

*Agónios, Agónarchos, Agónistêrion:*  
THREE WORDS ALLEGEDLY FORMED  
FROM *Agôn*, "ASSEMBLY"

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It is generally held by most scholars that the word *ἄγών* has the meaning "assembly, gathering" in Homer and Hesiod; this meaning is also said to occur a few times in the classical period as an archaic usage or "Homerism."<sup>1</sup> There are also three words formed from *ἄγών* which are said to retain the archaic meaning "assembly" after the epic period: the derivative *ἄγώνιος* in the phrase *ἄγώνιοι θεοί* in Aeschylus, the compound *ἄγωναρχος* in the Boeotian dialect, and the derivative *ἄγωνιστήριον* in Aristides. The purpose of this paper is to examine these words in their context and to determine if they actually do contain an archaic meaning of *ἄγών*, "assembly."

Elsewhere I have argued that *ἄγών* never has the meaning "assembly" in general.<sup>2</sup> If this view is correct, it would be a strong indication that any word formed from *ἄγών* would not contain the meaning "assembly;" the conclusions expressed in the present article, however, are not dependent on this view, and are meant to be judged on their own merits.

*Ἀγώνιοι θεοί*

The phrase *ἄγώνιοι θεοί* occurs once in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, and four times in his *Suppliants*.

Aesch. *Agam.* 513. In the *Agamemnon*, the herald of the returning

<sup>1</sup> See LSJ, s.v. *ἄγών* I 1, "gathering, assembly." On *ἄγών* in epic, see the article by H. J. Mette in *Lfgre* 134-36; on *ἄγών* as a "Homerism" in the classical period, see E. Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* II (Oxford 1950) 260-63.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Ellsworth, *Agôn: Studies in the Use of a Word* (Diss., Berkeley 1971) 7-23, 137-216 (the present article is a revision of pp. 264-86); and "ΑΓΩΝ ΝΕΩΝ: An Unrecognized Metaphor in the *Iliad*," *CP* 69 (1974) 258-64.

army, upon his arrival at Argos, opens his speech with a long invocation of the gods (503–17). In turn, the herald calls upon the Argive land, the light of the sun, Zeus, Apollo, τοὺς ἀγωνίους θεοὺς / πάντας (513–14), Hermes, and the heroes of the Argive land.

Several interpretations of the phrase ἀγωνίους θεοὺς have been offered by editors and commentators. Early editors preferred meanings of ἀγωνίους which were current in the fifth century. Stanley, for example, relying on Hesychius' definition of ἀγώνιοι θεοί, οἱ τῶν ἀγώνων προεστῶτες, understood ἀγωνίους θεοὺς as "gods of the games."<sup>3</sup> This meaning of ἀγώνιος occurs several times in Pindar, once in Euripides, and once in Plato, and reflects the common fifth-century meaning of ἀγών, "games, contest(s)."<sup>4</sup> Hermann, on the other hand, commented on ἀγωνίους θεοὺς that "illi sunt qui dederunt victoriam," i.e., in the Trojan war.<sup>5</sup> ἀγώνιος occurs twice in Sophocles with similar meaning; and another common fifth-century meaning of ἀγών is "battle, fighting," a meaning which occurs five times in Aeschylus.<sup>6</sup>

More recent opinion, however, has favored giving the word ἀγωνίους a meaning associated with the archaic meaning of ἀγών, "assembly." This interpretation has been influenced by a comment in Schol. T (Eust.) on Hom. *Il.* 24.1: καὶ ἀγωνίους θεοὺς Αἰσχύλος τοὺς

<sup>3</sup> Stanley is quoted in S. Butler, *Aeschyli tragoediae quae supersunt* (Cambridge 1809–1815) IV 203. Other editors adopting this interpretation include Porson (1794), Blomfield (1823), and Klausen-Enger (1863). Cf. also LSJ, s.v. ἀγώνιος 1, "either gods in assembly, or the gods who presided over the great games (Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo, and Hermes), = ἀγοραῖοι, Eust. 1335.58." The citations for this entry are Aesch. *Agam.* 513, *Supp.* 189, 242; Pl. *Leg.* 783a7; ἀγώνιοι θεοί in the last citation is usually thought to mean only "gods of the games," cf. D. F. Ast, *Lexicon Platonicum sive vocum Platoniarum index* (Leipzig 1835–1838) s.v. ἀγώνιος, "ad certamen pertinens; unde θεοὶ ἀγώνιοι, certaminum praesides."

<sup>4</sup> On ἀγώνιος: Pind. *Ol.* 10.63, *Isth.* 1.60, 5.7, 9.8; cf. fr. 107a.1–3 and P. Oxy. 2621 fr. 7.12; Eur. *Alex.* 13 (Page, *Select Papyri III: Literary Papyri*, Poetry, rev. ed. [London 1942]); cf. also Soph. *Aj.* 194 as understood by J. C. Kamerbeek, *The Plays of Sophocles, Commentaries: Part I, The Ajax*, tr. by H. Schreuder, rev. by A. Parker (Leiden 1953) 60. On ἀγών: LSJ, s.v. ἀγών II, "assembly of the Greeks at the national games."

<sup>5</sup> G. Hermann, *Aeschyli tragoediae* (Berlin 1859<sup>2</sup>) II 409; cf. also the edition of Paley (1870).

<sup>6</sup> On ἀγώνιος: Soph. *Tr.* 26, *Aj.* 194 (see LSJ, s.v. ἀγώνιος 2, "either pause from battle, or strenuous rest (oxymoron, cf. Sch.);" cf. also R. C. Jebb, *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments, Part VII, The Ajax* [Cambridge 1896] 41, and Kamerbeek [above, note 4] 60). On ἀγών: LSJ, s.v. ἀγών III 2, "battle, action;" ἀγών = "battle, fighting" at Aesch. *Pers.* 405, *Agam.* 1377, *Cho.* 584, 729, *Eum.* 914.

ἀγοραίους. Wilamowitz interpreted ἀγοραίους narrowly as "(gods) of the marketplace," as is clear from his translation of 512-13: "und euch auch grüss' ich alle, die ihr rings den markt beschützend thront."<sup>7</sup> Denniston-Page interpret the comment in the scholia in a more general way, "gods of the Assembly."<sup>8</sup>

Eduard Fraenkel provides the most detailed discussion of the phrase.<sup>9</sup> Fraenkel considers "gods of the gathering" possible here, but prefers an interpretation previously suggested by Wecklein, "gods in assembly," partially on the grounds that ἀγώνιοι θεοί probably means the same in this place as it does in the *Suppliants*, where there is no question of a market or gathering of people.<sup>10</sup> The more important consideration, however, is the decisive reason Fraenkel has for adopting the interpretation "gods in assembly," namely, that an adequate explanation of the phrase must show how ἀγωνίους θεούς fits into the context of the herald's speech. Fraenkel points out that Aeschylus is here following a common formula of prayer: the herald, after addressing some of the gods by name, mentions the rest in a general phrase, so as not to offend any through omission.

Fraenkel is certainly correct about the prayer form used by the herald, but he fails to see that this in no way calls for the interpretation of ἀγωνίους θεούς as "gods in assembly;" it makes no difference whether the gods are assembled or not, just that none are omitted from the prayer. The word πάντας in 518 fulfills this function perfectly.<sup>11</sup> In order to determine the correct meaning of ἀγωνίους θεούς one must

<sup>7</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aischylos: Agamemnon* (Berlin 1885) 35.

<sup>8</sup> J. D. Denniston and D. Page, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957) 119. This interpretation also appears in the editions of Headlam-Pearson (1910), Smyth (1922), Thomson (1966), and in the commentary by Rose (1958). Fraenkel (above, note 1) traces both "market-gods" and "gods of the assembly" to the influence of O. Mueller's *Anhang zu Aesch. Eum.*, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Fraenkel (above, note 1) 260-63.

<sup>10</sup> N. Wecklein, *Aischylos Orestie* (Leipzig 1888) 67. This interpretation is also ancient, see Schol. F on *Agam.* 513: τοὺς ἅμα ἐνὶ τόπῳ ἰδρυμένους. Editors adopting it include Schneider (1839), Verrall (1904), Groeneboom (1944), and Untersteiner (1946). See also G. Italie-S. Radt, *Index Aeschyleus* (Leiden 1964<sup>2</sup>) s.v. ἀγώνιος, "in coetum coniuncti (de Dis consentibus);" for LSF, see note 3 above. (There is, of course, no reason to suppose that ἀγώνιοι θεοί in the *Agam.* and *Supp.* has the same meaning, if context demands otherwise.)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Fraenkel's (above, note 1) 262 remark: "Ag. 513 approximates still more closely to the common formula of prayers with the πάντας in τοὺς τ' ἀγωνίους θεούς πάντας."

look more closely at the context in which the phrase occurs (509-17):

ὑπατός τε χώρας Ζεὺς ὁ Πύθιός τ' ἄναξ,  
τόξοις ἰάπτων μηκέτ' εἰς ἡμᾶς βέλη·  
ἄλις παρὰ Σκάμανδρον ἦσθ' ἀνάρσιος·  
νῦν δ' αὖτε σωτήρ ἴσθι καὶ παιώνιος,  
ἄναξ Ἀπολλων· τοὺς τ' ἀγωνίους θεοὺς  
πάντας προσαυδῶ τόν τ' ἐμὸν τιμάορον  
Ἑρμῆν, φίλον κήρυκα, κηρύκων σέβας,  
ἥρωες τε τοὺς πέμψαντας, εὐμενεῖς πάλιν  
στρατὸν δέχεσθαι τὸν λελειμμένον δορός.

After Zeus, Apollo is invoked with direct reference to his activity in the Trojan War; three lines, in fact, are devoted to the request that he become friendly after his former hostility. It is at this point that the herald calls upon τοὺς ἀγωνίους θεοὺς / πάντας. This immediate juxtaposition suggests that ἀγωνίους θεοὺς / πάντας refers to all the other gods who took part in the Trojan War; the herald does not want to omit any of the gods who, like Zeus and Apollo, took part in that conflict. This interpretation is confirmed by the rest of the prayer. After calling upon the ἀγωνίους θεοὺς, the herald singles out Hermes, his own patron, who also took part in the war.<sup>12</sup> Finally, in order not to pass over any of the gods relevant to his present situation, the herald mentions those local deities (516-17) who did not take part in the fighting at Troy.

The prayer formula cited by Fraenkel, then, does not support Wecklein's interpretation, "gods in assembly," as Fraenkel maintains, but rather indicates that ἀγωνίους θεοὺς means "gods of the battle, fighting," a meaning already suggested in part by Hermann. However, one cannot restrict the phrase, as Hermann did, only to those gods who gave victory, but rather must refer it to all the gods who were involved in the war, as the three line invocation of Apollo preceding the phrase shows.

Aesch. *Supp.* 189, 242, 333, 355. The ἀγώνιοι θεοί in the *Suppliants* belong to the scenery of the play; they are representations of gods

<sup>12</sup> Fraenkel (above, note 1) 262-63 rightly remarks that "Conscientious commentators have observed that τόν τ' ἐμὸν τιμάορον Ἑρμῆν must be taken as forming part of what has preceded it . . ."

located at an altar on the stage. The characters in the drama refer to them on four occasions:

*Δα.* ἄμεινόν ἐστι παντὸς οὐνεκ', ὦ κόραι,  
πάγον προσίζειν τόνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν.  
κρεῖσσον δὲ πύργου βωμός, ἄρρηκτον σάκος. (188-90)

*Βα.* κλάδοι γε μὲν δὴ κατὰ νόμους ἀφικτόρων  
κεῖνται παρ' ὑμῶν πρὸς θεοῖς ἀγωνίοις. (241-42)

*Βα.* τί φῆς ἰκνεῖσθαι τῶνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν  
λευκοστεφεῖς ἔχουσα νεοδρέπτους κλάδους; (333-34)

*Βα.* ὁρῶ κλάδοισι νεοδρόποις κατὰσκιον  
νεύονθ' ὄμιλον τόνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν. (354-55)

Stanley and some later editors, citing the comment in Hesychius quoted above, understood ἀγώνιοι θεοί as "gods of the games."<sup>13</sup> Fraenkel follows Wecklein in understanding the phrase here, as well as at *Agam.* 513, in the sense "gods in assembly."<sup>14</sup> *LSJ* consider both meanings possible.<sup>15</sup>

There is very little in the context of the four occurrences to indicate which meaning is most suitable. With respect to the immediate verbal context, a slight redundancy is produced by the meaning "gods in assembly" in 355, ὄμιλον τόνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν, "this assembly of assembled gods;" this is an argument, although not a decisive one, against this meaning. Nor does the situational context suggest any preference of meaning. The scene of the *Suppliants* is a lonely uninhabited place outside Argos. This rules out either "market gods" or "gods of the assembly," as Fraenkel notes. Otherwise the place is characterized by Aeschylus simply as a holy place or place of worship, and nothing else. One of the chief ways in which the Greeks worshipped their gods was by the celebration of games in their honor, and so the epithet ἀγώνιοι, "of the games," is most appropriate as simply

<sup>13</sup> Stanley is quoted in Butler (above, note 3) II 111-12. This interpretation is adopted in the editions of Porson (1794), Schütz (1809), Paley (1870), and Tucker (1889).

<sup>14</sup> Fraenkel (above, note 1) 261; N. Wecklein, *Die Schutzflehenden* (Leipzig 1902) 43 (this comment is virtually the same as the one he makes on *Agam.* 513 [above, note 10]). Other editors adopting this interpretation include Smyth (1922) and Untersteiner (1946); Rose (1957) adopts it in his commentary. Cf. Italie-Radt (above, note 10).

<sup>15</sup> See note 3 above.

another way to characterize the place as holy.<sup>16</sup> The interpretation of ἀγώνιοι θεοί as “gods in assembly,” however, would also fit the situational context, inasmuch as there are a number of gods assembled together.<sup>17</sup>

It is impossible, then, to distinguish between the two proposed meanings of ἀγώνιοι θεοί by means of context. Clearly, when a word may have either a current or an archaic meaning, the hearer (or reader) of the word will give it the meaning most familiar to him; he will only turn to an archaic or rare meaning, if a current meaning makes no sense to him. One must understand, therefore, the phrase ἀγώνιοι θεοί as Aeschylus’ audience would have, “gods of the games.”

### Ἀγώνναρχος

The scholium cited above in the discussion of ἀγώνιοι θεοί, Schol. T (Eust.) on Hom. *Il.* 24.1, mentions a compound ἀγώνναρχος, which is said to demonstrate that ἀγών meant ἀγορά in the Boeotian dialect: παρὰ δὲ Βοιωτοῖς ἀγὼν παλαιοὺς ἢ ἀγορά· καὶ τὸν ἀγορανόμον ἀγώνναρχον (ἀγῶν’ ἀρχόν MS, ἀγωνάρχην Eust.) καλοῦσιν.

Before 1884, there was no ancient evidence available either to confirm or deny the truth of this assertion. The only occurrence of the word was in Attic, and it meant “those in charge of a contest,” a meaning derived from the common fifth-century meaning of ἀγών, “games, contest(s).”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf. H. J. Rose, “The Greek Agones,” *Aberystwyth Studies* 3 (1922) 17–20; E. N. Gardiner, *Olympia: Its History and Remains* (Oxford 1925) 67–68, and *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford 1930) 32–33.

<sup>17</sup> The passages cited by Wecklein (above, note 14) 43 and Fraenkel (above, note 1) 261 referring to an “assembly of gods” in the *Suppliants* (κοινοβωμία at 222) and elsewhere in Aeschylus (*Ξυντέλεια* at Sept. 251, *θεῶν* / *ἄδε πανάγυρις* at Sept. 219–20) have no relevance to the interpretation of ἀγώνιοι θεοί here, since the gods may be both assembled and worshipped with games.

<sup>18</sup> The first declension form ἀγωνάρχαι occurs in Soph. *Aj.*, when Ajax gives instructions to the chorus about the disposition of his arms (572–73): καὶ τὰμὰ τεύχη μήτ’ ἀγωνάρχαι τινὲς / θήσουσ’ Ἀχαιοῖς μήτε λυμεῶν ἐμός. The meaning of ἀγωνάρχαι here is “those in charge of a contest,” namely, the funeral contest Ajax imagines might be held for his arms. This is the ancient explanation of the word; the Schol. simply comments ἀγωνοθέται, and the *Suda* quotes *Aj.* 572–73 after the entry: ἀγωνάρχαι· ἀγωνοθέται, ἄρχοντες τῶν ἀγώνων (as in the ed. of Bekker [Berlin 1854] 21; these words are missing from Adler’s ed.). *LSJ* s.v. ἀγχνάρχης I, “judge of a contest,” is slightly inaccurate.

In 1884, a short inscription from Thespieae (III/II B.C.) containing the word ἀγώναρχυ was published by P. Foucart (= IG VII 1817):<sup>19</sup>

Τὸ ἀγώναρχυ τὸ ἐπὶ  
Πολέ[α]ο ἄρχοντος,  
.....[ω]νος,  
[.....Δι]ογνεΐτω  
.....ίσκω,  
[.....ο]ς  
.....υκω.

Foucart, citing the comment in Eust. (Schol. T) on Hom. *Il.* 24.1, understood ἀγώναρχυ as officers with duties similar to those of agoranomes in other cities. This identification of the two magistracies has been generally accepted, usually with the additional comment that ἀγών = ἀγορά, "assembly" or "market."<sup>20</sup>

The fact that Eust. (Schol. T) says παρὰ Βοιωτοῖς, and that this inscription is from Boeotia, has no doubt led to the acceptance of Foucart's conjecture. Nevertheless, the inscription itself offers no evidence whatsoever that the ἀγώναρχυ were similar to the agoranomes among the Boeotians; it contains only a list of officers named ἀγώναρχυ for a certain year, ἐπὶ Πολέ[α]ο ἄρχοντος. Thus, the inscription merely confirms that agonarchs did exist in Boeotia; the identification of agonarch and agoranome was still entirely dependent on the late evidence of Eust. (Schol. T) on Hom. *Il.* 24.1.

In 1935, another Thespian inscription (III B.C.) containing three occurrences of ἀγώναρχος was first published.<sup>21</sup> P. Roesch

<sup>19</sup> P. Foucart, *BCH* 8 (1884) 414-15; cf. *BCH* 9 (1885) 408. *SEG* XXIII 275 dates this inscription (doubtfully) to a little after III B.C.; E. Schwyzler, *Dialectorum Graecarum exempla epigraphica potiora* (Leipzig 1923) No. 550g (p. 266) to III/II B.C.

<sup>20</sup> The two magistracies are identified by Schwyzler (above, note 19) No. 550g (p. 266). Identification of the magistracies is considered as evidence for ἀγών = ἀγορά in Boeotian by F. Bechtel, *Die griechischen Dialecte* I (Berlin 1921) 303; A. Thumb and A. Scherer, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialecte* II (Heidelberg 1959) No. 238e (p. 44). Most scholars who define ἀγορά give it the meaning "assembly;" Reisch in *RE* I (1894) 836; *LSJ* s.v. ἀγωνάρχης II; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots* (Paris 1968) s.v. ἄγω. Fraenkel (above, note 1) 260 thinks ἀγορά means "market." R. Meister in *GDI* No. 812a (I, p. 403) disagrees with the usual interpretation of ἀγώναρχυ; he thinks they " = Agonotheten."

<sup>21</sup> By A. D. Keramopoulos, *Ἀρχ. Δελτ.* 14 (1931-1932) 28-40 and Pl. IV and IVa, who dated it to III B.C. Roesch (see following note) 18-19 dates it to not before 220/215 B.C. and not after 210/208 B.C., which is accepted at *SEG* XXIII 271.

re-examined the stone in 1960, and has offered a new transcription in a book which is virtually an extended commentary on it.<sup>22</sup> The inscription consists of a record of the titles and names of Thespian magistrates for two consecutive years. A single agonarch is mentioned at the beginning of each year's list (3-4, 68):

ἀγώναρχος  
[Δά]μων Νεάνδρω  
.....  
ἀγώναρχος . . . . . ος Θ[ε]κ[λ]εῖος Ε.

Three agonarchs are mentioned near the end of the first year's list along with a secretary (51-54):

ἀγώναρχυ vac. \*Αρ-  
χιππος Τίμωνος, Εὐμάρων Εὐφάσιος, Εὐρεϊσί-  
ας Καραιογίτω vac. γραμματιστὰς Ἀγαθοκλεῖς  
Διονο[υ]σίω

Neither year offers a complete list of magistrates; the first (1-60) lacks the earlier ones, the second (61-86) breaks off in the middle. From both, however, a complete list of magistrates can be drawn up, since missing titles of the first year can be supplied from the second, and vice versa. The Thespian magistrates of the combined list fall into definite groups in such a way that Roesch is able to organize them into a "Tableau des Magistrats de Thespies." The single agonarch appears among "*Magistrats fédéraux élus par la cité*" (1-3, 65-68); the college of three agonarchs and their secretary, among city magistrates concerned with "*Sports et fêtes*" (45-53).<sup>23</sup>

These occurrences of ἀγώναρχος, then, are provided with a very definite context. Since the college of three agonarchs are concerned with sports and contests, i.e., ἀγῶνες, it is only reasonable to conclude that, whatever their exact duties, the ἀγών in the name means "games, contest(s)." The single agonarch is a federal officer; on the analogy of the city agonarchs, it can be conjectured that he too was concerned with sports and contests. He certainly cannot have been an agoranome in

<sup>22</sup> P. Roesch, *Thespies et la confédération béotienne* (Paris 1965); the inscription appears on pp. 4-11. Roesch's version was subsequently published at *SEG XXIII* 271.

<sup>23</sup> Roesch (above, note 22) 22-24. The other magistrates in this group are two παιδονόμυ (line 45), two γουνηκονόμυ (47), three γουμνασίαρχυ of the old (48) and three of the young (50).



any ordinary sense of the word, as Roesch notes, since at this time the federation had no market, and no need for agoranomes, who are usually concerned with regulating prices, provisioning the market, and so forth.<sup>24</sup>

One must conclude from this evidence that Schol. T (Eust.) on Hom. *Il.* 24.1 is simply incorrect in equating ἀγώναρχος with ἀγορανόμος as evidence that ἀγών had the meaning ἀγορά among the Boeotians. This inscription shows that ἀγώναρχος in the Boeotian dialect contains one of the most common meanings of ἀγών, "games, contest(s)," not an archaic or rare meaning.

### Ἀγωνιστήριον

If one reviews the words formed from ἀγών in *LSJ*, one discovers one other derivative which is said to contain the meaning "assembly." *LSJ* define the word ἀγωνιστήριον as "place of assembly;" the only citation for the word is the *Panathenaicus* of Aristides, 1.108 Jebb.<sup>25</sup> James H. Oliver may have relied on *LSJ* in his recent translation of the

<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, Roesch still attempts to rely on the comment on ἀγώναρχος in Schol. T and Eust. to Hom. *Il.* 24.1. In his explanation (141–45) of the federal agonarch (he says very little about the city agonarchs, see pp. 143, 226), Roesch says that the other cities of the federation also appointed agonarchs, and that they corresponded to agoranomes, not to ordinary agoranomes, but to "agoranomes de panégories, chargés de contrôler les panégories et d'y faire régner l'ordre,"—i.e., the agonarchs corresponded to agoranomes only in the case of specialized agoranomes who are concerned with ἀγῶνες. This limits the equation ἀγώναρχος = ἀγορανόμος severely, and certainly cannot allow one to conclude from it that ἀγών = ἀγορά among the Boeotians. At most, Roesch's explanation, if one accepts it, shows only how the mistake in Schol. T (Eust.) was generated. Keramopoulos (above, note 21), also relying on Schol. T and Eust. on Hom. *Il.* 24.1 (he cites the irrelevant *IG* VII 1817 as well), thought (p. 29) that the ἀγώναρχος of lines 3 and 68 = ἀγορανόμος, but defined (35) the duties of the ἀγώναρχου in lines 51–54 in accordance with those of the magistrates which precede them: supervision of the choral ἀγῶνες and the ἐορταί and θυσιαί of the women and young men. M. Feyel, *Polybe et l'histoire de Béotie au III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère* (Paris 1942) 267, thought that all ἀγώναρχου = ἀγορανόμοι. *LSJ* Suppl., s.v. ἀγώναρχος, citing this inscription, say simply "= ἀγωνάρχης," without specifying the meaning under this entry, I or II (see above, notes 18 and 20).

<sup>25</sup> This occurrence in Aristides is apparently the only one in a classical author; the word occurs later, however, in the church fathers, with the meanings "1. place of contest, palaestra," and "2. proving-ground," according to G. W. H. Lampe and others, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Fasc. 1 (Oxford 1961) s.v. ἀγωνιστήριον. The adjective ἀγωνιστήριος is defined by *LSJ* as "= ἀγωνιστικός," which has meanings associated with ἀγών, "games, contest(s)."

*Panathenaicus* where he gives ἀγωνιστήριον the meaning "assembly place."<sup>26</sup>

The ancient authorities are in disagreement with this definition. Hesychius defines ἀγωνιστήριον as τόπος, ἐν ᾧ ἀγωνίζονται (cf. *Etym. Magn.*), and the scholium to this line comments simply δικαιοσύνης.<sup>27</sup> These comments indicate meanings of ἀγωνιστήριον which are consistent with the common meanings of ἀγών, "contest" and "trial."<sup>28</sup>

The issue can only be settled by turning to the context of the occurrence. The following is a very condensed version of *Panathenaicus* 106-08 Jebb:

Two of the greatest gods contended for Athens, Athena and Poseidon; Athena won, but both conferred benefits on the city. Not only did gods contend *for* the city, they contended *in* it: Poseidon prosecuted Ares here for the murder of his son, and as a consequence the Areopagus got its name. There is nothing superior to the Areopagus; it sends up clear knowledge of the just as if a kind of mantic exhalation and all people yield to the judgements made here. καὶ μεταβολὴ τοῦ χωρίου τοῦτου μόνου ἤδη σχεδὸν οὐχ ἤψατο, οἷα δὲ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀγωνιστήριον τοῖς θεοῖς ἀνείται καὶ οἷς ἐξ ἐκείνου καθήκει καὶ πάντες παράδειγμα δικαιοσύνης νομίζοντες οὕτω τιμῶσιν αἰδοῦτων θεῶν. Another famous trial which took place here was the judicial contest between Orestes and the Furies.

ἀγωνιστήριον occurs in a distinctly judicial environment: (1) mention of the prosecution of Ares by Poseidon, (2) praise of the Areopagus as the supreme place of judgment, (3) ἀγωνιστήριον, (4) the words πάντες παράδειγμα δικαιοσύνης νομίζοντες, (5) mention of the trial of Orestes.<sup>29</sup> It is clear from this that ἀγωνιστήριον must mean primarily "place of judicial contest, trial."<sup>30</sup> Since the judicial contest between

<sup>26</sup> James H. Oliver, *The Civilizing Power: A Study of the Panathenaic Discourse of Aelius Aristides against the Background of Literature and Cultural Conflict, with Text, Translation and Commentary*, TAPhS, n.s. 58.1 (Philadelphia 1968) p. 51, sect. 43.

<sup>27</sup> The definition of Hesychius is quoted by H. Stephanus, *Thesaurus Graecae linguae*, ed. C. B. Hase and others (Paris 1831) I 605B; cf. also the translation of Reiske (below, note 30).

<sup>28</sup> See LSJ, s.v. ἀγών II, sub-heading "of contests in general;" III 1, "generally, struggle," and 3, "action at law, trial."

<sup>29</sup> Words formed from ἀγών occur in the description of the trial of Orestes: ἀγωνισταῖς = "the adjudicants (Orestes and the Furies)," ἀγωνίζεται = "he (Orestes) contended at law."

<sup>30</sup> Oliver (above, note 26) 51 translates ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀγωνιστήριον τοῖς θεοῖς ἀνείται:

Ares and Poseidon is given as an example of a contest in the city as contrasted to one for the city, Aristides may have coined ἀγωνιστήριον for the more usual δικαστήριον, as a kind of word play involving another meaning of ἀγών, "contention, conflict."<sup>31</sup> In any case, it is impossible to detect any residue of the archaic meaning of ἀγών, "assembly," in ἀγωνιστήριον.

*Conclusion.* The three words—ἀγώνιος, ἀγώναρχος, ἀγωνιστήριον—believed to embody an archaic meaning of ἀγών, "assembly, gathering," have been examined in the light of all that is known about the context in which they occur. In each instance, it has been shown that a meaning which is related to some contemporaneous meaning of ἀγών is appropriate to the derived or compounded word. Hence, there is no need to assume that the word in question reflects some archaic meaning of ἀγών.

Two causes seem to have led to the hypothesis of an archaic usage: (1) excessive dependence on ancient commentators and lexicographers, (2) the attraction—for scholars—of the obscure and rare as opposed to the obvious and commonplace. Neither of these considerations, however, can take precedence over contextual evidence, for, to paraphrase Bentley, "nobis et ratio et res ipsa centum auctoribus potiores sint."

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"It has been left as an assembly place for the gods." I think, rather, that the phrase means something like "it has been consecrated to/by the gods as a place of judicial contest, trial" (for this meaning of ἀνείλται, see LSJ, s.v. ἀνίημι II 6); cf. J. J. Reiske, *Animadversiones ad Graecos auctores* III (Leipzig 1761) 237: "consecratus est his locus diis ut forum, in quo suas illi causas agitent." Cf. also the description of the Areopagus at Eur. *El.* 1262–63 as a place ἵν' εὐσεβεστάτη / ψήφος βεβαία τ' ἐστὶν ἥ ἐκ τε τοῦ θεοῖς, which also occurs after mention of the prosecution of Ares by Poseidon.

<sup>31</sup> Lysias 1.30: τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, τῷ ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου, 6.14: ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ ἐν τῷ σεμνοτάτῳ καὶ δικαιοτάτῳ δικαστηρίῳ, Dem. 23.65: τὸ ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ δικαστήριον; cf. also the definition of Ἀρείος πάγος in the *Suda*: δικαστήριον Ἀθηνῶν and Hesychius: ἐν Ἀθήναις δικαστήριον ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει.