

Chapter 11

MATTHIAS HAAKE – Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster
 haakem@uni-muenster.de

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Megara and ‘the Megarians’: a City and its Philosophical School*

When Plato left Athens after the death of Socrates, he first went, along with other members of Socrates’ former entourage, to Megara. More or less nothing is known about his stay there, yet it is possible to ascertain the motives for his decision to leave his native city and relocate to a place where, in the words of the Cynic Diogenes, the inhabitants “feast as if to die tomorrow, and build as if they were never to die at all”¹. Aside from the

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1 SSR² II Diogenes Sinopeus (= V B) fr. 285 (p. 341) *apud Tert. Apol.* 39.14: *Megarenses obsonant quasi crastina die morituri, aedificant uero quasi numquam morituri*. – On this saying and its parallels, see Legon 1981: 257 n. 1. See also Packmohr 1913: 89; Overwien 2005: 388.

geographical proximity of Megara and its oligarchic regime,² the reason was, according to Plato's student Hermodoros of Syracuse,³ that the fugitives from Athens were eager to meet Eukleides, a former student of Socrates himself and founder of the so-called Megarian school.⁴ Although Megara could not compete with Athens in terms of a vibrant philosophical scene, the city was by no means a place without relevance in the history of philosophy, especially in the late Classical and early Hellenistic times. This aspect is widely ignored in studies on ancient Megara, due to the prevalent force of Athenocentrism in the study of the history of philosophy.⁵

It is not the aim of the present paper to revise this image either. Rather, this contribution elaborates on the idea that a philosophical school existed in Megara that was identified through association with its place – a school of thinkers who took their name from the city and thus were known as Megarians.⁶ It is also not my intention to outline a history of the Megarian school.⁷ Rather, I seek to locate it in the local (discourse) environment of the city; to ask for interactions between the city of Megara, its citizens and inhabitants respectively, and the school and its members;⁸ and, as far as possible, to embed the

2 On Megara's constitutional order in the early 390s, see Legon 1981: 263 as well as Gehrke 1985: 109 with n. 15 with reference to Pl. *Cri.* 53b.

3 *FGrH* 4A Hermodoros of Syracuse 1008 F 1a+b = Hermod. Plat. fr. 1-2 Isnardi Parente²: *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.106, 3.6. See Eler 2007: 46; see also Haake forthcoming. Cf. Döring 1972: 76-77.

4 For Eukleides' biography, it suffices to refer to Muller 2000b. According to Pl. *Phd.* 59c, he was present at Socrates' death; Xenophon, however, did not mention him in his *Memorabilia*.

5 This is true, e.g., in respect to Highbarger 1927 (whose announced second volume on Megara including cultural aspects of the city [xi; see also Highbarger 1923: iii] was never published); Hanell 1934; Legon 1981; Gehrke 1986: 140-144.

6 In a largely unnoticed passage of the prologue to his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius mentions the various possibilities to name a philosophical school, among them the designation ἀπὸ πόλεων (1.17). Even if it is, in general, possible to explain the origins of a name of a philosophical school, it is an unsolved question as to how and by whom philosophical schools were named and for which reason(s) a specific name was chosen. The remarks by Gigon (1960: 60) on Diog. Laert. 1.17 are anything but exhaustive; cf. also Cambiano 1977: 27-35.

7 In this respect, see von Fritz 1931; Montoneri 1984: 15-226; Muller 1988; Döring 1998: 207-237.

8 It is worth noting that, in order to avoid misconceptions, in Ancient Greek the ethnicity of the inhabitants of Megara is Μεγαρεύς, pl. Μεγαρείς (Legon 2004: 463), whereas the name of the members of the school is Μεγαρικός, pl. Μεγαρικοί, a term rarely attested; see Döring 1989: 296. In English the form "Megarician(s)" is uncommon (a rare exception is Bocheński 1951: 77-102); both the inhabitants of the city and the members of the school are therefore mostly called Megarians.

Megarian school in the Megarian localscape.⁹ To achieve this goal, I will examine the presence of Megarian philosophers in Megara as well as their visibility, and engagement, in the local cosmos of the city. The first step, however, will be to address some general problems in respect to the Megarian school that make things even more difficult than the outlined approach would suggest. In the concluding observations, a remarkable piece of evidence, dating to the second century CE, will be introduced in order to demonstrate that, at a time when the Megarian school was long gone, its founder continued to be remembered as an icon of local pride.

Tracing the Megarian School

Among the various Socratic schools, the Megarians are probably the least known philosophical group, owing to the paucity of available evidence.¹⁰ To name only the most crucial, and probably the most astonishing of the many unsolved problems regarding the Megarians, it is far from being clear as to what extent the Megarians can be characterized as a philosophical school in the rigid sense of the term at all, and if so, what the term ‘school’ entails in their particular case.¹¹

Yet, let us consider some statements from ancient authors: Aristotle mentions the Megarians in his *Metaphysics*;¹² Epicurus wrote a treatise entitled *Against the Megarians*;¹³ Strabo knew that Megara,

9 The term ‘-scape’ is in part borrowed from the title of a workshop organized by Anja Slawisch and Michael Loy in Cambridge, March 22–23, 2018: *Shedding Light on the Matter: Ideascapes and Material Worlds in the Land of Thales*.

10 See, e.g., Muller 1988: 11. Three collections of fragments and testimonies (with commentary and partly in translation) are available: Döring 1972; Montoneri 1984; Muller 1985. See also, indispensably, Giannantoni’s *SSR² I Euclidis et Megaricorum Philosophorum Reliquiae* [= II A-S] [p. 375–483]. If referring to ‘Megarian’ sources, I will generally restrict myself to reference the text according to its edition in Giannantoni’s *SSR²*, as well as in Döring’s collection and to mention the ancient author (and, if necessary, his work) who quotes the respective fragment. In general, I refrain from referring to the commentaries on the Megarians. It is easy to find the relevant passages.

11 See, e.g., Cambiano 1977; Montoneri 1984 (esp. 67–72, 202–205, 224–225); Muller 1988: 44–48; Döring 1989.

12 Arist. *Metaph.* 1046b29–32 (IX 3.1) [= *SSR²* Eubulides (= II B) fr. 15 (p. 393) = fr. 130A Döring]. See Giannantoni 1993.

“once even had schools of philosophers who were called the Megarian sect, these being the successors of Eukleides, the Socratic philosopher, a Megarian by birth.”¹⁴

and Diogenes Laertius explained in his *Life of Eukleides* that,

“his followers were called Megarians after him, then Eristics, and at a later date Dialecticians, that name having first been given to them by Dionysius of Chalkedon because they put their arguments into the form of question and answer.”¹⁵

What can be deduced from these and other testimonies is that the Megarian philosophers were a group of people who were considered to be philosophers, though distinct from other philosophers. Their technique of questioning and reasoning is labeled “Megarian(-styeled)” by Plutarch in his treatise *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, when criticizing Chrysippos for his attacks on Megarian philosophers.¹⁶ The verb *μεγαρίζω* has been used by Diogenes Laertius to describe the habit of following the Megarian philosopher Stilpo, thus to “megarise”.¹⁷ The *Suda* (tenth century CE) also contains the entry *Μεγαρίσαι*.¹⁸

13 The title is known from Diogenes Laertius' catalogue of works of Epicurus: Diog. Laert. 10.27 [= SSR² Eubulides (= II B) fr. 17 (p. 396) = fr. 194 Döring = Epicur., p. 21 Arrighetti]. On Epicurus' and the Epicureans' critical attitude toward the Megarians, see Sedley 1976: 144-147.

14 Str. 9.1.8 [= SSR² I Euclides (= II A) F 29 (p. 385-386) = F 43A Döring] (transl. by H.L Jones): ἔσχε δέ ποτε καὶ φιλοσόφων διατριβὰς τῶν προσαγορευθέντων Μεγαρικῶν, Εὐκλείδην διαδεξαμένων ἄνδρα Σωκρατικόν, Μεγαρέα τὸ γέ.

15 Diog. Laert. 2.106 [= SSR² I Dionysius Chalcedonius (= II P) (p. 469) = F 31 Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): Εὐκλείδης ἀπὸ Μεγάρων (...) καὶ οἱ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Μεγαρικοὶ προσηγορεύοντο, εἴτ' Ἐριστικοί, ὕστερον δὲ Διαλεκτικοί, οὓς οὕτως ὠνόμασε πρῶτος Διονύσιος ὁ Χαλκηδόνιος διὰ τὸ πρὸς ἐρώτησιν καὶ ἀπόκρισιν τοὺς λόγους διατίθεσθαι. – On Dionysius of Chalkedon, see Muller 1994. On the quoted passage, see Sedley 1977: 77; Döring 1989: 301-303.

16 Plut. *Mor.* 1036e-f [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 28 (p. 463) = fr. 186 Döring = SVF II (Chrysipp. Stoic.) fr. 271 = Chrysipp. Stoic. fr. 278-279 Dufour]. On Plutarch's criticism of the Stoics (and especially Chrysippos), see Hershbell 1992.

17 Diog. Laert. 2.113 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 2 (p. 450) = fr. 163A Döring]. For *μεγαρίζω* and its meanings, see LSJ *s.v.* *μεγαρίζω*. See also Döring 1998: 231.

18 *Sud. s.v.* *Μεγαρίσαι* (M 388) [= fr. 163B Döring] (transl. by D. Whitehead): τὰ Μεγαρέως δοξάσαι. Στίλπων γὰρ ὁ φιλόσοφος Μεγαρεὺς ἦν, τῆς Ἑλλάδος: ὃς τοσοῦτον εὐρησιλογία καὶ σοφιστεία προῆγε τοὺς ἄλλους, ὡς μικροῦ δεῖσαι

Despite these and other comparable sources, it remains difficult to consider the Megarians as a school in terms of the general understanding of this expression. This becomes immediately clear if one considers a common definition of the concept of a philosophical school whereby a philosophical school is “[n]ot, in general, a formal institution, but a group of like-minded philosophers with an agreed leader and a regular meeting place, sometimes on private premises but normally in public.”¹⁹ Against this background it is evident that, for all we know, the Megarians can be seen only in a very wide sense as a philosophical school, or that they must be considered a philosophical school with loose internal ties. Some key features common to the concept of philosophical schools were not shared by them: for instance, throughout their (post-Euklidean) history they neither had a head of school (only dominating figures), nor were all persons affiliated to the Megarians based at Megara. Likewise, no regular meeting place in the city is attested.²⁰ The philosophers grouped under the name of Megarians only had some topics in common, especially logic, metaphysics and, to some extent, ethics. Although there seems to have been no larger dogmatic basic framework, a specific form of questioning and reasoning was assigned to their intellectual conversations.²¹ All of these circumstances might reasonably explain the noted changes of the naming of the Megarians (Diogenes Laertius, above).²²

πᾶσαν τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἀφορῶσαν εἰς αὐτὸν μεγαρίσαι. – “[Meaning] to hold the views of a Megarian. For Stilpon the philosopher was from Megara, in Greece; [it was he] who so far excelled the rest in inventiveness and sophistry that almost the whole of Greece looked away from others to him [and chose] to Megarise.”

19 See Long and Sedley 1987: 5. In this context, see also Haake 2015: 59–62.

20 The reference to the διδασκαλεῖον of Eukleides at Megara in Pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias’ (probably to be identified with Michael of Ephesus, a Byzantine philosopher flourishing in the twelfth century CE; see, e.g., Luna 2001: 53–66, 187; Salis 2007: 2389–2391) *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics* ([Alex. Aphr.] in *Metaph.* 570.25–26 Hayduck [= *SSR*² I Eubulides (= II B) fr. 16.1–3 (p. 394) = fr. 130B] ad Arist. *Metaph.* 1046b29 [IX 3.1]) should be considered of doubtful value; see, however, Montoneri 1984: 71. On διδασκαλεῖα in general, see the short remarks by Scholz 1998: 41 n. 116.

21 It is a controversial matter whether Stilpo (*SSR*² I Stilpon [= II O] fr. 26 (p. 462) = fr. 27 Döring = Aristocle. fr. 7.1 Chiesara *apud* Eus. PE 14.17.1) held a similar view as expressed by Eukleides in the ‘basic dogma’ (*SSR*² I Euclides [= II A] fr. 30 [p. 386] = fr. 24 Döring *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.106. On the ‘basic dogma’, see Döring 1987: 91–92); cf. Chiesara 2001: 155–158.

22 On these explanations see, convincingly, von Fritz 1931: 718–719; Cambiano 1977 (esp. 36); Montoneri 1984: 67–72; Döring 1989: 309–310.

Even though Megara was thus not a permanent center of Megarian philosophy, the name of place remained a characteristic of those who belonged to the Megarian school. Moreover, some of the philosophers called Megarian were also Megarian citizens or spent at least some of their time actually practicing philosophy in Megara. Next to Euclid, the founder of the school, Ichthyas, Philippos, and Stilpo were the most prominent protagonists.²³ Their presence and role in the city will be taken into account below.

Prominent Members of the School

The Platonic dialogues are often embedded in short prefatory notes. The setting of one of these prefatory dialogues, in the *Theaitetos*, is located in Megara. Whether this dramatic proem is authentic or not, is not relevant in the current context.²⁴ Briefly, the setting is the aftermath of the battle of Corinth, probably in 392 or 391 BCE (rather than in 369),²⁵ and the scene is at one of the city gates. Eukleides, who had intended to go to the harbour, has come upon the mathematician Theaitetos of Sounion,²⁶ who, wounded in the battle of Corinth, was on his way back to his native city. Upon his return to Megara, Eukleides runs into Terpsion,²⁷ who had been looking for him. This encounter results in the immediate reading aloud of a conversation between Socrates and Theaitetos (and Theodoros²⁸) in the year before Socrates' death; this conversation was recorded by none other than Eukleides after Socrates relayed the discussion to him, and by happy chance, Eukleides had this text with him when he meets Terpsion. More interesting than the reading aloud of Eukleides' text by his accompanying slave in memory of Theaitetos is that Terpsion tells Eukleides that he had been looking for him in the agora.²⁹

23 On these three philosophers, see, e.g., Muller 2000c; Muller 2012; Muller 2016b.

24 Pl. *Tht.* 142a1-143c8 [=SSR² I Euclides (= II A) fr. 9 (p. 379-380) = fr. 5 Döring]. See the short overview by Erler 2007: 232. On the introductory dialogue, see also the commentary by Seeck 2010: 15-17.

25 See Nails 2002: 276-277; Erler 2007: 232.

26 On Theaitetos, see Nails 2002: 274-278; Narcy 2016.

27 On Terpsion, see Nails 2002: 274; Muller 2016c.

28 On Theodoros of Cyrene, see Nails 2002: 281-282; Macris 2018.

29 Pl. *Tht.* 142a2-3.

Whatever the veracity of this story, it must have been plausible to the readership to find the Megarian philosopher Eukleides in the agora of his native city. Unfortunately, nothing further is known about Eukleides' public presence in Megara. Timon of Phlius in his satirical poems *Silloi*, noted that Eukleides “inspired the Megarians with a frenzied love of controversy”.³⁰ This shows that in the context of mocking philosophical satires, it was obvious to credit Eukleides with some influence over his fellow citizens.

More instructive than Eukleides' involvement in the public life of his hometown, and that of his student Euboulides of Miletus (who is mentioned in passing in an Attic comedy by an unknown author³¹), is the case of Ichthyas, son of Metallos. Ichthyas was also one of Eukleides' students. A minor player in the history of philosophy, he played an important role in the history of his hometown in the 4th century BCE. Diodorus Siculus sets the historical stage for us, stating that “in the city of the Megarians, when some persons endeavored to overturn the government and were overpowered by the *dēmos*, many were slain and not a few driven into exile.”³² It is much debated whether this passage is part of Diodorus' description of the conditions in the Peloponnese after the *koinē eirēnē* of 375 or if it relates to the aftermath of the battle of Leuktra in 371. Even though current scholarship widely accepts the earlier date,³³ the later one cannot be excluded with certainty.³⁴ A short sentence in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, often disregarded by ancient historians, is of great interest, since it provides a particular detail of this incident of *stasis*: “Ichthyas”, relates Tertullian, “is killed while he organizes a plot against his city.”³⁵

30 Timo Phliasius fr. 28 di Marco *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.107 [= SSR² I Euclides (= II A) fr. 34 (p. 387) = fr. 8 Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): ... Εὐκλείδου, Μεγαρεῦσιν ὃς ἔμβαλε λύσσαν ἐρισμοῦ. On this fragment, see di Marco 1989: 175-177.

31 On Euboulides, Muller 2000a. *PCG* VIII Adesp. com. fr. 149 Kassel and Austin *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.108 [= SSR² I Eubulides (= II B) fr. 1 (p. 389) = fr. 51A Döring].

32 Diod. 15.40.4 (transl. C.L. Sherman, modified): ἐν δὲ τῇ πόλει τῶν Μεγαρέων ἐπιχειρήσαντες τινες μεταστῆσαι τὴν πολιτείαν, καὶ κρατηθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου, πολλοὶ μὲν ἀνηρέθησαν, οὐκ ὀλίγοι δ' ἐξέπεσον.

33 For a concise overview, see, e.g., Stylianiou 1998: 330-332.

34 See, e.g., Gehrke 1985: 110, 147 with n. 6; Jehne 1994: 64 n. 100.

35 Tert. *Apol.* 46.16 [= SSR² I Ichthyas (= II H) F 3 (p. 439) = F 48 Döring]: *Ichthyas, dum civitati insidias disponit, occiditur*. In the manuscripts of the *Apologeticus*, the name of Ichthyas is corruptly transmitted (*ichthyas* and *ichthydias*). For long, this has resulted in a misleading conjecture (*et Hippias*; see, e.g., Tert. *Apol.* ed. Waltzing and Severyns; *DK* 86 [79] Hippias A 15 [II, p. 330]) and in the hypothesis that Tertullian had confused the sophist Hippias of Elis and Hippias, the son of the Athenian tyrant Peisistratos (see, e.g. Waltzing 1931: 293-294). As Emonds (1937: 186-187) has pointed out, this was not without consequences for the evaluation of Tertullian's quality as author and the *Apolegeticus*' value as a source; see,

Ichthyas' plotting and the civic strife in Megara mentioned by Diodorus relate to the same instance of *stasis*.³⁶ The short remark thus provides an additional piece of information,³⁷ that is: Ichthyas not only played a vital role among the oligarchic conspirators, but he was also among those who met their death in the wake of the failed coup d'état.³⁸ Unfortunately, nothing more can be inferred from this detail, as most aspects regarding the context of the upheaval remain obscure.³⁹

e.g., Geffcken 1937: 282 with n. 1. However, Emonds (1937: esp. 180–184) has convincingly demonstrated that the text must be read 'Ichthyas' and he has also explained how the defective transmission in the manuscripts can be explained. All later essential critical editions of the text (e.g., *CCSL* I [Tert. *oper.* I]) accept Emonds' emendation. This emendation has also been recognized and accepted in studies in the history of philosophy of the Megarians (see, e.g. Döring 1972: 100) and in the field of patristic studies on Tertullian (see, e.g., Georges 2011: 653 with n. 57).

36 See already Emonds 1937: 185–186; see Kroll 1940; F. Jacoby in *FGrH* 3b *Noten* 230; Meyer 1970: 848. Döring (1972: 100–101), however, is rather skeptical and suggests to see Ichthyas' death in the context of civil strife in 343 (on this apparently bloodless conflict between [philo-Makedonian] oligarchs and [philo-Athenian] democrats, see Legon 1981: 290–294; Gehrke 1985: 110). Döring's main argument for his suggestion – based on Diogenes of Sinope's dubious dialogue *Ichthyas* (Diog. Laert. 2.112 [= *SSR*² II Diogenes (= V B) fr. 124 (p. 283) = fr. 32A Döring], 6.80 [= *SSR*² II Diogenes (= V B) fr. 117 (p. 280–282) = fr. 32B Döring]) and consequential chronological considerations – is worth considering, even though it is far from convincing. Further investigations are necessary, even more so, if the above quoted passage by Diodorus is dated to 372. On Diogenes' problematic catalogue of literary works, see, with different positions in respect of their authenticity, Goulet-Cazé 1986: 85–90; Winiarczyk 2005.

37 Tertullian's source for his knowledge about Ichthyas remains an open question. To think of a Hellenistic (or, less probably, early Imperial) compilation of anti-philosophical polemic might not be completely misleading. In any case, it is remarkable that Ichthyas is not mentioned in Tatian's polemic against philosophers (Tat. *adv. Graec.* 2.1–3.4) whereas Plato, Aristotle, and Aristippos, who are quoted together with Ichthyas by Tertullian (Tert. *Apol.* 46.15–16), are referred to by Tatian (Tat. *adv. Graec.* 2.1–2). The attribution of the fragment on Ichthyas to Aristotle's *Megarian Constitution*, as suggested by Emonds (1937, 190–191), should be considered as doubtful. Jacoby (*FGrH* 3b *Noten* 230) has pointed out that an unknown local Megarian historian might have been the first to record the events of the Megarian civil strife of the 370s, and that this anonymous historian was the source of Ephoros, who was used, in turn, by Diodorus; see also Piccirilli 1975: 1 n. 4. The connection between the anonymous Megarian or Ephoros respectively and the unknown source of Tertullian must remain again an unanswered question. It is remarkable, however, that Tertullian refers explicitly in his *On the Soul* to Ephoros: *BNJ* 70 Ephoros F 217 *apud* Tert. *de An.* 46. Moreover, it is not possible to allocate the 'Ichthyas-fragment' to Theophrastus' *Megarian (Dialogue)* attested in Diog. Laert. 5.44 (= Thphr. fr. 436 no. 20 Fortenbaugh – Huby – Sharples – Gutas), 6.22 (= Thphr. fr. 511 Fortenbaugh – Huby – Sharples – Gutas).

38 As far as I know, this passage has never been taken into account. See, e.g., Legon 1981 (esp. 274, 276–278); Gehrke 1985 (esp. 110); Scholz 1998; Stylianou 1998 (esp. 329–332); Robinson 2011 (esp. 46); Gray 2015; Simonton 2017.

39 It is important to underline, however, that Ichthyas' involvement in (Megarian oligarchic) politics had nothing to do with his philosophy but with his presumable social background, which induced his association with philosophy. Despite the scarce evidence, it is a plausible assumption to see in Ichthyas an offspring of the Megarian upper class. In this respect, see, e.g., the remarks by Haake 2009: 130–132, which can be applied to Megara; see also Haake 2015: 76; Nebelin 2016: 364.

The next Megarian who is visible in our sources was Stilpo of Megara (c. 360 to 280 BCE), the last and perhaps most prominent Megarian philosopher, who attracted a considerable number of students, as evidenced by his fellow citizen Philippos of Megara, also a Megarian philosopher.⁴⁰

Even though Stilpo was a person who was known to the Athenian public⁴¹ – apparently he had taught, at least temporarily, in Athens,⁴² before being accused for religious reasons⁴³ – he appears to have lived and taught mostly in his hometown of Megara.⁴⁴ Some short pieces of information handed down by Diogenes Laertius suggest that Stilpo was a public figure in Megara known for his philosophical activity. Stilpo was also engaged in politics, according to an isolated, brief sentence in the *Life of Stilpo*.⁴⁵ In the *Life of Diogenes*, Stilpo

40 Diog. Laert. 2.113 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 16 (p. 458) = 164A Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): περί τούτου φησὶ Φίλιππος ὁ Μεγαρικὸς κατὰ λέξιν οὕτω· “παρὰ μὲν γὰρ Θεοφράστου Μητροδόωρον τὸν θεωρητικὸν καὶ Τιμαγόραν τὸν Γελῶν ἀπέσπασε, παρ’ Ἀριστοτέλους δὲ τοῦ Κυρηναϊκοῦ Κλείταρχον καὶ Σιμμίαν· ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν διαλεκτικῶν Παιώνειον μὲν ἀπ’ Ἀριστείδου, Δίφιλον δὲ τὸν Βοσποριανὸν Εὐφάντου καὶ Μύρμηκα τὸν Ἐξαινέτου παραγενομένους ὡς ἐλέγξοντας ἀμφοτέρους ζηλωτὰς ἔσχε.” – “On this let me cite the exact words of Philippos the Megarian philosopher: “for from Theophrastus he drew away the theorist Metrodoros and Timagoras of Gela, from Aristotle the Cyrenaic philosopher, Kleitarchos, and Simmias; and as for the dialecticians themselves, he gained over Paionios from Aristides; Diphilos of Bosphorus, the son of Euphantos, and Myrmex, the son of Exainetos, who had both come to refute him, he made his devoted adherents.” See Döring 1972: 144–146.

41 Stilpo is mentioned in a fragment of Sophilus’ comedy *The Wedding*: PCG VII Sophilus fr. 3 *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.120 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 3 (p. 450) = fr. 185 Döring]; see Weiher 1914: 70–71. According to Diogenes Laertius in his *Life of Stilpo*, “[i]t is said that at Athens he (*i.e.* Stilpo) so attracted the public that people would run together from the workshops to look at him.” (2.119 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 11 (p. 453) = fr. 176 Döring] [transl. by R.D. Hicks]: λέγεται δ’ οὕτως Ἀθήνησιν ἐπιστρέψαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὥστ’ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐργαστηρίων συνθεῖν ἵνα αὐτὸν θεάσαιντο.).

42 This can be reasonably deduced from the fact that the founder of the Stoa, Zeno of Kition, was a student of Stilpo; see, e.g., Döring 1998: 231. In which form Stilpo’s teachings at Athens took place, is unknown.

43 In the context of this process, Stilpo should have been expelled from Athens: Diog. Laert. 2.116 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 12 (p. 454) = fr. 183 Döring]. See Parker 1996: 277–278; Mikalson 1998: 129 n. 66; Haake 2016: 217–218.

44 Among those who settled at Megara because of Stilpo were the philosophers Asklepiades of Phlious (Goulet 1989; see additionally Haake 2010) and Menedemos of Eretria (Goulet 2005a): Diog. Laert. 2.126 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 7 (p. 452–453) = SSR² I Menedemos (= III F) fr. 1 (p. 503) = fr. 170 Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): “Asklepiades of Phlious drew him away, and he lived at Megara with Stilpo, whose lectures they both attended.” (Ἀσκληπιάδου δὲ τοῦ Φλιασίου περισπάσαντος αὐτὸν ἐγένετο ἐν Μεγάροις παρὰ Στίλπωνι.). This happened in the late 320s; see Knoepfler 1991: 171 n. 5; Döring 1998: 242. Unfortunately, it is not possible to decide whether the location of Stilpo’s teaching, which is provided in an Oxyrhynchian papyrus, and which might have Stilpo’s dialogue *Metrokles* (Diog. Laert. 2.120 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 23 (p. 461)] = fr. 187 Döring) as source, should be located in Athens or Megara: *P.Oxy.* LII 3655 = *CPF* I 1 99 Stilpon 2T.

45 Diog. Laert. 2.114 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 35 (p. 468) = fr. 162 Döring]; Diogenes uses the word πολιτικώτατος. The sentence on Stilpo as a political man is not related to the surrounding context. Rather, it follows

is mentioned alongside the Athenian Phokion as one of the students of Diogenes of Sinope, who became active in politics.⁴⁶ It can be reasonably assumed that Stilpo was involved in Megarian affairs (certainly with no intention to realize philosophical ideas), because of his likely membership in the Megarian elite. Such a social background for a philosopher in late Classical and early Hellenistic times would not be surprising; on the contrary, this would be expected.⁴⁷

Whatever the authenticity of further information on Stilpo's biography might be, its overall impression supports the image of the philosopher who was a member of Megara's upper class. According to a certain Onetor, as Athenaios reports in book 13 of his *Learned Banqueters*, Stilpo had, next to his wife, a *hetaira* named Nikarete,⁴⁸ who “was a quite refined courtesan and was particularly attractive because of her ancestry and her education, since she had been a student of the philosopher Stilpo.”⁴⁹ Even though we sense a certain topicality here – the prominent theme of “the philosopher and the *hetaira*” –, this does not prevent us from drawing certain conclusions from this reference.⁵⁰ Philosophy and hetairism were integral parts of the lifestyle of the male elites of Greek cities in the

Diogenes' lengthy remarks on Stilpo's pupils and is followed by his more detailed observations on his family relations. It is worth noting, however, that the opposite image of Stilpo as a man who has chosen to live in tranquility (*i.e.*, beyond politics) is present in Plutarch's *Life of Demetrios* 9.9 [= *SSR*² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 15 (p. 455) = fr. 151B Döring]. On contrasting images of the lives of philosophers, see, e.g., Haake 2013a: 85–88.

46 Diog. Laert. 6.76 [= *SSR*² II Diogenes (= V B) fr. 138 (p. 291) = fr. 149 Döring]. On Phokion and Diogenes, see Gehrke 1976: 192–193, 197 with n. 87.

47 See, e.g., the results of Haake 2007.

48 *FGrH* 4A Onetor 1113 F 2 *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.114 [= *SSR*² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 17 (p. 459) = fr. 155 Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): Καὶ γυναῖκα ἠγάγετο· καὶ ἑταῖρα συνῆν Νικαρέτην, ὡς φησὶ που καὶ Ὀνήτωρ. – “He married a wife, and had a mistress named Nikarete, as Onetor has somewhere stated.” On Nikarete, see Kroll 1936; Goulet 2005b. On Onetor, Goulet 2005c.

49 Athen. 13.596e [= *SSR*² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 17 (p. 458–459) = fr. 156 Döring] (transl. by S.D. Olsen): Νικαρέτη δὲ ἡ Μεγαρίς οὐκ ἀγεννῆς ἦν ἑταῖρα, ἀλλὰ καὶ γονέων <ἐνεκα> καὶ κατὰ παιδείαν ἐπέραστος ἦν, ἠκροᾶτο δὲ Στίλπωνος τοῦ φιλοσόφου. – “Nikarete of Megara was a quite refined courtesan and was particularly attractive because of her ancestry and her education, since she had been a student of the philosopher Stilpo.” – The Cynic Krates probably mocked Stilpo's relationship with Nikarete in an undertone of sexual ribaldry: *SSR*² II Crates (= V H) fr. 67 (p. 549) *apud* Diog. Laert. 2.118 [= fr. 180 Döring]. On *hetairai* in Athenaios' work, see McClure 2003: 27–58.

50 A further anecdote regarding Stilpo and a *hetaira*, Glykera, can be traced back to Satyros: Satyr. fr. 19 Schorn *apud* Athen. 13.584a [= *SSR*² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 18 (p. 459) = fr. 157 Döring].

Classical and Hellenistic periods.⁵¹ It is, therefore, not inconceivable that Stilpo, who was married and had a daughter, took a *hetaira* who descended from a noble Megarian family.⁵²

No examination of Stilpo as a public figure and a politically relevant person can leave aside what may be considered the most popular anecdote about any Megarian philosopher in antiquity.⁵³ According to Diogenes Laertius, Ptolemy I and Demetrios Poliorketes held Stilpo in high esteem:

“Ptolemy Soter, they say, made much of him, and when he had got possession of Megara, offered him a sum of money and invited him to return with him to Egypt. But Stilpo would only accept a very moderate sum, and he declined the proposed journey, and removed to Aegina until Ptolemy set sail. Again, when Demetrios, the son of Antigonos, had taken Megara, he took measures that Stilpo’s house should be preserved and all his plundered property restored to him. But when he requested that a schedule of the lost property should be drawn up, Stilpo denied that he had lost anything which really belonged to him, for no one had taken away his learning, while he still had his eloquence and knowledge. And conversing upon the duty of doing good to men he made such an impression on the king that he became eager to hear him.”⁵⁴

It cannot be denied that Diogenes’ remarks regarding the interest of Ptolemy and Demetrios in Stilpo are topical insofar as they belong to the huge amount of comparable

51 Cf. Kurke 1997; Davidson 1997: 109–136; Hartmann 2002: 133–211.

52 Stilpo’s daughter, who was married to Simmias of Syracuse (Muller 2016a), a friend of her father, is attested by Diogenes Laertius: Diog. Laert. 2.114 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 17 (p. 459) = fr. 153 Döring].

53 For a collection of the respective sources: SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) fr. 15 (p.455–458) = fr. 151A–I Döring.

54 Diog. Laert. 2.115–116 [= SSR² I Stilpon (= II O) F 14–15 (p. 454–455) = F 150–151A Döring] (transl. by R.D. Hicks): Ἀπεδέχετο δ’ αὐτόν, φασί, καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ Σωτήρ. καὶ ἐγκρατῆς Μεγάρων γενόμενος ἐδίδου τε ἀργύριον αὐτῷ καὶ παρεκάλει εἰς Αἴγυπτον συμπλεῖν· ὁ δὲ μέτριον μὲν τι τὰργυριδίου προσήκατο, ἀρνησάμενος δὲ τὴν ὁδὸν μετήλθεν εἰς Αἴγιαν, ἕως ἐκεῖνος ἀπέπλευσεν. ἀλλὰ καὶ Δημήτριος ὁ Ἀντιγόνου καταλαβὼν τὰ Μέγαρα τὴν τε οἰκίαν αὐτῷ φυλαχθῆναι καὶ πάντα τὰ ἀρπασθέντα προύνοησεν ἀποδοθῆναι. ὅτε καὶ βουλομένῳ παρ’ αὐτοῦ τῶν ἀπολωλότων ἀναγραφὴν λαβεῖν ἔφη μηδὲν τῶν οἰκείων ἀπολωλέκειναι· παιδείαν γὰρ μηδένα ἐξενηνοχέειν, τὸν τε λόγον ἔχειν καὶ τὴν ἐπιστήμην. [116] Καὶ αὐτῷ διαλεχθεὶς περὶ ἀνθρώπων εὐεργεσίας οὕτως εἶλεν ὥστε προσέχειν αὐτῷ. – Sonnabend 1996: 294 is anything but helpful on this. That Megara was plundered after Demetrios had conquered the city is attested by Plutarch: Plut. *Demetr.* 9.8.

statements regarding Hellenistic monarchs wishing to demonstrate good relations with philosophers.⁵⁵ The anecdote on Demetrios' offering and Stilpo's refusal should be read as one of the neat stories illustrating the failed attempt of a king to attract a philosopher as well as the topical antagonism between "the wise" and "the powerful".⁵⁶ Yet, all this does not necessarily mean that both rulers did not attempt to be on good terms with Stilpo – especially for political reasons. It is quite plausible to take such a royal effort as the historical nucleus of the whole story.

Although not much is known about the political situation in Megara at the end of the fourth century BCE, it is nevertheless possible to give an impression of the historical situation and to contextualize Ptolemy's and Demetrios' attempts to attract Stilpo. We hear that there was a change in the constitution, which has to be considered as part of the fierce power play in the Greek world in the early Hellenistic period. According to Diodorus and Plutarch, Demetrios abolished the oligarchy and restored democracy after he had conquered the city in 307 BCE – all of which probably occurred in a situation of internal conflict in Megara.⁵⁷ It is conceivable that Stilpo, as a member of the civic elite and possibly as a prominent figure, might have been a person who was considered a potential partisan of both Ptolemy and Demetrios, instrumental in their attempts to gain control of Megara.

Between the early fourth and the late third century, then, several members of the Megarian school appear to have been present in the city. Due to the fragmentary nature of our sources, however, it is difficult to see the details of this developing story. We are left with a more general impression. The magnitude of this philosophical imprint on the local discourse world of Megara is impossible to assert.

In a similar vein, it is difficult to infer insights from other Greek cities with respect to a public discourse on Megarian philosophers and philosophy in Megara. Since the early

55 In this respect, see Haake 2013b: 181-184.

56 On this antagonism in general, see Dorandi 2005a and Haake 2013b: 182.

57 Diod. 20.46.3; Plut. *Demetr.* 9.8; cf. Gehrke 1985: 110. See also the contribution by Klaus Freitag on Demetrios' engagement in Aigosthena.

Hellenistic period, epigraphic evidence has been of great importance in this respect.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, no relevant inscriptions are currently known from Megara.⁵⁹ Another possible source to shed light on the public opinion and discourse on philosophers and philosophy has also been entirely lost: Megarian comedies.⁶⁰ It is no other than Aristotle, who, among other comic traditions, also mentions the existence of a local Megarian comedy tradition in his *Poetics*.⁶¹ Whatever the peculiarities of this Megarian comedy might have been,⁶² we might reasonably assume that philosophers, as public figures, were presented in the corresponding plays.⁶³

The *Megarikoi* – from School to an Icon of Local Pride

For nearly two hundred years, Megarian philosophers were part of the history of Megara. Yet even though they were involved in the public and political life of the city at times, it is difficult to measure their imprint on the local cosmos. Likewise, it is more or less impossible to pinpoint a Megarian impact on the thinking of the Megarian philosophers, especially because of the outlined characteristics of the Megarian school. We must content ourselves with the rather general assessment that Megarian philosophers were recognized by their compatriots in a certain, locally distinct fashion. Moreover, it is likely that such fashion in the perception of philosophers was never static nor homogenous, but malleable over time and depended on who the philosopher was. It is equally reasonable to assume that next to *the* local Megarian public discourse on Megarian philosophers were various discourses resting upon the social background of the respective speakers.⁶⁴ It is plausible to postulate that Megarian philosophers would be, at any rate, responsive to local incidences

58 See Haake 2007. For one of the earliest pieces of epigraphic evidence for a philosopher, a Delphic honorary decree for Menedemos of Pyrrha (Bousquet 1940–1941: 94–96), a student of Plato (Dorandi 2005), see Knoepfler 2010.

59 On the Megarian decree culture, Liddel 2009.

60 In this context, Haake 2007: 6 n. 33, 9–10, 279.

61 Arist. *Poet.* 1448a29–35 (esp. 31–32). On this passage, see Heath 1989: 348; Guastini 2010: 131–134.

62 On Megarian comedy, Breitholz 1960: esp. 34–71; Kerkhof 2001: 17–24; Storey 2010: 181; Zimmermann 2011: 664; see also Braund and Hall 2014: 378–379.

63 The philosopher and philosophical themes were not only topics in Attic comedy, as the example of Epicharmos of Syracuse illustrates; see, e.g., Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012: 87–95; Willi 2012: 58–63.

64 In this context, see the general remarks in Haake 2007: 5–6.

– if not in their philosophical thinking, then at least in their acting as social beings and ‘political animals’.

In his *Attic Nights*, Aulus Gellius reports a story that his teacher, the Platonic philosopher Taurus,⁶⁵ told his students, for uplifting reasons, that

“[t]he Athenians had provided in one of their decrees that any citizen of Megara who should be found to have set foot in Athens should for that suffer death; so great was the hatred of the neighboring men of Megara with which the Athenians were inflamed. Eukleides, who was from that very town of Megara and before the passage of that decree had been accustomed both to come to Athens and to listen to Socrates, after the enactment of that measure, at nightfall, as darkness was coming on, clad in a woman’s long tunic, wrapped in a partly-colored mantle, and with veiled head, used to walk from his home in Megara to Athens, to visit Socrates, in order that he might at least for some part of the night share in the master’s teaching and discourse. And just before dawn he went back again, a distance of somewhat over twenty miles, disguised in that same garb.”⁶⁶

At first glance, many readers might see in this narrative, staged on the eve of the Peloponnesian War, nothing more than a story propagated in the philosophical circles of Athens at the time of the Second Sophistic.⁶⁷ Yet such a view does no justice to the tale

65 On (L. Calvenus) Taurus, see Lakmann 2017: 238–248.

66 Gell. 7.10.2–4 [= Tauros T 7 Lakmann] (transl. by J.C. Rolfe): [2] “Decreto,” inquit, “suo Athenienses caverant, ut qui Megaris civis esset, si intulisse Athenas pedem pressus esset, ut ea res ei homini capitalis esset; [3] tanto Athenienses,” inquit, “odio flagrabant finitimorum hominum Megarensium. [4] Tum Euclidis, qui indidem Megaris erat quique ante id decretum et esse Athenis et audire Socratem consueverat, postquam id decretum sanxerunt, sub noctem, cum advesperasceret, tunica longa muliebri indutus et pallio versicolore amictus et caput rica velatus, e domo sua Megaris Athenas ad Socratem commeabat, ut vel noctis aliquo tempore consiliorum sermonumque eius fieret particeps, rursusque sub lucem milia passuum paulo amplius viginti eadem veste illa tectus redibat.” On this passage, its narrative frame and the moral of this story, Lakmann 1995: 58–68 (esp. 61–65).

67 Even though the story might be of limited historical value, it is somewhat surprising that it is almost completely ignored in scholarship on the relations between Megara and Athens on the eve of the Peloponnesian War, the so-called Megarian decree(s) in particular. A rare exception is Zahrnt 2010; see also de Ste. Croix 1972: 246. The general ignorance must be all the more surprising since Gellius’ wording of the decree (7.10.2: ... *ut qui Megaris civis esset, si intulisse Athenas pedem pressus esset, ut ea res ei homini capitalis esset* ...) is an obvious reminder of the respective phrase in

and its diffusion. It is possible that it must remain an open question of when, where, and by whom this story was invented, but it was only depicted in Megara itself, found on the obverse of a local coin from the second century CE, most likely from the reign of Hadrian.⁶⁸ The reverse shows the famous statue of Artemis Soteira by the Classical sculptor Strongylion,⁶⁹ while the obverse depicts a male head looking to the right, bearded and veiled, wearing an earring. Since the magisterial publication of Giovanni Angelo Canini's *Iconografia, cioè disegni d'imagini de famosissimi monarchi, regi, filosofi, poeti ed oratori dell'antichità* (1669), the portrait has been identified with the Megarian philosopher Eukleides.⁷⁰

the so-called decree of Charinos as handed down by Plutarch in his *Life of Pericles* (Plut. *Per.* 30.3: ... ὃς δ' ἄν ἐπιβῆ τῆς Ἀττικῆς Μεγαρέων, θανάτῳ ζημιούσθαι, ...). It is not possible to consider this aspect in the current context. It should be noted, however, that the passage of Gellius (who might have known Plutarch's text; see Lakmann 1995: 228) on the Athenian decree relating to the Megarians is placed in the context of the complex debate on the Charinos decree; see, e.g., Connor 1962; Cawkell 1969; Fornara 1975; Sealey 1991; Stadter 1984; McDonald 1994. For a very short orientation, see Samons 2016: 270 n. 50.

68 The *Quellenfrage* regarding the decree of Charinos, and its use by Plutarch and its presence in the anecdote about Eukleides has not been definitively answered. Stadter, for example, sees a "documentary source" (1989: 279) behind Plutarch's text, which might have been available through Krateros (cf. Stadter 1984: 353; Erdas 2002: 304. See also Meinhardt 1957: 58, who believes Plutarch had access to the full document). For Gigon, the origins of the story about Eukleides should be placed in the context of early Socratic literature (1947: 283). Lakmann has offered three different possibilities: an unknown, lost literary source; an orally transmitted tradition; or an invention by Taurus himself (1995: 64-65). Be that as it may, it is important to bear in mind that, at some point, Eukleides' story became part of Megara's local memoryscape.

69 On the cult image of Artemis Soteira, which is attested by Pausanias (1.40.2-3), see *LIMC* II 1: 655 no. 419, 657 no. 448-449. On Strongylion, see *DNO* II: 415-427, esp. 415-417 no. 1.

70 *BMC Attica* 121 no. 43 with pl. XXI,14 = *RPC* III i, no. 408 with *RPC* III ii: pl. 19,408. See Canini 1669: 119 with pl. 89; Richter 1965: 120 with fig. 576; Schefold 1997: 416 with fig. 298; Hellmann 2000.



BMC Attica 121 no. 43 = *RPC* III, no. 408 (obverse) [© The Trustees of the British Museum]

At a time when the Megarian school had long disappeared from the philosophical scene, for some four hundred years or so, Eukleides' native city took pride in its well-known son, the first of the Megarian philosophers, and minted a series of coins with his portrait that visualized the tradition of Eukleides' guile and perils he had once endured in his efforts to attend Socrates' philosophical lessons in Athens. As with many other Greek communities under Roman rule, Megara too expressed its local identity by referring to an intellectual hero of the past,⁷¹ with coins showing the founder of a philosophical school named after his own birthplace: Megara.

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⁷¹ See, e.g., Schefold 1997: 68-70, 400-423.

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