. a small-world network) centring on Rome.

Conclusion

To summarize, we have shown how civic panhellenic festivals in the Hellenistic period, such as that of Artemis Leukophryene at Magnesia on the Maeander and Hekate at Lagina near Stratonikeia, functioned as hubs, or central nodes, in the network building which these cities engaged in as they sought to strengthen their position among their peers in the extended Greek oikoumene. In the case of Lagina we also indicated how such a festival could serve to consolidate the local community within its territory, and how it ultimately appeared to operate principally within the ‘home region’ of the polis, among its direct peers.

We furthermore identified a number of important network agents who helped shape and reinforce the interstate relationships, i.e. the ties, through such festivals. These include the athletes and performers who through their circuit travels literally accumulated and dispersed the knowledge of the festivals among the various poleis, and the theoroi who were the very medium through which information about the festivals was shared. The festivals and the kind of common knowledge they generated, shared by so many different poleis across the wider Greek world, served to bind them together at the core of their common identity.

Our aim with this exploratory study was to show the potential of network theory for interpreting the development of Greek festivals in this period. A fuller analysis is planned in which we examine in much more detail the ways that global ties were created through local connections. In the end this will surely lead towards a better understanding of how these festivals played a critical part in creating a ‘small Hellenistic world’ in which Greek cities at either end of the spectrum were only one
or two handshakes away from each other, the *oikoumene* which Rome inherited and which formed the base for its empire.
Figure captions

Figure 1. Map showing the cities that participated in the festivals of Artemis Leukophryene at Magnesia on the Maeander at the end of the 3rd c. BC (Rigsby 1996, 179-279 nos. 66-131); see Appendix 1 for a list of the cities shown here (credit: Sam van Dijk)

Figure 2. Map showing the cities that responded to Stratonikeia’s invitation to recognize the asylia granted by Rome (I.Stratonikeia 505-508) in 81 BC. A list of the cities is given in Appendix 2 (credit: Sam van Dijk)

Figure 3. Map showing the network of a Koan athlete who participated in the festivals of Hekate at Stratonikeia (Lagina) (Inscr. Cos EV 203). The cities are shown in Appendix 3 (credit: Sam van Dijk)

Figure 4. Map showing the origin of the victors in the Amphiaraia festival in the 4th c. BC. Size of the nodes based on the number of victors. A list of the cities is given in Appendix 4 (credit: Sam van Dijk)

Figure 5. Map showing the origin of the victors in the Amphiaraia-Romaia festival in the 1st c. BC. Size of the nodes based on the number of victors. A list of the cities is given in Appendix 5 (credit: Sam van Dijk)

Figure 6. Map showing the networks of the victors in the Amphiareia-Romaia Size of the nodes based on the number of victors. A list of the cities is given in Appendix 6 (credit: Sam van Dijk)
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