

Athens and Boiotia

Interstate Relations in the
Archaic and Classical Periods



Roy van Wijk

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Were Athenians and Boiotians natural enemies in the Archaic and Classical periods? The scholarly consensus is yes. Roy van Wijk, however, re-evaluates this commonly held assumption and shows that, far from perpetually hostile, their relationship was distinctive and complex. Moving between diplomatic normative behaviour, commemorative practice and the lived experience in the borderlands, he offers a close analysis of literary sources, combined with recent archaeological and epigraphic material, to reveal an aspect to neighbourly relations that has hitherto escaped attention. He argues that case studies such as the Mazi plain and Oropos show that territorial disputes were not a mainstay in diplomatic interactions and that commemorative practices in Panhellenic and local sanctuaries do not reflect an innate desire to castigate the neighbour. The book breaks new ground by reconstructing a more positive and polyvalent appreciation of neighbourly relations based on the local lived experience. This title is available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

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To Laura, mo leannan bhoidheach

Contents

List of Figures [page viii]

Acknowledgements [ix]

Note on the Text [xii]

List of Abbreviations [xiii]

Chronological Overview of Atheno-Boiotian Relations [xv]

1 Introduction [1]

2 The Attic Neighbour? A Short Chronological Overview
of Atheno-Boiotian Relations [12]

3 That Sweet Enmity: The Conventions of
Neighbourly Interactions [73]

4 Do Fences Make for Better Neighbours? Geopolitics and
Strategic Interests [172]

5 Contested Memories: Remembering the Atheno-Boiotian
Relations at Panhellenic and Local Spaces [279]

Conclusion [382]

Bibliography [386]

Index Locorum [435]

Index [439]

Figures

- 1.1 Overview of important places [page 10]
- 2.1 Places mentioned in Peisistratid-Theban relationship [15]
- 2.2 Places of importance during the Corinthian War [39]
- 2.3 Boiotian maritime network [57]
- 2.4 Important places during Third Sacred War [64]
- 3.1 Theban Herakles coinage, late fifth century [138]
- 3.2 Places mentioned in the section on cultic connections [161]
- 4.1 Routes of Attica [175]
- 4.2 Map of natural features demarcating the borderlands [176]
- 4.3 Athens and its borderlands [178]
- 4.4 Close-up of Mazi plain map [194]
- 4.5 Fortress at Eleutherai [202]
- 4.6 Map of Oropos and Oropia in relation to Athens and Thebes [207]
- 4.7 Plataia and its relation to Thebes, Athens and other borderlands [226]
- 4.8 Close-up of Parasopia [227]
- 4.9 General sea flows in the Aegean [244]
- 4.10 Harbours and places mentioned [245]
- 4.11 Siphai fortifications [248]
- 5.1 Places of dedication except Olympia [281]
- 5.2 Map of Sanctuary at Delphi [282]
- 5.3 Replica of Serpent Column at Delphi [287]
- 5.4 Dedication of Alkmeonides at the Ptoion [304]
- 5.5 *Kioniskos* from Thebes detailing events of 507/6 [309]
- 5.6 View from Koroneia Akropolis towards Petra, likely home to the Athena Itonia sanctuary [331]
- 5.7 Map of modern Thebes with ancient sites marked [346]
- 5.8 Fourth-century stele containing the Oath of Plataia and the Ephebic Oath from Acharnai [353]
- 5.9 Lion of Chaironeia [363]
- 5.10 Plan of Amphiareion at Oropos (north of river) [367]

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Note on the Text

References to authors are in line with the Oxford Classical Dictionary (*OCD*⁴), while abbreviations for journals follows the standards set by *L'Année Philologique*.

Unless otherwise stated, all literary translations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, or with minor adjustments. The choice to omit most Greek text is due to their availability online; it is added only when translations need clarification. Most inscriptions are accompanied by Greek text taken from the versions provided in IG or SEG.

The transliteration of Greek names and terminology is a contentious issue; rather than submitting to one dogmatic approach, I have opted to go for clarity and fluidity. In certain cases, this leads to the Greek form (Boiotia, rather than Boeotia) while in others, I adhere to more commonly used Latin names (Thucydides instead of Thoukydides). Moreover, I mostly refer to 'the Athenians' rather than Athens when it comes to treaties or decision-making. While in some cases this makes for more expanded verse, I do believe it is closer to the true nature of political interactions, especially in antiquity. Furthermore, I only capitalise the Persian royal title ('King') as is more common practice, whereas other monarchs are referred to as 'king'.

All maps are made by the author with the help of the QGIS programme and the databases accrued by the Ancient World Mapping Centre, unless otherwise stated.

Unless otherwise stated, all dates are BCE.

Abbreviations

- Agora *The Athenian Agora Volumes*, 1953–
- AIO S. Lambert et al., Attic Inscriptions Online, available at www.atticinscriptions.com/
- ATL B. D. Meritt, H. T. Wade-Gery and M. F. McGregor, *The Athenian Tribute Lists*, 4 vols. Princeton, 1939–53
- BE *Bulletin Épigraphique*, 1983–89
- BNJ I. Worthington (ed.), *Brill's New Jacoby*. 2006–
- CEG P. A. Hansen, *Carmina epigraphica graeca*, 2 vols. Berlin
- CID Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes
- COB A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia*, BICS Supplement 38.1–4, 4 vols. London, 1981–94
- CT S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, 3 vols. Oxford, 1991–2008
- FD Fouilles des Delphes
- FGrH F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden, 1923–
- Harding P. Harding, *Translated Documents, from the End of the Peloponnesian War to the Battle of Ipsos*. Cambridge, 1985
- IEleusis K. Clinton, *Eleusis: The Inscriptions on Stone. 1A Text. 1B Plates. II Commentary*. Athens, 2005/2008
- IG Inscriptiones graecae
- IOropos V. Petrakos, *Οἱ Ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ἱεροπόου*. Athens, 1997
- IThesp P. Roesch, *Les Inscriptions de Thespies*, online corpus available at www.hisoma.mom.fr/production-scientifique/lesinscriptions-de-thespies
- ML R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, rev. ed. Oxford, 1988
- NIO P. Siewert and H. Taeuber, *Neue Inschriften von Olympia: Die ab 1896 veröffentlichten Texte*. Vienna, 2013
- OR R. Osborne and P. J. Rhodes, *Greek Historical Inscriptions 479–404 BC*. Oxford, 2017

- RO P. J. Rhodes and R. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions, 404–323 BC*. Oxford, 2007
- SEG Supplementum epigraphicum graecum
- Syll.³ Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum, 4 vols. Leipzig, 1915–24
- Tod II M. N. Tod (ed.), *Greek Historical Inscriptions 403 BC to 323 BC*. Oxford, 1948

Chronological Overview of Atheno-Boiotian Relations

546	Peisistratid tyranny established with Theban help
519	Initial Plataian alliance with Peisistratid tyrants
510–508/7	Civil strife in Athens; Isagoras and oligarchs supported by Spartans and Boiotians
508/7–501/0	Establishment of Athenian democracy under Cleisthenes; intermittent conflicts between Athenians and Thebans with their Aeginetan allies
508/7–501/0	Formation of patron-client relationship between Athenians and Plataians
501/0–480/79	No indication of conflict between the neighbours
480/79	Persian invasion of Greece under Xerxes. Athens, Plataia and Thespiiai remain committed to repelling Persians; rest of Boiotia medizes
478–458	Peaceful co-existence; Atheno-Plataian alliance continues
458	Battles of Tanagra and Oinophyta
458–446	Athenian domination of Boiotia
446	Battle of Koroneia; expulsion of Athenians from Boiotia; Atheno-Plataian alliance remains in place
446–431	Peaceful co-existence but in opposing military alliances
431–404	Peloponnesian War between Peloponnesian League and Athenian Empire
427/6	Destruction of Plataia
424	Battle of Delion
411	Oropos detached from Athenian control
404/3	Theban support for exiled Athenian democrats to reclaim Athens for Spartan-backed oligarchy
404–382	Friendly co-existence between Athenians and Boiotians
395	Atheno-Boiotian alliance against Spartans
395–386	Corinthian War; Sparta and allies versus coalition of Boiotians, Athenians, Argives and Corinthians
387/6	King's Peace; restoration of Plataia; dissolution of Boiotian koinon
382–379	Spartan junta in Boiotia
379/8	Restoration of Boiotian koinon; overthrow of Spartan junta in Thebes

378	Formation of Second Athenian Confederation; Athens and Thebes allied, other Boiotian poleis in Spartan alliance
371	Battle of Leuktra
369–339/8	Period of ‘uneasy enmity’; officially Athenians and Thebans/ Boiotians oppose each other, but few hostilities
369	Spartan-Athenian alliance versus Thebes
366	Theban takeover of Oropos
362	Battle of Mantinea
357	Skirmishes between Athenian and Boiotians in Euboia
357–346	Third Sacred War
346	Peace of Philokrates
339/8	Alliance of Thebans and Athenians contra Philip of Macedon
338	Battle of Chaironeia between Athenians, Thebans and Philip
338–336	Restoration of Plataia?
335	Revolt against Alexander; destruction of Thebes
323/2	Hellenic War; Athens and Boiotians in different camps

1 | Introduction

In 424 an invading Athenian army was intercepted by a Boiotian army near Delion. Most Boiotian generals were disinclined to engage in battle, before one of their peers, Pagondas, delivered a rousing, mind-changing speech:

As between neighbours generally, freedom (*eleutheria*) means simply a determination to hold one's own; and with neighbours like these, who are trying to enslave near and far alike, there is nothing for it but to fight it out to the last. Just regard the state of the Euboians and of most of the rest of Hellas, and be convinced that others have to fight with their neighbours for this frontier or that, but that for us conquest means one border for the whole country, about which no dispute can be made, for they will simply come and take by force what we have. So much more have we to fear from this neighbour than from another... The Athenians have shown us this themselves; the defeat which we inflicted upon them at Koroneia, at the time when our quarrels had allowed them to occupy the country, has given great security to Boiotia until the present day.¹

In his speech Pagondas tackles the central theme of this book: the neighbourly relations between the Athenians and Boiotians. He summarises the key three themes. First, he touches upon the normative practices in the Greek world when he speaks of the inalienable right of *eleutheria* that each polity should enjoy. This rallying cry is specifically tailored to the ideological battlegrounds of the Peloponnesian War. In the rest of his speech he relates how the Athenians' abrasive, expansionist behaviour went against the mores of Greek politics. Second, the Athenians are relentless in their desire for more land, ignoring that traditionally frontiers between polities could be disputed, but should never be erased. This deals with the geo-political aspects of their relationship. Finally, he reflects on the past neighbourly interactions when he evokes the memory of the battle of Koroneia (446), when Boiotian insurgents expelled the Athenians and, through it, obtained freedom for the region. The conventions of conduct between polities, the role of disputed lands and geographical considerations, and the commemoration of the shared past

¹ Thuc. 4.92.4–6.

are the three themes that will be treated in this book. Together they constitute a fresh analysis that appreciates the neighbourly relations in a different, more positive and polyvalent light.

This represents a departure from previous studies. Scholars normally view this dyad as rife with hostility, inspired by the Realist school of international relations.² According to this view, poleis were in a constant state of war, and periods of peace constituted only a short-term reprieve from this state of affairs. Alternatively, times of collaboration were the result of a shared fear of a third party, such as the Spartans. It assumes decision-makers were rational actors principally interested in optimising their own gain at the expense of others, without concerns for morals or non-rational arguments such as justice. Induced by mutual fear and driven by expansionism, the Athenians and Boiotians were caught in a vicious cycle of fear, conflict and distrust, fuelled by an inveterate hostility. Force and strength, not moral principles, were the guiding light of Greek interstate affairs. This lack of morality is reflected in our sources. Periods of war are vividly remembered through oral traditions, memorials and festivals that commemorate the devious neighbour. In sum, they were natural enemies because of their proximity.

Or so the story goes. I will argue instead that Pagondas describes an anomaly in Atheno-Boiotian history that unfortunately has been taken as the norm. The aim of this book is to demonstrate that the Athenians and Boiotians were not natural enemies, but rather the opposite. This partially builds upon new insights in interstate relations and the formation of memorial practices, and will be combined with a re-evaluation of the borderlands and the geographical setting.³ A central point is their geographical entwinement, which tied their fates together, leading to a mutual understanding and realisation of dependence. Naturally that does not prohibit any hostile intentions between them. Just as human experience is varied and cannot be caught in a monolithic model, so too the neighbourly relations were idiosyncratic.⁴ The three themes mentioned above –

² Buckler and Beck 2008: 23; Cartledge 2020; Eckstein 2006; 2012; Finley 1985; Garlan 1989; Hornblower 2011; Kagan 1987; Roberts 2017. Two examples illustrate the dominance of the Realist discourse: 'In short, Athens had begun to fear Thebes more than Sparta' (Buckler and Beck 2008: 41); 'Nevertheless the chief Athenian anxiety continued to be Thebes' (Hornblower 2011: 255).

³ Van Wees 2004: 9–13; Low 2007; Giovannini 2007; Hunt 2010. Scharff 2016; Sommerstein and Bayliss 2013 on the credibility of oaths in interstate discourse. For the investigation of memory: Barbato 2020; Canevaro 2018; Harris 2013; Liddel 2020; Shear 2011; Steinbock 2013.

⁴ This is a median way between the Christ's pessimistic view of altruism (Christ 2012) and Herman's idealistic naïve image of the Athenians embracing a code of conduct that underreacted to aggression (Herman 2006). Low 2007: 175–211 offers a more satisfactory approach.

the conventions of conduct between polities, the role of disputed lands and geographical considerations, and the commemoration of the shared past – will illuminate the complex nature of the relations between these two regions. To grasp the interrelatedness of these regions and how that impacts their relations, a short description of Attica and Boiotia is needed.

1.1 More Than Spots on the Map: The Geography of Attica and Boiotia

Attica and Boiotia were similarly sized, yet differed in various ways.⁵ Attica was more arid, save for the fertile areas around Eleusis and Rhamnous. It was home to several larger settlements, such as Eleusis, which were gradually integrated into the Athenian *polis*.⁶ Of its harbours, Phaleron was the oldest but was supplanted by Piraeus.⁷ Attica also contained a rich vein of silver in the Laurion region.⁸ The peninsula's northern edge were the mountain ranges stretching from Mount Kithairon to Mount Parnes, while the Aegean and Saronic Gulf beckoned in the east and south. The access to the sea, combined with the mining activities, formed the basis of the Athenian wealth, especially since the lands were not capable of supporting the population, making food imports essential.⁹

Boiotia was fertile, filled with rich plains watered by alluvial deposits flowing from rivers like the Asopos. The region consisted of two basins, one in the northwest and one to the southeast, enclosed on both sides by mountain chains. Mount Parnassos acted as a beacon in the northwest, with Mount Parnes and Mount Kithairon fulfilling that role in the south. The waters of the Corinthian Gulf and the Euripos Strait straddled the Boiotian coasts.¹⁰ In contrast to Attica, Boiotia was home to several independent poleis, such as Tanagra, Thespias and Plataia, with Thebes the dominant force due to its size. The mosaic of poleis created a different political ecology, leading to the Boiotian experiments with common polities like the *koinon*.¹¹

⁵ The section title is a direct nod to Finley 1963: 35, who claimed that Athens itself – whether its territory or economy – ‘never meant anything but a spot on the map’. Attica is ca. 2,550 km² with islands included, but without Oropos: Busolt and Swoboda 1926: II 758. Boiotia is 2,580 km²: Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985: 142; Gonzalez Pascual 2006: 44 calculates 2,554 km².

⁶ For pre-Kleisthenic Attica: Rönnerberg 2021. ⁷ Paga 2021: 187–96. ⁸ Nomicos 2021.

⁹ Bresson 2016; Moreno 2007 for the food supply. Paga 2021: 257–63 for the basis of wealth.

¹⁰ For more on Boiotian geography: Farinetti 2011.

¹¹ Boiotia's political innovations contrast with its reputation as a cultural backwater, as ancient sources and modern scholars are wont to do. Ephoros FGrH 70 F119 believed the Thebans offered little culturally in comparison to Spartan *agoge* and Athenian *paideia*. Yet Sabetai 2022

Binding these regions was the intermediate mountain range between Mount Kithairon in the west to Mount Parnes in the east. Previous studies viewed these mountains as a severe obstacle to communications and interactions, yet the realities of quotidian life show the opposite.¹² Mountains may seem an intransigently physical boundary, but the mountainous delineation of the frontier between Athens and Boiotia was ultimately a human construct. The mountains could be circumvented by way of Oropos, rendering the notion of a defensible border through fortifying the mountain passes tenuous.¹³ Their geographical entwinement ensured both polities could not act independently of another. This realisation is key, as it functions as an important corrective to the notion of constantly warring poleis.

1.2 A Constant State of War?

‘For (as he would say) “peace”, as the term is commonly employed, is nothing more than a name, the truth being that every polis is, by a law of nature, engaged perpetually in an informal war with every other polis.’¹⁴ These words have frequently been accepted *prima facie* as constituting the natural state of affairs between Greek poleis.¹⁵ Envisioning a similar scenario for the neighbourly relations seems almost natural. The Athenians in particular had a reputation for constant warfare. A recent study calculates war was on the agenda almost every year of the Classical period, an impressive tally.¹⁶ War was ubiquitous in Athenian life and war with the neighbours was no exception.¹⁷

Or was it? The annals of history appear replete with references to conflict. Scholars eagerly follow the ancient sources by assuming these neighbours were natural enemies, their licentious desire to outdo one another interrupted by hiatuses of peace.¹⁸ Collaboration was perceived

has persuasively traced the cultural influence of Boiotian artists in various media. On the *koinon*: Beck 1997; Beck and Ganter 2015; Kalliontzis 2021; Mackil 2013; Schachter 2016a.

¹² König 2022.

¹³ Farinetti 2011; Fossey 1988: 1–13. Ober 1985a for the idea of a defensive wall shielding Attica from invasion.

¹⁴ Pl. *Laws* 626a. See also Hdt. 7.9.

¹⁵ Low 2007: 1–6; 16–29. A good corrective to the notion of ubiquitous warfare can be found in the desire for peace over war in ancient sources: Moloney and Williams 2017; Raaflaub 2007; 2016.

¹⁶ Pritchard 2018: 7; 138–57. ¹⁷ Meier 1990.

¹⁸ Kühn 2006: 176: ‘unter Peisistratos, nur im einen seltenen Phase athenisch-thebaischer Kooperation’.

as an exception, brought about through a common threat. Times of possible peace unmentioned by our sources were automatically assumed to be periods of hostility.¹⁹ Yet this overlooks ‘the dark side of the moon’: the side of the neighbourly relations omitted by our sources. Uneventful years could be ignored by ancient chroniclers and historians, as these make for less compelling storytelling. Understanding the limitations of our sources is therefore necessary, as it can correct some of the misassumptions regarding the neighbourly relations.

Another helpful tool to redress this issue is a longer diachronic perspective. In [Chapter 2](#) the Atheno-Boiotians relations from the mid-sixth century till the start of the Hellenic or Lamian War in 323 will be reviewed. This historical overview provides the backdrop on which to project the subsequent thematic chapters. It also demonstrates that war was not the natural state of the neighbours. The years of hostility add up to 104 years, less than half of the time under consideration. This includes the thirty-six years of ‘cold war’ in the mid-fourth century, during which little combat occurred ([Chapter 2.6](#)). This is not to refute that war was a real possibility, but it serves as a reminder that war was not a natural outcome. Collaboration or friendly relations were not an anomaly, as evidenced by the years of peaceful co-existence ([Chapters 2.1, 2.3, 2.5](#)).

If mutual anxiety over a common foe did not lead to chronic warfare or collaboration, what were the factors that influenced the neighbourly relations? [Chapter 3](#) addresses this question. The thematic investigations of the military and political relations in the years between 550 and 323 build upon new insights in the study of international relations in Classical Greece. These studies stress the importance of ‘non-rational’ factors such as kinship, social memory, reputation, reciprocity and justice for guiding interstate norms and decision-making.²⁰ Several case studies will demonstrate how these factors impacted decision-making, whether negatively or positively. What emerges is a more complex picture of neighbourly relations and the realisation that the skein of kinship ties, reciprocal considerations

¹⁹ Steinbock 2013: 79 dismisses the diplomatic solution in Aeschylus’ *Eleusinians* as an Athenian-Theban rapprochement ‘in light of the political circumstances’. But there is no evidence of hostilities at the time ([Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1](#)). Cartledge 2020: 16; Lalonde 2019: 183 n. 63; Wilding 2021: 32 for similar assessments of this period.

²⁰ Giovannini 2007; Hunt 2010; Lendon 2010; Low 2007; van Wees 2004. Lebow 2008 created an overly reductionist honour-centric model, as there were several overarching motives in the interstate arena.

and moral arguments played an equally large, if not larger, role in military and political matters.²¹

1.3 For Lands That Are Lost Now, but Once So Dearly Held?

Motivations like kinship, honour and standing could outweigh ‘rational’, materialistic considerations like the conquest of disputed borderlands. Scholars have been preoccupied with hostile interactions as the governing mode of interaction in the borderlands.²² They argue the attachment to ancestral lands or desire for symbolic capital in a rivalry underpins neighbourly interactions.²³ Yet Chapter 4’s analysis of the borderlands reveals a different reality.

Contrary to scholarly orthodoxy, quarrels over borderlands arose *after* hostilities had broken out over other matters, which granted the opportunity to conquer disputed districts. The successful conquest of land showed the approval from the gods. This success could be confirmed in the final treaty following the conflict. Such a re-evaluation integrates recent advances in our understanding of borderlands as zones of interaction.²⁴ This meshes with a re-appraisal of the ancient economy that moves away from the ideal of autarky advanced by the primitivist school of Moses Finley. Specialisation in the Greek world stimulated exchange and dependence on other polities for certain products.²⁵ This interdependence

²¹ Stressing ‘non-rational’ factors does not mean the Greeks were incapable of rational decision-making. Ober 2022 argues they were instrumentally rational, capable of thinking ahead and determining the cost and benefits of actions. Irrational arguments such as oracles could thereby still inform decision-makers, who then calculated whether a decision should be taken.

²² Buckler and Beck 2008: 23; Cartledge 2020; Eckstein 2006; 2012; Finley 1985; Garland 1989; Hornblower 2011; Kagan 1987; Rockwell 2017: 45; vanden Eijnde 2011. Another recent example, albeit in a different area, is Ager 2019. She employs the contemporary theoretical framework of enduring rivalries to uncover the difficulties of the Spartan integration into the Achaian *koinon*. Their attachment to their lands prevented a smooth integration. In Ager 1996 she traces the history of arbitration over disputed borders, demonstrating mechanisms that existed to channel border disputes into diplomatic venues. Cf. Müller 2016: 20: ‘Wars over borders and territories were incredibly numerous and persistent in the world of Greek poleis until the Roman Empire.’

²³ Ma 2009; Sartre 1979; van Wees 2007 stress the symbolic value of border disputes.

²⁴ De Polignac 2011; 2017; Fachard 2017; McInerney 2006. There were possible ‘border markets’, supporting the idea of border areas as transitional negotiatory zones: Munn 1989; Tandy 1997: 120. The ‘Plataia gate’ inscription at the Eleutherai fortress demonstrates how goods could be taxed and travelled through the borderlands: Fachard et al. 2020a.

²⁵ Bresson 2016; Harris, Lewis and Woolmer 2015; Izdebski et al. 2020. Manning 2017 on the futility of creating a dichotomous application of ancient economy.

added another motivation to avoid warfare, as it obstructed economic exchange.²⁶

To understand the geographical entanglement of the neighbours, and how it impacted their relationship, additional geographical factors like the Boiotia's harbours and its role as a buffer for Attica will be considered. These case studies reveal that the geographical entwining of the neighbours impeded repeated conflicts, for it was more advantageous for the Athenians and Boiotians to cooperate. The geographical entwining inhibited the desire to wage war over coveted lands, despite the repeated claims by orators that Oropos should be recovered, or Plataia be restored.

1.4 Lest We Forget: Commemoration and Social Memory

The mention of orators leads us to the expressions of remembering the neighbourly history and its outlet in the commemorative practices. Social memory could influence decision-making, as orators recalled past events and pointed to older decrees to sway their listeners.²⁷ Physical markers in the landscape, such as trophies or buildings, acted as foundations to build their stories of glorious memories or eventful defeats upon. These stories, festivals and memorials helped shape the Athenian and Boiotian self-image. These views could feed into the decision-making process and positively or negatively impact the neighbourly relations.

The cultures of commemoration were not a homogenous phenomenon. In [Chapter 5](#) both sacred and civic spaces will be analysed to unravel the perception of the shared past and investigate the use of sanctuaries as mirrors for neighbourly relations. This investigation will show that its memorisation was mostly a local affair and intended to act as a backdrop for galvanising the population against the neighbour at opportune times. On a Panhellenic level, however, this rivalry went understated. Rather, it was frequently Spartan agency that determined dedications at Panhellenic sanctuaries. Concerns over displaying the credentials to act as leaders of the Greeks were another factor. This undercuts the notion that these neighbours were natural enemies. One would expect any advantage gained at the expense of the other would have been advertised at the highest possible platform at sanctuaries such as Delphi. This localised perspective clarifies

²⁶ E.g., the famous eels of Lake Kopais: Ar. *Ach.* ll. 940–50; *Pax* l. 1000.

²⁷ Barbato 2020; Canevaro 2019; Harris 2013; Shear 2011. Liddel 2020 demonstrates how the interplay between decrees and orators strengthened the bonds of social memory in swaying decision-making processes.

that stories of conflict fostered bonds between people within the same community. To facilitate that feeling, it was necessary to have an obvious 'other'. In this case, the neighbour performed that task since their proximity provided the perfect foil to project a different image on.²⁸

1.5 Studying the Neighbourly Relations *sui generis*

A new manner of looking at the neighbourly relations necessitates a fresh way to read our sources since the questions you ask shape the answers you get. Our (literary) sources are not infallible and should be treated as such. One issue is the Athenocentrism of many literary sources. The occasions where we catch a true glimpse of the viewpoint of other polities are rare. Sometimes these shine through, but are then imbedded within an anti-Boiotian source like Herodotus or Xenophon, which complicates the task of extracting a more benign view of an event. On other occasions, these non-Athenian views are lodged in later historians or writers such as Diodorus or Plutarch, whose historical pedigree is often dismissed on the basis of their lateness. Yet their reputation has been rehabilitated in recent years.²⁹ The appreciation of local histories, combined with the critical engagement with historians of impeccable credulity such as Thucydides, has allowed these authors to be viewed as representatives of other traditions that merit investigation.³⁰ Additionally, authors with credibility, such as the Oxyrhynchus historian, suffer from the fragmentary nature of their work.³¹ Xenophon has stepped out of the shadow of Thucydides and has been viewed as a useful historian in his own right, but his anti-Theban sentiment and moralistic tendency clouds much of his narrative.³² Orators such as Isocrates or Demosthenes provide other pieces of information that can reveal those parts not covered in the historical writers and help patch together the history of the fourth century.

Each writer has their own agenda and this will be treated accordingly within the main text when critical engagement with the source is necessary.

²⁸ For Thebes as an anti-Athens: Zeitlin 1990. Cerri 2000; Berman 2015: 75–121 warn for overly monochromatic interpretations of Athenian plays.

²⁹ For Diodorus' reputation as a historian: Muntz 2017; Sacks 2014. Buckler 1993; Stadter 2015: 56 rightly note that Plutarch exhibits an adroit sense of historical criticism vis-à-vis established historians such as Thucydides.

³⁰ For a critical evaluation of Thucydides and Herodotus' speeches: Scardino 2007. For local histories: Thomas 2019; Tufano 2019a.

³¹ Occhipinti 2016. ³² Christ 2020.

Methodologically, these sources require re-evaluating. Scholars perceived them in a classical historicist sense and thus *looked* for evidence of hostility, which these ancient writers provide aplenty. A more critical historicist approach reveals these accounts of conflict were written because of their value as compelling stories, but they do not reflect the lived experience. Posing different questions to our sources can thus reveal a divergent underlying dynamic of the neighbourly relations. It is this perspective I aim to uncover in this book.

Archaeology is a great aid to this endeavour. Survey archaeology provides glimpses of lived realities, for instance, in the hinterland of Thespiæ; excavations uncovered new inscriptions that significantly altered our understanding of the neighbourly relations in the Archaic and Classical periods.³³ These inscriptions, most prominently the *kioniskos* from Thebes, act as an important corrective to the Athenocentrism of our written sources (see [Figure 1.1](#) for these places).³⁴ Epigraphy and archaeology can therefore help illuminate a different side to the neighbourly relations.

A final note concerns my usage of the ‘Thebans’, the ‘Boiotoi’ or ‘Boiotians’. These are not interchangeable. These terms are not a collective for *all* Boiotians, since the Plataians were notorious dissidents. Whenever I employ ‘the Thebans’, I mean the Thebans alone, since our sources are unspecific. In the case of ‘the Boiotoi’ or Boiotians, I mean the *koinon*. This never includes the Plataians; these will be mentioned separately if they played a role. Confusingly, the sources do mention the Thebans when they mean the Boiotians. However, this is often the result of the mid-fourth-century dominance of the Thebans over their Boiotian brethren. In Athenian sources, referring to the Thebans rather than the Boiotians was meant as an insult, considering the Thebans viewed themselves as the *extension of the Boiotoi* and representatives of the *koinon*. Sources such as Demosthenes or Diodorus thus refer to the Thebans as representing the *koinon*, rather than the inhabitants of the polis. A case in point is the situation in 402 in Oropos. Diodorus writes that the Thebans added the Oropia to Boiotia ([Chapter 4.1.2](#)).³⁵ This is a tricky example, since Diodorus retrojects the dominance of the Thebans onto the past. It probably concerned the *Boiotoi* who decided to add the Oropia to Boiotia rather than the Thebans. Another interesting example is the shift

³³ Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007; Bintliff, Farinetti, Slapšak and Snodgrass 2017; Fachard et al. 2020a.

³⁴ Aravantinos 2006. This inscription is treated in [Chapters 4.1.1, 5.2.2](#).

³⁵ Diod. 14.17.2–4; Theopompos FGrH 115 F12.



Figure 1.1 Overview of important places.

from ‘Boiotians’ to ‘Thebans’ in the narrative of the invasion of 507/6 and subsequent quarrels with the Athenians (Chapter 2.2).³⁶ This clarification hopefully helps to distinguish my usage of these names.

By combining chronological and thematic approaches, this book will highlight the idiosyncrasies of the Atheno-Boiotian relations. What emerges is a polychrome picture of the ancient experience. There is not one overarching theoretical model that explains the nature of these relations, nor is there one answer to determine it. Several case studies will illuminate how the neighbourly relations were influenced by a range of factors, such as reputation, honour and reciprocity, rather than being dictated by fear and military power. This applies to the contested borderlands as well. Disputes over these lands were an *extension* of conflict, not the cause thereof. The outbreak of hostilities cannot be reduced to a monolithic picture of territorial desiderata. It will be argued that the Athenians and Boiotians understood that their geographical entwinement

³⁶ Hdt. 5.76–9.

meant their fortunes' entwinement, and that collaboration was more beneficial than hostility. That did not preclude the outbreak of hostilities, as the commemoration of the shared past demonstrates. Yet even those layers of antagonism can be stripped back to reveal their apparent 'hatred' aimed to strengthen the internal bonds of the polis or *koinon*, rather than foment further hostilities. This book will thus help to illuminate the possibilities a study of interstate relations in the 'longue durée' can procure, and the importance of taking geography into consideration when studying the relations between polities.

2 | The Attic Neighbour?

A Short Chronological Overview of Atheno-Boiotian Relations

[T]hey feared that if the Athenians had it (Ambrakia) they would be worse neighbours to them than the present (ones).

—Thuc. 3.113.6¹

How did the Atheno-Boiotian relations develop throughout the circa 200 years between Peisistratus' rise and the Battle of Chaironeia? There were divided loyalties, hostilities, shifting alliances and desperate last-minute coalitions, making for a scintillating read if one wishes to trace the constant changes in the political landscape. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a succinct overview of Atheno-Boiotian relations during that time. The 200 years can be divided into larger blocks of friendly or hostile relations. There were exceptions to the rule. The period between Mantinea (362) and Chaironeia (338), for instance, characteristically draws less attention in other studies, because there is less to write about. This suggests a period of hostility, but it was a tepid one at best. This chapter provides a descriptive background of the neighbourly history for the thematic studies, which will treat particular aspects more in depth. What emerges is a complex picture of evolving hostilities and collaborations that demonstrates that a monolithic interpretation of inborn animosity does not apply to the Atheno-Boiotian history.

2.1 Benign Beginnings? From Peisistratus to Cleisthenes (546–507/6)

Conventional histories of Atheno-Boiotian relations start with Athens' mid-sixth-century tyrant Peisistratus. After two earlier unsuccessful attempts at grabbing control, the third time proved the charm in 546.² The help he received from befriended families elsewhere was instrumental.

¹ Arist. *Rhet.* 1395a. The Athenian occupation of Samos in 366 made the phrase 'the Attic neighbour' proverbial for noxiousness, cf. Moreno 2009; Duris FGrHist 76 F96; Craterus FGrHist 342 F21.

² Andrewes 1982: 399–400.

This help was perhaps given in return for earlier favours.³ According to Herodotus the fiercest supporters were the Thebans:

Many of these gave great amounts, the Thebans more than any, and in course of time, not to make a long story, everything was ready for their return: for they brought Argive mercenaries from the Peloponnese, and there joined them on his own initiative a man of Naxos called Lygdamis, who was most keen in their cause and brought them money and men.⁴

Considering the Thebans' vaunted wealth, known from epic poetry and recent osteological investigations, their use of it to improve their political situation is understandable.⁵ Their help ensured the tyrant's indebtedness through the customs of *charis*, presumably with a future return on their investment in mind. Its exact extent is unknown, but perhaps this took the form of agreements concerning the desirable borderlands (Chapter 4.1). This exchange of money and services established a friendly co-existence. Their good rapport is expressed in the *Odyssey's* Catalogue of Heroines edited under Peisistratid aegis.⁶ The origins of the heroines can be retraced to Central Greece and southern Thessaly, Thebes and southern Boiotia in particular. Tyro, Odysseus' first mention, can track her bloodline to the Aeolids, a mythological family with roots in Thessaly. The wily hero follows this up with heroines connected to Thebes and Boiotia: Antiope is a daughter of the Boiotian river Asopos; Alcmene is the mother of Heracles; Megara is the daughter of Creon and wife to Heracles. Epicaste, a different name for the more familiar Jocaste who descends from the original founders of Thebes, the Spartoi, finishes the Boiotian tetraptych.⁷ According to Stephanie Larson, the Thessalian connections are linked with Boiotia, due to their prominence in the Boiotian ethnogenesis.⁸ The inclusion of these central Greek heroines is telling. It juxtaposes this material with traditional Athenian genealogies such as those offered for Phaedra and Ariadne by Odysseus. In Larson's words: "The geographical associations of the *Odyssey's* catalogue thus suggest that a positive political and cultural relationship between Boeotia, especially Thebes, Thessaly, and Athens, marked the period of the catalogue's final composition."⁹ Although it is not conclusive, these heroines' insertion can be read as a Peisistratid

³ Lavelle 2005: 139–43 suggests Peisistratus offered military assistance to the Thebans previously.

⁴ Hdt. 1.61.3–4; [Arist]. *AP* 15.2. ⁵ Berman 2015. For the diet: Vika 2011; Vika et al. 2009.

⁶ Larson 2013 for the *Odyssey*; but Finglass 2020 counters an Athenian edification of the *Odyssey*.

⁷ Hom. *Od.* 11.235–80. Stanford 1947 detected a profound Boiotian influence on Chapter 11 of the *Odyssey*.

⁸ Larson 2013. ⁹ Larson 2013: 406.

attempt to reflect their most important ties – Thessaly and Thebes – within the context of cultural productions such as the *Odyssey*.

Why would the friendship with the Thebans help Peisistratus, other than repaying incurred debts? Christopher Pelling argued that a befriended tyrant in neighbouring areas is a powerful weapon to have as it is easier to arrange affairs with one leader compared with other forms of government.¹⁰ Forging individual ties with a tyrant streamlined the interactions. In the case of border disputes or other conflicts, satisfying the wishes of the tyrant responsible for the ‘foreign policy’ of his polis was easier than to please oligarchies or democracies with their multitude of opinions.¹¹ Friendly co-existence could be beneficial to both parties. Each had their own areas of interest. The Peisistratids focused on expanding in the Thraceward region and the Cyclades, whereas the Thebans struggled with the Orchomenians to expand their grasp over north-western Boiotia.¹² It seems unlikely either side *directly* helped the other expand, but the collaboration offered stability that could have provided the necessary security to expand without fear of pending difficulties in other theatres. The main rivals for the Thebans were the Orchomenians, and a friendly tyrant in Athens prevented a possible two-front war. Their possible alliance with the Locrians fits into this narrative as does the joint dedication with the people of Halai. Both would have helped to pressure the Orchomenians.¹³ For Peisistratus, his friendly ties with the Argives, Thebans and Eretrians ensured most of his immediate neighbours would not intervene with his tyranny.¹⁴

This seems more relevant in light of Peisistratus’ origins. He came from Philaidai, in the vicinity of Brauron (see [Figure 2.1](#)). Some scholars posit this was the basis for his putsch.¹⁵ Jessica Paga questions the Peisistratid prominence in this region. His roots lay there, but he was far from the sponsor of the Brauron cult or the deeply involved local man that some scholarship portrays him to be.¹⁶ This loose attachment makes the lack of interest in the Euboian Gulf and the Oropia more understandable. Instead,

¹⁰ Pelling 2006.

¹¹ Hdt. 5.97 claims 30,000 Athenians are easier to persuade than one man, Cleomenes.

¹² For the Peisistratids: van den Eijnde 2019: 60–3. For the Thebans: Schachter 2016a: 36–50. Dull 1985 downplayed Orchomenian importance in this period but cf. Farinetti 2003; Bearzot 2011; Schachter 2014a. Epigraphic evidence from Olympia reflects these struggles: *NIO* 121. Fossey 2019: 24–60 dates this expansion against the Orchomenians to the late sixth century.

¹³ Both dedications were made at Delphi: *SEG* 41.506; Larson 2007b. ¹⁴ [Arist]. *AP* 15.2.

¹⁵ Lavelle 2005: 171–90. ¹⁶ Paga 2021: 236.

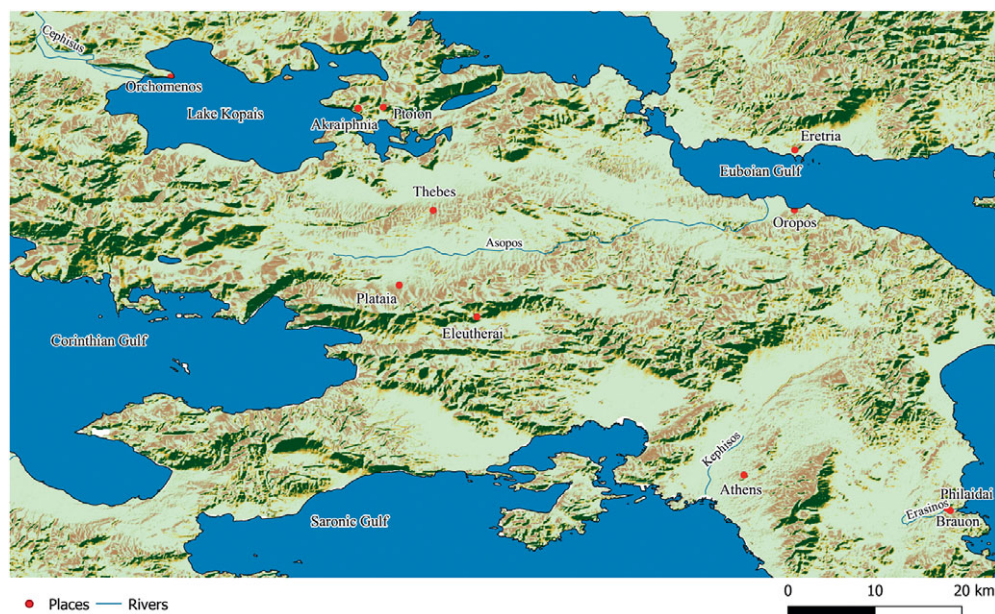


Figure 2.1 Places mentioned in Peisistratid-Theban relationship.

he focused on strengthening his base in the Thraceward region and his grasp over the more central regions of Athens.

Notably absent in this overview is the conflict over Eleutherai, a border town located in the Mazi plain ([Chapter 4.1.1](#)). Scholarship is divided into two camps over its alignment with Athens, based on the introduction of the Dionysios Eleutherios cult in Athens. One group relies on the Parium Marble, a third-century chronicle that claims the first performance of the City Dionysia occurred in the 530s.¹⁷ The other group prefers the end of the sixth century, due to the difficulties of restoring the first performance of the festival around the 530s.¹⁸ Their argument is based on epigraphy. The victor's list of the Dionysia catalogues victors down to 346 but no further back than 502/1, meaning an earlier date was unlikely. Recent epigraphic material from Thebes and excavations at the Dionysios sanctuary in Athens support a later date ([Chapter 4.1.1](#)).¹⁹ This removes the only attested conflict during Peisistratus' tyranny.

¹⁷ Camp 1991; Carpenter 1986: 117–23; Herington 1985: 87–91; Pickard-Cambridge 1958. Schachter 2016a: 46 remains uncommitted.

¹⁸ Connor 1989; 1996; West 1989.

¹⁹ Matthaïou 2014. Paleothoros 2012: 51–67 for the excavations in Athens.

The friendship continued throughout the Peisistratid tyranny, with the hereditary ties passing from Peisistratus to his sons Hipparchos and Hippias. The expulsion of the family by invading Spartan troops and Athenian insurgents in 510 changed matters. This reconstruction deviates from customary histories that place a neighbourly conflict over Plataia in the years of the Peisistratid tyranny. Although the Plataians and Peisistratids forged an alliance in 519, hostilities with the Thebans did not ensue. Hostilities erupted only at the end of the sixth century (Chapter 3.1.1). Instead, this alliance was another Peisistratid attempt to forge friendly ties in Central Greece. An example of the continued friendly relationship between the tyrants and the Thebans is Hipparchus' dedication at the Ptoion near Akraiphnia. This marble base is about 20 centimetres high and circa 28 centimetres in diameter at its widest point. The inscription was inscribed all around the socle.²⁰ The inscription was brief: 'set up by Hipparchus, son of Peisistratus'. Nevertheless, it indicates Peisistratid interest in a Theban sanctuary whose transregional apogee had passed at this time.²¹ The location continued to attract a large Boiotian crowd, however, and a dedication by the Athenian tyrant would stand out, perhaps signalling his continued friendship with the Thebans.

2.2 First Blood: The Late Sixth Century and the Atheno-Boiotian Conflict

The disposal of the tyrants and the subsequent civil strife in Athens created the breeding ground for hostilities between the Athenians and some of their Boiotian neighbours (510–507/6).²² A Spartan-backed oligarchy under Isagoras initially took root but quickly faltered. The Athenian *demos* revolted and recalled his rival Cleisthenes and other exiles. These returnees initiated an ambitious 'democratic' programme that involved significant reforms.²³ Disgruntled by his exile, Isagoras appealed for help to his friend Cleomenes, the Spartan king. Joining the Spartans were other Peloponnesians, including the Corinthians and the Chalkidians, as well as

²⁰ Bizard 1920.

²¹ This will be treated in Chapter 5.2.1. Larson 2013 adduces architectural features at the Ptoion as indications of Peisistratid sponsorship of the shrine, based on similarities between roof tiles and other construction work. While a tempting hypothesis, stylistic similarities can be better explained by itinerant craftsmen.

²² War with the Aeginetans broke out only after the tyrants' disposal: Figueira 1993.

²³ Ober 2007.

a coalition of Boiotian poleis under Theban aegis.²⁴ The coalition forces broke in as far as Eleusis, when strife erupted and the Corinthians withdrew, forcing the Peloponnesians to withdraw as well. This left the Boiotians and Chalkidians to face the Athenians alone. The Chalkidians suffered an abysmal fate: they were defeated, ransomed and a cleruchy was installed near their polis. The Boiotian coalition soldiered on and even obtained some successes by capturing Oinoe and Phyle, before suffering a defeat at the hands of the Athenians, who celebrated their victory in a lavish manner (Chapter 5.2.2).²⁵ The reasons for the Boiotian involvement are probably related to *xenia* ties between their leaders and the Spartans. Another reason was their membership of the Peloponnesian League, rather than a desire for revenge over previous territorial disputes (Chapter 3.1). The result significantly shifted the political landscape, as the Athenians secured an alliance with the Plataians and annexed Eleutherai and perhaps Oropos (Chapters 3.1.1, 4.1.1–4.1.3).

It was this defeat that set the pace for subsequent years. The loss was a temporary setback for the Thebans.²⁶ Rather than lamenting their defeat, they looked for new allies and approached the Delphic Oracle for help. In its characteristic enigmatic way, the Oracle replied that the Thebans had to reach out to those nearest to them.²⁷ In confusion they responded that the Koroneians, Thespians and Tanagraians had already fought alongside them. After deliberating the matter in an assembly they realised the Oracle alluded to their kinship with the Aeginetans.²⁸ The Thebans appealed to the Aeginetans, who sent them the divine images of the ‘Sons of Aiakos’.²⁹ Believing the odds were in their favour, the Thebans took the field against the Athenians, but came undone again. They now pressed their new allies for hoplites rather than sacred statues.³⁰

²⁴ Hdt. 5.79.2. A Chalkidian-Boiotian alliance on the basis of a shared coinage had been proffered (Babelon 1907: 974–5), but see Macdonald 1987–8; Parise 2011; Schachter 2016a: 61.

²⁵ Hdt. 5.74; 77.

²⁶ Herodotus’ narrative shifts from Boiotians to Thebans, which could indicate the *Boiotoi* were a short-lived military alliance (Meidani 2008). Yet Moggi 2011 demonstrates the frequent interchangeability of the two in Herodotus’ writing.

²⁷ Hdt. 5.79.1.

²⁸ Hdt. 5.79.2. Mackil 2013: 28–9 suggests this could be a deliberative body attended by several Boiotian poleis. Schachter 2016a: 56 n. 20 is more careful.

²⁹ Hdt. 5.80. The Athenians introduced the Aiakides cult to weaken Aegina; Kearns 1989: 47. Burnett 2005: 26–8 suggests the episode may be a Herodotean invention permeated with anti-Aeginetan sentiment.

³⁰ Polinskaya 2013: 134–9.

This formula proved more successful, with the Aeginetans declaring war on the Athenians unannounced, a diplomatic faux pas in Herodotus' eyes. They descended on the shores of Attica and ravaged the coast, while the Athenians were warding off Boiotian troops.³¹ One can wonder whether the Aeginetans would break with norms in such a blatant matter. It could be Herodotus' way of portraying the Athenians positively through victimising them. When hostilities ended is uncertain, but the conflict ostensibly lasted several years. A back-and-forth on the Attic-Boiotian borders is likely, with each party trying to establish control over areas of this contested landscape. A prolonged conflict meshes with Ernst Badian's sketch of the Cleisthenic reforms ([Chapter 4.1.1](#)).³² The impetus for a new political constellation came in 508/7 after Cleisthenes' return, but the confirmation and execution of these reforms would take several more years and probably lasted until the end of the sixth century.³³ The implementation of these reforms was mired in ongoing military crises, with the likely perpetrators the Thebans and their Boiotian and Aeginetan allies. The aftermath of these invasions was physically visualised in the Attic landscape.³⁴ In addition to the expansion and upgrade of the fortifications of border demes such as Eleusis and Rhamnous, other coastal demes like Sounion or Piraeus received elaborate attention in response to the Aeginetan forays.

The conflict between the Athenians and Boiotians ended sometime around the turn of the century, with evidence for continued warfare lacking. Although a lack of evidence is not conclusive, the Athenian and Plataian decision to march out en masse to face the Persians at Marathon in 490 would be striking if the threat of the Thebans still loomed.³⁵ With the Aeginetans we are on looser ground, since conflicts flared up intermittently until the Battle of Salamis in 480. Perhaps their Boiotian collaboration ended around 501/0.³⁶ That end date would align with the Athenian decision to send twenty triremes in support of the Ionian Revolt in 499. Those ships would have been badly needed if the Aeginetans continued to

³¹ Hdt. 5.81. This shifts the emphasis back to the Boiotians. Buck 1981 dates the alliance to 505/4.

³² Badian 2000b.

³³ Anderson 2003: 147–77. Van Wees 2013: 1–14, 67–8 argues for a more developed military at an earlier stage.

³⁴ Paga 2021: 175–246.

³⁵ Hdt. 6.108. For Marathon: Krentz 2010. The victory was perhaps commemorated with a dedication at Delphi: *FD* III 4.190. The fragmentary nature of the inscription allows little certainty.

³⁶ Figueira 1993: 53–5, 113–51 for a chronology of Atheno-Aeginetan conflicts.

raid the littoral demes at the time.³⁷ The lack of references to further neighbourly conflicts and the likelihood that the Cleisthenic reforms were functional around 501/0 provides a possible *terminus ante quem* for these localised, neighbourly hostilities.

2.3 Troubling Times: The Persian Wars of 480/79 and the Aftermath

The next neighbourly interaction is during Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480/79. The eventual victory of the Greek alliance over the Persians reshaped the Greek self-perception and bred a sense of military, political and cultural superiority in the victors.³⁸ The invasion and its responses are a watershed in Atheno-Boiotian relations, though in the basking light of triumph lay the shadow of medism. The decision of the Thebans and most Boiotians – except the Thespians and Plataians – to join the Persians after an initial resistance at Thermopylai contrasted with the Athenians' continued resistance. This decision darkened their future, especially in the eyes of the victors who used this history to castigate the medizers at politically expedient times (Chapter 5.2.3).

After the actual conflict, medism was not forgotten, but its memory reshaped according to the polis commemorating it. In Athens' case, medism was often suppressed because of the focus on the Battle of Marathon in 490. In this battle, no (mainland) Greeks participated on the Persian side, making it ideal for commemoration in the post-war period. Moreover, the Athenians did not have to share the credit for this battle with any other poleis. The castigation of medizers stood in stark contrast to the pre-war period. Prior to the conflict, working with the Mede was commonplace and not stigmatised. Only in the aftermath of the wars and the Hellenic League's ideological campaigning did a sense of vilification attach to the term.³⁹

The decision of Boiotian poleis to medize occurred in several stages. The Battle of Thermopylai in 480 and the defeat of the forces of the Hellenic League against Xerxes constituted a turning point. The passes to Central Greece were defended by a relatively small force: 300 Spartiates under

³⁷ Hdt. 5.97.3.

³⁸ Hall 2002: 125–34; Bridges et al. 2007. Vlassopoulos 2013: 8, 163 attenuates the cataclysmic effects of the war.

³⁹ Beck 2020: 206; Gartland 2020. For the origins of medism, see Gillis 1979: 45; Graf 1984.

Leonidas accompanied by other Peloponnesians and a Boiotian force consisting of 400 Thebans and 700 Thespians. For the Thespians, this constituted a significant sacrifice, but the limited amount of Thebans is striking. Some scholars view the defence at Thermopylai as a manoeuvre to slow down the Persian advance to allow for evacuations to be arranged. Others view it as an all-out defence, or even the launch pad for a counter-offensive. A third option envisions a short-lived defence, aimed at creating a diversion to collect and organise a defence in Boiotia.⁴⁰ Whether this constituted a fully committed defence by the Boiotians remains a matter of debate, considering the small number of troops supplied. If it was not a concerted effort, why were there Thebans (and Thespians) at Thermopylai? Personal ties to the Spartan royal house may have played a role, whereas the contributions from Thebes could reflect a segment of the population unwilling to medize.⁴¹ There was, however, no concerted region-wide effort to counter the Persians.⁴²

According to Herodotus, the Thebans and other Boiotians had already submitted to the Persians and were at Thermopylai as hostages of Leonidas.⁴³ Plutarch, a staunch defender of Boiotia, polemicised against the Halicarnassian historian by pointing out that the Thebans were present at an earlier communal defence effort in Thessaly. He bases himself on Aristophanes of Boiotia.⁴⁴ While Plutarch's diatribe may ascribe loyalist motives to the Boiotians, the basis of his work provides a counter narrative to Herodotus. His assertion that Boiotians were present at Tempe is consistent with Herodotus' account of Thermopylai and suggests the latter battle may have been a pivotal moment in the decision to medize.⁴⁵ Herodotus does not explicitly detail the composition of the land army marching to Tempe, but mentions only the two most notable lieutenants, Euenetos for Sparta and Themistocles for Athens.⁴⁶ This increases the likelihood that he omitted a Boiotian contingent at Tempe, who would have marched under their own banner. The full history eludes us, but Bernd Steinbock has advanced the discussion by applying the idea of a

⁴⁰ Van Wees 2019. For the counter-offensive: Matthew 2013; for the suicide mission to thwart advances: Cartledge 2006: 130. For the defence in Boiotia: Chapter 4.3.

⁴¹ Schachter 2016a: 68–70.

⁴² Contra Buck 1979: 132. He argues the contingents corresponded to *lochoi* from the *koinon*.

⁴³ Hdt. 7.132; 7.233.2. Cawkwell 2005: 92: 'It is remarkable how little of books 7, 8, 9 can with any confidence be presented as furnishing a reliable account of what actually happened.'

⁴⁴ Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 31; Schachter *BNJ* 379; Thomas 2014: 154; Tufano 2019a: 227–40.

⁴⁵ Demand 1982: 20–1. ⁴⁶ Hdt. 7.173.2; Tufano 2019a: 240–2.

‘consistency bias’ to Herodotus’ narrative.⁴⁷ This means that any action by the Thebans or Boiotians that was inconsistent with his image of ‘arch-medizers’ was dismissed. To rationalise their subsequent behaviour, Herodotus retrojected their medizing onto the past, creating a consistent image of zealous medizing policy. His attitude towards the Thebans and Boiotians stands in stark contrast to other medizers. Alexander I of Macedon, for instance, receives a benign appraisal. In this case the historian remains ‘sensitive to people’s occasional powerlessness’.⁴⁸ No such sensitivity is forthcoming for the Boiotians. Nevertheless, Herodotus ironically admits the Thebans were divided over the medizing course.⁴⁹

The Theban defence at Thermopylai was therefore not one of compulsion, but a reflection of a party with enough influence to offer Leonidas a stay at the Herakleion, and which showed their commitment to the Hellenic League.⁵⁰ When that help was not forthcoming, the decision to medize was easier. The decision was facilitated by the friendship ties between an exiled Spartan in the Persian retinue, Demaratus, and the leader of the medizing party in Thebes, Attaginus.⁵¹ The advance of a substantial army and these ties meant that the pro-Persian group became more dominant in Theban affairs.⁵² Regional rivalries, like the ones Herodotus ascribes to the Thessalians and Phocians, were probably less important.⁵³

If the Boiotians medized because their position was lost and there was no allied force forthcoming, why did the Thespians and Plataians continue to resist? For the Plataians, their intimate connection to the Athenians provides the answer. Another factor could be the local rivalry with the Thebans, whose medizing ways gave the impetus to resist Persia. The Thespian case is less apparent. Simon Hornblower is less doubtful: ‘These two cities (Plataia and Thespiai) were historically aligned with the Athenians and this is no doubt a large part of the reason why they took a different line from their neighbours.’⁵⁴ But the Thespian connection emerges only after the wars. None of our sources indicate any internecine friction between the Thebans and Thespians, but a large part of the

⁴⁷ Steinbock 2013: 116–17.

⁴⁸ Baragwanath 2008: 238, 318–22; Moloney 2020. Cf. Hdt. 7.172 on the Thessalians.

⁴⁹ Hdt. 9.67: οἱ γὰρ μηδίζοντες τῶν Θηβαίων (those of the Thebans that medized). For this interpretation: Flower and Marincola 2002: 224. Diod. 11.4.7 elucidates similar divisions in Theban society.

⁵⁰ Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 31.

⁵¹ Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 31. Attaginus later arranged the banquet for the Persians: Hdt. 9.61.

⁵² Gartland 2020. ⁵³ Hdt. 7.6. ⁵⁴ Hornblower 2004: 160.

Thespian male population had perished at Thermopylai under Damophilos. These men may have been pro-Spartan with ties to the Theban contingent resisting the Persians.⁵⁵ Relations between the new Theban leadership and the Thespians were perhaps less cordial, prompting the Thespians to throw their lot in with the Greek alliance. It could have been a precursor to the events after the Battle of Delion (424), when the decimated hoplite class struggled to subdue the Thespian populace whose Athenian sympathies were objectionable to the *koinon*.⁵⁶

Another possibility could be the Thespian relations with the Plataians. Their shared cult of Hera Kithaironia forged a strong local tie.⁵⁷ The cult is confined to the Thespike and Plataike. This cultic connection is not easily traceable to this early stage. The date of the Hera temple in Plataia is uncertain as is the ascription of the epithet Kithaironia to the Hera cult in Thespias. Yet this shared cult could have created the sort of bond to inspire a united front within the Boiotian political landscape.⁵⁸ Moreover, the later instalment of the festival included ritualised feasting, as can be gathered from Thespian inscriptions. These common meals then forged a close connection between these poleis.⁵⁹ Because of the cult's importance to Plataian identity through the Daidala festival, the shared celebrations of the cult could have generated a stronger bond between the Plataians and Thespians and could have nudged the latter towards resisting the Persians.⁶⁰

Their decision proved to be the right one, as the Persian forces were driven from mainland Greece after the Battle of Plataia in 479. A swift retaliation against the Thebans ensued, as the Hellenic League besieged the city. Its impenetrable walls became totemic for medism, since many pro-Persian elements in Central Greece fled to the Cadmeia.⁶¹ A prolonged

⁵⁵ Hdt. 7.222. The pro-Spartan Thebans at Thermopylai were led by Leontiades or Anaxander: Plut. *De Hdt. Mal.* 33. Could the Damophilos that died at Delion in 424 (*IThesp* 485, fr. B l. 11) be a grandson of the man who fell at Thermopylai? His participation alongside the Thebans and his membership of the hoplite class (Thuc. 4.133) could indicate pro-Theban sympathies. Kowalzig 2007: 388–9 suggests the name Damophilos indicates pro-Athenian sympathies. Similarly she argues that Dithyrambos, the best Thespian fighter at Plataia, indicates Theban antipathy by employing a Dionysiac name rather than an Apolline one.

⁵⁶ Thuc. 4.133.1. ⁵⁷ Schachter 2016a: 183–4.

⁵⁸ For the temple: Konecny et al. 2013: 141–4; Mackil 2013: 227–9 for the cult and epithet issue. Fossey 2019: 67–8 rejects this possibility, but his arguments lack in-depth treatment of the impossibility of a shared cult.

⁵⁹ *IThesp* 38; 39; Iversen 2010.

⁶⁰ For the Daidala cult: Iversen 2007: 381–3; Schachter 2000: 13–14.

⁶¹ Hdt. 9.86–8 offers little detail about the closing stages. Diod. 11.32; Thuc. 1.90.2–3 mention Thebes became a refuge. Its fortifications were the largest in mainland Greece and could contain

siege achieved little. A deal was reached that only the ringleaders of the medizing party were handed over and the siege was lifted. These ringleaders, however, were executed without a fair trial, casting a stain on their wilful surrender. Fortunately for the Thebans and other Boiotian medizers, that was the only punishment incurred.

So what followed? A different era in the Greek world started.⁶² The unilateral domination of the Spartans and their Peloponnesian League made way for a bifurcated structure in which Athens established itself as a leading power in the Greek world. Part of this new power came from their leading role in the Delian League that had formed to oppose the Persians and avenge their heinous acts. Its political goals were clear: to retaliate for the vicissitudes suffered at the hands of the Great King by taking the war to him.⁶³ Allegedly, the aims of the Delian League were irreconcilable with friendly neighbourly relations. David Yates, for instance, who emphasises the laudable view that enacting punishment for medism was self-defeating for the Athenians' aims, cannot divorce himself from the idea that the Thebans could be exempted from this rule: 'Athens needed an ethnic war that unified their Greek allies against a foreign threat. The Thebans and Dolopians could be singled out as scapegoats.'⁶⁴ It overlooks the notion that this Panhellenist, ideological veil concealed that the Athenians (ab) used this military tool to fulfil imperialistic objectives in the Thracian Chersonese and other areas of interest they had targeted since the second half of the sixth century.⁶⁵ So while the Athenians could stigmatise the Thebans, it undermined the aims of their alliance. This forces us to reconsider the neighbourly relationships after the Persian wars.

For instance, the Atheno-Plataian connection was bolstered by the final battle of the war taking place at Plataia. Promises were made to keep the Plataike an inviolable territory (Chapter 4.1.3). What about the rest of Boiotia? A period of détente and perhaps Atheno-Boiotian collaboration followed, though most scholars view the period as being rife with raw emotions of revenge. Insofar as is possible to reconstruct this period, little has been said about the neighbourly interactions in the early stages of the

up to 100,000 people: Bintliff 1999. But Hüllden 2020: 365–70 doubts an early extensive Theban fortification.

⁶² Beck 2016. ⁶³ Thuc. 1.96.1. Hall 1989: 62. ⁶⁴ Yates 2013: 47.

⁶⁵ Kallet 2013 contra traditionalists who argued for a gradual development from voluntary alliance to repressive empire, e.g., Meiggs 1972. This perspective relied upon the 'three-barred sigma debate' and the dating of epigraphical sources to the 450s that indicated a 'rise in imperialism'. Mattingly 1996 gave later dates for these inscriptions and new technologies support his arguments: Papazarkadas 2009b; Assael et al. 2022.

Delian League. One notable exception is Albert Schachter, who gingerly suggests a cordial relationship (Chapter 3.2.1).⁶⁶

The Spartan perception of medizers differed from the Athenian one. The former castigated the medizers. The latter undertook cultic exchanges, which helped the reintegration of their Boiotian neighbours after the war (Chapter 3.5). Another element was the rise of a Panhellenic political project under Athenian aegis: the Delian League. This required a different attitude towards former medizers. The situation was not dissimilar to what occurred after the Second World War in Europe, with Western Germany swiftly reembraced by the other European forces and their American allies. That does not ignore the lingering feelings of dislike among the populations of Western Europe, but on a macro-political level, there was a relatively quick rehabilitation of the erstwhile enemies. While the Persian Wars should not be viewed through the same prism as the Second World War, there is little evidence for a fierce retaliation against the Boiotians from the Athenian side in the post-war decades. The Panhellenic ideology of the Delian League was designed to embark on a war against the quintessential Other, the Persians. A unified Panhellenic ideology was embedded in this compact, stressing unity and (Ionian) kinship to strengthen the cohesion of the alliance.⁶⁷ Punishing the medizers served no purpose, but disrupted the harmony, since many island and Ionian members of the League had fought on the Persian side.⁶⁸ Singling out poleis for punishment would not garner confidence among the Athenian allies that a similar fate would not await them.⁶⁹ The Athenian campaign against Carystus, on the southern tip of the Euboian peninsula, is sometimes viewed as an Athenian punishment against medizers. Yet Thucydides describes a campaign where the Carystians refuse inclusion in the Delian League, without mentioning medism. Herodotus alludes to another campaign, but this occurred *prior* to the Persian Wars.⁷⁰ The sentiment of revenge against medizing Greeks seems to mostly emanate from the Spartan side. They undertook a campaign against the Thessalians to expand their influence in the Amphictyony.⁷¹

There is one source that could vindicate an antagonistic view. It concerns a bronze plaque from Olympia, dedicated by the Olympian

⁶⁶ Schachter 2016a: 69–70.

⁶⁷ Constantakopoulou 2007; Fragoulaki 2013: 212–16; Smarczyk 1990. ⁶⁸ Hall 2002: 187–9.

⁶⁹ Powell 2015: 36–7.

⁷⁰ Thuc. 1.98.3; Hdt. 8.112; 121; Wallace and Figueira 2019. The Carystians dedicated a statue at Delphi to commemorate their contributions to the anti-Persian coalition: Scott 2010: 87.

⁷¹ Hdt. 6.72; Paus. 3.7.9; Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 21; Hornblower 2011: 23–54.

judges presiding over arbitration cases at the Zeus sanctuary. Letter forms indicate a date in the 470s and its contents concern the verdict of a fine meted out to the *Boiotoi*:⁷²

Ἄγαλμα Διός· Πύρρο γρ[α]φέας·
καὶ Χαρίξενος καὶ τοὶ μαστροὶ.
[τ]αῖρ δίκαις, ταῖρ κὰ τῶν Βοιωτῶν Μένανδρος
[κ'] Ἀριστόλοχος τοῖρ Ἀθηναῖος ἐδικαξάταν,
[ἐ]πέγγον καὶ τοῖ Θεσπιέσσι καὶ τοῖρ σὺν αὐτὸς
[σφ]ε δίκαιος δικαστᾶμεν κ' ἀπὸ τῶν Θεσαλῶν
[ἐ]πεδικάξαν.

Offering to Zeus. Pyrrhon, secretary, Charixenos, and the mastroi have decided that the verdicts which Menandros and Aristolochos rendered against the Boiotians in favour of the Athenians, were not justly rendered in favour of both the Thespians and their dependants, and they have rescinded the penalty against the Thessalians. (trans. A. Schachter)

Some scholars believe this retribution was handed out along the fault lines of medism.⁷³ If that were the cause, it goes unmentioned. An omission does not exclude the possibility that other indictments were used as a cloak for medism, yet the speculative nature of that argument reveals the reluctance of Greek poleis to invoke medism as a justifiable indictment against fellow Greeks at this juncture. The judgement rather reflects an epichoric Thespian perspective, who did not want their sacrifices in the Persian Wars to be ignored ([Chapter 5.1.1](#)).⁷⁴ They do not contest their relation to their fellow Boiotians. Their desire is to be excluded from the monetary fine exacted upon them.⁷⁵ Maybe this involved monetary reparations for the destruction of Athens and Thespiai at the hands of the Boiotians and the Persians. All this bronze tablet shows is the continued existence of a Boiotian political entity that was fined at the instigation of the Athenians.⁷⁶ The absence of the Spartans is easily explained. The Peloponnese hardly suffered destruction during Xerxes' invasion, making any claim from their side preposterous. Despite the declaration for a fine occurring at a Panhellenic shrine, a monetary fine is relatively minor in

⁷² *NIO* 5; Siewert 1981 dates it to 474–8; Minon 2007: 104–12. Van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994: 248 are more doubtful. Larson 2007a opts for a later date. For the discussion: Schachter 2016a: 59. Barringer 2021: 143–5 still connects the inscription to a Panhellenic unity after the war, cf. [Chapter 5.1.1](#).

⁷³ Beck and Ganter 2015. ⁷⁴ Van Wijk 2021b.

⁷⁵ [τ]αῖρ δίκαις (l.3). Siewert 1981: 237 views a monetary fine as a lenient punishment.

⁷⁶ Larson 2007a: 157–60; Mackil 2013: 32.

light of the destruction of a city. The Boiotian poleis would be more than willing to buy off the affair with money, considering the debate in Thebes during the siege of 479: ‘No, rather if it is money they desire and their demand for our surrender is but a pretext, let us give them money out of our common treasury (for it was by the common will and not ours alone that we took the Persian side).’⁷⁷

The subsequent execution of the Theban ringleaders by the Spartan general Pausanias nullified that possibility. Perhaps the Athenians would have been satisfied with a one-time payment, rather than the punishment of the elites. Money could be found in the pockets of the prosperous Thebans and Boiotians, judging from their remarkable quick recovery from the Persian Wars.⁷⁸ Communal games at the Itonion and Onchestos appear to have continued in the decades after the war. Organising these events required money, indicating the Boiotians could still procure sufficient funds. Another indicator of wealth is the participation of Boiotian elites in Panhellenic events.⁷⁹ Financially, Boiotian elites apparently suffered no penury following the war. Their inclusion in these Panhellenic games implies they were not widely stigmatised.

Another possible indication of friendly relations comes from Athens. It concerns two bronze vessels from 480–470. One was found in Karabournaki and a similar hydria is on display at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. The former was found in Attica, whereas the latter’s provenance is unknown. Yet the vessel was manufactured in Thebes: τὸν Θέβαις αἰθλον.⁸⁰ The similarity between the two vessels might indicate the Athenian vessel was produced in Boiotia, hinting at possible athletic interactions between the two regions. While far from conclusive, the participation in Theban games demonstrates there was no stigma attached to participating in its games shortly after the Persian Wars. It seems there was no widespread Athenian condemnation or punishment. The shielding of the Boiotians against Spartan interests, while founded upon Athenian interests, suggests the initial post-Persian war decades were a period of détente or even, for instance, close collaboration or alliance (Chapters 3.2.1, 3.5).

⁷⁷ Hdt. 9.87.2. ⁷⁸ Schachter 2016a: 51–65, 69–70.

⁷⁹ Pind. *Olym.* 7.84; fr. 94b ll. 46–7; *Isth.* 3.10; 4.57; *Pyth.* 11. Pythian 11 has been dated to 474 (Schachter 2016a: 66–79) or 454 (Bowra 1964: 402–5; Kurke 2013) but the dating does not affect the Theban victory in 474.

⁸⁰ Papazarkadas 2014: 229.

2.4 An Age of Extremes: Domination and Destitution (458–404)

The decades after the Persian invasion are shrouded in darkness, with only snippets of information available. Neighbourly interactions are more traceable for the 450s. Two major battles were fought on Boiotian soil in this decade: the Battle of Tanagra (458) and the Battle of Oinophyta (458). Each profoundly impacted the Atheno-Boiotian relationship.⁸¹

The first was heavily contested and pitted a Spartan army against an Athenian army supported by Thessalians and Argives.⁸² The Spartan presence reoriented political loyalties in the region, with pro-Spartan regimes taking over in Thebes and Boiotia after the battle (Chapter 3.2.3). The dust had hardly settled on Tanagra before Athenian soldiers were marching into Boiotia again. They mustered an army under Myronides' command and defeated the Boiotian forces at Oinophyta. After the victory, Myronides tore down the walls of Tanagra, took a hundred of the richest men from Opuntian Locris hostage and subdued Boiotia and Phocis.⁸³ An alliance between the Athenians and the Delphic Amphictyony is recorded around this time.⁸⁴ Whether it pre- or post-dates the Battle of Oinophyta is unclear. Perhaps the Athenians' control over Delphi and Phocis meant they employed the symbolic capital of Apollo's sanctuary to tie the members of this political organ together since the Spartans had marched on Doris to expand their influence in the Amphictyony.⁸⁵ The Athenians would then have achieved what the Spartans could not: a dominant position in the religious affairs of (Central) Greece.

The victory at Oinophyta inaugurated an unparalleled period of Athenian domination over Boiotia. Friendly elites were installed to ensure compliance with the new order (Chapter 3.2.3). Their inclusion in the Athenian empire is perhaps found in the Athenian Tribute Lists. Yet the name of two Boiotian poleis in the inscriptions depends on ambiguous

⁸¹ Lewis 1992a: 501 for the dates.

⁸² The Spartans dedicated spoils on the Temple of Zeus at Olympia as a trophy: OR 112; CEG 1.351. Paus. 5.10.4, Hdt. 9.35.2; Plut. *Cim.* 17.6 claim victory for the Spartans. For Athenian sources: Papazarkadas and Sourlas 2012; Tentori Montalto 2017b: 119–26. For Boiotians at the battle: Chapter 3.2.3.

⁸³ Thuc. 1.108.2–3. For a possible location of Oinophyta: Fossey 1988: 58–60. Chapter 5.2.4 for the commemoration of the battle. The takeover did not establish a 'landed empire': Chapter 4.3.

⁸⁴ OR 116; Rhodes 2008. Roux 1978: 44–6, 239–40 expresses doubt over this alliance.

⁸⁵ Hornblower 2011: 55 for Spartan aims.

restorations.⁸⁶ Thucydides provides an insight into the new arrangements as he mentions a Boiotian contingent in an Athenian campaign to Thessaly to restore Orestes, the exiled son of the king of Thessaly. He refers to this contingent as Athenian allies.⁸⁷ This reference suggests the Boiotians were at least formally allied to the Athenians. Whether that involved integration into the League is unknown, but their military assistance was a significant boost to the military possibilities of the League in Central and Northern Greece (see also [Chapter 4.3](#)).

This Athenian domination proved ephemeral. The region was in turmoil after the five-year truce between the Athenians and Spartans ended in 446. Tensions flared up over the control of the Apollo sanctuary in Delphi, with the Spartans placing it in Delphian hands before the Athenians marched in and restored the Phocians to power.⁸⁸ Trouble was brewing elsewhere too. In 446 Euboian, Locrian and Boiotian exiles took over Orchomenos, Chaironeia and other places in Boiotia.⁸⁹ Thucydides' silence on their motives is somewhat frustrating, but presumably these men formed part of the ousted groups after the events of 458. An Athenian response materialised swiftly. The general Tolmides marched out with a thousand hoplites and an unspecified number of allied troops. Initially, his expedition was successful. Chaironeia was taken, its populace subjected to *andrapodismos* and a garrison installed.⁹⁰ The army withdrew from the town and were en route to Haliartos to await reinforcements when the exiles – the Orchomenizers – ambushed the Athenians near Koroneia.⁹¹

⁸⁶ David Lewis suggested reading Orchomenos and Akraiphnia instead of other accepted restorations (Lewis 1981; 1992b; 1994); *ἡερχομ]ένιοι* in the list of 453/2 (*ATL* list 2, col. 9), like [*Κλαζομ]ένιοι*, stating his new restoration was epigraphically preferable. The restoration of the ethnic is based on IG I³ 73 (424/3), where in line 23 *ἡερχομ]ιον* is restored: Wilhelm 1974: 572–92. The appearance of a new fragment from col. 8 clearly read *Κλαζομέν[ιοι]* and made the reconstruction of Klazomenai in col. 9 untenable: Camp 1974: 317. Lewis' other proposal was more tenuous; he restored Akraiphnia (*Ακρ[αίφνιο]ι*) in IG I³ 259.III.20 (454/3). Robertson 2004 suggests the Boiotians were summoned to pledge their allegiance to Athens at the Panathenaia with the *peplos* dressing of Athena appropriating a Boiotian tradition. Though the Athenians are not unfamiliar with transforming the cults of subjugated rebels to fit their own needs (Hölscher 1998), this seems to me too far-fetched.

⁸⁷ Thuc. 1.111: *παραλαβόντες Βοιωτούς καὶ Φωκέας ὄντας ξυμμάχους οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι*. These allies might have been buried in Athens: Schilardi 1980.

⁸⁸ Thuc. 1.112; Philochorus *FGrH* 328 F34; Plut. *Per.* 21.2–3. ⁸⁹ Lewis 1992a: 502.

⁹⁰ Gaca 2010 for *andrapodismos*.

⁹¹ Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F81; Theopompos *FGrHist* 115 F 407; Aristophanes *FGrH* 379 F3. Bearzot 2011: 275–6 argues the Athenians used the Orchomenians as a counterweight to the Thebans, but the exiles' names contradict that (Dull 1977; Moretti 1962: 131). Larsen 1960 implies the Orchomenians as a polis took the lead, but that is not suggested by Thucydides. For the Athenians awaiting reinforcements: Buck 1970: 225.

The Athenians were soundly beaten: a portion of the army perished and others taken prisoner. In exchange for the bodies of the fallen, they were forced to withdraw from Boiotia. After their retreat the Boiotian poleis became *autonomoi* again.⁹² The exiles' ease in recruiting troops and wreaking havoc on the north-western parts of Boiotia demonstrates the Athenian hold was fairly loose, although this could have been the result of the recent catastrophe in Egypt and other wars stretching manpower thin.⁹³

The Boiotian insurgence inspired revolutionary fires in Megara and Euboia, demonstrating the difficulties Boiotians could inflict upon the Athenians beyond their borders.⁹⁴ These revolts during an ongoing war with the Spartans may have prompted the quick settlement with the Boiotians. The loss of this strategic region was precipitated by the Athenian war fatigue. Reflecting this sentiment are the unfavourable terms of the Thirty Years' Peace concluded with the Spartans after the subjugation of the Euboians.⁹⁵ The Athenians gave up important Megarian harbours such as Nisaia and Pagai (Chapter 4.2.1) while abandoning Achaia and other posts in the Peloponnese. The withdrawal of the Athenians allowed the Boiotians to restore their *koinon*, but whether the Plataians became a member remains unclear (Chapter 4.1.3). Their Athenian alliance remained intact and pro-Athenians were still found in the *koinon*, as detailed by *proxenia* awards.⁹⁶

The loss of Boiotia meant accusations of medism hurled at the Boiotians became in vogue – save for the Plataians and perhaps the Thespians – in Athens. The Panhellenist ideal was dusted off by Pericles, despite the lack of an imminent Persian threat. He invited delegates from everywhere, including Boiotia, to discuss the Greek sanctuaries that had burned down, the sacrifices needing to be made to the gods in name of Hellas and how to

⁹² Thuc. 1.113; Diod. 12.6.1–2; Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.4; [Pl.] *Alc. Mai.* 1 112C; Plut. *Alc.* 1. Schachter (forthcoming) suggests the return to *autonomia* might mean the Boiotian cities were part of the empire. At Thuc. 1.97; 6.69.3; 7.57, Thucydides juxtaposes the independent allies with those paying tribute.

⁹³ Thuc. 1.104; 109. ⁹⁴ Thuc. 1.114.3; Diod. 12.7; Plut. *Per.* 22.1–2.

⁹⁵ For the terms with the Euboian rebels: *IG I³ 40*; *AIO* papers no. 8; Igelbrink 2016: 264–83. Papazarkadas 2009b 73–4 ventures a date of 424/3 (Philochoros 328 F130). For the unfavourable terms of the treaty: Thuc. 1.87.6, 115.

⁹⁶ *IG I³ 23* for a group of Thespians and their descendants. Walbank 1978: no. 11 dates it to 460–440. Some Orchomenians received similar honours: *IG I³ 73*; *SEG* 33.13; 424/3 ll. 25: *καὶ νῦν καὶ ἐν τῷ πρ[όσθεν χρ]όνῳ*. Another (*IG I³ 97* (412/11) honours Eurytion, like his father and ancestors (l. 6–7: *καὶ οἱ [π]ρόγονοι αὐτῶν πρόξενοι τέ εἰσιν Ἀθηναίων*). Mackil 2013: 37 proffers some of these exiles were resettled in Thourioi.

secure the seas from piracy. Despite doubts about the historicity of this event, a certain interest in the Panhellenist discourse is noticeable in other ways.⁹⁷ At this time, the Athenians set out to 're-invent' their city through the beautification of many of its sanctuaries and important sites.⁹⁸ Omnipresent in the decorations was the eternal struggle against the 'other', one of the defining tenets of Panhellenism. Its political exponent, however, had been put on hold, precipitated by the lack of Persian aggression. The notion of *eleutheria* from the oppressor was adapted to become a flexible and multipurpose concept that enabled the Athenians to justify their continued rule over the League, despite the lack of Persian danger. This was best expressed in the *Tatenkatalog*, a canon of deeds performed by the glorious predecessors of the Athenians that promulgated their self-identity as the champions of freedom and defenders of justice.⁹⁹ It incubated the belief that Athenian rule was the norm to guarantee the freedom of the Greeks against the Persians and that of their own in the face of their Greek enemies.¹⁰⁰

This had repercussions for the attitude towards the Boiotians. Without the need for a united Panhellenist campaign and with the return of hostilities, there was no need to ignore the medizers' actions during the Persian Wars. I suspect Boiotian medism became a popular trope in the run-up to the Peloponnesian War. At this point it was politically expedient to emphasise the past behaviour of the Boiotians since they were Spartan allies. In a struggle for dominance and Panhellenic acclaim, pointing out that the Spartans were allied to medizers could prove beneficial (Chapter 5.2.3). That attitude accords with the increasingly narrow Athenian view of the Persian Wars before the Peloponnesian War.¹⁰¹ Contributions made by other poleis, like Corinth, were increasingly suppressed and devalued.

The period between the Thirty Years' Peace treaty of 446 and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 was characterised by increasing tensions throughout the Greek world. But these had less to do with an inveterate enmity between the Athenians and Boiotians. Other factors were more important, such as the Corcyrean and Corinthian appeal to Athens and Sparta for help, or the Spartan self-image as wardens of honour and

⁹⁷ Plut. *Per.* 17. Meiggs 1972: 512–15; Stadter 1989: 201–4 argue there was an authentic decree.

⁹⁸ Hurwit 2004.

⁹⁹ Loraux 1986; Proietti 2015. For the changes in the memory of medism: Chapter 5.2.3.

¹⁰⁰ Thuc. 1.75.3–4; Raaflaub 2004: 177. ¹⁰¹ Yates 2019: 136–67.

leaders of Greece.¹⁰² The growing challenge to Spartan honour and their frail confidence triggered a response that eventually led to war.

Various factors contributed to its outbreak. A conflation of fears, interests and desires created a powder keg that, despite all the repeated efforts from both sides to arbitrate the matter and deescalate the tension, needed just a small spark to explode.¹⁰³ And explode it did. According to Thucydides, a Boiotian affair triggered the war.¹⁰⁴ In 431 pro-Theban Plataians plotted a coup with befriended Theban peers, such as Eurymachos, to change the town's political allegiances after its secession from the *koinon* sometime before.¹⁰⁵ Whether the *koinon* condoned the action is uncertain. The inclusion of *boiotarchs* in the attack suggests so but these were all Thebans, hinting at an exclusively Theban undertaking.¹⁰⁶ The endeavour went horribly wrong. The Plataians imprisoned most of the attackers before unlawfully executing them.¹⁰⁷

Informed of the nocturnal attack, but unaware of the executions, the Athenians implored their Plataian allies to stay calm and prevent further escalation. Meanwhile every Boiotian present in Attica was incarcerated for leverage in future negotiations.¹⁰⁸ The Athenians were hoping for a diplomatic solution, even if they blamed the Thebans for breaching the Thirty Years' Peace.¹⁰⁹ The news of the prisoners' execution in Plataia ended the window for negotiations. From that moment the war devolved into a brutal conflict that witnessed immoral killings, outlandish destructions and horrid executions. In tandem with the slipping moral standard came the ever-growing size of the resources invested in the war, with war now raging on an unprecedented scale.¹¹⁰

As a Spartan ally, the Boiotians opposed the Athenians. This was the result of prearranged alliances, not an innate neighbourly hostility. The *koinon's* independent role for most of the war appears to support that

¹⁰² For the Peloponnesian War: Lebow 2003: 65–167; Lendon 2010. Roberts 2017 warns against a deterministic outlook on the outbreak, but focuses on the 'Thucydides Trap', in which an established power *must* clash with a rising one.

¹⁰³ Thuc. 1.78, 139, 126.2. Quotidian relations continued despite the threat of war: Thuc. 2.6.2; Ar. *Ach.* 575–625.

¹⁰⁴ Munn 2002. Other origins for the war: Ar. *Ach.* 528; *Peace* 990; And. 3.8.

¹⁰⁵ The date of the attack is debated: *HCT* 2.3; *CTI* 237–8; Green 2006: 234–5 n. 195; Iversen 2007: 393–4, 410–11. Eurymachos was presumably pro-Spartan: Hdt. 7.233; Schachter 2016a: 66–79.

¹⁰⁶ Thuc. 2.2.3–4. Buck 1994: 11 supports a federal engagement contra Mackil 2013: 336–7.

¹⁰⁷ Thuc. 2.2–4. For the unlawfulness: Scharff 2016: 253–8. Diod. 12.42.1–7 sees the prisoners return to Thebes.

¹⁰⁸ Thuc. 2.5.5–7; 6.2. ¹⁰⁹ Cusumano 2016; Scharff 2016: 253–8. ¹¹⁰ Roberts 2017.

notion.¹¹¹ In the revolt at Lesbos Boiotians were instrumental in stirring up discontent towards the Athenians not on account of Spartan considerations, but to strengthen their own kinship ties around the Aegean.¹¹² Another example is their support for their beleaguered Megarian neighbours in 424 before the Spartans did.¹¹³ Other actions had more severe results. The destruction of Plataia in 427 marked a change from the previous military engagements, which hitherto had negligible impact upon the war. This erased a renowned town and dealt a propagandistic blow to the Athenians, who neglected to aid the Plataians (Chapter 4.1.3).¹¹⁴

In 424 the Boiotians decisively beat the Athenians at Delion, halting a string of Athenian successes and causing a reversal in the war. Delion was the result of an Athenian plan to pin down the Boiotians with a pincer move. One army under Demosthenes would install friendly regimes in Chaironeia and Siphai to secure the Corinthian Gulf promontory. Another army under Hippocrates would march on Oropos and Tanagra and recreate the successful *epiteichismos* tactics that had worked so well at Pylos against the Spartans by reinforcing and fortifying Delion (Chapter 4.2.1).¹¹⁵ The two-pronged attack would split the *koinon*'s forces and erode its cohesion from fortified bases, eventually taking them out of the war. The plot faltered, as the plans for Siphai and Chaironeia were discovered, leaving Hippocrates to fend for himself at Delion. His isolated army bore the full weight of the Boiotian forces and were trounced in battle. Emphasising Boiotian independence is not to diminish their involvement in the conflict – Delion in particular was a turning point in the war *and* for Boiotian self-awareness – but underlines their independent course from their Spartan allies.¹¹⁶ That emerges during the negotiations before the Peace of Nicias in 421. They refused to act as a third-rate power or subordinate ally to the Spartans by handing over their conquered possessions without concessions (Chapter 3.1.2).

Two notorious events of the decade after the Peace of Nicias were the Profanation of the Mysteries and the Mutilation of the Herms scandals in

¹¹¹ Buck 1990; Connor 1997 contra Cawkwell 2011: 271, who believes the Boiotians were only interested in the integrity of the *koinon* rather than pursuing their own agenda.

¹¹² Thuc. 3.5.3, 15.1; 3.2.3 for the kinship ties: Βοιωτῶν συγγενῶν ὄντων; 3.13.1: ἐπειδὴ Βοιωτοὶ προκαλέσαντο εὐθύς ὑπηκούσαμεν.

¹¹³ Thuc. 4.66–73; Hornblower 2010: 131–2. ¹¹⁴ Marsh-Hunn 2021.

¹¹⁵ Westlake 1983. Lucas 2021 on siege warfare in the fifth century and its effects on *epiteichismos*. The Athenians were transforming a religious boundary into a political one by fortifying Delion: Allison 2011.

¹¹⁶ For Delion's commemoration: Chapter 5.2.6. For the speeches prior: Thuc. 4.91; 95–7; 100–1. I omit Diodorus' testimony as he blurs of mythology and history: Toher 2001.

Athens. Implicated citizens were condemned, their property confiscated. Those who had fled the scene were condemned to death in absentia. The impact of the events stretched beyond the borders. According to Thucydides, those embroiled in the scandals colluded with the Boiotians to hand over the city to them.¹¹⁷ It reveals the persistent danger the Boiotians could pose to the stability of the Athenians through their proximity, especially during crises. While the Spartans were still traipsing at the Isthmus, the Boiotians were already on the border.¹¹⁸ This allowed them to acutely respond to changes in Athens, making their threat much more palpable than the distant Spartans.

Throughout the later stages of the war the Boiotians thwarted Athenian ambitions by fighting in Sicily and occupying the border fortress at Dekeleia.¹¹⁹ The fortification of Dekeleia in particular proved fruitful. It cut off the Athenians from the silver mines in Laurion and severed the transport axes running through Attica, especially the vital artery with Oropos, where a substantial amount of imported grain arrived. The support in Sicily, Byzantium and Asia Minor shows how the Boiotians fostered their kinship ties around the Greek world. This went beyond the demands made of other allies within the terms of the Peloponnesian League.¹²⁰ Their zeal is probably best explained by a desire to create their own lasting legacy, independent of the Spartans. Another vigorous blow came in 411, when the Athenians lost Oropos to the Boiotians. This takeover precipitated the loss of Euboea, a vital asset for Athenian survival (Chapter 4.1.2). In the next few years the Athenians were pushed into a corner but continued to work their way out of trouble. Yet after some minor success, the Athenians spiralled downwards. The final strike came in 405 at the Battle of Aegospotami (Chapter 5.1.2). The loss of their fleet was too severe to overcome and sealed their fate.

¹¹⁷ Thuc. 6.61.2. And. 1.45 refers to the event and the measures taken.

¹¹⁸ Rubel 2013: 74–98. Thuc. 6.61.2 does not mention the Boiotians' location, unlike And. 1.45. Makkink 1932 *ad loc* connects it to a plot; MacDowell 1989 *ad loc* relates it to Spartan business in Boiotia. Judging from And. 1.44, the majority of the accused escaped. Fornara 1980 claims Thucydides may have relied on Andocides' work.

¹¹⁹ Thuc. 6.91.6; 7.19.1–2; 7.27.5; Hell. *Oxy.* 12.4; 17.5; *CT* III 567–70. Other sources refer to the occupation's effects and the Boiotians' role: Lys. 7.6; Isoc. 14.31; Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.5; *Mem.* 3.5.4; Plut. *Lys.* 27.

¹²⁰ Sicily: Thuc. 7.19.3, 25.3–4, 43.7, 45.1; Fragoulaki 2013: 100–18. Sardinia: Kühr 2011. Italy: Str. 9.2.13. For archaeological connections with Boiotia: Roller 1994. Byzantium: Xen. *Hell.* 1.3.15; Russell 2017: 227–8, 239–40. Asia Minor: Thuc. 8.100.3. The Boiotians granted the rebels the same amount of triremes as the Spartans: Thuc. 8.5.2. Chios' connection to Boiotia is more obscure: Hornblower 2006; Matthaïou 2006: 134.

It was another year before the conflict ended (404). The Athenians were in an unenviable position, their fate dependent on the judgement of former enemies.¹²¹ Following the surrender, the Boiotians proposed to raze Athens to the ground and use its lands for pasture. Bernd Steinbock argues this response emerged from the fear they suffered in 480/79 while enduring the siege by the Hellenic League.¹²² Yet that experience could have had a contrary effect and softened their demands for revenge, unless one believes the Boiotians to be truly malicious. The Spartans refused this proposal, however, on grounds of the Athenian contribution to the Persian Wars, obliquely throwing a jab at the Boiotians.¹²³ What could have induced this refusal and this oblique insult to their allies?

The Boiotians' strained relationship with the Spartans over various issues, such as the establishment of Herakleia Trachis in Central Greece and the distribution of booty from Dekeleia, was a contributing factor.¹²⁴ From a *Realpolitik* perspective, a destruction of the city was detrimental to the Spartans as it removed a substantial buffer from Central Greece against Boiotian expansion.¹²⁵ In a similar fashion, the Boiotians insisted on the ritual destruction of Athens as they feared the city would turn into a powerful pro-Spartan bulwark. By transforming Attica into sacred territory, dedicated to (shared) pastoral activities, they could alleviate Spartan fears about the Boiotian appropriation of these lands. Perhaps the vicissitudes suffered during the war, such as the heinous slaughter at Mykalessos in 413, were another motive but that goes unmentioned in our sources.¹²⁶ These self-interested arguments are certainly valid and could have influenced decision-making.

But as Steinbock rightly argues, other aspects factored into the decision.¹²⁷ References to the past deeds of the Persian Wars were not a mere façade and evoked emotions on the Spartan side of the glorious resistance against the Persians.¹²⁸ It also allowed the Spartans to juxtapose the Athenians with the Boiotians, whose growing recalcitrance was worrisome to observe. Additionally, the Panhellenist discourse employed by the Spartans throughout the war made it nearly impossible to destroy fellow

¹²¹ Their resilience after setbacks to the population is impressive, but Akrigg 2019: 244–6 points out the radical rise *and break* in Athenian population numbers before and during the Peloponnesian War.

¹²² Steinbock 2013: 280–91.

¹²³ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.19, 3.5.8; Isoc. 14.31; And. 3.21; Plut. *Lys.* 15.3, cf. Mackill 2013: 84.

¹²⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.5; Plut. *Lys.* 27.4. ¹²⁵ Poly. 1.45.5.

¹²⁶ Mykalessos: Thuc. 7.29–30, cf. Fragoulaki 2020. ¹²⁷ Steinbock 2013: 280–91.

¹²⁸ Contra Hamilton 1997: 216; Cartledge 1987: 275–83.

Greeks and offer their city as a tithe to Apollo in Delphi after they had valiantly fought the Persians.¹²⁹ It was imperative to promote a feeling of unity for a possible conflict with the Persians. Accepting the Boiotian proposal would have sacrificed any credibility of the Spartans as leaders of the Greeks. They would have committed a horrible, irreversible act that negated any future normalisation with the Athenians. It is easy to envision inherent hostility towards the Athenians inspiring the Boiotian proposal, but perhaps a small hostile clique dominating the political scene is to blame, as suggested by the Theban ambassador to Athens in 395.¹³⁰ The immediate aftermath of the war points in this direction. The proposal was more likely the extension of apprehension over Spartan behaviour than neighbourly enmity.

2.5 All Quiet on the Western Front? United against the Spartans (403–369)

After the Athenian surrender the Spartans freely dictated terms. The fleet was heavily reduced and the Long Walls protecting the city destroyed, removing the two safety nets against foreign incursions. Additionally, the source of Athens' power, the Delian League, was dissolved.¹³¹ Symbolising their humiliating status was the inclusion into the Peloponnesian League as a Spartan ally. A new oligarchic government was installed to replace the democracy to ensure compliance with these conditions.¹³² These changes confirmed the fears envisioned by the Boiotians and Corinthians: Athens was now a Spartan pawn.

Highly unpopular from the start, the new government was confronted with rising tensions. The Spartan general Lysander installed a garrison to assuage the situation.¹³³ Thirty men were appointed to reshape the ancestral laws and stabilise the city, but their rule turned into a tyranny. They now acted as the de facto government. Moderate elements of the previous ruling clique were persecuted, and a majority of the population lost its citizenship.¹³⁴ This forced many Athenians into exile. Most of the staunchest democrats fled to Thebes, where they were offered a safe haven in

¹²⁹ The situation at Plataia was different since this was decided upon by the Thebans and the city had not been razed to the ground, as the excavations bear out (Konecny et al. 2013).

¹³⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.8; Plut. *Lys.* 15. ¹³¹ *RO* 3. ¹³² Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.2; 2.2.20.

¹³³ Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.13.

¹³⁴ Shear 2011: 166–87. Carugati 2019 treats the measures taken after the Thirty to inure the democracy against future challenges.

defiance of Spartan demands.¹³⁵ The reason for the sudden change in outlook in Thebes is partially due to changes in leadership, with Ismenias and his party taking over (Chapter 3.2.2). Recent Spartan attempts to intervene in the polis' affairs probably instigated these changes. According to Isocrates 'the Lacedaimonians no sooner gained the supremacy than they straightway plotted against the Thebans'.¹³⁶ The Loeb and other editions perceive this as the capture of the Cadmeia in 380s, but Isocrates probably refers to the end of the Peloponnesian War, which could explain Ismenias' rise to power.¹³⁷

Defying Spartan orders to extradite the refugees, the Boiotians shielded the Athenian exiles under Thrasybulus in Thebes and its surroundings to provide them with a base to launch their coup against the Thirty. Their motives were not solely altruistic. It was in their interest to support these exiles, so that the pro-Spartan regime in Athens could be toppled. Moreover, their help for the refugees was impelled by the Theban self-image to emulate the deeds of Heracles by protecting the weak (Chapter 3.4.1). Officially, the Boiotians offered no help to the refugees. Harboursing the exiles was an intractable act but did not constitute a declaration of war towards the Spartans.¹³⁸ The exiles succeeded in capturing the border fortress at Phyle, before marching on Athens itself. After a bloody battle between the regime and the exiles, the refugees came out victorious. The Spartans wished to intervene and demanded reinforcements from their Boiotian allies. The *koinon* refused, however, suggesting they supported the Athenian democrats. Any lingering negative emotions stemming from the Peloponnesian War appear to have been set aside, even if temporarily. Hampered by the lack of help, the Spartans were compelled to broker an agreement between the warring Athenian factions.¹³⁹

The post-war period was thus an amicable period for the neighbours, but this relationship was not formalised until 395. In the intermittent years (403–395) the relationship between the Spartans and their Boiotian allies deteriorated, laying the *Realpolitik* foundations for a neighbourly rapprochement. Spartan abrasive behaviour caused that deterioration, ranging from interventions in Elis to large-scale campaigns in Asia Minor. As Paul Cartledge put it, the Spartans started to increasingly act as the new

¹³⁵ Thebes: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.1; Lys. Fr. 286 Carey; Diod. 14.6.3; Plut. *Lys.* 27.4–5; Justin 5.9.4. Megara: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.1; Lys. 12.17. Argos: Dem. 15.22; Diod. 14.6.2; Justin 5.9.4. Corinth: Aeschin. 2.147–8.

¹³⁶ Isoc. 8.98. ¹³⁷ Hornblower 1992: 121–2.

¹³⁸ Diod. 14.32; Plut. *Lys.* 27.4; Justin 5.9.8. For its commemoration: Chapter 5.2.7.

¹³⁹ Buck 1998: 70; Cook 1988: 70. The agreement: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.29–30; 3.5.5.

Athenians towards their allies, in both repressive behaviour and expansionist tendencies.¹⁴⁰

The campaign in Asia Minor particularly influenced attitudes. The ascension of Agesilaos to the Spartan throne brought forward a leader with a distinctive mix of imperialism and Panhellenism in his convictions. He advocated a renewed war against the Persians, using a familiar expression: *eleutheria* for the Greeks in Asia Minor. He levied troops for the expedition and marched into Boiotia for departure on this pretext.¹⁴¹ Wishing to emulate Agamemnon on the eve of his voyage to Troy, Agesilaos wanted to sacrifice at Aulis before his departure, doubling down on his Panhellenic credentials with this Homeric invocation.¹⁴² He did not consult the Boiotians first, however, triggering a piqued response from the *koinon* for his intrusive behaviour and lack of decorum. When word reached the *boiotarchs* of his impending sacrifice at Aulis, they dispatched horsemen to the scene to halt Agesilaos' offering. Agesilaos was incensed and sailed off in anger.¹⁴³ The *boiotarchs'* actions are often interpreted as religiously shrouded political goals, but this view has been challenged. Stopping the sacrifice was not a spiel fronting for political gains. The Spartan king had violated customs by having his own diviner sacrifice, rather than the diviner attached to the sanctuary.¹⁴⁴ His actions were not a matter of charged impiety but betrayed his arrogant ambitions and were certainly not the act of a thoughtful ally. It was a prologue to the times ahead.

Any goodwill the Spartans had created by overcoming the Athenians in the Peloponnesian War evaporated. In the process they alienated allies like the Boiotians and Corinthians. These saw the writing on the wall and in 395 pushed for an alliance with the Athenians *against* the Spartans, leading to the Corinthian War (395–387/6). Persian money fomented anti-Spartan

¹⁴⁰ Cartledge 2003: 211–12. E.g., Lysander's campaigns in the northern Aegean and Agesilaos' truce with the Persians to pursue Spartan interests in Thrace in 399: Plut. *Lys.* 16; 19–20; Poly. 1.45.4; Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.2; 3.2.23; Diod. 14.17.5–6; 14.38.

¹⁴¹ Diod. 14.79.1. Prompting his zeal for war with the Persians was the news of a Persian fleet under construction in 397 (Diod. 14.39.2; Isoc. 4.142). In Xen. *Ages.* 1.8 the king generates widespread enthusiasm with his Panhellenist allusions, but this concerns an encomium: Cartledge 1987: 65.

¹⁴² Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.3. Cartledge 1987: 212; Cawkwell 2011: 245–6 underline this Panhellenist notion. Meidani 2013 stresses the reference to Agamemnon is an attempt to underline the Spartans' role as hegemon. Munn 1997: 70–1 argues this episode allowed the Spartans to portray the Thebans as medizers.

¹⁴³ Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.4. Plut. *Ages.* 6.4–5; *Lys.* 27.1; *Pel.* 21.4; Paus. 3.9.3 offer more scathing accounts. Xenophon mentions it in his *Hellenica*, but omits it in his *Agesilaos*, suggesting he disapproved of it: Nevin 2014.

¹⁴⁴ Nevin 2017: 155–6.

disaffection among Greek poleis, triggered by a range of Spartan trespasses, such as intervention in the internal affairs of allies, including Thebes.¹⁴⁵

A proxy war in Central Greece, where the Boiotians kindled a conflict between the Opountian Locrians and Phocians, provided the onset for the war.¹⁴⁶ Xenophon's account pretends the Thebans, easily bribed by Persian money because of their moral depravity, were solely to blame for the war. Their role as a principal instigator is undeniable, but Xenophon's characteristic defamation of the Thebans should make us cautious. He omits the Demaneitos affair. This Athenian general had sought out Conon to have the Persians wage war on the Spartans, only to be recalled and castigated for this unauthorised action.¹⁴⁷ Clearly the Boiotians were not the only Greeks looking to instigate a conflict with the Spartans, as tensions within the Peloponnesian League were rising.

This conforms to Jennifer Roberts' view in *The Plague of War* that the conflicts of the early fourth century were not a separate event, but a continuation of the Peloponnesian War.¹⁴⁸ These conflicts revolved around the same goal as the Peloponnesian War: Spartan dominance and the challenge thereof. That process ended only with their defeat at Leuktra in 371.

In this case the Athenians *and* the Boiotians challenged the Spartans by forging an alliance in 395 (Chapter 3.2.2). Their compact quickly led to war. A string of land battles followed at Haliartos (395) and Koroneia (394) in Boiotia (see Figure 2.2). Neither alliance garnered any momentum. Fortune seemed to smile on the anti-Spartan alliance initially, as Haliartos was a resounding victory. The return of Agesilaos from Asia Minor in 394 beckoned a different course, resulting in the undecisive Battle at Koroneia.¹⁴⁹ Despite some minor successes for the coalition, they were nowhere near bringing the Spartans to their knees. Early attempts at concluding a peace in 392 were fruitless but did lay the groundwork for an important shift: the Persians switched sides. They swung their support from the Athenians to the Spartans.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Hornblower 2011: 219–25; Kagan 1961; Perlman 1964. Bruce 1960 argues the outbreak was accidental and asserts the Spartans later put the blame fully on the Thebans.

¹⁴⁶ Hell. Oxy. 21.1 (Chambers); Xen. Hell. 3.5.4. Hell. Oxy. 21.4 mentions a Spartan envoy to Thebes to propose an allied assembly to vent their grievances and prevent war. Neither Xenophon (Hell. 3.5.5) nor Pausanias (3.9.10) mention it. Buckler and Beck 2008: 44–58 oppose the interpretation of this envoy as an attempt at arbitration.

¹⁴⁷ Simonsen 2009. ¹⁴⁸ Roberts 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Haliartos: Gonzalez Pascual 2007. Buckler and Beck 2008: 69: 'If Coronea constitutes a Spartan victory, one shudders to think what qualifies as a Spartan defeat.'

¹⁵⁰ Xen. Hell. 4.8.14–16. Diod. 14.85.4 remains silent on any debate at Sardis.



Figure 2.2 Places of importance during the Corinthian War.

The tides of war definitively turned in 388. Supported by the resources of the Persian empire, the Spartans took control of Rhodes and the Hellespont. This takeover asphyxiated the Athenian war effort by cutting off their grain supply.¹⁵¹ The return of Tiribazus, a Persian satrap sympathetic to the Spartans who replaced a hostile predecessor, alerted the Spartans to the chance to settle the war in their favour. The early contours of a treaty – perhaps even a separate pact between the Spartans and Persians – were hammered out at the Persian court.¹⁵² Early in 387 Tiribazus and the Spartan ambassador Antalcidas returned to Sardis with the royal edict to be disseminated among the Greeks before the treaty was ratified in Sparta in 387/6. Often referred to as the King's Peace, Xenophon provides us with an epitome of the treaty:¹⁵³

King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia should belong to him, as well as Klazomenai and Cyprus among the islands, and that the other

¹⁵¹ Rhodes: Diod. 14.97; Hellespont: Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.29. ¹⁵² Hyland 2017: 105–6.

¹⁵³ The extent of participating poleis is unknown, but went beyond the major powers. Smaller poleis had equal incentive to represent their interests: Urban 1991: 102; Buckler and Beck 2008: 233.

Greek poleis, both small and great, should be left independent, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros; and these should belong, as of old, to the Athenians. But whichever of the parties does not accept this peace, upon them I will make war, in company with those who desire this arrangement, both by land and by sea, with ships and with money.¹⁵⁴

Stelai with terms of the peace were probably set up around Greece.¹⁵⁵ The treaty was a major victory for the Spartans as most participants consented to the terms. The Argives and Corinthians, however, initially refused to disband their union until Agesilaos' threats of war forced them to reconsider. The Boiotians also posed a problem. Acting as representatives of the *koinon*, the Thebans wanted to swear to the treaty as a common polity. Agesilaos, however, was adamant that every Boiotian polis should be autonomous and represented separately. The Thebans reluctantly reconsidered after threats of a full-blown invasion of their territory. Their allies declined to offer their support, leaving them with no other choice but to adhere to Agesilaos' wishes. Perhaps the Athenians abstained because they retained control over Imbros, Lemnos and Skyros in the treaty, confirmed by the sending of a cleruchy to Lemnos in 386.¹⁵⁶

The King's Peace in 387/6 marked a turning point in Greek history. Acting as proxies for the Persian King, the Spartans championed the peace and made sure its provisions were obeyed by others.¹⁵⁷ In reality the role gave them licence to apply its conditions unilaterally wherever it suited them. Part of the abuse stems from the ambiguity of the term *autonomia*. *Autonomia* meant different things to different people. The term was constructed around consent, meaning it was applied in a manner perceived by the participants (Chapter 3.4.3).¹⁵⁸ The treaty was thus the perfect tool for any prospective hegemon. The Spartans happily abused the peace to enforce its terms on their opponents, such as the Boiotian *koinon* or any hegemonic build-up under Athenian auspices. Other poleis were notoriously exempt from its enforcement, because they either had not submitted

¹⁵⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.31. Whether this is only a preamble has been doubted: Schmidt 1999: 85. Part of the debate centres on the possible inclusion of an explanation of the autonomy clause, like in the Prospectus of the Second Athenian Confederacy (RO 22 ll. 20–4), cf. Cawkwell 2011: 173–5; Jehne 1994: 37–44; Ryder 1965: 122–3.

¹⁵⁵ See RO 20 ll. 21–3: μή παραβαίνο[ν]τας τῶν ἐν ταῖς στήλαις γεγραμμένων [π]ερὶ τῆς ἐρήνης μηδέν.

¹⁵⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.32–3. Cleruchy: IG II² 30; Clinton 2014; Culasso Gastaldi 2011; 2012; Marchiandi 2003. For the islands' importance for the grain supply: Moreno 2007: 102–15, 339.

¹⁵⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 5.1.36; Isoc. 4.175. ¹⁵⁸ Hansen 1995a.

to the treaty or were not regarded as a threat by the Spartans.¹⁵⁹ Peter Hunt astutely observes: ‘These [Common Peace treaties] had as their real and stated goal the establishment of peace in the whole Greek world. But it was always peace on the terms of one state or another; that a legal analogy was used did not mean that the result did not involve winners and losers.’¹⁶⁰ The *koinon* had the honour of being one of the first victims of Spartan guardianship of *autonomia*.¹⁶¹ Other victims were soon to follow.

Although the Corinthian War ended with the *political* dissolution of the Boiotian *koinon*, the clipping of its institutional wing did not stop quotidian interactions such as religious celebrations and trade.¹⁶² The King’s Peace did sever the Atheno-Boiotian alliance. Its abrogation meant the Boiotian poleis could pursue a different course. Some scholars argue a Spartan-Theban alliance was formalised, as the restoration of Plataia and the independence of Oropos facilitated the re-emergence of Leontiades and his partisans to political prominence.¹⁶³ That is contradicted by the Spartans’ Olynthian campaign in 382 (Chapter 3.2.3). These scholars mostly base themselves on a reference in Plutarch’s *Pelopidas* (4.4–5). He mentions a Theban contingent, including Epameinondas and Pelopidas, participating in Spartan actions against Mantinea. However, they ignore Plutarch’s aims in writing this piece. He wished to portray Epameinondas as the ideal philosopher-warrior but was less interested in recording actual history.¹⁶⁴ Another text frequently brought to bear is Isocrates’ *Plataicus*, where he mentions the Theban betrayal of the Athenians after the Corinthian War. Yet his indignation about this betrayal is tenuous. The pamphlet is filled with factual errors and was written in a spirit of antagonism towards the neighbours in the late 370s after the destruction of Plataia.¹⁶⁵ It was written from the perspective of Plataians, who may have viewed events in a different light following the destruction of their town in 373. They may have wished to castigate the Thebans before an Athenian audience, if it even was delivered before a larger audience.

¹⁵⁹ Mackil 2013: 64–5 argues the Peace was not the ‘death knell’ for koina. E.g., the Achaians were unaffected: Beck 2001: 363; Larsen 1968: 171–2. For the Common Peace as a concept: Low 2012; Raaflaub 2010.

¹⁶⁰ Hunt 2010: 236.

¹⁶¹ It is referred to as a prominent example of Sparta’s guardianship of the peace: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.16.

¹⁶² Mackil 2013: 65; Schachter 2016b.

¹⁶³ Buckler 1980a collects the previous scholarship. Plataia: Chapter 4.1.3; Oropos’ independence: Chapter 4.1.2.

¹⁶⁴ Buckler 1980a. Plutarch contradicts Xenophon and Diodorus (Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.2–6; Diod. 15.5.3–5, 12.1–2).

¹⁶⁵ Queyrel-Bottineau 2014a.

Admittedly, a contingent was present at Mantinea, but rather as pro-Spartan parts of Theban society. Their personal relations led to their participation, rather than as official representatives of the polis.¹⁶⁶ The situation resembles Thermopylai, where Theban elements contributed in an ‘unofficial’ capacity (Chapter 2.3).

The King’s Peace abolished the Athenian-Boiotian alliance, but did not erase all traces of interregional collaboration. The ascension of Sparta as enforcer of the King’s Peace, combined with the impotence of its Theban enemies to (re)coagulate the notion of a shared Boiotianness into an alliance, left the Athenians and Boiotians at the mercy of Spartan indifference, dislike or – worse – hatred. The abuse of the peace treaty was bound to lead to resistance in the disaffected poleis of mainland Greece and the Aegean, which it did, but with unforeseen consequences.

In 383 the Olynthians extended their influence over the Chalkidian peninsula. In response, their troubled neighbours appealed to Sparta for help. According to the envoys, the Spartans were obliged to help on account of their previous intervention in Boiotia. They signalled that the Olynthians made overtures to the Athenians and Thebans for an alliance, making intervention necessary in their opinion. Although this alliance never materialised, its possibility was enough to warrant a large-scale expedition to hinder Olynthian expansion (Chapter 3.2.3).¹⁶⁷ Passive resistance to the campaign came from the Boiotian *koinon*. Its citizens were prohibited from participating in the Spartan campaign, a decree presumably issued under the auspices of the anti-Spartan leader Ismenias and his partisans.¹⁶⁸ The decree inadvertently destabilised the relationship with the Spartans more than envisioned. Indifference was one thing, blatant disobedience from an ally another. Thus the Spartans planned to remove the more obstinate segments of Boiotian society.

The opportunity came during the march to Olynthos in 382. The Spartan expeditionary force under Phoibidas encamped near Thebes. Leontiades, leader of the pro-Spartan faction in Thebes, proposed to betray the Cadmeia to Phoibidas during a religious festival. Spartan troops entered the city and Leontiades presented the coup as a *fait accompli* to the Theban council. His scheme soon found widespread support. The council decided

¹⁶⁶ Both *hetariae* remained influential and struggled for dominance as both Ismenias and Leontiades occupied the office of polemarch in 382: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.32–4.

¹⁶⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.15–16, 20–4.

¹⁶⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.27. This would violate the terms of Spartan-Theban alliance: Gehrke 1985: 175–7.

to arrest Ismenias as a warmonger detrimental to the well-being of the polis. Ismenias received a sham trial and was afterwards executed because of his alleged medism, proving such accusations continued to wield political influence.¹⁶⁹ Preferring exile over death, 300 of his closest followers fled the city, mostly to Athens, handing Thebes over to a Spartan clique.¹⁷⁰

Other Boiotian poleis felt the Lacedaimonian hammer as well. Thespiiai and Plataia were ruled by pro-Spartan regimes. Tanagra may have had a garrison, since it had a harmost in 377 and probably some years before. Thebes turned into an unlikely haven for Boiotian democrats with the pro-Spartan oligarchies controlling so many poleis.¹⁷¹ Those left fled to Athens, where they rallied around the leadership of Androkleidas, one of Ismenias' faithful.¹⁷²

After the takeover of Boiotia the Spartans were at the apogee of their power. But they wasted any remaining goodwill from the Peloponnesian War with their coup in Thebes. Outrage and indignation dominated the responses to the capture of the Cadmeia. Most Greeks – and Spartans for that matter – were quick to condemn Phoibidas' actions. Agesilaos managed to shield him from severe punishment and even got him appointed as the harmost of Thespiiai.¹⁷³ The widespread condemnation of the action is not surprising. A takeover of a polis through subterfuge was not uncommon and would not have caused such affront. But this seizure was not a military operation, nor a clandestine endeavour.¹⁷⁴ The real transgression was the violation of the King's Peace, by interfering in the independence of a Greek polis. The Spartans aggravated their offence by breaking the covenant of gods overseeing the treaty.¹⁷⁵

The pro-Spartan junta in Thebes was short-lived. After three years of planning, shielded by Athenian protection, Theban exiles arranged to overthrow the regime, contriving with discontent citizens still living in

¹⁶⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.26–31; Plut. *Pel.* 5. Trial: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.35–6; Plut. *Pel.* 5.3; *de gen. Soc.* 576a; Landucci Gattinoni 2000; Lenfant 2011.

¹⁷⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.27. The Thebans now supported Spartan campaigns against Olynthus: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.37; 40–1.

¹⁷¹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.10; 14–16; 46–9. Wickersham 2007 for Spartan garrisons in Boiotia. The Spartan occupation must have been a harrowing time for those with the wrong sympathies: *IThesp* 999, a gravestone from ca. 500 that was overturned and reused for the burial of a Spartan. Ma 2016: 175 n. 22 suggests a deliberate attempt to desecrate the plot of an exiled family from Thespiiai.

¹⁷² Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.31. Leontiades ordered the assassination of Androkleidas in Athens: Plut. *Pel.* 6.3.

¹⁷³ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.32, 4.41; Diod. 15.20. Xenophon could not hide his contempt for Agesilaos' protection of Phoibidas and left it out of his encomium, unlike Plutarch: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1; Plut. *Ages.* 23.3–6.

¹⁷⁴ Nevin 2017: 156–9. ¹⁷⁵ Low 2007: 94–5.

the city.¹⁷⁶ In December 379 a group of exiles entered the city and assassinated the *polemarchs*. With the support of the hoplites and cavalry, the insurgents succeeded in accomplishing the coup. The new regime re-instituted the *boiotarchia*, replacing the incumbent *polemarchs*. Despite the office's limitations – only Theban citizens became *boiotarchs* – it signalled the intentions of reforming the *koinon*.¹⁷⁷

Help was underway from Athens while Spartan attempts to quell the uprising led to nothing.¹⁷⁸ Apprehensive of retaliation, the Athenians sent ambassadors to other poleis to persuade them to join a common cause for liberty.¹⁷⁹ The first to respond were the Chians, followed by the Byzantines, Mytileneans and Rhodians. The Athenians then convened a common council for these allies to join. Treaties with the Byzantines and Thebans were formed in rapid succession, modelled after the earlier alliances with the Chians and Mytileneans.¹⁸⁰ In the Theban treaty, a stele of the allies on the Akropolis is mentioned, presumably a reference to the terms of the earlier compacts Diodorus mentions. An additional clause refers to oaths taken by envoys, seventeen in total, twelve Athenians and five representatives of the allies, probably the island poleis Diodorus enumerated, whom he describes as allies of the Thebans.¹⁸¹ This suggests an early inception of the Second Athenian Confederacy to prevent further Spartan aggression, with Athenian-Theban collaboration at its heart.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Liddel 2020: 186–7 relates how Pelopidas derided Athenian decrees, but still used them as examples worthy of emulation for the Theban exiles.

¹⁷⁷ The major sources for the coup are: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1–12; Plut. *Pel.* 7–13; *De gen. Soc.* 25–34. On the re-establishment of the *boiotarchia*: Buckler and Beck 2008: 87–98. The new Theban constitution is debated: Rhodes 2016b calls it an *oligarchia isonomos*; Cartledge 2020: 184–9 argues for a democracy from 379 onwards.

¹⁷⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.9–13. In Xenophon the children of pro-Spartan Thebans were slaughtered. It seems to demonstrate the Thebans' amorality, juxtaposed with Athenian righteousness, implying the former were unfit to rule (Pownall 2004: 65–71). Diodorus (Diod. 15.25–7) omits the episode.

¹⁷⁹ Diod. 15.28.2–4. Xenophon ignores the Confederacy's inception, but it was a purposeful omission as he wished to diminish Athenian help in the rise of Theban power: Pownall 2004: 65–71.

¹⁸⁰ *IG II² 41 = Harding 34* (ll. 4–7: ἔναι Βυζα[νίος Ἀθηναίων] συμμάχος κ[αί] τῶν ἄλλων συ[μμάχων] τὴν [δὲ] συμμαχίαν ἔ]ναι αὐτ[οῖς] καθάπερ Χίοις]. The reference to other allies suggests the alliance was concluded before the Byzantine pact. The fragmentary state of the stone prevents any securer dating. Pritchett published an honorary decree for Euryphron in connection with Athenian envoys for the alliance: *SEG* 32.50.

¹⁸¹ Diod. 15.28.4; *IG II² 40 = Harding 33*. The treaty is very fragmentary, but for this interpretation: Buckler 1971b; Burnett 1962.

¹⁸² A decree of Methymna's admission into the Confederacy supports an early inception of the alliances. The reference to *synedroi* implies a formalised structure for prospective members: *RO* 23 ll. 11–18.

The new network proved its worth three months later (378). Sphodrias, the Spartan harmost at Thespiiai, decided to march his troops to Attica during the night to raid the Piraeus. His decision has puzzled scholars as the Piraeus was impossible to reach in a night's march. Xenophon's use of the verb προσποιέω suggests Sphodrias pretended to go one place but went elsewhere. Buckler therefore argues the harbour was never the goal.¹⁸³ Its purpose was to intimidate the Athenians in the wake of their diplomatic endeavours with the Thebans. Kleombrotos could have instigated the attack, encouraged by Athenian signs of hesitation over a looming conflict. A reminder of Spartan power could have swayed the mood in favour of less hawkish Athenians, especially with Spartan embassies present in the city.¹⁸⁴

But the botched raid had the opposite effect.¹⁸⁵ Compounding matters was the subsequent treatment of Sphodrias. His trial in absentia suggests the Spartans were keen to de-escalate the situation. His acquittal, probably through the negotiation of Kleombrotos and Agesilaos, sent a different signal.¹⁸⁶ This lack of concern for justice gave the Athenians the ammunition needed to proclaim a violation of the King's Peace, the perfect pretext to expand their nexus of alliances. From the seed of six poleis blossomed a multilateral coalition comprising more than forty poleis. A massive stele, sometimes hailed as the most interesting epigraphic legacy of fourth-century Athens, records the extended invitation to other poleis.¹⁸⁷

There was no denying the Confederacy was now at war with the Spartans. War clouds were gathering above the Peloponnese but drifted towards Boiotia in spring 378. A full army of Spartan allies headed to Boiotia, led by Agesilaos, who came out of retirement for the occasion to

¹⁸³ Buckler and Beck 2008: 79–84.

¹⁸⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.20–4; Diod. 15.29. Buckler and Beck 2008: 79–84. Ancient authors imply the Thebans bribed Sphodrias to coax him into the attack: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.20; Plut. *Pel.* 14.3–4; Hodkinson 2007. Other ancient authors blame it on incompetence: Callisthenes FGrH 125 F 9.

¹⁸⁵ I follow Diodorus' chronology on the foundation of the Confederacy. He places its inception in 377/6 after the liberation of Thebes but before Sphodrias' raid. His absolute dating is wrong, but the chronology of events is plausible: Buckler and Beck 2008: 71–8; Cargill 1981: 57–60; Cawkwell 2011: 192–211; Dreher 1990. Supporting this reconstruction is the Athenian navy's expansion: Clark 1990. Others argue the Spartan aggression prompted the formation of the Confederacy: Badian 1995: 89–90; Hamilton 1989; Howen 2008; Rice 1975; RO 22, p. 100. But that offers no plausible explanation for Sphodrias' raid, except Theban maliciousness or incompetence, a rather cynical picture. Kallet-Marx 1985 dates the inception before Thebes' liberation.

¹⁸⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.21–4; Diod. 15.29.6; Plut. *Ages.* 24; 26.1.

¹⁸⁷ RO 22. ll. 23–5: ἐπι δὲ τ[οῖς] αὐτοῖς ἐφ' οἷσπερ Χίοι καὶ Θηβαῖοι κα[ὶ] οἱ ἄλλοι σύμμαχοι.

punish his Theban nemesis.¹⁸⁸ The ensuing conflict, called the Boiotian Wars, proved the wisdom of Theban-Athenian collaboration. Their combined efforts kept the Spartans from defeating the Thebans and established a common front in Boiotia.¹⁸⁹ The war ended in 375 after the Spartans suffered significant losses on land at Tegyra and against the navies of the Confederacy at Naxos and Alyzia.¹⁹⁰ Xenophon claims the Boiotians afterwards marched against their neighbours and subdued them, but this is to be rejected, since this is a process that likely took years rather than weeks, as Emily Mackil notes.¹⁹¹ This process involved the removal of pro-Spartan elements from poleis such as Plataia and Thespiiai to establish a secure perimeter against possible Spartan incursions.

In autumn 375 the Persian King summoned the Greeks for a renewal of the King's Peace, a welcome reprieve for the warring parties.¹⁹² The defeats had drained the Spartan motivation for war and the Athenians were buckling under financial pressure, exacerbated by the Theban reluctance to contribute to the maintenance of the fleet. The Thebans were especially unwilling to conclude a treaty because of their recent successes in Boiotia. The treaty nevertheless happened, recognising the Spartans as hegemons on land and Athenians on the sea.¹⁹³

Xenophon attributes the treaty to a growing fear of Theban power among the Athenians and Spartans. However, he mostly divulges his dislike for the Thebans and retrojects a later attitude among segments of Spartan and Athenian society. This part of the *Hellenica* was probably written after the Battle of Mantinea and the rise of Theban power, thereby distorting Xenophon's views of these years.¹⁹⁴ This allows his moralistic tendencies to emerge and exculpate both parties from enacting an imperialistic peace that only served their purposes. This mirrors the later developments of the Spartan-Athenian collaboration against the Thebans,

¹⁸⁸ Another reason was the repatriation of the pro-Spartan exiles in Thebes: Xen. *Ages.* 2.21–2; *Hell.* 5.4.13; 4.35; Cartledge 1987: 229–32.

¹⁸⁹ Munn 1993: 129–60 summarises the Boiotian War (378–375).

¹⁹⁰ Plut. *Pel.* 16–17.10; *Ages.* 27.3; Diod. Sic. 15.81.2. For Tegyra: Buckler and Beck 2008: 99–110. For the naval battles: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.61–5; Diod. 15.34.4–35.2.

¹⁹¹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.63 Mackil 2013: 70. For the removal of pro-Spartan elements: González 1986.

¹⁹² Buckler 1971a. A Cult to Peace (*Eirene*) was established in Athens: Parker 1996: 230.

¹⁹³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.1; Diod. 15.38.2; Philochoros FGrH 328 F 151. Xenophon puts the onus on the Athenians and omits the Persian king, contrary to Diodorus and Philochoros. He is probably shielding his beloved Spartans from involvement with the King: Gray 1980. Diodorus mentions a Theban desire to sign the peace on behalf of the *koinon*, but conflates it with the peace of 371: Rhodes 2010: 96 contra Parker 2001.

¹⁹⁴ Dillery 1995: 13–14.

implying the latter's hunger for power was ultimately the cause of the rapprochement between former enemies (Chapter 3.1.3). Lingering grudges over the lack of Theban financial contributions may have been a factor, but that did not cause friction between the Athenians and their Theban allies. The Thebans justifiably refused because they were exempted from paying *syntaxeis*, unlike other members of the alliance.¹⁹⁵ Their financial situation was also dire: there was no financial infrastructure to maintain their army *and* contribute to the fleet.¹⁹⁶ Nor was the re-establishment of the *koinon* a frightening prospect. In 395 the alliance had been with the *koinon*. A resuscitation of Theban power in the region was not a surprise considering the re-establishment of the *boiotarcheia* after the expulsion of the Spartans.

An exciting find from Thebes sheds new light on the contemporary neighbourly relations. It concerns an alliance between the Thebans and the Histiaians on Euboea and can – with some minor reservations – be dated to 377/6.¹⁹⁷ The text runs as follows:

 [- - - - -?μὲ ἐξέμεν καταλ]-
 ύεσθαι [τὸ] ἢ πόλεμον ἡσιτιαί-
 ας χωρὶς Θεβαίων· ἡγεμονία-
 ν δὲ ἔμεν τὸ πολέμο Θεβαίων καὶ
 κατὰ γᾶν καὶ κὰτ θάλατταν
vacat

4

[-----]
 [It will not be allowed for?]
 the Histiaeans to abandon (?) the war
 without the Thebans. The leadership
 of the war will belong to the Thebans both
 by land and by sea. (trans. Aravantinos and Papazarkadas)

Histiaia was the only Euboian polis to remain loyal to the Spartans after the inception of the Second Athenian Confederacy. After an uprising of Theban prisoners in 378 the polis revolted.¹⁹⁸ The Thebans here claim a

¹⁹⁵ Dreher 1995: 84–6. The introduction of *syntaxeis* can probably be dated to 373: Theopompus FGrH 115 F 98.

¹⁹⁶ Schachter 2016a: 113–32.

¹⁹⁷ Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012. I follow the editors' dating of the treaty to 377/6 based on the Ionic alphabet and the reference to Thebans rather than Boiotians. A date after 371 cannot be excluded; *BE* 2013 no. 170; Mackil 2013: 69 n. 63; Gartland 2013.

¹⁹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56; Diod. 15.30.

hierarchical role over their Euboian neighbour, but in 375 the Histaiaans joined the Athenian Confederacy, possibly at their instigation.¹⁹⁹ One could cynically argue that Histiata's inclusion was a restriction of Theban influence. But why would the Athenians alienate their strongest ally at this point? They had blatantly violated the terms themselves during Timotheos' campaign in the Ionian Sea, making it unlikely they could evoke the King's Peace to force the Thebans to give up Histiata.²⁰⁰ If Theban assertiveness was a predicament, it was a firmly kept secret. Of course the Athenians were not above maintaining double standards, but it would have been counterproductive, especially if it strengthened the Thebans' resolve *not* to pay for the allied fleet.

The renewal of the King's Peace in 375 brought a (short) period of tranquillity to the Greek world.²⁰¹ Shortly after the peace the Spartans removed their garrisons from Boiotia either forcibly by treaty or due to a lack of resources to maintain forces abroad.²⁰² Their removal offered the Thebans the needed breathing space to settle matters in Boiotia. Lessons from the past taught them the fragility of an egalitarian *koinon* rife with internecine struggles. They could not rely on the goodwill of their neighbours. Straightforward domination, however, could curtail their perfidious Boiotian neighbours.

In the following years, several troublesome Boiotian poleis witnessed this change first-hand, as the Thebans debilitated them one by one. Thespians was 'συντελεῖν μόνον εἰς τὰς Θήβας'.²⁰³ This expression has been interpreted as a dissolution of the Thespian polity, their political independence taken away and their territory turned into an appendix of the Theban *chora*. After the Battle of Leuktra in 371 followed another round of punishments, this time leaving no stone unturned.²⁰⁴ The Plataians found themselves in a familiar fate, fleeing to Athens, with their town razed to the ground save for its sanctuaries (Chapter 4.1.3). Other poleis, such as Orchomenos and Oropos, eluded this fate: the Theban attempt in

¹⁹⁹ RO 22 l. 114: [Ἐσ]τιαῖς; BE 2013 p. 473; Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012: 247 n. 38. Theban role in joining the Confederacy: Picard 1979: 235.

²⁰⁰ Timotheos' campaign: RO 24.

²⁰¹ Whether the peace was as transient as Xenophon describes is irrelevant here. He is followed by Buckler and Beck 2008: 79–84. Cawkwell 1963a argues the peace lasted until 373.

²⁰² Diod. 15.38.2 writes the peace stipulated the removal of foreign garrisons. ²⁰³ Isoc. 14.9.

²⁰⁴ Bakhuizen 1994 treats this phenomenon with an impressive analysis, but leaves little room for the continued existence of individual poleis: Gonzalez Pascual 2006: 34–8; Mackil 2013: 296. Schachter 2016a: 114; Snodgrass 2016 show that the literary sources exaggerated the destruction of the town (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1; 3.5; Diod. 15.46.6; 51.3; Isoc. 6.27; Dem. 16.4; 25; 28).

Orchomenos failed, whereas the Athenians took over Oropos sometime in 374 or 373 (Chapter 4.1.2).

These changes in the political landscape had the potential to break the Athenian-Theban alliance. The Thebans were *stricto sensu* in violation of the King's Peace by their intervention in Boiotian poleis. Scholars therefore point to 373 as a breaking point in the relationship as the Athenians could not accept such blatant violations in their role as *prostates* of *autonomia*.²⁰⁵ But this line of reasoning can be countered. Neither of the assailed poleis were members of the Confederacy and were excluded from the peace of 375. If the peace was as short-lived as Xenophon describes, its effects would have worn out by the time of the Theban assaults on the Boiotian poleis. Moreover, the Athenians were equally infringing on the *autonomia* of poleis. Stasis was rife in several poleis in the Adriatic, such as Corcyra, and the Athenians had no qualms intervening there.²⁰⁶ Although the Athenians were not above hypocrisy, naively accepting their self-image as incongruent with the Thebans' actions betrays a veneration for the Athenians rather than historical reality. Even if the alliance was strained, it remained intact: epigraphic evidence proves the Thebans were involved in the Confederacy after these events.²⁰⁷

Xenophon claims that disaffection with the Thebans prompted the Athenians to sue for peace with the Spartans in 371. Athenian ambassadors invited the Thebans to participate in the peace conference in Sparta.²⁰⁸ In my opinion, this demonstrates several things. First, the Theban actions against Thespias and Plataia were prompted because the latter clung to their Spartan alliance. Subduing them could be viewed as part of the renewed conflict after 373. Second, the despatch of an Athenian embassy stresses the importance of the Thebans within the Confederacy. Their inclusion was regarded as vital to a successful compact.

Yet actions spoke louder than words. Whereas Xenophon is right in saying the Athenian attitude towards the Thebans changed – they did not 'commend' (ἐπῆνυον) them anymore – they certainly did not intervene on behalf of the beleaguered Boiotian poleis. They chose the middle way: to neither support nor oppose the Thebans. This indecisiveness shows the demos was equally hesitant to raise the war cry against the northern neighbours, despite the overtones of the Plataians and their supporters such as Isocrates. Involving the Thebans in the peace treaty was paramount

²⁰⁵ Cloché 1934: 74; Dreher 1995: 32–4; Judeich 1927: 183; MacDowell 2009: 104–6.

²⁰⁶ Buckler 2003: 265–8. ²⁰⁷ RO 29 l.15. ²⁰⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1–2.

to maintaining their alliance, and presumably to tame their expansionist ambitions in Boiotia.

The peace conference turned out to be a heated meeting. Xenophon provides an epitome of the speeches given by the Athenian ambassadors Kallias, Autokles and Kallistratos, who voice their concerns over Spartan and Theban conduct. They present the Athenians as just guardians of the *autonomia* clause and the King's Peace, but without necessarily choosing sides (Chapter 3.1.3).²⁰⁹ Despite the reservations on each side, a treaty was finalised. Each city was to confirm the compact by taking oaths on their own behalf, but a change of heart in the Theban camp imploded the negotiations. The issue was a semantic one. The Thebans wished to take the oath on behalf of the *Boiotoi*, rather than the Thebans. This led to their exclusion from the pact.²¹⁰ According to Xenophon, the Athenians en masse were elated at this course, hoping the subsequent clash would decimate the Thebans.²¹¹

The Spartans were disgruntled, the Athenians stood aloof and the Thebans were waiting for the expected hammering from the Spartans, who viewed themselves as guarantors of the *autonomia* and the incompatibility thereof – in their eyes – with the *koinon*. The Athenians found themselves in an enviable position. If the Spartans marched against the Thebans, the latter's hopes of complete domination over Boiotia could be curbed. At the same time, the Athenians would continue to benefit from their alliance to keep Sparta at an appropriate distance. They had achieved their goal: a renewed dominance of the Aegean with the added benefit of having powerful friends in Thebes.

The Spartan army under Kleombrotos marched from Phocis to Boiotia hoping to punish the Thebans, only to find an unexpected humiliating defeat on the fields of Leuktra in 371.²¹² The Thebans shocked the Greek world and shattered any remaining notion of Spartan invincibility.²¹³ News of the victory reached Athens, with a further request for aid. Instead of a warm welcome, the herald was met with indifference. Normal courtesies

²⁰⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.9–17.

²¹⁰ Mosley 1972; Buckler and Beck 2008: 41 argue the Thebans hoped to acquire de jure recognition of their position, with the other parties fearing to lose the progress made at the conference.

²¹¹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.18–20 probably exaggerates the point by using *δεκατεύω*, a verb closely connected to the ritual destruction of a city and used in connection to medism in the fourth century; Steinbock 2013: 122–4.

²¹² Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.3; Plut. *Ages.* 2–3. For his route to Leuktra: Buckler 1996.

²¹³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.14–15; 27; Diod. *Sic.* 15.51–7; Plut. *Pel.* 20–3, *Ages.* 28.5–6; Arist. *Pol.* 1269a34–1271b19; Buckler and Beck 2008: 111–26.

were not extended to him, nor was there any response to the call for help.²¹⁴

In the wake of Leuktra a new conference was convened. Attempts to broker a peace between the warring parties broke down when the Thebans abstained from attending and were automatically excluded.²¹⁵ Perhaps they were disillusioned with the recent course of events and decided Spartan stubbornness would not be subdued by one military setback. The former treaty was hardly changed. This time the Athenians were guardians of the peace. A more significant alteration was the compulsory clause: if any signatory violated the treaty, the others were obliged to defend the wronged.

Indifferent to the new treaty, the Thebans went about their business. The Thespians had proven themselves unreliable allies at Leuktra, and punishment was meted out accordingly. A year later, it was the Orchomenians' turn. This time the carrot was a better weapon than the stick. Instead of subjugation, the Orchomenians were reckoned to belong to the territory of the allies. It is a rather curious phrase, but implies they became integrated into the *koinon*.²¹⁶ The Thebans also looked across their borders: the Euboian poleis changed their allegiance after Leuktra, undermining Athenian prestige and endangering the latter's grasp over Oropos.²¹⁷

Confidence in Thebes was rising and with disgruntled Peloponnesian communities rebelling and seeking help from Boiotia, Spartan power in the peninsula quickly eroded.²¹⁸ They forged lasting ties with these communities, if the proxeny award for Timeas son of Cheirikrates, a Laconian, belongs to this period.²¹⁹ Most telling was the re-establishment of an independent Messene.²²⁰ The radical recalibration of the political landscape inevitably had repercussions for the Athenian-Theban relationship. The defeat of Sparta effectively ended the Peloponnesian War, taking a major force out of the equation.²²¹ The ascension of the Thebans as the champions against Spartan aggression placed the Athenians in a

²¹⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.19–20. The Thebans sent a similar request to Jason of Pherai: Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.20–1.

²¹⁵ Nor was there representation from the King: Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.1–3; 36; Buckler 1980b: 68–9; Jehne 1994: 74–9.

²¹⁶ Diod. 15.57.1: διόπερ τοὺς μὲν Ὀρχομενίους εἰς τὴν τῶν συμμάχων χώραν κατέταξαν, cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.10. It implies a similar status to Thespias' in 373.

²¹⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.23; Ages. 2.24. Buckler and Beck 2008: 134 n. 44 claim these were defensive alliances, but Rhodes 2010: 252 challenges that notion.

²¹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.30–2; Hamilton 1991: 227–8. ²¹⁹ Mackil 2008.

²²⁰ Diod. 15.66.1; Nep. *Ep.* 8.4; Plut. *Ages.* 34.1; *Pel.* 24.9; Paus. 4.26.6–28.1; Papalexandrou 2014 for ritual connections between Thebes and Messene.

²²¹ Roberts 2017.

predicament. The situation no longer allowed them to bide their time and strengthen their position while the Thebans and Spartans wore each other down. Their dilemma was whether ‘they must . . . forgo their dreams of hegemony or to devote their energies to maintain the balance of power in Greece’.²²² For the moment they chose neither and the Theban alliance remained in place.

The invasion of the Peloponnese in 370/69 proved a turning point. It was a coup de grâce for the fledging Spartan ambitions in the Greek world. For the Thebans, the first foray outside of Boiotia and Phocis in decades was a novelty and demonstrated their new-found confidence. Their assertiveness in the Peloponnese validated Athenian trepidations over the *koinon*’s growing power. Their estrangement reached its apex when the Athenians agreed to an alliance with the Spartans in 369. It was then, and only then, that the neighbourly collaboration finally disintegrated (Chapter 3.1.3).²²³

2.6 An Intermezzo of Uneasy Enmity (369–346)

With a few rigorous strokes, the Thebans repainted the canvas of the Greek political world, placing themselves alongside the Spartans and Athenians in the annals of Greek history. Textbooks characteristically restrict the zenith of Theban power to the period between Leuktra and Mantinea, following Xenophon in finishing his *Hellenica* after the Battle of Mantinea in 362. Scholars have been inclined to follow this assessment.²²⁴ One reason is the heroization of the brilliant generals Pelopidas and Epameinondas, who are ascribed such importance that their deaths inaugurated an inescapable decline for the Thebans. Their brilliance is undeniable, as was their influence on Theban plans. But the currents of history are not just shaped by

²²² Buckler 2003: 310.

²²³ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1; Diod. 15.67.1. The Spartans were not as enthusiastically received as Xenophon writes: Fisher 1994. Buckler and Beck 2008; Hornblower 2011: 249, 33–43 argue the alliance broke down after the conferences in 371. Dreher 2017: 119 places Thebes’ departure from the Second Athenian Confederacy in 374, but their involvement in the Athenian Confederacy in 372 contradicts it.

²²⁴ Xen. 7.5.27. Not all ancient historians shared this vision. Others preferred the Sacred War (357–346) as a turning point: Callisthenes FGrH 124 T27; Ephoros FGrH 70 F9; Shrimpton 1971: 311. Even Buckler 1980b, a noted ‘boiotarch’, is guilty of the chronological limitation and the heroization. Hornblower 2011 puts his chapter on Philip right after the Battle of Mantinea in 362. Worthington 2014: 9 suggests the rebuilt Athenian economy aimed to thwart Theban ambitions. Schachter 2016a: 113–32 prolongs the period of Theban domination into the 350s.

individuals. These ripple its surface, whereas the larger waves are created by long-term developments, such as geography, biology and sociology, and continue unabated.²²⁵ That is not a call towards determinism, but merely to point out that the right conditions were in place for these individuals to flourish.²²⁶ Thebes survived the deaths of its eminent statesmen through other talented leaders such as Pammenes. A perfectly timed demographic boom ensured that the Thebans could benefit from these leaders.²²⁷ At the zenith of their power, they both incorporated the fertile lands of the Parasopia and subdued the recalcitrant neighbours who had thwarted a Theban-led *koinon* in previous times. Fortifications arose at Siphai, Koroneia, Eleutherai and Haliartos, among other places, solidifying the grasp of the *koinon* over these areas. These fortresses also offered protection for its populace due to the horrifying experiences of the recurrent invasions during the Boiotian Wars.²²⁸

Their rise in standing after Leuktra meant the only *true* competitor for Theban dominance over Greece was Athens. Sparta, despite its august hegemonic role in the fourth century, was suffering a population decline, making its leading position increasingly untenable after 371.²²⁹ Athens had suffered severe losses in the Peloponnesian War that could have struck down any polis. Yet the population decrease had unforeseen advantages, providing stability and equality, preventing a collapse similar to Sparta's. This stability enabled them to remain a force throughout the fourth century.²³⁰ Their biggest obstacle to influence and a good reputation was their irresponsible pursuit to recapture Amphipolis, which clouded their judgement and put a severe strain on their resources and the relationship with their allies.²³¹

The deck was therefore stacked against a benign neighbourly co-existence. Yet there is remarkably little hostility between the Athenians and Thebans over a prolonged period. A look at the years between the breakdown of the alliance (369) and the anti-Macedonian alliance (339/8)

²²⁵ Horden and Purcell 2000 call these the Brownian motions.

²²⁶ See Ephoros' remark that the Boiotians, despite their natural advantages, were unable to hold on to the hegemony for long: Ephoros FGrH 70 F119 = Str. 9.2.2–5.

²²⁷ Bintliff 1997; 1999; 2005; Bintliff, Howard and Snodgrass 2007; Bintliff et al. 2017; Hansen 2006; 2008.

²²⁸ Buckler 1980b: 19: 'an unmitigated terror that threatened to destroy nearly all they possessed'. Fossey 2019: 172–207. Koroneia: Diod. 16.58.1. Siphai: Schwandner 1977. Chorsiai: Buesing and Buesing-Kolbe 1972. Haliartos: Austin 1925/6: 82–4; *Teiresias* 47.2 (2017). Perhaps Tanagra: Bintliff et al. 2004. Eleutherai: Fachard et al. 2020a.

²²⁹ Arist. *Pol.* 2.1270a; Cartledge 1979: 307–18. Cawkwell 1983 dissents from this view.

²³⁰ Akrigg 2019: 243–4. ²³¹ Badian 1995.

reveals there were few occasions they were at loggerheads. Mostly, their threats remained in the realm of words, rather than swords.

That does not mean there were no conflicts. The deaths of rulers in Macedonia and Thessaly left a power vacuum the Thebans were eager to fill. Their presence in Macedonia was strengthened through personal ties and shielded against an increased presence of Athenians in the region, who still relished the possibility of capturing Amphipolis.²³² Convulsions in the Peloponnese led to Theban interventions there. To settle matters in the long term, a peace conference was convened in Delphi in 368. The negotiations between the Thebans and Spartans broke down, however, over the acknowledgement of Messenian independence.²³³

The next year the Thebans took recourse to the best option to solidify their role in Greece: a Common Peace. They were determined to have the Persian King endorse it. An affirmation of the *prostates'* role would work wonders for their standing. They would replace the Spartans and Athenians, and any notion of dissolving the *koinon* and the rebuttal of de jure recognition of their claim over Boiotia would be dismissed. No longer would the *autonomia* clause be abused by external powers to intervene in Boiotian affairs. Informing their allies of their intentions – and thereby comply with the stipulations of their alliances that prevented unilateral decision-taking – a peace conference was convened beyond the confines of Greece. Instead, it took place in Susa, deep inside the Persian Empire.²³⁴

What set this conference apart from earlier conferences was the Theban role, their assertiveness reflected in the terms presented to the King. This time there was no mention of dissolving the *koinon*, nor of a division of hegemonies. Instead, other powers needed to be curtailed, which meant insisting on Messenian independence to diminish the vestiges of Spartan hegemony in the Peloponnese. The naval ambitions of the Athenians had long disturbed the King and these were now openly condemned, leading to the demand for their navy to be beached.²³⁵ Under these terms, the King proclaimed his support for a renewal of the peace under Theban aegis. Predictably, both the Spartans and Athenians disagreed.

²³² Plut. *Pel.* 26.4–27.2; Diod. 15.67.4; 71.1. Lasting ties: Athenaios of Macedon: *SEG* 34.355; *RO* p. 218.

²³³ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.28–33.

²³⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.33; Lenfant 2011; Tuci 2019. Plut. *Pel.* 30 has the Thebans sending ambassadors to the King after the Spartans and Athenians, but considering their leading role, they would have taken charge in these matters. Diod. 15.83.1 only mentions the peace.

²³⁵ Hornblower 2011: 259 states the Thebans replied to Iphikrates and Autokles' actions in the north.

To finalise the treaty another conference was convened in Thebes (367/6), where the oath-taking would take place. The conference turned into a diplomatic fiasco. The Arcadians walked out, while other representatives bade the Thebans to send delegations to their respective cities, should they wish to obtain their oaths. The Thebans willingly obliged, only to be confronted with refusal from the Corinthians, the first stop on their travels. Other poleis swiftly followed. Their refusal, according to Xenophon, ended the Theban hopes of gaining the hegemony over Greece (diplomatically).²³⁶

Scholars have been quick to denote Pelopidas' endeavours as a diplomatic debacle. It was not as successful as hoped, with the obstreperous Athenians and Spartans unwilling to accede to the treaty, and their allies following suit.²³⁷ The repeated abuses of the King's Peace by both Athens and Sparta had transformed the protection the Common Peace offered to smaller poleis into a hollow shell, incapable of preventing any disruptive action by the hegemons.²³⁸ It must have affronted the Thebans to be refused this position by other Greeks, but it did not stop them from exploring other venues to promulgate their credentials as leaders of the Greeks. At Delphi their increased presence followed the footsteps of previous hegemons eager to display their dominance (Chapter 5.1.3). Another, more subtle, propagandistic tool was the possible adaptation of the Ionic script to symbolise their new leading role in the Greek world as a Panhellenic power.²³⁹

A year later (366/5) another ratification of 'Pelopidas' Peace' was explored, after the Oropians had thrown in their lot with the Thebans at the expense of the Athenians (Chapter 4.1.2). A peace was concluded, with the Corinthians and others adhering to the terms of 367. That these Peloponnesian allies were 'allowed' to accept the peace demonstrated the Spartans' weakness.²⁴⁰ The Athenians joined too, allegedly obtaining a royal acknowledgement of their claim to Amphipolis, perhaps in exchange

²³⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.33–40.

²³⁷ The perfect example of this sentiment was the execution of Timagoras, one of the Athenian ambassadors, for accepting Pelopidas' proposals: Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.37–8; Plut. *Pel.* 30; Dem. 19.31, 137, 191.

²³⁸ Sterling 2004 argues the peace was rejected because the King's role as guarantor lay at the root of the problem, not Theban hegemony. Stylianou 1998: 485–9 accepts the treaty's ratification, but that seems implausible as the separate Corinthian-Theban peace shortly after (Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.6–7) contradicts it.

²³⁹ Papazarkadas 2016: 136–9. ²⁴⁰ Bayliss 2017.

for rescinding their claims on Oropos.²⁴¹ The Persian King had rebellious satraps on his mind. Satisfying the Athenians could keep them out of his domains, an acute problem as events in Samos (366) proved.²⁴² The Spartans were again isolated over their refusal to acknowledge Messenia's independence.

The peace finally gave the Thebans the recognition they were looking for. One threat remained: the Athenians – with their navy, access to the grain baskets of the Pontic region and protection of their Confederacy. Events at Oropos opened a window of opportunity for the *koinon* when Athenian allies refused to confront the Thebans.²⁴³ The allies' reluctance showed the fickleness of the Confederacy, especially since the establishment of an Athenian cleruchy in Samos (366) evoked memories of the fifth-century empire among the members of the alliance.²⁴⁴ The pact's primary aim to protect against Spartan aggression seemed a waning memory in light of Sparta's fortunes. The Spartan-Athenian alliance of 369 undermined a cornerstone of the Confederacy's existence, and the time was ripe for the Boiotians to deliver a final blow to its foundations. A plan was conceived to launch a massive fleet of a hundred ships to tour the Aegean and convince members of the Confederacy to leave the alliance. Judging from their extensive contemporary proxeny network (see [Figure 2.3](#)), the Boiotians were serious about creating a large naval network around the Aegean.²⁴⁵ The people of Rhodes, Chios and Byzantium were specifically targeted to assist the scheme because of their wealth and strategic locations.²⁴⁶

What set this endeavour apart is its execution. Whereas the Spartans were brought to their knees militarily, this time diplomacy and symbolism

²⁴¹ Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.6–11. Only Diod. 15.76.3 mentions Persian and Athenian involvement. This discrepancy has sparked debate. I follow Breebaart 1962: 44–5; Heskell 1997: 101–8; Hornblower 2011: 259–60; Jehne 1994: 86–8 contra Buckler 2003: 330; Ryder 1965: 83, 137–9. An argument for Athenian inclusion is Epameinondas' tour of the Aegean in 364. Laches, an Athenian admiral, refused to engage with the Boiotians, perhaps restricted by the terms of the Peace: Diod. 15.79.1. The claim to Amphipolis is mentioned by Dem. 9.16.

²⁴² Knoepfler 2012.

²⁴³ It may have given the impetus for the construction of the fleet: Knoepfler 2012.

²⁴⁴ Ar. *Rhet.* 1384 b32; SEG 45.1162; IG II² 108.

²⁴⁵ Buckler and Beck 2008: 180–95, 199–210; Knoepfler 1978; Mackil 2008; Roesch 1984b; Vlachogianni 2004–9. Fossey 2014: 3–4, 17–22 offers unconvincing criticism of the restorations of these proxeny decrees. Visits to Herakleia Pontike: Justin 16.4.3; Jehne 1999: 340. Delos: Tuplin 2005: 55–8; Keos (RO 31) can possibly be added.

²⁴⁶ Diod. 15.78.4–79.1. Diodorus places the voyage in 364/3 and scholars debate whether the decision was made in 366. Buckler 1980b: 161–9 argues for an earlier date; Ruzicka 1998: 61 n. 8 with an extensive bibliography. Mackil 2008: 181 is sceptical about establishing chronological certainty.



Figure 2.3 Boiotian maritime network.

were the weapon of choice. The Common Peace of 366/5 tied the Athenians to that pact, but their power base remained intact. Their ambitious, expansionist nature made them a perpetual danger to the Boiotians' security, even with the Spartans subdued. By demolishing the foundation of their power, the Confederacy, and threatening their food supply by detaching Byzantium from it, the Boiotians could seriously weaken their biggest obstacle to dominance. The aim was not the future subjugation of the Athenians. Despite Epameinondas' alleged claims to bring the Akropolis' Propylaia to the Cadmeia and Isocrates' alarmist message of a Theban hegemony by land and sea, the plan was probably to neutralise the Athenians, thereby ensuring their continued obedience to the Common Peace.²⁴⁷ The best method was not challenging them to a naval battle, but subtly utilising Boiotian connections throughout the Aegean and using persuasion to erode the Athenians' power. Martin Dreher's investigation of the Confederacy demonstrates most of the defections from this alliance were not necessarily the result of 'anti-Athenian' attitudes.²⁴⁸ These mostly

²⁴⁷ Aeschin. 2.105; Isoc. 5.53. Stylianou 1998: 494–5 points out Epameinondas' rhetoric was exaggerated in Athenian sources.

²⁴⁸ Dreher 2017.

existed among poleis *forcefully* brought into the Confederacy. Among voluntary members, there were few defections. This strengthens my point: that it was a Boiotian attempt to showcase their suitability as a leader, rather than foment anti-Athenian rebellions.

For the *koinon* with its limited economic resources, working within the confines of the Common Peace was a safer way than sinking large amounts of money into a fleet. Scholars previously looked eastwards for this endeavour's financier, but the involvement of the Persian King has since been nuanced or even rejected.²⁴⁹ Recent investigations of Persian behaviour vis-à-vis the Greeks in the preceding period advocate a different view of the monarch's interventions in Greece.²⁵⁰ Occupied with rebellious satraps and limited resources, the Persian King was probably less inclined to invest substantial sums in boosting the Boiotians, as his sponsorship of the Common Peace of 366/5 brought the desired stability on the edges of his empire. This was the main royal ideology and the impetus behind this institution. That goal was already achieved with the Athenians voluntarily joining that pact. This lack of Persian financial firepower explains the ephemeral nature of the Boiotian fleet, which disappears from our sources after Diodorus' mention. He never refers to a large fleet when writing about Epameinondas' voyage, such as when he encounters the Athenian admiral Laches. This lends credence to the possibility that the fleet of a hundred ships was never realised, but constituted a smaller flotilla, perhaps buttressed by ships borrowed from the Rhodians, Chians and Byzantines.²⁵¹ A fleet of around forty ships, which was not unconceivable for the Thebans to construct, sufficed for the ambassadorial voyage envisioned. Under cover of the Peace they would be safe from Athenian forces, while this arrangement granted the financial flexibility to wage war on other fronts. If successful, it would be a masterstroke, adding further prestige to the Thebans' role as *prostates* and demonstrating to the Greeks other ways of maintaining stability and peace that did not require violations of the Common Peace.²⁵²

The measure of the scheme's success has sparked intense debate. The debate revolves around Diodorus' enigmatic phrasing of Epameinondas'

²⁴⁹ Persian sponsorship: Buckler 1980b: 161; Carrata Thomas 1952: 22–4; Fortina 1958: 80–1. For the criticism: Stylianou 1998: 495. Nuanced: Schachter 2014b. Rejected: van Wijk 2019.

²⁵⁰ Hyland 2017.

²⁵¹ Van Wijk 2019. The renting of ships is not unprecedented: Hdt. 6.89. Diodorus: Λάχητα μὲν τὸν Ἀθηναίων στρατηγόν, ἔχοντα στόλον ἄξιόλογον καὶ διακωλύειν τοὺς Θηβαίους ἀπεσταλμένοι, καταπληγόμενος καὶ ἀποπλευῖσαι συναναγκάσας

²⁵² Low 2018. Dem. 9.21–31 implicitly acknowledges the hegemony of the Thebans.

accomplishments (Diod. 15.79.1: ἰδίας τὰς πόλεις τοῖς Θηβαίοις ἐποίησεν). Modern scholarship is divided into three camps. One side argues that the voyage achieved little and was a failure.²⁵³ On the other side, there are scholars who argue for a full-blown revolt against the Athenians.²⁵⁴ A moderate position grants a minimal amount of success, believing the Byzantines revolted against the Athenians, but debates whether further rebellions took place.²⁵⁵

Although Epameinondas' actions were intended to undermine the Athenians' base of power, they were not inherently bellicose in nature. There was no aggression involved nor were his actions overt acts of war. The scheme aimed at dislodging members from the Athenian Confederacy. Its aim was to demonstrate to other Greeks that unlike the previous purveyors of the Common Peace, they acted according to the stipulations of that treaty and were fit to act as its guarantor.²⁵⁶ The measure of success depends on one's conception of its objectives. If the intention was to create a Theban thalassocracy to replace the Athenian Confederacy, then obviously it failed, despite efforts to create a lasting network.²⁵⁷ If the objective was to deprive the Athenians of access to the Hellespont and wreak havoc within their alliance, then the voyage was successful. The latter represented a massive boost to the Theban cause in the atomised political landscape of the fourth century.

In 364 the Boiotians solved matters closer to home. Despite the death of Pelopidas, interventions in Thessaly ensured the Thebans of a majority of votes on the Amphictyonic Council, while a plot instigated by discontent elements in Orchomenos led to a subjugation of this recalcitrant polis.²⁵⁸ Their hands free of troublesome factions at home, the Thebans again turned towards the Peloponnese. Their involvement led to the Battle of Mantinea in 362. It pitted two large coalitions against each other, with the Athenians and Spartans on one side, and the Thebans on the other, constituting one of the few clashes between the two neighbours on a battlefield. It was the greatest battle the Greek world (hitherto) ever

²⁵³ Buckler and Beck 2008: 199–210; Cawkwell 2011: 299–333; Stylianou 1998: 495; Tejada 2015.

²⁵⁴ Ruzicka 1998. ²⁵⁵ Hornblower 2011: 262; Russell 2016.

²⁵⁶ If Justin's account (16.4.3) of the Theban visit to Herakleia Pontike can be trusted, it means the Thebans refrained from intervening in poleis suffering from *stasis*, in accordance with the terms of the peace.

²⁵⁷ Gartland 2013 for the numismatic efforts to create this network.

²⁵⁸ Thessaly: Buckler 1980b: 175–82. Orchomenos: Diod. 15.79.3–6; Dem. 20.109; Paus. 9.15.3. They paint a gruesome picture, but the repercussions may have been more lenient: Schachter 2016a: 114.

witnessed and many lives were lost, including that of Epameinondas. As so often in the fragmented political landscape of the fourth century, it solved preciously little.²⁵⁹

An atmosphere of exhaustion took over the Greek world after the battle. Beaten down and war weary, all warring parties except the Spartans renewed the Common Peace in 362/1.²⁶⁰ Most of the terms stayed the same. What changed was the explicit injunction prohibiting the King from intervening in Greek affairs, if the enigmatic decree from Argos known as the Greek response to the Satraps' Revolt can be trusted. It stipulates that all adherents to the peace shall act in unison, should the King or anybody from his territory move against the signees. In exchange, his claims to Asia Minor are acknowledged.²⁶¹ There appears to have been no *single* polis claiming to champion the treaty. Instead, an extensive pact was created that included the Athenians, Thebans and several other larger poleis, except the Spartans. The Peloponnese and Arcadia remained a hotbed of conflict, proving the battle of Mantinea had not alleviated any of the problems haunting the Greek political landscape earlier.²⁶²

The next decade (350s) formed a watershed. One factor is the succession crises in Thrace and Macedonia, prompting Athenian intervention.²⁶³ Thracian matters were settled in a satisfactory matter, but in Macedonia the young king Philip hoodwinked the Athenians into a deal to safeguard his inheritance by promising to hand Amphipolis to them in due course. Two years later (357) their naivety was exposed when the Macedonians occupied Amphipolis and did not surrender it, starting the War on Amphipolis.²⁶⁴ A second issue in 357 was the cessation of two members of the Confederacy, Chios and Rhodes, which were supported by the Byzantines and Coans in their attempts to break away, the Social War. Deciding the war in the rebels' favour was the threat of an all-out war from the Persian King, who grew weary of Athenian marauding in the eastern

²⁵⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.22–5; Diod. 15.85–7; Plut. *Mor.* 194C; 761D; Paus. 8.11.5–10; Buckler 1980b: 216–19.

²⁶⁰ Diod. 15.89.

²⁶¹ RO 42. That is how I interpret: 'ἐξομεν καὶ ἡμεῖς [ἐς βα]σιλέα' (ll. 11–12). For questions about its authenticity: Tejada 2022.

²⁶² In 361 the Thebans again intervened in Arcadia. I follow Diodorus' dating, though others date it prior to the Battle of Mantinea: Buckler and Beck 2008: 252.

²⁶³ Heskell 1996.

²⁶⁴ Dem. 23.163–73; RO 47; Amphipolis: Diod. Sic. 16.2.1; 2.4–3.7; Theopompos FGrH 115 F 30, 42; Dem. 23.116; [Dem.] 7.27; Aeschin. 2.33; 70; 3.54; Isoc. 5.2.

Aegean.²⁶⁵ A third problem was the outbreak of the Third Sacred War, which pitted the Thebans as leaders of the Amphictyony against the Phocians and their Spartan and Athenian allies. This conflict proved to be the downfall of the Thebans, as it drained their resources and opened the way for Philip of Macedon to enter the fray in Central Greece as champion of Apollo and Delphi.²⁶⁶ The conflict raged for eleven years and ended in the Peace of Philokrates (357–346), but the Athenians and Thebans never engaged in any direct fights.

The one exception between Mantinea and Chaironeia was a struggle in Euboia. Two opposing factions on the island pulled in both powers to settle a civil war. In a remarkably quick campaign the Athenians emerged victorious, resulting in the Euboians' withdrawal from their alliance with the Boiotians.²⁶⁷ Nicholas Cross blames the demise of the Boiotian influence here and in the Peloponnese on the lack of lasting personal ties with the new allies, but this overlooks the divergent goals in different war theatres.²⁶⁸ The Boiotians realised the need to create enduring relationships, as shown by their maritime endeavour. In the Peloponnese, they aimed to create stable economic links with the Peloponnesian poleis. Their allies started minting on the same Aeginetan standard after Leuktra.²⁶⁹ Simon Hornblower echoes Ephoros' statement about the Boiotian pedigree by stating that 'Theban cultural baggage was so limited in comparison to the Spartan *agoge* and Athenian *paideia*, leaving preciously little but medism and treachery', yet their dedications at Delphi counter that notion (Chapter 5.1.3).²⁷⁰

An overview of thirty years of Athenian-Boiotian hostility from Mantinea to Chaironeia is brief. It constitutes one pitched battle, a diplomatic naval campaign, a small skirmishing campaign in Euboia and the arbitrated dispute over Oropos in 366. For two main Greek powers,

²⁶⁵ Diod. 16.7.3–4; 21.1–22.2. Whether Cos was a member of the Confederacy has been doubted: Sherwin-White 1978: 42–3 contra Cargill 1981.

²⁶⁶ For the outbreak of this war: Buckler 1989; Franchi 2016: 94–138. On its nomenclature: Robertson 1978; Davies 1994; Pownall 1998. McInerney 1999: 165–72 views it as a local conflict that was later embellished. Howe 2003 connects the conflicts over pasture land to the need for sacrificial victims for the cult.

²⁶⁷ Diod. 16.7.2; Dem. 8.74; 21.174; Aeschin. 3.85. Diodorus misdates these events, but that does not dismiss their historicity: RO 48. For Athenian-Euboian relations in the fourth century: Knoepfler 1995. After the war, the Athenians attempted to forge ties with the new leaders, as demonstrated by the proxeny decree for Herakleodoros and two of his friends (IG II³ 1.2.398): Knoepfler 2016a: 140–55.

²⁶⁸ Cross 2017. ²⁶⁹ Grandjean 2003: 49–89.

²⁷⁰ Hornblower 2011: 256; Ephoros FGrH 70 F119 (Str. 9.2.2–5).

especially neighbours who were supposedly natural enemies, that appears relatively minor. This takes on added importance in light of the wars that *were* fought during this time. The Sacred War offered ample opportunities for hostilities, considering the Thebans were hamstrung in Phocis. The Thebans could have similarly profited from their alliance with Philip of Macedon to challenge an Athenian Confederacy without some of its strongest members. Yet neither pounced on the opportunity. Instead, they focused on other more pressing issues – for the Boiotians the matters in Phocis; for the Athenians in the Aegean – with little interest in exploiting the other’s weaknesses. It is a stern reminder that the neighbourly relations were more complex than a dualistic ‘friendly’ or ‘hostile’.

It is tempting to view this inchoate warring as the result of a short-lived Theban hegemony, with the Battle of Mantinea quelling Theban hegemonial aspirations. The death of the charismatic leaders Pelopidas (364) and Epameinondas (362) exposed the inherent weaknesses of the Theban hegemony: the lack of a sustainable institutional framework to integrate their allies.²⁷¹ This argument revolves around an inscription detailing payments of war contributions to the Thebans during the Third Sacred War and the mention of Byzantine *synedroi* bringing these funds.²⁷² There are grounds to believe there was no extensive network akin to the Delian League in place, but some formal mechanism must have directed these funds, or made decisions pertinent to the allies.²⁷³ The most convincing support for this view comes from Albert Schachter, who argues the Thebans’ insatiable obsession to finally subdue the Phocians led to a long-drawn-out war that unveiled their Achilles’ heel: monetary penury.²⁷⁴ Its solution was manpower, as the Boiotians repeatedly ‘mercenaryed’ their troops to willing rebellious satraps or the Persian king. Schachter also manages to ‘push’ the period of Boiotian domination into the 350s. Mantinea had a negligible effect on the Greek political landscape and did little to alter Thebes’ position as the dominant military force. Xenophon’s remark that Mantinea put the Greek world into more disarray was therefore not unfounded.²⁷⁵

The Boiotians remained the strongest force in Greece, despite the death of their most brilliant leaders. Boiotia was under Theban sway and the Delphic Amphictyony firmly under their control. The time was ripe to

²⁷¹ Buckler and Beck 2008: 223–77; Cartledge 2000: 310; Cross 2017; Jehne 1999: 328–44.

²⁷² RO 57 ll. 11–15: σύνεδροι Βυζαντίων [εἰνίξαν].

²⁷³ Lewis 1990; Swoboda 1900; Stylianos 1998: 412–13; RO *ad loc.*

²⁷⁴ Schachter 2016a: 113–32. ²⁷⁵ Xen. Hell. 7.5.27: ἀκρισία δὲ καὶ παραχῆ.

remove the final obstacle to domination and overshadow Athens. But instead of cementing their status as a unilateral *superpower*, the *koinon*'s endeavours in the 350s devolved into a quagmire that drained their finances. They fought an indefatigable foe whose income seemed endless, the Phocians. This opened the door for Philip of Macedon, who came to dominate the Greek political landscape in the following decades. His meteoric rise to power eventually opened the way for an Atheno-Theban reconciliation.

2.7 A Brave New World: Macedon Enters the Fray (346–323)

From the ashes of the Third Sacred War arose the Macedonian phoenix under Philip. The energetic king turned his kingdom around, transforming it from a backwater exploited by external political actors into a political and military powerhouse.²⁷⁶ His victory in the Sacred War confirmed his star was rising, with the Boiotians and Athenians taking a back seat. During the conflict and its immediate aftermath, the king foreshadowed the silhouettes of his later strategy: a carrot for the Athenians, but a stick for the Boiotians.²⁷⁷ On the one hand, he offered a bilateral alliance and peace treaty to the Athenians in 348, surprising even his staunchest opponents.²⁷⁸ The king's reasons for peace can only be guessed at, but perhaps it was to isolate the Thebans from the Athenians and prevent a rapprochement between the two strongest poleis in Greece.²⁷⁹ On the other hand, he ignored requests for help from Thebes in 347 – both the king and the *koinon* were fighting on the side of the Amphictyony against the Phocians and their allies – and was apathetic to their concerns.²⁸⁰ Instead, he let them revel in their discomfort, allowing Tilphousa and Chorsiai to be transformed into Phocian bulwarks in western Boiotia before sending a small expeditionary force to aid the *koinon*.²⁸¹ Perhaps it was due to personal reasons after his period of ransom in Thebes as Diodorus writes that the king enjoyed seeing the victors of Leuktra humbled.²⁸²

The Thebans proved their resilience by defeating the Phocians at Abai, prompting the latter to call upon their hitherto tepid allies to become more

²⁷⁶ Gabriel 2010; Worthington 2008a. ²⁷⁷ Worthington 2008a : 84–101, 142.

²⁷⁸ Aeschin. 2.12–17 with Cawkwell 1978a; Ellis 1976: 101–3; 1982; Worthington 2008a: 82–5.

²⁷⁹ Carlier 1990: 157–60; Sawada 1993 contra Ryder 1994: 244. ²⁸⁰ Diod. 16.58.1–4.

²⁸¹ Diod. 16.33.4; 56.2; 58.1; Dem. 3.27; 19.141; 148; Theopompos *FGrHist* 115 F 167. Kallet-Marx 1989.

²⁸² Diod. 16.58.3.



Figure 2.4 Important places during Third Sacred War.

involved in exchange for the control of three strategically located towns occupying the Thermopylai pass (see Figure 2.4).²⁸³ Both the Athenians and Spartans complied and sent contingents to block the passage. Diplomatic exchanges between the Macedonians and Athenians, and other belligerents, nevertheless continued. Numerous embassies went back and forth, only to be played by the Macedonian king, who meanwhile expanded his territories in Thrace.

The source material for these embassies is problematic. The most extensive sources, Aeschines and Demosthenes, provide information in speeches from later years when the treaty itself was highly controversial and castigated. Narrative histories are lacking.²⁸⁴ What seems certain is that the final blow came when news reached the Athenian embassies of the Phocians' unconditional surrender to Philip. The king's takeover of the Thermopylai pass sent Athens into a frenzy, and precautions were made for an impending invasion.²⁸⁵

Demosthenes and other like-minded citizens saw the war clouds gathering. Others, such as Aeschines, believed the end of the war could

²⁸³ Diod. 16.58; 16.33.4; 35.3; 56.1–2.

²⁸⁴ Buckler 2000: 121–32, 148–54; Harris 1995: 52–62; Efstathiou 2004.

²⁸⁵ Justin 8.5.3; Dem. 19.86; 125. The decree preserved in Dem. 18.37 is unauthentic: Canevaro 2013: 243–8.

effectuate a positive outcome. They hoped that Philip would act as a harbinger of justice to the Thebans by restoring Plataia and other Boiotian poleis. Their beliefs were fuelled by calculations of interest, believing the Boiotians were becoming too powerful and arrogant, providing sufficient motives for Philip to punish them, rather than the Phocians. That certain segments of Athenian society honestly believed the king would negate his oaths shows amoral calculations were not considered implausible in interstate contexts. But the accuracy of these claims is doubtful.²⁸⁶ The Athenians finally assented to the terms of the Peace of Philokrates in 346 after realising the Phocian cause was lost. The Peace was a negative agreement, a mechanism to guarantee the parties involved refrained from action.²⁸⁷ The Phocians received a separate treaty and were punished accordingly, but not to a draconian extent.²⁸⁸ One of the punishments was the Phocians' loss of their seat on the Delphic Amphictyony, which shifted to Philip. Combined with his earlier votes obtained through his Thessalian takeover, the king was in control of the Amphictyonic Council, a honour that previously rested with the Boiotians.

In the following years the Macedonian threat withered but in 344 the atmosphere became increasingly bellicose. Philip's influence in Greece was steadily growing and Demosthenes jostled for influence in the Athenian Assembly, hoping to thwart the king's process.²⁸⁹ Confronted with continued obstinate Athenian behaviour, Philip decided a different tactic was needed to weaken them. Instead of retaliating with brute force, he offered to modify the current peace treaty by transforming it into a *common peace* in 344.²⁹⁰

Philip had studied his political history well. The *synedrion* of the Athenian Confederacy preferred the common peace option. Its implementation would have created a multilateral peace that severed the hierarchical ties between Athens and its allies, replacing it with a direct peace between

²⁸⁶ Dem. 5.10; 19.112. Ellis 1982; Konecny et al. 2013: 32 accept this claim but its veracity is refuted by Cawkwell 1978b. Another fantasy was the exchange of Euboea for Amphipolis: Aeschin. 2.119; Dem. 19.22; 220; 326.

²⁸⁷ Low 2012: 124.

²⁸⁸ Typaldou-Fakiris 2004: 326 contra Buckler 2000: 132. *RO* 67 is an account that details the Phocian repayments, which were gradually reduced from sixty talents in 343 to ten in 337.

²⁸⁹ For Buckler 2003: 455 the embassy amounted to nothing but an Athenian-Messenian alliance with possible other participants contradicts this: *IG* II³ 1; Lambert 2012: 184–5.

²⁹⁰ Sealey 1993: 172 dates the proposal to 343, but see Carlier 1990: 185–6. The Athenians were *not* behind the proposal: Cawkwell 1963b. Philip's possible motive could have been the Persian embassies in Greece, soliciting help for the expedition against Egypt: Philochoros FGrH 328 F 157, Diod. 16.44; Ruzicka 2012: 177–98.

Philip and the members. This isolated the Athenians from their defensive network. The proposal ultimately broke down because of unrealistic counter-proposals by the Athenians.²⁹¹ Anti-Macedonian politicians were now gearing up for war and their influence gradually grew.²⁹² Demosthenes, for instance, spoke out against the peace proposal. His *Second Philippic* warns of Philip's danger and juxtaposed Athens with poleis such as Thebes, selfishly aiding foreign powers as they had done in the Persian Wars.²⁹³

Demosthenes' premonition of war became reality in the years after 343. Philip's subjugation of Thrace and the attempts to replace Euboian leadership with friendly regimes put the Peace of Philokrates under further strain.²⁹⁴ Around this time Demosthenes started to make conciliatory remarks about the Boiotians.²⁹⁵ Perhaps he aimed to include them in a grand alliance against the Macedonians. His mission achieved little, with only former enemies like the Byzantines and Kallias of Chalkis welcoming the call.²⁹⁶ Shortly afterwards Demosthenes delivered his *Fourth Philippic*, reiterating the need for a broad anti-Macedonian alliance.²⁹⁷ War waged on in the Pontic area, with the Athenians supporting their beleaguered Byzantine allies. The final straw came in 340: Philip captured a massive Athenian grain fleet, prompting them to officially declare war upon the king.²⁹⁸

Matters grew worse when an Amphictyonic Council meeting in spring 339 jeopardised the peace between the Athenians and Boiotians. The cause was the Athenian dedication of golden shields at the Apollo temple in Delphi, meant to embarrass the Boiotians ([Chapter 5.1.3](#)).²⁹⁹ The

²⁹¹ The additions to Philip's proposal were brought forward by Hegesippus, an ally of Demosthenes. His speech is not extant, but the terms are enumerated in Dem. 7.18–25.

²⁹² Worthington 2013: 188–99. ²⁹³ Dem. 6.9–12.

²⁹⁴ Demosthenes' ally Hegesippus presumably proposed the decree to enact penalties for attacks on Eretria (RO 69) to mollify the Euboians at this time (Knoepfler 2016a: 132–40). Knoepfler dates the decree to 343. Perhaps the Athenian-Eretrian alliance stems from that year: IG II³ I 429.

²⁹⁵ In his *On the Chersonese* Demosthenes states Philip is misleading the Thebans (Dem. 8.63); in the *Third Philippic* he warns that Philip's actions in Euboea have a negative effect on Athens and Thebes (Dem. 9.27).

²⁹⁶ Dem. 9.71; 10.32; 18.94, 244, 302; Diod. 16.74.1, 77.2; Philochoros FGrH 328 F 157; Aeschin. 3.238.

²⁹⁷ MacDowell 2009: 354–5; Trevett 2011; Worthington 1991 for its historicity.

²⁹⁸ Theopompos FGrHist 115 F 292; Philochoros FGrH 328 F 55, 162; Dem. 18.72, 87–94, 139, 240–3; Diod. 16.77.2; Justin 9.1.5–8. Cawkwell 1978c: 138, 179 views the capture of the fleet as a consequence of the declaration of war, not its cause.

²⁹⁹ Aeschin. 3.116.

Amphissans officially brought the charges forward, but the impetus for this action probably came from their Theban allies.³⁰⁰ Despite the initial bleak outlook for a rapprochement, the dispute inadvertently opened the possibility to achieve Demosthenes' long cherished wish: a neighbourly alliance.

Rather than denying the charge, Aeschines, one of the Athenian delegates, turned the tables on the Amphissans. He indicated the Amphissans' use of the sacred plains near Cirrha to the *amphictyons*, whose inspection of the plains confirmed his claims. Faced with an ultimatum by the council, the Amphissans assumed their Boiotian allies would shield them from harm. But they abstained from intervention. In the following meeting Philip was appointed leader of the Amphictyonic army. Both the Boiotians and Athenians refrained from attending: the Boiotians because they had no desire to participate in a vote to declare war on their allies, the Athenians because Demosthenes persuaded them to abstain due to the possible detrimental consequences for the relationship with the Boiotians.³⁰¹

The stars aligned perfectly for a rapprochement. An alliance proper, however, was still in the works, despite some reconciliatory gestures. Philip had set his sights on invading Attica and from his base in Elateia made overtures to his Boiotian allies to join in the invasion or stay aloof. Terrified at this prospect, the Athenians sent delegations to Thebes to convince them to *join* in an alliance against Philip. Much to their surprise, and after significant concessions, the Boiotian council preferred an alliance with the Athenians over supporting their Macedonian ally ([Chapter 3.4.4](#)).³⁰² Instead of an unimpeded march to intimidate the unrepentant Athenians, Philip now faced a coalition of Greek poleis led by the two strongest powers in mainland Greece: the Boiotians and Athenians. In the initial phase of the war the coalition forces achieved some minor successes.³⁰³ Undeterred, but weary of the costs, Philip sent embassies to both Thebes and Athens to solve the situation diplomatically.³⁰⁴ These attempts were fruitless and the

³⁰⁰ Londey 1990. Ryder 2000: 80 blames Philip for the outbreak of the war but he was engaged in Thrace and Scythia when the council convened, making it unlikely: Roisman 2006: 133–45.

³⁰¹ Aeschin. 3.128–9.

³⁰² Perhaps the Boiotian proxeny grant to two Athenians fits into this context: Knoepfler 1978. Londey 1979 suggested a later date, but see *Teiresias Epigraphica* 1980: 17, no. 54. Perhaps *IEleusis* 70 and 71, two Eleusinian decrees honouring Thebans for their active participation in the Dionysia, fit as well? *AIO ad loc* acknowledges that the lettering can comfortably be put c. 340.

³⁰³ Dem. 18. 216–17. An Athenian *taxiarch* may have been honoured for his participation in these campaigns: *IG II²* 1155; Lambert 2015.

³⁰⁴ Aeschin. 3.148; Theopompos FGrHist 115 F 328.

warring parties called out for more support. Supporting Philip were the Phocians and Thessalians. The anti-Macedonian coalition mustered the help of eight other polities.³⁰⁵ The armies met on the fields of Chaironeia.³⁰⁶ The result was a grand victory for Philip, who now dominated Greece, marking a significant turning point in Greek history (Chapter 5.2.9).³⁰⁷ The battle's result formed a watershed in Athens' foreign policy. Treaties dominate the epigraphical landscape prior to the battle, but the post-338 policy aimed at cementing ties with individuals to further their goals rather than bilateralism.³⁰⁸

Poleis were now no longer completely independent. While the leaders in Sparta, Athens and Thebes always factored the Persians into their deliberations, they were still capable of overthrowing incumbent hegemon through collaborations with other powers.³⁰⁹ The Macedonian victory ended that.³¹⁰ The power of Macedon was too large to be toppled, even with the support of all the Greek poleis. As before, the fragmented political landscape prevented a unified front. The coming of Macedon may have even been celebrated by some poleis, who had suffered from the oppressive hegemon in Central Greece and the Peloponnese.

Obviously, that had repercussions for the Athenians and Boiotians. Philip wasted no time in settling the score after his victory. First on the list were his former allies in Thebes. They were forced to ransom the bodies of their fallen at Chaironeia. The city was garrisoned by a Macedonian force, its pro-Macedonian exiles restored and a small clique installed to rule the *koinon*. The *koinon* was not dissolved, but Theban influence was gravely reduced by the (proposed) restoration of Plataia, the reinstatement of Orchomenos and Thespiiai, and the independence of Oropos.³¹¹ The Athenians, however, received reconciliations. The bodies of their fallen were restituted for free and their claims to islands such as Lemnos

³⁰⁵ Dem. 18.156, 158, 218–22. Athens' reputation for twice supporting the sacrilegious trespassers of Delphi's laws tempered any enthusiasm, as did war-weariness: Worthington 2013: 246.

³⁰⁶ Gonzalez Pascual 2020.

³⁰⁷ Dem. 16.169–79; Aeschin. 3.142–51; Diod. 16.85.5–86.6. Turning point: Lyc. 1.50; Justin 9.3.11. Rzepka 2018 suggests the alliance was initially more successful.

³⁰⁸ Lambert 2012: 377–86.

³⁰⁹ Rop 2019 shows Greco-Persian relations were closer than normally assumed.

³¹⁰ I do not aim to portray the loss at Chaironeia as the polis' death-knell. Greece under Macedonian rule was not some destitute place. Some poleis even flourished: Akrigg 2019; Kalliontzis 2021.

³¹¹ Diod. 16.87.3; Paus. 4.27.9–10, 9.1.8, 6.5, 37.8; [Dem.] 1.9; Justin 9.4.6–10, 11.3.8; Dem. 18.282, 284; Aeschin. 3.227. Oropos, contrary to Pausanias, was not restored to the Athenians at this time: Knoepfler 2001b: 371–85.

acknowledged. In return, the Confederacy needed to be disbanded. Both powers were reduced to their core, rendering any possible collaboration feebler in the face of Macedonian power.

The disparate treatment is striking but makes sense when considering Philip's aims. The Boiotians had broken their treaty as allies and their 'immoral' behaviour deserved punishment. The garrison in Thebes controlled one of the main axes of transportation in Greece. The Athenians were simply an enemy who deserved lenient treatment. Concessions could sway them into reconciliation, as cooperation was more desirable than resistance, especially as their navy could be vital for an upcoming invasion of Persia.³¹² The Athenians thanked Philip by dedicating statues of Philip and his son Alexander in the Agora, but at the same time appointed Demosthenes to deliver the Funeral Oration of the fallen.³¹³

Nevertheless, it was imperative for Philip to consolidate his gains. To accomplish this he reverted to a familiar mechanism: the Common Peace. This time it encompassed all the Greeks while its guarantor was Philip, not the Persian King. Philip went a step further and created a grand alliance, the League of Corinth, ostensibly brought into life to combat the Persians.³¹⁴ The king was crowned the hegemon of this new Greek army. Under Macedonian tutelage that most elusive of Panhellenist goals had been fulfilled: the Greeks united to combat the common foe.³¹⁵

Philip's intentions were abruptly interrupted by his premature death in 336, leaving the Macedonian throne to his young son Alexander.³¹⁶ For many Greek poleis, including Athens and Thebes, this was an opportune moment to voice their dismay over the new political order and remove the Macedonians as hegemon from the League of Corinth. But the embers of freedom soon died out. Rumours of an impending rebellion prompted Alexander to move his army into Greece and many poleis acknowledged Alexander as the king. The new king then convened a meeting at Corinth with the members of the League to appoint him his father's successor in the Greek war against Persia for revenge and *eleutheria*.

³¹² Cawkwell 1978c: 168 points to Boiotian interactions with the Persians as an explanation for Philip's harshness. Yet the Athenians were also in contact with the Persian King, making it a moot point.

³¹³ *Tod* II no. 180.

³¹⁴ Diod. 16.89.1–3, 91.2; Justin. 9.5.1–7; [Dem.] 17; Ryder 1976. Its terms are reconstructed from a fragmentary treaty in Athens: *RO* 76. Worthington 2008b argued this might record a bilateral Athenian-Macedonian peace.

³¹⁵ Yates 2019: 202–48. ³¹⁶ Diod. 17.2–3; Justin 11.2.4–6; Arr. 1.1–3; Plut. *Alex.* 14.1–5.

News of the young king's alleged death in 335, however, sparked a new revolutionary fire. Fomenting the rebellious sentiment in Thebes was the return of anti-Macedonian exiles from Athens.³¹⁷ The Athenians, spurred on by Demosthenes – and possibly Persian gold – sent money and weapons to the insurgents. The old alliance was rekindled, with the Assembly voting to forge a defensive alliance with the Thebans.³¹⁸ It was a presumptuous move, as Alexander was still alive. The king initially intended to be lenient. He needed all the troops he could gather for a campaign against Persia and the Thebans were a crack force. But the Thebans desired no reconciliation and hoped to incite further rebellion by appealing to all Greeks to join them in their struggle for *eleutheria* and to topple the tyrant.³¹⁹ With that, the Thebans struck at the core of the message Philip and Alexander espoused at Corinth.

Anxious that the scourge of rebellion would spread, the king swiftly moved his armies into Greece. His rapid approach froze the Athenians, who refrained from militarily supporting the Thebans. Meanwhile, the young king defeated the Thebans in battle, entered the city and razed it to the ground, except for its sanctuaries. Women were raped, children enslaved, and the men slaughtered. Few escaped the rampage, a prerogative left to *proxenoi* of the Macedonians and priests and priestesses. Those with other sympathies who managed to escape found their way to Athens or the Persian army.³²⁰ Thebes' destruction radically recalibrated the political and physical landscape of Boiotia and Greece. Some may have rejoiced due to their previous difficult relationship with the Thebans, but for a majority of Greece, there was little to be celebrated.³²¹ Central Greece entered a new era, and it was a Macedonian one.

According to our partisan sources the destruction was a result of Alexander's Greek allies, including Athens, who voted for Thebes' razing

³¹⁷ [Demades] 1.17. ³¹⁸ Habicht 2006: 33–4.

³¹⁹ Plut. *Alex.* 11.4; Diod. 17.9.5. Diodorus' account differs from Plutarch. In Diodorus Alexander is first intent on full reconciliation, only to change his mind when he is rebuffed. He then considers the city's destruction, but not the extermination of its population, at which he only arrives later. Plutarch's account is less convoluted: the Theban refusal simply triggers a turn-around in the plan.

³²⁰ Aeschin. 3.159; Paus. 9.71; Plut. *Alex.* 13.1. Munn 2021 mentions a Theban serving in the Athenian army. He dates the inscription before the end of the fourth century. The Theban served among the *hypaithrois*, which could have consisted of mercenaries. Persian Army: Hofstetter 1978: no. 89, 313; Arr. *Anab.* 2.15.2–4; Plut. *Mor.* 181B.

³²¹ Flower 2000: 96–7 only enumerates the Boiotian poleis previously subdued by the Thebans and speculates about the Spartan responses. For the changes in the Boiotian landscape: Gartland 2016b.

because of its medism in the previous century.³²² It was more likely the wish of returned exiles of poleis who had suffered at the hands of Theban oppression in the years prior, such as the Orchomenians, Thespians and Plataians. They participated in the sack of the city and were rewarded with parts of its territory.³²³ The Panhellenist discourse was perhaps a convenient cover for more ‘mundane’ motivations.

The destruction of Thebes sent shock waves throughout the Greek world, but perhaps none more so than in Athens. Despite their aversion to the Macedonians and their relationship with the Thebans, they remained aloof from the revolt. Even virulent war hawks like Demosthenes refrained from action after initially expressing their sympathy with the rebellion.³²⁴ Alexander rewarded their restraint by handing the Oropia to the Athenians (Chapter 4.1.2).³²⁵ In return, he demanded the extradition of several prominent anti-Macedonian politicians but rescinded after Athenian embassies persuaded him otherwise.³²⁶

Thebes’ destruction ushered in a new era for the Athenians. Their politicians, realising Alexander and Macedon were too great a force to handle, reverted to a period of political conservatism. The removal of their strongest ally and the creation of a pro-Macedonian Boiotia effectively ended the security of the Athenian borders and meant that Alexander could march into Attica at any given time. The disruptive effects of Macedonian intervention in Boiotia therefore had ramifications not only for the *koinon* but equally for Athens.

The end of Thebes did not mean the end of Atheno-Boiotian relations. A substantial Theban exile community remained in Athens and *proxenia* ties between the regions were upheld.³²⁷ Yet Macedonian rule, combined with Thebes’ destruction, had altered the political landscape of Greece forever. Neither Athens nor Thebes would reach similar heights in political and military power.

³²² Arr. *Anab.* 1.7.4–8.8, 9.6–10; *Marm. Par.* (IG XII. 544 ll. 103–4); Din. 1.24; Aeschin. 3.133, 157; Plut. *Alex.* 11.6–12.6. These sources exonerate the Macedonians from harm and justify Thebes’ destruction. Diodorus (17.9–14) is a corrective to these apologists by pointing out that Alexander was to blame for the destruction. For this ‘intentional history’: Worthington 2010.

³²³ Arr. *Anab.* 1.9.9; Diod. 18.11.3–5; Din. 1.24; Gullath 1982: 77–82.

³²⁴ Diod. 17.8.6; Din. 1.19; Plut. *Dem.* 23.1. For the changes in his stance: Carlier 1990: 238–42.

³²⁵ The fragmentary decree IG II³ 1 443 details possible payments and supply of troops to Alexander’s campaign against Persia.

³²⁶ Diod. 17.115, Arr. 1.10.4–6; Plut. *Dem.* 23.4; *Phoc.* 17.2; Sealey 1993: 204–5; Bosworth 1980: 92–6.

³²⁷ Paus. 9.7.1–2; [Demades] 1.17; RO 94; IG II³ 1.345; SEG 27.60. Possibly IG VII 2869.

The Greek world had undergone a radical transformation with the ascension of Macedonian rule. Full independence no longer existed, as the overwhelming power of Macedon shattered previous mores of interstate relations. The death of Alexander in 323 inspired various Greek poleis to rise in revolt with hopes of regaining the reins, a revolt known as the Hellenic War.³²⁸ The lack of a clear successor to the Macedonian throne further fuelled the revolutionary fires. The Athenians joined the revolt as well. Their position initially put them at odds with the Boiotian poleis, who were fearful that an Athenian victory would lead to the restoration of Thebes. This proves the prudence of the Macedonian intervention in Boiotia, as the Athenian war effort was stymied by a hostile *koinon*.³²⁹ In the early phases the anti-Macedonian alliance achieved some successes, but these were ephemeral and the war ended in disappointment. Macedonian rule was reinstated, and in retaliation, the Athenians lost control over the Oropia and Samos and saw its democracy annulled.³³⁰

Less than a decade later, one of the successors vying for the Macedonian throne, Cassander, decided to restore Thebes.³³¹ The Athenians enthusiastically supported the project, as evidenced by the list detailing the contributions to its rebuild.³³² Undoubtedly, their enthusiasm was enhanced by the presence of a large refugee community, serving as a constant reminder to their plight. But part of it was the history Thebes carried.

This overview shows that war was not an inevitable prospect for the neighbours. A chart of their history does not follow a straight line that represents continuous hostility. Nothing suggests that the starting point of their shared journey determined the course, nor was any setback an insurmountable one. A litany of events characterises the Atheno-Boiotian relations, and it cannot conceivably be captured in one framework or another. In that sense, it reflects human nature and experience to its fullest.

³²⁸ On the nomenclature: Ashton 1984.

³²⁹ Mackil 2013: 92: 'The Boiotians initially refused to support the movement, fearing that if it was successful, the Athenians would restore Thebes, but they were eventually persuaded to join.' She refers to Diod. 18.11.3–5 but the coalition's victory at Plataia does not mean an enlistment of the Boiotians for the anti-Macedonian alliance.

³³⁰ Habicht 2006: 56–61.

³³¹ Miller 1996 summarises Atheno-Boiotian relations after Alexander. The Thebans were re-admitted into the *koinon* in 287. The distribution of power was more egalitarian than before to prevent a repeat of Theban abuses: Roesch 1982: 435–9. For a fragmentary Athenian decree possibly connected to its restitution: *IG II² I 967*.

³³² Holleaux 1895; Buraselis 2014; Kalliontzis and Papazarkadas 2019.

3 | That Sweet Enmity

The Conventions of Neighbourly Interactions

For (as he would say) ‘peace’, as the term is commonly employed, is nothing more than a name, the truth being that every polis is, by a law of nature, engaged perpetually in an informal war with every other polis.

—Pl. *Laws* 626a

War (and conflict) was a ubiquitous part of ancient Greek life. The Athenians and Boiotians were certainly no stranger to it. A brief glance at their history in the Classical period (Chapter 2) could turn the greatest optimist glum, if one only looks at the times of hostility. Around two centuries of co-existence were filled to the brim with conflicts, occasionally interspersed with periods of collaboration that resulted from a conflation of interests or common enemies. A dizzying array of battles and wars fill the history books, creating the impression that these neighbours were indeed naturally disinclined towards each other.

A closer look at the way these neighbours interacted, however, counters that notion. Tracing the modes of conduct between the polities will clarify my contention that the neighbours were *not* inveterate enemies. Instead, they avoided conflict on a regular basis or collaborated on account of other reasons besides mutual interests. The examples below demonstrate the complexity of human interaction and the difficulty of imposing a narrow interpretation on two centuries of shared history. These conventions were built on familiar aspects of interstate relations, such as reciprocity, but its precise application within the spheres of neighbourly relations has been overlooked. This investigation provides the opportunity to uncover other, less familiar characteristics of their relationship. Examples include the role of reputation and its perceptive influence on decision-making, or how the decision to go to war was steeped in various considerations unconnected to an inborn desire to fight each other and was more likely the result of external intervention. The examples provided below offer a glimpse of the possibilities that can be achieved by avoiding the pitfalls of *Realist* discourse and the ingrained notion of neighbourly conflict as predetermined,

or other notions such as the desire to achieve ‘a balance of power’, which was an unfamiliar term to the ancient Greeks.¹

3.1 Opting for Conflict

The decision to go to war was a common but not a natural one in Athens. War was frequently avoided through negotiation or by deferring issues to arbitration by other poleis.² Only when these attempts failed did warfare become an option. Taking into consideration the risk associated with engaging in a pitched battle, as underlined by various classical Greek sources, the choice for war was not taken lightly.³ Neighbourly relations adhere to the same notion, but a common assumption that war was the inevitable choice on account of long-standing feuds and borderland disputes still exists. That sense of hostility started in 519 with the Plataian alliance and continued unabated until the destruction of Thebes in 335, with few exceptions in between. The following examples show, however, that Atheno-Boiotian hostilities were often the result of various factors and in certain cases *could* be avoided. At other times, they occurred through external interference that thwarted attempts at a rapprochement. In each case we can retrace attempts to avoid hostilities whenever possible, even if the end result was not always convivial.

3.1.1 *The Plataian Alliance with the Athenians at the End of the Sixth Century*

One example of scholarly conformity related to precedent in creating a narrative of hostility is the Atheno-Plataian alliance to the detriment of the Thebans. The fissure between the Boiotian Plataians and the Thebans was not an inevitable course that laid the groundwork for centuries of enmity to come. The episode described by Herodotus demonstrates the importance of the *choices* made in the forging of the alliance and its eventual effect on the neighbourly relationship. The Plataian decision to align with the Athenians came about through the referral by Cleomenes and relied upon the latter accepting the Plataians’ supplication, which was not a certainty.⁴ Their predicament reinforces the notion that their plea was a last-ditch attempt. This situation does not fit the stabler times of the Peisistratid

¹ Cross 2019. ² Ager 1996. ³ Konijnendijk 2020.

⁴ Naiden 2006 traces the various stages of supplication, including acceptance by the other party.

tyranny. A more suitable context is the last decade of the sixth century or the invasion of Attica in 507/6.⁵ Methodologically, it was simpler to assume the alliance occurred earlier to explain the Boiotian participation in the 507/6 invasion of Attica. But this relies on an inexact reading of our sources. Scholars preferred Thucydides' narrative over Herodotus' eulogy of Athenian democracy rather than consider their motives. A linear progression of hostilities that continued to expand fitted the dominant narrative of neighbourly hostilities. Yet the path to hostility was more sinuous.

Herodotus describes the story of the alliance, but Thucydides provides a date that stems from his acerbic remark that Plataia was destroyed in the 'ninety-third year after she became an ally of Athens' (καὶ τὰ μὲν κατὰ Πλάταιαν ἔτει τρίτῳ καὶ ἑνενηκοστῷ ἔπειδὴ Ἀθηναίων ζύμμαχοι ἐγένοντο οὕτως ἔτελεύτησεν). Since the destruction occurred in 427, the Atheno-Plataian alliance dates to 519.⁶ A compact was thus agreed upon in 519 unless Thucydides was creative with numbers. Since the Peisistratids were firmly in charge at that date, the tyrants must have been the ones responsible for this Plataian alliance. However, I do not view this alliance as a radical break between the Athenian tyrants and the Thebans. It was the second inception of a Plataian-Athenian coalition that Herodotus describes in his account of the Battle of Marathon that irked the Thebans and fuelled their desire for revenge.⁷ *That* alliance, in my opinion, differs from the compact of 519 and was created at a different time: in the later sixth century when hostilities between the Athenians and Thebans were already underway.

This reconstruction avoids the issue of reconciling Thucydides' date with Herodotus' account, a labour that bogged down scholars in the past. The incongruency induced some emending of the Thucydidean text to allow for a different date, either 509 or 506.⁸ Besides the inherent epistemic difficulties in altering the text, the textual tradition here reveals no signs of corruption, making any emendation suspect.⁹ The solution therefore cannot be found by tampering with the manuscript.

A more elegant solution to consolidate the two accounts exists: Thucydides and Herodotus are describing two different events.

⁵ For proponents of 519: Camp 1991; Carpenter 1986: 117–23; Cartledge 2020: 79; Herington 1985: 87–91; Kolb 1977; Pickard-Cambridge 1958; Schachter 2016a: 36–50.

⁶ Hdt. 6.108; Thuc. 3.68.5. ⁷ Van Wijk 2017.

⁸ Amit 1970; Busolt 1885–1904: II 399 n. 4; Ducat 1973; French 1960: 91; Grote 1907: II 442 n. 54; Konecny et al. 2013; Salmon 1978: 20; Tausend 1992: 181–2; Shrimpton 1984; Fossey 2019: 50–1 remains agnostic.

⁹ Develin 1990.

Herodotus writes the following about the Plataian alliance with the Athenians:

The Plataians had put themselves under the protection of the Athenians, and the Athenians had undergone many labours on their behalf. This is how they did it: when the Plataians were pressed by the Thebans, they first tried to put themselves under the protection of Cleomenes son of Anaxandrides and the Lacedaimonians, who happened to be there. But they did not accept them, saying, ‘We live too far away, and our help would be cold comfort to you. You could be enslaved many times over before any of us heard about it. We advise you to put yourselves under the protection of the Athenians, since they are your neighbours and not bad men at giving help.’ The Lacedaimonians gave this advice not so much out of goodwill toward the Plataians as wishing to cause trouble for the Athenians with the Boiotians. So the Lacedaimonians gave this advice to the Plataians, who did not disobey it. When the Athenians were making sacrifices to the twelve gods, they sat at the altar as suppliants and put themselves under protection. When the Thebans heard this, they marched against the Plataians, but the Athenians came to their aid. As they were about to join battle, the Corinthians, who happened to be there, prevented them and brought about a reconciliation. Since both sides desired them to arbitrate, they fixed the boundaries of the country on condition that the Thebans leave alone those Boiotians who were unwilling to contribute (τελέειν) to the Boiotians.¹⁰ After rendering this decision, the Corinthians departed. The Boiotians attacked the Athenians as they were leaving but were defeated in battle. The Athenians went beyond the boundaries the Corinthians had made for the Plataians, fixing the Asopos river as the boundary for the Thebans in the direction of Plataia and Hysiai. So the Plataians had put themselves under the protection of the Athenians in the aforesaid manner, and now came to help at Marathon.¹¹

The situation sketched by Herodotus has striking similarities to the situation of 507/6, when invading armies from Boiotia and the Peloponnese, including the Corinthians, attacked Attica. All these parties are present in the Herodotean account. Its occurrence around that time is therefore quite likely.¹² Simon Hornblower argues on textual and narrative grounds that the division of books five and six in Herodotus is an artificial

¹⁰ For this translation of ‘τελέειν’: Mackil 2013: 27. ¹¹ Hdt. 6.108.

¹² Hennig 1992; Moretti 1962 view Herodotus’ account of the Plataian alliance as a later fabrication.

one, constructed by Hellenistic scholars.¹³ If he is right, that strengthens the connection between the account of the invasion and the Plataian alliance, since no dividing line would have existed between them in Herodotus' original text. For the Thucydidean date, however, there is no evidence to support all parties being in close proximity. Evidence of absence does not equate with absence of evidence and there are possible candidates for placing these parties together at this time – like a festival – but it makes the ascription of the Herodotean account to 519 more problematic.

A more fruitful inquiry of Herodotus' text provides some relief. Herodotus insists on the Athenians as agents. This firmly places it in the democratic era. Whenever he speaks of the tyranny, he names the Peisistratids as the actors. Deviating from that course in this particular episode would seem remarkable.¹⁴ He elsewhere differentiates between the Peisistratids and Athenians, signalling he does not equate the two in his narrative.¹⁵ On occasions where the historian details actions undertaken by the democracy, he specifies the Athenians as actors, similar to here, where they are sacrificing to the gods.¹⁶ Finally, there is the matter of semantics. Herodotus describes a subservient relationship, exemplified in words as 'ἐδεδώκεσαν', whereas Thucydides mentions an alliance or communal bond (ξύμμαχοι), which is a different kind of association.¹⁷ It seems the relationship transitioned from a more voluntary affair into something resembling a client-patron relationship.¹⁸

The act of Plataian supplication before the Athenians embodies that relationship. Earlier interpretations of the event assumed every supplicant was automatically accepted, since rejecting overtures from people or communities in need who followed the prescribed norms of supplication was a faux pas bordering on insolence towards the gods. Such an interpretation favoured a Peisistratid date. This offered the tyrants a religious motive to manoeuvre out of their affiliation with the Thebans, as their hands were

¹³ Hornblower 2013; Hornblower and Pelling 2017. ¹⁴ Hdt. 1.61; 5.63–5; 5.91–4; 6.35–9.

¹⁵ Hdt. 1.59–60; 62–3. ¹⁶ Hdt. 5.64; 5.73; 5.77–9; 5.91.

¹⁷ Sommerstein and Bayliss 2013: 186 n. 3 mention Herodotus rarely uses *symmachia* and only in combination with *omnumi* or *horkos*, both not used in the account.

¹⁸ For the client-patron relationship: Crane 2001. Badian 1993: 221 n. 27 views the relationship as a form of *douleia*. He relies on Paus. 1.32.3 but archaeological research at Marathon undermines his story that the Plataians were buried together with the slaves: Hammond 1992; Mersch 1995. The subservient relationship emerges from the Plataians' necessity to confer with the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War: Thuc. 2.73.1; 3.54.4; 64.3.

tied by the Plataians' plea.¹⁹ An obvious act of supplication put the supplicandus under immense pressure. Yet acceptance was not a foregone conclusion. The decision to accept or refuse the plea lay with the supplicandus. Refusal was not uncommon as Cleomenes' refusal clearly demonstrates.²⁰ Perhaps Herodotus wished to portray the Athenians as pious protectors of the weak, whereas the Spartans rejected these mores for more mundane reasons. This takes away the necessity for the Peisistratids to accept the Plataians and allows for a different possibility in which the tyrants could have ignored the plea if they had no desire to intervene in Boiotian affairs.

In 507/6 matters were different. Cleomenes' campaign was faltering. He was forced to withdraw from Eleusis, where the interaction between the various parties could have taken place, especially now that we know the Boiotians claimed capture of the city.²¹ His suggestion to the Plataians could have been the additional motivation the Thebans and their Boiotian allies needed to continue the invasion, despite the lack of Spartan support.²² That offers two options. Either the Athenians saw an opportunity and took it, since the Boiotians were already hostile towards them, and hoped additional forces could turn the tide. Or a more sensitive argument could take into consideration the importance of the Assembly in decision-making – if it was already in place – and assume the emotive arguments of the supplicants on their doorstep held more sway than any *Realpolitik*. This was a more time-consuming process, rather than an impromptu acceptance and arrangement of the alliance. That same example of protecting the weak and acting as the home of asylum would later be repeated in the Assembly, indicating it was a likely option. Appealing to the emotion of an audience by invoking the supplicandus status was perhaps more endearing to the demos and easier to achieve than convincing one ruler or ruling family to overhaul their relationships.²³ The supplication is therefore not positive evidence for a Peisistratid date.

¹⁹ Mafodda 1996: 107–8: 'una pportune motivazione religiosa alla decisione del tiranno di schierarsi dalla parte di Platea contro Tebe'. He is not completely wrong in believing it offered the Peisistratids a religious excuse to accept the Plataians, but that does not explain their willingness to affront the Thebans.

²⁰ Naiden 2006: 105–69.

²¹ SEG 56.521 l.2: [— — —] ἠελόντες κέλευσῖνα (. . . having taken also Eleusis).

²² Hdt. 5.75.1–2 for the faltering campaign. Plutarch's analysis of the situation (Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 861e) makes for interesting reading: 'If then Herodotus is not malicious, the Lacedaimonians must have been both fraudulent and spiteful; and the Athenians fools, in suffering themselves to be thus imposed on; and the Plataians were brought into play, not for any good-will or respect, but as an occasion of war.'

²³ See, e.g., Hdt. 5.97. On supplicants in Athenian memory: Steinbock 2013: 155–210.

Another aspect is the intertextuality between Herodotus and Thucydides. Simon Hornblower demonstrated that Thucydides in the speeches in his own work relies on Herodotus for a majority of the historical narrative prior to the Persian Wars.²⁴ This includes the Plataian speech in 427 when they defend themselves before a Spartan jury against accusations of *attikismos*. The content of the accusation is less important here. What matters is the epichoric version of history presented by the Plataians in the trial. They relate how the Spartans drove them into Athenian arms after being pressed by the Thebans, echoing the story in Herodotus' *Histories*:

For this you were to blame. When we asked for your alliance against our Theban oppressors, you rejected our petition, and told us to go to the Athenians who were our neighbours, as you lived too far off. In the war we never have done to you, and never should have done to you, anything unreasonable. If we refused to desert the Athenians when you asked us, we did no wrong; they had helped us against the Thebans when you drew back, and we could no longer give them up with honour.²⁵

Throughout the trial, the Plataians narrate the tribulations they suffered and how they (incorrectly) persevered as the only Boiotians to oppose the Persians alongside the Spartans.²⁶ Indeed, the Persian Wars occupy a central position in the local tradition of the town and its inhabitants.²⁷ By employing direct speech, Thucydides emphasises the tragic arc of the Plataian fate.²⁸ After mentioning their efforts during the Persian Wars, the Plataians end their tale by implying the relationship between the Athenians and themselves arose *after* the Persian Wars.

It was against this reconstructed history that Thucydides aimed his remark that the alliance started in 519. One of the purposes of his work was to demonstrate the otiose uses of the past in rhetorical practice and particularly in interstate relations.²⁹ The Plataians misrepresent the truth, perhaps unwillingly, and Thucydides' acerbic remark countered that

²⁴ CT III: 130–3. The authors' interaction is perhaps stronger than previously assumed: Occhipinti 2020.

²⁵ Thuc. 3.55.1–3. ²⁶ Thuc. 3.54.3. ²⁷ Yates 2013.

²⁸ Scardino 2007: 453–63. The influx of Plataian refugees into Athens after the town's destruction probably gave Thucydides more detailed information undercutting any need to question the historicity of the trial's contents.

²⁹ Grethlein 2010: 234, 239–40. Bruzzone 2015 argues the Plataians are lodged in the past during their speech, ignorant that the past is irrelevant in their current predicament. This is emphasised by the names of the Plataian speakers: 'Astymachos, son of Asopolaos' and 'Lakon, son of Aieimnestos' (Thuc. 3.52.5). The name Asopolaos is no longer unattested, as it appears in a fourth-century Plataian casualty list: Kalliontzis 2014: Ἀσωπόλαος.

notion. In addition to his intentions, the tense he uses here implies that a break could have occurred. The aorist employed – ἐτελεύτησεν – suggests a past event that does not necessitate a continuous process. The first alliance could have been forged in 519 but interrupted in the intermittent period, for instance, through the expulsion of the tyrants. Thucydides shows that the shared history of the Athenians and Plataians started in 519 and ended in 427, but does not claim this was an ongoing relationship. Therefore the relationship was possibly rekindled in the late sixth century, but in a different configuration. When the tyrants aligned with the Plataians, this was not done to the detriment of the Thebans or their claims in the Parasopia, but was more in line with other Peisistratid familial ties to rulers in Central Greece, such as the Eretrians or Thessalians (Chapter 4.1.3).³⁰

Boiotian evidence appears to confirm this picture. During the trial the Thebans paint a scene of peaceful co-existence between the Thebans and their Plataian neighbours in an earlier phase, even if it is pervaded by their own propaganda.³¹ The lack of any fortifications at Plataia around this time suggests there were no impending fears of a Theban invasion, considering their proximity.³² The late sixth-century sale of Theban-owned plots beyond the Asopos River, in what later constituted Plataian territory, implies a lack of disputes over borders. Though it concerns segments of an unpublished inscription, a Peisistratid acceptance of a Plataian alliance was apparently not the spark that lit the fuse.³³

This reappraisal of late sixth-century events also has reverberations beyond the immediate alliance. If there was no rupture between the tyrants and the Thebans, we can dismiss the notion that they were involved with the Alcemonid coup, launched from Leipsydrion in 511.³⁴ Our sources omit any support. Local aristocrats were capable of establishing their own strongholds within Attica, especially in these borderlands, outside of the Peisistratid nexus.³⁵ Any notion that the Athenian tyrants intensified their

³⁰ Hdt. 5.63–4; Thuc. 6.55.1; [Arist]. *AP* 17.3, 18.2.

³¹ Thuc. 3.61.2. ‘The Plataians not choosing to recognise our supremacy, as had been first arranged, but separating themselves from the rest of the Boiotians, and proving traitors to their nationality, we used compulsion; upon which they went over to the Athenians, and with them did us much harm, for which we retaliated.’

³² Hülten 2020: 375–80. No evidence of archaic walls or fortifications were found at Plataia but their existence was speculated by Konecny et al. 2013 because of the hostility with the Thebans.

³³ Matthaïou 2014: ἐπ’ Ἀσοπῶ; δι’ Ἀσοπῶ and ποτ’ Εὐάκροιδι’ Ἀσοπῶ.

³⁴ Hdt. 5.62.2; Schol. Ad Ar. *Lys.* 665; [Arist]. *AP* 19.3. Rhodes 1981: 235 for the date. Buck 1979; Munn 2002 argue for Theban help.

³⁵ Anderson 2003: 34. Rönnberg 2021: 73–8 critiques some of Anderson’s arguments, though he does not refute the lack of ‘full integration’ of Attica into the Athenian polis.

relations with the Thessalians at the expense of the Thebans is equally irrelevant. These views stem from a break between the erstwhile allies and a controversial dating of the Battle of Keressos – between the Thessalians and Boiotians – to 520, whereas archaeological evidence for any such conflict leans towards a much earlier date.³⁶

It also explains why the Thebans were not present at the overthrow of the tyrants. If a Plataian-Peisistratid alliance had agitated them, the opportunity to expel their hated enemies would have been the ideal opportunity to even the score. While Herodotus may have wanted to leave out any Theban participation in this formative event, he is not alone in omitting their involvement.³⁷ In the same vein, one can wonder why the Plataians did not rush to the Peisistratids' side. Herodotus here provides a simple answer. The tyrants asked only the Thessalians for help.³⁸ The lack of hostilities is reflected in Hipparchos' dedication at the Apollo Ptoios sanctuary in Akraiphnia. It can be dated to the years *after* 519, showing the tyrant's son was still on good terms with his Theban neighbours (Chapters 2.1, 5.2.1).

What the example of the Plataian alliance beautifully illustrates is the desire of scholars to view any possible contacts between the Athenians and Plataians as detrimental to their relation with other Boiotian poleis. In this version, however, there is no need to assume hostile relations during the tyranny. The Plataians' relationship with the Athenians became poignant only when hostilities were already underway. It is not through border

³⁶ Buck 1979: 108–9; Moretti 1962: 104–5. Keressos: Plut. *Cam.* 19.3; *De mal. Her.* 33. Scholars date it between 600 and 480: Fossey 2019: 24–60; Guillon 1963: 95–6; Larsen 1968: 30; Tausend 1992: 32. Archaeological evidence: Fossey and Gauvin 1985a: 64; Lauffer 1985: 107; Lehmann 1983. But see Hülden 2018; 2020: 365–70 for the difficulty in dating fortifications on masonry style. Hall 2002: 143; Sordi 1993: 31 connected the Battle of Keressos to NIO 5 and view the battle within the context of the Persian Wars (Chapter 2.3). This inscription deals with a fine handed to the Boiotians and Thessalians, although the latter are exonerated. The fine was handed out on behalf of the Athenians and Thespians, but Plutarch explicitly mentions the Boiotians as warding off the Thessalians. Despite the issues with following Plutarch on account of the conflicting dates he offers, assuming the Boiotians would be fined for defending their region against the Thessalians is remarkable. Sordi's links it with a violation of the Olympic truce. Lämmer 1982–3, however, rejects the existence of the truce. On the difficulty of the literary sources: Tufano 2019a: 40–2.

³⁷ Hdt. 5.55; 62–5; 6.123; Thuc. 6.53.3; 59.4; Ar. *Lys.* 1155–6; [Arist]. *AP* 17–19. There was a popular tradition that preferred viewing Harmodios and Aristogeiton as the liberators of Athens: Pownall 2013.

³⁸ Hdt. 5.63.3: Οἱ δὲ Πεισιστρατίδαι προτυνηθόμενοι τὰυτὰ ἐπεκαλέοντο ἐκ Θεσσαλῆς ἐπικουρίην: ἐπεποίητο γὰρ σφι **συμμαχίη** πρὸς αὐτούς. Note Herodotus' wording here, as opposed to his wording of the Plataian alliance.

disputes that tensions flared up; instead, through the changes in leadership in Athens – or the fuzziness thereof – the possibility for enmity arose.

Yet even in that situation, it was not natural animosity that led to neighbourly conflict. In 507/6 a coalition of Boiotian poleis joined the Spartan-led incursion into Attica with the intent of overthrowing the newly installed regime. Scholars have argued that the participation of Boiotian poleis in this invasion was a matter of revenge over the Plataian alliance of 519, or because of opportunism and a quick land-grab.³⁹ Instead, a likelier explanation is the personal ties between Theban leadership and Cleomenes, a network that also includes the Athenian oligarchic leader Isagoras.⁴⁰ Another possibility is the membership of the Boiotian poleis in the Peloponnesian League.⁴¹ In accordance with their duties they followed Cleomenes' lead. That is the impression Herodotus' narrative conveys:

Cleomenes, however, fully aware that the Athenians had done him wrong in word and deed, mustered an army from the whole of the Peloponnesus. He did not declare the purpose for which he mustered it, namely to avenge himself on the Athenian people and set up Isagoras, who had come with him out of the Akropolis, as tyrant. Cleomenes broke in as far as Eleusis with a great host, and the Boiotians, by a concerted plan, took Oinoe and Hysiai, districts on the borders of Attica, while the Chalkidians attacked on another side and raided lands in Attica.⁴²

Since Cleomenes' first intervention on behalf of Isagoras ended in retreat and was a Spartan incursion alone, the need for the full force of the League was warranted on the second attempt. Following the terms set out in the treaty, equal partners like the Corinthians and Boiotians were allowed to decide whether their assistance in a campaign could justifiably be required of them.⁴³ That is exactly what occurred at Eleusis during the invasion. The Corinthians believed they were acting unjustly upon finding out the purpose of the expedition, felt deceived by Cleomenes and decided to withdraw.⁴⁴ It possibly caused dismay among the Boiotians too, whose reluctance could have impelled Cleomenes to send the Plataians to the Athenians to ensure the conflict continued.⁴⁵ Irrespective of Cleomenes' intentions – and that part must remain speculation – the newly forged

³⁹ Buck 1979: 115; Rockwell 2017: 45–6. ⁴⁰ Schachter 2016a: 68.

⁴¹ On the terms of the Peloponnesian League: Sommerstein and Bayliss 2013: 212–33.

⁴² Hdt. 5.74. ⁴³ Bolmarcich 2005: 23.

⁴⁴ Hdt. 5.75.1: 'When the armies were about to join battle, the Corinthians, coming to the conclusion that they were acting wrongly, changed their minds and departed.' Berti 2010b for other explanations.

⁴⁵ SEG 56.521 l.2: [-----] ἡελόντες κέλευσῖνα (... having taken also Eleusis).

alliance between the Plataians and Athenians was an affront to Theban honour, who believed themselves to be in charge of Boiotian affairs. Since the troops were gathered and an invasion underway, the Thebans and their allies now had a new reason to continue their incursion, namely, the audacity of the new Athenian leadership to openly dismiss the Theban leadership claim over the Plataians.

The analysis of this episode traces some aspects of neighbourly relations. Deciding to engage in hostilities was never a foregone conclusion that moved from one point in the past towards the present in an inexorable matter. The Plataians' history with the Athenians demonstrates this. They moved from an alliance with the tyrannical rulers to a period of non-alignment before being pressed by their Boiotian neighbours into contributing to the *koinon*. This forced their hands to turn elsewhere for help. Their initial decision is striking. Instead of opting for the Athenians, the Plataians hoped for Spartan support. This hints at criticising the Spartans in the account, but the episode shows that for the Plataians, the Athenians were not necessarily the first choice for protection against the Thebans. Their trepidation suggests that the lack of a relationship with the new Athenian leadership prevented an earlier approach, and the situation Athens found itself in did not inspire confidence. Nor was it a given that the Athenians would rise to the challenge against the Thebans and their Boiotian allies, perhaps echoing previous experiences during the Peisistratid era.

3.1.2 *A Peace for Our Times? Putting an End to the Archidamian War*

The Peace of Nicias brought a temporary halt to the vicissitudes of the Peloponnesian War. The road to it was arduous, affected by the back-door dealings and clandestine affairs of some Spartans. Questions of honour, political standing, prisoner exchange and disputed lands pervade the drawn-out process. The negotiators encountered various possible pitfalls during negotiations. Some of these challenges involved the Boiotians and Athenians. Indeed, Aristophanes in his *Pax* portrays the neighbours as indifferent or even opposed to the peace, manifested through their lacklustre efforts to drag Eirene from the pit she was imprisoned in.⁴⁶ His scathing depiction provides a precious insight into the perception of the

⁴⁶ Ar. *Pax* 230–85.

peace talks. The play's second place at the City Dionysia of 421 shows some Athenians did appreciate Aristophanes' casting of the Boiotians as the main antagonist in the delicate process.

Cherishing Ares and his toxic gifts to mankind was not a typical Boiotian trait, however. Thucydides observes their obtrusive behaviour in a more neutral manner, emphasising their self-interests in the negotiation process. A closer inspection of the negotiations reveals a different motive. The participants were determined to finalise a treaty and return to a peaceful co-existence. Despite the Boiotians' successes, they did not desire to continue the war, nor was their behaviour directed by fear or dislike for the Athenians. Instead, the Peace of Nicias and its negotiations exemplify that neighbourly hostilities were uncharacteristic and how egregious behaviour concerning previous agreements exacerbated the matter.

The run-up to the treaty starts in 423 when the warring parties agreed to a one-year armistice. This short-term pact formed the basis for an enduring future treaty, signalling a desire to conclude the ongoing war.⁴⁷ The Spartans and the Athenians had an agreement in place, but some final details needed ironing out concerning the use of the Apollo temple in Delphi. From the wording of Thucydides, one wonders whether the Boiotians had been included in the initial discussions:

As to the temple and oracle of the Pythian Apollo, we are agreed that everyone wishing to shall have access to it, without fraud or fear, according to the usages of his forefathers. The Lacedaimonians and the allies present agree to this, and promise to send heralds to the Boiotians and Phocians, and to do their best to persuade them to agree likewise.⁴⁸

Although their reluctance slowed the process, an enduring peace was within reach. The episode illustrates that the Boiotians were independent enough to insist on certain terms, since the pilgrims would be passing through their territory.⁴⁹ More importantly, all allies present seem to be clustered around the Peloponnese, with Megara a possible exception. The Saronic Gulf seems particularly well represented. Among the oath-takers from the Spartan side are Corinthians, Sicyonians, Megarians and Epidaurians.⁵⁰ Whether the Boiotians had been privy to the earlier stages

⁴⁷ Thuc. 4.118.13. ⁴⁸ Thuc. 4.118.1–2.

⁴⁹ *CT ad loc* views the Boiotians' control over the route to Delphi as the key to the emphasis on their role; Ar. *Birds* 188–9: 'Pisthetaerus: The air is between earth and heaven. When we want to go to Delphi, we ask the Boiotians for leave of passage.' On the passage and route: Kühn 2018: 201–10.

⁵⁰ Thuc. 4.119.1–3.

of negotiation remains unclear. Arnold Gomme first remarked that the agglomeration of involved poleis controlled the Isthmus, making an Athenian invasion difficult. Their inclusion was vital as their powerful fleets could oppose the Athenian naval power.⁵¹ Simon Hornblower agrees with this assessment. Both remark that the absentees were deemed less important.⁵² That could be true, yet the implications of these back-channel talks are obvious. The exclusion of the Boiotians left them isolated, which would have tempered their relationship with the Spartans. The Spartans were secure in the knowledge that the Peloponnese was secured. Their selfish arrangement could have triggered fears among the Boiotians of impending Athenian attacks. In light of the recent attack at Delion this was a palpable threat, which makes their reluctance to negotiate according to Spartan terms more understandable.⁵³ A later adherence to the treaty remains murky, but possible. The *koinon* remained dormant in 423 and 422, except for the dismantling of the Thespian walls to preserve its hoplite class against 'atticising' revolts.⁵⁴

In 421 negotiations were finally underway for a lasting peace treaty, with the Spartans and their allies agreeing to a pact with the Athenians and their allies. The Boiotians were among Peloponnesian League members voting against the treaty. Despite having their claim to Plataia vindicated in the finalised agreement, the Boiotians refuted other facets of the deal like the return of the fortress at Panakton (Chapter 4.1.1).⁵⁵ This was a stumbling block, but not an impossible obstacle. The Boiotians cleaved to this part of the negotiations because they held the cards. The Spartans wished to retrieve their imprisoned brethren captured some years before by exchanging them for Boiotian-held Athenian prisoners. Additionally, Panakton would be swapped for the fort at Pylos. The Spartans could offer precious little in return. That predicament became worse when Spartan commanders in the north refused to hand over places promised to the Athenians in the earlier deal. In short, the Boiotians were not compelled to hand over their advantageous bargaining position for the sake of the Spartans. Keeping in mind the potential dismay from earlier negotiations, this

⁵¹ Gomme 1956: *ad loc.* ⁵² *CT ad loc.*

⁵³ It echoes Spartan behaviour during the Persian Wars, when they left Central Greece to fend for themselves. In the Athenian sources this memory remained present (Queyrel-Bottineau 2014b). There are no Boiotian sources to corroborate whether this memory rose to prominence at this time.

⁵⁴ Thuc. 4.133.1–2.

⁵⁵ The Megarians, Corinthians and Eleans also voted against: Thuc. 5.17.2.

recalcitrance should not be viewed solely through the prism of self-interest; trust and reputation played an important role too.

Another flashpoint was the Spartan Panhellenic colony at Herakleia Trachis that was founded on the Boiotians' doorstep in 426.⁵⁶ Liberated Greeks had settled there in droves, but the governor's abrasive behaviour towards them evaporated any goodwill accumulated by fighting Athenian suppression. The town slid into disarray because of mismanagement and fell in 420 after forces from Thessaly and its environs defeated the inhabitants.⁵⁷ The Boiotians then occupied the place to prevent the Athenians from taking over. Their efforts imply the colony had been a point of dispute within the Peloponnesian League.⁵⁸

Trepidations among the allies remained, even after repeated insistence to accept the Peace of Nicias that was in place. Spartan allies, including the Boiotians, continued to rebuff the treaty until 'a fairer one than the present was agreed upon'.⁵⁹ They were emboldened by the support of the Megarians and Corinthians, who were equally reluctant to accept the terms. Together they could oppose the Athenians and were less reliant on Spartan goodwill. Exasperated at the lack of progress, the Spartans opted for a separate alliance with the Athenians to enforce the terms of the Peace of Nicias onto unwilling allies instead.⁶⁰

Viewing the Boiotian resistance as a firm adherence to territorial gains at the expense of the Athenians, and thereby perhaps an inimical attitude towards the latter, seems a logical conclusion. Yet later events show the Spartans' attitude towards their allies appeared to be the cause of distress. As independent allies, the *koinon* had every reason to pursue their own aims rather than meekly follow the Spartans' directions.⁶¹ The Boiotians remained open to negotiations, even after the alliance between the two blocks materialised. They agreed to a truce with the Athenians 'ἐκεχειρίαν δεχήμερον ἤγον'.⁶² The translation of this phrase has caused some debate, but this probably meant a truce that was renewed every ten days wherein lay a perpetual de facto renewal until someone broke the agreement. Therefore it required constant attention and effort from both sides.⁶³ This was ideally achieved by the *proxenoi* in both cities, who could easily renew the truce if needed.

⁵⁶ Thuc. 3.92.3.

⁵⁷ Hornblower 2010: 271 argues the Spartans treated the Greeks in the town as helots.

⁵⁸ Thuc. 5.51–2. It continued to be an issue in 395: Cook 1990. Hornblower 2011: 137 writes this may emphasise Boiotian disquiet at Spartan behaviour.

⁵⁹ Thuc. 5.22. The phrase is ἦν μὴ τις δικαιότερας τούτων ποιῶντα. ⁶⁰ Thuc. 5.22–3.

⁶¹ Bolmarcich 2005. ⁶² Thuc. 5.26.2. ⁶³ Arnush 1992; Whitehead 1995.

Donald Kagan regards this ten-day truce as a preventive measure struck out of fear of Athenian interference.⁶⁴ These fears stemmed from the recent Theban intervention in Thespiiai, done to prevent an Athenian-supported uprising. These motivations seem difficult to retrace and Kagan's interpretation betrays his adherence to the Realist dogma. He writes the following:

So frightened were the Thebans that, even while rejecting the Peace of Nicias, they negotiated an unusual, if not unique, truce with the Athenians whereby the original cessation of hostilities was for ten days; after that, termination by either side would require ten days' notice. Such fears, along with great ambitions, made the Thebans hope for the renewal of war that would lead to the defeat of war and the destruction of its power.⁶⁵

In short, fear dictated that short-term truces be established to avoid escalation.

Kagan's interpretation is monolithic, however, and only views the events through a conflictual prism. The repeated truces, rather, indicate a willingness to maintain an open channel for diplomacy and return to a peaceful co-existence.⁶⁶ At the moment it was necessary to appease both parties in the newly formed Atheno-Spartan super alliance. The best way to achieve this was by concluding separate treaties with the Athenians until a long-lasting variant was formalised. Temporary reprieves allowed for further negotiations to take place, not to prevent a full-scale war from re-erupting. The frequent renewal of the truce indicates the parties had no desire for further war. It would have been easier to mobilise troops and attack as soon as the truce ended. A desire to utilise that time to improve the outlook of a lasting peace also explains why the Corinthians, despite their alliance with the Argives, wished to obtain a similar agreement. An Argive alliance provided the security against further aggression, a safety net the Boiotians lacked. Yet the latter rebuffed any notion of an Argive alliance, nor did they succumb to the temptation to revoke the ten-day truce at the behest of their Corinthian allies.⁶⁷

A change of direction came from the Spartans in the following year.⁶⁸ Certain elements of Spartan society adverse to a rapprochement with the

⁶⁴ Kagan 1981: 24–5. ⁶⁵ Kagan 1981: 24.

⁶⁶ That appears the best way to read Thucydides' remark that this cannot 'be considered a state of peace' (καὶ εὐρήσει οὐκ εἰκός ὄν εἰρήνην αὐτὴν κριθῆναι): Thuc. 5.26.2.

⁶⁷ Thuc. 5.32.4–7.

⁶⁸ Harris 2021: 55 notes the Spartans were in a weaker position in the negotiations, as evidenced by sending *presbeis autokratores* to Athens with full powers to negotiate a treaty.

Athenians persuaded Boiotian envoys to approach the Argives for a defensive alliance. The proposal was astutely rejected by the leaders of the *koinon*, who were fearful of affronting the Spartans and risking further estrangement, unaware that the *boiotarchs* had received word from Spartan ephors to approach the Argives.⁶⁹ Paul Cartledge perceives the rejection as a matter of political brotherhood, with the Boiotian council wishing to remain close to oligarchic Sparta rather than throw in their lot with the democratic Argives.⁷⁰ Although such emotions cannot be discounted, his argument that the oligarchic Spartans would be more willing to defend the Boiotians against ‘atticising’ elements falls flat in the face of the Battle at Delion, as well as the Athenians’ lack of constitutional preferences for collaboration.⁷¹ According to Simon Hornblower it meant the Boiotians still held the Spartans in awe.⁷² But that overlooks that an Argive (defensive) alliance did nothing for the Boiotian status vis-à-vis the other two powers in the Greek world, making their reverence less likely in the face of the situation confronting them.

The Spartans saw an opening to finalise the peace treaty. They requested the Boiotians to return Panakton to the Athenians and restore the latter’s prisoners. For their cooperation, the Boiotians insisted on a bilateral alliance with the Spartans, although it constituted a breach of the Spartan-Athenian arrangement. Their insistence for this compact was probably precipitated by the Spartan-Athenian alliance. This stipulated the bilateral enforcement of the Peace of Nicias on unwilling parties. Sensing the possible ramifications of Atheno-Spartan collaboration, the Boiotians needed reassurance from their ally, rather than protection from their southern neighbours. Trust was an issue. Some of Sparta’s allies perceived the bilateral alliance as a breach of the Peloponnesian League’s system, leaving members to fend for themselves. Others perceived their pact as null and void. A separate bilateral alliance, as requested by the Boiotians, would repair some of that reputational damage. It would also elevate the *koinon*’s status by recognising it as an equal power in the Greek political sphere, a factor frequently overlooked in scholarship, but one that played a vital role in the agonistic world of Greek politics.⁷³ Degradation to a second-rank status, as accomplished by the Athenian-Spartan alliance, was unacceptable for the Boiotians, especially after their recent victories at

⁶⁹ Thuc. 5.36–9. Hornblower 2010: 137 argues this reflects an ‘institutional unease’ between the *boiotarchs* and the federal council.

⁷⁰ Cartledge 2020: 153–4. ⁷¹ Brock 2009. ⁷² Hornblower 2011: 167.

⁷³ Lendon 2010 argues standing was central to the Peloponnesian War.

Delion. Their request for a separate alliance was to improve their prestige and standing among the two great powers in the Greek mainland. They would willingly hand over their assets, if their status was confirmed. Their emphasis on equal status demonstrates their unease with Spartan actions and a desire to be accepted as a major player in the Greek world.⁷⁴

Negotiations continued, but this time the Boiotians were in a better position thanks to their alliance with the Spartans. The latter hoped to persuade them to surrender Panakton to the Athenians and confirm the peace treaty. The Boiotians did concede, but only after demolishing the fortress. They justified their action by alluding to Athenian violations of ancient oaths.⁷⁵ It was an action inspired by confidence, but should not be viewed as an irreparable breach of negotiations. Panakton was handed over in compliance with the request, but with the fortress dismantled, rather than upright, as the Athenians had envisioned. The Athenians then implored the Spartans to revoke their Boiotian alliance in adherence to the original bilateral compact. In the end, it was the Spartans who clung to their Boiotian alliance.⁷⁶ The Athenians responded in kind by arranging an alliance with the Argives at the instigation of Alcibiades, recalibrating the political landscape in mainland Greece.⁷⁷

Why did the Athenians persist in viewing the separate alliance as harmful? Status certainly played a role. The Atheno-Spartan dyad allowed both powers to direct negotiations with less regard for others. The Spartan-Boiotian alliance, and the increased status of the *koinon*, transformed that dyad into a triumvirate. Athenian negotiations were more difficult with the Boiotians. They held significant barter in the form of prisoners and lands, and the Athenians had nothing to offer in return. Any advantages the Athenians held were desiderata for the Spartans. Yet the Boiotians relinquished these to obtain a separate alliance with the Spartans. Therefore they desired to conclude a compact with the Athenians for an uptick in standing and prestige, even at the expense of valuable lands.

This episode serves as a reminder that border disputes were not an insurmountable obstacle towards peace, but could be made into one if this

⁷⁴ Buck 1994: 21–4 retrojects Leontiades' leadership from 395 onto this period, but the Boiotians are anonymous from Thucydides book 5 onwards, making this claim hard to substantiate.

⁷⁵ Thuc. 5.42, *CT* III 94 rightly points to Boiotian agency in the destruction, rather than Spartan intrigue. Seager 1976: 258 views the return of Panakton as a small price to pay for the Boiotians, but that ignores the importance of the Athenian violations of the oaths in place: [Chapter 4.1.1.](#)

⁷⁶ Thuc. 5.44.3.

⁷⁷ Thuc. 5.45; *IG* I³ 83. The Athenians placed the onus of breaching the treaty on the Spartans, not the Boiotians: Thuc. 5.56.3; Low 2020.

was the intention. A malicious Boiotian attitude to the Athenians was not to blame. The Spartans' questionable actions invited the ire of the Boiotians, leading to their recalcitrance. That attitude is already present during the negotiations in 423, when they were excluded from the initial phase. It continued throughout later discussions, as the Spartans refused to acknowledge and recompensate the Boiotians for their territorial losses, despite holding the goods the Spartans were desperate to trade. These negotiations show that a plethora of factors obstructed the prospects of a lasting peace, but an inherent neighbourly hostility was not one of them.

3.1.3 *Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow: The 'Auld Alliance' of 369*

The Spartan-Athenian alliance of 369 demonstrates that the Athenian decision to break with the Thebans was not a natural, swift outcome of expansionism within Boiotia. The road to Spartan perdition in Athenian eyes was more circuitous than Xenophon or Isocrates portray. Modern scholars equally view it as a quick and rational process. Yet the abandonment of the Theban alliance was one of hesitation, rather than visceral responses prompted by the outcome of the Battle of Leuktra (371). The estrangement stemmed from an emotional reaction to Prokles of Phlius' speech in a later meeting. A full year elapsed after the monumental battle before any sense of empathy for the Spartans entered the Athenian political realm: it was only triggered by the invasion of the Peloponnese under Epameinondas. Even then several months elapsed before an alliance was finalised.

According to Xenophon and Isocrates, both unfriendly to the Thebans, the seeds of antagonism were planted in 373 with Plataia's and Thespias' destruction. Previously, all Theban actions were deemed acceptable, since an attempt at Orchomenos in 375 bypassed serious condemnation.⁷⁸ Hence scholars have pointed to 373 as a breaking point in the relationship. The Athenians could not accept such blatant violations of their role as *prostates of autonomia* (Chapters 2.5, 3.3.3). Not too much faith should be placed in these words. Thebans continued to perform key functions in the Second Athenian Confederacy after the destruction of the Boiotian towns.⁷⁹ Xenophon wrote at a time of heightened tensions, making his anti-Theban bias more susceptible to exaggeration. He places this episode in a sequence of Theban hubris rendering them unfit to rule.⁸⁰ It leaves his

⁷⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.10.

⁷⁹ RO 29 l.15 (372 BCE).

⁸⁰ Pownall 2004.

countrymen out of a murky ethical predicament concerning their Theban allies and the fate of the Plataians and Thespians, who both had enjoyed fruitful relationships with the Athenians. The same applies to Isocrates. His claims come from the acerbic pamphlet *Plataicus*, which was probably never delivered in the Assembly, but rather circulated in private circles.⁸¹ The speaker was supposed to be a Plataian. His viewpoint, while permeated with references recognisable to any Athenian, reflects a patently Plataian perspective.⁸² Matteo Barbato argued the contents and tone of the speech do not fit with the discursive parameters of the Assembly but mix deliberative and forensic features.⁸³ There are few references to deliberative principles of advantage inserted into the speech. Instead, it is a moralistic piece focused on justice for the Plataians against Theban aggression. Pity and empathy for the unjustly expelled Plataians aside, the indignant outrage infused into Xenophon's and Isocrates' accounts had little effect on political decision-making.

The Athenians invited the Thebans to accompany them to the peace conference in 371:

Meanwhile the Athenians, seeing that the Plataians, who were their friends, had been expelled from Boiotia and had fled to them for refuge, and that the Thespians were beseeching them not to allow them to be left without a city, no longer commended the Thebans, but, on the contrary, while they were partly ashamed to make war upon them and partly reckoned it to be inexpedient, they nevertheless refused any longer to take part with them in what they were doing, inasmuch as they saw that they were campaigning against the Phocians, who were old friends of the Athenians, and were annihilating cities which had been faithful in the war against the barbarian and were friendly to Athens. For these reasons the Athenian people voted to make peace, and in the first place sent ambassadors to Thebes to invite the Thebans to go with them to Sparta to treat for peace if they so desired.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Papillon 2004: 218–19; Steinbock 2013: 198–200. Cartledge 2020: 195 says the pamphlet fell on willing ears in Athens, as can be gathered from the peace conference in 371, but that ignores the private capacity of the pamphlet.

⁸² Isoc. 14.42: 'Therefore, let none of you shrink from taking on dangers when you do it with justice. And let none of you think that you will lack for allies, should you wish to give aid to all those who are unjustly treated and not just to the Thebans' (trans. T. Papillon). At 12.53, he recollects Adrastus' campaign against Thebes with Athenian help, but undermines the legitimacy of the campaign (Gotteland 2001: 202) and stresses that the Plataians are more deserving of help than the Argives were (Barbato 2020: 208).

⁸³ Barbato 2020: 207. ⁸⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1–2.

Modern scholars attribute the invitation to a fear of growing Theban power.⁸⁵ In my opinion, the Athenians wanted to include the Thebans in a treaty to maintain the alliance. This notion seeps through Xenophon's language. He acknowledges that the Athenians had no desire to declare war upon their neighbours. What's more, they were even partly *ashamed* of the possibility. This suggests the conscious move away from an alliance and pact was perceived as shameful for the Athenians. They stayed away from supporting Theban exploits on account of ancient friendships.⁸⁶ This was a middle way, rather than a stern departure. The invitation to attend the conference was intended to maintain the status quo, not as a ploy to handcuff the Thebans' fates to Athens or else feel its wrath.

The Athenian speeches delivered at the peace conference confirm that view. The first speaker, Kallias, a torch bearer in the Eleusinian Mystery cult, emphasised the desirability of Atheno-Spartan reconciliation, especially in the wake of Theban aggression.⁸⁷ It is easy to envision this proposal detrimentally influencing the Atheno-Theban alliance, but Kallias only refers to an end to hostilities between the warring parties because they hold similar views. He adds it would be weird for poleis with differing opinions to engage in war, let alone if they see eye to eye. Yet there is not a word of a future alliance or engagement contra the Thebans.⁸⁸ Kallias is followed by Autokles. He strikes a less congenial tone by airing his grievances over Spartan conduct and blames the war on their violations of *autonomia*. Their hypocrisy in accusing the Thebans of abrasive behaviour was uncouth and did not warrant a friendly Athenian reception.⁸⁹ Despite his sharp criticism, he does not defend the Thebans. Rather, Autokles exhibits an anti-Spartan perspective, as the focus on *autonomia* equally applied to the Thebans.⁹⁰ He demonstrates the fluidity of the term and offers an Athenian perspective to its implementation. Their view

⁸⁵ Buckler and Beck 2008: 43; Hornblower 2011: 255; Mackil 2013: 70. They adhere to Xenophon's words, but overlook his moralising tendencies.

⁸⁶ This Phocian friendship may have been a later adaptation: Franchi 2022.

⁸⁷ Xenophon introduces Kallias in a rather perfunctory manner and scathingly characterises him as 'a man who delighted in being praised no less by himself than by others'. This undercuts Kallias' claims concerning his political experience and importance: Tuplin 1993: 104–5 contra Gray 1992: 66 n. 19.

⁸⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.4–5. ⁸⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.7–9.

⁹⁰ Adcock and Mosley 1975: 155 claim Autocles' speech is anti-Spartan and not pro-Theban. For the insistence on the *autonomia* clause: Gray 1989: 123–31. Plutarch adds a truculent clash between Agesilaos and Epameinondas. Epameinondas accused the Spartan king of a hollow stance on *autonomia*, stating the subjugation of the Laconian towns violated autonomy (Plut. *Ages.* 27.3–28.4; Paus. 9.13.2; Nep. *Epam.* 6.4). Rhodes 1999 discusses *autonomia* and its effect on the peace conference.

entails full external and internal freedom for each polis. Kallistratos delivers the final speech. He voices his concern over Theban conduct, shared by the Spartans, and insists on common interests, a recurring feature in the Assembly. Yet he follows that up by admonishing the Spartans to honour the *autonomia* clause, before reiterating the wish for friendship. There is again a hint of criticism, but no reference to a possible alliance.⁹¹ Kallistratos is aware of Theban actions undermining their relationship with the Athenians.⁹² But the only proposal on the table is peace. There is no talk of abandoning the Thebans nor of a pact against them. The mood was unfavourable but severing the alliance was not contemplated. The first indications of estrangement only beckoned in the aftermath of the conference.

The Thebans were excluded from the peace because of their insistence on swearing as the ‘Boiotians’, rather than themselves. This gave the Spartans the munition to enforce the *autonomia* clause, resulting in their eventful defeat at Leuktra. Prior to that battle, the Athenians were in an ideal situation. If the Spartans marched against the Thebans, the latter’s expansionism in Boiotia could be curbed and they could be forced to accept the peace treaty (Chapter 2.5). In that scenario, the Thebans continued to be Athenian allies on favourable terms. A Theban victory was perhaps never envisioned. The stipulations of the treaty explain the Athenians’ aloofness. Their participation in the pact negated any necessity to aid their allies.

The Theban response after Leuktra supports such a reading. From their perspective, the alliance was still intact. Diodorus adds that Theban families moved to Athens prior to the battle for safety.⁹³ In their message after the victory, they exclaimed their elation and desire to continue the fight, *with* Athenian help. The Spartan attack against a member of the Confederacy meant it was time to come to the Thebans’ aid. Yet instead of a warm embrace, the garlanded messenger (ἄγγελον) received the cold shoulder. No courtesies were extended by the Athenians according to Xenophon. *Aggelon* often denotes a non-Greek messenger.⁹⁴ Perhaps he conspicuously wanted to undermine the respectability of the Theban messenger and acquit the Athenians of wrongdoing.⁹⁵ Such a hostile response, even if the victory was unwelcome news, would be remarkable and conflicts with the diplomatic norms. Perhaps it is Xenophon’s way of emphasising the

⁹¹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.10–17.

⁹² Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.13: εὐδῆλον ὅτι εἰ τῶν συμμάχων τινὲς οὐκ ἄρεστά πράττουσιν ἡμῖν ἢ ὑμῖν ἄρεστά.

⁹³ Diod. 15.52.1. ⁹⁴ Adcock and Mosley 1975: 152.

⁹⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.20. Diod. 15.63.1 mentions nothing about it.

rising hostility towards Theban success in Athens, rather than a reflection of reality. The alliance, however, remained intact.

According to Polybius the Achaians attempted to arbitrate between the Spartans and Thebans, but negotiations broke down on a familiar theme: the status of the members of the Boiotian *koinon* and the Laconian *peroikic* towns.⁹⁶ The collapsed arbitration opened the door for the Athenians to proclaim their leading role over Greece with a Common Peace. This time the parties convened in Athens. In addition to solving the conundrum of handling the precarious situation that confronted them, it was also a valuable tool to assume the hegemonial role in Greece after Leuktra created a vacuum of leadership.⁹⁷ Everyone wishing to accept the previous treaty was invited to participate. All parties present accepted it, except the Eleans. The Thebans abstained from attending and were automatically excluded. They saw the writing on the wall and unrepentantly rejected any notion of signing as the Thebans. In the aftermath of the conference, they invaded the Peloponnese (370). After much deliberation and hesitation in the Athenian Assembly, this created the opening for a Spartan-Athenian rapprochement.⁹⁸

It is within this context that Xenophon records speeches given by ambassadors of the Spartans and their allies, who were in Athens when the Assembly convened to discuss the political developments. These speeches, even if not recorded verbatim, reveal how the two former enemies reconciled (Chapter 3.2.2). On first glance, Spartan lamentations about injustice and defeat seemed futile. The collective of Arakos, Okyllos, Pharakos, Etymokles and Olontheus rose up in the Assembly to present the Lacedaimonian perspective. Xenophon condenses their speeches into a brief summary, since they were saying similar things. Recollections of past benefits such as the expulsion of the Peisistratids, Athenian help against the Messenian revolt and their shared stance against the Persian invasion are alluded to throughout their speeches.⁹⁹ There is even talk of ‘tithing’ the Thebans, rekindling an ‘old’ promise stemming from the Persian Wars.¹⁰⁰ The boisterous expression had the opposite effect, however, as murmurs

⁹⁶ Polyb. 2.39.9; Str. 8.7.1 mention the arbitration. The historicity of this event is debated. Polybius may have fabricated it to boost Achaia’s status: Beck 1997: 60; Freitag 2009; Walbank 1957–79: I 226–7.

⁹⁷ Tuplin 1993: 157–62.

⁹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.22–3; 33; Diod. 15.63.2–4. Tuplin 1993: 150 points out the Thebans are portrayed as passive followers rather than assertive actors to undercut their potential as hegemon.

⁹⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.33–4.

¹⁰⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.35: Ἐὰν δὲ ὑμεῖς καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὦ ἄνδρες, ὁμονοήσωμεν, νῦν ἐλπίς τὸ πάλαι λεγόμενον δεκατευθῆναι Θηβαίους. This is an exaggeration and reflects the *Hellenica*’s time of conception, when such talk became fashionable, cf. Chapter 5.2.8.

spread through the Athenian audience recalling the Spartans' abrasive behaviour of years past. The situation was remedied when the ambassadors recalled how the Spartans prevented the Thebans' proposed destruction of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. Another set of arguments based on 'treaty and oath obligations' incurred a violent response. As Xenophon remarked, invoking the responsibilities the Athenians carried as guarantors of the peace was perhaps the longest (τὸ μέγιστον), but not the strongest (ὁ πλεῖστος λόγος) argument.¹⁰¹ Some Athenians suggested the mess in which the Spartans found themselves was because *their* allies violated their oaths.¹⁰² Aid for the beleaguered former hegemon was still illusory in large part due to the lack of Spartan envoys' understanding of the Assembly's discursive parameters.¹⁰³

The mood of the audience swung when representatives of the Spartan allies spoke. Kleiteles of Corinth entreated the Athenians to help his countrymen. They were innocent victims having to endure the Thebans' unprovoked ravaging of their lands, a manifest violation of the oaths all parties had taken in 371 and which the Athenians had sworn to uphold. He implored the Athenians to rise up for his unjustly suffering countrymen, who were now feeling the repercussions of the Peace's breakdown:

While the Assembly itself was trying to determine these matters, Kleiteles, a Corinthian, arose and spoke as follows: 'Men of Athens, it is perhaps a disputed point who began the wrong-doing; but as for us, can anyone accuse us of having, at any time since peace was concluded, either made a campaign against any city, or taken anyone's property, or laid waste another's land? Yet, nevertheless, the Thebans have come into our country, and have cut down trees, and burned down houses, and seized property and cattle. If, therefore, you do not aid us, who are so manifestly wronged, will you not surely be acting in violation of your oaths? They were the same oaths, you remember, that you yourselves took care to have all of us swear to all of you.' Thereupon the Athenians shouted their approval, saying that Kleiteles had spoken to the point and fairly.¹⁰⁴

Kleiteles only proved an intermediary, since the piece de résistance was delivered by Prokles from Phlius, a likely personal acquaintance of Xenophon.¹⁰⁵

Men of Athens, it is clear to everyone, I imagine, that you are the first against whom the Thebans would march if the Lacedaimonians were got

¹⁰¹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.34–7. ¹⁰² Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.35–6. ¹⁰³ Barbato 2020: 69–75.

¹⁰⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.37. ¹⁰⁵ Both were Agesilaos' *xenoi*: Cartledge 1987: 264.

out of the way; for they think that you are the only people in Greece who would stand in the way of their becoming rulers of the Greeks. If this is so, I, for my part, believe that if you undertake a campaign, you would not be giving aid to the Lacedaimonians so much as to your own selves. For to have the Thebans, who are unfriendly to you and dwell on your borders, become leaders of the Greeks, would prove much more grievous to you, I think, than when you had your antagonists far away. Furthermore, you would aid yourselves with more profit if you should do so while there are still people who would fight on your side, than if they should perish first and you should then be compelled to enter by yourselves upon a decisive struggle with the Thebans.¹⁰⁶

His remarks focus on future Theban actions, whose proximity would inflict worse damages upon the Athenians than the Spartans could ever achieve. Helping the Spartans now would not be altruism, but a preventive measure with future advantages as it would press the Spartans into a dependent reciprocal relationship with the Athenians. The Athenians could benefit from their support against the Thebans should tensions rise and create a large front against the neighbours if necessary. Using this strategic cost-benefit analysis as a basis, Prokles continues to elaborate the benefits for his audience:

Now if any are fearful that in case the Lacedaimonians escape this time, they may again in the future cause you trouble, take thought of this, that it is not those whom one benefits, but those whom one injures, of whom one has to fear that they may someday attain great power. And you should bear in mind this likewise, that it is meet both for individuals and for states to acquire a goodly store in the days when they are strongest, in order that, if some day they become powerless, they may draw upon their previous labours for succour. So to you has now been offered by some god an opportunity, in case you aid the Lacedaimonians in their need, of acquiring them for all time as friends who will plead no excuses. For it is not in the presence of only a few witnesses, as it seems to me, that they would now receive benefit at your hands, but the gods will know of this, who see all things both now and for ever, and both your allies and your enemies know also what is taking place, and the whole world of Greeks and barbarians besides. For to none of them all is it a matter of indifference. Therefore, if the Lacedaimonians should show themselves shameful in their dealings with you, who would ever again become devoted to them?¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.98–9. ¹⁰⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.40–2.

Providing aid to the beleaguered Spartans therefore enhances the Athenian reputation throughout the Greek world and indebts the Spartans quasi-permanently, ensuring their compliance with Athenian wishes in the future since their fates would be attached to the norms of reciprocity. Should they forego their obligations, the repercussions would be in the Athenians' favour: renegeing on these promises would not only incur divine wrath, but also leave the Spartans isolated and less of a danger. Prokles then recalls past common exploits as examples of Spartan trustworthiness, such as the stand against the Persians, in contrast to the Thebans. He meanders into the Athenian reputation of lore: one of *philanthropia*, or helping others out of sense of justice without expecting a reward.¹⁰⁸ He alludes to his hosts' devotion to justice, as exemplified by two mythological precedents:

In former days, men of Athens, I used from hearsay to admire this state of yours, for I heard that all who were wronged and all who were fearful fled hither for refuge, and here found assistance; now I no longer hear, but with my own eyes at this moment see the Lacedaimonians, those most famous men, and their most loyal friends appearing in your state and in their turn requesting you to assist them. I see also the Thebans, who then did not succeed in persuading the Lacedaimonians to enslave you, now requesting you to allow those who saved you to perish. 'It is truly a noble deed that is told of your ancestors, when they did not suffer those Argives who died at the Cadmeia to go unburied; but you would achieve a far nobler deed if you did not suffer those Lacedaimonians who still live either to incur insult or to perish. And while that other deed was also noble, when you checked the insolence of Eurystheus and preserved the sons of Herakles, would it not surely be an even nobler one if you saved from perishing, not merely the founders, but the whole state as well? And noblest of all deeds if, after the Lacedaimonians saved you then by a vote, void of danger, you shall aid them now with arms and at the risk of your lives. Again, when even we, who by word urge you to aid brave men, are proud of doing so, it would manifestly be generous of you, who are able to aid by act, if, after being many times both friends and enemies of the Lacedaimonians, you should recall, not the harm you have suffered at their hands, but rather the favours which you have, received, and should render them requital, not in behalf of yourselves alone, but also in behalf of all Greece, because in her behalf they proved themselves brave men.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.43–4. ¹⁰⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.45–8.

These acts of benevolence could now be emulated or eclipsed by helping the Spartans against the insolent Thebans. Prokles adds a distinct Panhellenic touch by implying the Athenians would be helping all of *Hellas*, not just the Spartans.¹¹⁰ Perhaps this supports Leptines' alleged remark that 'he would not stand by and see Greece deprived of one of her eyes'.¹¹¹ After these exhortations the Athenians voted to aid the Spartans in full force, sending Iphikrates around the Peloponnese to divert the Thebans. The campaign was intended to signal support, as Iphikrates merely danced around the Boiotian army in the Peloponnese, instead of confronting it.¹¹² An alliance, however, had not yet been concluded.

According to Xenophon, the Athenians were unwilling to listen to any pro-Theban speakers. But this reflects his tendency to omit speeches advocating policies that were not followed.¹¹³ There are references to speakers, such as Xenokleides, aiming to thwart any rapprochement with the Spartans.¹¹⁴ Nor does Xenophon mention the heavy support of the influential politician Kallistratos, instrumental in pushing the pro-Spartan agenda.¹¹⁵ Xenophon likely condenses the debate that followed Prokles' speech, in which both sides would have been heard before a decision was made.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the Athenians were not as strong in their support. There were issues over the exact terms of the alliance. The Athenians were unwilling to submit to Spartan hegemony on land in exchange for their own leadership over naval affairs. It would be akin to leading their slaves, whereas the Spartans would lead full citizens, as one speaker notices.¹¹⁷ As a compromise, they agreed to a rotational scheme, with an alternating leadership of land and naval military affairs. Their insistence on this condition shows the alliance was not a foregone conclusion, especially considering the 'strategic sacrifices' the Athenians had to make.

The question remains why the Athenians took the decision now.¹¹⁸ Some of their allies were concerned about sacrificing a successful

¹¹⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.38–48. Baragwanath 2012 believes Prokles' speeches were fabricated by Xenophon.

¹¹¹ Arist. *Rh.* 3.10.1411a2–3; MacDowell 2000: 235.

¹¹² Buckler 1978; Pritchett 1974–91: II 17 question the tradition of a trial for the Boiotian generals who invaded the Peloponnese.

¹¹³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.49; Buckler and Beck 2008. ¹¹⁴ [Dem.] 59.26–7.

¹¹⁵ At the time of the Cadmeia's occupation, Kallistratos was an avid supporter of the Thebans against Sparta: Hochschulz 2007; Sealey 1956. He was later exiled from Athens for his role in the Theban occupation of Oropos: Chapter 4.1.2.

¹¹⁶ Canevaro 2018. ¹¹⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.1–14.

¹¹⁸ As Buckler 2003: 310 characterises the decision: '[This] policy was short-sighted, wasteful, and potentially dangerous, and from it Athens gained nothing but regrets.'

collaboration to help a defeated nemesis on the verge of a breakdown. This becomes clear from an inscription detailing three decrees for the people of Mytilene. The decree concerns an affirmation of Mytilenean loyalty and their role in the anti-Spartan alliance. The decree is unfortunately broken off (l. 49) at a point where the explanation for this decree would begin. Parts 1 and 2 refer to subsequent embassies sent from Mytilene to the Athenians after the latter's receptive response to their worries, but decree 3 is of more concern here:

8

The Council and the People decided. Diophantos proposed: concerning what the ambassadors who have come from Lesbos say.

Decree 3

35 In the archonship of Lysistratos (369/8). The Council and the People decided. Kallistratos proposed: to praise the People of Mytilene because they fought together through the war which is over well and enthusiastically.

40 And reply to the ambassadors who have come that the Athenians fought for [the freedom] of the Greeks; and when [the Spartans] were campaigning against the Greeks contrary to the oaths and the

45 agreement, they themselves supported, and they called on the other allies to provide the support due to the Athenians, abiding by the oaths, against those who were [contravening] the treaty, and they think it right. (trans. S. Lambert and P. J. Rhodes)¹¹⁹

The dismay over allying with the Spartans, precisely those enemies the Second Athenian Confederacy was meant to combat, was probably more widespread than our (Athenian) sources reveal. It is not necessarily an expression of sympathy towards the Thebans, but the abandonment of a member of that pact for an alliance with the 'sworn enemy' of the Confederacy was certainly striking. Perhaps this ties in to the 'shame' Xenophon speaks of, when discussing the Athenian decision to no longer view the Thebans in a positive light.

Additionally, if fears over growing Theban power were pressing, the change in alignment would have occurred in 371, or even in 373 after Plataia and Thespiiai were subjugated. Realist discourse habitually dominates the interpretations of the Spartan-Athenian alliance. Fears over growing Theban power were the overriding motive for the rapprochement,

¹¹⁹ RO 31; *AIO ad loc.* The Mytileneans were seemingly unsatisfied with Athenian explanations. The anti-Spartan lines of the Prospectus (RO 22 ll. 9–12) were never deleted, unlike the lines on the King's Peace (ll. 12–15).

despite the fact that none of the aggression was aimed at the Athenians.¹²⁰ Yet the Spartan envoys make no mention of this, nor is it the key aspect of Prokles' speech.¹²¹ It is the evocation of the Athenian love for justice and protection of the weak that triggers the vote, framed within the context of future benefits for the Athenian people.

However, Prokles does not deviate from the Spartan arguments that much. He repeats the past collaborations between Spartans and Athenians, but he uses these exempla to gradually mould his speech to convince the Athenians to engage in an advantageous commitment of *charis* with the Spartans. Prokles thus cleverly adheres to the Assembly's discursive parameters by placing the future advantages from this policy at the forefront of his speech.¹²² Appeals to future benefits that align with the Athenian self-identification as protectors of the weak (*philanthropia*) and their bravery makes this explicit: whereas the Spartans needed only to vote to save Athens, the Athenians have to risk their lives to do the same for their former benefactors. The speaker thus does not need to emphasise Theban *hybris* in this exhortation. He can simply focus on the Athenian perspective on the upcoming clash.

The alliance of 369 ended the neighbourly collaboration, but was not the result of an inexorable clash between inveterate enemies. Rather, Athenian desires to act as just guardians of the peace and protectors of other poleis proved instrumental in shifting their allegiance towards the Spartans. The potential benefits for the polis were another factor. That does not exculpate the Thebans from any wrongdoing, nor are the Athenians solely to blame. The Athenians proved rather helpless in stopping Epameinondas from gutting Spartan power in the Peloponnese, perhaps demonstrating their lack of enthusiasm to fully commit to the Spartans' defence. Their change in alliance proved more harmful than helpful, leading to the loss of Oropos in 366 that eventually cost Kallistratos his place as a leading Athenian politician.¹²³ It is a testimony to the continued ambivalence towards the

¹²⁰ Buckler and Beck 2008: 43: 'At the real heart of the matter, however, is that Athens and Sparta had come to fear Thebes more than they did each other'; Cartledge 2020 (on the peace of 375): 'The three main Greek parties concerned – Sparta, Athens and Thebes – all had their own reasons for agreeing to a cessation of hostilities; the Spartans and the Athenians mainly because Thebes's post-378 resurgence had been alarmingly too swift and too complete.' He adds a Theban takeover of Oropos in 373, but there is no evidence for this: Chapter 4.1.2. Hornblower 2011: 255: 'Nevertheless the chief Athenian anxiety continued to be Thebes'; Mackil 2013: 70.

¹²¹ Steinbock 2013: 198–201, 328–30 makes a similar argument against 'fear' and realism.

¹²² For the parameters: Barbato 2020.

¹²³ Xenophon omits it but refers to the loss of Oropos: Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.1.

new political constellation and shows that anti-Spartans and pro-Boiotians could always be found in Athens.

That the hostility towards the Boiotians would devolve into a cold war after the Battle of Mantinea best embodies the idiosyncratic relationship between the neighbours, rather than a status quo of distrust and hatred. The farewell to friendly neighbourhood was the result of a rise of anxiety over Theban actions, but was sealed only several years after by evocations of the Athenian past as *philanthropoi*. That the decisive speech was delivered by a Spartan ally, instead of a Spartan ambassador, further underlines how the 'Auld Alliance' of 369 aimed at protecting the weaker Spartan allies because of the role of *prostates* the Athenians had adjudged themselves after the Peace Conference of 371. Its eventual purpose was to take a leading role in Greek affairs, wishfully bypassing the leading power at that time, Thebes (Chapter 2.6). Similar to the example of the Plataean alliance described above, the decision to go to war with the neighbours was not a natural outcome but the result of an innate Athenian desire to avoid war with the Thebans while at the same time curbing their ambitions, much to the detriment of their existing alliance. It was akin to having their cake and eating it too.

3.2 Friends in the Right Places: Elite Interaction, *xenia* Ties and Reciprocity

Leading politicians in the two regions distinctly influenced the neighbourly relations on various occasions. The Peisistratids, for instance, enjoyed a friendship with their Theban compatriots, which ensured a peaceful co-existence. (Chapter 2.1). The change in leadership in Thebes after the Peloponnesian War led to a rapprochement between the erstwhile enemies (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.2). Conversely, the pro-Spartan intentions of Leontiades and his group created a situation in which the neighbours were perceived as enemies of the *koinon* (Chapters 2.4, 2.5, 3.2.3). The attitudes of elites and the mechanisms to change either attitudes or leadership thus merit analysis. These elites did not function in a vacuum and they were not the only factors altering relations. Instead, this section shows how these elites could give the final push to influence neighbourly relations, either positively or negatively.

What were the mechanisms for elite interaction? One way to maintain ties was through guest-friendship (*xenia*). These were often unofficial elite people and their personal relations engaging in a reciprocal friendship.

Sometimes these connections were elevated to officialdom as *proxenos*, where citizens acted as representatives of the interests of other poleis within their home town.¹²⁴ These representatives could speak or act on behalf of the granting community with hopes of improving relations. Most of these ties were founded upon the concept of reciprocity, with elites exchanging favours and courtesies, just as in inter-polis affairs (Chapter 3.3). Military intervention was a more forceful way to influence matters. The Boiotians were no stranger to being on the receiving end of external interventions. Both the Spartans and Athenians were guilty of such interference on numerous occasions (Chapter 3.2.3). Their willingness to invest time, money and manpower to effectuate a change in Boiotian leadership reveals the strategic importance of the region throughout the Classical period.

The evidence for some of these interactions may be slim and thus should not be overstated. What this analysis demonstrates is how *xenia* ties could have played a role in inter-polis relations as an additional factor to other considerations. In the case of the stasis in mid-fifth-century Boiotia, for instance, strategic interests were likely the primary factor for intervention after the Battle of Tanagra (Chapters 2.4, 3.2.3). Yet the appeal of Boiotian exiles in Athens may have convinced the *demos* to act quickly. Sometimes an unfriendly disposition towards the Spartans helped elites to promote the interests of the neighbour, as the cases of Themistocles and Ismenias demonstrate (Chapters 3.2.1, 3.2.2). Personal ties were therefore useful mechanisms for improving relations, but elite manoeuvrings were just as often dictated by self-interested motives, such as improving one's standing within the community.

3.2.1 Athenians and Boiotians after the Persian Wars

The decades after the Persian Wars of 480/79 remain enigmatic with regard to neighbourly relations. Scholars point out that the previous animosity continued after Xerxes' withdrawal. The lack of references to conflict suggests otherwise. The presence of veterans who understood the complicated nature of the war and the choices made, including the initial resistance by segments of Boiotian society, allowed for a persisting, nuanced picture of the conflict. This prevented the telescoping of events into a narrower narrative in the decades following Xerxes' invasion (Chapters 2.3, 5.2.3).¹²⁵ Segments of Athenian society could still develop a pejorative image of the Thebans and others but this constituted only *one*

¹²⁴ Herman 1987; Mack 2015; Mitchell 1997. ¹²⁵ Steinbock 2013: 116–17.

picture of the Persian Wars. This alerts us to the dangers of assuming a monolithic picture of malleable conceptions such as memory and attitudes. The experience of veterans allowed the complexities of this recent past to persist in their political outlook. This mitigated the influence of 'revanchist' notions towards the Boiotians, in both sentiment and politics.

One of these veterans was Themistocles, a leading figure in Athenian politics after the war. His actions in the Delphic Amphictyony reflect his quasi-sympathetic attitude, mentioned by Plutarch in his *Life of Themistocles*. Themistocles opposed the Spartans' wishes to exclude the Boiotians and other medizers from the Delphic Amphictyony on account of their collaboration with the Persians:

At the Amphictyonic Council, the Lacedaimonians introduced motions that all cities be excluded from the Alliance which had not taken part in fighting against the Mede. So Themistocles, fearing lest, if they should succeed in excluding the Thessalians and the Argives and the Thebans too from the Council, they would control the votes completely and carry through their own wishes, spoke in behalf of the protesting cities, and changed the sentiments of the delegates by showing that only thirty-one cities had taken part in the war, and that the most of these were altogether small; it would be intolerable, then, if the rest of Hellas should be excluded and the convention be at the mercy of the two or three largest poleis. It was for this reason particularly that he became obnoxious to the Lacedaimonians, and they therefore tried to advance Cimon in public favour, making him the political rival of Themistocles.¹²⁶

The Athenian leader refutes this proposal, since the decision would exclude a great number of members from this influential Council. It would transform the Amphictyony into a vehicle of two powers, rather than serve its actual purpose. Themistocles' intention here was to prevent the Spartans from taking over the Amphictyonic Council to acquire power and prestige. His protection of the Boiotians therefore was not predicated on his previous relationship with them. The realisation of Spartan designs moved his sympathies elsewhere. The final remark by Plutarch is relevant here and serves as a reminder of the influence a popular leader could have. The Spartan desire to promote Cimon shows that other poleis were keen to influence opinions elsewhere, and perhaps we can envision the Boiotians eager to back Themistocles in light of his recent support. Their *proxenoi* in Athens could have been helpful.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Plut. *Them.* 20.3–4. On its influence: Hornblower 2010: 55–8.

¹²⁷ Kilinski 2003–9 describes a contemporary grave of a possible Athenian proxenos of a Boiotian polis, judging from a grave gift on top his grave depicting a Boiotian kantharos. Zaccharini

Considering the source we are dealing with, some caution is merited. Plutarch is a noted Boiotian apologist, writing many centuries after the events. His work is permeated with the fourth-century Panhellenist traditions that continued to influence Greek thinking throughout antiquity. Another warning sign is that this is an encomium of the Athenian leader. Thus we may be dealing with a retrojection of Panhellenic fervour, in which Themistocles acted on behalf of his fellow Greeks in the interest of *all of Hellas*, rather than just his polis.

Yet other examples corroborate Themistocles' behaviour towards the Spartans.¹²⁸ He had proven himself more reluctant to comply with their wishes shortly after the war, when they requested that Athens remained unwallled. Themistocles responded by postponing a reply until a defensible wall was built to present the Spartans with a *fait accompli*.¹²⁹ Moreover, the Spartans were keen to expand their influence in the Amphictyony. One example is the Thessalian expedition under Leotychides after the Persian Wars to end Aleaud rule in the region because of their 'medism'.¹³⁰ The short-lived nature of Hellenic League against the Persians as Spartan and Athenian interests rapidly diverged after the war added further fuel.¹³¹ Plutarch's account might therefore be more veracious than normally assumed.

Allowing the Spartans to pursue their plans would increase their influence in the Delphic Amphictyony and Central Greece, a troubling prospect for the Athenians. The Spartans possessed a proxy vote through the Dorians of the Metropolis, but they aimed to expand their influence at the expense of other groups by obtaining a vote allocated to their polis, rather than a kinship group.¹³² One possible motivation was a desire to

2011: 287–8 doubts whether the Spartans could influence Athenian politics by promoting Cimon, but admits they could use their *philoï* or use Spartan families with Athenian connections and promote Cimon through their *xenoi*.

¹²⁸ Sanchez 2001: 98–103 is the strongest opponent. But see Hornblower 2010: 56: 'Some moderns disbelieve this, fancying in their modest way they know more about Delphi than did Plutarch, a Delphic expert, an amphiktionic representative of Boiotia, and an attested *epimelete* and *agonothete*.' Plutarch draws heavily on Thucydides and Herodotus for his *Life of Themistocles*, making the similarity perhaps less suspect. He relies on lost material, which may have related to this issue: Frost 1980: 3–59; Piccirilli 1983: xl–xliii.

¹²⁹ Thuc. 1.90–2; Diod. 9.39.

¹³⁰ Hdt. 6.72; Paus. 3.7.9; Plut. *De Her. Mal.* 859d; Hornblower 2011: 103. The Athenian alliance with the Thessalians in 461 (Thuc. 1.102) fits with curbing Spartan expansion within the Amphictyony.

¹³¹ Yates 2015.

¹³² Daux 1957: 95–120; Lefèvre 1988: 53; Sanchez 2001; Hornblower 2010: 23–54. Paus. 10.8.2–5 speaks of Lacedaimonian involvement in the sanctuary; Aeschin. 2.116 refers to

restore their reduced prestige in the wake of the Delian League's expulsion of Spartan leadership.¹³³

Herodotus echoes the idea of Athenian protection for medizing poleis against Spartan interests. He relates how the Peloponnesian leaders conceived of a plan to resettle the Ionians in the centres of medizing people and expel the medizers to spend their lives in servitude to the Persian King. But the Athenians resolutely rebuked the plan. Herodotus' work is filled with wholesale transfers of populations, but the case of Ionia is significant. It serves as a middle ground between the Athenians and Persians and is deeply embedded in the contemporary setting in which Herodotus' work was created.¹³⁴ There are hints of contemporary Athenian-Ionian ideology at work here. Yet the creation of such an imaginary scheme indicates that in Athenian eyes, the Spartans were set on punishing the medizers.¹³⁵ Herodotus explains that the Athenian resistance to the plan is based on their sympathy for the Ionians, who were originally their colonists and should be excluded from Spartan decision-making. Strategic interests could have mattered too. Like the Ionians, the Boiotians were of strategic importance. Some had committed to the defence of Central Greece and Attica, contrary to the Spartans, even if Boiotian contributions would be ignored later (Chapter 4.3).¹³⁶

The entanglement between Athenians and Boiotians continued after the war. The Athenians got involved in the reconstruction of Thespiiai. The town had lost a significant portion of their population. After the withdrawal of the Persians, several members of the Greek alliance committed manpower and money to repopulate it. With these people came cults and institutions, whose footprints were still found in later times.¹³⁷ Allegedly one enthusiastic sponsor of the rebuilding plans was Themistocles. According to Herodotus, he enrolled his former slave Sikinnos as a citizen of Thespiiai when they were adopting citizens. Themistocles made him wealthy, suggesting Sikinnos could have become an influential citizen.¹³⁸

Lacedaimonian delegates in the Council. He refers to delegates that are part of the 'Dorian vote', not a Spartan vote.

¹³³ If the date 479/8 is correct: Flacelière 1953: 19–28.

¹³⁴ Hdt. 9.106; Flower and Marincola 2002: *ad loc.* If Tausend 1992: 27 correctly assigns an originally Ionian population to Boiotia, this protection of 'Ionians' adds importance to Athenian interference on their behalf. The Poseidon Helikonios cult may be a remnant of these ties: COB II 206–7.

¹³⁵ Sanchez 2001: 100 rejects any historicity.

¹³⁶ Queyrel-Bottineau 2014b reviews how the Athenians chastised the Spartans throughout the Classical period for their withdrawal to the Peloponnese.

¹³⁷ Roesch 1965: 238–41; Schachter 1996; Schachter and Marchand 2012. ¹³⁸ Hdt. 8.75.

Under Themistocles' leadership we can therefore detect a more benign attitude towards the Boiotians. This attitude was the mostly the result of the Spartan-Athenian estrangement. Nevertheless, he wielded great political clout in Athens, enough to convince the demos to protect the medizing poleis, rather than punish them.¹³⁹

Although Themistocles was influential, he had to rely on supporters and allies in the Assembly. It is here that other elite interactions between the two regions come into play. A recent inscription found at the Herakleion in Thebes, tentatively dated to 500–450 but most likely 500–475, describes honours granted to one or more men and their descendants:¹⁴⁰

[- - - - -]τῶε Ἄριστ-
 [- - - - -]τῶε Ἄθανα-
 [- - - - - κ]αὶ παίδε-
 4 [σσι- - - -]ΤΕΓΟΑΝ:α
 [- - - - -]πρῶπραχ-
 [σίαν - - -] ἔδον α-
 [- - -] Θ[ε]βαῖος υ
 8 [- - -]αἰαβοιοιστάρχιο-ἄντος

The inscription is too fragmentary to provide any conclusive evidence, but the awardee was possibly Athenian, if the ending of line 2 is an indication: [- - - - -]τῶε Ἄθανα (*toe Athana*). The awarding community is unknown but can be guessed at. The language contains hints of Tanagran dialect, found in contemporary inscriptions, making its provenance from that polis quite likely. A *boiotarch* (αἰαβοιοιστάρχιοντος) from Thebes is mentioned, suggesting that the issuing body concerned a supra-polis polity.¹⁴¹ That means this could be a Tanagraian *proxeny* award for an Athenian, validated by the Boiotian *koinon*. Whereas relations with the Plataians and Thespians could be viewed as a natural extension of their participation on the side of the Hellenic League, the same cannot be said of Tanagra. Yet this decree demonstrates that Boiotian sympathisers could be found in Athens. The Persian Wars did not erase that sentiment. The involvement of a polis *and* supra-polis entity shows the friendly interactions were approved on a level above that of personal ties, with the *koinon* interested in cultivating friendly ties with Athenians.

¹³⁹ Hdt. 8.110; 112; 123–5; Forsdyke 2005: 177.

¹⁴⁰ SEG 60.509. Aravantinos 2014: 202; Schachter 2016a: 53 n. 8 dates it to 500–475; BE 2012 no. 200.

¹⁴¹ Aravantinos 2014.

In addition to this unknown *proxenos*, a more famous son of Athens appears to have sympathised with his Boiotian peers. An ostrakon from the Athenian agora, dated to 480–470, indicts Megakles of the Alcmeonid clan.¹⁴² A vote for his ostracism is unremarkable – he was ostracised two times – but the grounds for doing so are salient in this case: ‘on account of Drymos’ (δρυμὸν ἠδὲνεκα).¹⁴³ This economically important area was located on the Attic frontier (Chapter 4.1.1).¹⁴⁴ Angelos Matthaïou interpreted this as a vilification of the Athenian politician because the area was lost to the Boiotians under his leadership, but Mark Munn has provided a different explanation.¹⁴⁵ In his interpretation, Megakles was indicted because of his constructive attitude towards the Boiotians. He preferred to maintain Drymos as a prerogative of his aristocratic peers, rather than pursue the interests of the Athenian city-dwellers by appropriating the lands for the *demos*. Whether this was a case of elite versus the masses – which I find less likely – as opposed to a borderland mentality versus the city-dwellers, the willingness of some Athenians to oust Megakles should not be regarded as inherent hostility towards the Boiotians.¹⁴⁶ They were unsuccessful, as Megakles’ ostracisms were related to different interests, such as his love of horses, money and adultery.¹⁴⁷ In the eyes of those scribbling his name on an ostrakon the impetus for implicating Megakles had to do with his preferences to put personal interests before that of the polis. This could have been an intra-elite reckoning, with others vying to topple an influential politician unafraid to entertain cordial relations with Boiotian peers in the borderlands. The exact nature of this indictment must remain speculative, yet neighbourly animosity does not appear to be the cause. Instead, the appearance of Megakles on ostraca was the consequence of internal rivalries.¹⁴⁸ The Boiotians could thus find friends in the upper echelons of Athenian society. Megakles’ actions may have been motivated by his

¹⁴² SEG 46.82.

¹⁴³ Lewis 1997: 110–15. He dates this ostrakon to Megakles’ second ostracism (Lys. 14.39). For Drymos’ location: Schachter 2016a: 80–112.

¹⁴⁴ Berti 2001: 59–60.

¹⁴⁵ Matthaïou 1992–8; Munn 2010: 197. Fachard 2017 argues the commonalities of Athenian and Boiotian elites in the borders in comparison to their city-dwelling countrymen led to a form of inequality in the borderlands.

¹⁴⁶ Barbato 2020 on the strength of *astu* versus border over mass versus elite.

¹⁴⁷ Forsdyke 2005: 155–6.

¹⁴⁸ That applies to his second ostracism in 471/0 (Forsdyke 2005: 176). She ponders whether the rival aristocratic group was led by Themistocles, but I would think their outlook towards Central Greece would counter that notion. Relatives of Megakles were mentioned in the ostraca, indicating the Alcmeonids were certainly targeted.

personal relations with his peers across the political divide. His actions reveal the Alcmeonid connections with the Boiotians ([Chapter 5.2.1](#)) may have persisted for over seventy years.

A string of Athenian leaders friendly to the Boiotians, such as Themistocles and Megakles, countenanced a friendly neighbourly co-existence in the 470s. Their motives were varied. Themistocles aimed to thwart the Spartans and their political ambition; Megakles' conviviality was based on shared experiences and common pastures. Their efforts underline the importance of friendly leadership to promoting a benign neighbourly relationship. The next example perhaps best embodies that seminal aspect. The rapprochement in 395 followed a devastating war that ended with the proposed destruction of Athens by the Thebans.

3.2.2 *Thrasybulus, Ismenias and the Atticizers in Thebes*

The need for the right kind of leadership to promote reconciliation between former enemies emerges most prominently after the Peloponnesian War. War is atrophy and the unedifying aspects of its horrendous nature came to the fore in this conflict. This particularly applies to the Athenian-Boiotian experience. From the invasion around Tanagra to the clash at Delion, the war brought intensified mutual hostility. That enmity was propelled to greater heights after the massacre at Mykalessos and the depredations the Athenians suffered from the Boiotian plundering and raiding from Dekeleia. It culminated in the Theban proposal to eradicate Athens, to prevent the city turning into a Spartan bulwark against the Boiotians ([Chapter 2.4](#)).

Yet within mere months after this proposal the Thebans were helping Athenian refugees reclaim their city from a pro-Spartan oligarchy. Their aid defied Spartan wishes for extradition. Cracks had started to appear in the pro-Spartan veneer of Boiotian leadership. Their dismissal of Spartan wishes was nevertheless a further step in the deterioration of the relationship and cannot solely account for their indifference. What lay behind this change of heart? The Oxyrhynchus historian offers a glimpse.¹⁴⁹ He describes the situation in Thebes in 395:

The political situation was this: the party of Leontiades were pro-Spartan [oligarchs], and the party of Ismenias were known as [populist] atticizers

¹⁴⁹ The historian was aware of the internal political dynamics of both Athens and Thebes: Occhipinti 2016; Schepens 2001: 223–4; Shrimpton 1991: 195. One dissident is Bleckmann 2006: 58–9. He regards references to Theban internal politics as a façade.

because of the keen support they had offered the exiled Athenian democrats – not that they actually cared about the Athenians, of course. In reality their aim was to disrupt the peace; and it was when they could not persuade the Thebans [to go along with them] that they became an atticizing party with the idea that it would be a better way of making them willing to do mischief. That being the situation in Thebes, and each of the parties now being firmly formed, many people came forward from the cities in Boiotia and joined one or other of the *hetairaia*. At that time and even a short while before, those around Ismenias and Androkleidas were dominant among the Thebans themselves and in the council of the Boiotians, but previously those around Asias and Leontiades held sway over the city through persuasion for some length of time.¹⁵⁰

Leadership in Thebes and the *koinon* had undergone profound changes in a short period of time. The plight of the exiles played second fiddle to considerations of internal politics. It seems perfectly plausible to assume Ismenias and his group were behind the exiles' decree and the antagonism towards the Spartans, even if the exact moment of their ascension to power is uncertain.¹⁵¹ Their method for convincing the populace and the federal council was not through obscurantism: help for the Athenians was never hidden. Instead, Ismenias obtained his influence by appealing to the Theban self-image to help the Athenians (Chapters 3.4.1, 5.2.7).

Ismenias and his followers were not inherently pro-Athenian, as the Oxyrhynchus historian points out. The stars were perfectly aligned for Ismenias to nourish anti-Spartan sentiment. Conflicts over the distribution of the booty from Dekeleia fed into the discontent, while Spartan expansionism in Central Greece and Macedonia was perceived with weary eyes. The implicit reference to Theban medism when preventing the eradication of Athens in 404 was another sign on the wall (Chapter 2.4).¹⁵² Repeated Spartan attempts to intervene in Theban internal affairs fostered resentment in the polis and the region, as alluded to by Isocrates.¹⁵³ Helping the

¹⁵⁰ Hell. Oxy. 20.1–2 (Behrwald). This follows Beresford 2014's translation and new reading of the papyri.

¹⁵¹ The year 404 is the consensual *termine ante quem* for their ascension: Busolt 1908; Cloché 1918; Funke 1980: 47–8; Kagan 1961: 330–2; Lendon 1989; Lérica Lafarga 2007: 613–15; Mackil 2013: 45. I adhere to the term 'group', contra Bearzot 2009, who argues for 'political parties' following set ideologically determined domestic and foreign policies, rather than individual ties.

¹⁵² Booty and destruction, Athens: Xen. Hell. 2.2.19–20; 3.5.5; Plut. Lys. 27. Spartan expansionism: Cartledge 1987: 283. For humanitarian reasons, like the brutality of the Thirty regime in Athens: Hamilton 1979: 150.

¹⁵³ Isoc. 8.98: 'the Lacedaimonians no sooner gained the supremacy than they straightway plotted against the Thebans'. In the Loeb edition, this has been perceived as the capture of the Cadmeia in 380s, but this probably refers to the end of the Peloponnesian War.

Athenians thus served a dual purpose: it garnered clout with the Theban populace and communicated a clear independent course from the Spartans.

In subsequent years tensions within the Peloponnesian League increased. War clouds were gathering over Greece and disputes over pastures around Delphi granted the Boiotians the opportunity to escalate tensions (Chapter 2.5). The Spartans wasted no time. They gathered an army to subdue the Boiotians, who, alarmed by that prospect, immediately sent an ambassador to Athens to arrange an alliance. Xenophon provides an epitome of the ambassadors' speech.¹⁵⁴ The historicity of the speech is doubted, because of the positive evaluation of Athens. According to John Buckler and Vivienne Gray this betrays his subjectivity, and they consider it a fabrication.¹⁵⁵ Its encomiastic qualities are undeniable, but Andocides references a Theban speech in 395, making its occurrence at least credible.¹⁵⁶ Others believe the speech happened, but Xenophon was flexible with his notary skills, keeping only elements that flattered the Athenian crowd.¹⁵⁷ Flattery was not unusual in diplomacy, so perhaps he was not as creative as scholars have assumed.¹⁵⁸ The speech can be regarded as having taken place, whether the historian copied its words exactly or not.

Looking at the speech itself, the first oratorical attack involved a plethora of rational arguments, stressing the benefits of an alliance. The ambassador emphasises the Boiotians would prove far more valuable allies to the Athenians than they were to the Spartans.¹⁵⁹ He then flatters his audience on account of their reputation as protectors of the weak and liberators of oppressed peoples. Next, he recalls the help for the Athenians, demonstrating that the support for the exiles was not predicated on pure altruism:

But when the Lacedaimonians summoned us to the attack upon Piraeus, then the whole polis voted not to join them in the campaign. Therefore, since it is chiefly on your account that the Lacedaimonians are angry with us, we think it is fair that you should aid our polis. And we consider it in a far greater degree incumbent upon all those among you who belonged to the exiled democrats that you should zealously take the field against the Lacedaimonians. For the Lacedaimonians, after establishing you as an oligarchy and making you objects of hatred to the commons, came with a

¹⁵⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.8–15.

¹⁵⁵ Bearzot 2004: 21–30; Buckler and Beck 2008: 58; Gray 1989: 107–12; Schepens 2012. Tuplin 1993: 61 offers a more stringent rebuttal of questions of fabrication.

¹⁵⁶ And. 3.24. This speech is haunted by the spectre of unauthenticity: Chapter 3.4.2.

¹⁵⁷ Dalfen 1976; Seager 1967; Sordi 1950; 1951. ¹⁵⁸ Orsi 2002.

¹⁵⁹ Cartledge 1987: 289–93; Hamilton 1979: 201–5; Tuplin 1993: 63 identified these aspects of the speech as *the* convincing elements to conclude the alliance.

great force, ostensibly as your allies, and delivered you over to the democrats. Consequently, in so far as it depended upon them, you would certainly have perished, but the commons here saved you. (my translation, adapted from the Loeb edition)¹⁶⁰

He emphasises the recent help for the exiles as evidence of their good intentions. It demonstrates how reciprocity was a key factor in establishing the alliance by stressing the efforts the Thebans undertook on the Athenians' behalf (Chapter 3.3).¹⁶¹ Whether the request was reasonable within the perimeters of reciprocity is another matter – Xenophon represents it as Theban excessive greed and avarice – but nominally, some form of quid pro quo was expected.¹⁶² Hence the ambassador frames the speech according to the Assembly's norms by portraying the advantages incumbent upon the Athenians should they join their neighbours.¹⁶³

Thrasybulus replied to the speech by proclaiming a Spartan attack on Boiotian soil would be met with an Athenian military response, then moved to pass a decree to conclude an alliance with the Thebans. He was aware of the risk his countrymen were taking on behalf of the northern neighbours, as he admits himself:

Thrasybulus, after replying to the ambassadors with the decree, also pointed out that although the Piraeus was without walls, they would nevertheless take the risk (παρακινδυνεύσοιεν) to repay a favour to them greater than the one they received. 'For you,' he said, 'did not join the expedition against us, while we fight on your side against them, if they march against.' (trans. B. Steinbock)¹⁶⁴

In the Loeb version the verb παρακινδυνεύσοιεν is translated as 'brave the danger'. Xenophon uses this verb only twice in the *Hellenica*, which emphasises its importance here. The translations seem similar but do not convey the same message. Braving a danger forms part of a different cognitive sphere than taking a risk does.¹⁶⁵ The Athenians were not acting

¹⁶⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.8–9.

¹⁶¹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.7–16. Steinbock 2013: 251–3 identified these arguments as the most convincing parts for the Athenians.

¹⁶² Bearzot 2004: 21–30 on how this episode reflects Boiotian avarice.

¹⁶³ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.15: 'but be well assured, men of Athens, that we believe we are inviting you to benefits far greater for your state than for our own'. This included the recovery and possible expansion of their former empire.

¹⁶⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.16.

¹⁶⁵ In the only other instance that Xenophon employs the verb, it is translated as 'take the risk': Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.5. The French translation (Hatzfeld 1954) goes thus: 'Thrasybule, qui fut chargé de leur transmettre ce vote en manière de réponse, leur fit en outre remarquer que c'était à un moment où le Pirée était sans murailles qu'ils acceptaient quand même de leur rendre un

altruistically by helping the Boiotians, as the ambassador promises a new Athenian *arche*. However, the self-interest was not that evident initially. They risked attacks on Attica without the protection of the Long Walls, which were still unfinished.¹⁶⁶ They were therefore more aware of the prospective risks by accepting the alliance, risks they may not have taken without the possible benefits or without the trust stemming from the recent help from the Thebans.¹⁶⁷

However, Xenophon omits a vital piece of information. He repeatedly implies the alliance was between the Athenians and Thebans. But in reality it concerned the *Boiotoi*, as evidenced by a fragmentary bilateral treaty found on the Athenian Agora, dated to 395.¹⁶⁸

[- - - - -
 - - - - -]
 [.]οι [- - - - -
 - - - - -]
 ²vacat²
 Alliance of the Boiotians and Athenians
 for all time.
 If anybody goes against the Athenians for war either
 5 by land or sea, the Boiotians shall
 help with all their strength as the Athenians
 call on them, as far as possible; and if
 anybody goes against the Boiotians for war either
 by land or by sea the Athenians shall help
 10 with all their strength as the Boiotians
 call on them, as far as possible. If it is
 [decided to add or subtract anything] by the Athenians
 [and Boiotians deliberating jointly?]
 - - - - -]
 15 [- - - - -]
 (trans. S. Lambert)

The alliance was concluded with the *koinon* and implies that the Athenians accepted the status quo in the borderlands, such as the

service plus grand que celui qu'ils avaient resu d'eux.' This translation avoids this issue. In the Funeral Oration, Pericles speaks of meeting dangers (Thuc. 2.39), for which the phrase 'τρόπων ἀνδρείας ἐθέλομεν κινδυνεύειν' is used.

¹⁶⁶ Conwell 2008. ¹⁶⁷ Van Wijk 2021a.

¹⁶⁸ RO 6; AIO *ad loc.* Unfortunately, the stone breaks where reasons for the alliance would be mentioned. See Matthaiou 2012: 14 on the stone, with a preceding decree perhaps ratifying the alliance.

Boiotian occupation of Plataia and Oropos (Chapters 4.1.2, 4.1.3). The difference between Thebans and Boiotians is more than semantical, despite Xenophon's wizardry with terms. Accepting an alliance with the Boiotians meant Ismenias and his party's influence stretched beyond their hometown and affected the *koinon*'s policy. Despite the perils the Athenians were undertaking, they did not press for further concessions from their allies, and the treaty is one between equals rather than hierarchical.¹⁶⁹

In addition to the recollection of reciprocity, elite relationships played an equally central role in the formation of the alliance. The leaders in both poleis, Ismenias and Thrasybulus, had already gotten acquainted during the latter's exile in Thebes. Ismenias' help was certainly not forgotten, since the help Thrasybulus received was immortalised in the Theban Herakleion (Chapter 5.2.7). Moreover, Ismenias knew the rules of the trade and must have informed the ambassador on the norms of interstate relations by invoking the previous help granted to the Athenians.¹⁷⁰ The firm grasp of his group over Thebes and the federal council ensured the *koinon* was a willing friend, whereas the presence of several former exiles could have exerted a strong influence on the decision-making process in the Athenian Assembly. They were possibly essential in swinging the vote in favour of an alliance, despite Xenophon's claims that the alliance was accepted 'unanimously' or by a large majority (πάμπολλοι).¹⁷¹

Further strengthening the bonds was Thrasybulus' role as the most prominent politician in Athens. His acquaintance with Ismenias and his group laid the groundwork for the earlier rapprochement and the eventual alliance. Without a change in leadership in Theban politics and their intervention in protecting the future Athenian leader, opportunities for reconciliation and collaboration would have been severely impeded. It demonstrates the need for the right leadership at the right time to influence neighbourly policy, something Ismenias was certainly aware of if he wanted to counteract the Spartan ambitions in Central Greece.

¹⁶⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.14 where the ambassador suggests the Boiotians would be part of the future empire: νῦν δέ γε εἰκὸς τῶ παντὶ ἔρρωμενεστέρως ὑμῖν συμμαχεῖν ἡμᾶς ἢ τότε Λακεδαιμονίους.

¹⁷⁰ Despite their boorish reputation, the Thebans were well versed in picking the right ambassadors for the job, fluent in the diplomatic lingo of the time: Tuci 2019.

¹⁷¹ Canevaro 2018 argues unanimity was the consensus-based anchor of democratic decision-making and was not a façade to cover disputes. He explains how a lot of these decisions were extensively deliberated upon before a consensus was reached. On the exiles' presence, perhaps the ambassador's referral to 'you' and Thrasybulus' reply with 'us' referred to the exiles in attendance, rather than the generic 'Men of Athens'?

Changes in attitude were not always determined by proclivity towards the other. It is tempting to denote leaders as ‘pro-Athenian’ or ‘pro-Boiotian’ but that disregards their epichoric outlook. They often acted in the interest of their own polis first. Leaders may have entertained warmer bonds with segments of Boiotian or Athenian society, but that could not obfuscate that ‘democratic connections’ were not instrumental, nor was it a matter of ‘anti-Spartan’ sentiment. It was a mixture of personal connections, local interests and shared opponents that steered neighbourly relations. Whereas in certain cases the Athenians could promote ‘polis-centred’ elites in 424 when trying to topple the *koinon* (Chapter 3.2.3), there were no qualms in collaborating with a proud ‘*koinonist*’ like Ismenias in the 390s.¹⁷²

Therefore prudence is required when speaking of ‘pro-Athenian’ or democratic parties, as their preferences included an array of interests and beliefs that cannot easily be captured in one word or ideology. But when interests aligned with the right leadership, it allowed for collaboration or triggered a hostile response that undid previous relations. The outcome was not the result of an inveterate enmity, but sometimes dictated by the change in leadership. In each of the previous two cases, these changes in leadership occurred as a result of intra-polis rivalries, spurred on by possible threats from outside. Yet a peaceful transition was not always the case, as the next section will demonstrate.

3.2.3 *The Descendants of Oedipus: Stasis in Boiotia and External Intervention*

Pericles allegedly used the metaphor of holm oaks battering their limbs against one another to describe Boiotian politics, ridden with strife and internecine fighting.¹⁷³ There is poetic license at play in the silver-tongued politician’s words, but there is sufficient evidence that Oedipus’ heritage encumbered his descendants in the fifth and fourth centuries. This discordance was exploited by the Athenians and Spartans, who both wished to install leaders in Boiotia who were friendly to their cause.

The Spartans were the first to exploit the divisions in Boiotia. In 458 they sent an expedition to Doris to help against the Phocians. The outward journey went by ship across the Corinthian Gulf, but the return went overland. On the march home, Nicomedes, the Spartan army leader,

¹⁷² Thuc. 4.76. Ar. *Eq.* 475–9 for the plans in 424. ¹⁷³ Arist. *Rhet.* 3.1407a.1–5.

lingered in Boiotia, pondering whether to force his way through Megara or ship the troops across to the Peloponnese and risk a naval engagement with the Athenians. In the cursory version of events Thucydides presents that was apparently not an issue on the first leg of the expedition.¹⁷⁴ The historian offers no further explanations. He only mentions a disgruntled faction from Athens that approached Nicomedes with a plan to topple the democracy.¹⁷⁵ The plan amounted to nothing, as the entire Athenian levy, joined by a thousand Argives and other allied forces, attacked the Spartans near Tanagra. The latter won the contested battle and marched through the Megarid, seemingly untroubled by their earlier trepidations (Chapter 2.4).

Diodorus provides a more extensive account. According to the first-century historian, the Athenians forced the Spartans' hand by sending a fleet into the Corinthian Gulf and troops to the Megarid. While the Spartans lingered in Boiotia, the Thebans offered to fight the Athenians on the Spartans' behalf:

During this year the Thebans, who had been humbled because of their alliance with Xerxes, sought a way by which they might recover both their ancient influence and reputation. Consequently, since all the Boiotians held the Thebans in disdain and no longer paid any attention to them, the Thebans asked the Lacedaimonians to aid them in winning for their city the hegemony over all Boiotia; and they promised that in return for this favour they would make war by themselves upon the Athenians, so that it would no longer be necessary for the Spartans to lead troops beyond the border of the Peloponnesus. And the Lacedaimonians [assented],¹⁷⁶ judging the proposal to be to their advantage and believing that, if Thebes should grow in strength, she would be a kind of counterweight to the increasing power of the Athenians; consequently, since they had at the time a large army in readiness at Tanagra, they increased the extent of the circuit wall of Thebes and compelled the cities of Boiotia to subject themselves to the Thebans.¹⁷⁷

Diodorus provides an intriguing local insight into the Tanagra affair. The alleged reason for the downtrodden state of the 'Thebans' is a striking

¹⁷⁴ Thuc. 1.107–8. Chapter 4.3 analyses this manoeuvre. In Chapter 4.2.1 the importance of the Boiotian harbours for Athenian strategy is noted.

¹⁷⁵ There were real concerns over civil war erupting in 458: Aesch. *Eum.* 856–66; 976–87; Mitchell 2022.

¹⁷⁶ 'Assented' has been emended, as the verb is missing in the manuscript: Green 2006: 160 n. 328.

¹⁷⁷ Diod. 11.81.1–3. This translation follows Green 2006: 158–9 contra Haillet 2002; Oldfather 1946.

one. If medism cast such a heavy burden, the open accusations by other medizing Boiotian poleis is remarkable (Chapter 5.2.3). Perhaps it would be better to read this phrase as the Theban families that had been in charge of the polis during Xerxes' invasion and had lost their influence afterwards. The chance of recapturing their prominent position with the Spartan help would then have been a perfect opportunity to oust the Athenian-leaning or neutral groups.

The Sicilian historian presents this collusion as occurring *after* the Battle of Tanagra, but as Peter Green observes, Diodorus may have garbled the chronology.¹⁷⁸ From the surrounding narrative it appears he interjects an episode into the Boiotian account. This sequence of events is supported by remarks from Plato and Pausanias, who place Boiotian forces at the battle. Presumably, this was cavalry as the Spartans had not brought any. It suggests the Thebans had joined the Peloponnesian League prior to the conflict.¹⁷⁹ Although Diodorus grants a sliver of light in the cursory darkness of Thucydides' narrative, his account is frequently rejected over its sloppiness in chronological matters.¹⁸⁰ Thucydides' retelling, however, obfuscates any notion of Spartan agency, aside from intervening on behalf of the Dorians. Would that have been the singular objective? And would they have rushed into Central Greece without realising the Athenians could block their return?

Various explanations have been offered. Ian Plant regards the move into Boiotia as a Spartan initiative.¹⁸¹ They aimed to put pressure on Oropos and the Athenian grain supply to force a battle and draw troops away from Aigina. Joseph Roisman stresses the internal Athenian divisions, strengthened by the return of the philolaconian Cimon from exile.¹⁸² His influence could have hindered affirmative action against the Spartans in the ongoing war. Resolve was needed: by posing the Spartans as trapped, the Assembly could be convinced to send the entire levy to use this opportunity for a victory. A final proposition regards the Doris campaign as a distraction from the start. Instead, the re-establishment of a Theban

¹⁷⁸ Green 2006: 160–1 n. 329: 'This paragraph makes it clear that Diodorus' preliminary background to his account of Myronides' campaign in Boiotia refers back to the period immediately before Tanagra, the only time when the Spartans had "a large force in readiness" there. All the (very plausible) activity here described will have taken place then. This at once removes numerous inconsistencies.'

¹⁷⁹ [Pl.] *Alc.* 1 (112c); Paus. 1.29.9. For the horsemen: Pritchett 1996: 157–8. However, he exaggerates the number of Boiotians present at the battle.

¹⁸⁰ Buck 1970: 219–21; Walters 1978. Others are more lenient: Badian 1993: 213 n. 50; Sacks 2014: 4–5.

¹⁸¹ Plant 1994. ¹⁸² Roisman 1993; Vanotti 2018.

counterweight to the Athenians had always been the intention.¹⁸³ This is plausible but denies the religious and propinquitous importance of the Doris campaign, as Simon Hornblower pointed out.¹⁸⁴

Quite likely it was a mixture of considerations. The Spartans were wont to be secretive about campaign objectives. We may question whether Thucydides recorded *all* considerations or whether his later Spartan informants were apodictic enough in their stories.¹⁸⁵ The Spartans presumably envisioned the campaign as a good opportunity to thwart the Athenians. Camping near Tanagra is a logical move if they wished to instigate a political change.¹⁸⁶ Tanagra had been a loyal ally of Thebes and planting a Spartan army in the Boiotian heartland avoided confrontation with more pro-Athenian poleis like Thespiai or Plataia.¹⁸⁷ The tearing down of the Tanagran walls after Oinophyta could also reflect the Athenian punishment of a disobedient ally, especially if relations were closer after the Persian Wars than normally assumed.¹⁸⁸ The loss of *autonomia* occurred only after the later battle of Oinophyta, suggesting Boiotian poleis could have been members of the Delian League (Chapter 2.4).¹⁸⁹ Even if the Boiotians were an Athenian ally, their borders were permeable for the Spartans.¹⁹⁰ Forcing their way through could have signalled to the region's inhabitants that the Athenians were unwilling to protect the friendly elites in the cities and offered Boiotians with other convictions a chance for change. The suggestion that Tanagra was a pro-Athenian hegemon prior and was therefore targeted by the Spartans should

¹⁸³ Cloché 1946–7: 141; 1952: 66–70; Kagan 1969: 86–90. ¹⁸⁴ Hornblower 2010: 131.

¹⁸⁵ Plant 1994. Pritchett 1996: 149–55; Roisman 1993 put more credence in Thucydides' integrity but overestimate the reliability of his Spartan informants (Rahe 2019: 168 n. 35). Thucydides' brevity is nevertheless odd, since Tanagra constitutes a central place in the *Pentakontaetia*: Piérart 1987.

¹⁸⁶ Mitchell 2022 suggests it was a deliberate and aggressive Spartan move to camp on the border.

¹⁸⁷ Schachter 2016a: 80–112.

¹⁸⁸ It may explain why the Athenians crossed Boiotian borders unopposed, despite being armed (Mosley 2007; Thuc. 4.78). An alliance between Spartans and Thebans would allow an unharmed march through Boiotia.

¹⁸⁹ Naxos, Samos and Thasos were forced to give up their fleets, had their walls destroyed and paid tribute after their rebellion was subdued. Thasos is listed in the *ATL* (*IG* I³ 259 l. 14 = *OR* 119A); *ATL* III 272 restores Naxos in the lists for 454/3. The Samians were a special case because they paid reparations rather than tribute (*IG* I³ 48). Thucydides mentions that a democracy was imposed on Samos, but whether it was part of the settlement is unclear (Diod. 12.28.4). Hansen 1995a asserts *autonomia* is incompatible with being an Athenian subject; see Thuc. 7.57.

¹⁹⁰ The north-western borders of the region are easily permeated by an army: Burn 1949. This would negate the need to obtain permission to cross a polis' territory under arms: Mosley 2007; Thuc. 4.78.

be rejected as there is no evidence supporting Tanagraian dominance in Boiotia at the time.¹⁹¹

If the Theban takeover occurred before the Battle of Tanagra, it is remarkable that neither Thucydides nor Diodorus mention Boiotians at the battle, unlike Plato and Pausanias.¹⁹² Is it a later insertion by Plato and Pausanias? In Plato's case, the contemporary conflicts with the Boiotians possibly inspired a retrojection of their involvement at Tanagra, whereas Pausanias relies on a grave monument of two fallen Athenians.¹⁹³

Diodorus mentions a four-month truce after the battle; Thucydides does not.¹⁹⁴ Truce or not, the Spartans withdrew after Tanagra. An explanation for their expedited withdrawal comes from Diodorus, who states the Thebans proposed to support the Spartans so they did not have to conduct campaigns outside the Peloponnese. The new walls the Spartans helped construct could have been sufficient in their eyes to ward off further incursions, or they did not expect a swift Athenian response. Nicomedes thus had achieved a secondary objective of their campaign: bring the Boiotians into the anti-Athenian fold.

The Spartan-installed Theban dominance faltered after sixty-two days, when Athenian forces defeated the new Boiotian leaders at Oinophyta.¹⁹⁵ What prompted the acute response, so shortly after tasting defeat at Tanagra? Thucydides is cursory in his treatment and offers no insights. He notes the Tanagraian walls were destroyed after Oinophyta and Boiotia was subdued.¹⁹⁶ Robert Buck argues political opportunism was at play here.¹⁹⁷ The hypothesis certainly has its merits – why waste a good crisis? – but ignores the groundwork laid for this opportunity. Diodorus provides a glimpse but garbles the chronology of the battles and conflates several battles into one. Despite his confusing chronology, he possibly presents a valuable Boiotian tradition. The first-century historian's account indicates

¹⁹¹ Schachter 2016a: 61–2 contra Amit 1971: 62; Babelon 1907: 974–5; Fowler 1957; Gehrke 1985: 165; Head 1881: 21–2; Hegyi 1972: 25 n. 14; Rahe 2019: 168. It is based on Tanagraian coinage, but the chronology is notoriously difficult and coinage does not equate leadership.

¹⁹² Thucydides only mentions 'allies' in the campaign to Doris: Thuc. 1.107.2 (καὶ τῶν συμμάχων μυριοῖς). Could it be that some segments of Boiotia fought on the Athenian side at Tanagra? Thuc. 1.107.6 mentions 'respective contingents from the rest of their allies' besides the Argives (καὶ τῶν ἄλλων συμμάχων ὡς ἕκαστοι). Boiotians were named as allies in a Thessalian campaign some years later: Thuc. 1.111.

¹⁹³ Roller 1989: 71–2 rejects Pausanias' reference to this battle. Plato places the battle of Oinophyta two days after Tanagra, rather than Thucydides' sixty-two, making it possible that he conflates the later battle with that of Tanagra, or as Green 2010: 160–1 n. 333 asserts, several battles were fought.

¹⁹⁴ Diod. 11.80.6. ¹⁹⁵ Thuc. 1.108.3 mentions sixty-two days. ¹⁹⁶ Thuc. 1.107–8.

¹⁹⁷ Buck 2008.

a recent turnaround had occurred in Boiotian politics and the Athenians may have been keen to reverse it.

An unlikely source provides some further layering: Plato's *Menexenus*. This Platonic dialogue contains a passage where after much trepidation Socrates delivers a funeral oration allegedly taken from Aspasia. During this eulogy, he makes the following statement:

and thereby our city was plunged against its will into war with the Greeks. Thereupon, when war had broken out, they encountered the Lacedaimonians at Tanagra while fighting in defence of the liberties of the Boiotians; and though the battle itself was indecisive, it was decided by the subsequent result. For whereas the enemy retired and made off, deserting those whom they had come to assist, our men won a victory after a two days' battle at Oinophyta, and rightfully restored those who were wrongfully exiled. These were the first of our men who, after the Persian war and now helping Greeks against Greeks in the cause of freedom, proved themselves men of valour and delivered those whom they were aiding; and they were the first to be honoured by the polis and laid to rest in this tomb.¹⁹⁸

Scholars viewed the eulogy as ironic, a mockery of the Athenian self-image, and rejected its historical value.¹⁹⁹ Admittedly, the tone is mocking and the possibility of aristocratic philosophers ridiculing the beliefs of the Athenian citizenry is not unfounded. David Engels argued that the dialogue is best viewed as a serious fourth-century political pamphlet written by an unknown author.²⁰⁰ The historical authenticity of the passage and what it claims about Athenian motives leading to Oinophyta thus attains more credibility.²⁰¹

The evocation of liberation should not be read as an Athenian canard. There were segments of the population that interpreted the incursion at Oinophyta within that framework. The proposal to intervene was probably brought forward in the Assembly along those lines. The evocation of altruism combined with serving the interests of the polis are not mutually exclusive.²⁰² There would have been no compunction to frame re-installing friendly elites for the benefit of the polis as an altruistic action to restore wrongfully exiled refugees.²⁰³ The notion of protecting and helping the

¹⁹⁸ Pl. *Menex.* 242b–c. ¹⁹⁹ Henderson 1975: 35–6. ²⁰⁰ Engels 2012.

²⁰¹ Sansone 2020: 11–16, 135–8 is surer of Plato's authorship, albeit admits the eulogy has ironic undertones.

²⁰² Barbato 2020: 58–65.

²⁰³ For later parallels of Boiotian exiles fleeing to Athens: *IG I³ 23* (447/6 BCE, decree for four Thespians); *IG I³ 73* (424/3 BCE, Orchomenians); *IG I³ 72* (414 BCE); Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.30–1; Plut. *Pel.* 6.3; *SEG 32.47* (382 BCE).

emigrés who had fled persecution from (Theban) illicit behaviour certainly meshes with the Athenian self-image.²⁰⁴ The core of the decision to march on Oinophyta remains intact, even if exaggerated. It was a desire to reconstitute pro-Athenian elites to ensure the Spartans did not have a befriended power on Athens' doorstep.

The Athenian willingness to intervene is easily explained. Intervention removed a significant danger on their frontier, as a hostile Boiotia was a bane to Athenian success (Chapter 4.3). To maintain command of the First Peloponnesian War, it was paramount to keep an open channel into Central Greece to cut off Spartan movements. Moreover, the truce with the Spartans prevented their participation, granting a realistic chance of besting the isolated Theban regime in battle, not to mention the possibility of obtaining help from other disgruntled elements within the region. The victory at Oinophyta inaugurated a period of Athenian domination, sustained and abetted by the Boiotian exiles who had requested help.

The political preferences of these restored exiles is harder to gauge. Aristotle remarks that the democracy in Thebes collapsed due to bad government after Oinophyta.²⁰⁵ Paul Cartledge views this as a retrojection or Aristotle's way of saying that the previous oligarchic clique had broadened its threshold for participation in politics.²⁰⁶ But why would a democracy be incompatible with pro-Spartan affiliations? And should we assume the Athenians collaborated only with democracies? The Spartans wished to re-establish Theban dominance to counterweigh the Athenians; Theban convictions were of less importance. Nor were the Athenians unscrupulous about supporting oligarchs whenever the situation called for it.²⁰⁷

Also in the following point the Athenians seem to me to act ill-advisedly: in cities embroiled in civil strife they take the side of the lower class. This they do deliberately; for if they preferred the upper class, they would prefer those who are contrary-minded to themselves. In no city is the superior element well-disposed to the populace, but in each city it is the worst part which is well disposed to the populace. For like is well disposed to like. Accordingly the Athenians prefer those sympathetic to themselves. Whenever they have undertaken to prefer the upper class, it has

²⁰⁴ Mitchell 2022 suggests Plato might refer to the pro-Athenian Boiotian cities in the borderlands.

²⁰⁵ Arist. *Pol.* 1302b: 'as for example at Thebes the democracy was destroyed owing to bad government after the battle of Oinophyta'.

²⁰⁶ Cartledge 2020: 104. ²⁰⁷ Brock 2009.

not turned out well for them; within a short time the people in Boiotia were enslaved; similarly when they preferred the Milesian upper class, within a short time that class had revolted and cut down the people; similarly when they preferred the Spartans to the Messenians, within a short time the Spartans had overthrown the Messenians and were making war on the Athenians.²⁰⁸

The account stems from an oligarchic pamphlet from the late fifth century, making his reflections on Athenian tergiversations all the more striking.²⁰⁹ No umbilical cord existed between ‘democracy’ and ‘Athens’ in the realm of politics as interests could be re-negotiated for political expedience. Democracies were a preferred partner because of the ideological similarities, but pragmatism trumped other considerations. The need for friendly leadership prompted the Athenian intervention, but their dominance over Boiotia proved ephemeral and was overturned after the Battle of Koroneia in 446 (Chapters 2.4, 5.2.5). The ousted elites found their way southwards, but this time a response was not forthcoming.²¹⁰

The thought of revisiting a possible coup in Boiotia did not leave Athenian minds. In 429 and 426 they campaigned against the *koinon* with hopes of prompting popular uprisings across the region.²¹¹ A more concrete plan was conceived in 424:

Hippocrates and himself (Demosthenes) had overtures made to them by certain men in the cities in Boiotia, who wished to change the constitution and introduce a democracy as at Athens; Ptoiodoros, a Theban exile, being the chief mover in this intrigue. The seaport town of Siphai, in the bay of Krisai, in the Thespian territory, was to be betrayed to them by one party; Chaironeia (a dependency of what was formerly called the Minyan, now the Boiotian, Orchomenos), to be put into their hands by

²⁰⁸ [Xen.] *AP*. 3.10–11. Robinson 2011: 53–4 argues a Theban democracy dissipated after the Battle of Oinophyta and was replaced by a pro-Athenian oligarchy. Marr and Rhodes 2008: 163 connect Aristotle’s remark to the Old Oligarch’s reflections and believe a Theban democratic uprising was suppressed by the Athenians.

²⁰⁹ Marr and Rhodes 2008. Hornblower 2010: 323–46 argues for a fourth-century date, with the text a ‘clever ludic work of imaginative fiction which perhaps belongs to the genre of literature associated with the symposion or ritualized drinking session’.

²¹⁰ *IG* I³ 23.

²¹¹ Nicias attacked Tanagra, presumably in 426: Thuc. 3.91.3–6. Another option for the campaign is 429: Diod. 12.65.3–5; Athen. 218b; *SEG* 48.83; Parlama and Stampolias 2000: 366–9 no. 452: *hoi*δε Ἀθηναίων ἱππῆς ἠπῆρες ἀπέθανο[ν] | ἐν Τανάγραι καὶ ἐ’ Σπαρτόλο[ι]. Spartolos is only known as a target in 429/8: Thuc. 2.79. For new interpretations of the inscription: Matthaïou 2009; Papazarkadas 2009b: 67–70. Perhaps these attacks were two separate campaigns: Schachter 2016a: 83. Demosthenes’ campaign in 426: Thuc. 3.95.

another from that town, whose exiles were very active in the business, hiring men in Peloponnese.²¹²

In this scenario, Boiotian exiles play a key role in organising a political turnaround in the region. The political allegiance of these exiles is harder to gauge. Robert Buck views the Delion campaign as an attempt to neutralise and democratise Boiotia.²¹³ Whether democratisation was imperative for Athenian help, or whether these exiles wished to overthrow the current regimes for their own benefit and saw democratisation as the best way to achieve it, is uncertain. The Oxyrhynchus historian's description of the situation in 403 suggests the political constellation was oligarchic.²¹⁴ Thucydides' remark that the Theban dismantling of Thespias's walls was done on account of its *attikismos* in 423 suggests there may have been democratic predilections at stake. At the same time, sympathy for the Athenians also existed among non-democratic segments of Thespias and other poleis.²¹⁵ These recurring efforts throughout the first decade of the conflict demonstrate the Athenians were acutely aware of the benefits of the right leadership. The disastrous results of the Delion debacle, however, put these desires to rest. Only then did it dawn on the Athenians that the days of disturbing Boiotian harmony were over.²¹⁶

Athenian aloofness in the fourth century did not palliate the festering wound of discord in Boiotia. Spreading the infection of stasis this time were the Spartans. Their intervention in Thebes is perhaps the worst excess of their hegemony. After the defeat in the Corinthian War, Ismenias and his anti-Spartan group remained influential in Thebes. His continued clout meant the embers of collaboration with the Athenians remained aglow. Realising the danger to their hegemony, the Spartans – most likely Agesilaos and his compatriots – conceived of a plan to extinguish the cinders of neighbourly cooperation. Rumbblings in the north provided the right opportunity. Compounding matters was the recent Theban decree forbidding its citizens from supporting the Spartan campaign against the

²¹² Thuc. 4.76.2–3. *CT II* 249 writes that some manuscript traditions denote Ptoiodoros as a Thespian, rather than a Theban. Both Gomme and Hornblower prefer Thespian, due to long-lasting ties between Thespias and Athens.

²¹³ Buck 1994: 16. ²¹⁴ Lérica Lafarga 2007: 509–600; Occhipinti 2016: 131.

²¹⁵ Thuc. 4.133. The suppression of the demos' uprising in 414, after which a share of the instigators fled to Athens, suggests similar sympathies: Thuc. 6.95.

²¹⁶ The events of 379/8 suggest Athenian help for the Boiotians, but the Spartan junta's overthrow was effected by Boiotian exiles and the Athenians played a minor role in supporting it. Moreover, that campaign was restricted to Thebes, whereas the rest of the region remained under Spartan sway.

Olynthians.²¹⁷ This was not quite as profound a threat as the Acanthian delegate Cleigenes presented to the Spartans – he claimed the Thebans and Athenians were arranging a triangular alliance with the Olynthians – but the refractory behaviour provided enough ammunition to foist suspicion on the Thebans.

Opportunity beckoned when the Spartan force heading to the Chalkidike encamped outside Thebes and was approached by Leontiades. He had lost his leading position to Ismenias and now invited the Spartans to change the politics of Cadmus' city:

Phoibidas, it is within your power this day to render the greatest service to your fatherland; for if you will follow me with your hoplites, I will lead you into the Cadmeia. And this once accomplished, be sure that Thebes will be completely under the control of the Lacedaimonians and of us who are your friends; whereas now, as you see, proclamation has been made forbidding any Theban from serving with you against the Olynthians. But if you join with us and accomplish this deed, we will at once send with you many hoplites and many horsemen.²¹⁸

The plan worked to perfection as the women were celebrating the Thesmophoria on the Cadmeia, while the men deliberated in the agora.²¹⁹ Soon after, recalcitrant elements of Theban society found their heads on the chopping block – in Ismenias' case literally – or were forced to flee elsewhere, as did Androkleidas and Pelopidas. Athens was a favoured destination.²²⁰ The political overhaul complete, Spartan garrisons were installed in several Boiotian poleis and worries of neighbourly collaboration quelled.²²¹ The episode proves the fissile nature of Boiotian politics. Perhaps this episode lends credence to the Athenian tendency to use Boiotia as a canvas on which to paint the dangers of stasis.

So was this a conflation of circumstances leading to a denouement that even Xenophon condemned? That is a possibility. Maybe the gods smiled particularly bright on the Spartans that day, their nightly encampment near

²¹⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.15; 5.2.27. This undercuts a Spartan-Theban alliance, as it violated the terms of such a compact: Gehrke 1985: 175–7. One papyrus fragment (*P.Oxy.* 1.13 = FGrH 135) refers to a Theban-Olynthian alliance but the papyrus is Hellenistic and was fabricated on the basis of Xenophon's account, cf. Hornblower 2011: 238.

²¹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.26–7. Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.32–3 where Leontiades elaborates the advantages of the new arrangement to the Spartan council.

²¹⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.25–31.

²²⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.26–31; Plut. *Pel.* 5. Trial: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.35–6; Plut. *Pel.* 5.3; *de gen. Soc.* 576a.

²²¹ The Thebans now supported Spartan campaigns against Olynthus: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.37; 40–1.

Thebes en route to Olynthus granting Leontiades the courage to propose such a hubristic and opportunistic ploy.

Or was the upheaval, as John Buckler argued, the objective of the Olynthian campaign all along? Eudamidas' army was already in Thrace to support the Acanthians. Phoibidas' force was meant to reinforce that campaign. On its march northwards from the Peloponnese, it inexplicably decided to detour to Thebes. It was Boiotia's most prosperous and wealthy city, but a warm welcome was not awaiting them there. Even in antiquity the agency of the Spartans was debated.²²² Buckler therefore suggests the only possible target of Phoibidas' march was Thebes, as there was no need to encamp in its vicinity. Fear of an impending triangular alliance between the Athenians, Thebans and Olynthians prompted this dire decision.²²³ Evidence of such an impending compact appears to be overdrawn. Buckler invokes the above-mentioned papyrus, the Chian-Athenian alliance of 384 and a Chalkidian alliance with the Athenians. The latter omits any mention of the Olynthians, and the restoration of 'Chalkidians' is uncertain. The treaty is of an unknown date, meaning the placement of the alliance in this context is debatable.²²⁴ These fragmentary mentions do not contradict the presence of Athenian and Theban ambassadors present in Olynthus according to Cleigenes of Acanthus, nor do they explain the deviation taken by Phoibidas.²²⁵ Gaining control over Boiotia meant mastering a large swath of Central Greece and creating a buffer against the Athenians. Ultimately, the takeover of Thebes was like a boomerang – Xenophon views it as the fulcrum of Spartan downfall – but for now it granted the Spartans suzerainty over Boiotia.²²⁶

The Spartan junta proved ephemeral. This characteristically applies to all examples of foreign intervention in Boiotian affairs. Yet these examples re-affirm how the leadership in the Boiotian poleis was valuable in fostering attitudes towards the Athenians. Not every Boiotian disliked the southern neighbours: clashes between them often occurred as the product of

²²² Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.28; 32; Diod. 15.20.2 is more confirmative: 'Accordingly the Spartans gave secret instructions to their commanders, if ever they found an opportunity, to take possession of the Cadmeia.'

²²³ Buckler and Beck 2008: 76–7.

²²⁴ *P. Oxy.* 1.13 = FGrH 135 (Theban-Olynthian alliance); *RO* 20 (Chian-Athenian alliance); *IG* II² 36 ([ἐπι Διεπρέφος ἄρχ]οντ[ος]. [συμμαχία Χαλ]κιδέων τῶ[ν ἐ]-[πι Θράκιης τοῖ]ς ἐ[σ]περίοις). It is the same archon as the Chian alliance, but this is a restoration and the alliance was arranged two years before the events in Thebes.

²²⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.14: 'Again, we (the Acanthians) left ambassadors both of the Athenians and of the Boiotians already there.'

²²⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.1.

exogenous interference. Numerous considerations played a role in determining the outlook of elites, as detailed above. Sometimes this led to a rapprochement or hostilities between the neighbours. Part of the value of installing friendly elites was to ensure the new leaders were grateful to their benefactors through the norms of reciprocity, another important factor in interstate relations and one that often chimed with elite interactions.

3.3 Reciprocity in Neighbourly Relations

Reciprocity guided human and divine interactions in the Greek world. Just as pious Greeks reminded the gods of their fatty sacrifices or beautiful dedications in expectation of a reward, so too the gods expected gifts from the humans they granted favourable outcomes. Interactions between polities functioned no differently. Favours were redeemed in exchange for past deeds or future returns. We have numerous examples of ambassadors or leaders referring to previous support, favours or help in acute situations (Chapter 3.2.2).²²⁷ The neighbourly relations traversed the same road and reciprocity acted as the oil that greased the cogs of the machine.

In the pages above it has been argued that reciprocity and friendly elite interaction go hand in hand. One of these examples has been discussed in Chapter 3.2.2, when the Theban ambassador to Athens reminds his audience in 395 of the protection the Boiotians offered the Athenian democratic exiles. A role reversal occurred some decades later. After the deleterious Spartan takeover of the Cadmeia in 382, the purge of Ismenias' partisans forced many to find refuge in Athens. Many were not still safe from the spectre of internecine disputes, as assassins murdered the exiles' leader, Androkleidas.²²⁸ Athens nevertheless offered some reprieve and shielded the Theban exiles from incurring the Spartan wrath.

Their presence led to an intense debate in the Athenian Assembly, with mounting Spartan pressure to hand over the exiles. According to Plutarch the demos deliberated and approved the shelter for the exiles:

There came also letters from the Lacedaimonians charging the Athenians not to harbour or encourage the exiles, but to expel them as men declared common enemies by the allied cities. The Athenians, however, not only yielding to their traditional and natural instincts of *philanthropia*, but also making a grateful return for the kindness of the Thebans, who had

²²⁷ Azoulay 2004: 318–26; Hunt 2010; Low 2007; Mitchell 1997; van Wees 2004: 9–13.

²²⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.31; Plut. *Pel.* 5; 6.2; Tufano 2020.

been most ready to aid them in restoring their democracy, and had passed a decree that if any Athenians marched through Boiotia against the tyrants in Athens, no Boiotian should see or hear them, did no harm to the Thebans in their city.²²⁹

Plutarch is a later source, making his account more suspect. An admirer of Athenian affairs, his reference to their natural instincts of *philanthropia* extols their characteristics. Yet this was a common trope within Athenian discourse and should make us less suspicious.²³⁰ Adhering to the notion of reciprocity fits in with the *charis*-dominated parameters of the Athenian Assembly. It was a grateful repayment of the Theban help for the democratic exiles in 404. That help had been immortalised in various ways within Athenian social memory (Chapter 5.2.7). The survival of many of these exiles, who now occupied leading roles within the polis, could certainly have acted as a stimulus during the deliberation. Plutarch mentions it as a key factor for ignoring Spartan demands. The exiles' guest-friends who once received Theban guest-friendship in times of peril were now openly vouching for the exiles in the Assembly and lobbying for support.²³¹ The Thebans could count on their *xenia* connections to see them through, even in the wake of Spartan aggression.²³²

Plutarch's words of a warm reception for the Theban exiles are corroborated by epigraphic evidence. An inscribed stele from the Athenian Akropolis records the honours awarded to Boiotian exiles after the capture of the Cadmeia:

- 1 [.....24.....]#⁷#⁷[— — —]
 [.....22.....]#⁷ΤΟΣΤΑ#⁷Γ[. . .]
 [.....19..... καθ]άπερ Ἀθην[αῖ]-
 [οι16..... τῶν] δὲ ἄλλων ΥΓ[. . .]
 5 [.....21.....] ἰσοτελεῖς κ[. . .]
 [.....20..... κ]αὶ στρατεύ[εσ]-
 [θαι ὅταν ὁ δῆμος στρατεύη]ται καὶ τ[ὸ]ς [στ]-
 [ρατηγὸς χρῆσθαι αὐτοῖς ὦ]ιτινι ἂν ο[ὔ]ν τ[ι]-
 [ρόπῳ βόλωνται· τὰς δὲ δίκ]ας διδόνα[ι Ἀθ]-
 10 [ήνησι τῶν ἐγκλημάτων ὀπό]σα μετὰ τὴν φ[υ]-
 [γὴν γεγένηται. ἂν δὲ τις αὐ]τῶν ἀποθάνη
 [βιαιῶι θανάτῳι, γί]γνεσθα[ι τὰς τι[μ]ωρία-
 [ς καὶ τὰς δίκας? καθάπερ εἶ]ρηται [ἐν] ταῖς

²²⁹ Plut. *Pel.* 6.3. ²³⁰ Barbato 2020. ²³¹ Strauss 1987: 103–4; Worthington 1992: 193–4.

²³² One of these, Thrasybulus of Kollytos, was mentioned by Aeschines as a frequent ambassador to Thebes (Aeschin. 3.138) and was one of the ambassadors mentioned in the Prospectus of the Second Athenian Confederacy to be sent to Thebes for further negotiations (RO 22, ll. 72–7).

[συμβολαῖς· ἐπιμέλεσθαι δὲ] τὸς π[ρ]υτάνει-	
[ς καὶ τὴν βουλὴν τὴν βουλε]ύο[σαν] καὶ τὸς	15
[στρατηγούς, ὡς ἄμ μὴ ἀδικῶ]νται· τὴν δὲ ἀτ-	
[έλειαν ἔναι καθάπερ τοῖς] ἐξεληλυθόσ[ι]	
[Θηβαίων καὶ Βοιωτῶν? ἐς Ἀθή]νας ὕστερο[ν]	
[ἦ οἱ ἐπὶ Φοιβίδα Λακεδαιμό]νιοι τὴν Καδ[μ]-	
[εῖαν κατέλαβον· ἀναγράψαι] δὲ αὐτῶν τὰ ὀ[ν]-	20
[όματα ἐν ἀκροπόλει ὑπὸ? τὰ] δεδογμένα, τ[ο]-	
[ύς δὲ φεύγοντας Ἀπολλων?]ιατῶν ἀπογρά[ψα]-	
[σθαι τὰ ὀνόματα τῶι γραμ]ματεῖ τῆς βολ[ῆς]	
[. . . . 12 εἶπεν· τὰ δ]ὲ ἄλλα κύρ[ι]α εἶ[ν]-	
[αι ἅπαντα ὅσα Ἀπολλωνια?]τῶν ²³³ τῶι δῆμῳι πρ-	25
[οεψηφισμένα ἐστὶν ὑπὸ τ]ῷ δῆμῳ τῷ Ἀθηνα(ίων). { ² vacat}	

col. [Γ]οργώπας

[Ἡρ]άκλειος	I.20
[Ἀ]ναξίλας	
[Πύ]θειος	
[Ξ]άνθων	
[Τι]μόδη[μ]ος	25
[Πυ]ριλάμπης	
[Ἀ]σίων	
[Ε]ύφάνης	
[Ἀρ]ίφαντο[ς]	
[Φ]ειδοκρά[τη]ς	30
[Σ]θενόδημος	
[Ξ]ενοπείθης	
[Ἀ]γάθων	
[Ε]ὔανδρος	
[Κ]αλλιφάνης	35

col. Πρα[— —]

Ἀλκίμ[α]χος	
Πολύε[υκ]τος	
Ἀριστό[πα]πιππο<ς>	
Ἀρπαλ[ίω]ν	
Κλε[αίνετ]ος?	25
Εὐ[ά]ν[ωρ]	

²³³ Gehrke 1985: 176 n. 75 points out there is a possibility that IG II² 245 is the earlier decree mentioned and IG II² 37 an amendment of the earlier decree for the Thebans to include new arrivals from Boiotia.

	Ἐπιτ[ρε]φίδη<ς>
	Ἄρισ[τόξ]ενος
	Πολ[ίαρ]χος
30	Ξέν[αρ]χος
	Σς
	Ε[ύρυτ]ίων
	Θ[έογν]ις?
	Σω[κρ]άτη<ς>?
35	A # ⁷
	[. 24] # ⁷ # ⁷ [— — —]
	[. 22] # ⁷ ΤΟΣΤΑ # ⁷ Γ [. .]
	[. 19] like Athenians
	[. 16] others Γ [. .]
5	[. 21] isoteleis (plural) κ [. .]
	[. 20] and do military service
	on the same basis as the People does military service and the
	<i>strategos</i> shall employ them in the manner he wishes;
10	and as regards any legal complaints that may arise after their exile, they
	shall be submitted to justice at Athens;
	and if anyone suffers a violent death, the punishments
	and judicial arrangements shall be as specified in the judicial convention;
	and the <i>prytaneis</i> and the boule in office
15	and the <i>strategoí</i> shall take care
	that they suffer no harm; and they shall receive tax-exemption
	on the same basis as the Thebans and Boiotians
	who fled to Athens after Phoibidas
	and the Lacedaimonians
20	took the Cadmeia;
	and to inscribe their names
	on the Akropolis under what has been decided;
	and the names of the refugees from Apollonia?
	shall be given to the <i>grammateus</i> of the <i>boule</i> .
	[. 12] said: everything else that was
	previously voted by the Athenian People for the Apollonian People
	shall be valid.
	col. Gorgopas
I.20	Herakleios
	Anaxilas
	Pytheios
	Xanthon
25	Timodemos
	Pyrilampes

Asion	
Euphanes	
Ariphantos	
Pheidokrates	30
Sthenodemos	
Xenopeithes	
Agathon	
Euandros	
Kalliphanes	35
col. Pra [— —]	
Alkimachos	
Polyeuktos	
Aristopappos	
Harpalion	
Kleainetos	25
Euanor	
Epiterephides	
Aristoxenos ²³⁴	
Poliarchos	
Xenarchos	30
S. . . s	
Eurytion	
Th[eogenes]	
Sokrates	
A # ⁷²³⁵	35

The decree is problematic since a large part is reconstructed on the basis of historians' accounts. Some things are clear. The start of the inscription details how some exiles had been fully assimilated with the Athenians, whereas others received obligations on par with the citizenry in terms of taxation and military service (ἰσοτελεῖς l. 5), judiciary protection and tax exemption (τῆν δὲ ἀτ[έλειαν] ll. 16–17).²³⁶ These are customary honours

²³⁴ Aristoxenos is mentioned in *IG II²* 2 ll. 2–3 ([Ἀριστ— —]ωι Σίμωνος Βοιωτίωι). Walbank 1982 dated the inscription to 382/1. Fossey 1991: 258–61 rejected this identification. He accepts Walbank's date but regards the honourees as two separate people, with the honouree of *IG II²* 2 a Plataian bearing a different name. Lewis (*SEG* 32.38); Raubitschek 1941: 287; Tracy 2003 favour the original date of 403/2.

²³⁵ *IG II²* 37 *corrigenda et addenda*, 656–7; Wilhelm 1942: 10–11. Wilhelm mistook the names in the other columns of the stele as representing honours for Apollonian citizens but Walbank 1982: 267–70 (*SEG* 32.47) revealed these names to be Boiotian exiles. I thank Stephen Lambert for his help with the translation.

²³⁶ Georgiadou 1997: 98 argues this status also entailed an exemption from the tax on metics.

for foreigners in recognition of their services.²³⁷ These various assimilative efforts demonstrate that the Athenians *did* provide a shield for the exiles from Spartan aggression to regain themselves.

This granted the exiles time to conceive of a plan to recover their city.²³⁸ After three years of planning they arranged to overthrow the regime in Thebes, contriving with discontent citizens in the city. In December 379 a group of exiles entered the city and assassinated the *polemarchs*. Support within the city quickly materialised and the insurgents succeeded in expelling the Spartan garrison, despite initial reinforcements from other garrisons spread across Boiotia (Chapter 2.5).²³⁹ Removing the Spartans from Thebes was in the Athenians' self-interest, but the news must have been received with elation. Did the Athenians feel their past debt was now repaid? The extent of their help in the initial phase *after* the reclamation of the Cadmeia has been debated. The degree of help offered by the Athenians appears subsidiary to an investigation of reciprocity, but the framework of *charis* can help with the analysis of this difficult episode and elucidate the Athenian motives for their actions.

The dispute boils down to one key element: Did the Athenians publicly support the Thebans by sending troops to the borderlands to prevent further Spartan reinforcements from reaching Boiotia, or was it limited to shielding the exiles and sending them out on their way to Thebes, in similar fashion to Thrasybulus' march in 404?

Different accounts exist. Diodorus explicitly mentions a Theban embassy speaking in the Athenian assembly. He provides an epitome of their speech, steeped in the language of reciprocity, which convinced the demos to dispatch a force in a public show of support:

The Thebans, anticipating the arrival of a large army from Greece to aid the Lacedaimonians, dispatched envoys to Athens to remind them that they too once aided in restoring the democracy of the Athenians at the time when the Athenians had been enslaved by the Thirty Tyrants, and to request the Athenians to come with all their forces and assist them in reducing the Cadmeia before the arrival of the Lacedaimonians. The Athenian people heard the ambassadors through to the end and voted to dispatch immediately as large a force as possible for the liberation of Thebes, thus repaying their obligation for the former service and at the same time moved by a desire to win the Boiotians to their side and to

²³⁷ Mack 2015: 22–83.

²³⁸ On political activism of exiles: Loddo 2019.

²³⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.9–13.

have in them a powerful partner in the contest against the superiority of the Lacedaimonians.²⁴⁰

In Diodorus' version, the Athenians voted to dispatch a large army to secure the liberation of Thebes as a token of gratitude for the previous help, thereby fulfilling their obligations. Similar support is mentioned by the orator Dinarchus:

Some of them, when the Cadmeia was garrisoned by Spartans, assisted the exiles who returned to Thebes and at their own risk set free a neighbouring city, long enslaved. Others lent aid when your ancestors were persuaded to take the field by Kephalos, who proposed the decree and who, undaunted by the might of Sparta and regardless of the risks either of military or political action, moved that the Athenians should march out to help the exiles who had taken Thebes.²⁴¹

There are two issues here. Dinarchus spoke more than half a century after the events. His *Against Demosthenes* therefore could have been influenced by events between his speech and the recapture of the Cadmeia. The recent destruction of Thebes could have acted as a foil for Dinarchus to project his dismay over Demosthenes' and the Athenians' lacklustre support for the Thebans against the wrath of Alexander.²⁴² Diodorus wrote his works much later and his reputation as a bad historian led to a quick dismissal by scholars. The reference found in Dinarchus was equally unhelpful, because of the restricted appreciation for orators as historical sources. Instead, scholars were quick to anoint Xenophon, a contemporary historian, as the most reliable source.²⁴³ His account and language imply a more elliptical approach, as he twice vaguely mentions 'the Athenians from the borders'. First, they arrive at Thebes to repel Spartan attacks and they intervene when the Thebans attack the Spartan garrison that was leaving the city under oath.²⁴⁴ This suggests limited support, which appears to be confirmed by the later demos-ordained execution of the Athenian generals

²⁴⁰ Diod. 15.25.4–26.1. At 15.26.2 he adds the Athenians despatched a significant army under Demophon.

²⁴¹ Din. 1.39. Isoc. 14.29 provides an ambivalent account where the help for the exiles is acknowledged, but official help or military support omitted. Isocrates is somewhat resentful and perhaps portrayed an augmented picture of Athenian support to dismiss the Thebans as distrustful people who betrayed their benefactors.

²⁴² Worthington, Cooper and Harris 2001: 12.

²⁴³ Beloch 1893–1904: II 3.1.146; Buck 1994: 81–7; Hack 1978; von Stern 1884: 45–5; Worthington 1992: 195.

²⁴⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.10; 12.

collaborating with the rebels in Thebes.²⁴⁵ The execution is remarkable and fits more with a smaller force acting on their own account rather than a demos-ordained *psephisma* aimed at thwarting the Spartans. Xenophon's bias, however, obstructs his value as a source. He ignores any Theban role in recuperating Athens' power through the formation of the Second Athenian Confederacy, of which this is a key event.²⁴⁶ His reference to this limited Athenian force in the wake of their intervention against Theban *hybris* appears to support this notion. As Diodorus' reputation as a historian has slowly recovered in recent years, combined with his incomparable value for describing the period of Theban ascendancy, his account has also received more appreciation.²⁴⁷

Therefore Diodorus' account might provide more trustworthy information for understanding the Atheno-Theban relationship at this moment. The Athenians exceeded expectations of *charis* by employing a significant army for the purpose of helping the Thebans, in addition to acting as a safe harbour for the exiles. The decree's mover, Kephalos, possibly had other motives in mind too: the build-up of a network of resistance against the Spartans since he was notorious for his anti-Spartan outlook.²⁴⁸ By helping the Thebans, they were more likely to join any emerging anti-Lacedaimonian coalition.

That leaves the problem of the generals' execution. This presumably occurred after the expulsion of the Spartan garrison, in a period of anxiety about repercussions. This is possible, even if the generals acted in an official capacity. The generals, buoyed up by Theban partisans and personal connections with the insurgents, acted before an official decree was enacted.²⁴⁹ They officially acted outside the premises of the decree, an

²⁴⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.19: 'Now the Athenians, seeing the power of the Lacedaimonians and that the war was no longer in Corinthian territory, but that the Lacedaimonians were now going past Attica and invading the country of Thebes, were so fearful that they brought to trial the two generals who had been privy to the uprising of Melon against Leontiades and his party, put one of them to death, and, since the other did not remain to stand trial, exiled him.'

²⁴⁶ Stylianou 1998: 230–1.

²⁴⁷ Momigliano 1935; Sordi 2005. Diodorus' comeback: Badian 1995: 89; Cargill 1981: 56; Cawkwell 2011: 207–9; Kallet-Marx 1985: 140–7; Parker 2007: 15–16, 24–5, 27–8; Stylianou 1998: 230–1. Buck 1992 attempts to reconcile Xenophon and Dinarchus, but unsatisfactorily. Cloché 1952: 117–23 occupies a middle ground, arguing the generals initially moved unofficially, *after* which an alliance was concluded, with a time lapse in between.

²⁴⁸ Din. 1.38. Kephalos' career was anti-Spartan. He was a proponent of war with the Spartans in 395 (*Hell. Oxy.* 10.1; Paus. 3.9.8) and in 384 served as an envoy to the Chians (*RO* 20 ll. 39–40); see *RO* 19 l.6.

²⁴⁹ Stylianou 1998: 236. Later sources suppressed the trial, explaining Diodorus' omission. Later orators enhanced the extent of Athenian help: Aeschin. 2.164; Isoc. 5.43; 14.28–9.

acceptable reason for trial. Another reason could be internal politics. Eager to alter the polis' policy, the generals were sacrificed to avoid a conflict with the Spartans.

Yet there was no turning back now. The stage was set for a clash with the hegemon.²⁵⁰ The Athenians and Thebans saw their interests converge and reciprocity formed an important part of their willingness to collaborate. Their shared resistance formed the basis of a new network of alliances aimed at thwarting the Spartans, the Second Athenian Confederacy. Under its wings, the neighbourly relationship reached a new zenith of cordiality.

A final example is less explicit but fits the mould of reciprocal gestures. The Athenians received the Theban exiles into their midst after the punishment meted out by the Macedonians following the Battle of Chaironeia in 338 (Chapter 2.7). In an eerily similar fashion to Spartan conduct in 382, the Cadmeia was once again garrisoned and a junta installed, made up of recalled pro-Macedonian exiles. Some leaders were executed, whereas others were forced into exile. Most of the exiled anti-Macedonian leaders found their way to Athens for safety and a guarantee from prosecution.²⁵¹ The parallels do not end there, as three years later, upon hearing rumours of Alexander's death, Theban exiles returned home by night, assassinated figures of the leading clique and appealed to their fellow citizens to rise in revolt.²⁵² The only thing missing is clear evidence of Athenian support.

It is highly likely that the exiles set out from Athens. The city harboured fugitives and was near enough for a nightly march to reach Thebes. Bernd Steinbock argued that the support took on a subdued form that was not openly publicised, for instance, the weaponry given by Demosthenes to the

Aeschin. 2.117 references the help the ungrateful Thebans forgot. A scholiast confirms it refers to 379/8: Schol. Aesch. 2.117 (257 Dilts); Steinbock 2013: 260–7.

²⁵⁰ A Spartan force was underway when the garrison on the Cadmeia surrendered, but was forced to redirect as the passes at Eleutherai were guarded by the Athenian general Chabrias. Buckler and Beck 2008: 165–79; Cawkwell 2011: 205–9; Jehne 2004: 469 argue his presence indicates Athenian support for Thebes. I accept this premise but add that the occupation of *foreign* lands was part of the *psephisma* moved by Kephalos. This contravenes Buckler and Beck 2008: 165–79; Ober 1985a: 211, who argue Eleutherai was Athenian at this time and therefore they had every right to occupy it. Yet for most of the Classical period Eleutherai was Boiotian (Fachard 2013) thereby necessitating a decree to be moved to station Athenian troops there.

²⁵¹ Justin 9.4.8–9; Diod. 16.87.3. That some found their way to Athens can be gathered from [Demades] 1.17. Steinbock 2013: 272 notes these parallels must have evoked that memory among the Athenian population.

²⁵² Arr. *Anab.* 1.7.1–2; Bosworth 1980: 74–9. These exiles may have supported Amyntas, a pretender to the throne: Worthington 2003. Amyntas has more connections to Boiotia: an Oropian proxy decree (RO 75A) and a consultation of Trophonios in Lebadeia (Schachter 2016a: 128 n. 46). Prandi 1988 offers an overview but warns against ascribing Amyntas too much agency.

exiles according to Plutarch and Diodorus.²⁵³ After the coup was completed, the Thebans sent an embassy to Athens asking for an alliance. This embassy would have evoked the historical precedents as an example to be emulated through the lens of reciprocity. Only this time, the Athenians used a wait-and-see approach before witnessing the destruction of Thebes by Macedonian might.²⁵⁴

Following the destruction of the city, Alexander issued a decree demanding the extradition of any Theban fugitive: 'They finally voted to raze the city to the ground, to sell the captives, and that the Theban refugees should be liable to seizure from all Greece and that no Greek should offer shelter to a Theban.'²⁵⁵

The parallels with the Spartan decree are uncanny and surely evoked memories among the Athenian population of that event. The matter was debated in the Assembly, where it was decided that instead of punishing the Theban exiles, the politicians responsible should carry the burden. An embassy under Demades was sent to Alexander, who acceded to all of the orator's points, even obtaining the king's permission for the *demos* to harbour the refugees.²⁵⁶ Justin goes further and ascribes culpability to the Athenians for Alexander's decree, since they had opened their gates to the refugees.²⁵⁷

The decision to protect the refugees in 335 was made with the memories of past experiences in mind.²⁵⁸ It is in this context that Dinarchus' remarked in 323:

The Thebans, so our elders tell us, when the democracy in our city had been overthrown and Thrasybulus was assembling the exiles in Thebes ready for the seizure of Phyle, although the Spartans were strong and forbade them to admit or let out any Athenian, helped the democrats to return and passed that decree which has so often been read before you, stating that they would turn a blind eye if any Athenian marched through their territory bearing arms.²⁵⁹

Discussing the admission of the exiles would certainly have reminded the attendants of the Assembly of the Theban plight and their actions for the Athenians in a similar situation. Admittedly, there is not a direct evocation of reciprocity as in the other examples, but the reference to these earlier events could have stirred similar emotions to honour a long-standing relationship, especially in the wake of their recent alliance (Chapter 2.7). Reciprocity therefore not only sowed the seeds for

²⁵³ Plut. *Dem.* 23.1; Diod. 17.8.5; Steinbock 2013: 274. ²⁵⁴ Diod. 17.8.6. ²⁵⁵ Diod. 17.14.3.

²⁵⁶ Diod. 17.15.1–5; Plut. *Alex.* 13.1, cf. Steinbock 2013: 275–6. ²⁵⁷ Justin 11.4.9–11.

²⁵⁸ Steinbock 2013: 275–6. ²⁵⁹ Din. 1.25.

neighbourly reconciliation and collaboration at the start of the century; it also provided the foundation for later common grounds after the failed attempt to halt the Macedonian advance. Normative practices such as reciprocity, and the adherence to it, helped to establish a polis' reputation, whether negative or positive. The various forms of reputation will be treated next.

3.4 Reputation as a Facilitator of Neighbourly Collaboration

Accounts that focus on the *Realpolitik* aspect of interstate relations frequently overlook the importance of reputation, as fear and military power dominate their narratives. Yet a polis' reputation could smooth relations or provide the basis for alliances. The Spartans' call for *eleutheria* at the start of the Peloponnesian War is a good example. By proclaiming to be the liberators of Greece – a Persian War redux with the Athenians as the new Persians – they were able to muster a large crowd of poleis under their banner to combat the Athenians.²⁶⁰ Their appeal to liberation granted them the trust of other poleis to join their ranks. Conversely, Athenian actions and words in suppressing other Greeks, exemplified in the Melian Debate, influenced how their peers perceived them, as the Boiotian general Pagondas eloquently put it in his speech at Delion in 424.²⁶¹ The prospect of reputational repercussions could influence decision-making, especially in an arena where honour was a vital instrument in guiding interstate relations.²⁶² Reputation, however, was not just subject to the opinions of other polities. The self-image of poleis and their values towards others equally guided decision-making. Self-presentation, in this case of the Athenians and Thebans, laid the foundations for alliances and other collaborative efforts. Investigating the effects of reputation thus goes beyond the monolithic 'fear of a third-party' paradigm for collaboration and offers a fresh perspective on the formation of such pacts.

3.4.1 *The True Heirs of Herakles: Harbours Athenian Exiles in Boiotia*

The change of leadership in Thebes after the Peloponnesian War (431–404) prompted a different outlook on the developments taking place in Athens. Rather than support the Spartans to preserve the repressive

²⁶⁰ Thuc. 1.139.5; Raaflaub 2004: 195. ²⁶¹ Thuc. 4.92.4–6; 5.84–116.

²⁶² Lendon 2010; Lebow 2008, although Lebow overstates the centrality of honour as *the* determining factor.

regime of the Thirty, the *koinon* decided to shield Athenian exiles fleeing persecution in direct opposition to their allies' requests (Chapters 2.4, 3.2.2). The self-interested benefits from resisting the Spartans arguably occupied a role in the decision-making process, but by itself that cannot explain how Ismenias and his group swayed the popular opinion in the federal council against the explicit wishes of their allies and *for* former foes.

The Oxyrhynchus historian points out persuasion was the element that allowed Ismenias to take control of the polis and the council of the *koinon*. He was unable to convince the *koinon* to break the peace for no apparent reason, or for a dislike or fear of the Spartans. Instead, it was a friendlier disposition towards the Athenians that appears to have been decisive. The Theban self-image was key in swaying the sentiment. Believing themselves the descendants of Herakles in spirit, it was now time to match him in deeds. Ismenias and his men argued that harbouring the refugees would match the heroic philanthropy of both Herakles and Dionysos, worthy predecessors to emulate:

but above all, because they (the Thebans) first put the Athenians in the way of freeing themselves from the Thirty tyrants whom he had set up, whose terrorizing power the Lacedaimonians had increased by decreeing that fugitives from Athens might be brought back from every place of refuge, and that all who impeded their return should be declared enemies of Sparta. In reply to this the Thebans issued counter decrees, akin in spirit to the beneficent deeds of Herakles and Dionysos, to the effect that every house and city in Boiotia should be open to such Athenians as needed succour; and that whosoever did not help a fugitive under arrest, should be fined a talent; and that if anyone should carry arms through Boiotia against the tyrants in Athens, no Theban would either see him or hear about it. And they did not merely vote such Hellenic and humane decrees, without at the same time making their deeds correspond to their edicts; but Thrasybulus and those who with him occupied Phyle, set out from Thebes to do so, and the Thebans not only provided them with arms and money, but also with secrecy and a base of operations.²⁶³

Diodorus' testimony echoes that of Plutarch:

Though this decree was shocking, all the rest of the cities, dismayed at the power of the Spartans, obeyed it, with the exception of the Argives who, hating as they did the cruelty of the Lacedaimonians and pitying the hard lot of the unfortunate, were the first to receive the exiles in a spirit of humanity (φιλανθρωπῶπῳς). Also the Thebans voted that anyone who

²⁶³ Plut. *Lys.* 27.2–4.

witnessed an exile being led off and did not render him all aid within his power should be subject to a fine.²⁶⁴

A divine mythological example is not evoked, but the language describing the decision (φιλανθρώπως) hints at similar considerations. The notion of *philanthropia* was dominant in Athenian discourse and the Thebans acted in that spirit, rather than perform the role of the hubristic defilers of Greek *nomos* that the Athenians often portray them to be.²⁶⁵

Of course we are dealing with late sources, one written by a Boiotian apologist at worst, or a connoisseur of local interests at best, and another a compiler of other works whose reputation as a historiographer has suffered.²⁶⁶ Xenophon's omission of the Theban decree exacerbates the matter. Tempting as it is to dismiss Plutarch's account as an interjection of later propaganda, or Diodorus' retrojection of later attitudes onto the past, there are sound reasons to accept the later testimonies. Xenophon is notoriously partisan towards the Spartans and dismissive of positive Theban characteristics.²⁶⁷ Research into his oeuvre stressed his moralistic and artistic motives in downplaying the Theban contributions to restoring the Athenian democracy.²⁶⁸ Omitting the Theban decree against Spartan wishes, in support of the Athenian democratic exiles whom he admired, may therefore be related to his desire to suppress events that could place the Thebans in a positive light, rather than a lack of historicity.²⁶⁹

There are other elements that support the historicity of the decree, as Bernd Steinbock has shown.²⁷⁰ Both Dionysos and Herakles were of paramount importance to Thebes. It was the first place where Dionysos was allegedly worshipped, whereas Herakles was a native son of the city.²⁷¹ Their place in the common *imaginaire* of the Greeks found its way into diplomatic spheres. According to Justin certain Theban elders implored Alexander to spare their city because it had 'given birth not only to men but also to gods', alluding to both Herakles and Dionysos.²⁷² Material evidence, like the mid-fifth-century coinage that combines imagery of the two gods with the *ethnikon Thebaion* or *Thebaios*, confirms

²⁶⁴ Diod. 14.6.2–3. ²⁶⁵ Barbato 2020: 182–213. ²⁶⁶ Steinbock 2013: 224–31.

²⁶⁷ Buck 1994: 74 ascribes an anti-Theban bias but its prominence cannot explain all omissions of historical events.

²⁶⁸ Dillery 1995; Gray 1989; Pownall 2004: 65–112; Tuplin 1993.

²⁶⁹ Xenophon was not impartial to Thrasybulus (Buck 1998: 13) nor was he a one-sided ardent oligarchic sympathiser: Christ 2020.

²⁷⁰ Steinbock 2013: 224–31. The language of the decree accords with contemporary decrees: Schweigert 1939.

²⁷¹ Demand 1982: 55, 69. ²⁷² Justin. 11.4.4–6.



Figure 3.1²⁷⁴ Theban Herakles coinage, late fifth century.
(Source: CNG Coins, Lancaster PA, www.cngcoins.com)

that picture.²⁷³ (See [Figure 3.1](#).) Referring to the ancestral deeds could therefore find willing ears among the listeners.

Working in Ismenias' favour was the mythological precedent for collaboration between the two neighbours. Theseus, as representative of Athens, and Herakles, his Theban counterpart, had cooperated on numerous occasions. Herakles frequently received support and protection from Athena, the Athenians' patron goddess. This was confirmed in various contexts. On the Panhellenic stage, visitors to Olympia could witness Athena's help on the metopes at the Zeus temple at Olympia.²⁷⁵ In Thebes visitors to the Herakleion could see the temple's pediments, as well as the rock that Athena threw to prevent Herakles from murdering his father.²⁷⁶ These mythological precedents formed an ideal reference point for contemporary affairs and could have been instrumental in swaying the vote, besides the strained Theban-Spartan relationship.²⁷⁷ Steinbock even speculates that the mythological precedents Ismenias drew upon were based on the collective memory of his Athenian guest-friend Thrasybulus.²⁷⁸ The embodiment of their help in the form of statues of

²⁷³ Kraay 1976: 111. The electrum coinage of the 370s depicts Herakles as the snake-strangler: Gartland 2013.

²⁷⁴ Silver stater (425–400) 12.07 g, 6h Triton XI 08.01.2008 *Obv.* Boiotian shield; *c/m:* ivy leaf on oval punch *Rev.* Θ-E across lower field; all within square incuse. The coins combine a symbol of Dionysos – the ivy leaf – and Herakles.

²⁷⁵ Barringer 2021: 129–31. ²⁷⁶ Paus. 9.11.2; 9.11.6.

²⁷⁷ Isoc. 5.32 says no other polis venerated Herakles as much as the Thebans. For Herakles' and Dionysos' importance for Thebes: *COB ad loc.* Mythological precedent: Diod. 4.16.4; 26.1. Theseus' importance for Athenian identity cannot be overstated: Calamé 1990.

²⁷⁸ Steinbock 2013: 224–31.

Athena and Herakles in the Theban Herakleion appears to point in that direction (Chapter 5.2.7).

Invoking the deeds of Herakles and Dionysos was therefore not an empty gesture to provide a cover for *Realpolitik* motives over the backs of Thrasybulus and the Athenian exiles. The pattern of self-reflective emulation of mythical precedents conforms to the ideal self-image of the Thebans and is not at odds with our knowledge of the procedure in Athens. We are the prisoners of our sources here, since we cannot ascertain whether Ismenias brought the matter before the council by evoking the city's most famous sons, but the reference to *philanthropia* and *charis* – the repayment of Athena's efforts in helping Herakles accomplish his labours and stopping him from committing patricide – were fitting remarks in the Athenian Assembly. A similar process was possible in Thebes. Ismenias would then have painted the future benefits for the Thebans and Boiotians by helping the Athenians, thereby continuing the relationship established in antiquity as the basis for future collaborative conduct (Chapters 3.2.2, 3.3).

Vital in this deliberation, however, was the Theban self-perception as people who upheld Greek *nomoi* to the highest standard, filled with faithful people who did not forget past benefactions. Their own reputation thus gave the final nudge in convincing the *koinon* to support the exiles against the Spartans. The strained relationship with the Spartans further helped matters. Yet without the appeal to the Theban reputation the decree protecting the exiles and a possible rapprochement would not have existed. Should Ismenias and his partisans have caved to Spartan demands, the democratic revolt in Athens would have died in the cradle. Their convictions to emulate Herakles and Dionysos proved to be the ideal argument to change Theban minds. It was reputation that laid the foundation of trust upon which the alliances of the early fourth century were built.

3.4.2 'Without them we are lost': Pseudo-Andocides and the Alleged Peace of 391

In the previous example we looked at the role of Theban self-perception and reputation in influencing neighbourly relations. In this example we will look at a possible example of the Boiotians' reputation through Athenian eyes during the Corinthian War. How did reputation play a role in the perception of the other? How were the neighbours perceived by Andocides, and how was this image conveyed to an Athenian audience? For years the Athenians and Boiotians fought side-by-side, which fostered mutual

respect and trust. The positive effect on neighbourly relations found its strongest expression in *On the Peace*, allegedly by Andocides but more likely to be a Hellenistic excursus from a rhetorical school.²⁷⁹ This speech was allegedly delivered after a peace conference in Sparta, which occurred after the initial unsuccessful discussions in Sardis (Chapter 2.5).²⁸⁰ While this Spartan conference in all likelihood never happened, and *On the Peace* is the later creation of rhetoricians in training rather than Andocides himself, the text is nevertheless valuable as the core of the argument rests on the Boiotians' role in the war. Inadvertently, the author of the text demonstrates the importance of their reputation by using it as the example on which to build his case. That rhetoricians in Hellenistic times expected the reference to the Boiotians to be a convincing argument in the early fourth century, despite the numerous historical errors in *On the Peace*, illustrates the lasting impact of the *koinon*'s reputation as a pivotal ally. Although the authenticity of the text can thus be rejected, it still provides a rewarding insight into the perception of the Boiotians through 'Athenian' eyes.

According to *On the Peace*, the earlier peace negotiations in Sardis broke down over the Spartans' insertion of the *autonomia* clause. This stated that every Greek polis should be autonomous and independent. The clause was aimed at weakening the Boiotians and was unsurprisingly a stumbling block for them. Their vehement opposition was backed by the Athenians. The stakes were high for both. The Boiotians feared a disintegration of the *koinon*, a daunting prospect for the Athenians as well. A fragmented Boiotia would leave them isolated and without their buffer against Spartan attacks. The Athenians were also apprehensive of the possible repercussions for their dominions, especially Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros.²⁸¹ Acting as a unified front against Spartan machinations was important to the two allies, as the Spartans strove to erode the union of Boiotian and Athenian power, even if it meant sacrificing the liberty of the Greeks in Asia Minor (Chapter 2.5).

²⁷⁹ Harris 2000. Harris 2021 returns to the matter by providing an extensive investigation of the fallacies of the text, in response to Magnetto 2013; Rhodes 2016. The case now seems to be settled in Harris' favour.

²⁸⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.12–16. Diod. 14.85.4 remains silent on Sardis. Plut. *Ages.* 23.1 conflates this mission with the eventual embassy that led to the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6: Urban 1991: 59–78.

²⁸¹ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.14–15. Hansen 1995b; 1996b; Keen 1996; Ma 2016 treat this example and the King's Peace to determine the autonomy the Boiotians poleis enjoyed under Theban leadership.

The lack of constructive results did not mean peace left the warring parties' minds. The participation of numerous poleis shows there was a genuine willingness to explore a treaty, but their presence was instigated not only by pacifistic intentions. Neglecting to participate meant the Spartans could implement their own terms. That is the situation sketched by the author of *On the Peace*, who implies another conference was held in Sparta in 391.²⁸² This treatise sets out the terms of the treaty, hoping to persuade the Athenians of the necessity to accede to it.

The speech is problematic because the document is peppered with historical inaccuracies. In addition, it would be the only *symbolleutic* speech to have survived prior to Demosthenes' oeuvre. There are two brief later references to an Andocidean speech, but these neglect to mention where it was delivered. These inadequacies, combined with ancient doubts about the historicity of the work, led Edward Harris to put forward a strong case that *On the Peace* is a Hellenistic exercise by a forger from a rhetorical school well acquainted with Classical sources.²⁸³ He bases himself on various historical inaccuracies. One is the reference to ambassadors with full powers to negotiate a treaty (πρέσβεις αὐτοκράτορες), sent by both sides. This conflicts with diplomatic norms of the times, since *presbeis autokratores* were normally sent by only one party, rather than bilaterally. They were used rarely and mostly when there was an obvious hierarchical power relation. Often it was the weaker party instigating negotiations, but sometimes the victor could send these ambassadors to impose terms. One example is the Peloponnesian War's aftermath, when the Spartans sent them to Athens.²⁸⁴

Harris' position clashes with those scholars who view the speech as authentic. In recent years Anna Magnetto has defended the speech's historicity. She points out that ambassadors with full powers were not a rare occurrence in the diplomatic practices of the time and Andocides' text thus complies with the contemporary standards.²⁸⁵ Peter Rhodes points out linguistic consistencies between the first three speeches of the corpus, unlike the fourth (*Against Alcibiades*), which has been found to be spurious. He mentions that Philochoros is not infallible, nor is Xenophon's

²⁸² The historicity of a second conference is corroborated by Philochoros FGrH 328 F 149. Yet Philochoros probably referred to the conference of 387/6: Harris 2021: 43 n. 49.

²⁸³ Harris 2000; 2021.

²⁸⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.16–23; 5.3.26. In light of Andocides' aims, could it be that he refers to this office precisely because he understands the contemporary diplomatic practices and wishes to convey the message that the Spartans had already won and were dictating terms?

²⁸⁵ Magnetto 2013.

silence on the second conference a reason for rejection.²⁸⁶ Xenophon frequently omits episodes, especially when they are incompatible with his intentions. A conference in Sparta where the thought of abandoning the Asiatic Greeks to the Persian King was entertained by the Spartans would certainly fit that mould.

Irrespective of authenticity, the author of the text provides a crucial insight by writing down arguments *he believed* would have been convincing to an Athenian audience in the early fourth century. Therefore it can be used as an exercise in understanding the role of reputation in interstate relations. ‘Andocides’ goes to great lengths to convince his polis of Sparta’s near invincibility, his praise influenced by his oligarchic sympathies and personal ties. It serves to juxtapose the futile Athenian allies in the Peloponnese with the essential Boiotians.²⁸⁷ The speaker argues that this current peace offer is better than the previous one, since Athenian control of the islands Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros was guaranteed, and any restriction on the size of the Athenian navy lifted. With the biggest obstacles for a rapprochement removed, the time was ripe for peace, especially since a better offer would not be forthcoming.²⁸⁸

These ‘concessions’ to the Athenians indicate the Spartans possibly aimed to divide the allies in this fictive situation. The convergence of Boiotian and Athenian objectives at the negotiations in Sardis had prevented the enforcement of the *autonomia* clause. Conceding Imbros, Skyros and Lemnos was a small price to pay for isolating the Boiotians. An isolated Boiotia was an easier target. Splintering the *koinon* was the main Spartan objective, and without the *koinon*’s backing, the Athenians would remain subdued in the future. Offering the Athenians a more favourable deal served to weaken the Boiotians and, in turn, their southern neighbours. In this speech, however, the Boiotians had already accepted a dissolution of their *koinon*, however unlikely, which would contravene its authenticity.²⁸⁹ The treatise is deceptive. There is no proof the Boiotians were intending to accept, or had accepted, a peace treaty in 391. They were willing negotiators and perhaps war-weary – the sense the speaker tries to convey – but not forced to accede.²⁹⁰ Why would the speaker make this

²⁸⁶ Rhodes 2016: 83–6. ²⁸⁷ Missiou 1992: 140–68.

²⁸⁸ And. 3.22. Acceptance of the treaty would improve relations with the Persian King, essential to the reclamation of the empire, according to the author.

²⁸⁹ Harris 2021.

²⁹⁰ Cloché 1919: 181: ‘Andocide se trompe (peut-être a-t-il été trompé par Lacédémone), ou il ment. Car c’est un fait que Thèbes n’a pas conclu la paix en 391 : sans prendre une part active à

claim then? In my opinion, that can be retraced to the reputation of the Boiotians and their value to the Athenians.

According to Anna Missiou, the speaker insists on the righteous course of the Spartans.²⁹¹ This contrasts with his initial portrayal of justifiable actions by the Athenians: ‘Everyone would agree, I think, that war is justified only so long as one is either suffering a wrong oneself or supporting the cause of another who has been wronged. Now we were both suffering a wrong ourselves and also supporting the cause of the Boiotians who had been wronged.’²⁹²

This accords with the Athenian self-image as protectors of the wronged against hubristic behaviour. The invasion of Boiotia by the Spartans could be portrayed in this light and meshes with how the Theban ambassador in 395 tried to convince the Athenians to forge an alliance.²⁹³ The Boiotians are here viewed in a positive light, as those who were wrongfully attacked by the Spartans and demanded and deserved Athenian attention. Viewed from this perspective, the Athenians were acting as *philanthropoi*.

In the speaker’s eyes, however, that righteousness can be countered with the iniquitous turn of events, benefitting from the delight that is hindsight:

Again, what are the conditions under which the Boiotians are making peace? They went to war because they refused to allow the Orchomenians their *autonomia*. Today, after the loss of thousands of lives, after the devastation of a large part of their lands, after heavy public and private expenditure, which is now a dead loss, after four years of fighting, the Boiotians are recognizing the *autonomia* of the Orchomenians and making peace, thereby rendering their sufferings useless, as by acknowledging the *autonomia* of the Orchomenians at the outset they need never have gone to war at all. Those are the circumstances in which the Boiotians are ceasing hostilities.²⁹⁴

Anna Missiou comments on this passage: ‘Such a derisive reference to the Boiotians, Andokides reckoned, would serve his purpose very well: while disparaging one of Athens’ allies and indirectly Athens, it would implicitly bring credit to Sparta, who supported a just and prudent course, the granting of autonomy to Orchomenos.’²⁹⁵ While her assessment of the

la guerre de 390–387, elle ne traitera qu’en 387/6. Sa volonté pacificatrice, en effet, ne suffisait pas pour créer un traité; Cloché 1941: 27. Hamilton 1979: 257 for a different view.

²⁹¹ Missiou 1992: 146. ²⁹² And. 3.13.

²⁹³ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.10: ‘Furthermore, men of Athens, although we all understand that you would like to recover the dominion which you formerly possessed, we ask in what way this is more likely to come to pass than by your aiding those who are wronged by the Lacedaimonians.’

²⁹⁴ And. 3.20. ²⁹⁵ Missiou 1992: 146–7.

objectives may be right, the orator would have made a great mistake by engaging with the listeners in such a confrontational manner. He implicitly condemns the Athenians for detaching the Corinthians and Boiotians from the Spartan alliance, thereby arguing his fellow countrymen were the aggressors despite the lenient treatment they received from the Spartans after the Peloponnesian War:

Later we gave them our oath, were allowed to erect the column, and accepted a truce upon dictated terms, a hardship which was welcome enough at the time. Nevertheless we then proceeded, by means of an alliance, to detach the Boiotians and Corinthians from the Spartans, and to resume friendly relations with the Argives, thereby involving the Spartans in the battle of Corinth. Who, again, turned the king of Persia against the Spartans? Who enabled Conon to fight the engagement at sea which lost her maritime supremacy?²⁹⁶

In both cases, invoking aggression acts as a foil against the notion of self-defence. The Spartans still do not come across as the righteous defenders of *autonomia* that the speaker wants them to be: that the Boiotians never agreed to the release of the Orchomenians from the *koinon* attests to that. The speaker's abrasive blaming of the Athenians for the war must have created some bad blood among his compatriots, had the speech been delivered in the Assembly.²⁹⁷

Scholars who accept the authenticity have looked for reasons to explain the contempt for the terms of this proposed treaty. Atavistic Athenian attitudes were possibly to blame.²⁹⁸ Recent flirtations with the rulers of Cyprus and Egypt antagonised the Persian King and anti-Persian emotions were prevalent in the polis, despite the recent collaboration.²⁹⁹ Another factor pushing the anti-Spartan attitude was the appointment of Strouthas to the satrapy of Asia Minor, who was openly opposed to the Spartans.³⁰⁰ Finally, surrendering the cities of Asia Minor, precisely those poleis that

²⁹⁶ And. 3.22.

²⁹⁷ Viewed from this angle, the rejection of the treaty and the displeasure over the offered terms leading to the vilification and exile of the responsible ambassadors seems more understandable: Philochoros FGrH 328 F149. Harris 2021 argues that it means the negotiators had accepted the King's Peace in 387/6, as it was not unprecedented that negotiators of an accepted treaty were condemned afterwards.

²⁹⁸ Hornblower 2011: 231 terms it a 'traditional hatred for Persia'.

²⁹⁹ The Athenians were allies of Artaxerxes but supported Evagoras of Cyprus in his revolt (Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.24). In the honours granted to him, the Athenians spin history by omitting the King's role in the victory of Knidos, emphasising Conon and Evagoras' contributions instead: *RO* 11; Isoc. 9.56–7; Gygas 2016: 192–6.

³⁰⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.16.

were meant to be liberated under the spectre of Panhellenism, ensured that ceding these Greeks to the King was met with dismay. The speaker glosses over this point. This concession would have meant the (temporary) end of re-establishing the empire in this war, which was one of the reasons the Athenians entered the war for in the first place: 'For at the time when you held dominion you were the leaders, you recall, of those only who dwelt on the sea; but now you would become the leaders of all alike – of ourselves, of the Peloponnesians, of those whom you formerly ruled, and of the King himself with his vast power.'³⁰¹ Although this phrase stems from the Theban ambassador, this prospect probably weighed on the minds of Athenian audiences. Giving up the objective of the war could have been a decisive factor in turning down the proposal.³⁰²

Another element that may have weighed heavier was the integrity of the Athenian territory, a factor overlooked by the forger in creating this speech. If he was aware of the situation, he would have understood that deep ingrained fears over the hinterland's destruction, an attitude stemming from the Peloponnesian War, still found a welcome home in the polis.³⁰³ Yet the Athenians witnessed no invasions of their countryside during this war, nor a similar number of casualties.³⁰⁴ Combined with the (near) completion of the Long Walls, the feeling of safety must have been high in Athens.³⁰⁵ That contrasts with the sufferings of the Boiotians, whose lands witnessed devastation. The speaker hoped to elicit a vicarious response from his listeners, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. He painted a picture in which the Athenians would lose all their lands as a result of continuing the war for the favour of the Argives.³⁰⁶

The most likely reason for optimism, however, was the Boiotian stance. The terms of the treaty were less relevant. The Athenians rejected various treaties during the Peloponnesian War with favourable terms, and it is unlikely that a slight change in the terms could have swayed the population

³⁰¹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.14.

³⁰² And. 3.24 echoes this sentiment as the author claims the Athenians were overwhelmed with joy and confidence after concluding the Boiotian alliance.

³⁰³ There might be a hint of this realisation, since references to prosperity undergirded fears of Athenian farmers for war: Missiou 1992: 144–71.

³⁰⁴ These losses impacted Athenian society: see the monuments for the losses of the battles of Koroneia and Nemea (*RO* 7a) and the Dexileos stele (*RO* 7b); Clairmont 1983: 212–14; Osborne 2010.

³⁰⁵ Conwell 2008: 3, 109–28.

³⁰⁶ And. 3.26: 'And to what end? To enable us to lose our own lands as well as that of the Corinthians in the event of defeat, and to secure Corinth for the Argives in the event of victory. Will not that prove to be our object in fighting?'

into peace. The resolve shown by the Boiotians – even with the vicissitudes enumerated by the speaker – must have encouraged the Athenians to continue fighting. I believe the reputation of the Boiotians for persisting, and their trustworthiness in the face of war, strengthened the Athenian resolve, believing a crucial decision in the war could be imminent, despite recent setbacks.

The speaker's exclamations serve as a monitory example for what could happen if the Athenians did not accept a peace treaty, but inadvertently amplifies the reputation of the Boiotians by extolling them compared with the other allies:

What, then, remains to be considered? Corinth, and the appeal which the Argives are making to us. First as to Corinth. I should like to be informed of the value of Corinth to us, if the Boiotians leave our ranks and make peace with the Spartans. Recall the day on which we concluded our alliance with the Boiotians, gentlemen: Recall the assumption on which we acted. We imagined, did we not, that once they joined forces with us we could face the whole world. Yet here we are considering how we can continue fighting the Spartans without their help, now that they are making peace.³⁰⁷

The author belabours the point that the war is a doomed expedition without the Boiotians and assigns a key role to them in his discourse.³⁰⁸ A better solution would be to enjoy the fruits of peace with the neighbouring Boiotians, rather than share the burdens of war with the Argives. Ironically, I believe it is here that he undercuts his own chances of success by conveying the benefits of peace:

Such are the prospects to which we are committed; and we have a choice between two alternatives, that of joining the Argives in fighting the Spartans, and that of joining the Boiotians in making common peace with the latter. Now what alarms me above all else, gentlemen, is our old fault of invariably abandoning powerful friends in preference for weak,

³⁰⁷ And. 3.24–5.

³⁰⁸ If Buck 1994: 2; Garnsey 1988: 112; Moreno 2007: 303 are correct in believing the Boiotians furnished the Athenians with grain, this remark takes on added importance. Other alliances were ostensibly made with the grain supply in mind: Evagoras of Cyprus (*RO* 11); Dionysius of Syracuse (*RO* 10) and the Eretrians (*Tod* II 103). Hansen 2006: 84–92; 2008 subscribes to the importance of Euboea for supplying grain and diminishes the role of Boiotia as an exporter, pointing to Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56–7. Yet this grain shortage was the result of *two* years of failed harvests. Fachard 2012: 114–15 provides calculations that undercut Eretria's role as an exporter of grain.

and of going to war for the sake of others when, as far as we ourselves are concerned, we could perfectly well remain at peace.³⁰⁹

These remarks are meant to degrade the Argives, but allot great importance to the Boiotians by viewing them as the key to victory. More tangential for the reputational point is that the speaker contravenes the Athenian self-image of justifiably protecting the weak against the strong, or protecting the Boiotians from Spartan abuses. This conflicts with his previous remark. Instead of the reciprocal politics the Athenians pursued by supporting the Boiotians, it was time to join the Spartans and revert to the more righteous policies of the past: the honourable goal of protecting weaker poleis.³¹⁰ The author of *On the Peace* thus cemented the reputation of the Boiotians, even if it was a rhetorical exercise. The lamentations over their apparent acceptance of a peace treaty serve to confirm the importance of the neighbours in the war effort. Notwithstanding its inauthenticity, the forger accidentally demonstrated that the reputation of the Boiotians remained solid in later times for their vicissitudes and wavering commitment to the war against the Spartans to be employed in a speech of what Hellenistic rhetoricians believed would have been given in the early fourth-century Athenian Assembly. The forger nevertheless makes some errors by evoking the honourable goal of protecting the weaker poleis, in this case the Spartans, and thus misjudged the Athenian self-declared probity. In light of recent events, such as the hubristic behaviour at Aulis by Agesilaos, the Boiotians were still deemed to be the wronged polity in this scenario.

In this case, Athenian self-professed probity for justice and protecting the weak was the fulcrum that continued the Corinthian War. *Realpolitik* was less of a concern than the reputational damage the Athenians could incur from abandoning the suffering poleis and leaving them to the wanton whims of the Spartans. Reputation was elementary in resecuring the neighbourly bonds in the face of a possible disruptor. It was the valorous reputation of the Boiotians as an essential ally that allowed a later forger to use their alleged withdrawal from the war as an argument while the reputation of protecting the weak and wronged from Spartan caprices reinforced the Athenians' resolve to fight alongside their Boiotian neighbours.

³⁰⁹ And. 3.28.

³¹⁰ Missiou 1992: 147–53. Azoulay 2004: 318–26 argues *charis* and *philanthropia* are interconnected aspects of the same cultural framework, meaning they were not as incompatible as Andocides portrays them to be.

3.4.3 Prostates of *Autonomia*: The Second Athenian Confederacy and the Thebans

After a hiatus of several years, the Athenians and the Thebans again formed an alliance to combat the Spartans. The basis for their friendship was the protection of the Boiotian exiles in Athens after the Spartan takeover of their city in 382 (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.3, 3.3). This action was widely condemned and serves as an example of the Spartan descent into amoral behaviour. One key aspect of their volatile behaviour was the enforcement of *autonomia* according to their own insights. The fraught appropriation of *autonomia* proved to be the foundational block for a more secure neighbourly arrangement.

After the King's Peace of 386 the notion of *autonomia* became an increasingly potent political tool wielded by the Spartans (Chapter 2.5). Their arbitrary implementation of the concept, combined with their military power, afforded them the freedom to abuse the term according to their own needs. The desultory manner of punishment exacted upon poleis in breach of that norm, as well as the disputes over the term in the *koinai eirenai* between 378 and 366, demonstrates the different ways of understanding and applying *autonomia* to the political landscape. The fluidity of the term lent itself to abuse by those agents policing the treaty: a 'hegemony through peace', subscribing to the potency of the Common Peace as a political weapon.³¹¹ In response to Spartan abuses of the clause, a ring of resistance slowly formed, starting with the Athenian-Chian alliance of 384. The alliance is carefully worded to comply with the constraints of the King's Peace: ἐπ' ἔλευ[θε]ρίαι καὶ αὐτονομί[α]ι. A salient detail of the alliance concerns the preliminary talks. The Chians apparently initiated them, perhaps worried about Persian intentions and Spartan aloofness.³¹²

Gradually, the seed of resistance grew into the Second Athenian Confederacy, which became a mechanism to cope with the Spartan hegemony. It employed a manifestly Athenian interpretation of *autonomia*. The Athenians expounded a view of *autonomia* that signified a polis' full independence from external and internal interference, albeit when it suited them. This meant that collecting payments (*syntaxeis*) from their allies for the maintenance of the Confederacy did not infringe upon poleis' *autonomia*, an attitude shared by several of the allies in the Confederacy.³¹³ This contrasted with the Spartan interpretation. They viewed the clause as

³¹¹ Raaflaub 2010; Low 2012. ³¹² RO 20 ll. 20–1; 16–17.

³¹³ Kellogg 2007 for the alliances created by Thrasylbulus prior to the King's Peace of 386.

denoting the position of *poleis* removed from the control of an opposing power, but more importantly, integrated into their own alliance as autonomous *and* dependent allies (Chapter 2.5).³¹⁴ Autokles' speech at the 371 peace conference perfectly encapsulates this ambivalence:

Men of Lacedaimon, that what I am about to say will not be said to your pleasure, I am not unaware; but it seems to me that men who desire the friendship which they may establish to endure for the longest possible time, ought to point out to one another the causes of their wars. Now you always say, 'The cities must be *autonomia*,' but you are yourselves the greatest obstacle in the way of their *autonomia*. For the first stipulation you make with your allied cities is this, that they follow wherever you may lead. And yet how is this consistent with *autonomia*? And you make for yourselves enemies without taking counsel with your allies, and against those enemies you lead them; so that frequently they who are said to be independent are compelled to take the field against men most friendly to themselves. Furthermore – and there can be nothing in the world more opposed to *autonomia* – you establish governments of ten here and governments of thirty there; and in the case of these rulers your care is, not that they shall rule according to law, but that they shall be able to hold possession of their cities by force. So that you manifestly take pleasure in despotisms rather than in free governments. Again, when the King directed that the cities be independent, you showed yourselves strongly of the opinion that if the Thebans did not allow each one of their cities, not only to rule itself, but also to live under whatever laws it chose, they would not be acting in accordance with the King's writing; but when you had seized the Cadmeia, you did not permit even the Thebans themselves to be *autonomia*. The right thing, however, is that those who are going to be friends should not insist upon obtaining their full rights from others, and then show themselves disposed to grasp the most they can.³¹⁵

This was the mindset behind the foundation of the Second Athenian Confederacy in 378, with the Thebans a founding member.³¹⁶ The Confederacy's opening clause describes the goals of the alliance: 'So that the Spartans shall allow the Greeks to be free and autonomous, and to live

³¹⁴ This dependence is seen in the earlier Peloponnesian League: Bolmarcich 2005. One example of disparate treatment is the Spartans' response to the Olynthians after taking the city since nothing happened to their supra-polis polity in the Chalkidike: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.37–3.27; Diod. 15.20.3–23.3.

³¹⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.7–9.

³¹⁶ Bertoli 2003: 88–9 places the foundation of the Confederacy in the context of Spartan abuses.

at peace occupying their own territory in security, and so that the peace and friendship sworn by the Greeks and the King may be in force and endure in accordance with the agreements.³¹⁷ The message was clear. The Athenians (and their allies), not the Spartans, were the true champions of the King's Peace. They protected the *autonomia* and *eleutheria* of the Greek poleis. *Eleutheria* had been added to *autonomia* for emotive force in the wake of Spartan abuses.³¹⁸ The stone's location further emphasises this message: it stood next to the statue of Zeus Eleutherios in the Agora.³¹⁹ The proclamation resonated with at least some Greek poleis. Shortly after, the Chalkidians joined the Confederacy voluntarily.³²⁰

Considering the recent abuses the Thebans had suffered from the Spartan enforcement of *autonomia*, the message of protection could have been a key factor in re-establishing the military and political bonds between the neighbours. That does not mean that 'it was fear, then, that threw the Athenians and Thebans into alliance' after Sphodrias' botched raid on the Piraeus.³²¹ The slogan of liberation played a large role in the recapture of the Cadmeia: 'After this they immediately made proclamation to all the Thebans, both horsemen and hoplites, to come forth from their houses, saying that the tyrants were dead.'³²²

Similar pleas appear in other sources. According to Plutarch in his *Life of Pelopidas*, Pelopidas exhorted his fellow Thebans by proclaiming that they should take Thrasybulus as an example and liberate Thebes (ἐλευθερώσωσι τὰς Θήβας), just as Thrasybulus had expelled the Thirty (tyrants) from Athens.³²³ The language of freedom runs through Diodorus'

³¹⁷ RO 22 ll. 9–14: ὅπως ἂν Λακεδ[αιμό]νιοι ἐδώσι τὸς Ἕλληνας ἐλευθε[ρ]ο[ς] [καί] αὐτόνομος ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, τῆ[ν] χώραν] ἔχοντας ἐμ βεβαίωι τῆ[ν] ἑαυτῶν πᾶσαν, κα]ί [δ]π[ω]λ[ς] κ]υ[ρ]ία ἦι κ[α]ί δι[α]μένη ἧ τε εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ φιλία ἦν ὥμοσ]α[ν] οἱ Ἕλληνες] καὶ [βα]σιλεὺς κατὰ τὰ[ς] σ]υ[ν]θήκας]. Accame 1941 argued this passage was deleted at some point. Investigations of the stone support this: Crowther and Matthaïou 2004–9. Perhaps the clause referring to the King's Peace was deleted after 367 when the Boiotians attempted to take the role of champions of the peace: Cargill 1981: 31–2. Or the Athenians had no use for these terms and envisioned a different character to the Confederacy. Cargill argues for a more benign Confederacy different from its fifth century predecessor, but Athenian actions in subsequent decades suggest otherwise: Hornblower 2011: 260–3.

³¹⁸ Bosworth 1992: 136.

³¹⁹ RO 22 ll. 63–72. On the cult's relation to the Persian Wars and Athenian imperialism: Raaflaub 2004: 58–117.

³²⁰ IG II² 44 = Harding 38. The alliance contains interesting clauses concerning the impositions the Chalkidians will *not* be subjected to: RO p. 109. Daverio Rocchi 2008 argues the *autonomia* of all guaranteed within the King's Peace was replaced with a more limited degree of *autonomia* through the voluntary alignment of smaller poleis with the Athenians and Spartans.

³²¹ Mackil 2013: 69. ³²² Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.9. ³²³ Plut. *Pel.* 7.2.

brief account of the episode too.³²⁴ The semantic connection between tyrants and *eleutheria* cannot be overlooked in this instance, especially as it was prominent in Athenian discourse.³²⁵ We may assume the message of *autonomia* and *eleutheria*, as promised by the charter of the Second Athenian Confederacy, would have found willing ears among the Thebans. Hence it is unfortunate that the Theban-Athenian treaty, agreed to just before the foundation of the Confederacy, is too fragmentary to examine the motives behind its formation.³²⁶ Since the Confederacy is based on the same terms as that pact, maybe there were regulations on *eleutheria* and *autonomia*.³²⁷

Judging from the clause ‘and the *demos* shall elect three ambassadors (to go) immediately to Thebes, in order to persuade them of whatever good they can’, some issues remained to be ironed out between the two.³²⁸ Scholars viewed this clause as embodying fears over the resurgence of the *koinon*.³²⁹ The ambassadors were meant to convince the Thebans to join on their own behalf and not as the Boiotians.

Yet the majority of Boiotian poleis were still under the Spartan thumb, despite the re-establishment of the *boiotarchia*. I therefore believe the clause should be interpreted positively. A treaty between the Athenians and the Thessalian *koinon* features a similar clause, and Aeschines refers to it when speaking of the treaty with Philip of Macedon in 346.³³⁰ The clause presumably records the Athenian intention to collaborate closely with their ally and keep in constant contact.³³¹ Moreover, the usual suspects for disrupting Atheno-Theban collaboration were not an issue. Oropos was independent after the King’s Peace, while the Plataians, Orchomenians and Thespians were under Spartan sway. The Confederacy was specifically aimed at combatting the Spartans. An expansion of Theban power within

³²⁴ Diod. 15.25.2: καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς τὰ Λακεδαιμονίων φρονούντας ἐν ταῖς ἰδίαις οἰκίαις ἐφόνευσαν, ἔτι κοιμώμενους καταλαβόντες: ἔπειτα τοὺς πολίτας ἐπὶ τὴν **ἐλευθερίαν** παρακαλέσαντες συνεργοὺς ἔσχον ἅπαντας τοὺς Θηβαίους.

³²⁵ Raaflaub 2004: 58–117. ³²⁶ IG II² 40.

³²⁷ RO 22 ll. 24–5: ἐπιδὲ τ[οῖς] αὐτοῖς ἐφ’ οἷσπερ Χίοι καὶ Θηβαῖοι.

³²⁸ RO 22 ll. 73–5: ἐλεῖσθαι δὲ τὸν δῆμον πρέσβεις τρεῖς αὐτίκα μάλ[α] εἰς Θήβας, [ο]ἴτινες πείσοσι Θηβαίους ὁ[τ]ι ἂν δύνω[ν]ται ἀγαθόν. Rhodes and Osborne mention the clause does not suggest any vagaries.

³²⁹ Accame 1941: 69; Cawkwell 2011: 192–3; Hornblower 2011: 241; Mackil 2013: 69.

³³⁰ RO 44 ll. 46–7. It implies the Athenians initiated the alliance, rather than the Thessalians: AIO *ad loc.* Aeschin. 2.104 uses the term to denote a vagary to be exploited by Philip, who does not have to adhere to the dissolution of the Boiotian *koinon*.

³³¹ The Thebans contributed the largest part of any potential *Bundesheer*: Dreher 1995: 58–9. They performed a leading role in the *synedroi*, with a Theban proposing a vote to the allies in 372: RO 29 l. 15.

Boiotia could serve that purpose. There is no reason to believe the resurgence of the *koinon* was perceived as problematic in Athenian eyes. Depending on the Athenian interpretation of *autonomia*, the *koinon*'s formation did not violate the King's Peace.³³² An earlier attempt to combat the Spartans (395) unproblematically involved the *entire* Boiotian *koinon* and all of the region.

The Thebans' prominent role within the Confederacy is shown by their service in various functions, for example, as *triarchs* in the Athenian navy, proving the two worked in unison against the Spartans.³³³ As was the case in 395, the Athenians wished to reclaim the seas. The Thebans wanted to 'rekindle the Theban business', as Xenophon put it.³³⁴ These ambitions were not contradictive. The two different spheres of influence could happily coexist. Nothing suggests friction between the neighbours. On the contrary, after Sphodrias' raid the Athenians set about constructing ships and went to the help of the Boiotians zealously.³³⁵

This example demonstrates how the Athenians' reputation as the guardian of *autonomia*, triggered by Spartan abuses of the term, was the foundation of their revival as an Aegean-wide power in the 370s. Their determination to support poleis against external domination inaugurated a renewed collaboration with the Thebans, who had repeatedly been the victims of Spartan abuse.³³⁶ Due to these abuses, the Athenians could proclaim to be *prostates* of the wronged poleis. They propagated *their* view of *autonomia*, realising it would resonate across the Aegean, but particularly in Thebes. Through reciprocity – protecting the Boiotian exiles in 382 – and acting as the counterfoil to the abrasive Spartans, the Athenians were able to rekindle neighbourly collaboration. In turn, this functioned as the foundation of their anti-Spartan alliance that re-granted them control over the Aegean.

Whereas the previous examples demonstrated how reputation facilitated neighbourly collaboration, the finale example will show how a bad

³³² It did not prohibit the 'Chalkidians from Thrace' joining later: *RO* 22 ll. 101–2; pp. 104–5.

³³³ [Dem.] 49.14–5; 21, 48–51; 54. A catalogue of ships mentions the Thebans returned two ships: *IG* II² 1607 l. 49; *IG* II² 1605 l.12; 1604.

³³⁴ *Xen. Hell.* 5.4.46.

³³⁵ *Xen. Hell.* 5.4.34: προθυμίας ἐβοήθουν. He blames the βοιωτιάζοντες for riling up the Athenians. Xenophon for the first time switches the agency from the Thebans to the Boiotians. For Atheno-Boiotian relations until 371: Buckler and Beck 2008: 33–43. The Athenians probably set out to construct 100 ships: *IG* II² 1604. To create a financial buffer for the coming conflict, the Athenians instituted a property tax (*eisphora*) to decrease their dependency on external sources: Christ 2007.

³³⁶ An additional benefit may have been combatting of piracy in these waters: Kellogg 2007: 65–6.

reputation was an obstacle. This predicament was solved only through a determined display of trustworthiness and loyalty, revealing how essential reputation was for establishing friendly neighbourly relations.³³⁷

3.4.4 How Can You Mend a Broken Heart? The Theban-Athenian Alliance of 339/8

In 339 the Macedonian king Philip gathered his forces at Elateia, awaiting preparations to invade Attica. On his way lay Boiotia. The *koinon*, though nominally his allies, already demonstrated their obstinate streak by expelling a Macedonian garrison from Nicaea and replacing it with their own. They had also allowed an Athenian mercenary force to march through Boiotia unhindered when hearing of Philip's approach to Central Greece during the recently concluded Sacred War (340–339) (Chapter 2.7).³³⁸ All was forgiven in the heat of the moment. The Macedonian king sent his emissaries to Thebes to convince the *koinon* to join in the invasion or obtain free passage through its lands.³³⁹ Apprehensive of the prospect of facing the two crack forces of the period, Philip's arrival at Elateia sent the Athenians into a frenzy and prompted the despatch of an embassy to Thebes to plea for an alliance. In light of the decades of uneasy enmity and the Athenian abandonment of the Boiotians after their victory at Leuktra, the mission seemed doomed from the start. The proposals from both parties split the *koinon's* leadership. Some members threatened secession should the Athenians be favoured over Philip, an ally.³⁴⁰ Yet the Athenians miraculously obtained the alliance.

Demosthenes, who headed the Athenian embassy, implored the Boiotians to stand against the tyrannical king and, unlike their forebears, confront the barbarian invasion to preserve Greek freedom. His speech has not survived. This reconstruction is based on his later reflections and anecdotes in *On the Crown*, but he does relate the contents of the speeches given by Philip's ambassadors. Demosthenes insists he was instrumental in achieving the alliance during the embassy's visit, a sentiment echoed by

³³⁷ Most work on 'trust' in Ancient Greece focuses on economic relations or intra-polis relations, rather than the inter-polis realm: Johnstone 2011; 2017.

³³⁸ Philochoros FGrH 328 F 56; Aeschin. 3.146; Din. 1.74.

³³⁹ Perhaps a reminder how uncouth marching an army through one's territory without the right authorisation was; Thuc. 4.78 on the case of Brasidas marching through Thessaly.

³⁴⁰ Marsyas FGrH 135–6 F20; Theopompos FGrH 115 F 328; Dem. 18.152–8, 168, 174–5, 178, 211–15; Diod. 16.84.3–85.1; Justin 9.3.6.

other sources.³⁴¹ Recently recovered fragments from Hyperides' *Against Diondas* correct this interpretation of events. They do not negate Demosthenes' value as the conductor of the alliance, but provide a more nuanced interpretation.³⁴² An analysis of these sources reveals the importance of honour, standing, social memory and mutual trust to understand the full complexity of the eventual alliance, rather than an over-reliance on Demosthenes and his invocation of rectifying past wrongs.

In *On the Crown* Demosthenes defends Ctesiphon against Aeschines' attacks, after Ctesiphon had donated his speaking time to him. Demosthenes used the opportunity to defend his anti-Macedonian policy and vehemently attack those who leaned differently. The orator explores how he had proposed an embassy to Thebes, led by himself as a *proxenos* of that polis.³⁴³ It was his way of stressing his political contributions to Athenian policy. By pointing out the decrees he was associated with and which he had proposed, Demosthenes aimed to accrue social capital in Athens to demonstrate his contributions to the defence of Athens by creating a useful alliance.³⁴⁴ In years prior, despite the inimical nature of neighbourly relations, Demosthenes had paved the way for a reconciliation by countering the dominant narrative in Athens, which viewed the Thebans as archetypical traitors of Hellas.

In the 350s and 340s Demosthenes repeatedly tried to combat that image.³⁴⁵ In some of his speeches he hints at a possible rapprochement between the neighbours, or even an alliance. He mentions the increased friction among the Boiotians regarding Philip's actions and their doubts over their alliance with the king. Demosthenes had to tread lightly, as the negative image of the Thebans in Athens persisted – he even refers to it on two occasions – yet these occur at a time when Philip's threat is less palpable than at the end of the decade.³⁴⁶ In *On Behalf of the*

³⁴¹ Dem. 18.211–15; Theopompos FGrH 115 F 328 = *Plut.* Dem.18.2.

³⁴² Carey et al. 2008; Tchernetska 2005.

³⁴³ Aeschin. 2.141–3 mentions Demosthenes was a *proxenos*. ³⁴⁴ Liddel 2020: II 77–80.

³⁴⁵ The first is *On the Symmories* of 354/3 (MacDowell 2009: 142–3; Dem. 14.33–4). The second is *On Behalf of the Megalopolitans* of 353/2 (Badian 2000a: 30–1; Karavounis 2002: 124–73; Schaefer 1885–7: I 513–19) where he argues for a possible alliance (Dem. 16.21; 25–6). The third is *On the Peace* (346); Dem. 5.14–15. Finally, *On the Chersonese* and the *Third Philippic*, both delivered in 341; Dem. 8.63; 9.27.

³⁴⁶ In his *Against Leptines* (Dem. 14.109) from 355/4, Demosthenes jibes at the Thebans for their treatment of Orchomenos: Canevaro 2016: *ad loc*; Kremmydas 2012: 378–9. In the *Second Philippic*, he portrays the Thebans as always aiding foreign powers, unlike the Athenians, who selflessly counter any foreign threat (Dem. 6.9–12). But this probably had more to do with the Athenian self-image than any fierce condemnation of the Boiotians.

Megapolitans (346) Demosthenes stresses that the Boiotians are more trustworthy allies than the Spartans, already planting the seeds for their solid reputation.³⁴⁷ In later years he stresses the Boiotians are misled by Philip rather than being devious traitors.³⁴⁸ It is within this cognitive sphere that Demosthenes convinced his countrymen of the need to ally with the *koinon*. He realises that sixty years of inculcated and repeated abuse is hard to refashion but manages to do so with the threat of Philip looming. The embassy of 339 to Thebes meant Demosthenes had other minds besides those of his countrymen to convince. The orator had a tough act to follow, as the Macedonian ambassadors were allowed to speak first on account of the alliance with the *koinon*:

When the Thebans held their assembly, they introduced Philip's ambassadors first, on the ground that they were in the position of allies. They came forward and made their speech, full of eulogy of Philip, and of incrimination of Athens, and recalled everything you had ever done in antagonism to Thebes. The gist of the speech was that they were to show gratitude to Philip for every good turn he had done to them, and to punish you for the injuries they had suffered, in whichever of two ways they chose – either by giving him a free passage, or by joining in the invasion of Attica. They proved, as they thought, that, if their advice were taken, cattle, slaves, and other loot from Attica would come into Boiotia, whereas the result of the proposals they expected from us would be that Boiotia would be ravaged by the war.³⁴⁹

Their words fell on deaf ears, however, as Demosthenes saved the day with an incredible speech. Unfortunately, his speech has not survived, which would give some insights into the arguments used. Perhaps these involved invocations of honour or a possibility to rectify the past wrongs during the Persian Wars by now committing to the defence of Greece (Chapter 5.2.9). He was successful and it resulted in the alliance with the Boiotians. At least, that is the version he presents, arguably to strengthen his own social capital and defend his political record in the wake of the defeat at Chaironeia.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Dem. 16.21: πολὺ δὴ κάλλιον καὶ ἄμεινον τὴν μὲν Θηβαίων συμμαχίαν αὐτοῦς παραλαβεῖν; Dem. 16.29: 'I am surprised that some of you are afraid of the enemies of Sparta becoming allies of the Thebans, and yet see nothing to fear in their subjugation by the Lacedaimonians, forgetting the practical lesson to be learned from the past, that the Thebans always use these allies against the Lacedaimonians, whereas the Lacedaimonians, when they had them at command, used them against us.'

³⁴⁸ Dem. 5.14–15; 8.63. ³⁴⁹ Dem. 18.213. ³⁵⁰ Liddel 2020: II 79.

His version seems to be vindicated by Theopompos' verdict of the event. The fourth-century historian's work partially survives in Plutarch's biography of Demosthenes:

Well, then, the Thebans, in their calculations, were not blind to their own interests, but each of them had before his eyes the terrors of war, since their losses in the Phocian war were still fresh; however, the power of the orator, as Theopompos says, fanned up their courage and inflamed their honourable ambition and obscured all other considerations, so that, casting away fear and calculation and feelings of obligation, they were rapt away by his words into the path of honour.³⁵¹

The evocation of honour and standing is pivotal. Theopompos' account suggests the *koinon* overwhelmingly moved to support the Athenians. Plutarch probably exaggerated that Demosthenes was the key cog in the anti-Macedonian machine by directing its strategy, contrary to the actual terms of the alliance. Yet the observation that 'rational' considerations and their own interests were subsidiary to other interests remains valid.³⁵² This undermines the notion that fear dictated interstate interactions. Theopompos' evaluation supports the idea that Demosthenes used arguments from social memory and past events.

Words, however, were not enough to convince the Boiotians. Demosthenes portrays an advantageous account of his own role, and although seemingly confirmed by Theopompos, Gordon Shrimpton demonstrated that Theopompos' fragment is largely crafted on the basis of Demosthenes' *On the Peace*.³⁵³ While Plutarch may have sprinkled in some elements of his own, it certainly prohibits ascribing too much influence to Demosthenes and his performance in Thebes. Further undermining his testimony is the decree allegedly moved before the embassy. It is filled with elements of social memory and relates past benefits rendered by the Athenians to the Heraclids or Oedipus.³⁵⁴ But the decree Demosthenes mentions is either spurious or – worse – a fabrication, meaning his role in arranging embassies with the Boiotians can be duly doubted.³⁵⁵ A final nail in the coffin comes from Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon*, delivered in 330:

I think that not Phrynonidas and not Eurybatos, nor any other of the traitors of ancient times ever proved himself such a juggler and cheat as this man, who, oh earth and heaven, oh ye gods and men – if any men of

³⁵¹ Plut. *Dem.* 18.2–3 = Theopompos FGrH 115 F 328. ³⁵² Steinbock 2013: 269–71.

³⁵³ Shrimpton 1991: 171–80. For Plutarch's possible additions: Flower 1994: 144–5.

³⁵⁴ Dem. 18.181–7. ³⁵⁵ Spurious: Yunis 2001: 29–31; fraudulent: Canevaro 2013: 310–18.

you will listen to the truth – dares to look you in the face and say that the Thebans actually made the alliance with you, not because of the crisis, not because of the fear that was impending over them, not because of your reputation (οὐ διὰ τὴν ὑμετέραν δόξαν), but because of Demosthenes' declamations! And yet in other days many men who were trusted by the Thebans (πρεσβείας ἐπρέσβευσαν εἰς Θήβας οἱ μάλιστα οἰκείως ἐκείνοις διακείμενοι) had gone on missions to them; first, Thrasymachus of Kollytos, a man trusted in Thebes as no other ever was; again, Thrason of Erchia, *proxenos* of the Thebans; Leodamas of Acharnai, a speaker no less able than Demosthenes, and more to my taste; Archedemos of Pelekes, a powerful speaker, and one who had met many political dangers for the sake of the Thebans; Aristophon of Azenia, who had long been subject to the charge of having sympathised with the Boiotians; Pyrrhandros of Anaphlystos, who is still living. Yet no one of these was ever able to persuade them to be friends with you. (my adopted translation from the Loeb edition)³⁵⁶

Of course, we are dealing with Demosthenes' nemesis. He efficaciously downplays Demosthenes' rhetorical influence by enumerating previous Boiotian friends and *proxenoi* who were unable to sway opinion. It aims to contrast Demosthenes with his predecessors in order to drag his reputation through the mud, especially in the wake of Thebes' destruction (335) while Demosthenes and the Athenians stood idly by.³⁵⁷ More pertinent to the current investigation, however, is that Aeschines pinpoints his polis' reputation as one of the contributing factors to arranging the alliance, contrary to Demosthenes' claims.

This is where the new Hypereides fragments come into play. The conclusion of the alliance was a prolonged and delicate process. Far from immediately materialising after Demosthenes' speech, the Boiotians played a patient game, hoping to extract the best possible terms from their neighbours. If their terms were unacceptable, they could choose the Macedonians' side. Sensing the desperation of their neighbours, they demanded 'preposterous' terms and sufficient proof of Athenian alacrity. That proof came late and only then was the alliance concluded, according to Hypereides in his speech delivered in early 334:³⁵⁸

When you heard this from us, you travelled from Eleusis to Thebes; and you were so well disposed and friendly towards each other that having

³⁵⁶ Aeschin. 3.137–9.

³⁵⁷ Liddel 2020: II 241 argues that decrees were easy to attack and we see an example of that here.

³⁵⁸ Horváth 2014: 10–23. Rhodes 2009 gives a later date (mid-334), but that does not undermine my argument.

themselves entered they received your army into their city and their houses into the presence of their wives and children. And you, though you had not yet received any firm assurances from them, sent your force there while Philip was close at hand; and at that point Philip went off, without achieving any of his goals. We and the Thebans came back and rapidly confirmed the alliance. (trans. Carey et al.)

This different narrative, which was overwhelmed in later sources by the strength of Demosthenes' account, is not necessarily anti-Demosthenic. Hypereides was after all his ally.³⁵⁹ Demosthenes' omission of the march is understandable. According to Peter Liddel, one of the primary themes of his *symbolletic* oratory is the idea that Athenian decrees were empty rhetoric, since their military behaviour failed to live up to the expectations of these decrees.³⁶⁰ Admitting that the Athenians *actually* militarily backed up their decree with the *koinon* would contradict his argument. Hypereides' account demonstrates that the conclusion of the alliance was not a foregone conclusion. It was based on an Athenian army appearing on the Boiotians' doorstep. A committed defence of Boiotia was the *koinon*'s most important demand, as the proposals from the Athenians and Philip split their leadership. Keeping in mind the troubled recent nature of neighbourly relations, the reluctance to abandon an ally for the sake of an enemy was not a trivial matter, and broached the vital issue of trust in political relationships.

The spectre of Leuktra must have been haunting Boiotian minds. The *koinon* had been isolated from the peace treaty of 371 and the Spartans marched their army into Boiotia, but this elicited no response from their Athenian allies. This was perhaps not the crux of the matter. One can argue the Spartan invasion was a calculated risk by the Thebans. It was the aftermath of the battle that cemented the legacy of dyadic distrust. Rather than rally to the banner of their wronged ally, the Athenians stayed aloof and added injury to insult by allying with the Spartans in 369 (Chapter 3.1.3). Their abandonment of the Theban pact – in both word and deed – broke the covenant of trust. Thirty years may have healed some wounds, but the *koinon* required evidence from the Athenians that a repeat of Leuktra was not in the cards. The Athenian tergiversation lay at the root of that distrust.

The ambivalent stance towards a potential rapprochement translated not only into the request for a show of faith from the Athenians, but

³⁵⁹ Guth 2014. For the influence of Demosthenes' legacy: Lambert 2018: 185–7.

³⁶⁰ Liddel 2020: II 169.

equally into the unusual terms of the alliance. The terms were derided by Aeschines as being heavily skewed towards the Boiotians:

and when he had gained this point he betrayed all Boiotia to the Thebans by writing in the decree, 'If any city refuse to follow Thebes, the Athenians shall aid the Boiotians in Thebes,' cheating with words and altering the facts, as he is wont to do; as though, forsooth, when the Boiotians should be suffering in fact, they would be content with Demosthenes' fine phrases, rather than indignant at the outrageous way in which they had been treated; and, secondly, he laid two thirds of the costs of the war upon you, whose danger was more remote, and only one third on the Thebans (in all this acting for bribes); and the leadership by sea he caused to be shared equally by both; but all the expenditure he laid upon you and the leadership by land, if we are not to talk nonsense, he carried away bodily and handed it over to Thebes.³⁶¹

Accusations of bribery are overdrawn, but the alliance does seem to have been a golden deal for the Thebans in terms of costs and leadership. Considering the circumstances of both parties, the concessions by the Athenians have been viewed in a more favourable light by scholars analysing the terms.³⁶² The division of the financial burden is unsurprising. Athens was a wealthier polity than the *koinon*, who were hampered by the costs of the Sacred War.³⁶³ Carrying the costs of equipping a fleet had proven to be a thorny issue during their membership of the Second Athenian Confederacy. The most salient feature, however, and the one echoed in the Demosthenic and Theopompean narratives, is the leadership role assumed by the *koinon*. This aspect touches upon another facet of the creation of the alliance: honour.

In my opinion, this is what Theopompos refers to. After repeated rejections of the Boiotians' leading role in Helladic affairs, their leading role in the alliance contra Philip finally affirms their hegemonic status in Greece, as preservers and leaders of Greek freedom against Macedonian oppression. It was a role they had been craving for decades, as evidenced by their dedications in Delphi and Boiotia (Chapters 5.1.3, 5.2.8). The accruable symbolic capital from leading an alliance to victory against Philip

³⁶¹ Aeschin. 3.142–3. It is interesting to follow Liddel 2020: II 242–3 that there was awareness among Athenian audiences and orators for the non-Athenian audience for their decrees.

³⁶² Mosley 1971; Hunt 2010: 103 point out how these terms differ from contemporary alliances.

³⁶³ Schachter 2016a: 113–32. Athens' state revenue and per capita income equalled or exceeded its fifth-century height, even though its citizen population never regained the fifth-century level (Ober 2008: 253).

could be translated into a lasting legacy afterwards.³⁶⁴ Defeating the new threat to Greek *eleutheria* would overshadow any lingering doubts about Boiotian sturdiness in the face of foreign oppression. Similar to the Athenians, who built their empires on their Persian War credentials, the Boiotians could do the same, but against a nearer and more dangerous foe.

It was therefore neither fear nor material gains that dominated the Thebans' considerations for a neighbourly alliance.³⁶⁵ Rather, it was their standing and honour, as well as a practical show of faith to solder the broken chain of trust. The wound was further sutured by the advantageous terms of the alliance. These should not solely be viewed as inane greediness from the Boiotians to extract as much as they could from their neighbours; it was an essential part of re-establishing the broken trust. A further conclusion can be drawn from this episode. That the *koinon* deserted their ally Philip, irrespective of their strained relationship, and re-aligned with the Athenians after thirty years of hostility demonstrates that a mutual inimical attitude was not a given. The right circumstances inoculated the neighbours against a preordained notion of dislike even after prolonged bouts of enmity. The Athenian concessions show they were aware of how to apply the right medication to the wound of distrust and proved themselves to be remarkable healers of neighbourly hostility.

3.5 Cultic Connections

Cultic connections are a final convention of establishing friendly relations. These could be used to solidify relations or to confirm and validate treaties. The Athenians and Boiotians were no strangers to the benefits of employing cultic ties to mend relations. In the fourth century, the Boiotians utilised such ties – by either exporting their own or importing them from abroad – to strengthen bonds with poleis around the Aegean.³⁶⁶ The Athenians introduced the Asklepios cult from Epidauros to validate the Peace of Nicias between the two poleis during the Peloponnesian War.³⁶⁷ These also served more quotidian interests of the city's inhabitants but could act as beacons of relations between communities.

³⁶⁴ For symbolic capital in Greek interstate relations: Crane 1998: 105–24.

³⁶⁵ Kelly 1980 argues Philip's alliance with the Persian King Ochus precipitated the Theban decision, but see Buckler and Beck 2008: 243 for the impossibility of that claim.

³⁶⁶ Schachter 2014b; Schipporeit 2013: 23–4. ³⁶⁷ Van Wijk 2016.



Figure 3.2 Places mentioned in this section.

Is there a similar example of cultic exchange between the Athenians and Boiotians? (See Figure 3.2.) One possibility, though speculative, is the Athena Areia cult in Plataia and Acharnai. In Boiotia the cult is only attested in Plataia, whereas Acharnai is the sole Athenian location with evidence of this cult.³⁶⁸ The warm bonds between the Plataians and Athenians are well known. Perhaps a cultic exchange took place at the time of the second alliance in the late sixth century (Chapter 3.1.1). In this early phase the Athenians could have forged a deeper relation with their allies, especially ones living at the crossroads between the Peloponnese and Boiotia. The reason for Acharnai would then be less obvious, but perhaps the martial valour of the deme had come to the fore in the wars of the late sixth century.³⁶⁹

Another sacral connection between Athens and Plataia might bear more fruit. If Plutarch's testimony of the Battle of Plataia in 479 is accepted, the

³⁶⁸ RO 88; COB I 127–8. The sanctuary is unattested and there are no traces of cult activity in Plataia. Paus. 1.28.5 refers to an altar of Athena Areia on the Areopagus, dedicated by Orestes after his acquittal, but nothing more can be said about it. A cult in central Athens would strengthen the cultic connection between the poleis.

³⁶⁹ For this martial valour: Kellogg 2013b.

Plataians removed their border *horoi* with the Athenians prior to the battle. This created a contiguous territory, in accordance with an oracle that proclaimed the battle would be won on Athenian soil in the plain of Eleusinian Demeter and Kore.³⁷⁰ An abandoned shrine dedicated to the goddesses was found on the Atheno-Plataian border, implying the cult was established there: ‘By conference and investigation with these he discovered that near Hysiai, at the foot of Mount Kithairon, there was a very ancient temple bearing the names of Eleusinian Demeter and Kore.’³⁷¹

The story is likely a retrojection or later tradition, but there are clues of a Demeter cult in the territory of Plataia. An early fifth-century dedication to Demeter has survived, but without an epithet.³⁷² Herodotus describes the remains of a temple that had hitherto remained unidentified.³⁷³ Equally problematic is whether the epithet Eleusinia was extended to the goddess before or after the battle. If it occurred after the battle, the epithet could have been granted in honour of the protecting goddess and her support against the Persians, as Deborah Boedeker has shown.³⁷⁴ The sudden rise and swift decline of the cult – it seems to have ended long before Plutarch wrote about it, and the lack of architectural remains appears to vindicate that impression – is striking. The vicissitudes suffered by the Plataians throughout the fifth and fourth centuries can explain why the fortunes of the cult waned with that of the town, especially if it was a token of Athenian protection.

The identification of the cult as one derived from Eleusis probably reflects a later tradition.³⁷⁵ If not, the shrine may have been a late sixth-century vestige, with the sanctuary demarcating the border, a role frequently fulfilled by temples to Demeter. In other contexts the cult was used to articulate kinship ties or, more forcibly, the expansion of the Athenian sphere of influence.³⁷⁶ The Plataian case could represent an older, forgotten extension of territorial claims by the Athenians or, conversely, a Boiotian

³⁷⁰ Plut. *Arist.* 11.8: ‘And besides, that the oracle might leave no rift in the hope of victory, the Plataians voted, on motion of Arimnestos, to remove the boundaries of Plataia on the side toward Attica, and to give this territory to the Athenians, that so they might contend in defence of Hellas on their own soil, in accordance with the oracle.’

³⁷¹ Plut. *Arist.* 11.6. ³⁷² Pritchett 1979; Schachter 2016a: 168–71.

³⁷³ Hdt. 9.57.2; 62.2; 65.2; 69.1; 101. The temple’s location is disputed. A Russian traveller account from the late nineteenth century may help with a possible identification: A. Mozhajsky in *Tierrasias* 49.1 (2019).

³⁷⁴ COB I 154. Boedeker 2007.

³⁷⁵ Beck forthcoming suggests it may have stemmed from Eleusis.

³⁷⁶ Fragoulaki 2013: 136–7. Bowden 2007 dismisses the dissemination of the cult as a later invention.

claim to Eleusis in the south (Chapter 4.1.1).³⁷⁷ The reference to separate territories by Plutarch conforms with the outline of the Plataian-Athenian alliance (Chapter 3.1.1) and may provide a kernel of truth with regard to a cultic exchange under Athenian aegis. The cult then articulated the Atheno-Plataian border and was part of an effort to strengthen their relationship in the late sixth century. Herodotus' account of the Plataian *chora* suggests it was separate from Attica. Combined with the declaration of the Plataike as 'neutral soil' after the Persian Wars – thus reinstating the separation between Attica and the Plataike – there is reason to accept parts of Plutarch's account (Chapter 4.1.1).³⁷⁸ The cult may have been used as a regulator of the borders or as a site of negotiation for peaceful interactions between communities, in line with Jeremy McInerney's and François de Polignac's depiction of border sanctuaries.³⁷⁹ If we were to accept Plutarch's testimony, a cultic exchange between the Athenians and Plataians at the end of the sixth century could have taken place to strengthen the bonds between the two polities.

The same holds for Eleutherai. This border town on the edges of the Mazi plain became part of the Athenian nexus sometime between 507 and 501 (Chapter 4.1.1). The town's main deity was Dionysos, whose cult found its way to Athens. The god's epithet, Eleutherios, betrays its origins.³⁸⁰ The sanctuary was located near the theatre on the South Slope of the Akropolis. Its earliest archaeological evidence stems from the first quarter of the fifth century.³⁸¹ Pausanias provides an etymology for the Athenian cult. He describes various aspects of the relationship between the Athenians and Eleutherians but also mentions one striking element:

The reason why the people of Eleutherai came over was not because they were reduced by war, but because they desired to share Athenian citizenship and hated the Thebans. In this plain is a temple of Dionysos, from which the old wooden image was carried off to Athens. The image at Eleutherai at the present day is a copy of the old one.³⁸²

The Eleutherians never became Athenian citizens, so Pausanias' source either describes a later situation or fabricates this motivation. In addition, recent epigraphic material from Thebes portrays a more convivial relationship between the Eleutherians and Thebans (Chapter 4.1.1). As Robert

³⁷⁷ Daly 2015: 57 n. 88. ³⁷⁸ Hdt. 6.108. ³⁷⁹ De Polignac 2011; 2017; McInerney 2006.

³⁸⁰ Connor 1996 views the cult in relation to freedom from tyranny. Raaflaub 2000 refuted this notion. The lack of tribal organisation in the City Dionysia could indicate an earlier tradition: Sourvinou-Inwood 1994.

³⁸¹ Paleothoros 2012: 51–67. ³⁸² Paus. 1.38.8.

Parker notes, if the introduction of the cult in Athens occurred after their takeover of Eleutherai, carrying off the image of the town's prominent deity was rather uncouth.³⁸³ They were obviously capable of this behaviour, but there are not many similar occurrences of such blatant theft to establish a cultic relation. Irene Polinskaya propounds a different view: 'Whenever the Greeks succeeded in making the gods of others their own, by becoming owners *de facto* or proclaiming ownership of these gods *de iure* (gods move, boundaries stay, or boundaries move, gods stay – in both cases, owners change), they showed their respect to these gods by traditional means of veneration.'³⁸⁴ Judged from that perspective, the Athenians were perhaps not that abrasive, but willing enablers of a cult. The decision to carry off the *xoanon* and establish a cult at the Akropolis was not a truculent act, but an appreciation of the town's deities, attached to the land.

Another etymological story holds that Pegasos of Eleutherai brought the cult and image from Eleutherai to Athens but was spurned, only for the Athenians to incur the wrath of Dionysos in the form of genital disease before caving in.³⁸⁵ This is more in line with other Dionysiac introductions, and would better reflect the relationship between Athens and this border town, which claimed to be Dionysos' birthplace.³⁸⁶ It details a more collaborative effort, despite the earlier dismissal of the cult, and reflects a better method for Athens to integrate this town. Some scholars doubt the connection between the introduction of the cult and political overtures by the Athenians, which is plausible.³⁸⁷ After all, cause and effect do not have to correlate in this event. Nevertheless, the claims to be the god's birthplace and the Athenians' *de facto* confirmation and celebration thereof in the wake of recent quarrels with the Boiotians would make the introduction of the cult all the more potent. If that interpretation is correct, the introduction of Dionysos and his cult was meant to establish a stronger link with the Eleutherians and would be a means of forging more permanent connections between the Athenian *astu* and its borderlands.

A more salient case for cultic exchange between the neighbours comes from Herodotus. He provides an anecdote about the retrieval of an Apollo statue from Delos to Delion in Boiotia. The interpretation of this story reveals the desire of scholars to assume a hostile viewpoint in every vein of neighbourly interactions, even in stories of cultic embrace between the two regions. Scholars previously assumed there were inveterate inimical feelings

³⁸³ Parker 1996: 94–5. ³⁸⁴ Polinskaya 2010: 67–8. See, e.g., Hdt. 5.82–6.

³⁸⁵ Schol. ad. Ar. *Acharnians* 242. ³⁸⁶ Diod. 3.66.1; 4.2.6.

³⁸⁷ Parker 1996: 94; Pickard-Cambridge 1958: 57–8; Sourvinou-Inwood 1994: 273–5.

at play, translating into an interpretation of the retrieval of the Apollo statue as an overt display of Theban assertiveness towards the southern neighbours.³⁸⁸ Herodotus recounts the following:

Datis journeyed with his army to Asia, and when he arrived at Mykonos he saw a vision in his sleep. What that vision was is not told, but as soon as day broke Datis made a search of his ships. He found in a Phoenician ship a gilded image of Apollo and asked where this plunder had been taken. Learning from what temple it had come, he sailed in his own ship to Delos. The Delians had now returned to their island, and Datis set the image in the temple, instructing the Delians to carry it away to Theban Delion, on the coast opposite Chalkis. Datis gave this order and sailed away, but the Delians never carried that statue away; twenty years later the Thebans brought it to Delion by command of an oracle.³⁸⁹

These scholars interpret this as the Thebans asserting their domination over the coastal region, proclaiming their revival as the guarantor of Boiotian interests and perhaps taking an oblique swipe at the Athenians, who were in control of Delos at the time.³⁹⁰ They connected this action to a loss of Theban prestige because of their medism. This re-dedication offered the perfect opportunity to vindicate themselves. The Theban agency is peculiar in this scenario, as the temple later lay in Tanagra's territory.³⁹¹

Albert Schachter argued differently.³⁹² Delos was firmly under Athenian control. To claim the statue without an appropriate response from its de facto controllers, and make audacious claims towards the sanctuary, renders unilateral Theban agency unlikely. In light of the circumstances, Athenian involvement in the affair seems more probable. The retrieval of the statue was then more of a rapprochement. That interpretation finds support in the Boiotian evidence. Sherds indicating a cult of Herakles on Tanagraian territory suggest the Delion area was under Theban sway around 470. This cult was frequently used by the Thebans to appropriate

³⁸⁸ Buck 1979: 142; Demand 1982: 27; Mackil 2013: 189–92. ³⁸⁹ Hdt. 6.118.

³⁹⁰ Buck 1979: 142; Demand 1982: 27; Mackil 2013: 189–92. Diod. 11.81.1–2 for their medism vis-à-vis other Boiotian communities. But that applies only to Plataia and Thespiiai, as the rest medized. Scott 2005: 397–8 says nothing of any motives. Delos was a natural hub on the maritime routes leading from Boiotia and Attica to Asia Minor (Arnaud 2005: 57; Morton 2001: 175), so the island was a logical choice to leave the statue.

³⁹¹ Schachter 2016a: 80–112.

³⁹² Schachter 2016a: 69–70. Mackil 2013: 188–90 uses Athenian ownership to indicate the hostile intentions behind the dedication, but why would the Thebans look to Delos for this retrieval, rather than invent a different story, especially as Herodotus relies on Theban sources: *COB* I 44–7 *ad loc* contra Scott 2005 *ad loc*, who refers to a possible Persian or Ionian source?

their claims, as Albert Schachter points out, implying there was less need to validate their claim to Delion, if these sherds reflect such a territorial vindication.³⁹³

I would argue the cultic exchange was the result of an even closer tie since the cult of Apollo at Delos was the religious centre of the Delian League and bound its members together. The sanctuary's network stretched across the Aegean and formed an integral part of the Athenian propaganda to create a unified political and ethnic front against the Persians. Even if Delos enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy at the time, combined with the possibility of smuggling in the Cyclades, it would be remarkable if the Athenians would be unaware of this retrieval due to their control of the island.³⁹⁴ Symbolically connecting Delos to Delion implies a conscious action on behalf of the Athenians and Thebans, as I cannot envision the Thebans acting on their own.³⁹⁵ The story could be designated a ruse if Herodotus relied on Theban sources, but considering his bias, he would have stressed the diabolical intensions behind it.

His encomiastic writing on all things Athenian is another factor. The story of the plunder at Delion is connected to the Battle of Marathon, the grandest Athenian victory. This momentous achievement formed the core of the polis' pride as it was *their* victory, unlike other contested victories against the Persians. This allowed the Athenians to omit medizers in their recollection, perhaps offering an opening for the Thebans.³⁹⁶ If the re-dedication was meant as an affront to the Athenians, Herodotus would have mentioned the abuse of the glorious achievement against the Persians by the people he perpetually describes as archetypical medizers, especially if he relied on Theban sources. His neglect in rectifying this story leads me to surmise that the story concerns a rapprochement between the two neighbours.

The cultic connections between Delion and Delos are well known. Delion was arguably a 'branch' of the Delos Apollo cult.³⁹⁷ The site was not perceived as part of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, but was subsequently

³⁹³ Schachter 2016a: 105. For the sherds: Andreiomenou 1985; 2007: 31–44; Vottéro 2001: 183 dates these deposits.

³⁹⁴ Smarczyk 1990. Chankowski 2008: 9–10; 29–74; Trümper 2016: 231–49 describe the extent of Athenian control over the island. Constantakopoulou 2007 lists up to twenty sanctuaries of Delian Apollo throughout the Aegean.

³⁹⁵ Delos and Delion had a possible shared origin: Chankowski 2008: 66; COB I 44–7.

³⁹⁶ Gehrke 2007; Jung 2006: 27–224.

³⁹⁷ Constantakopoulou 2007 lists the disseminated sanctuaries connected to Delian Apollo across the Aegean. Chankowski 2008: 9–10, 29–74; Trümper 2016: 231–49 on Athenian control over the Delian sanctuary.

written into the Boiotian version of the myth, with Apollo stopping in Tanagra on his way from Delos.³⁹⁸ Thus the Boiotians purposely integrated themselves into the Delian myth. Later sources attest to Artemis and Leto's worship alongside Apollo at Delion.³⁹⁹ How far back this tradition goes is unclear. Its earliest attestation comes from Pindaric fragments, suggesting a date no earlier than the 490s. Attempts have been made to connect these fragments and to integrate Delion into Apolline myth in Herodotus' story, but these remain tantalising suggestions.⁴⁰⁰ Giambattista D'Alessio suggests Pindar wrote a *Hymn to Apollo* for this occasion and opted to connect Herakles with the foundation of the cult and the retrieval of the statue.⁴⁰¹ Considering the time of performance and the central role of Thebes' most famous native son, Pindar's poem may have been a rehabilitation effort. Pindar employs Herakles in a similar fashion elsewhere.⁴⁰² The insertion of Herakles aimed to showcase Thebes' rightful place in the Panhellenic realm of myth to remind others of its prominence in the Greek *imaginaire*. Its performance at Delion would not prohibit people from other poleis attending. Some Delians and Athenians could plausibly be present at this occasion. Reminding the audience of Herakles' work in establishing the cult at Delos (and elsewhere) would demonstrate how ingrained Herakles was in the events of the Greek world, and how subsequently the Thebans were too, as exemplified by their retrieval of an Apolline statue from Delos with the approval of the Athenians.

Could we take it a step further and argue that the inclusion of the Thebans, or Boiotians, into the Delian-Attic League was expressed by the rededication of Apollo's statue at Delion (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.3)? Delos was the political centre of the League where the allies convened. The integration of Delion into the network of Delian Apollo forged a stronger bond between the two sanctuaries and, in turn, the regions they belonged to.⁴⁰³ Combined with the Athenians' fervent use of Delian Apollo as a propagandistic tool, the conscious connection between the sanctuaries could have promoted new political ties.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁸ Mackil 2013: 189–92. Thuc. 4.76.4 places Delion in the Tanagraike.

³⁹⁹ IG VII 20 l.12; Paus. 9.20.1, 22.1; 10.28.6; Schol. ad. Pind. *Ol.* 7.154a; Livy 31.45.6–8; 35.51. The Scholiast tradition of Pindar infers the Delia as one of Pindar's duly-order Boiotian games.

⁴⁰⁰ D'Alessio 2009. ⁴⁰¹ D'Alessio 2009. ⁴⁰² Hurst 2018.

⁴⁰³ The maritime outlook of the League connects Delion too, as the sanctuary was located near the sea front: Thuc. 4.76.4; Schachter 2016a: 85. Delos as the political centre: Thuc. 1.96.2.

⁴⁰⁴ It may have had the benefit of involving Asia Minor's Aiolian Greeks, including the Lesbian poleis, as the Boiotians had shared in the colonisation of the region: Fossey 2019: 88–96.

The story allowed the Thebans to embed themselves in the Panhellenist, revanchist discourse. They could now pose as victims of Persian aggression by linking the raid of Delion to the prelude of the Battle of Marathon.⁴⁰⁵ In this narrative, their recent medism could be forgotten. By offering a new chapter to the Marathon story, the Thebans meshed their story with the dominant discourse of the Delian League. Whether the evidence can be stretched this far is uncertain, but there is no reason to argue for a hostile interpretation of this event, even if the Thebans dedicated a new temple to commemorate the retrieval in 470.⁴⁰⁶

The Athenians perhaps returned the favour. A *horos* stone, delineating a sanctuary to Athena Itonia, was found in the Athenian Agora. Based on its lettering, the inscription was dated to 475–450.⁴⁰⁷ Despite other plausible reasons for its presence in Athens, the cult was one of the primary Boiotian cults, intimately tied to the story of Boiotian ethnogenesis.⁴⁰⁸

The interpretation of the cult's introduction has nevertheless been troubled by the perception of contiguous neighbourly hostility. Gerald Lalonde recently dismissed the possibility of the cult's introduction through Boiotian involvement, instead preferring Thessalian connections.⁴⁰⁹ His reasons for repudiating a Boiotian provenance is that 'since there is no ancient testimony or modern scholarly argument that the Athenians received the cult from Boiotia or the Cycladic island of Amorgos, the other two places of its significant manifestation, scholars have logically turned to Thessaly as the likely source'.⁴¹⁰ Yet there is no source attesting a Thessalian origin either.⁴¹¹ The argument for Thessaly is 'based on evidence that is circumstantial but not without weight', while he adds in a footnote that

though its proximity to Attica might otherwise make Boiotia a plausible source of the Athenian cult, the relations of Boiotia and Athens in much of the sixth and early fifth centuries, the likely period of the cult's transmission, were characterized by a chronic hostility that was not very

⁴⁰⁵ For the malleability of social memory, one can think of the Plataians, whose participation at Marathon was slowly forgotten in fourth-century Athenian discourse: Steinbock 2013: 138–9; Chapter 5.2.3.

⁴⁰⁶ Pitteros 2000: 603 prefers a later fifth-century date for the temple.

⁴⁰⁷ *Agora XIX H1*: [Ἄθ]ενοίαιος [Ἰτ]ουνοίαιος.

⁴⁰⁸ Kowalzig 2007: 328–91; Kühr 2006; Larson 2007a. ⁴⁰⁹ Lalonde 2019: 167–204.

⁴¹⁰ Lalonde 2019: 183.

⁴¹¹ Mili 2015: 231–3 makes the case that the cult stems from Philia, but was not necessarily Thessalian in the sense that the catchment area stretched beyond political borders of later political regions. Instead, it should be viewed as more of a 'Central Greek' cult.

conducive to the sharing of a cult that was, at least in Thessaly and Boiotia, largely military and political in character.⁴¹²

Lalonde relies on an interlude of Thessalian cavalrymen briefly stationed in Athens to help Peisistratus as the time frame for the cult's introduction. He further argues the (speculated) location of the sanctuary in Athens was within an area that witnessed frequent Peisistratid sponsorship for cults and buildings. Yet a lot of 'Peisistratid' buildings are now dated to the period of the early democracy, making the connection more tenuous, and the area he targets was appropriated by the democracy afterwards.⁴¹³ Finally, he argues that the naming of a gate in the Themistoclean wall after the sanctuary and cult, built after the Persian Wars, indicates a form of familiarity with the cult that can retrace its antiquity into archaic times.⁴¹⁴ The source he alludes to, the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*, however, dates to the latter half of the fifth century, meaning the cult could have been introduced in the 470s as well.⁴¹⁵ Nor should the breakout of hostilities at a later date prohibit a lasting embrace of the cult, if it did not harm a Thessalian origin after their betrayal at the Battle of Tanagra. This is not to castigate an eminent scholar's excellent work, but merely to demonstrate how a preconceived notion of thinking about neighbourly relations has clouded the possibility of viewing the cult as an introduction from Boiotia, especially considering its importance within the region.⁴¹⁶

There is a possible Boiotian connection. An amendment to the sacred calendar of the Attic deme of Thorikos records the offering of a sheep to the 'Heroines of the Koroneians ([Ἡ]ρωῖνησιν Κορωνέων)'. This has been interpreted as a connection with the Boiotian polis that was home to the famous Itonia temple.⁴¹⁷ Nikolaos Papazarkadas pondered whether this association and the Athenian cult of Athena Itonia might have been parts of the same nexus.⁴¹⁸ Unfortunately, that is all that can be plausibly said about this cult, since the *horos* stone of the Athenian cult was not found in situ.⁴¹⁹ If a Boiotian origin of the cult can be entertained, the Athenians, in

⁴¹² Lalonde 2019: 183 n. 63. ⁴¹³ Paga 2021: 128–40.

⁴¹⁴ Lalonde 2019: 167–204. Admittedly, Lalonde allows for a different placement of the sanctuary that would counter the notion of Peisistratid sponsorship.

⁴¹⁵ Pl. [Ax.] 364 a–b(–d).

⁴¹⁶ There might be a Thessalian connection in Amorgos, as reconstructed by Lagos 2009 (and *IG* 12.7.22) but a similar occurrence in Athens does not automatically follow.

⁴¹⁷ *SEG* 33.147, face c l. 58. For this interpretation: Daux 1983: 158–9; Lupu 2005: 14.

⁴¹⁸ Papazarkadas 2011: 26 n. 50.

⁴¹⁹ Papazarkadas 2011: 26. The cult persisted in Athens down to the fourth century: *IG* I³ 383; *IG* II² 333 ll. 18–19; *SEG* 54.143; Gawlinski 2007.

exchange for the integration of the Delion cult into the Delian Apollo network, could have integrated this quintessential Boiotian cult to reinforce the ties between these regions. Such a manoeuvre would not be uncommon, as other cults were introduced into Athens to strengthen political ties or confirm interstate treaties.

These examples demonstrate how neighbourly relationships could be reinforced by cultic exchanges. Uncertainty shall always remain, as some reconstructions offered here cannot be ascertained. This overview of possible cultic exchanges shows how cults could have functioned as adhesives between the regions and how the possibility thereof has frequently been viewed in a negative light and dismissed outright by earlier scholarship.

3.6 Conclusions

From the various examples treated above, certain commonalities can be inferred. The conventions of neighbourly conduct could be detriments to or stimuli for a convivial co-existence. Reputation was one such factor. The damage incurred to the Athenians' reliability after their abandonment of the Boiotians in 369 prevented an earlier rapprochement between the neighbours. Only after a significant symbolic gesture was some of the faith restored. Another example is the self-image of the Boiotians as rightful heirs to the Heraclid heritage in convincing the *populus* to support the Athenian democratic exiles in 403, which formed the basis for the later alliance of 395. A similar ambivalence was at work in the realm of leadership and the installation of friendly elites. Whenever the leadership in either Athens or Boiotia was partial to the other, relations were easier to maintain. It was such a dominant factor that throughout the fifth and fourth centuries, external powers like the Athenians and Spartans endeavoured to install friendly regimes in Boiotia. A dominant factor in all of these considerations was reciprocity. The bonds of *charis* chained people to each other and its obligations ensured a recurring cycle of benefactions between the connected parties. This meant that matters such as reputation or leadership cannot be disentangled from the ubiquitous presence of *charis* in interstate relations. Nevertheless, war was sometimes unavoidable. As the examples above demonstrate, polities always had to opt for war or peace when presented with the choice. While this did lead to conflict at times, there were just as many attempts to avoid war through arbitration or treaties. Hostility was therefore not a logical outcome of an inherent enmity towards each other, but a choice. Treaties were moreover often confirmed

with cultic connections. Linking sanctuaries from contested border regions with the centres of political power was one way in which the Athenians established firmer rapports with the Plataians and Eleutherians. The Delian cult of Apollo was purposed for conciliatory use with the Thebans after the Persian Wars. What unites this diverging spectrum of factors is the need to view neighbourly relations through a different prism and allow for the multifocality of human experience to shine through. There is no universal pattern that can explain every facet of neighbourly relations, but these conventions provide a way towards a different method for studying them.

Geopolitics and Strategic Interests

[T]he land for private ownership is to be divided in half, one part in the borderlands, the other part by the city, in order that, two lots having been distributed to each citizen, everybody shall have a share in both places. Thus this is equal and just and more conducive to agreement on wars with neighbours. For wherever this is not the case, some citizens care little about hatred of neighbours, while others worry about it a lot, indeed beyond what is good. For that reason among some there is a law that those who live by the borderlands should not participate in deliberation about wars against them on the ground that because of private interest they cannot deliberate well.

—Aristotle, *Politics* 7.1330a

In his *Politics*, Aristotle develops his model city and expounds his view on the division of the polis' lands. This envisions awarding plots of land in both the city and the borderlands to ensure citizens had an equal share in the polis' property under jurisdiction. A more pressing issue in Aristotle's opinion is the balanced outlook on neighbourly warfare it brings. People living in the borderlands were inclined to vote against war, fearing the impending damages on their properties, whereas city people would be easily swayed to withstand invasion and devastation, since their lands would suffer the least. Although this is a hypothetical situation and such an ideal mixture was not commonplace, his remark is apropos the matter at heart in this chapter: the borderlands. Aristotle recognises that people living in close proximity were less likely to risk enduring warfare with each other, as it conflicted with their interests.¹ That is precisely the point I will be making. Contrary to scholarly orthodoxy, the Boiotians and Athenians were less preoccupied with fighting over borderland desiderata, since they suffered more than they gained. Rather, they were more compatible. Collaboration was more a natural extension of their geographical entwinement, instead of inherent hostility.

Of course lands were still disputed, but the attachment to territory that is so typical of modern interstate relations needs to be subtracted from the evaluation of geopolitical interests in antiquity. Our source material is richly filled with debates over borders and boundaries, demonstrating that the subject mattered to the Greeks.² Claims over disputed parts did exist. These claims within the borderlands, which stretches from the slopes of Mount Kithairon to Mount Parnes plus the Oropia, were presented or invented to vindicate the ownership thereof. Thierry Lucas argued that these lands even constituted ‘a cultural unity’, founded upon their distinct borderland culture and attitude.³ Numerous tools were at the disposal of the neighbouring polities to claim these lands. These ranged from mythological histories aimed at cementing their claims to ritual connections between core and periphery and the construction of military structures to ensure their grasp over the region.⁴ I will here contradict the long-held scholarly pre-occupation with border disputes as the governing mode of interaction between neighbouring polities and argue that disputes over borderlands arose *after* war had broken out, rather than being the impetus for its outbreak. This acute sensitivity over borders stems from a modern nationalist perspective, with its connotation of attachment to territory, which was less prominent in ancient Greece.⁵

Moving beyond the prism of border disputes as the mode of interaction opens up different possibilities for analysing the geographical entwining of the two regions in question. Typically, the negative ramifications of this geographical proximity have been stressed. No obstacle, like other poleis or narrow passageways such as the Isthmus, lay between the Athenians and Boiotians, in contrast to the far-away Spartans, as remarked upon by the

² Mitchell 2022. ³ Lucas 2019.

⁴ Chaniotis 2004. De Polignac 1995 [1984]; 1991 developed a core-periphery model, which Malkin 1996 criticised. Novel approaches towards border sanctuaries emphasise ‘central functions’ and their place for negotiation: McNerney 2006; de Polignac 2011; 2017.

⁵ Elden 2013: 21–50 for an analysis of ‘territory’ in ancient Greece. However, he focuses on literary sources and ignores other sources, such as *horoi* and other indications of territorial demarcation: Fachard 2014; 2016a. Rousset 1994’s investigation of epigraphical material demonstrates that *horoi* were exceptional. Natural landmarks more often were specified in treaties or other accounts to delineate borders. Paga 2021 demonstrates that there was ‘border awareness’ in the late sixth century. Autochthony, so prominent in Athens and Thebes (Beck 2020: 43–75), had more to do with their heritage stemming from the home soil than with borderlands.

An interesting discussion takes place among the Boiotians and Athenians in the aftermath of the Battle of Delion, which involves notions of what constitutes territorial gain: Allison 2011; Polinskaya 2020.

speaker Prokles of Phlius in Xenophon.⁶ This entanglement has hitherto been overlooked and requires an interpretation that stresses the essential role Boiotia occupied in the defence of Attica, making their compliance more paramount to Athenian success than any Spartan military support could be. This vital role can be partly retraced to the central position of Boiotia within Greece. Connecting Northern Greece to the Peloponnese were various roads crossing through Boiotia, transforming its inhabitants into involuntary participants in multiple battles fought during the Classical and Hellenistic periods (see [Figure 4.1](#)).⁷

The long border entwining Attica and Boiotia meant the latter was the ideal partner to shield the former's hinterland. A friendly neighbour could do wonders for the protection of Attica.⁸ It was a more affordable option than garrisoning and fortifying all the passes through the mountainous and porous terrain, an unviable solution.⁹ Conversely, a hostile neighbour could inflict horrible damages upon the Athenians or open the floodgates to Attica for potential enemies to enter unobstructed. These considerations undoubtedly factored into the decision-making process and ensured a more flexible and innocuous attitude towards collaboration.

But Boiotia's appeal as an advantageous neighbour goes beyond the borderlands. Its harbours, an oft-neglected part of its geographical outlook, provided direct access to the Corinthian Gulf and fostered a distinct maritime perspective for western Boiotia. On the other seaboard, there were harbours offering close connections to Euboia and routes into the Aegean and the Hellespont. The close geographical proximity of Euboia to the eastern Boiotian seaboard made any grasp over that pivotal island by foreign powers precarious. A friendly neighbour therefore was an invaluable ally for the Athenians if they desired to keep the rich and fertile island within their nexus.

A different perspective of the geographical proximity allows for a more rewarding analysis. The entwinement impacted their relations more positively than normally assumed. It creates a nuanced picture of the two neighbouring regions that focuses more on their compatibility and the possibility to cooperate, rather than stressing the antagonistic effects of disputed lands that has been so dominant in previous discourse.

⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.39: 'For to have the Thebans, who are unfriendly to you and dwell on your borders, become leaders of the Greeks, would prove much more grievous to you, I think, than when you had your antagonists far away.'

⁷ Alcock 1993: 149 offers the routes for the Roman period.

⁸ Van Wijk 2020.

⁹ Fachard et al. 2020a calculates the garrisoning of fortresses.

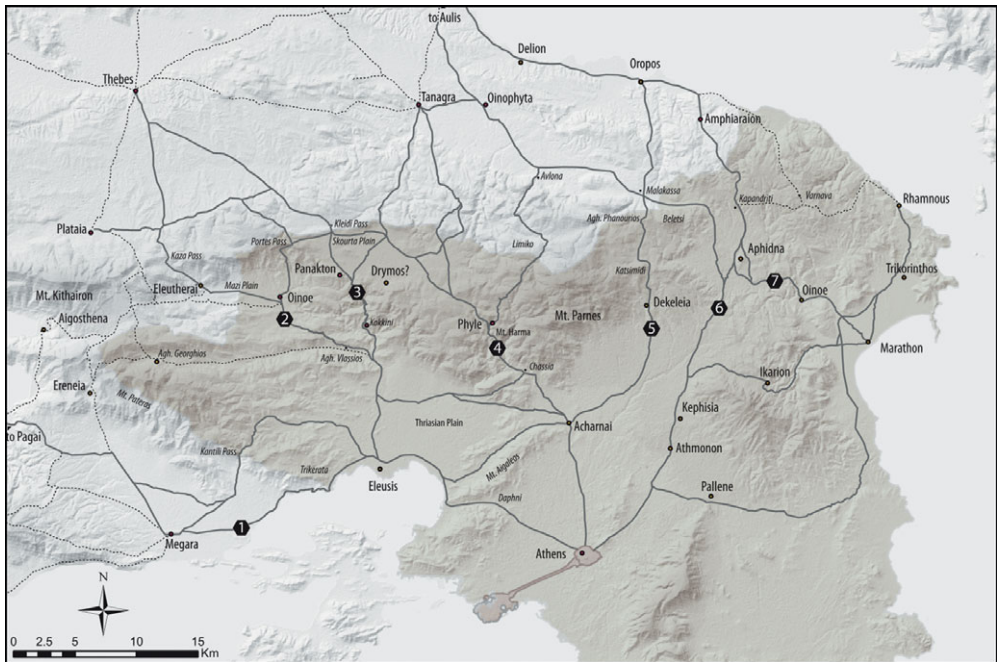


Figure 4.1 Routes of Attica. The borders, reflected in contrast to the highlighted Athenian *chora*, are those of 366–335 BCE.

(Source: © Sylvian Fachard)

4.1 Where the Wild Things Are: An Introduction to the Borderlands

A mountain range stretching from the Corinthian Gulf to the Euboian Gulf separates the two neighbouring regions. Bookmarking both ends are two imposing topographical features: Mount Kithairon in the west and Mount Parnes in the east (see [Figure 4.2](#)). Along their slopes are some of the most fertile lands in Central Greece. This crescent comprised the Mazi and Skourta plains, Plataia and the Parasopia, and Oropos and the Oropia. These borderlands were termed *ta methoria* (τὰ μεθόρια), contested lands between the Athenians and Boiotians constantly eluding permanent control.¹⁰

Dictating the desirability of these regions was their economic potential, as Sylvian Fachard pointed out.¹¹ Blessed with large forests, these areas

¹⁰ Plataia and the Oropia were technically not part of ‘τὰ μεθόρια’, but did play an important role in the attempts to control this mountain range.

¹¹ Fachard 2017 treats this phenomenon, and a large part of the economic analysis is based upon his insights into the borderlands as an area of exchange.

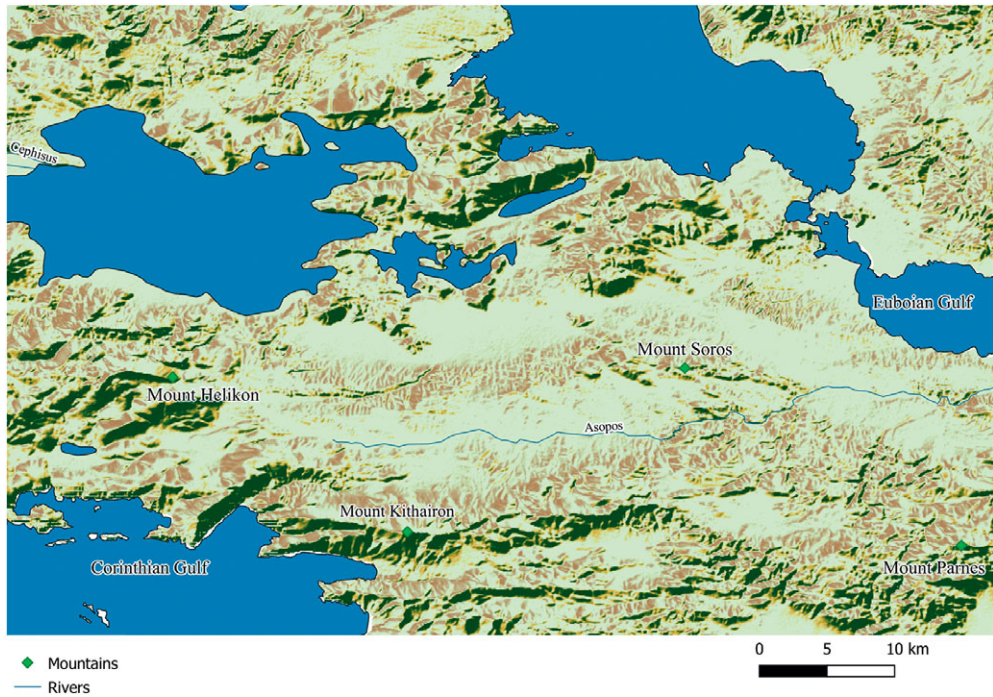


Figure 4.2 Map of natural features demarcating the borderlands.

could be lucratively exploited through hunting, apiculture or logging.¹² These forests largely consisted of pine, which allowed for the extraction of a tar for the production of a resin indispensable for the preservation of wine and the maintenance of fleets.¹³ The limited availability of this product throughout Central Greece reinforced the allure of controlling these borderlands.¹⁴ Besides the copious products the woods offered, the rich alluvial soil was another pull factor, especially for the Athenians. Their arid lands paled in comparison to the rich harvests of barley and grain stemming

¹² Konecny et al. 2013: 21–2. The density of the woodland has been debated. Bintliff 1993: 141 estimates woodlands covered about one-sixth of Boiotia, with the fifth to third century presenting a downward trend; Meiggs 1982: 189–90 suggests there was plenty of wood on Kithairon.

¹³ Trintignac 2003 on pine tar production and its uses. Knoepfler 2012: 452–3 argues this tar lay at the heart of Oropos' status as a neighbourly desideratum. Fachard and Pirisino 2015: 146 believe the product must have been exploited elsewhere (in Attica), because control over the Oropia was elusive and thus an unreliable source. For other occupations of the woodlands: Papazarkadas 2009a: 176–7; Fachard and Pirisino 2015.

¹⁴ Febvre 1970: 200.

from the borderlands.¹⁵ In a world where the Athenians, and possibly the Boiotians – depending on high or low population estimates – were perpetually dependent on grain imports, the yields from the borderlands offered a welcome relief.¹⁶ A final source of income was the pastoral activities in the plains, its rocky outlines sustaining an impressive array of plant life capable of feeding large herds and flocks.¹⁷

Strategic interests also played a role. Josiah Ober's thesis of 'road control' and a unified defensive system created *ex novo* in the fourth century – as set out in his magisterial *Fortress Attica* – has been criticised.¹⁸ Fortresses do not lend themselves to road control and were incapable of hermetically sealing off areas from invasion.¹⁹ Yet the towns of Oropos and Plataia did occupy strategic locations that added to their importance. Plataia overlooked the passes at Mount Kithairon and the most direct road between the Peloponnese and Boiotia. Oropos exerted a controlling presence over Euboea, creating a more tractable relationship with this economically important island.²⁰ These territories were thus vital regions to control, as reflected in the recurrent changes in ownership.

Markers in the physical landscape reflected these changes in political alignment. The construction of military buildings like fortresses, the erection or expansion of walls, or the appropriation of cults that were tied to their respective territories were meant to symbolise the takeover of contested lands.²¹ Communities had a wide array of ways to announce their control over a region and the τὰ μεθόρια of the Attic-Boiotian frontier (see [Figure 4.3](#)) provided plenty of examples that reveal their role in the neighbourly relations.

Delineation of borders was another matter. Clearly demarcated borders sometimes remained elusive and their confirmation fuzzy, but the process of demarcation became increasingly common in the later Archaic period.²²

¹⁵ The Skourta Plain produced circa 10 per cent of the total Athenian grain and wheat production: Bresson 2016: 407–9; Munn and Zimmermann-Munn 1990. For the Oropia: Cosmopoulos 2001: 7, 75.

¹⁶ Hansen 2006; 2008 based on his higher population numbers contra Bintliff 2005. Boiotia could become dependent on grain imports: Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.56–7. Akrigg 2019: 176 argues an Athenian population of 400,000 was possible before the Peloponnesian War, making imports even more essential.

¹⁷ Rackham 1983. ¹⁸ Ober 1985a.

¹⁹ Lohmann 1987; Munn 1986; 1993. Hardin 1988; 1990 found fault with the notion of a defensive mentality arising after the Peloponnesian War. Daly 2015 retrojects this part of Ober's thesis to an earlier date.

²⁰ Hammond 1954; Thuc. 8.60.

²¹ De Polignac 1995; Malkin 1996. For examples of cults: [Chapter 3.5](#). ²² Raaflaub 1997.

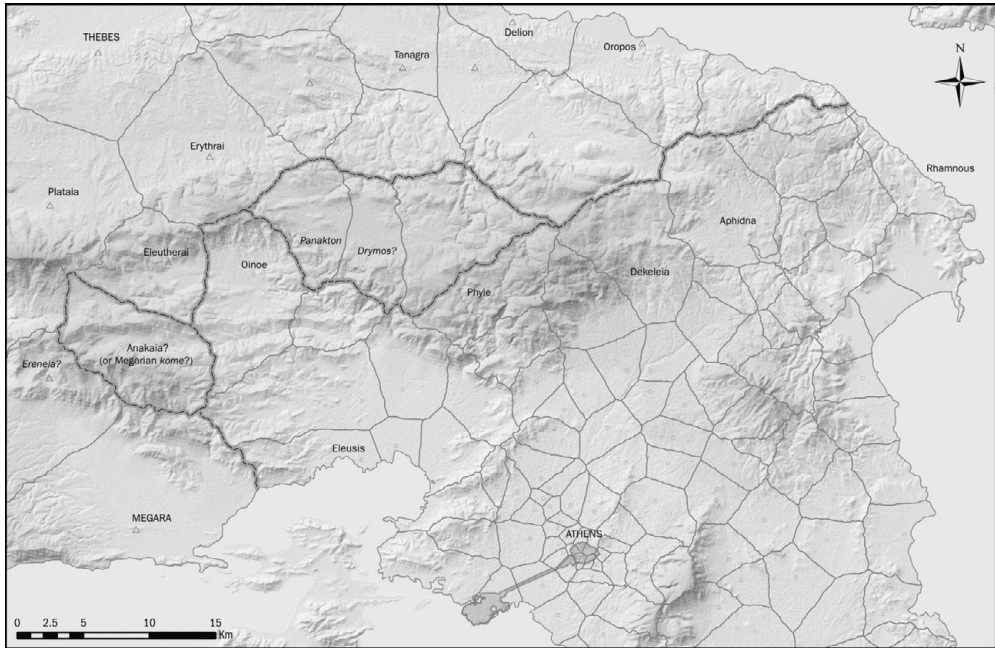


Figure 4.3 Athens and its borderlands.

(Source © Sylvian Fachard)

This process was probably stimulated by population growth, with demographic pressure impelling populations to move towards previously uninhabited areas. In Boiotia and Attica, the first demographic growth occurred in the sixth century, especially in its later decades.²³ This ‘internal colonisation’ of the territories required clear agreements concerning the borderlands. The territories of poleis expanded gradually, filling up uninhabited zones that used to delineate the borders between polities.²⁴ Borders were also marked by rock indicators such as *horoi*. In other cases, claims over political borders were more lavishly demonstrated, through the construction of temples that created a connection between core and periphery, or by other monumental buildings.²⁵ Having established these perimeters for the study of the borders and their fluctuations, we now turn to the case studies.

²³ Farinetti 2011: 225; Fossey 1988: 423–4; Osborne 1996: 70–81. But see Akrigg 2019: 85–8 for difficulties with survey data to estimate population numbers.

²⁴ A late archaic *horos* probably records the border between Akraiphnion and Kopai: SEG 30.440. For ‘empty’ zones between polities demarcating border areas: Bintliff and Snodgrass 1985.

²⁵ Paga 2021: 175–246.

4.1.1 The Skourta and Mazi Plains

Despite the difference in habitation and settlement patterns, the Mazi and Skourta plains are analysed together because interventions in these plains frequently took on a similar character.

The Mazi Archaeological Project demonstrated that the plain was suitable for viniculture and possessed fertile agricultural and pastoral lands.²⁶ Dominating the plain were the settlements of Eleutherai and the Athenian deme Oinoe of the Hippothontic tribe. The nucleus around Eleutherai and Oinoe formed the core of the settlements, with secondary hamlets and *komai* spread around them, similar to what we see in Acharnai.²⁷ This situation evolved more extensively in the fourth century. Eleutherai grew into an impressive town with a substantial size, whereas Oinoe possibly became the largest deme in Athens in terms of surface area.²⁸ The roots of both settlements can only be retraced to the last quarter of the sixth century, based on inscriptional evidence, in contrast to the scant archaeological material.²⁹

The Skourta plain witnessed less permanent occupation, as the survey by Munn and Munn-Zimmermann showed.³⁰ At the end of the fifth century, but most certainly by the second half of the fourth century, smaller, secondary hamlets and farmhouses started to appear around the edges of the plain. Earlier traces of occupation were found at the site of later fortresses, such as Panakton and Phyle, yet these did not pre-date the late sixth or mid-fifth century. It was on account of its fertile lands that the plain was an enviable stretch of land. If the area known as Drymos was located close to the plain, arboriculture may have played a significant role too. However, its precise location has been debated. Other habitational forms took the shape of farmsteads, located around the edges of the plain.³¹

The Skourta plain is the highest extensive area of cultivable land within the Kithairon-Parnes mountain range, at an average elevation of just over 530 meters. The basin is located between the summits of the mountains that bookmark the range separating Attica from Boiotia. It is wider than it is long: approximately twelve kilometres wide from east to west and about

²⁶ For the project: www.maziplain.org/; Fachard 2013; 2017; Fachard et al. 2015; 2020a; 2020b; Knodell et al. 2016; 2017; Papangeli et al. 2018.

²⁷ For Eleutherai and Oinoe: Knodell et al. 2016. Kellogg 2013b: 26–34 for the case of Acharnai.

²⁸ Knodell et al. 2016: 160–1. For Oinoe as the largest deme in surface area: Fachard 2016a: 207.

²⁹ Knodell et al. 2016: 161. ³⁰ Munn 2010: 195; Munn and Munn-Zimmermann 1989; 1990.

³¹ Schachter 2016a: 92 finds it unlikely that a wooded area called 'Drymos' would be in the plain itself. Perhaps it was an adjoining area, which equally fell inside τὰ μεθόρια. Farmsteads: Munn 2010.

four kilometres north to south. The plain is surrounded by mountains, creating a natural defensive mechanism against intruders, while isolating it from areas such as the Parasopia to the north(west) or the Eleusinian plains to the south. The shortest route between Athens and Thebes passed through the plain, which was often taken by travellers.³²

This is a markedly different habitat from the Mazi plain.³³ This small valley is located between the Kithairon and Pateras mountain ranges, but lies lower and is better connected with roads to Athens, the Megarid and Thebes. A natural route to Boiotia goes through the gully at the Kaza pass, linking the Mazi plain to the Parasopia. The Mazi plain was located at the crossroads of interregional traffic, since major arteries between the Megarid, Attica and Boiotia lay across it.³⁴ The combination of fertile lands and valuable thoroughfares created two enclaves of highly valuable districts lodged in between Attica and Boiotia.

Despite the appearance of various military structures around these plains, their strategic value was limited.³⁵ These towers and forts were refuges for the population, or could be used as advanced scouting structures to locate oncoming hostile forces.³⁶ Their placement was related less to military considerations, such as confronting invading armies, and more to economic ones. Dominating the roads allowed for taxes to be levied on travellers importing goods, and fortifications protected those working the fertile lands around the settlement.³⁷ These fortified buildings ensured some form of control over these plains. When the entire plains were under control of one party, then routes between one place and another could be controlled.³⁸

Besides Athenian and Theban interest, the Mazi plain also attracted the Megarians. A recent find from Thebes attests to this interest. The Tanagraians had stakes in the Skourta plain, just like their Theban and Athenian neighbours, as Albert Schachter has shown.³⁹

Demographically, the plains had their own unique pattern of growth. Attestations of Bronze Age occupation were found in the Mazi plain survey, but subsequent periods saw a decline in population and settlements.⁴⁰ There is a possible Geometric occupation of the Mazi plain, but

³² Farinetti 2011: 395–7. ³³ Fachard et al. 2014. ³⁴ Fachard and Pirisino 2015.

³⁵ Munn 2010.

³⁶ The Tsoukrati towers in the Skourta plain (Munn 1989) and the Velatouri tower in the Mazi plain (Papangeli et al. 2018: 161–2).

³⁷ Fachard 2013; Fachard et al. 2020a; Munn 2010. For the visibility: Farinetti 2011: 256 fig. 31.

³⁸ Fachard 2013; Fachard et al. 2020a. ³⁹ Schachter 2016a: 92–4.

⁴⁰ Knodell et al. 2016: 149: ‘After the Mycenaean period, we encounter an occupational hiatus in the Mazi plain. Confidently-dated Geometric pottery is still absent from our survey collection,

the ceramic evidence points to a rather small population, if there was permanent habitation at all. Early Archaic pottery has been found, but only at the Cave of Antiope.⁴¹ This is a cave steeped in mythological tradition, intimately tied with Theban foundation legends.⁴² On account of its mythological importance, the cave may have attracted people from further afield who came to worship at the site. Perhaps the large amount of Corinthian *aryballoi* found at the location indicates the cave was a locus for interaction, in a similar vein to the shrine at Mount Parnes, for which see below.⁴³ Considering the wealth of material found at the cave, it is plausible to assume a small settlement at Eleutherai in the late seventh century, but there is no conclusive evidence for it.⁴⁴ In the (later) Archaic period more elements are detectable, with finds concentrated around the later deme site of Oinoe. On the other side of the plain, evidence of occupation at Eleutherai is rather scarce, but picks up near the late sixth century. Epigraphic evidence demonstrates that it certainly existed by the last quarter of that century.⁴⁵

In the Skourta plain the board is barer, with no archaeological traces until the late sixth century after a four-century hiatus. The fortress at Panakton was not constructed until the mid-fifth century, but there are traces of habitation in the Proto-Geometric period before a long lay-off.⁴⁶ At the end of the sixth century, habitation picks up again. The recent attestation of Phyle in the late sixth-century *kioniskos* from Thebes aligns with the archaeological findings.⁴⁷

Perhaps a shift of the Atheno-Boiotian border towards the Skourta plain in the late sixth century can be detected in the cultic pattern at Mount Parnes.⁴⁸ A shrine dedicated to Zeus was frequented by Boiotians and Athenians alike during most of the sixth century, acting as a sanctuary shared between the two regions or at least as a *place*-based shrine, with

and the only clearly Archaic pottery comes from the so-called cave of Antiope (late 7th to early 6th century).⁹

⁴¹ Fachard et al. 2015; 2020a; Knodell et al. 2016; 2017; Papangeli et al. 2018.

⁴² Paus. 1.38.9; Kühr 2006: 118–32. ⁴³ *Aryballoi*: Knodell et al. 2016: 147.

⁴⁴ Knodell et al. 2016: 160.

⁴⁵ Fachard et al. 2015: 182. For the epigraphic evidence: Matthaïou 2014.

⁴⁶ Munn 2010: 194–5.

⁴⁷ Farinetti 2011: 395–7 summarises the Skourta Plain survey's findings. For the *kioniskos*, see below.

⁴⁸ Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa and Vivliodetis 2015. Arrington 2021: 216 mentions the pottery at Parnes was often pierced or burned, suggesting ritual activity. Rönnerberg 2021: 222–3 suggests it formed part of a wider abandonment of many peak cults, except Hymettos. Perhaps the cult was moved to Athens: Parker 1996: 32.

visitors coming from surrounding areas. Boiotian visitors are particularly present in the dedicatory record through the inscribed sherds and the banquet material left behind. Previously, the significant amount of metal knives found at the shrine were perceived as a formative response by Athenian elites marking their territory.⁴⁹ Recent analyses, however, stressed that these knives were connected to animal bones and related to banqueting.⁵⁰ These knives were consecrated to the god after use at the banquet, with the worshippers' provenance of a subsidiary importance. The amount of Corinthian pottery found at the shrine indicates a strong Boiotian presence, since no other Attic mountain shrine has yielded similar deposits, whereas the dissemination of Corinthian pottery in Boiotia was widespread. Interestingly, around 500 the dedications started to dry up. This indicates the shrine's function as a border demarcation or negotiatory space possibly ceased.⁵¹ Dwindling activity at the shrine suggests the Skourta plain may have become an early indicator of an agreed-upon border between the Athenian, Theban and Tanagraian lands at the end of the sixth century after the conclusion of hostilities.

It is around this time the Mazi and Skourta plains enter the historical record. Herodotus mentions the Boiotians captured 'the remotest demes of Hysiai and Oinoe' during the invasion of Attica in 507/6.⁵² His phrasing is odd, since Hysiai was never an Athenian deme or included in Attic lands at this time.⁵³ Herodotus probably uses the word 'deme' for the remotest regions of Attica and retrojects a later state of affairs onto the past when Hysiai became Plataian territory in the aftermath of the invasion. Kevin Daly proposed a different interpretation: he argues Herodotus' description of Hysiai as a deme reflects the later fifth-century tendency in Athenian historiography to include non-Attic lands into a concept of a 'Greater Attica' that stretched beyond the geographical and political edges of the peninsula.⁵⁴ The deme status of Hysiai is of minor importance. What matters are the quarrels over the Parasopia and the Mazi plain in this account. Herodotus' remark was the standard version of events for a long time, until his account was partially confirmed and expanded upon by a *kioniskos* found in Thebes:

[-----]ος φοινώας και Φυλάς
[-----] ηελόντες κέλευσινα

⁴⁹ Vanden Eijnde 2011; Matthaïou 2021. ⁵⁰ Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa and Vivliodetis 2015.

⁵¹ Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa and Vivliodetis 2015; Lucas 2019.

⁵² Hdt. 5.74: ἀπὸ συνθήματος Οἰνόην αἰρέουσι και Ἰστιάς δήμους τοὺς ἐσχάτους τῆς Ἀττικῆς.

⁵³ Daverio Rocchi 1988: 33; Whitehead 1986: 48 n. 39. ⁵⁴ Daly 2015.

[-----]αι Χαλκίδα λυσάμενοι
 [-----]μῶι ἀνέθεισαν

... of Oinoe and Phyle
 ... having taken also Eleusis
 ... Chalkis... having freed
 ... dedicated to...⁵⁵

Found in the early 2000s, the inscription differs from Herodotus in one aspect: instead of Hysiai, the *kioniskos* mentions the Boiotians capturing Phyle. Vassilis Aravantinos adds that the broken part of the column may have mentioned Hysiai.⁵⁶ While this is possible, advertising an attack on a neighbouring Boiotian town in the context of attacking Attica would be striking, but not impossible. Hysiai lies within the Parasopia and would have been part of the Theban *chora*, independent, or, as likely happened after the invasion, part of the Plataian *chora* (Chapter 4.1.3).⁵⁷ If Simon Hornblower correctly views the split between books 5 and 6 of Herodotus' *Histories* as a Hellenistic intervention, then the mention of Hysiai takes on added importance.⁵⁸ Perhaps the mention of Hysiai fits in with the narrative of the Plataian alliance. Herodotus elaborates that the Plataian alliance was an outcome of the earlier Boiotian attack on the Parasopia. Reconstructing what actually occurred in this case is difficult, but the inclusion of Hysiai among the list of captured *topoi* appears to be a Herodotean error or conflation. Another explanation is that by swapping Hysiai for Phyle, the success rate of the invaders is portrayed as more limited than it was. It shifts the emphasis from the Mazi plain and the corridor connecting Attica to the Parasopia to a much larger stretch of borderland by incorporating the edges of the Skourta plain.⁵⁹ The capture of Phyle, which is located on the furthest southern edges of Skourta plain, amplifies the initial successes of the invaders against the Athenians.⁶⁰ However, it is just as likely that the people setting up the *kioniskos* put a positive spin on the event in the wake of the subsequent defeat. Irrespective of the weight one assigns to each account, what seems clear is that both sides stressed the capture of these borderlands, as a strident effort either to demonstrate resolve or to ascribe positives to what became a disastrous campaign.

Both Herodotus and the *kioniskos* indicate that control over the borderlands was, or *became*, a pertinent issue. It was not a dispute over

⁵⁵ SEG 56.521. ⁵⁶ Aravantinos 2006: 374. ⁵⁷ Hdt. 6.108.5–6; Fossey 1988: 114–15.

⁵⁸ Hornblower 2013. ⁵⁹ Beck 2014.

⁶⁰ Munn 2010: 194 for Phyle bordering the Skourta Plain.

borderlands that inspired the Boiotians' involvement in the invasion (Chapters 2.2, 3.1.1). In the transitional period from the limited Peisistratid control to the democracy, the issue of agency in the borderlands could have taken on added importance. Perhaps the Boiotian coalition chose to strike pre-emptively. If Isagoras was installed in place of Cleisthenes and his reforms, the integration of borderland towns into the Theban *chora* could be presented as a *fait accompli* to the new leadership. They presumably would have accepted the situation, considering Isagoras would have owed his power to the military force of the neighbours.

The Boiotian coalition, led by the Thebans, would then have chosen to strike the iron while it was hot. The biggest benefactors of expanding these lands would be the Thebans and Tanagraians, since they directly bordered the Mazi and Skourta plains. Even with the expanding populations moving into the Mazi and Skourta plains, most of these communities remained politically unaligned. The Athenian tyrants undertook little effort to vindicate their claims beyond the confines of Mount Hymettos, Pentelikon and Aigaleios.⁶¹ With the Athenians in disarray, and a possible new leadership indebted by *charis*-led debt, expanding into these borderlands was now possible. The Tanagraians could have benefitted from establishing themselves in the Oropia (Chapter 4.1.2) and the Skourta plain. For the Thebans, the integration of places alongside the Mazi and Skourta plains substantially increased their *chora*, as their interests in the Mazi plain from epigraphic evidence shows.⁶²

Epigraphic material from Thebes, of which only phrases have been offered in a preliminary study by Angelos Matthaïou, revealed that the earliest relations between Thebes and Eleutherai went deeper than initially assumed. One of the bronze plaques is concerned with the ruling on a territorial dispute between the Megarians and the Thebans and Eleutherians.⁶³ The two communities were collaborating against foreign intrusion of their soil. The Thebans functioned as the guardians of the Mazi plain, defending these fertile lands from Megarian encroachment. Salient about the Theban-Eleutherian relationship is the wording used to describe their connection. In lines 5–6 it reads: κένικασε ἡ πόλις ἡ

⁶¹ Anderson 2003: 34. ⁶² Matthaïou 2014: 213–15.

⁶³ Matthaïou 2014: 213–15; Thebes Museum no. 35913; SEG 60.506. A new study is currently underway by Angelos Matthaïou and Nikolaos Papazarkadas. Considering the geographical relation between Eleutherai and Megara, the disputed land was located somewhere in between. Was it part of the *hiera orgas* the Athenians and Megarians later disputed? Topographical studies have placed it in the northern stretches of the Megarid: RO 58 = *IEleusis* 144; Papazarkadas 2011: 146.

Θεβαί|ον κέλευθεραίο[ν].⁶⁴ This wording is reminiscent of later instances of *sympoliteia*, a phenomenon more associated with the Hellenistic period. Arguably, one can postulate a similar hierarchical relationship here.⁶⁵ Eleutherai was then part of the Theban *chora* that stretched into the Mazi plain. This explains the interest in Oinoe. By capturing this town on the other side of the Mazi plain, the fruits of this bountiful plain would be secured for the Thebans and prevent further encroachments while pushing back the Athenians *and* Megarians.

The *kioniskos* mentioned above confirms the importance of the Mazi and Skourta plain for the dedicants, with their ambitions stretching to Eleusis.⁶⁶ Eleusis is not part of the Mazi or Skourta plain, and although arguably integrated into the Athenian polis since the earlier sixth century, the capture details the continued debate over its alignment.⁶⁷ The capture by the Boiotian coalition made sense. The town was at a strategic crossroads between the Megarid and Athens, and the Thrasian plains produced an abundance of grain.⁶⁸

The *kioniskos* probably concerned a ritual transfer of the captured territories, conceptualising the Boiotian attack on Athens as a pre-emptive strike.⁶⁹ The ritual transfer vindicated the capture of these lands and reaffirmed their conquest, since land won by the spear counted as a rightful reason for claiming dominion over an area. These considerations were probably not the main instigator for the Boiotian coalition; installing a friendly regime was much more compelling. If the *kioniskos* was set up after their defeat, it would have acted as a memento for their claims to these lands, especially after the Athenians established their connection with the borderlands during the Cleisthenic reforms.

⁶⁴ SEG 60.506.

⁶⁵ SEG 47.1563 l. 14: ὑπαρχούσας Πιδασεῦσιν καὶ Λατμίοις; RO 14 l.2: Μ[α]ν[τ]ινεῦσ[ι] καὶ Ἐλιφρασίοις. It is very early for such a status, but Dreher 2003 describes the process of similar early compacts. He argues these were often a response to powerful neighbours. Corsten 1999: 158–9 argued that *sympoliteia* could be used for expansion. I thank Nikolaos Papazarkadas for referring me to the similarities.

⁶⁶ There was a fifth-century Boiotian claim to Eleusis (Lavecchia 2013); the extensive defensive walling built around the town has reaffirmed Athenian control in the wake of the attack (Paga 2021: 179–87). For Eleusinian-Theban relations: Beck forthcoming.

⁶⁷ Rönnberg 2021: 68–71, 239–45 dates the integration of Eleusis into the Athenian polis in the latter half of the sixth century, basing himself on IG I³ 991 = *IEleusis* 3. He argues that the Athenian Eleusinion had been inhabited by Demeter, but not necessarily in her Eleusinian guise, contrary to Miles 1998: 19, 21–3.

⁶⁸ Bresson 2016: 410; Hammond 1954; *IEleusis* 177.

⁶⁹ Mackil 2014. The *kioniskos* was presumably a base for a tripod: Aravantinos 2006. For the symbolical transfer of territory through the dedication of tripods: Papalexandrou 2008: 266–8.

These reforms were a process of several years but the duration is up for debate. Stuart Elden argued the lack of measuring tools and cartography meant it was a long-drawn-out process to detail where the boundary lay and which area or town belonged to which part of Attica.⁷⁰ His work is hindered by a lack of engagement with the archaeological and epigraphic material. According to archaeological data, more than seventy sites were occupied outside of Athens that later became demes by the time Cleisthenes enacted his reforms.⁷¹ The pre-existence of communities alongside their territory would have negated the need to traipse around the Attic countryside with a chisel in hand to demarcate the borders.⁷² What Cleisthenes' reforms did do was to create a shared polity to connect these settlements. Communities and their adjacent lands, previously unattached, were now integrated into a larger polity that connected its political heart – Athens – with the outstretched villages and towns spread across Attica. This included places such as Oinoe and Phyle and their respective territories.⁷³ Because the reclamation and integration of these places into the Athenian polity was not conceived of *ex novo*, nor finished within a matter of months, the inclusion of these borderland towns was likely in direct conflict with Boiotian claims, and established the Athenian presence in the fuzzy situation that was the borderlands.⁷⁴ Perhaps this explains why Oinoe and Phyle received deme status, whereas other places such as Panakton did not.

Here the archaeological evidence comes into play. The process of assigning deme status is not fully understood. Most scholars believe that people registered at what they considered to be their home.⁷⁵ This act of self-identification underlines the importance of locality before any political loyalty at this early stage.⁷⁶ As the Mazi and Skourta plains at this time were sparsely populated and only recently inhabited, the appeal of

⁷⁰ Elden 2013: 31–7. For a treatment of the Cleisthenic reforms: Russo 2022: 23–60.

⁷¹ Fachard 2016a.

⁷² Fachard 2016a. Kienast 2005 for 'proto-demes'. For boundary-making and territoriality: Daverio Rocchi 2007.

⁷³ Ober provocatively proposed Oinoe was founded after the creation of the deme system: Ober 1995: 112 n. 41. Yet the *kioniskos* confirms it existed prior to the reforms; perhaps it became Athenian afterwards. Archaeological material from the Mazi plain seems to confirm this: Fachard et al. 2020a. On the Attic settlements centuries prior to the Cleisthenic reforms: Rönneberg 2021.

⁷⁴ Badian 2000b; Eliot 1962; Rhodes 1972: 191–3; 1981 support the long chronology of the reforms. Andrewes 1977; Thompson 1971 supported the 'short theory'.

⁷⁵ Humphreys 2008; 2018: 775.

⁷⁶ Whitehead 1986: 55–6. For the importance of place: Beck 2020: 43–74.

registering at places such as Drymos, Panakton or Eleutherai could have been limited. This does not preclude the designation of these areas as demes – the irregularity of the deme system demonstrates that in certain cases, the status was meant to articulate claims to areas – but with other options available, the Athenians may have abstained from doing so in these cases. One possibility is that people were offered two options: either to register as an independent deme or to register at another, nearby deme.⁷⁷ Perhaps most people preferred to register at Phyle or Oinoe. In the latter’s case, this could explain *why* it was such an extensive deme size-wise, with many surrounding inhabitants choosing to register there. Another explanation is that the Athenians appointed deme status to an area to stake a claim to the contested area.

One way to validate claims was by constructing fortresses or temples in the borderlands. At places such as Rhamnous or Sounion monumental works were erected to signal Athenian ownership. At the same time, it was a concerted effort to shore up the defences in the wake of the invasion and the repeated attacks by Thebans and Aeginetans (Chapter 2.2).⁷⁸ Another expression of the connection between the Attic core and its peripheral areas was the maintenance and construction of new roads. These roads linked the new territories to the political centre, thereby forging a stronger tie with the liminal areas and ensuring that the inhabitants of τὰ μεθόρια would not feel isolated and alienated from their brethren in the *asty*.⁷⁹ Finally, hero cults could be established that were rooted in the locality to emphasise the connection between the inhabitants and place, as Emily Kearns details.⁸⁰ The expansion of the Athenian polis likely occurred in the wake of the first hostilities and was designed to prevent a recurrence. It significantly altered the relationship between the regions. The Athenians went from nearby friends to actual neighbours of the Thebans and Tanagraians, not to mention the possible extension of the Athenian influence into the Parasopia (Chapter 4.1.3). The timing of the expansion was not amiss. According to Alain Bresson, the Athenian polis entered a state of external grain dependency from the sixth century onwards.⁸¹ The stimulus of demographic growth might have pushed the Athenian democracy to expand its border and procure more resources in the wake of its victory. The victory allowed them to challenge the Theban and Tanagraian claims in a much more vigorous form, of which the deme assignment, the

⁷⁷ Humphreys 2008; 2018: 775.

⁷⁸ Paga 2021: 176–245. Rhamnous’ protection was linked to its fertile hinterlands: Oliver 2001.

⁷⁹ Fachard and Pirisino 2015. ⁸⁰ Kearns 1989. ⁸¹ Bresson 2016: 410.

construction of monumental works and the construction of roads were the physical and political expression.

In some cases the Athenians went further than merely delineating their borders. In the years after the invasion, they annexed Eleutherai, controlling the Mazi plain and its resources.⁸² How the new political situation was articulated remains unclear as Eleutherai was never incorporated into the Attic deme system.⁸³ This may have been the choice of people living there or reluctant Athenian governing bodies, considering Oinoe lay close by and became a substantial settlement in its own right. Another option is that Eleutherai, like Panakton and Drymos in the Skourta plain perhaps, became an Athenian cleruchy.⁸⁴

If the introduction of the Dionysos Eleutherios cult can be connected to the conquest of Eleutherai, its introduction may have been an ostentatious display of domination over this settlement and the Mazi plain (Chapter 3.5). While there is no proof of a *pompe* to ritualise the link between core and periphery, a new sanctuary was built in Dionysos' honour on the south slope of the Athenian Akropolis following the trajectory of other 'liminal' places whose deities found their way to the centre of Athens, such as Brauron and Eleusis.⁸⁵ Whether a (new) temple at Eleutherai was built to signify the new connection is uncertain.⁸⁶ The cultic introduction clarified that the Mazi plain was part of Athens, rather than the Theban *chora*.

Shifts also occurred in the Skourta plain. The aforementioned shrine at Mount Parnes lost its function as a border shrine.⁸⁷ Another indication of border fluctuations comes from the Zeus temple in Olympia, where a

⁸² Connor 1989; 1996; Scullion 2002; West 1989. Archaeological evidence from Dionysos Eleutherios' shrine in Athens supports this date. The shrine's first phase is dated to 500–475: Paleothoros 2012: 51–67.

⁸³ The exclusion from the deme system is not decisive in assigning the annexation date: Ehrhardt 1990. A casualty list from 447 mentions an Eleutherian among the fallen: *IG I³ 1162 = OR 129*: Ἐλευθεροῦθεν Σεμυχίδες; Taylor 2002. For a parallel with Plataians buried in Athens: Paus. 1.29.11–12, *SEG* 52.60.

⁸⁴ Bresson 2016: 405.

⁸⁵ The *xoanon* was carried from the god's sanctuary in Athens around the city. The only proof stems from a much later ephebic procession: *IG II² 1028 ll. 17–18, 48 (100/99)*; 1008 ll. 14, 69 (118/7); *SEG* 15.104 (127/6).

⁸⁶ There is a Dionysos temple in Eleutherai, but the remains are dated to the fourth century: Stikas 1938. Tiles from the fifth century were found in recent surveys of the site, but these were out of context and cannot provide any clues, as Sylvian Fachard informs me. Pottery fragments (Boiotian *kantharoi*) associated with the god's cult, dated to ca. 500, have been found on site, which could indicate the presence of a shrine in his honour: *SEG* 35.36.

⁸⁷ Palaiokrassa-Kopitsa and Vivliodetis 2015.

bronze shield was dedicated at the turn of the sixth century. The dedicatory inscription mentions a victory over the Tanagraians by an unknown assailant:

- 1)]ΙΟΝΙΟ..Χ ΑΡΜΑΤ] ..Ε
- 2)
- 3)]Ν ΤΑΝΑΓΡΑΙ . . . ΕΛΟΝΤΕΣ.⁸⁸

Albert Schachter suggests this dedication referred to an Athenian victory over the Tanagraians by providing the following restoration:⁸⁹

Διὶ Ἀθηναῖοι ἀνέθεσα]ν
Ταναγραί[ο υ ἡ]ελόντες.

The Athenians give this to Zeus
Taken from the Tanagraians.

If his hypothesis is correct, the battle occurred somewhere in the borders between Tanagra and Athens; the Skourta plain is a likely candidate. As the war between the neighbouring regions waged on until the end of the century – with fluctuating intensity – this could have been offered after the defeat of the Boiotian forces in the invasion or in a different battle involving just the Athenians and Tanagraians. Then it would not conflict as much with the *quadriga* set up after the monumental victory over the invaders (Chapter 5.2.2). However, since the restoration depends on a lot of speculation, there is no certainty that the neighbours waged an ongoing war over the Skourta plain and its exploitation.

The designation of Phyle as a deme of the Athenian polis would nevertheless make more sense within this context on two grounds. The first is more top-down. If the impetus came from the Athenian leadership, the designation of Phyle was a clear-cut case of demarcating the furthest extent of Athenian control over the Skourta plain. Panakton, after all, became ‘visibly’ Athenian as a fortified position only in the mid-fifth century. Since Phyle encroaches the Skourta plain, rather than is situated within it, the lack of further habitation along the plain at this time possibly reflects an arrangement that left the plain to be tended by various surrounding communities as part of a treaty, as will be argued below. It is striking that Phyle, unlike Rhamnous or Eleusis, was not monumentalised, nor did it attain an influential cult place to distinguish it as an influential

⁸⁸ *NIO* 128.

⁸⁹ Schachter 2016a: 109–10. *SEG* 46.82; *NIO* 127; Matthaïou 1992–8: 173 might be added.

border area, or have its cults ‘imported’ to Athens, like Eleutherai. Another, bottom-up, possibility for why Phyle became a deme rather than Panakton lies with the choices made by the people living there. Phyle can be viewed as lying closer to the rest of Attica than Panakton, and perhaps there was more attachment to this place for people living near the Skourta plain than other settlements. Arguably, people from around Panakton may have registered at Phyle, rather than registering at Panakton, meaning the lack of a deme status for Panakton does not indicate a lack of Athenian interest in claiming the Skourta plain. The designation of deme status at Phyle suggests this part of the borderlands was regarded as Athenian, but it was never explicitly materialised in the physical landscape, allowing for a fuzzier situation in the Skourta plain than elsewhere.⁹⁰ The lack of physical validation suggests the plain was purposely maintained as a shared region.

The integration of these borderlands boosted Athens’ position vis-à-vis other polities in Central Greece and recalibrated the political landscape, as exemplified by their actions following the victory of 507/6. Eleutherai was annexed, erasing any existing border in the Mazi plain. According to Herodotus, the neighbourly dispute lingered on and the borderlands were probably at the heart of this continued hostility.⁹¹ The end date of these hostilities is unknown, as was its outcome. Eleutherai likely remained in Athenian hands for the first decades of the fifth century, further secured by the Athenian alliance with Plataia (Chapters 3.1.1, 4.1.3). Matters were perhaps different in the Skourta plain. Four sites are attested for the late sixth to early fifth century: Phyle, Panakton, Stefani and Agios Dimitrios.⁹² The extent of habitation at these sites remains unclear, but they remained unfortified for the first half of the fifth century.⁹³

Could this be subscribed to the difficulty of claiming these border sites? Or were these sites perhaps established after the events of 507/6? Or, finally, were they left unfortified to remain within the terms of an agreement concluded after hostilities ended? The Boiotians refer to an agreement about the exploitation of the Skourta plain after the destruction of the

⁹⁰ If one maps the monumentalisation efforts in Paga 2021: 175–246, it would cross the Mesogeia from Rhamnous to Eleusis and cover other more ‘obvious’ borderlands such as Sounion, but avoids the Skourta plain and anything north of Mount Parnes. Perhaps this illustrates the lack of clarification there, unlike in the Mazi plain.

⁹¹ Hdt. 5.78–81.

⁹² Farinetti 2011: 395–6, fig. 4 and table 1. These sites all lay on the ‘Athenian’ side of the plain.

⁹³ Could this coincide with a period of relative stability and peaceful co-existence between the neighbours? Fachard 2016b: 227 refers to the lack of border fortifications in the Eretrian as a possible consequence of their good relationship with the neighbouring polis of Chalkis.

Athenian fortress at Panakton in 421. These ancient oaths stipulated that the Skourta plain should remain uninhabited and be common grazing land for the surrounding communities, arguably the Thebans, Athenians and Tanagraians:

found [the Spartan ambassadors] that the Boiotians had themselves razed Panakton, upon the plea that oaths had been anciently exchanged between their people and the Athenians, after a dispute on the subject, to the effect that neither should inhabit the place, but that they should graze it in common (περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄρκοι παλαιοὶ μηδετέρους οἰκεῖν τὸ χωρίον, ἀλλὰ κοινῇ νέμειν).⁹⁴

Mark Munn traced these ancient oaths to the Geometric period, when the plain was abandoned.⁹⁵ But I find this highly doubtful. While the lack of datable material for the eighth and seventh centuries inevitably raises the question of whether the abandonment was deliberate, the oath may have been concluded at the end of the sixth century.⁹⁶ There is an ancient tradition concerning a duel between mythological Athenian and Boiotian kings (Xanthus and Melanthus) over Oinoe and Panakton, and these start to appear in our sources around the late sixth century or even fifth century.⁹⁷ Boiotian counter-claims to Panakton can be found in the *aition* for the *tripodephoria* from Thebes to Dodona.⁹⁸ This rite is associated with a Theban war against the Pelasgians, inhabitants of the area around Panakton.⁹⁹ The lack of monumentalisation at Panakton and Phyle could reflect such an agreement, making the Athenian presence in the Skourta plain less obvious than elsewhere.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, Thucydides uses the word ‘παλαιόν’ to refer to ancient oaths and agreements made relatively recently, in some cases less than thirty years ago. As the first disputes over these borderlands appear in our sources

⁹⁴ Thuc. 5.42.1. Νέμειν can be interpreted differently, but its opposition to οἰκεῖν points towards a translation of ‘grazing’: Chandezon 2003: 349 n. 123.

⁹⁵ Munn 1989. ⁹⁶ Chandezon 2003: 331–90 treats other similar arrangements.

⁹⁷ Munn 1989: 236–9; Prandi 1989; Robertson 1988. The story of Melanthus is connected to the Apatouria festival, and (later) evidence of sacrifices for the festival at Panakton exist: *IEleusis* 196 (234/3); Vidal-Naquet 1986: 109. Sometimes the dispute is placed at Melainai but this place should not be located in the Mazi or Skourta plain (Lambert 1997: 196). Rönnberg 2021: 69 shows that the stories of Eleusis’ integration into the Athenian polis started in the fifth century to explain the integration of that border area.

⁹⁸ Pind. Fr. 59; Ephoros *FGrH* 70 F 119 = Str. 9.2.4: *COB* III 154–5.

⁹⁹ Munn 1989: 236–42. Papalexandrou 2008: 268–9 links it to the Thebageneis (Chapter 4.1.3) and regards the *aition* for the *tripodephoria* as an articulation of Theban claims to Panakton and its surroundings.

¹⁰⁰ The sacrifices for the Apatouria festival at Panakton (*IEleusis* 196) could counter this, but these date to 243 and are therefore harder to accept as evidence for an earlier festival.

only at the end of the sixth century, the mythological tradition was a possible later Athenian retrojection to validate their claims. The Skourta plain could then have been left uninhabited as part of an agreement reached by the communities exploiting these lands: the Athenians, Thebans and Tanagraians.¹⁰¹ No military structures or extended sites of habitation are attested before the mid-fifth century around the plain, when hostilities broke out again (Chapter 2.4).¹⁰² This settlement was probably the most reasonable and profitable arrangement to put an end to the ongoing war between the neighbours. It is a further testimony to what I stated above: territory became a problem between the Athenians and Boiotians only when agreements over borders were broken or ignored. Control over borderlands was not necessarily an ingredient for hostile relations.

This is supported by events in the aftermath of the Persian Wars (480–479). An ostrakon found in the Athenian Agora, dated to the 470s, condemns the Alcmeonid Megakles ‘on account of Drymos’ (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1).¹⁰³ If Mark Munn is correct in interpreting the ostracism as the result of internal disputes over the exploitation of the Skourta plain, the period after the 470s was marked by a remarkable conviviality in the border territories, which coincides with a relative dearth of neighbourly hostilities in our historical sources.¹⁰⁴

The attitude towards the exploitation of the borderlands changed, however, when relations turned sour in the mid-fifth century. It was a period of upheaval in Boiotia. Within a decade, the Athenians subdued all of Boiotia before being forced to withdraw from the region after the defeat at Koroneia in 446. The precise settlement remains enigmatic – Thucydides mentions the Boiotians reclaimed their *autonomia* – yet we can conjecture some of the possible outlines of this settlement (Chapter 2.4).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Maybe the Athenians afterwards suffered a loss against the Tanagraians. The Tanagraians dedicated a shield at Olympia (525–500) but the opponent is ineligible: *NIO* 127 (Ταναγραῖοι τῶν --).

¹⁰² Munn 2010: 194–5: ‘Two decades before the Peloponnesian War’ (Panakton). Munn 1993: 9 for Phyle. Judging from Farinetti 2011: 395–6, fig. 4 and table 1, the sites on the ‘Boiotian’ side of the plain were inhabited later.

¹⁰³ *SEG* 46.82.

¹⁰⁴ Munn 2010. Fachard 2017: 45–6 reviews the evidence to illustrate how aristocrats could find a way to make profits in the border regions. These would then have been made at the expense of poorer fellow citizens, thus demonstrating how the borderlands could be the stage for inequality between (Athenian) citizens.

¹⁰⁵ Thuc. 1.113–14.

Eleutherai probably reverted to Boiotian control at this time. Thucydides calls Oinoe the border between the Athenians and Boiotians, suggesting Eleutherai became Boiotian sometime after 507/6, but before the start of the Peloponnesian War (431).¹⁰⁶ This may have been expressed in the sacred landscape through the instalment of a Herakles shrine. Albert Schachter interprets the arrival of such cults throughout Boiotia as indications of Theban control over the territories in question.¹⁰⁷ If his interpretation is correct, that could be the case in Eleutherai. Deposits of Boiotian pottery found in the town refer to a Herakles cult and are dated to the period 425–400.¹⁰⁸ Of course, such cultic activity is far from conclusive.

How the territory was divided, or how settlements were politically aligned, is more difficult to retrace. The results from the survey detail that in the fifth, and especially the fourth century, secondary settlements and hamlets emerged around the plain, with Eleutherai and Oinoe as nuclei. According to the Mazi Archaeological Project, the ceramic densities in the plain itself were lowest, suggesting a border ran between Oinoe and Eleutherai with Rachi Stratonos a possibility (see [Figure 4.4](#)).¹⁰⁹

The increase in sites makes it difficult to pin down which places belonged to whom, but settlement patterns might be insightful.¹¹⁰ Oinoe was the nucleus for a nexus of dispersed hamlets and settlements. At Eleutherai the settlement pattern was much more centralised around the town. This led to Eleutherai growing larger than Oinoe. Another difference is the lack of fortification at Eleutherai, while Oinoe was walled. The early fortress at Eleutherai may have granted protection to the population there and this may have made any fortification at the town unnecessary.¹¹¹ Could this indicate a difference in the exploitation of the plain, with the Boiotians focusing on the western half around Eleutherai, while the Athenians tried to cultivate the east? If that is correct, it suggests an arrangement concerning the exploitation of the plain. Recent events may have led to a clear division of who would cultivate what. Another option could be to view the fortification of Oinoe (prior to the Peloponnesian War) and the contemporaneous construction of a fortress near Eleutherai as conspicuous attempts to ensure the exploitation of parts of the plain for

¹⁰⁶ Fachard 2013; Thuc. 2.18. ¹⁰⁷ Schachter 2016a: 105–6.

¹⁰⁸ Hornbostel 1984; Ober 1987b. ¹⁰⁹ Knodell et al. 2016: 161.

¹¹⁰ Knodell et al. 2015: 145; Knodell et al. 2016: 161.

¹¹¹ Fachard et al. 2020a; Knodell et al. 2017: 156. Chandler 1926: 12 first recognised an earlier construction.

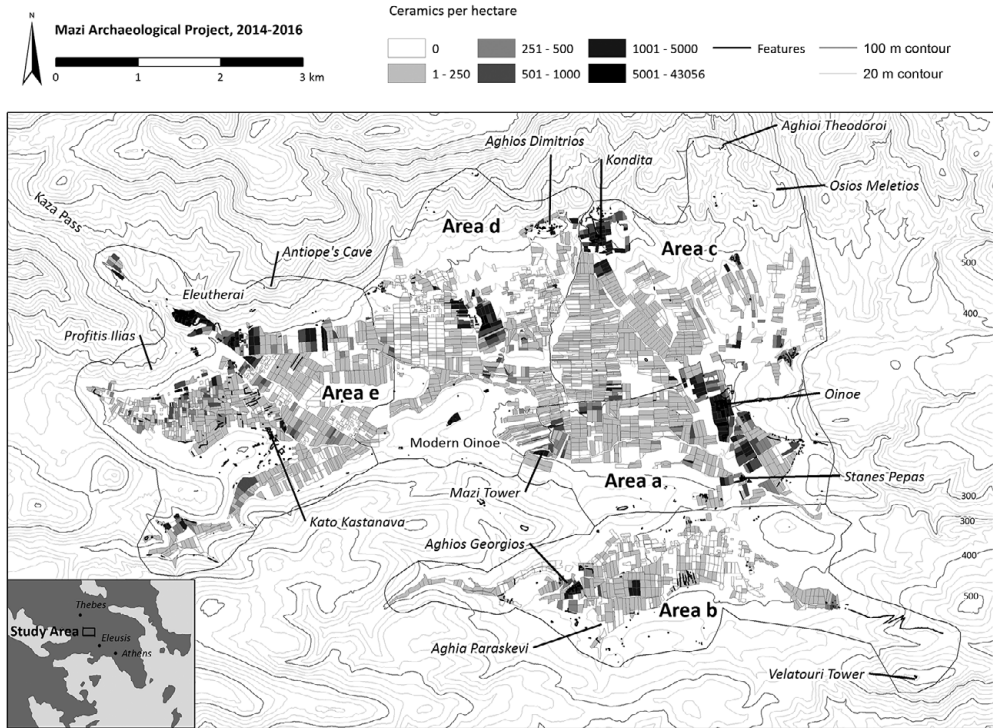


Figure 4.4 Close-up of Mazi plain map.
(Source: Mazi Archaeological Plain Project)

the people living there.¹¹² Following Sylvian Fachard's observations, the construction at Eleutherai was probably Boiotian, as the Athenians would not construct two fortifications that close to each other, considering the investment involved in constructing these enclosures.¹¹³ The construction of two fortified sites on opposite sides of the plain suggests that prior to the Peloponnesian War, a political border cut across the plain, with both the Athenians and Boiotians taking a share, as argued by Sylvian Fachard.¹¹⁴ The exact course of that political demarcation is harder to trace, and we may assume there was plenty of contact between both communities. The impetus for the fortifications was more likely the result of mutual suspicions in Thebes and Athens than a reflection of local animosity.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Thuc. 2.18.1–2. Earlier studies of the fortifications were unable to clarify the date of the fortifications, but new excavations have revealed the fifth-century foundations: Fachard et al. 2020a; Papangeli et al. 2018: 157.

¹¹³ Fachard 2013; Fachard et al. 2020a. ¹¹⁴ Fachard 2013, 2017; Fachard et al. 2020a.

¹¹⁵ Fachard 2017 on cross-border interaction.

The fortification of important sites also occurred at the Skourta plain.¹¹⁶ Panakton was fortified in the mid-fifth century, possibly because of the loss of influence in Boiotia.¹¹⁷ It was connected to other important (border) demes such as Oinoe and Eleusis via a new engineered path.¹¹⁸ The road signified that Panakton formed part of Attica. The fortified site served to protect the farmers when they were working the plains or as a refuge in times of danger.¹¹⁹ What it did not do was block the route from Boiotia into Attica: 'In strategic terms, the fortress and its garrison asserted control only in the sense that it prevented foreigners, in this case, Boeotians, from taking up residence and exploiting a valuable resource in grazing and farmland.'¹²⁰ Considering the lack of Boiotian habitation or military structures on the other side of the plain, the preventive purpose of Panakton seems to have been successful.¹²¹ The fortification helped to ensure the (partial) exploitation of the Skourta plain by settlers from Panakton and perhaps Phyle. It came at an opportune moment as well. Population increases between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War made the nutritional supply in Athens increasingly precarious.¹²² The alimentary penury perhaps inspired the abrasive behaviour of *fortifying* Panakton and claiming partial exclusivity, rather than accepting a shared exploitation.

Because the excavations at Panakton offered no clear-cut date, the fortified site may have been constructed before the Battle of Koroneia (446) (Chapters 2.4, 3.2.3). In that case, the fortification may be more cynically seen as an abuse of power by the Athenians, who wished to monopolise part of the Skourta plain at the time of their domination over Boiotia. Their actions then perhaps triggered resentment among their subjects. Considering the Athenians' 'loose grasp' over Boiotia during their decade-long domination, however, such antagonism would be remarkable since most poleis had a pro-Athenian regime. Conversely, it fits better after Koroneia. The militarisation of the plain did not deteriorate neighbourly relations, since these had already reached a nadir at that point. Personally, I am more inclined to favour this latter interpretation. During times of

¹¹⁶ Phyle's fortification remains uncertain: Munn 1993: 9. Ar. *Ach.* 1022–3 mentions garrison duties in 425; Thrasyloulos captured the fortress at Phyle in 403: Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.29–30; 3.5.5.

¹¹⁷ Munn 2010: 194–5. ¹¹⁸ Vanderpool 1978: 236–40. ¹¹⁹ Fachard and Pirisino 2015.

¹²⁰ Munn 2010: 198.

¹²¹ Judging from the walking distances from Thebes and Tanagra, the Skourta plain was a 100- to 120-minute walk (Farinetti 2011: 199, 219), making understandable the preference for pastoralism of the inhabitants of Thebes and Tanagra. That normally involved longer periods away from home, rather than the stationary profession of farming.

¹²² Akrigg 2019: 139–70.

harmonious co-existence there was less incentive to cut off Boiotian neighbours from exploiting the lands, especially as it could gravely endanger the fragile friendship with the Boiotians, who controlled a region of instrumental value to the safety of Athens.¹²³ In times of heightened hostility, the case was different. The recent hostilities with the Boiotians could have triggered the fortification of Panakton to ensure at least some share of the Skourta plain benefitted the Athenian people.¹²⁴ Their actions aggravated an already tense relationship with the Boiotians. The latter now had sufficient reason to openly strive for hostilities with the Athenians but remained aloof until the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

With the onset of the Peloponnesian War (431), these grievances came to the fore. The belligerents expected a quick end to the war. Thus, the Boiotians aimed to occupy as many contested places as possible to create the strongest negotiating position; possession is nine tenths of the law.¹²⁵ That is demonstrated by the allied forces' attacks on Oinoe. This fortified site was not on the direct route into Attica and its attack was not predicated on military interests. Some men in the invading army of the anti-Athenian coalition openly doubted its necessity.¹²⁶ Precaution perhaps warranted an attack on Oinoe. It is dangerous to leave the back of the army vulnerable to an enemy garrison. Boiotian objectives are a more likely motivation. Occupying Oinoe meant they could monopolise control over the Mazi plain by capturing the key hub in its web of settlements. They could then present the Athenians with an ultimatum in a future treaty or obtain ownership of more parts of the plain.¹²⁷ The sites of Panakton and Phyle must also have been harassed by Boiotian forces, with attacks on the Skourta plain attested in the mid-420s.¹²⁸ These moves imply a desire to rectify Athenian violations of the arrangements in the borderlands, as well as obtain the most advantageous position at the negotiation table.

Frustrations over Athenian actions in the Skourta plain emerged in the years 422–421. Panakton fell into Boiotians hands in 422 through

¹²³ Van Wijk 2020.

¹²⁴ Munn 2010. It is striking the Boiotians did not try to mitigate the effects of the Panakton fortress through their own military buildings. Such structures arose during the fourth century: Munn 1988; Cooper 2000.

¹²⁵ Hunt 2010: 135–7. Occupying territory does not by itself vindicate a claim to a piece of land, only a pre-existing claim enabled this: Chaniotis 2004: 187–90.

¹²⁶ Thuc. 2.18.

¹²⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.2; Winter 1971: 44 for the dangers of an enemy garrison in the rear.

¹²⁸ Ar. *Ach.* 1022–35; 1071–80 mentions an Athenian farmer from Phyle whose oxen have been stolen by the Boiotians. If Phyle was targeted by the Boiotians, we may assume Panakton was harassed as well.

subterfuge.¹²⁹ This granted them a substantial advantage in the peace negotiations of 421. Their actions during these talks demonstrate the impact of the Athenian fortifications. In the original arrangement, the fortress was to be returned to the Athenians by the Spartans, but the Boiotians were unwilling to hand it over.¹³⁰ In exchange for its possession, the Boiotians demanded a separate Spartan alliance to prevent their exclusion from a bilateral Atheno-Spartan treaty (Chapter 3.1.2). Panakton was eventually yielded to the Spartans, but only after the fortress had been destroyed. Incensed by this action, the Athenians wanted to have their claim to the Skourta plain validated in an agreement. If their claim was accepted by all parties, the Athenian fortification of Panakton was justified and accepted as the new status quo. Understandably, the Boiotians rejected this premise and justified the destruction of the fortifications by referring to the ancient oaths that guaranteed the neutrality and accessibility of the Skourta plain to the surrounding communities:

the Lacedaimonian ambassadors, Andromedes, Phaedimos, and Antimenidas, who were to receive the prisoners from the Boiotians and restore them and Panakton to the Athenians, found that the Boiotians had themselves razed Panakton, upon the plea that ancient oaths had been exchanged between their people and the Athenians, after a dispute on the subject, to the effect that neither should inhabit the place, but that they should graze it in common. (my translation)¹³¹

The centrality of Panakton, and the Skourta plain in general, during these negotiations is striking: the Athenians were willing to return Spartan prisoners and the strategically advantageous outpost on Pylos in exchange for Panakton and its fortress.¹³² Their insistence on its return is particularly salient when compared with their standpoint on Plataia. Its restitution came up during the negotiations, but the Athenians were persuaded to leave the matter in exchange for their control over the harbour of Nisaia on the Saronic Gulf.¹³³ Perhaps they realised Plataia could not be salvaged, or, more cynically, the Plataike simply did not matter as much as the Skourta plain. A treaty was acceptable, as long as the Athenian militarisation and claim to the Skourta plain remained in place. It was precisely those

¹²⁹ Thuc. 5.3.5.

¹³⁰ Thuc. 5.17–18. Echoes of this sentiment can be found in both Plutarchan references (*Alc.* 14.4; *Nic.* 10.3).

¹³¹ Thuc. 5.42.1; 5.39–42. Thucydides leaves the question of the legitimacy over the Boiotian claims untreated, but parallel border arrangements – with quarrelling neighbouring polities agreeing to a shared exploitation – are attested elsewhere in Greece: Chandezon 2003: 331–90.

¹³² Thuc. 5.18. ¹³³ Thuc. 5.17.2.

demands the Boiotians rejected. If the Athenians were willing to share the fruits of the borderlands equally, the Boiotians were amenable to a peace treaty. Boosting their resolve were the recent developments in the Peloponnesian War. Rather than being treated as a subordinate to the Spartans, they desired respect. With that came a demand to revert the Skourta plain to the prior status quo (Chapter 3.1.2). These inclinations demonstrate that control over the borderlands did not prohibit friendly relations. Clear agreements over the exploitation of marginal lands were conducive to peaceful co-existence. The Boiotians made that point: it was the Athenians' disregard for the established agreements over the exploitation of the Skourta plain that negatively affected the neighbourly relations.

Another border-related issue was the betrayal of the Athenian fortress at Oinoe in 411. According to Thucydides, the disposed Athenian oligarchs fled to Oinoe and convinced the garrison to surrender the fortress to the Boiotians as part of the conditions for the Athenians' surrender.¹³⁴ What did the fleeing Athenian oligarchs wish to accomplish by handing over the fortress to the Boiotians? Was it an attempt to precipitate the end to the war by relinquishing a disputed territory to the Boiotians? Or simply a way of appeasing their new hosts?¹³⁵

Unfortunately, Oinoe has not been the subject of extensive excavations, with only trial trenches dug to determine the extent of the fortifications.¹³⁶ Therefore it is unknown what happened with the fortress after the betrayal. There is no mention of a destruction in other sources, unlike Panakton. If the fortress was not dismantled, we can speculate about possible reasons. Was it that the Boiotians did not perceive Oinoe as a threat? Was it because of the manpower and money involved in dismantling the fortifications?¹³⁷ Or maybe the fortification of Oinoe did *not* conflict with previous arrangements concerning the Mazi plain? Until there is more evidence from excavations, we cannot tell. In all likelihood, the fortification reverted back to the Athenians after the war. The swift turnaround in Atheno-Boiotian relations could have helped the situation (Chapters 2.4, 2.5, 3.2.2).

The situation in the Skourta plain seems to have reverted to a state of co-exploitation. Insofar as the survey results provide any conclusions, the Panakton fortification remained in ruins after the Peloponnesian

¹³⁴ Thuc. 8.98. Xen; *Hell.* 1.7.28 where the responsible oligarch, Aristarchus, is still remembered as the one who handed over Oinoe to the Thebans.

¹³⁵ Simonton 2017: 46–7. ¹³⁶ Munn 1993: 8; Papangeli et al. 2018.

¹³⁷ Fachard and Harris 2021 make this point regarding the destruction of cities. Although this is on a different scale, it could have inhibited the Boiotians from investing anything into its dismantling.

War.¹³⁸ This ‘abandonment’ coincides with a period of harmonious Athenian-Boiotian relations, culminating in an alliance in 395.¹³⁹ Whether that was a conspicuous move is difficult to confirm, but perhaps there were more pressing matters to attend to rather than rebuilding the fortress. It may indicate a friendlier relationship between the neighbours leading to the older status quo of co-existence, but it cannot be ascertained.¹⁴⁰ The lack of fortifications does not mean the plain was completely deserted. Small habitation sites started to appear around the plain at the end of the fifth century.¹⁴¹ But the absence of military structures to thwart the exploitation of the plain by other communities like the Tanagraians suggests the fertile lands were available to all surrounding polities. The reluctance to refortify Panakton could have been the result of the collaborations between the Athenians and Boiotians shortly after the Peloponnesian War, and the enduring friendship it created throughout the first forty years of the fourth century. Another factor could have been decreasing Athenian population numbers and thus less pressure on the grain supply.¹⁴²

The alliance of 395 materialised at a time of reduced revenue for the Athenians and a Boiotia that was about to be invaded by the Spartans. A self-interested polity, as assumed by Realist theory and its supporters, would have exploited the situation to monopolise the Skourta plain, especially when the loss of revenue needed to be compensated by the hinterland.¹⁴³ The Athenians’ reluctance to push these claims not only argues against the Realist interpretation of interstate relations, but also implies that clear and fair agreements concerning territorial boundaries were pivotal to friendly neighbourly interaction. Realising that enmity with their neighbours had wreaked the most havoc on their countryside, as evidenced by their occupation at Dekeleia, it may have dawned on them that sharing these borderlands was more profitable in the long run.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁸ Munn 1989: 235. Out of almost 500 datable sherds, 63 per cent belong to the Classical period. From this era, 26 per cent can be placed in the 450–400 range, and 53 per cent in the 350–275 range. These results imply a limited occupation in the intermittent period, especially with no artefacts from Panakton that can be dated to the years 420–370. Munn 2010: 195 states construction of farmhouses starts in the late fifth century and became more common after 350.

¹³⁹ RO 6.

¹⁴⁰ Fachard 2016b: 227 on the case of Eretria and Chalkis, whose friendly relations led to few fortifications in the borderlands.

¹⁴¹ Munn 2010: 195; Munn and Zimmermann-Munn 1990: 37–8. ¹⁴² Akrigg 2019: 139–70.

¹⁴³ Perhaps the tempting suggestion by the Boiotian delegates that they could be a part of a renewed Athenian empire mitigated the need to reclaim these lands: Xen. 3.5.10, 14–15.

¹⁴⁴ For the destructive effects of Dekeleia’s fortification: Funke 2000.

Oinoe and Eleutherai remained fortified, demarcating the respective territories of the Boiotians and Athenians in the Mazi plain.¹⁴⁵ The demarcated borders in the Mazi plain could be perceived as tokens of suspicion and hostility. First, though, these fortifications had not been dismantled. There was no need to change the status quo, especially considering the costs involving in building these constructions.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the Skourta plain, these constructions did not conflict with a previous situation that caused dismay, but probably reflected the earlier arrangements concerning the exploitation of the Mazi plain. The increase in settlements around the plain could also have necessitated this sort of demarcation.¹⁴⁷ Second, these fortified sites served an important military purpose during the Corinthian War as military bases. The Spartans invaded Boiotia repeatedly in the opening phases of the war and often took the most direct road to Boiotia from the Peloponnese. This road led through the Mazi plain and made the garrisons at Oinoe and Eleutherai even more vital, not in repelling an invasion, but as bases for raids on the supply lines of attacking armies.¹⁴⁸

A reluctance to fortify Panakton during the years of alliance fits in with the picture painted above, yet the Athenians abstained from fortifying it even after the King's Peace of 387/6 and the end of their alliance. That is even more remarkable considering pro-Spartan regimes were in place in Thebes and Tanagra from 382 to 379, possibly creating friction. The Athenians decided to refortify Panakton only in the later fourth century (see below). Their reasons remain enigmatic. It was a period of expanding habitation around the Skourta plain with isolated farms arising at various places around the plane, especially in the later fourth century.¹⁴⁹ Similar habitation is not attested for the earlier half of that century. The earliest datable artefacts at Panakton pick up again around 370, after a half-century hiatus. This is just around the time that the Boiotian-Athenian alliance dissipated (Chapter 3.1.3).

In comparison to the apogee of tensions over the fertile plains in τὰ μεθόρια between 425 and 400, the period after the Peloponnesian War provides little evidence. Eleutherai is mentioned only once during the

¹⁴⁵ According to Raubitschek 1941 the Athenians honoured Eleutherians for their help in restoring the democracy in 403 by mentioning them in a decree (the decree of Archinos). The decree omitted other foreign helpers and could be viewed as an Athenian attempt to proclaim Eleutherai as a part of Attica. But Taylor 2002: 389–91 concedes there are problems with the restoration and whether Raubitschek's argument holds.

¹⁴⁶ Fachard et al. 2020a.

¹⁴⁷ Fachard et al. 2015; 2020b; Knodell et al. 2016; 2017; Papangeli et al. 2018.

¹⁴⁸ This would align with the flexibility of the *peripoloi* in charge of patrolling the frontier and the countryside: Chaniotis 2008; Couvenhues 2011.

¹⁴⁹ Munn 1989: 235–6; Munn and Zimmermann 1989: 100.

Boiotian War as a place for a united front against the Spartans.¹⁵⁰ Even in times of hostilities, like the 360s and 350s, our sources remain relatively silent on the Mazi and Skourta plain.¹⁵¹ It is only in the later fourth century, when a real threat of neighbourly conflict was on the horizon, that these borderlands became topical again in the literary record (see below).

Although one should be careful to create correlations where there are none, it seems plausible that the Athenians, unburdened from their desire to maintain cordial relations with the Boiotians, openly defied the agreements concerning the Skourta plain by fortifying Panakton. The fortification of Panakton during times of increasing animosity demonstrates the disruptive effects the appropriation of the borderlands could have. Whereas in other disputed territories there was no opportunity to physically dominate the landscape, the Skourta plain provided the perfect opportunity to establish a new military presence in the borderlands. The lack of earlier fortifications allowed for such a statement and prevented the neighbours from exploiting the previously shared farmlands.

On the other side of the border, the Boiotians instigated an elaborate fortification scheme. It was meant to safeguard fertile lands from invasion and plunder, among them Eleutherai (see [Figure 4.5](#)).¹⁵² Its monumental fortress was the most grandiose expression of the scheme. Although the masonry cannot provide a date set in stone, there are signs of expansions in the excavated structures that date to the fourth century.¹⁵³ Arguably, the work started after the Boiotian Wars of 375–371, in which Boiotia was the target of repeated Spartan invasions ([Chapter 2.5](#)). Whether the impetus for the construction came after the cessation of the Athenian-Boiotian alliance of 369 is unclear, but perhaps this led to more effort and resources flowing into the Eleutherai fortress. The fortress granted the Boiotians control over the commercial and civilian traffic coming from the Mazi plain. It secured the western side of the Mazi plain and offered a large enough refuge for the inhabitants of Eleutherai to flee in time of peril as

¹⁵⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.13–15.

¹⁵¹ According to Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.1 the costs of guarding the countryside (indirectly) led to the Peace of 375 with the Spartans (Munn 2021). Could it be that the financial costs of defending the countryside precipitated a lack of interest in refortifying Panakton, even during times of hostility with the Boiotians?

¹⁵² Cooper 2000; Fossey 1993.

¹⁵³ Fachard 2013: 91; Fachard et al. 2020a argue for a period of 375–325 with work on the fortress continuing through this period, contra Camp 1991; Cooper 2000 proposes a limited timeframe.



Figure 4.5 Fortress at Eleutherai.

(Source: Author)

Sylvian Fachard convincingly argued.¹⁵⁴ The symbolic aspect of the building mattered too. The Boiotian fortress dwarfed its Athenian counterpart at Oinoe and sent a clear message to the Athenians: the Boiotians were the dominant power in the Mazi plain, not their southern neighbours.¹⁵⁵ Since this was the time of expanding habitation in the plain, the message would have resonated even more.¹⁵⁶ New hamlets sprang up east and north-west of Eleutherai, and there is evidence of new habitation to the south of Oinoe and near the Mazi tower and Stanes Pepas. This increased habitation perhaps necessitated the Boiotian expansion of the fortress at Eleutherai to secure a larger population and prevent Athenian encroachment. Again, the tensions over control of valuable farmland mounted during times of

¹⁵⁴ Fachard 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Fachard 2013: 90–1, 95–6. The fortifications at Oinoe do not seem to have undergone expansion or reinforcement around this time. The construction of new towers appears to date to the late fourth/early third century: Papangeli et al. 2018: 158.

¹⁵⁶ Knodell et al. 2016: 161.

hostility; these matters could be solved diplomatically if the involved actors were willing.

The territories of Eleutherai, Oinoe, Phyle or Panakton do not show up in our sources for the 360s and 350s, although we do not possess a contemporary annalistic historical work for this time. The lack of references is nevertheless striking, as the Athenians did struggle with the Megarians over the borders of the *hiera orgas*, the sacred (fertile) lands between Eleusis and Megara. They pressed their claims in 352/1 and sent an army into the Megarid in 350/49 to re-establish boundaries.¹⁵⁷ Escalations in the Attic-Boiotian borderlands were mitigated by the Common Peace treaties of 366/5 and 362/1. After the Battle of Mantinea, both the Athenians and Boiotians were war-weary. The subsequent Third Sacred War (357–346) drew the Boiotians into a drawn-out and costly conflict with the Phocians. The financial strain of this war put any Boiotian ambitions in the borderlands on hold, rendering any attempt to stake a claim to the Skourta plain – and thereby risk a two-front war – unlikely.¹⁵⁸

The Peace of Philokrates (346) changed matters. The end of the war freed the Boiotians from the financial and military morass of the Third Sacred War. They could now turn their gaze southwards to the Skourta plain. In 343/2 Demosthenes warned his Athenian audience that they must now march out to protect Drymos and the land around Panakton against the Thebans, instead of recovering Oropos.¹⁵⁹ He implies there was a sudden threat to the Athenian exploitation of the Skourta plain. This contrasts with previous years, when the Boiotians were pre-occupied with the war in Phocis. The picture of an ungarrisoned and unkept fortification at Panakton is confirmed by the discovery of an inventory of weaponry and tools from the fortified site.¹⁶⁰ The decrepit state of some of the weaponry handed over to the newly installed general suggests the infrastructure had been standing idle for several years before Panakton became a pressing matter again. The inventory is dated to the archonship of Pythodotos

¹⁵⁷ [Dem.] 13.32; Androtion FGrH 324 F30; Philochoros FGrH 328 F 155; *IEleusis* 144; Matthaïou 2020. Concerns over encroachment of lands were vented by the Amphictyony, warning possible assailants of the ensuing sanctions: *CID* IV.2; Rousset 2002: 188–92.

¹⁵⁸ Schachter 2016a: 113–32; 2016b. ¹⁵⁹ Dem. 19.326.

¹⁶⁰ Munn 1996; 2010; 2021. Ober 1985a: 218 adds these were regular forces and acted as support for the stationed garrison at Panakton. Munn 2021: 289–90 notes Panakton is the only border fortress where inventories of weaponry were found, which could indicate it was a key cog in the border defence.

(343/2), which coincides with the year of Demosthenes' speech. A year prior, the troops had been mobilised to reoccupy Panakton.¹⁶¹

There might thus be a kernel of truth in Demosthenes' exhortations, although there is no proof of an attack occurring.¹⁶² The archaeological record offers some support to Demosthenes' claims.¹⁶³ If the watchtowers along the northern edges of the plain were indeed Boiotian constructions, as is likely, then the Boiotians started to assert themselves in the area around this time. These towers prevented further encroachment by Athenian farmers. Considering the near bankruptcy of the *koinon*, their decision to invest in the exploitation of the Skourta plain becomes more understandable.¹⁶⁴ The fertile lands provided valuable resources and its revenues could not be relinquished to the Athenians. The Peace of Philokrates tied the Athenians and Boiotians to Philip of Macedon, who was the *koinon*'s ally. The *koinon* must have felt emboldened, knowing the Athenians were in no position to challenge the Boiotians *and* the Macedonian king over the exploitation of the Skourta plain. The *koinon*'s leadership thereby demonstrated an acute awareness of the geographical implications of their political alliances with regard to the relationship with their Athenian neighbours: now was the time to claim their share of the Skourta plain and boost their economic recovery.

The terms of the alliance against the Macedonians in 339/8 provide another example of the delicate nature of borderlands in negotiations. More was needed this time for a rapprochement than the dismantling of the Panakton fortress. The *koinon*'s leadership insisted on the recognition of the Theban claim over Boiotia. Whether this included the Skourta and Mazi plain is unclear. These were τὰ μεθόρια, and thus not officially part of Boiotia. Considering the Athenians' predicament, the Boiotians could have pushed to include these plains, yet refrained from doing so (Chapter 3.4.4). They did not hesitate to demand financial concessions from the Athenians, so why the reluctance to push for these profitable lands?

The military situation in both plains might provide some indication. Unlike the militarisation of the Skourta plain during the Peloponnesian War, which was rather one-sided, the situation may have changed. That depends on whether the Tanagraians and Thebans had shielded their share

¹⁶¹ Munn 2021: 292; Traill 2021. ¹⁶² MacDowell 2000: 348.

¹⁶³ The Tsoukrati and Limiko towers were built in the period following the Sacred War (Munn 2010: 196). Munn 1988 argued for a Boiotian origin contra Vanderpool 1978.

¹⁶⁴ It is equally possible the Athenians exploited the Boiotians' destitution during the Third Sacred War and monopolised the usage of the Skourta plain, as seen in the increase in farm buildings: Munn 2010: 195.

by constructing the Tsoukrati and Limiko towers or whether these were Athenian constructions.¹⁶⁵ If Boiotian, these towers limited the Athenians' capacity to encroach upon these lands and may reflect a status quo in which each side respected a division or a shared exploitation of the lands. Perhaps this was the case in the Mazi plain as well, where the mutual fortifications on either side provided a refuge for the populations and ensured none of the powers at play were strong enough to monopolise the fertile plains.¹⁶⁶ This could reflect a shared exploitation or an agreement concerning the cultivation of the lands, thanks to a border running through the plain. A delicate balance in these plains could have assured there was no need to push for further concessions if that could disrupt the negotiations.

Interesting in this light is the refurbishment or strengthening of the fortifications at Phyle in 334/3 or 333/2 after the destruction of Thebes. Perhaps the same occurred at Oinoe.¹⁶⁷ With the other main player in the Mazi and Skourta plain taken out of the picture, the Athenians may have aimed at reinforcing their claims to these lands, especially with other Boiotian communities gobbling up parts of the Theban *chora*.¹⁶⁸

In sum, the Mazi and Skourta plains were desirable plots of fertile lands located in the frontier zone between Attica and Boiotia. In the sixth and early fifth century, control over the Mazi plain fluctuated between the neighbours. The situation changed in the late fifth century, when each side built fortifications, resulting in a status quo in which each cultivated its own share of the plain. This situation lasted throughout the fourth century. In the Skourta plain, the situation was different. A less developed settlement pattern in the fifth century provided a breeding ground for disputes, leading to the Athenian militarisation of the plain to ensure their grasp over it. This culminated in the destruction of the fortifications at Panakton. The early fourth century saw the return of a friendly co-existence and co-habitation of the plain, before the rebuilding of the Panakton fortifications in the mid-fourth century signalled the return of frictions. The situation stabilised somewhat after the Third Sacred War (357–346) with the Thebans and Tanagraians staking their claim to the desirable plots through

¹⁶⁵ Fachard 2016b: 212. Fachard 2017: 37 appoints the Tanagraians as the likely candidates.

¹⁶⁶ Fachard 2013; Fachard et al. 2020a for the notion that both sides staked a claim to their share of the plain by fortifying settlements like Oinoe, or through building the fortress at Eleutherai, in addition to other constructions meant to observe the plains like the Mazi tower.

¹⁶⁷ Phyle: IG II³ 1 429, l. 10. Oinoe: Papangeli et al. 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Arr. *Anab.* 1.9.9; Diod. 18.11.3–5; Din. 1.24; Gullath 1982: 77–82.

the construction of watchtowers to keep the Athenians at bay, before the matter seems to have been settled with the conclusion of the Theban-Athenian alliance in 339/8.

In the era of Macedonian domination, the importance of the Mazi and Skourta plains in manipulating neighbourly relations was not lost on Alexander's successors. Pretenders to the Macedonian throne would retain possession of the Athenian border fortresses to stymie opposition, or return the occupied fortified sites to the Athenians to curry favour.¹⁶⁹ Nor did the Athenians forget about the centrality of the hinterland, which gained a much larger role when their power was eclipsed by the Macedonian kings.¹⁷⁰

4.1.2 *Where the Earth Swallowed Amphiaraos: Oropos and the Oropia*

Another perennial bone of contention was Oropos and its adjacent lands, the Oropia (see [Figure 4.6](#)). Its inhabitants suffered from the precarious position of the region, wedged between the Athenians and Boiotians, with the Eretrians across the water wielding an equal amount of influence. The district is a maritime plain through which the river Asopos flows into the sea and extends some five kilometres along the shoreline in current times, though the region may have been slightly larger in earlier periods. Inland it is separated from Tanagra by a chain of hills, creating a natural demarcation. These hills did not obstruct travel, as the towns shared an easily traversable boundary.¹⁷¹ Geographically, it belonged to Boiotia, but politically it changed sides frequently, sometimes voluntarily, other times not.

In most cases, Eretrian involvement altered Oropos' political alignment.¹⁷² Although the roots of the town date to the early Iron Age, Oropos' early political affiliations remain shrouded in mystery.¹⁷³ There

¹⁶⁹ Munn 2010: 197; 2021. He adds a dedicatory inscription from Panakton with a Theban co-dedicant: Munn 1996: 53–5; 2021. He refers to the inscription *IG II³ 4 281 = IEleusis 195*, an Eleusinian decree with the 'Athenians stationed at Panakton' honouring Demetrios of Phaleron. However, as Tracy 1995: 43–6, 171–4 noted, the decree is dated to a later period, with the honours aimed at Demetrios' son.

¹⁷⁰ Oliver 2007. Fortifications were built at Megalouvono in the south-eastern part of the ridge in the Skourta plain: Farinetti 2011: 395.

¹⁷¹ Gomme 1911–12: 199 notes the easy traversable route between the towns.

¹⁷² Bearzot 1989. The Eretrian influence is found in the local dialect and language. Oropos is an Eretrian version of Asopos, the river that ran close by the polis: Knoepfler 2000; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1886.

¹⁷³ Mazarakis Ainian 1998: 210–14; 2002; 2007; Mazarakis Ainian, Lemos and Vlachou 2020. An eight-century stone disc with an inscription in Eretrian dialect complicates the picture (*IOropos 769*).



Figure 4.6 Map of Oropos and Oropia in relation to Athens and Thebes.

was an undeniable close link with Eretria. Whether Oropos was an Eretrian colony, as claimed by the third-century historian Nikokrates, is debated.¹⁷⁴ The connection remains problematic, as the remains at Oropos appear to pre-date those at Eretria.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, Nikokrates' testimony may reflect a later Eretrian tradition that emphasised the connections with Oropos. The increased prominence of the town and its illustrious healing sanctuary of Amphiaraos may be the reason for it.

So when did the Oropia become a neighbourly desideratum? The debate over the date of the first Athenian occupation of the Oropia is ongoing. Peter Funke argues it was part of Peisistratid Athens. Denis Knoepfler prefers a date after the 470s and contends the Oropia had been an Eretrian possession until then.¹⁷⁶ Yet I would contend there is a possibility the Oropia was Theban and *became* Athenian after the convulsions of 507/6.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Knoepfler 1985.

¹⁷⁵ Mazarakis Ainian 1998: 210–14; 2002; 2007; Mazarakis Ainian, Lemos and Vlachou 2020.

¹⁷⁶ Funke 2001; Wallace and Figueira 2011. Sineux 2007: 448–9; Walker 2004: 156 argue Oropos became Athenian after Eretria's destruction in 490, following Knoepfler.

¹⁷⁷ Bresson 2016: 407–9; Petrakos 1995 date the Athenian takeover of the Oropia to 507/6 but say little about its previous ownership. Parker 1996: 148 argues Athenian control can only be

Admittedly, the literary sources are inconclusive. Oropos' exclusion from the deme system suggests it was not part of the Athenian sphere before the Cleisthenic reforms. Yet other areas such as Brauron and Salamis certainly belonged to that nexus prior to the reform and were equally excluded.¹⁷⁸ There were other methods to express political affiliation, but there is little to no evidence from Oropos that details an Athenian connection, such as an eponymous hero cult or another connection to the Amphiareion (Chapter 5.3).¹⁷⁹ Nor is there evidence for Athenian involvement in the wake of the invasion of 507/6. The lack of monumental works at Oropos, in contrast to Rhamnous, would imply the Oropia was not perceived as a border requiring fortification or further elaboration.¹⁸⁰ Yet the situation in Skala Oropou, with the modern town built over large parts of the ancient polis, complicates the matter.

Herodotus' account of the Athenian cleruchs' flight from Chalkis in 490 when they heard of the pending Persian attack is more illuminating:

When Aeschines son of Nothos, a leading man in Eretria, learned of both designs, he told the Athenians who had come how matters stood, and asked them to depart to their own country (προσεδέετό τε ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι σφέας ἐς τὴν σφετέρην) so they would not perish like the rest. The Athenians followed Aeschines' advice. So they saved themselves by crossing over to Oropos.¹⁸¹

The cleruchs at Chalkis 'returned to their own country', after which they landed at Oropos. The language utilised by Herodotus suggests the Oropia belonged to the Athenians at this point, even if it is not specified that the region constituted 'home' for the cleruchs and the description may have reflected Herodotus' own time. Matters of convenience were not at stake here: it did not constitute the shortest route to mainland Greece. That distinction would have belonged to Boiotia. The narrowest crossing in the Euboian Gulf is no more than fifty meters between Chalkis and the mainland. If flight was of the utmost concern, and without any notion of neighbourly hostility, these cleruchs could have crossed over to Aulis first before heading to Athens. Yet in their attempt to escape the Persian

ascertained by the 450s, but an earlier date cannot be excluded. For a possible Boiotian occupation of Oropos before 507/6: Wilding 2021: 40–5.

¹⁷⁸ Ehrhardt 1990. Perhaps Oropos was a 'clérouquie dissimulée' like in the fourth century: Knoepfler 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Wilding 2021: 20–1.

¹⁸⁰ Paga 2021: 200–9. Rhamnous could act as a lookout for incursions from Chalkis, but then Oropos would be even more important to Athenian defences.

¹⁸¹ Hdt. 6.100.3–101.1.

onslaught, they went over to Oropos first. If they were willing to sail across the strait to a safe place, why would they have stopped at Oropos, rather than sail all the way to Athens itself? Even if the Eretrians possessed the Oropia, their friendly relations with the Athenians guaranteed a safer landing ground than the alternative of staying in Chalkis, but it would not entail ‘returning home’. I contend Herodotus’ language suggests the Oropia was a part of Athens in 490 and could have been since 507/6 or shortly after, when significant changes took place in the borderlands.

But the question of Athenian conquest after 507/6 hinges on whether Oropos was a Boiotian or Theban possession to begin with, rather than Eretrian.¹⁸² An exciting discovery from Thebes could shed new light on this issue. In 2014 the *editio princeps* of a dedication from the Apollo Ismenios temple at Thebes was published by Nikolaos Papazarkadas.¹⁸³ Originally, it was inscribed in Boiotian script somewhere around the end of the sixth century and reinscribed in Ionic script either in the 360s or after Thebes’ restoration in 316.¹⁸⁴

[σοῖ] χάριν ἐνθάδ’, Ἄπολλο[ν, - -]
 [κἔ]πιστὰς ἱερῶ στήσε κατ[ευχσά]μενος
 [μα]ντοσύναις εὐρὸν ὑπὸ ΤΑ[. . .]ΟΙΟ φαεννάν
 [ἀσπ]ίδα τὰ γ φροῖσος κα[λφ]ὸν ἀγαλ[μα θέτο?]
 [Ἄμ]φιαρέοι μνᾶμ’ ἀρετ[ᾶς τε ὄλβου τε[- -]
 [..]μεν ἅ ἐκλέφθε ΦΟ[- - - - - - - - - - -]
 [Θε]βαίοισι δὲ θάμβος Ε[- - - - - - - - - - -]
 [..]πιδα δαμονίος ΔΕ[- - - - - - - - - - -]

5

Here as an offer of thanks [to you], Apollo . . . [Indeed,] the supervisor of the shrine set it, having made a vow, discovering through his prophetic arts . . . the shining shield, which Croesus [set up?] as a beautiful pleasing gift to Amphiaros, a memorial of his excellence [and wealth/fortune] . . . which was stolen . . . and amazement to the Thebans . . . by divine power.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1886: 107 believed Oropos was Eretrian and became Theban after the Lelantine War. But the war’s date and historicity are unclear: Hall 2002: 233–4 contra Walker 2004: 156. Eretria did control the Euripos strait sometime in the sixth century: IG XII 9 1273/4; Walker 2004: 189–91.

¹⁸³ Papazarkadas 2014.

¹⁸⁴ Thonemann 2016 proposed a radical interpretation of the dedicant’s identity, but this should be rejected: Renberg 2021; Tentori Montalto 2017a offer new readings. Simonton 2020 connected the inscription to the Pindaric corpus. Foster 2018: 148–52 contextualised the inscription differently, by viewing the inscription as an attempt by the priests of Apollo Ismenios, and their connection to Delphi, to ‘bankrupt the Amphiaros-oracle’.

¹⁸⁵ Text and translation: Mili 2021.

The dedication was made by the sanctuary's priest, who had miraculously recovered a shield offered to Amphiaraos after it had been stolen from his sanctuary in Oropos.¹⁸⁶ Although the context of this 'theft' remains enigmatic, its concurrence with a possible Theban loss of Oropos is striking. The invocation of the Oropian deity par excellence, Amphiaraos, and the help of Apollo Ismenios, a deity whose shrine was the locus for the expression of Theban territorial domination within Boiotia, suggests the Thebans were here promulgating a claim to the Oropia in the wake of its loss.¹⁸⁷ I would not be surprised if Apollo Ismenios' priest decided to demonstrate his patriotic fervour at a time when the Thebans were planning a new expedition to reclaim Oropos.¹⁸⁸ The uniqueness of the metric dedication – the only one on stone from the Apollo Ismenios temple – suggests the dedication's singularity could be connected to a contemporary political context, as it stood out among the jungle of dedications at the shrine.¹⁸⁹ It strengthened the connection between Apollo Ismenios, Thebes and Amphiaraos, and the territory he inhabited – the Oropia – and could have vindicated their claim to these lands, seized by the Athenians. This reconstruction of events must remain conjecture. It is not implausible that the Oropia was shared by the Thebans and Tanagraians and belonged to Boiotia politically, or was politically independent prior to or perhaps after the invasion.¹⁹⁰

An Athenian takeover would have altered the power relationship between the neighbours in the Euboian Gulf.¹⁹¹ The Euboian Gulf was the conduit for seafarers heading eastwards from Boiotia to the Black Sea region, an area well connected to Boiotia.¹⁹² These maritime connections went through the Euboian Gulf, and from the Cyclades to the Black

¹⁸⁶ The origins of the Amphiareion have been debated: Wilding 2021: 19–46. But it's hard to pinpoint, because of the flooding in Early Iron Age Oropos, which may have caused the sanctuary to be moved too: see Mazarakis Ainian and Mouliou 2008; Knoepfler 2010 : 87–8.

¹⁸⁷ Papazakadas 2014: 245–7 notes Apollo Ismenios' promantic skills were needed since the Thebans could no longer consult Amphiaraos himself (Hdt. 8.134). Wilding 2021: 44 remains uncommitted. Renberg 2021 suggests there might have been a *heroon* to Amphiaraos in the Ismenion.

¹⁸⁸ Herodotus suggests the Thebans and Aeginetans ganged up on the Athenians afterwards: Chapter 2.2. Ma 2016: 35 n. 12 believes the inscription belongs to the context of a Theban expedition.

¹⁸⁹ Tentori Montalto 2017a: 4. For the dedications: Pind. *Pyth.* 11.4–5.

¹⁹⁰ Schachter 2016a: 82–4 on the Tanagraian border with Oropos; see his remark on the Amphiaraos cult consulted by the Persians prior to the Persian Wars: Schachter 2016a: 97.

¹⁹¹ Moreno 2007: 116 n. 174. He suggests Oropos provided a bridge to Euboia since 506.

¹⁹² Fossey 2019: 88–94. Goods from Boiotia were found in the Black Sea region and political and ethnic ties existed. On Boiotia's connections in the Eastern Aegean: Schachter 2016a: 98, 101.

Sea.¹⁹³ For the Athenians, who could travel via Euboia and Scyros, the route was perhaps less important for the grain trade. But Oropos mattered as a way to control Euboia and safeguard it from Boiotian interference (Chapter 4.2.2). The town was one of the more hospitable harbours in the Euboian Gulf and acted as a primary port for the commodities coming in from Euboia and the Black Sea region.¹⁹⁴ Oropos' annexation was essential for the maintenance of the Athenian cleruchy at Chalkis, established in 507/6, and to exert considerable influence on Euboia.¹⁹⁵ The district's annexation strengthened the Athenians' control over the contested waters of the Euboian Gulf and made the connection between the Chalkidians and Boiotians more vulnerable, which could prevent another unified effort against the young democracy.

Occupying the Oropia deprived the Thebans and Tanagraians of highly fertile lands, capable of producing substantial amounts of wheat and barley. Considering the Athenians' dependence on grain imports from the sixth century onwards, these fertile lands provided a powerful incentive to annex the Oropia.¹⁹⁶ The annexation of Oropos also acted as a buffer against future Tanagraian or Chalkidian incursions. The Oropia, together with the Athenian cleruchy at Chalkis, acted as an advanced strategic post and undermined a collaboration between the Chalkidians and Boiotians. It particularly shielded the eastern fringes of Attica, such as Rhamnous, with its fertile arable lands.¹⁹⁷ By dislodging Oropos from the Boiotian or Euboian nexus, the Athenians secured their borders, strengthened their grasp on the Euboian strait and increased the security of their food supply.

So how are we to describe the relationship between the Athenians and the Oropia? It likely took the form of a dependency with the inhabitants tilling the soil, while the Oropia was Athenian territory.¹⁹⁸ These lands were perhaps owned by wealthy Athenians, since plots in the Oropia were sold after the Mutilation of the Herms affair in 415.¹⁹⁹ The Oropians and their territory were employed as a buffer zone, possibly independent, but politically subservient to the Athenians. Maybe the status of Oropos was comparable to Plataia's: a protectorate of the Athenians, who could act as buffers against Boiotian aggression (Chapter 4.1.3).²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ Morton 2001: 175. ¹⁹⁴ Thuc. 7.28.1; Horden and Purcell 2000: 128.

¹⁹⁵ Thuc. 8.60; 8.95; Arnaud 2005: 57; Igelbrink 2016: 175–84; Moreno 2007: 77–123; Morton 2001: 38–45.

¹⁹⁶ Bresson 2016: 407–9. Could the expansion of farming in the Oropia after the Archaic period be related to an intensification of grain production? Cosmopoulos 2001: 58, 73–5 hesitates to overinterpret the survey results.

¹⁹⁷ Oliver 2001. ¹⁹⁸ Wilding 2021: 49–52. ¹⁹⁹ *IG I³* 428.

²⁰⁰ Thuc. 2.23.3 describes this situation for the year 431; Gschnitzer 1958: 82.

While the early political affiliations of the Oropia and its position along the Attic-Boiotian frontier cannot be certified, we are on firmer ground from the mid-fifth century onward. Following the Euboian revolts of 446, the Athenians decided to secure their ownership of the island and establish a cleruchy at Histiaia in 446/5.²⁰¹ In the decree detailing these arrangements, the ferry tariffs between Oropos, Chalkis and Histiaia are described within the context of piracy to ensure the safety of the ships traveling between these sites.²⁰² The inscription, although dealing with another settlement, illustrates the importance of Oropos within the ‘small world’ of the Euboian Gulf. The Athenian control over the Oropia cemented the grasp over Euboea. The connection with this valuable dominion, exemplified by the renewed establishment of cleruchies on the island, had become more tenuous after the Boiotian revolt in 446 and the Athenians’ subsequent withdrawal from Boiotia.

What more can Oropos’ alignment with the Athenians after 446 tell us? Although Athenian power was removed from Boiotia, it remained in place in the Oropia. Was the Oropia not perceived as Boiotian territory? Or was it part of the settlement that saw the Athenians possibly give up Eleutherai but not Oropos? Or did the Oropians revolt, but were subdued by the Athenians? Thucydides is characteristically cursory in his treatment of the affairs after the Battle of Koroneia in 446, including the treatment of Oropos.²⁰³ His silence may indicate nothing occurred in this region. Oropos and its lands were seemingly not the desideratum between the two neighbours at this point. Or maybe the Boiotians hoped to incorporate the district after a successful Euboian rebellion, as the collaboration with their island neighbours frequently factored in dislodging Oropos from Athenian control. The subjugation of these revolts, and the subsequent Athenian settlement, prevented that ambition from materialising.

The Oropia re-enters the stage during the Peloponnesian War (431–404). The Boiotians became more invested in securing and strengthening their hold on the border and joined with the Eretrians to detach the Oropia from Athenian control. Facilitating the takeover was the instalment of a hostile garrison in nearby Dekeleia in 413.²⁰⁴ Its instalment

²⁰¹ Thuc. 1.114.3; Plut. *Per.* 23.4. We also find the first attestation of Oropos as a toponym in a dedication (450–400) at Dodona: Dakaris, Vokotopoulou and Christidis. 2013: 296a.

²⁰² IG I³ 41 ll. 67–71: ξ[στο δὲ τοῖ προθμῆουonti ἐκ Χ][α]λκίδος ἐς Ὀροπόν πρ [ἀττεσθαι τρεῖς ὀβολός. ἐάν δ][ε] τις ἐχς Ὀροπό ἐς ἡεστ[ίαιαν] ἢ ἐς Δίον ἢ ἐκεῖθεν ἐ]ς Ὀροπόν προθμῆυει, πρ[αττέσθο ἡεπτ ὀβολός. ἐάν δ][ε] τις ἐκ Χαλκίδος ἐς ἡεστ[ίαιαν]. . .

²⁰³ Thuc. 1.113; Diod. 12.6.1–2.

²⁰⁴ Thuc. 6.91.6; 7.19; Diod. Sic. 13.72.3–9 mentions a 900-strong cavalry unit at Dekeleia in 408. Hunt 1998: 112–13 for the influx of slaves and wealth into Boiotia. For the fortification’s effects on the north-east: Funke 2000.

isolated the garrison in Oropos by disconnecting its main axis with Athens. In 411 the time was ripe to deliver the final blow. According to Thucydides, the Boiotians took over Oropos by treason.²⁰⁵ The surrender of the garrison had been plotted by Eretrian and Oropian exiles, but the choice to hand over the town to the Boiotians was dictated by circumstance, as the Eretrians were still under the Athenian yoke.

Thucydides records the motive for this intervention, connected to the inner-gulf dynamics between the island and the mainland: 'For it (Oropos) was opposite Eretria and it was impossible that so long as the Athenians held it, it would not be to the harm of the Eretrians and the rest of Euboia.'²⁰⁶ These exiles understood the local dynamics of power. With Oropos secured, any future external incursion in Euboia would be met with fierce Athenian resistance. The removal of their garrison weakened their position along the Euboian Gulf and took away a vital launching point for attack.²⁰⁷ The Boiotians realised the importance of Euboia for the survival of Athens and the central role played by the Oropia in maintaining the grasp over the island and the Euboian Gulf. The expulsion of the garrison struck the Athenians where they were weakest and strengthened the Boiotian position in Central Greece.

Instead of annexing the Oropia to the *koinon*, or to the Theban or Tanagraian *chora*, the external powers were satisfied with detaching the district from Athenian control.²⁰⁸ What was the incentive for this decision? Reputation could have played a role. If the Oropians were viewed as victims of Athenian exploitation, occupying these lands in a war for Hellenic *eleutheria* could have caused outrage throughout the Greek world. Another factor is the Boiotian-Euboian relationship, with the Eretrians in particular. The recent collaboration had forged a new identity for the *koinon* as the leader of the opposition in Central Greece. A takeover of a recently liberated district would have disturbed the delicate friendship, or the Oropians could have taken the initiative to remain independent.

After a brief decade of independence, *stasis* troubled Oropos in 402. Disgruntled exiles were unsuccessful in recapturing the city and approached the Thebans for help against the city's forces. Backed by these

²⁰⁵ Thuc. 8.60.

²⁰⁶ Thuc. 8.60.1. Knoepfler 2000 demonstrates the entanglement of Eretrian-Oropian affairs.

²⁰⁷ Knoepfler 2013 argues the Eretrian oligarchic revolution that followed enabled the Athenians' defeat in the battle for the Euboian strait.

²⁰⁸ Bearzot 1987 dates the *stasis* in Oropos and the Theban intervention shortly after 411 but Buck 1994: 123–6 prefers a period of Oropian independence between 411 and 402.

forces, the exiles succeeded. Shortly after, a drastic measure was taken according to Diodorus, who bases himself on Theopompos:²⁰⁹

The Thebans took the field against the Oropians, and becoming masters of the city, resettled the inhabitants some seven stades from the sea; and for some time they allowed them to have their own government, but after this they gave them citizenship and attached their territory to Boiotia (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δόντες πολιτείαν τὴν χώραν Βοιωτίαν ἐποιήσαντο).²¹⁰

Two things stand out.²¹¹ First, moving the city land inwards embedded the Oropians firmly into the geographical fabric of Boiotia and made it less susceptible to external intermingling. The external threat is usually perceived to be the Athenians. Considering the previous attacks on the eastern Boiotian seaboard, that is understandable. The contemporary friendly neighbourly relations contradict this, however. Nor did the move inland quell the possibility of Athenian troops marching overland to Oropos. As Ludwig Preller argued long ago, the more pressing danger loomed from across the water: the Eretrians.²¹²

The other salient feature is the combination of transforming the Oropia into Boiotian territory and extending citizenship to all Oropians. This unprecedented act of expanding the franchise to a ‘non-ethnic’ Boiotian polis is remarkable. In Emily Mackil’s view, this means the Thebans made Oropos ‘Boiotian’ rather than Theban and granted it an independent status as a member of the *koinon*.²¹³ Her suggestion is problematic, however, since Oropos is not mentioned as a separate member of the *koinon* by the author of the Hellenica Oxyrhynchia when describing the situation in 395:

All the inhabitants of the country had been divided into eleven units, and each of these provided one Boiotarch, as follows: the Thebans contributed four, two for the polis, and two for the Plataians with Skolos and Erythrai and Skaphai and the other places which originally were part of their (the Plataians’) polis but which were, at the time of which I write, absorbed into Thebes. The Orchomenians and Hyettians provided two Boiotarchs, the Thespians with Eutresis and Thisbai provided two, the Tanagraians one; the Haliartians, Lebadeians and Koroneians sent, each one of them in turn, a further one; and in the same manner one came from

²⁰⁹ Diod. 14.17.2–3.

²¹⁰ Diod. 14.17.2–4; Theopompos FGrH 115 F12. My translation adapted from the Loeb edition.

²¹¹ The move was possibly made to the hill named Lavovouni to the north-west of Skala Oropou. Tombs dating to the fifth and fourth centuries were found there: Mazarakis Ainian 1998: 211.

²¹² Preller 1852; Knoepfler 1995 made a renewed case for it. It was not the first time Oropos shifted: Mazarakis Ainian 2002.

²¹³ Mackil 2013: 45.

Akraiphnion and Kopai and Chaironeia. This, then, is the way in which the units provided the magistrates. (trans. A. Schachter)²¹⁴

Either this took place after 395 and the conclusion of the Atheno-Boiotian alliance – an unlikely suggestion – or the Oropians became incorporated into the Tanagraian territory and acted as a subservient Boiotian polis similar to Aulis or Anthedon, as proposed by Robert Buck.²¹⁵ After all, the border between the Tanagraike and the Oropia was fluid and undefined. The ‘Boiotianisation’ of Oropos prevented any future confusion over these lines.²¹⁶ An additional issue is the conflation of ‘Boiotians’ and ‘Thebans’ in Diodorus, who writes with the hindsight of the Theban hegemony and often mentions Thebans in lieu of the Boiotians.²¹⁷ A likely scenario is that the Oropia was made a dependency of the Tanagraians, with the Thebans in Diodorus’ description acting as representatives of the *koinon*.²¹⁸

Yet the majority – if not all – of the Oropia became part of the Tanagraian *chora*. This explains why the Oropians received undefined citizenship, but their territory became Boiotian. Their situation mirrored that of those poleis and towns in the Parasopia and elsewhere that *synoikised* with the Thebans during the Peloponnesian War.²¹⁹ The exploitation of these fertile lands was a benefit to the *koinon* and the Tanagraian polis. The incorporation of this district into Boiotia proper ensured any future qualms over the Oropians’ political affinity could be dispelled. ‘Boiotianisation’ of Oropos thus cemented the *koinon*’s claim to the territory. In any future disputes the case for ascribing these lands to Boiotia was solid. Should a polity accept a treaty with them, the other party would implicitly accept the Oropia as part of the *koinon*.

So how did the Athenians respond to the integration of the Oropia into the *koinon*? Admittedly, our sources remain silent about the issue. The silence suggests the Athenians did not regard inference in Oropos as an affront. The recent support for the Athenian democrats possibly abetted their restraint (Chapters 3.2.2, 3.3, 5.2.7).

²¹⁴ Hell. Oxy. 18.3 (Behrwald). Schachter 2016a: 51–2 with remarks on the translation of Ἰσθαῖοι as Hyettians.

²¹⁵ Buck 1994: 123–6. Gonzalez Pascual 2006: 31–2 argues Oropos became part of the *koinon* after 395. He hypothesised that ‘Oropos was . . . included in the Boiotian Confederation as compensation in place of Orchomenos.’ But why was there a need for compensation?

²¹⁶ For these fluid boundaries between the Oropia and Tanagraike: Thuc. 4.90–1; Schachter 2016a: 85–8.

²¹⁷ Sordi 2005. ²¹⁸ I would like to thank Peter Rhodes for this helpful comment.

²¹⁹ Hell. Oxy. 20.3.

The Athenians were reluctant to transform the Oropia into a source of antagonism. In 395 they agreed to an alliance with the *koinon*, which included accepting the Boiotians' claim to the Oropia. Perhaps they had hopes of reclaiming the Oropia by making Boiotia part of the new Athenian empire, as the Theban ambassador implies in Xenophon's *Hellenica*.²²⁰ We have to ascribe either an incredible premonitory vision to Athenian leadership or an unwillingness to force a dispute over the Oropia if it threatened a possible liaison with the *koinon*.

Nor did the Oropia stand in the way of future relations between the neighbours. The King's Peace of 387/6 forced the Boiotians to grant the Oropia's inhabitants their independence.²²¹ This was short-lived, as the Oropians returned to the Athenian fold in 374, at a time of renewed successful neighbourly collaboration (Chapters 2.4, 3.4.3).²²²

According to the Isocratic pamphlet *Plataicus*, there were concerns in Oropian society over the recent Theban expansionism within the region, prompting their approach for Athenian protection. Following Isocrates this protection came with a loss of independence and territory. In exchange parts of the precious Oropian woodlands were offered to the Athenians, as suggested by Denis Knoepfler.²²³ Isocrates writes the following: 'And yet what man would not detest the greedy spirit of these Thebans, who seek to rule the weaker, but think they must be on terms of equality with the stronger and who begrudge your city the territory ceded by the Oropians, yet themselves forcibly seize and portion out territory not their own?'²²⁴

This private pamphlet is dated to 373, acting as a *terminus ante quem* for the Oropia's allegiance to Athens. Isocrates' virulent anti-Theban attitude, combined with the nature of the *Plataicus* to act as a foil for expressing a localised dispute and excoriation of the heinous deeds enacted against the Plataians, make for an explosive mix. The private circulation of the piece further clouds the murkier aspects of the political shift. The Oropians are portrayed as acting in unison. Yet the approach only involved smaller segments of society rather than the whole community. It thus excludes parts of Oropian society less encumbered by Theban advances. Voluntarily relinquishing one's independence for protection is quite remarkable.

²²⁰ The ambassador suggests that the Boiotians would form of this empire: Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.10, 14–15.

²²¹ RO 27.

²²² Knoepfler 1986. I have trouble accepting the Oropians' omission from the list of allies in the Second Athenian Confederacy implies an earlier date for Athenian control, as Buckler and Beck 2008: 39–40 suggest.

²²³ Knoepfler 2016b. ²²⁴ Isoc. 14.20.

As described above, discord raged in Oropia on other occasions, so it is more likely the Athenians took advantage of a febrile situation in the border town to ensure its allegiance. Isocrates' claims can be doubted, but control over the Oropia is confirmed by Pandios' decree concerning the maintenance of the sanctuary of Amphiaraos, dated to 369/8.²²⁵ In Denis Knoepfler's terms, the Oropia became a '*clérouquies dissimulée*', a hidden cleruchy. It is an elusive term, but implies that control over the district was firm and top-down, with Athenian elements occupying leading positions and owning and distributing lands that previously belonged to the original inhabitants.²²⁶ The mechanisms of Athenian occupation therefore appear to have been less benign than Isocrates would like us to believe.

Yet the question remains: Why were the Athenians interested in annexing part of the Oropia, or even subjugating the entire region, if it could endanger the delicate alliance with their Theban neighbours, an important ally in the war against the Spartans? One needs to look at the recent events in Boiotia for a better understanding of the situation. The Theban attacks on Plataia and Thespiiai were probably incentivised by the renewal of hostilities with the Spartans in 373. These poleis occupied a front-line position and had acted as stepping-stones for Spartan invasions. Reinforcing the defences of the *koinon* at these places, even violently, made strategic sense, also for the Athenians. Oropos, however, lay outside the scope of a renewed Spartan conflict. Its inclusion into the *koinon* offered no benefits to the Athenians. The potential repercussions for accepting the Oropians as protectorates may have been assuaged by their willingness to transfer some of the town's precious woodlands to the Athenians in exchange for protection against the Thebans.²²⁷ The economic exploitation of these woodlands included apiculture and hunting, but, more importantly, the pine resin so essential for preserving ships. With the previous war's economic burdens lingering in Athens, the opportunity to obtain such profitable land was too tempting to refuse.²²⁸

The Theban response has not been preserved. Maybe they were as enraged as Isocrates holds, but his known prejudice against them, plus its

²²⁵ Knoepfler 1986.

²²⁶ Knoepfler 2012. Knoepfler illuminates the striking similarities between Oropos and the cleruchy at Samos (Shibley 1987: 140–3), established in 366.

²²⁷ Isoc. 14.20. Knoepfler 2016b: 234 argues it concerned the woodlands bordering Attica. Knoepfler proposes the division of Oropian territory, known from Hyperides' *In Defence of Euxenippos*, originally transpired in the period 374–366. If he is correct, that adds to the economic benefits the citizens gathered from the territory.

²²⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.1.

reference in the highly acerbic *Plataicus*, diminishes its historicity. The private nature of the pamphlet further restricts its value as a reflection of Theban attitudes, considering its limited audience already may have harboured negative views of the neighbours. The repetition of the familiar trope of their baseness adhered to their previous assumptions. Perhaps there were some dismayed Thebans, but the majority embraced the Athenian alliance. The Oropia's appealing aspects were less stringent for the Thebans than they were for the Athenians. There were no plans for maritime domination as Boiotia needed to be pacified first. As long as the Athenians abstained from intervening in that policy, it was an acceptable status quo. Finally, the Oropians were independent prior to their new alignment. Their Athenian alliance did not subtract from Boiotian territory but did take away the possibility of convivially reintegrating the Oropia into the *koinon*.

In the wake of Athenian hesitance to act against Theban expansionism within Boiotia, I would contend the takeover of Oropos was accepted by the Thebans either as a *quid pro quo* or as a fortification of their ally's position.²²⁹ A final possibility is that the Thebans were unwilling to act, as they valued the alliance and regarded their involvement in Oropos less obtrusive than a possible involvement in Plataia or Thespiei. Considering their later actions and adherence to the alliance until after Leuktra (see [Chapter 3.1.3](#)), that is a likely suggestion.

Oropos thus was not the cause of friction or, worse, a dissolution of friendly relations. In the years following the Athenian takeover of the Oropia, proponents of a pro-Theban policy were still dominant in Athens and vice versa. Only when relations foundered because of the alliance with the Spartans did the Oropia revert to a desideratum ([Chapter 3.1.3](#)). The breakdown in relations reignited tensions over the borderlands.

The cold war in the borders turned warm in 366. Oropian exiles plotted with the Eretrian tyrant Themison to expel the Athenians and install a different regime. A Theban intervention prevented further escalation as Athenian forces approached, but instead of reverting control to the Eretrians, the Thebans decided to retain control over the city. The Athenians marched to Oropos but declined to engage in combat, hamstrung by their allies' unwillingness to fight the *koinon* and violate the

²²⁹ The *hagemonia* treaty between Euboian Histaia and Thebes is important here (Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012). Histaia joined the Athenian Confederacy in 375 without complaints from the Thebans: [Chapter 2.5](#).

peace.²³⁰ Instead, the matter was parlayed to an interstate arbitration to determine the rightful owner.²³¹ The arbitrators decided in the Thebans' favour and vindicated their claim to the territory.²³² The basis for this decision cannot be established. Xenophon omits the outcome of the arbitration, but Kallistratos, the architect of the anti-Theban stand, was tried shortly after the loss of Oropos for his role in the affair.²³³ How these events unfolded is indicative of the Athenian position. Having forfeited their alliance with the Boiotians, their border security became increasingly tenuous. Their allies' lacklustre response demonstrates they were unwilling to sacrifice money and manpower to uphold Athenian ambitions.

This event made clear to the Athenians the fragility of their control over the borders and demonstrated the dangerous potential of Theban-Euboian cooperation. The loss unveiled the weaknesses in the Athenian military organisation because of an inadequate response to the threat. Inadvertently, it could have led to a re-organisation of the defensive command structure to improve the border defences and increase the military expertise in defending the frontier by creating the office of 'general of the countryside' (στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν).²³⁴

The decision to retain control over the Oropia fulfilled the Boiotians' desire to establish a stronger presence in the Aegean and erode Athenian power diplomatically, as reflected in their naval programme of the 360s.²³⁵ The Oropia and its pinewoods granted them access to a large reservoir of resin, essential for the maintenance of their fleet. The harbour added to the infrastructure required for the construction and maintenance of the

²³⁰ Plut. *Phoc.* 9.4, where the famous general implored his countrymen to fight the Boiotians over Oropos with words, in which they were superior, rather than swords.

²³¹ Aeschin. 3.85 appears to confirm the Oropia was lost during peacetime.

²³² Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.1; Diod. 15.76.1. This reluctance in my opinion adds credibility to Knoepfler's assertion (Knoepfler 2012) that the Oropia was a form of cleruchy, which violated the terms of the Second Athenian Confederacy. Although Oropos was not a member, this action would have resonated badly in the Greek world.

²³³ Ar. *Rhet.* 1364a; Plut. *Dem.* 5.1; Hansen 1975: 92–3, nos. 83 and 84; Tritle 1988: 104–5.

A historical anecdote detailing a discussion between Athenians and Boiotians over a town called Sidai, presumably located in the Oropia, supports this notion: Agatharchides FGrH 86 F 8 (Athen. 14 (650 F)); Buckler 1977. It contradicts the claims by Demosthenes and Aeschines, who decried the recovery was illegal.

²³⁴ Munn 1993: 190; Ober 1985a place the inception of this office between 386 and 371. This office is first attested in 352/1: *RO* 58 = *IEleusis* 144 ll. 16–23. The inscription deals with a dispute over the Megarian-Athenian border. Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.10–11; Arist. *Rhet.* 1360a on the effects of improved border defences.

²³⁵ Perhaps the recapture of Oropos was celebrated by the re-inscription of the retrieval of Amphiaraios' shield: Papazarkadas 2014. Whether the capture of Oropos was the impetus to start the programme, or the result of its conception, cannot be answered: Mackil 2008: 181.

proposed fleet. At the same time, the capture of Oropos weakened the Athenian economy and its position in the Euboian Gulf, ensuring the recent Boiotian-Euboian alignment remained firmly in place.

The repercussions of the Oropia's loss were felt in Athens. Chabrias and Kallistratos, the responsible generals, were prosecuted but acquitted for their role.²³⁶ Indirectly, they were held responsible for steering the Athenians into a pro-Spartan policy that resulted in the Theban takeover of Oropos. It is tempting to interpret these actions as deeds by the regretful Athenians, who were worried over further territorial losses.

What this suggests, in my opinion, is that territorial disputes emerged during hostile times and were the result, rather than the cause, of hostilities. Otherwise, the Thebans would not have waited several years before capturing the Oropia during peacetime, nor would they have neglected to act against the Athenians should the occasion arise. It is not my intention to exculpate the Boiotian *koinon* of any wrongdoing. Obviously, the decision was made to retain the Oropia for their own purpose, rather than to offer it to the Eretrians or to grant it independence. Yet their willingness to settle the matter in an arbitration shows their 'spear-won' land did not prevent them from looking for a diplomatic solution. Either the Boiotians thought their role as guarantors of the Common Peace of 366/5 propagandistically prohibited them from starting a war over disputed lands or they were not willing to let the friction over the ownership of the Oropia escalate into a war with the Athenians.

In 366/5 we witness the potential of the Oropia as a tool for external powers to influence the political landscape of Central Greece. One of the terms of the Common Peace of 366/5 enforced by the Boiotians and Persian King was the acceptance of Boiotian claims to Oropos. The treaty was accepted in exchange for a vindication of Athenian claims to Amphipolis, according to Demosthenes.²³⁷ If the compact is historically trustworthy, the willingness to relinquish the claim to Oropos is significant, even in return for the claim to Amphipolis, a loss that had been lamented for the last sixty years. The treaty shows how external powers were able to establish stability or alter the political landscape of Greece with the help of

²³⁶ Hansen 1975: cases 83–4. Kallistratos was condemned for a later, other charge (case 87).

²³⁷ Dem. 9.16 mentions the Oropos-Amphipolis swap: 'Tell me now: when he sends mercenaries to the Chersonese, your claim to which has been recognized by the king of Persia and by all the Greeks.' The historicity of this treaty is debated: Jehne 1992. Demosthenes (6.30) later claimed his opponents believed Philip would return Oropos for Amphipolis: 'and restore to you Euboia and Oropos in lieu of Amphipolis'. There is no consensus over Athenian and Persian involvement in the Peace of 366/5: Cawkwell 2005: 292–9; Stylianou 1998: 485–9.

settling disputes over contested areas.²³⁸ The disputed borderlands, Oropia included, were thus not an unsurmountable challenge to normalising relations between the Athenians and Boiotians, or the root cause of conflict.

The loss of the Oropia embodied the anti-Theban course the Athenians pursued since 369. It was a hotly debated issue in the Assembly, considering its recurrence in Athenian oratory. This reflects the repercussions of the growing Boiotian power at the expense of the Athenians. Indeed, there was no worse neighbour than a hostile, powerful *koinon*, and it showed through the loss of the Oropia.²³⁹ Of course, this partly depends on our source material. There are hardly speeches left from the fifth century. The lack thereof makes it harder to gauge whether the Oropia entered the political debate, as it did during the height of Atheno-Boiotian tensions in the mid-fourth century. Since the Oropia remained in Athenian hands for most of the fifth century, other areas like the Skourta plain or the Parasopia were more likely used as exemplary results of hostile relations with the Boiotians.

Other powers were aware of the Oropos' status as a desideratum. Demosthenes' speech *On Behalf of the Megapolitans* offers a glimpse. In 353/2, convulsions in the Peloponnese led to a situation in which the Athenians could act against Spartan interests by supporting the Megalopolitans, an ally of the Boiotians. The Spartans promised the Athenians the return of Oropos for their support in reclaiming the Spartan dominance over the Peloponnese:

But supposing, on the other hand, it should become clear to us that unless we let the Lacedaimonians subdue the whole of the Peloponnese, we shall not be able to take Oropos, then I think it the better policy, if I may say so, to let Oropos go, rather than sacrifice Messene and the rest of the Peloponnese to the power of Sparta. For I do not think that Oropos would be the only subject of dispute between us.²⁴⁰

The Athenians rejected the Spartan offer. Yet the dangling of the Oropia as a reward shows they were aware of topical debates in the Assembly. Their best option to persuade the decision-makers was the recapture of this region. At the same time, the rejection of the proposal shows the Oropia

²³⁸ Hyland 2017 shows the King's insistence on establishing stability as the main tenet of his policy in an earlier period (450–386). The Common Peace was employed by the Persian King to counter further Athenian infringement upon Asia Minor while he was dealing with rebellious satraps in the region. Athenian encroachment was an acute problem as the takeover of Samos in 366 proves: Ar. *Rhet.* 1384 b32; SEG 45.1162; IG II² 108.

²³⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.39; *Mem.* 3.5.4. ²⁴⁰ Dem. 16.18. Oropos is mentioned at 16.11 and 16.16.

was not enough of an incentive to wage war on the Boiotians.²⁴¹ Even when the *koinon* was at their weakest after several harrowing defeats in the Sacred War, the Oropia was not worth the risk for many Athenians. It was easier to decry the Boiotians' 'unlawful' possession of the Oropia, rather than act to recover it. Similarly, the looming threat of a Boiotian attack on the Skourta plain – which never materialised – prompted Demosthenes to decry the current state of affairs in Athens. Rather than march out to capture Oropos, the Athenians were clinging to their possessions.²⁴²

That Athenian attitude is also reflected in the aftermath of the Third Sacred War (357–346). Despite a defeat at the hands of Philip and his Boiotian allies, pro-Macedonian segments believed Philip would grant Oropos in exchange for accepting his claim over Amphipolis.²⁴³ Unbelievable as it seems that the Macedonian king would punish his Boiotian allies for the convenience of verifying his capture of Amphipolis, the improbable proposition demonstrates some Athenians put their hopes with external powers to retrieve the Oropia, rather than risk a war with the Boiotians.

Their ambivalent attitude towards Oropos – boastful and warlike in the Assembly, but reluctant and careful in the field – is confirmed by the Athenians' willingness to relinquish their claims to the Oropia for an alliance with the *koinon* in 339/8. Their amenable decision was partially prompted by the fear of a Macedonian attack but equally shows disputed territories could be bartered for and formed no obstacle to harmonious relations (Chapter 3.4.4).

These conditions changed with the Macedonian victory at Chaironeia in 338. Shortly after, Philip's grand designs for Central Greece began to take shape. The king granted the Oropians their independence.²⁴⁴ By detaching them from the *koinon*, he guaranteed himself a loyal enclave between Athens and Boiotia. The independence of Oropos moreover created a buffer to weaken the *koinon*'s defences, in addition to other changes in the political landscape of Boiotia.²⁴⁵ Scholars viewed the detachment of the Oropia as a punishment for the *koinon*, which it clearly was. But at the

²⁴¹ Milns 2000 argued Demosthenes' plea was too convoluted but that does not diminish the lack of appeal for recapturing the Oropia.

²⁴² Dem. 19.326: 'Instead of recovering Oropos, we are making an armed expedition to secure Drymos and the lands around Panakton.'

²⁴³ Dem. 5.9–10; 8.64; 9.11; 19.35–8, 41, 44, 68; Aeschin. 1.169; 2.119. How credible these accusations are coming from Demosthenes is debatable.

²⁴⁴ Knoepfler 2001b: 371–85. ²⁴⁵ Gartland 2016b.

same time, it endangered Athenian defences. Philip could now land troops close to the Attic border and march in should the situation require it.

The detachment of the Oropians also had a more devious effect: it transformed the territory into something that could be used to influence the Athenians or the *koinon*. Unlike the Persian King or the Spartans, who could only confirm the status quo or promise the recapture of the territory, Philip's military power enabled him to actually grant these lands to loyal allies. Whether he was planning to eventually grant the Oropia to another polis is unknown. Perhaps he would have done so after a successful campaign against the Persians. Regardless of future intentions, he created a situation in which he or any future Macedonian king could use it as a reward for unconditional loyalty, a prerogative unavailable to earlier powers.

His foresight was confirmed during the Theban rebellion at the start of his son's reign (335). After Alexander subjugated the Thebans and destroyed their city, Oropos was reverted to the Athenians for the latter's loyalty and to punish the Oropians for supporting competitors for the Macedonian throne (Chapters 2.7, 5.3). By putting them under Athenian control, he availed himself of this opportunity to reward the Athenians for their reticent attitude during the Theban revolt and strengthen the position of his loyal subjects in Central Greece. The Oropia was thus the perfect pawn for Alexander to play on the chessboard that was Central Greece.

The subsequent treatment of the district by the Athenians reveals the economic impact of the Oropia's return. In addition to the lavish celebrations to commemorate its return, the exploitation of its lands demonstrated the profits the citizens garnered from the new lands. A law on the Lesser Panathenaia details the conditions for funding the sacrifices to the goddess Athena from the proceedings of leases on properties in the Nea.²⁴⁶ Another law details the allocation of territory in the Oropia along tribal lines.²⁴⁷ These changes formed part of the extensive Lycurgan programme, aimed at rejuvenating the economy and strengthening its military.²⁴⁸ The important place of the Oropia within the Lycurgan scheme is clear from the increased efforts to promulgate Athenian control at the sanctuary of Amphiaraios. The clearest indication thereof comes from the ephebic presence at the

²⁴⁶ RO 81. Whether the Nea comprised all of the Oropia (Knoepfler 2012), or only a part (Papazarkadas 2009) is debated. Langdon 1987; 2016 locates Nea elsewhere, but his suggestions (small volcanic islets) are unconvincing.

²⁴⁷ *Agora* XVI 84; Knoepfler 2012; 2016b; Papazarkadas 2009a; 2011: 22.

²⁴⁸ Humphreys 2004: 77–130.

Amphiareion, confirming the sanctuary and its lands belonged to Athens, guarded by its forces (Chapter 5.3).²⁴⁹

In contrast to earlier times, there was no Athenian garrison in the Oropia. One possible explanation is the presence of a garrison at Rhamnous. Another holds that a garrison-free Oropos was imposed by Alexander.²⁵⁰ If this is correct, the de-militarisation of the zone means Alexander could intervene in Oropos should the Athenians resist him, reminding them how this liminal land served as a gateway to Attica for the Macedonians. The gift of the Oropia was a friendly gesture, but equally a reminder of the new state of affairs in Greece. Nevertheless, the decision to grant Oropos to the Athenians was a sound one. Actions against the Macedonians would now inevitably be weighed against the territorial repercussions of a rebellious attitude, especially since Philip and Alexander had shown no qualms about enforcing territorial changes to regulate the Greek poleis' behaviour towards the Macedonians. Judging from the rapid succession of political changes in the Oropia's fortunes under the Diadochoi, it seems the successors to the Macedonian throne took a page from the same book, employing the Oropia as the ideal tool to recalibrate and sway the loyalties of poleis in Central Greece.²⁵¹

In sum, the Oropia was a bone of contention between the Athenians and Boiotians, possibly as early as the sixth century. The fortunes of its inhabitants were often dependent on the fluctuations of power in Central Greece, with waning Athenian influence giving way to Eretrian involvement and Boiotian control. Its status as a desideratum is undeniable. Yet it became only one in the fourth century, when the Oropia became a frequent *topos* in Athenian oratory to signify the state of affairs since the rise of Boiotian power. What is striking is the different treatment of the Oropians. Whereas the Athenians exploited the lands like a cleruchy, the Boiotians integrated the Oropia into their *koinon*, rather than keeping it as a separate territory to be exploited.²⁵² Perhaps this attitude, combined with the change of fortunes in Boiotian power, explains why the Oropia was always forcibly

²⁴⁹ The Boiotian military convention of 287 demonstrates their military control over the region, as cavalry forces patrol and protect the Oropia: Etienne and Roesch 1978.

²⁵⁰ Knoepfler 2012: 454.

²⁵¹ The Athenians lost control over the Oropia in 323, after their participation in the Hellenic War. In 312 Oropos became Boiotian by virtue of Antigonos' general Polemaios (Diod. 19.57–61). In either 307 or 304 Demetrios Poliorketes reverted the Oropia to the Athenians (Roesch 1982: 429). In 295 the Oropians were perhaps independent, before becoming a member of the *koinon* in 287 (Etienne and Roesch 1978: 374).

²⁵² Wilding 2021: 47–190.

detached from the *koinon* by external forces, but chose to detach itself from the Athenians when the occasion arose.

That difference in attitude is reflected in later times. Two examples suffice to illustrate the point. In 295 the Oropians proclaim their utility to the Boiotian *koinon* should they obtain the funds to repair the city's walls, demonstrating a willingness to belong to the *koinon* and contribute as a member.²⁵³ The situation was different during Roman rule. The *koinon* had hardly been disbanded by the Romans before the Athenians launched a full-scale attack on the Oropia to reconquer this territory. Undoubtedly their audacity was fuelled by their friendship with the Romans, but they were severely punished.²⁵⁴ The longing for this district continued inexorably, as ephebes visited the shrine on their obligatory tour of Attica in 122/1, as if it belonged to Athens.²⁵⁵ The Oropia continued to occupy the minds of the Athenians long after their position in the Greek world became dependent on external powers such as the Macedonians and the Romans. It was these external powers who determined the political alignment of the Oropia instead of direct neighbourly interaction, a fate in which the Boiotians perhaps acquiesced more than the Athenians did.

4.1.3 *In the Shadow of Mount Kithairon: Plataia and the Parasopia*

Nestled beneath the slopes of Mount Kithairon, Plataia and the Parasopia were the ideal guardians to discourage hostile forces from entering Boiotia (see [Figure 4.7](#)). The passes over Mount Kithairon connected the main axis between the Peloponnese and northern Greece running through the Corinthia and Megarid.²⁵⁶ The inclusion of Plataia into a common Boiotian polity was of paramount importance. Conversely, from an Athenian perspective the town could act as the perfect outpost to obstruct incursions into Attica from Boiotia.

The Parasopia runs from Mount Kithairon in the south to the Soros range in the north. The eastern border is marked by the Asopos gorge to the east of the modern town of Asopia. A defining feature of the district is the Asopos river, which flows through the entire region as it hugs the border between Thebes and Plataia.²⁵⁷ In the south lies the town of Hysiai, which acts as the gateway to the Mazi plain, which can be reached through

²⁵³ *Ioropos* 303 l. 5 (295–285); *Ioropos* 302 (Circa 285); Post 2019.

²⁵⁴ Buraselis 2018: 152 n. 30. The Oropians rewarded an Achaian who helped prevent the takeover: *Ioropos* 307.

²⁵⁵ *IG* II² 1006 ll. 70–1. ²⁵⁶ Konecny et al. 2013. ²⁵⁷ Farinetti 2011: 179–80.

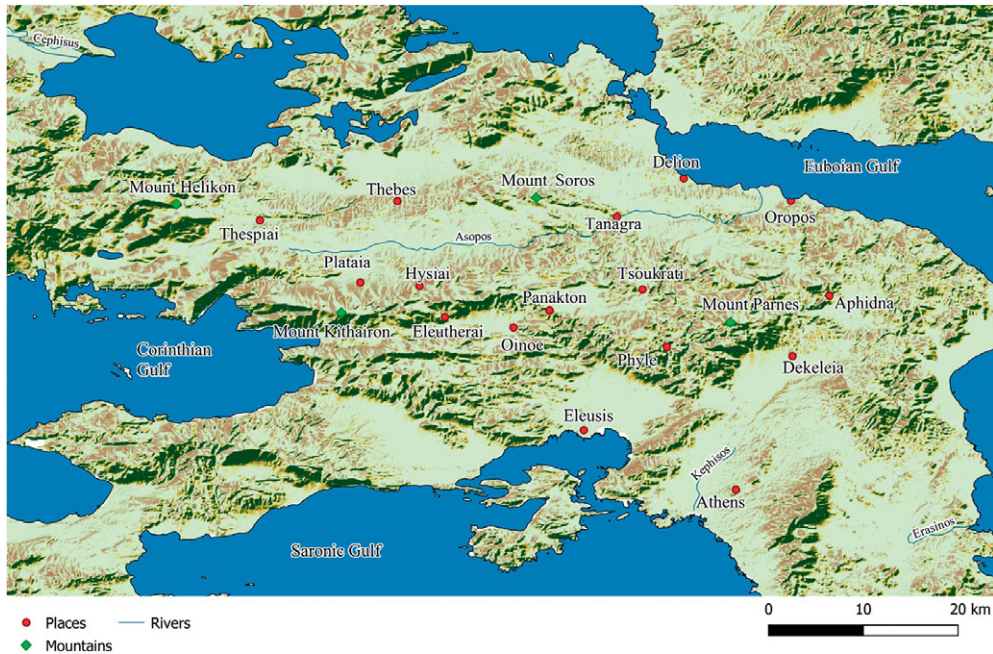


Figure 4.7 Plataia and its relation to Thebes, Athens and other borderlands.

the Kaza pass.²⁵⁸ The Parasopia is dominated by plain landscapes, even at a higher altitude, with the exceptions of those parts lodged beneath Mount Kithairon. The river provides further alluvial deposits, creating a long, narrow stretch of fertile lands located on easily reachable lands.

On a local level, the fertile lands of the Plataike, courtesy of the alluvial deposits from the Asopos river, were eyed by their more prosperous and stronger neighbours in Boiotia, the Thebans and the Tanagraians.²⁵⁹ The latter should not be overlooked, despite the lack of interest in their role by previous scholars.²⁶⁰ There was thus a tripartite intra-regional rivalry for the resources of the Parasopia. The convulsions on the Attic-Boiotian frontier, including Athenian interference on behalf of the Plataians, should be seen from that perspective.

The earliest clashes occurred at the end of the sixth century. Around that time a pattern of ‘Boiotian’ expansionism in the Parasopia can be detected

²⁵⁸ Fachard et al. 2020a.

²⁵⁹ The Tanagraian border in the Parasopia probably hugged the town of Skolos: Schachter 2016a: 95–6.

²⁶⁰ The defeated enemy in *NIO* 127 (525–500) is ineligible (Ταναγραῖσι τὸν . . .) but perhaps the Tanagraians fought the Plataians over a border dispute.

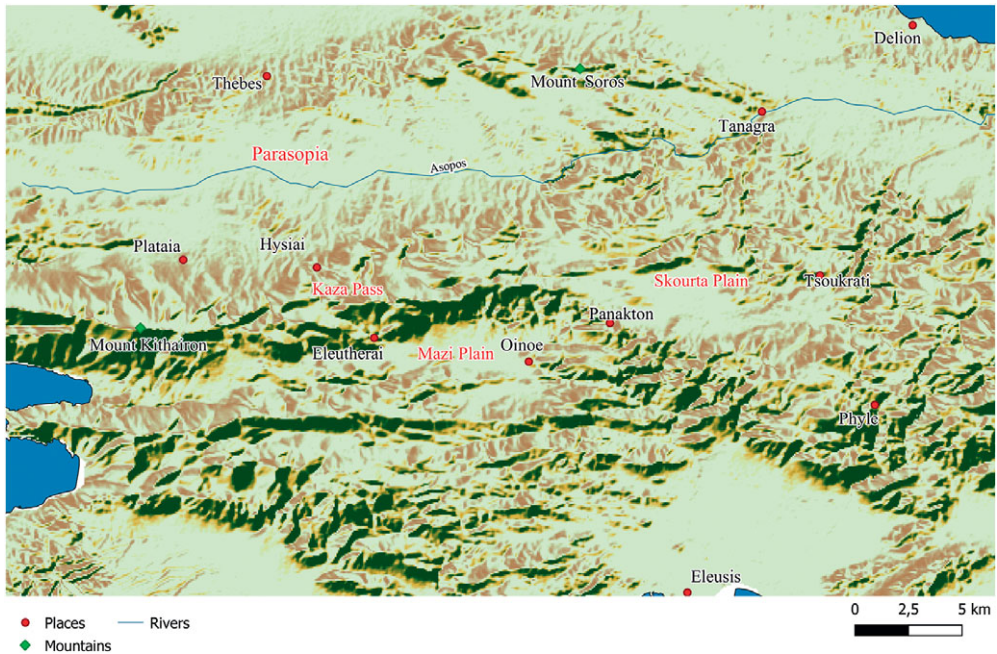


Figure 4.8 Close-up of Parasopia.

(see Figure 4.8). Ephoros describes a group called the Thebagenis, which were communities added to Thebes:

As to what the difference is between Thebagenis and the Thebans, in his second book Ephoros says: ‘The latter were counted amongst the Boiotians; the former enjoyed independence on the border with Attica, until many years later the Thebans annexed them. They were a mixture from many places and dwelt in the land beneath Kithairon and that opposite Euboa; their name was Thebagenis, because they were added to the other Boiotians by the Thebans.’ (trans. E. Mackil)²⁶¹

The symbolical expression of this dependency came in the form of tripods, dedicated at the temple of Apollo Ismenios in Thebes.²⁶² These

²⁶¹ Mackil 2013: 48–9; Ephoros FGrH 70 F21. Another source for the identification of the communities comes from *Hell. Oxy.* 19.3 (Behrwald), who enumerates the communities that *synoikised* with Thebes during the Peloponnesian War: Erythrai, Skaphai, Skolos, Schoinos, Aulis and Potniai.

²⁶² Dedications: Keramopoulos 1917: 64. Certain tripods support a restoration of Parasopia communities: Mackil 2013: 159: [- - - Ἀπόλλωνι Ποτινίῃς . . .]. Integration Potniai: Strabo 9.2.24; SEG 22.417; SEG 31.504; Keramopoulos 1930-1: 106: [Ἀπόλλωνι] ἡσιμ[ενίοι- - -] - - - - - εἶες κα- - - - - ; [Ἀπόλλωνι] ἡσιμεινίοι [- - -] μιο ἄρχοντος [- - -] νεῖες ἀνέθειαν. COB I 83 n.2, 81 n.2 suggests [Θεβαγεν]εἶες or [Θεβαγε]νεῖες. A dedication from the sanctuary to the hero

dedications were an open admission of loyalty to the Thebans as Nassos Papalexandrou clarifies.²⁶³ It could have occurred in the context of the border conflicts at the end of the sixth century, with the Thebans establishing a firmer grasp over these disputed lands.

Because these communities were all located in the Parasopia, the Thebans, acting as proxies for the Boiotoi, may have wished to confirm their loyalty. It firmed up their control of the borderlands, especially in the wake of their attack on Attica in 507/6. Perhaps the Plataians were asked for a similar display due to their previous ties to the Athenians, or because the Thebans required the support of this strategically important polis. This pressure led to the Atheno-Plataian alliance in the later sixth century (Chapter 3.1.1).

That interpretation tallies well with Herodotus' account. The Plataians were hard-pressed by the Thebans to contribute to the Boiotoi.²⁶⁴ Normally, the verb 'πιεζω' is used in the *Histories* to denote control over resources and often involves border disputes. Presumably, the Thebans and Tanagraians were pressuring the Plataians for resources in the campaign against the Athenians, or for the subjugation of the Parasopia. The subsequent settlement by the Corinthians of this intra-Boiotian dispute, in which the outlines of the respective *chorai* of both poleis were affixed with parts of the Parasopia granted to surrounding Boiotian communities, supports this interpretation. This can be gathered from Herodotus' remark that the Athenians, after their victory over the Boiotians, went beyond the boundaries set by the Corinthians. They then fixed the boundary between Thebes and Plataia at the Asopos river.²⁶⁵ An additional clause prohibited the Thebans from (militarily) acting against communities unwilling to 'τελέειν' to the Boiotoi.²⁶⁶

The translation of this verb has caused some debate. Emily Mackil proposed an interpretation that incorporates the financial connotations of the verb in Herodotus' work by translating the phrase as 'contributing to the Boiotoi'.²⁶⁷ These contributions could have taken the form of

Ptoios at Kastraki (c. 500) is attributed to the Thebageneis: SEG 44.406 ([--]εγνιες); Ducat 1971: 430 no. 278. COB III 13 suggested both Erchomenies (Orchomenos) or Thebageneis. A Theban epitaph reads Thebageneis, suggesting they were perceived as a separate community: Inglesse 2012: 23.

²⁶³ Papalexandrou 2005: 37–42; 2008: 266–8. ²⁶⁴ Hdt. 6.108.2: πιεζέμενοι ὑπὸ Θηβαίων.

²⁶⁵ Hdt. 6.108.6. This will be treated more in detail below. ²⁶⁶ Hdt. 6.108.4.

²⁶⁷ Mackil 2013: 27. Most scholars translate it as 'joining the Boiotoi'. There are precedents for this translation, but it disregards the financial connotations of the verb in Herodotus' work: Bakhuizen 1994: 309–16. Waanders 1983: 111 suggests 'to be counted amongst' (compare

economic support or a demonstration of loyalty similar to those made by the Thebageneis. The latter interpretation carries economic connotations: transferring territory equally included its resources. This was a radical departure from the previous relationship, based on the (unpublished) bronze plaques found in Thebes detailing the sales of lands from all over Boiotia. These mention Theban-owned possessions in the Parasopia (ἐπ' Ἀσοπῶ; δι' Ἀσοπῶ and ποτ' Εὐάκροιδι' Ἀσοπῶ), suggesting the borders had not been an issue hitherto.²⁶⁸ One could even claim the neighbours lived in peaceful co-existence.²⁶⁹

If it concerned a transfer of territory under the guise of sharing in *ta patria* of the *koinon*, the Plataians' reluctance to 'contribute' is more understandable. Surrendering the land was not just symbolic; with it came a loss of autonomy, unlike the Athenian alliance. Although the relationship was hierarchical, a status as an Athenian protectorate was preferable, because it shielded the Plataians from further aggression in exchange for their political autonomy, but without relinquishing their *chora* (Chapters 3.1.1, 3.5).²⁷⁰ For the Athenians such an arrangement was preferable too. As an emerging power, the support of a subordinate polis granted them not only prestige, but also manpower. The Plataians, through their strategic location overseeing the passes at Mount Kithairon, could act as a buffer against Boiotian aggression and possibly offered direct access to a harbour on the Corinthian Gulf.²⁷¹

The Plataians and Athenians may have forged a symbolic physical connection of their symbiosis. If Plutarch's testimony of the Battle of Plataia in 479 is to be accepted, the Plataians removed their *horoi* demarcating their border with the Athenians prior to the battle. This created a contiguous territory, in accordance with an oracle that proclaimed the battle would be won on Athenian soil in the plain of Eleusinian Demeter and Kore. Apparently, an abandoned shrine dedicated to the goddesses was found on the border, implying the cult had been established there. This probably reflects a later tradition. If it does not, the shrine may have been a vestige of the late sixth century, with the sanctuary demarcating the border,

Schachter 2000: 13–14). Hammond 2000 suggested 'to subscribe to the Boiotoi'. He mentions τελέειν normally implies 'to pay taxes'.

²⁶⁸ Matthaiou 2014.

²⁶⁹ Thuc. 3.61.2 for Theban claims of an ancient Plataian alliance during the trial in 427 (Chapter 3.1.1). Perhaps the lack of any fortifications at Plataia is a further indication as well: Hüllden 2020: 368–70.

²⁷⁰ Plutarch details the peculiarities of the border: Plut. *Arist.* 11.7–8; Prandi 1985.

²⁷¹ Freitag 2005: 315 refers to an undocumented Plataian harbour. Konecny et al. 2013: 51 mention a late archaic statue of Poseidon indicating a temple near the town's harbour but see BE 2014 no. 209 against this identification.

since Demeter's temples frequently fulfilled that role. The cult was used in other contexts to articulate kinship ties or, more forcibly, the expansion of the Athenian sphere of influence (Chapter 3.5).²⁷² The reference to separate *chorai* conforms with the outline of the Plataian-Athenian alliance and implies the possibility of a cultic exchange. The cult then articulated the border and was part of an effort to strengthen the relationship.

Plataia's alliance with the Athenians tallies well with the context of the Athenian politicisation of the borderlands in the wake of the invasion of 507/6. Theban actions and insistence on displays of loyalty drew the Plataians into the conflict and allowed the Athenians to mingle in Boiotian affairs, which they did with great effectiveness. Fresh from their victory over the Boiotians in 507/6, the Athenians took affirmative actions to stymie the possibility of future incursions into their territory. One preventive step was the alliance with the Plataians. Their territory was expanded to buttress their role as a buffer against Thebans and Tanagraians: 'The Athenians went beyond the boundaries the Corinthians had made for the Plataians, fixing the Asopos river as the boundary for the Thebans in the direction of Plataia and Hysiai.'²⁷³

It was an obvious boost to the Plataians. But the original arbitration is even more striking, since it favoured the Thebans and the Tanagraians. Otherwise, the Athenians could not have surpassed the Corinthian demarcation by affixing the Asopos river as the new boundary, since the river is equidistant from both Thebes and Plataia and cuts across their respective *chorai*.²⁷⁴ The new border arrangement strengthened the Plataians' position within Boiotia by incorporating Erythrai and Hysiai, adding manpower and resources while removing them from the Thebans and Tanagraians.²⁷⁵ Drawing the border at the river, moreover, added a barrier against future incursions, with its currents slowing down enemy troop movements.²⁷⁶ The Asopos river symbolically represented the recalibration of the political relations in the Parasopia. While the river is invisible from the Cadmeia or Thebes, the inhabitants of Plataia and other Parasopian communities could see it, understanding that it served as a natural

²⁷² Beck forthcoming. ²⁷³ Hdt. 6.108.6.

²⁷⁴ Farinetti 2011: 189. Plataia is closer to the river than Thebes but a straight line between the communities intersects at the river and the intersection point is about 8 km from both centres.

²⁷⁵ Amit 1973: 86–8; Badian 1993: 109–24; Prandi 1988: 79–93 date it after the Persian Wars but Herodotus' account contradicts this. Population calculations – extrapolating a force of 600 men at Marathon in 490 to a population of c. 5000 free citizens – support an earlier date.

²⁷⁶ Thuc. 2.5; Dem. 59.99; Ain. Tac. 8.1.

testament of the Plataians' increased power.²⁷⁷ The addition of these lands to the Plataian territory functioned as a shield against encroachment on the Skourta plain.

These shifts can be perceived as aggressive expansion at the expense of others, but, at the same time, the demarcation of a new border stabilised the situation in southern Boiotia. Geographical boundaries, like the Asopos river, were more permanent and could diminish the likelihood of another dispute over the delineation of the Plataian, Theban and Tanagraian territory.²⁷⁸ It proved very effective, considering the borders between these Boiotian polities were never again an issue. Future conflicts revolved around the incorporation of the *entire* Plataike, rather than a re-shuffling of the borders between the Boiotian neighbours.

Plataia again occupied a central place in the Atheno-Boiotian relations during the Persian Wars (480–479). After the fall of Thermopylai, the Boiotians changed sides and fought on behalf of the Persians. The Plataians continued to resist the invaders and were punished by having their town burned to the ground.²⁷⁹ Its destruction allowed the Thebans and Tanagraians to retract the changes made in 507/6 by incorporating the Plataike into their territory. Combined with the destruction of Athens, the Boiotians now controlled the Mount Kithairon-Parnes range, which could be guaranteed by a Persian victory.²⁸⁰

That victory never happened. The Hellenic League drove the Persian troops from the mainland after the Battle of Plataia in 479. This victory had a discernible effect on Plataia and its territory. In recognition of their sacrifices and to honour the lands in which freedom was won, the members of the Hellenic League granted the Plataians a form of territorial inviolability after the war.²⁸¹ This special status was similar to that of Panhellenic sanctuaries. The Plataike now existed as a neutral zone that rose above Greek interstate politics.²⁸²

Technically, this meant a diminution of Athenian influence. The protection of the Plataians was no longer their prerogative, but the responsibility of all the members of the Hellenic League. In practice, however, the

²⁷⁷ Gartland 2012: 84. My personal observations confirm his conclusions.

²⁷⁸ L'Homme-Wery 1996: 37; Ober 1995: 115. ²⁷⁹ Hdt. 8.50.

²⁸⁰ Gartland 2020. Destruction Athens: Hdt. 8.50.

²⁸¹ Alluded to by the Plataians in 427:

Πλαταιεῦσι γῆν καὶ πόλιν τὴν σφετέραν ἔχοντας αὐτονόμους οἰκεῖν (Thuc. 2. 71.2). Prandi 1988: 57–72.

²⁸² A later fourth-century date for the *Eleutheria* festival is more likely: Wallace 2011; Yates 2019: 71–4 contra Jung 2006. For Plataia as a later *lieu de memoire*: Kalliontzis 2014.

Plataians continued to entertain an intimate relationship with their Athenian neighbours.²⁸³ The ‘Panhellenic’ skein of diplomatic relations was meant to ensure the site’s neutrality and prevent the Athenians from monopolising the site of Plataia as a *lieu de mémoire*.²⁸⁴ In light of the increased tensions between the Spartans and Athenians after the war, and the eventual dissolution of the Hellenic League in the early 470s, the struggle over Plataia is unsurprising.²⁸⁵

Strategic considerations also played a role. The Plataians controlled the passes into Boiotia from the Peloponnese. Its neutrality kept the route into Central Greece open. The ‘Panhellenic’ protection of the polis was a security against future Boiotian expansion.²⁸⁶ Reinforcing this role were the fortifications of the town. The size and dimensions of the walls may have been expanded or the walls were constructed for the first time.²⁸⁷ *Intra muros* there was now enough space to shelter the population of the surrounding communities in the event of an attack, symbolising Plataia’s role as a regional refuge.

Another function of the walls lay in its symbolic significance. These imposing fortifications not only protected Plataia from outside harm, but reflected its contrasting position on the Boiotian border. Ethnically, the Plataians always regarded themselves as Boiotians. Their ancient role as a locus of Boiotian mythology confirms that.²⁸⁸ Politically, the situation was different. Plataia had deliberately separated itself from Boiotia at the end of the sixth century and these walls were a manifestation of that division. The fortifications served as a testimony to the division, with the Plataians performing the role of dissenters whose recalcitrance fractured the security of Boiotia in the interest of external powers.

In the following decades, the Plataians continued to foster this ambivalent attitude. They loyally followed the Athenians on most campaigns,

²⁸³ Crane 2001. The Spartans invoked this neutrality during the Peloponnesian War: Thuc. 2.71.3 with Bauslaugh 1991: 129–31. For the heroisation and memorisation of Plataia: Boedeker 2001.

²⁸⁴ Jung 2006: 291–2 on the transition of Spartan prominence in the commemoration of the Battle of Plataia to an increased emphasis on the Athenians.

²⁸⁵ Yates 2015.

²⁸⁶ Jung 2006: 264, 270 argues the Plataians maintained the graves and annual rites for the fallen of the Greek alliance, in exchange for this guarantee of independence. But the Plataians’ actions during the Peloponnesian War contradict this, as the Athenians determine their policies: Crane 2001.

²⁸⁷ Konecny et al. 2013: 28–9, esp. n. 103. See Hülnden 2020: 375–80 on the possible lack of archaic fortifications at Plataia.

²⁸⁸ Herakleides Kritikós BNJ 369a; Kühr 2006: 118–33. Archaeologically, the city’s roots can be traced back to the Mycenaean times: Konecny et al. 2013: 24–5.

including the help for the Spartans against the Messenian revolt in the 460s.²⁸⁹ They also started the construction of the temple of Athena Areia. Its sculptural and pictorial programme displayed the Plataians' view of the Persian Wars as an internecine struggle, a fraternal conflict between the Plataians and their Boiotian brethren.²⁹⁰ They remained anxious of their neighbours and fostered a more antagonistic attitude towards medism than the Athenians did, even when the latter fostered friendlier relations with the *koinon*.

Yet the Plataians appear to have voluntarily joined the *koinon* after the Battle of Koroneia in 446. That is implied by the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia's* author when he describes the *koinon's* federal system in 395: 'the Thebans contributed four (Boiotarchs), two for the polis, and two for the Plataians with Skolos and Erythrai and Skaphai and the other places which originally were part of their (the Plataians') polis but which were, at the time of which I write, absorbed into Thebes.'²⁹¹

Without a Plataian participation in the *koinon*, the Theban incorporation of their votes after the town's destruction in 427 makes no sense. They must have been members, since other interpretations involve convoluted reconstructions or retrojections.²⁹² It appears the Plataians had their cake and ate it too. The participation in the *koinon* did not sever their alliance with the Athenians.²⁹³ That they were included in the new federal structure despite this arrangement is a testament to their importance for the regional security of Boiotia.²⁹⁴ A hostile Plataia could act as a doorstep for hostile armies wishing a secure entry into Boiotia. By convincing the Plataians to join a more equal *koinon*, there was a chance for the *koinon* to

²⁸⁹ Thuc. 3.52–4; Hdt. 9.64. ²⁹⁰ Yates 2013.

²⁹¹ *Hell. Oxy.* 19.3 (Behrwald); translation from Schachter 2016a: 52.

²⁹² Against inclusion: Bruce 1968: 190; Prandi 1988: 79–91; Sordi 1968: 70. For inclusion: Amit 1973: 87; Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 450; Larsen 1968: 34, 132–3; Roesch 1965: 40. Mackil 2013: 336–7 n. 39 adds it would be striking that the Thebans gained two additional districts after the destruction of Plataia in 427 if they were not part of the *koinon*. Bruce 1968 argues this resulted from proportional representation after the annexation of Plataia's *chora*, with the additional wealth creating a larger share of Theban citizens. Sordi 1968: 71–2 argues the two districts were created after the Theban annexation, but this is unnecessarily convoluted. Konecny et al. 2013: 29 n. 109 argue, based on the relatively small garrison defending Plataia in 431, that their control over the Parasopia ceased by 447. But garrisons normally did not include the entire available military population.

²⁹³ Thuc. 3.68.5; *IG* I³ 1353 = *OR* 130: the funerary epitaph for Pythion, a Megarian who led Athenian forces to safety from Boiotia, presumably by way of Plataia.

²⁹⁴ Mackil 2013: 336–7 n. 39 adds the continuation of the Athenian alliance may have been a concession to the Plataians to compel them to join.

procure this polis for the defence of the region. It shows that Theban control over the Plataiake was not essential to normalise their relations.

It was a precarious arrangement, but one that demonstrates the value of these lands for both polities. For the Plataians it was a preferable arrangement. Previous attempts to incorporate the Plataians into the Boiotoi involved the surrender of territorial sovereignty. Their participation in the new, more equitable *koinon* required no such submission. The combination of maintaining their territory while participating in the *koinon*, which diminished the possibility of a renewed conflict with the Thebans or Tanagraians, was the perfect deal.

The delicate arrangement was short-lived. Plataia must have seceded from the *koinon* sometime between 446 and 431, leaving the Boiotians vulnerable. This awareness explains the clandestine manoeuvre by a group of Thebans colluding with their Plataian peers. They intended to overthrow the current regime and bring the polis back into the *koinon's* fold.²⁹⁵ Thucydides adds they undertook this action in anticipation of war. The conspirators hoped to achieve a peaceful reconciliation, reintegrate the Plataians and sever ties with the Athenians.²⁹⁶ But the clandestine operation failed, and the escalation of the situation within Plataia's walls led to the brutal slaughter of the Theban intruders. Soon afterwards, the town was besieged by Peloponnesian and Boiotian forces ([Chapter 2.4](#)).

The siege was meant to elicit a response from the Athenians, which never came. Their restraint is remarkable, considering Plataia's strategic importance, let alone the emotional ties. They were aware of possible repercussions of the murder of the Thebans in Plataia, as a garrison was sent out to reinforce the town.²⁹⁷ Perhaps they expected the oaths of 479 to be intact, which would prevent a Spartan-Boiotian collaboration against Plataia. The town's connotations with the hallowed grounds of freedom made it difficult to attack without exhausting other options.

The Spartans insisted on the Plataians' neutrality to avoid the appearance of violating their oath to defend the town. The Plataian rejection of the offer left the Spartans with little choice but to accomplish militarily what could not be done diplomatically: the abrogation of the Athenian-Plataian alliance. The preferred option was a surrender after a prolonged siege. A surrender took away the diplomatic option of restoring Plataia as an unlawfully conquered

²⁹⁵ Thuc. 2.2; *CT I* 241–3. ²⁹⁶ Thuc. 2.2.3–4; [Chapter 2.4](#).

²⁹⁷ Thuc. 2.7.1. That the attack was meant to elicit a response from the Athenians as an affront to their prestige and honour (Lendon 2010) is a credit to the Boiotian understanding of the politics involved.

territory. The Boiotians technically had no rightful claim and could not rely on the argument of ‘spear-won’ land. A voluntary surrender, however, annulled the efficacy of any arguments for its restoration or as a bargaining chip to be exchanged for geopolitical interests.²⁹⁸

The Plataians surrendered in 427. Megarian exiles and pro-Theban Plataians inhabited their lands afterwards. When the year passed, the entire town was razed save for its sanctuaries, its territory granted to wealthy Thebans on ten-year leases.²⁹⁹ Interestingly, they were the only ones to directly profit from the incorporation of the Plataike, apparently leaving the Tanagraians out of the proceeds. Their exclusion could be the result of the re-arrangements in the *koinon’s tele* after 446, which granted the Tanagraians territory on the eastern seaboard.³⁰⁰

Physically, the town no longer existed, but the remaining citizens continued to form a community under Theban aegis. Presumably, the pro-*koinon* Plataians moved to Thebes, whose massive fortifications provided the necessary security, symbolising its role as a safe haven for Boiotia and its communities. This negated the need for the Plataians to live in the ruins of their town as the lands of the Parasopia could be tilled from Thebes.³⁰¹ The construction of accommodations and a new temple for the Hera cult were signs of continuity and symbolised the care taken by the Thebans to preserve the town’s cult.³⁰² At the same time, the new buildings in the sacred landscape promulgated novelty, inaugurating a new period for the Parasopia under the *koinon’s* wings. One possible expression of Plataia’s incorporation was the re-organisation of the Daidala festival. The festival was intimately connected to Plataian history and involved the delineation of the town’s *chora* in a ritual procession.³⁰³ Could it be that the Daidala cult developed from a local celebration into a cult with a pan-Boiotian twist

²⁹⁸ This is the Theban argument against restoring Plataia in a peace deal: Thuc. 5.17.2.

²⁹⁹ Thuc. 3.68.3. For a treatment of the leases: Bruce 1968: 196–7; Papazarkadas 2011: 60 n. 183, 219 n. 30. Although one may question to what extent the town was razed: Fachard and Harris 2021.

³⁰⁰ Schachter 2016a: 81–91.

³⁰¹ Demand 1982: 11–12. The Theban fortifications were the largest in mainland Greece and could contain up to 100,000 inhabitants. Bintliff et al. 2007: 136 for the 5-km radius as a useful limit for regular intensive cultivation; Farinetti 2011: 189 fig. 9 shows the Parasopia to mostly fall in that range.

³⁰² An early Heraion was identified in the late nineteenth century (Washington 1891: 403; Iversen 2007: 388) but this is now rejected: Konecny et al. 2013: 141–4. COB I 244 n. 5 argues there was no temple pre-426.

³⁰³ The festival’s origins remain enigmatic: Chaniotis 2002; Knoepfler 2001a: 362–8; Strasser 2004: 341–2.

at this time? In that case, the cult enacted the ritual unification of Boiotia, suturing the Plataia-sized wound in the landscape.³⁰⁴

The integration of the Parasopia into the Theban *chora* not only served strategic purposes, but also symbolically represented the cohesion of the *koinon* against external threats. Plataia had been a thorn in the Boiotians' side for some eighty years. Even a brief interlude of integration after Koroneia (446) did not remedy this wound. As long as the town existed as an Athenian bulwark, it would threaten the unity of the *koinon* and its borders. The safety of the *koinon* was promulgated by the Thebans in the aftermath of Plataia's destruction when several communities from the vulnerable borderlands and the eastern seaboard *synoikised* with the Thebans to protect them against Athenian incursions in 426 and 424.³⁰⁵

As soon as the war broke out between the Athenians and Lacedaimonians, the Thebans experienced a significant rise in their overall prosperity; for when the Athenians began to threaten Boiotia, the inhabitants of Erythrai, Skaphai, Skolos, Aulis, Schoinos, Potniai and many other such towns, which had no walls, *synoikised* (συνωκισθησαν) with Thebes, which doubled its size.³⁰⁶

In one swift move, the Thebans tethered large swaths of Boiotia to its *chora* and obtained a harbour on the eastern seaboard, ensuring it was the dominant polis in the region.

Their strategy seems to have worked. Restoring Plataia by force ended in failure, thus the Athenians resorted to a diplomatic restoration in the negotiations for the Peace of Nicias in 421. They insisted on Plataia's restitution under the terms that every party involved in the peace agreement should return the possessions captured in the war. The Boiotians retorted by stating Plataia was not captured but had willingly surrendered and did not constitute territory won by the spear:

Each party was to restore its conquests, but Athens was to keep Nisaia; her demand for Plataia being met by the Thebans asserting that they had

³⁰⁴ Mackil 2013: 227–30. Contra COB I 248, who argues the Daidala became pan-Boiotian in the late fourth century. Prandi 1988: 22–4 proposed a seventh-century date but this claim cannot be corroborated.

³⁰⁵ Thuc. 3.91; 4.76–7; 90–101.

³⁰⁶ *Hell. Oxy.* 20.3 (Behrwald). I have left συνωκισθησαν untranslated. McKechnie and Kern 1988 prefer 'were gathered'. Bruce 1967: 114 translates it as a voluntary decision. Mackil 2014: 41 considers it a forceful Theban move. Some postulated a date at the start of the Peloponnesian War (Demand 1990: 82–5) or in its early phase (Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 441) but I believe the integration was possible only after Plataia's destruction. Salmon 1978: 82–3 places the *synoikism* in 447/6 as a reward, but who would be rewarded in this case?

acquired the place not by force or treachery, but by the voluntary agreement of its citizens; and the same, according to the Athenian account, being the history of her acquisition of Nisaia.³⁰⁷

This argument was accepted by the Athenians so they could retain Nisaia. They were willing to accept the Plataike as part of the Theban *chora* to conclude a peace treaty but insisted on the return of Panakton.³⁰⁸ This palliative was a tough pill to swallow for the Boiotians, who refused the treaty, instead preferring to subsist on ten-day truces (Chapter 3.1.2). It is striking that the Athenians were more adamant about the return of Panakton than Plataia (Chapter 4.1.1). Were they simply not willing to relinquish Nisaia for Plataia, or were other factors at stake? Perhaps they believed Panakton could be returned, whereas the restitution of Plataia created more issues. A more cynical interpretation is that the Plataike simply was not worth the hassle for the Athenians, whereas the exploitation of the Skourta plain directly benefitted them. In addition, the Plataians were a valuable additional source of manpower for the Athenians, whose forces had been drained by a decade of war and plague.³⁰⁹ Hopes of ending the Plataians' exile with a return to their homeland vanished when the treaty was confirmed, and the Athenians used Skione in northern Greece to establish a Plataian cleruchy.³¹⁰

What stands out about this episode is the Athenian willingness to sacrifice the Plataians for a stable relationship with the Boiotians by way of a binding treaty. It is a recurring theme in the Atheno-Boiotian relations from this point onward. The Boiotians made a valid point about the wilful surrender of the town. Unlike the Athenian fortification of Panakton, the capture of Plataia did not constitute a major breach of an intact treaty and was therefore less of an impediment to neighbourly relations. Plataia did not directly provide the Athenians with bountiful harvests and fertile grazing lands, unlike the Skourta plain. Neither did the town's strategic benefits outweigh a stable relationship with the Boiotians, especially in a situation like 421 when they posed the most imminent threat. Retaining the empire in exchange for the Plataians was a small sacrifice to make if it meant an end to hostilities.

³⁰⁷ Thuc. 5.17.2, adapted translation from the Loeb. Buck 1994: 15 argues their argument was correct, since pro-*koinon* Plataians lived in Thebes after the *synoikism*. Restoring the pro-*koinon* Plataians remained possible as the walls were only demolished at key positions, rendering its defences useless, but allowing for a quick repair: Konecny et al. 2013: 31 n. 131.

³⁰⁸ Thuc. 5.18. ³⁰⁹ Thuc. 4.67.1. Akrigg 2019: 171–204 for population decreases.

³¹⁰ Thuc. 5.32.1.

That overall strategic Athenian considerations outweighed the Plataians' plight becomes clear after the Peloponnesian War. In 395 the Athenians and the Boiotians agreed to an alliance. The reference to the 'Boiotoi', rather than Xenophon's Thebans, means that the Athenians accepted their claims over the Plataike.³¹¹ The Plataian exile community in Athens must have exerted significant pressure to raise their restitution in the Assembly. Nevertheless, the advantage of a Boiotian alliance weighed heavier than their restitution. The situation allowed for such a demand. With Spartan armies on the borders, the Boiotians were in a predicament, yet the Athenians neglected to press for the town's restoration. Acting as an Athenian buffer, the *koinon* was a more valuable ally than the Plataians.

The Athenians' behaviour must have aggrieved some Plataians. It was this grief and 'abandonment' the Spartans exploited in 387/6 when they used the terms of the King's Peace to end the Plataians' exile.³¹² The restoration of Plataia served a multifocal purpose. By fulfilling their long-cherished wish and forging an alliance with the Plataians, the Spartans assured themselves of a loyal enclave that guaranteed unobstructed access over the passes of Mount Kithairon and hindered a Atheno-Boiotian united front against forces coming in from the Peloponnesse.³¹³ Moreover, the Plataian hinterland acted as an ideal stepping-stone to land troops from the Peloponnesse via the Corinthian Gulf, should the passes over Mount Kithairon be obstructed by hostile forces.³¹⁴

Although the Athenians lost no possessions because of the King's Peace, the dissolution of the *koinon* and the establishment of pro-Spartan enclaves weakened their position by negating Boiotia's role as a buffer for Attica. A bonus for the Spartans was the propagandistic value of restoring Plataia. They championed the unification of the Greeks to fight the Persians in a

³¹¹ RO 6; Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.17. The Plataians in Athens (Lys. 23.5–6) surely felt indignant over the acceptance of an alliance with their tormentors in 395. Some Athenians must have spoken on their behalf in the Assembly, but as customary in Xenophon speakers whose proposals were not accepted were 'muzzled': Buckler and Beck 2008: 142–63.

³¹² Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.28, 32; Diod. 15.20.2; Paus. 9.1.4. Kirsten 1950: 2309 dates Plataia's re-foundation to 382. He links the restitution to the seizure of the Cadmeia, because the pacification of Thebes removed a substantial obstacle. Yet that ignores that the restitution of Plataia aimed to curb Theban influence: Prandi 1988: 121–33.

³¹³ The Plataians contributed to several Spartan campaigns against Thebes: Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.25–32; 5.4.10; Buck 1994: 65–80. Another possible campaign took the Plataians north to fight Olynthus: Kalliontzis 2014: 333–41. He dates the campaign to 348 but Pritchett 1974–91: IV 216 no. 77 offers other dates.

³¹⁴ Most of the mainland fighting revolved around the control over the Corinthian Gulf (Mackil 2013: 63). Controlling these poleis thus realised that ambition for the Spartans.

Panhellenic campaign from the start of the fourth century. Within this context of rampant Panhellenic fervour, guaranteeing the safety of an important *lieu de mémoire* in the commemoration of the Greeks' struggle against the Persians was especially prestigious. The restoration improved the Spartans' Panhellenic credentials while at the same time smearing the Athenians, who were unable to restore the Plataians and fought alongside the medizers. Strategically, the creation of a pro-Spartan enclave at the gates of Mount Kithairon kept the Thebans in check and weakened a future Athenian-Boiotian union against the Spartans.

The Spartan sponsorship became problematic for the Plataians after the Peace of 375. The treaty stipulated the removal of Spartan garrisons from Boiotia, making Plataia's position increasingly precarious. Earlier Theban attempts to reintegrate the Plataians in the *koinon* were rejected as the Plataians clung to their alliance with the Spartans. But it was imperative for the Thebans to cement the *koinon*'s hold over this important border territory, so they launched a successful surprise attack in 373. The Plataians were forced to leave and hand over their town.

Our sources offer conflicting motives for the attack. Diodorus, perhaps reflecting a Theban tradition, lays the onus on the Plataians, who had handed their city to an Athenian garrison in a despairing attempt to cling to their alliance. Yet that alliance is nowhere mentioned between 386 and 373. Their flight to Athens was logical in the wake of their past collaborations and their shared history: the Athenians always considered Plataia as a pseudo-protectorate.³¹⁵ Plataian culpability is contradicted by the accounts of Xenophon and Isocrates. Xenophon's bias requires no introduction, while Isocrates' *Plataicus* was written as a defence of the Plataians. Despite their flaws, the accounts fit the situation better. They portray the Plataians (and Thespians) as cleaving to their Spartan connection, leading to their expulsion. If the war with Sparta recommenced in 373, this would explain the lack of Athenian reprisals in the aftermath of Plataia's destruction (Chapter 2.5).³¹⁶

The Plataike and Parasopia were subsequently incorporated into the Theban *chora*, akin to other subdued neighbours.³¹⁷ Sanctuaries and cults were left intact, with the Thebans appropriating them to celebrate the unification of Boiotia.³¹⁸ It is a testimony to the central place occupied

³¹⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.1; Diod. Sic. 15.46.6; Paus. 9.1.8; Isoc. 14.9.

³¹⁶ Cawkwell 1963a; Gray 1980; Hamilton 1991: 116.

³¹⁷ Bakhuizen 1994; Gonzalez Pascual 2006: 34–8; Mackil 2013: 296.

³¹⁸ Maybe Korinna's poem on the mythological connections between the Parasopia and Boiotia was commissioned at this time. The dedication of new statues to Hera and the celebration of

by the Plataike in the region. After repeated invasions of their countryside, the Thebans solidified the security of their borders and could no longer tolerate the presence of recalcitrant pockets of resistance close by.³¹⁹

As before, the Plataians fled southwards to Athens where they received citizenship with certain limitations.³²⁰ Xenophon and Isocrates describe an overt outrage over the treatment of Plataia, but despite their appeals, the Atheno-Theban alliance continued. Perhaps fear of confronting their allies hamstrung the Athenians. What I find more plausible is that they did not want to agitate the Thebans over a town that recently collaborated with the Spartans, who were the target of the Confederacy (Chapter 3.4.3).³²¹ Isocrates himself nebulously admits the protection offered by the alliance outweighed the plight of the Plataians (Chapter 4.3).³²²

It is a recurrent theme of the fourth century, in which Plataia's importance as a strategic ally for the Athenians slowly dissipated when a Boiotian alliance could be procured. Conversely, the restoration of the Plataians re-emerged in the Athenian conscience when relations turned sour. Throughout the period of hostility (369–339) orators clamoured for the restoration of Plataia.³²³ For instance, Demosthenes' plea in *On Behalf of the Megapolitans*:

In order, then, that this unwillingness may not stand in the way of the weakening of the Thebans, let us admit that Thespiai, Orchomenos and Plataia ought to be restored, and let us co-operate with their inhabitants and appeal to the other states, for it is a just and honourable policy not to allow ancient cities to be uprooted.³²⁴

References to the destruction of Plataia were meant to demonstrate the depravity of the Thebans. Their arguments were undoubtedly helped by the presence of refugees.³²⁵ Bolstering their efforts was the situation from the early 350s onwards. The Third Sacred War (357–346) pitted the Athenians against the Boiotians and their 'barbarian' ally, Philip of Macedon. This Boiotian-barbarian synergy put Plataia, and the deeds of its inhabitants during the Persian Wars, back into the forefront of Athenian minds and helped rekindle their self-proclaimed role as defenders of Greek *eleutheria*

the Daidala then occasioned the poem: Schachter 2016a: 236–44. Berman 2010 dates Korinna's floruit to 335–320 but others view her as Pindar's contemporary: Larson 2002.

³¹⁹ Similar measures were taken against Thespiai and Orchomenos, with the Thebans settling or incorporating their territories: Bakhuizen 1994; Gonzalez Pascual 2006: 34–8; Mackil 2013: 296.

³²⁰ Canevaro 2010. ³²¹ RO 22 ll. 9–12. ³²² Isoc. 14.33.

³²³ E.g., Dem. 5.10; 6.30; 19.20; Isoc. 8.17, 115; Prandi 1988: 133–44. ³²⁴ Dem. 16.25.

³²⁵ Marsh-Hunn 2021.

in the face of foreign aggression. Plataia thus continued to play a role as a *lieu de mémoire*. Appeals to restore the Plataians not only were reflective of strategic interests but also served to promote Athenian propaganda.

Yet intentions of restoring Plataia at the expense of the Boiotians remained in the realm of words. During the Third Sacred War, the Athenians took no action to weaken the *koinon*, instead focusing their efforts elsewhere. Perhaps they were unable to enforce the restoration of Plataia, but any inclinations thereto were absent. The Boiotian-Macedonian victory in the Third Sacred War impeded any further hopes of restoring the town, despite the fantasies harboured by some Athenians that Philip would punish his allies and return the Plataians to their native home.³²⁶ Plataia, in sum, was a perfect ideological stick to hit the Boiotians with at suitable times, but the town's fate never realistically dominated Athenian objectives after the 420s.

Embodying this ambivalent attitude was the Athenian-Boiotian alliance forged in 339/8. Contrary to all the beautiful words proclaimed in the Assembly in support of the Plataians, its fortunes were sacrificed on the altar of expediency when the opportunity to join forces with the Boiotians presented itself. This decision was precipitated by the threat of a Macedonian invasion, but there were no scruples in accepting the Thebans' claim to *all* of Boiotia (Chapter 3.4.4). Similar to the situation in 395, the Theban occupation of Plataia and its lands formed no significant obstacle to a neighbourly alliance. Sacrificing an unattainable goal like the restoration of Plataia for the cooperation of one of the strongest land powers that guarded the passes into Attica did not impede Athenian-Boiotian collaboration.

The Athenian willingness to abandon the Plataian cause in exchange for Boiotian support does not mean other powers were unaware of the site's value, both strategically and symbolically. The role of Plataia's protector was dutifully taken up by Philip after his victory at Chaironeia in 338. Compared with his other interventions in the political landscape of Boiotia, the king's intention to end the Plataians' odyssey after nearly fifty years was his *pièce de résistance*.³²⁷ His sponsorship of the town served a multifocal purpose. It curbed Theban power by reducing its *chora* and re-installing a

³²⁶ Ellis 1982; Konecny et al. 2013: 32 accept the veracity of Philip's intentions to restore Plataia prior to Chaironeia, but Cawkwell 1978b refutes this.

³²⁷ Gullath 1982: 12–14; Prandi 1988: 138–44. Plataia's re-foundation in 338 is uncertain, but Delphic lists record Plataian *naiopoiioi* from 337 onwards: Kirsten 1950. From 331 they provided *hieromnēmones*: CID II 86 l.13.

hostile neighbour loyal to the Macedonians in its vicinity, whereas it was a subtle jibe at the Athenians. Philip could now rightfully claim to be the *prostates* of *autonomia*, which was of particular importance for the new Common Peace he enforced after the Battle at Chaironeia. The restoration of Plataia allowed Philip to present himself as the champion of *eleutheria* and Panhellenism, an important ideological statement in preparation for his war against the Persians to exact revenge for their sacrilegious transgressions during the Persian Wars.³²⁸

Philip's premature death prevented the maturation of his plans, but his son Alexander continued the project, propelling Plataia to greater heights, especially after the destruction of Thebes in 335. Alexander granted the Plataians a significant share of the Theban *chora* and later proclaimed in 331 that the town was to be rebuilt in grandiose fashion, in recognition of its contributions during the Persian Wars of the fifth century.³²⁹ His decision to sponsor the Plataians paid dividends for his successors, as the Plataians opposed the Athenians in the Hellenic War of 323.³³⁰

In conclusion, Plataia was not a significant obstacle towards neighbourly cooperation in the fourth century. Initially, the obstinate attitude of its inhabitants vis-à-vis the burgeoning *koinon*, combined with the town's strategic importance, made the Plataians a valuable ally to the Athenians within the mosaic of the borderlands. Acting as a buffer against Spartan-Boiotian collaboration, Plataia became a key feature of the Athenian defences. The town continued to occupy this position throughout the Persian Wars, which granted it a Panhellenic grandeur as the site where freedom was won. From an Athenian standpoint, Plataia's relevance subsisted in the spheres of history as the legendary place of Xerxes' downfall, its inhabitants fighting for the Greek cause against foreign aggression, as opposed to their Theban neighbours. Therefore, the Plataians were the perfect propagandistic tool for the Athenians to employ whenever there was a need to castigate the Thebans.

In an ideal situation, the Athenians possessed both the intimate alliance with the Plataians and the protection offered by a friendly Boiotia, as in the

³²⁸ Diod. 16.89.2, 91.2. Philip's Panhellenism: Wallace 2011: n. 13; Yates 2019: 202–48.

³²⁹ Plut. *Alex.* 34.1–2, *Arist.* 11.9. Konecny et al. 2013: 33 n. 147 suggest this date, contrary to Plutarch's (328). Irrespective of the dates, the message would be similar. The city walls and fortifications were significantly expanded to transform Plataia into the most dominant polis in southern Boiotia in lieu of Thebes: Konecny et al. 2013: 35–6. On the transformative effects the reconstruction had on Boiotia's landscape: Gartland 2016b.

³³⁰ The Athenian-Plataian relations possibly remained as close-knit as before: *RO* 94; *IG* II² 345; *SEG* 27.60; perhaps *IG* VII 2869. For Plataia during the Hellenic War: Wallace 2011.

450s. Realistically, however, its importance as a strategic asset, a purpose that it had served so dutifully for almost a century from 506 onwards, had vanished in the 420s. More often than not, the town was sacrificed for more valuable territories such as the Skourta plain, or courtly relations with the *koinon*, whose strategic value outweighed Plataia's. What factored into this tendency was probably that Plataia and the Parasopia, unlike other contested areas like the prosperous Skourta plain, were never directly owned by Athenians and therefore offered no benefits in terms of resources.

4.2 Boiotia and Its Ports

Boiotia's ports are an oft overlooked aspect of its strategic appeal. Yet these ports offered the Athenians significant advantages. The Boiotian ports on the Corinthian Gulf promontory and the eastern seaboard bordering the Euboian Gulf could act as gateways for Athenian conquest of Boiotia or as launching pads for attacks on the Peloponnese (see [Figure 4.9](#)). These maritime connections added to the region's strategic value and influenced neighbourly relations.

The harbours did not perform similar duties. Oropos, for instance, had two harbours: one for the city itself, presumably where the goods from Euboia were brought in, and one, the Delphinion, for pilgrims visiting the Amphiareion.³³¹ Others, such as Aulis on the eastern seaboard, were ideal for lodging and launching large fleets. Harbours like Anthedon were mostly used for commercial practices and fishing, rendering their strategic benefits of secondary importance. Finally, the smaller harbours on the Corinthian Gulf, such as Kreusis and Siphai, were ideally suited for stationing smaller fleets to raid the Peloponnese. These harbours demonstrate that Boiotia had the foundations for maritime ambitions.

Strabo, who bases himself on Ephoros, provides the best description of Boiotia's prowess for maritime connections: 'Ephoros declares that Boiotia is superior to the countries of the bordering *ethne*, not only in fertility of soil, but also because it alone has three seas and has a greater number of good harbours.'³³²

In light of these reflections, it is surprising that Boiotia's role as a conduit for maritime warfare – from an Athenian perspective – has generally been overlooked. Although Ephoros exaggerated the number of good harbours,

³³¹ Cosmopoulous 2001: 59; Papazarkadas 2011: 49; *IOropos* 303, ll. 45–9.

³³² Strabo 9.2.2.



Figure 4.9 Harbours and places mentioned.

with only Anhedon and Aulis qualifying for such a distinction, there is merit in the historian's observation that Boiotia was not landlocked.³³³ According to Emily Mackil, Ephoros' views were inspired by the maritime exploits of the *koinon* in the 360s.³³⁴ Its connections to the Black Sea region and the Aeolian coast of Asia Minor stretch back to earlier times, as shown by the various material deposits found in these areas and cultural links.³³⁵ The participation of the Boiotians in the colonisation of these areas shows these connections were profound. The eastern seaboard of Boiotia possessed good harbours with various links to important economic areas like the Pontic region, an area that increased in importance for the Athenians from the mid-fifth century onward (see Figure 4.10).³³⁶

The Boiotian harbours on the Corinthian Gulf promontory were not as secluded as assumed by John Buckler and Hans Beck.³³⁷ Recent scholarship has demonstrated the connectivity of harbours such as Siphai and Kreusis to other communities across the Corinthian Gulf.³³⁸ Far from being

³³³ Beck 1997: 86 n. 10; Buckler and Beck 2008: 180–98 argue that only Aulis and Anhedon qualified as good harbours. Wallace 1979: 9–13 offers a more favourable interpretation.

³³⁴ Mackil 2013: 284. The Boiotians were well connected and sometimes controlled other harbours further afield, such as Skroponeri, Larymna and Aigosthena: Farinetti 2011: 49.

³³⁵ Fossey 2019: 88–94; Schachter 2016a: 99–101. ³³⁶ Moreno 2007.

³³⁷ Beck 1997: 86 n. 10; Buckler and Beck 2008: 180–98. ³³⁸ Bonnier 2014: 114–16.

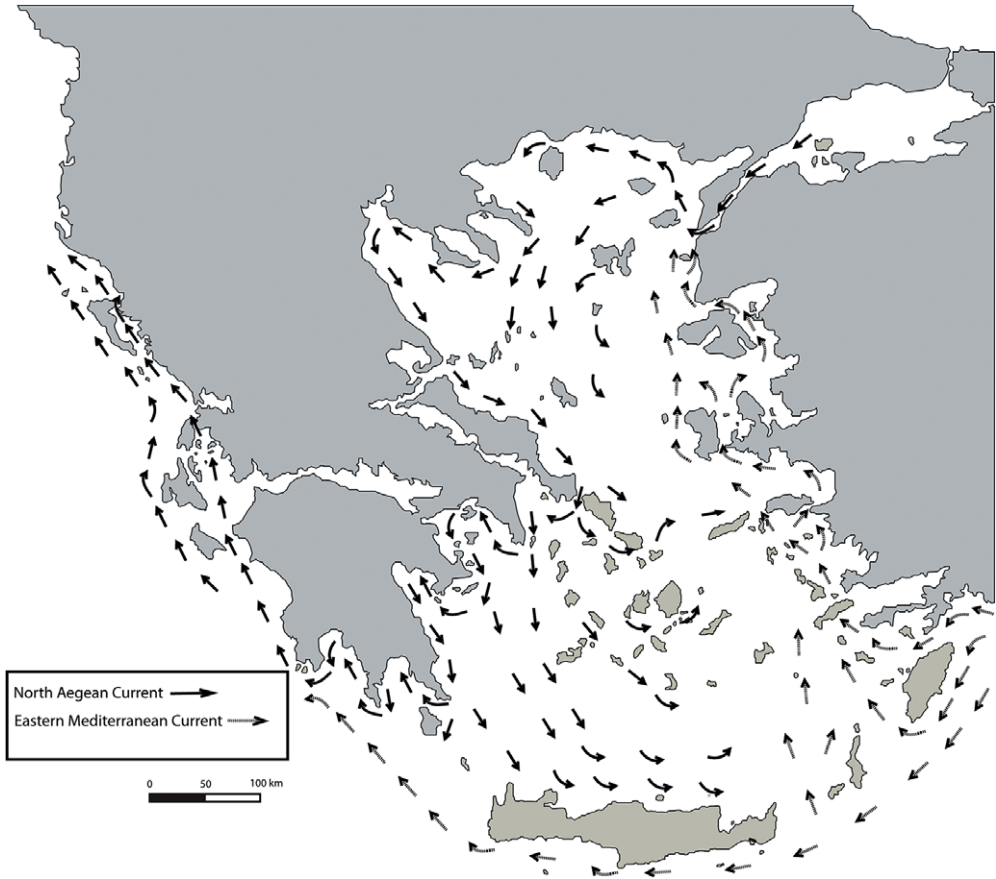


Figure 4.10 General sea flows in the Aegean.

(Source: © Tartaron 2013: 98–9 based on Papageorgiou 2008: fig. 3)

isolated hamlets, these harbours were better connected to their counterparts across the Gulf than to their inland neighbours. They were the ideal base for launching attacks on the Peloponnese. Possession of these harbours allowed direct raids against the Peloponnesian allies of the Spartans without having to circumvent the peninsula through the treacherous waters of Cape Maleas.³³⁹ In addition, these harbours offered quicker connections to important economic regions such as Sicily, the Adriatic and the poleis of

³³⁹ Morton 2001: 41, 83. A comparison between Tolmides' campaign against the Peloponnese in 457/6 and Pericles' in 453/2 is illuminating. Tolmides had to circumvent the Peloponnese to attack the Sicyonians, whereas Pericles sailed out from Pagai in the Megarid and saved valuable time and resources: Thuc. 1.108, 111. Freitag 2005: 304–39 analyses the military 'function' of the Corinthian Gulf.

the Ionic Sea.³⁴⁰ Control of harbours on the Corinthian Gulf promontory was therefore a vital asset for the Athenians at all times, and more so during times of hostilities with the Spartans.

4.2.1 *The Corinthian Gulf*

The Corinthian Gulf promontory was home to several harbours. The largest and best known were Siphai, Kreusis and Chorsiai. All three were located in the territory of Thespiai, which explains the Athenians' interest in maintaining cordial relations with this polis throughout the fifth century.³⁴¹ Control of the harbours was possibly lost after the King's Peace of 386, rendering each independent, explaining the relative lack of attestations for friendly ties between the Thespians and Athenians during that period.³⁴² With the rise of Theban power after 371 and the integration of large swaths of Boiotia into their *chora*, we may assume, as John Buckler does, that these harbours became part of the Theban territory.³⁴³ As will be argued below, the Thebans realised the importance of these harbours for the defence of Boiotia from the later fifth century onward. During their hegemonial heyday the Boiotians secured these coastal towns from foreign invasion via extensive fortifications. These works mitigated one of the *koinon*'s defensive weaknesses.

Siphai and Kreusis

Siphai (modern-day Aliko) and Kreusis, located near the modern town of Livadostro, were nestled into natural harbours that offered space for smaller fleets to lay anchor for the night. Siphai, in particular, commands a protected bay along the north shore of the Corinthian Gulf.

Both harbours were harder to reach for larger armies and therefore the perfect base for landing troops to establish footholds in Boiotia without the threat of a fierce defensive effort. One example is the Athenian attacks in

³⁴⁰ The Boiotians were maybe involved in the colonisation of Italy: Roller 1994. For their Adriatic connections: D'Ercole 2010. For the Adriatic's increased importance for Athens in the fourth century: RO 24; 100 = IG II³ 1 370; OR 149. For Corcyra's connections to the Adriatic: Kiechle 1979.

³⁴¹ NIO 5; Schachter 2016a: 51–65. These harbours were arguably located in the territory of Thisbe, but since this town belonged to the Thespian sphere, one can argue Thespiai controlled these harbours.

³⁴² *IThesp* 38 specifies these towns as separate entities to Thespiai, unlike earlier inscriptions such as NIO 5.

³⁴³ Buckler 1980b: 22; Roesch 1965: 50–2, 54–8.

424: Siphai and Kreusis were supposed to be betrayed to the general Demosthenes.³⁴⁴ Although the plan ultimately failed, the intended creation of two enclaves on the Corinthian Gulf, combined with the planned takeover of Chaironeia, would have granted the Athenians full control over the Corinthian Gulf promontory in Boiotia and an easily defensible foothold from which to hollow out the unity of the *koinon*.

In addition, Kreusis was the most important harbour on the coast and arguably Thespias's corridor to the wider Mediterranean Sea.³⁴⁵ This commercial function would have enhanced the appeal of controlling the harbour and, with it, the imports into Boiotia from the commercial networks stretching across the Corinthian Gulf and beyond. The precarity of the harbour's defences and its economic prominence were probably the main factors for the construction of the city's defences that can be seen to this day and which were constructed during the heyday of Theban hegemony or shortly thereafter.³⁴⁶

On the basis of its remains, Siphai received the most extensive fortifications out of all the coastal towns on the Corinthian Gulf (see [Figure 4.11](#)). The fortifications dominated the town's Akropolis, with its curtain walls cascading down into the sea to protect the harbour.³⁴⁷ Apparently, the strategic outweighed the economic in this case. Considering the recent experiences of the Boiotians – with the Spartans using Siphai as the entrance point into Boiotia in 371 – that comes as less of a surprise.³⁴⁸

Chorsiai

Chorsiai (modern-day Khostia or Prodromos) is located above the bay of Hagios Sarandi. Similar to Kreusis and Siphai, it formed part of the Thespias *chora* during the fifth century, before gaining independence and finally being integrated into the Theban *chora*. While the archaeological record left a less impressive legacy of fortification remains than the other harbours on the Corinthian Gulf, excavations revealed that fortifications were in place by the early 360s. These must have included a circuit wall around the Akropolis, in addition to the remaining gate and tower that remain standing.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁴ Thuc. 4.76.

³⁴⁵ Bonnier 2014: 219. For Kreusis' proximity and importance to Thespias compared with other harbours: Farinetti 2011: 155–65. It is interesting that the helmsman of the Argonauts, Tiphys, came from Siphai: Ap. Rhod. 1.105.

³⁴⁶ Fossey and Gauvin 1985b; Roesch 1965: 218 fig. 4. ³⁴⁷ Cooper 2000; Schwandner 1977.

³⁴⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.10; 5.4.16–17; 60; 6.4.3; 6.4.25; Ages. 2.18. ³⁴⁹ Fossey 1981: 51–61.



Figure 4.11 Siphai fortifications.

(Source: Author)

Compared with its counterparts, however, Chorsiai was more isolated as it lay further away from Thespiiai and closer to the Phocian border. Additionally, it occupied a strategic location on a vital axis in the central plains of Boiotia.³⁵⁰ It was of more importance to northern and western neighbours, such as the Phocians, who utilised Chorsiai as a base for further operations in Boiotia in 347/6.³⁵¹ The town's potential as a stronghold was realised by Philip, who returned the town and harbour in the Peace of Philokrates in 346 but not before demolishing its walls.³⁵² Obviously, it was meant to hinder any future Phocian incursions, but it also removed an obstacle for the Macedonians to enter Boiotia and the possibility for hostile forces to establish an enclave at an important cross-roads and harbour within Boiotia.

³⁵⁰ Farinetti 2011: 167–78. For Chorsiai's strategic location on transport axes: Freitag 2005: 314–15.

³⁵¹ Diod. 16.58.1. ³⁵² Dem. 19.141.

The Corinthian Gulf as a Strategic Asset for the Athenians and Spartans

The best example of Athenian maritime interest in employing Boiotia was simultaneously one of the anomalies of neighbourly relations: the period of Athenian domination over Boiotia (458–446). During the early stages of the First Peloponnesian War, the Spartans landed troops in Phocis to intervene in a local dispute. Their return to the Peloponnese by way of the Corinthian Gulf was prevented by the Athenian navy, forcing the Spartan forces to march overland via Boiotia (Chapters 3.2.3, 4.3).³⁵³ In the ensuing Battle of Tanagra the Spartans gained control over Boiotia, before the Athenians recaptured it after the Battle of Oinophyta (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.3). The swift response indicates the importance of Boiotia to the Athenians.

By (re)occupying the region, the Athenians guaranteed themselves of more harbours in the Corinthian Gulf, with Kreusis and Siphai as bases for raids on the Peloponnese. That allowed them to take the initiative and keep the Spartans from marching out of the Peloponnese. The move to secure the Corinthian Gulf came in 456/5, when the Athenians settled Messenian refugees at Naupaktos, a town they had captured the year before.³⁵⁴ This created a loyal enclave at the narrowest entry point to the Corinthian Gulf. Fleets could be stationed here to control the shipping into the Gulf and guard against hostile ships hoping to enter it.³⁵⁵ The harbour also served as a base for operations for expansion in north-western Greece. The settlement would not have been possible without the occupation of Boiotia.³⁵⁶ It provided the security needed for the Athenians to comfortably extend into north-western Greece and curtail Spartan ambitions in Central Greece, making their strategy one-dimensional by forcing the Spartans to march overland if they desired to attack Athens or Boiotia.³⁵⁷

It is with this maritime perspective in mind – control over the Corinthian Gulf – that the Athenian decision to gain mastery over Boiotia *and* Phocis after the Battle of Oinophyta (458) should be viewed. Scholars view this occupation of two ‘landed’ regions as an Athenian

³⁵³ Perhaps the Athenians stationed a fleet in the Corinthian Gulf at one of these harbours to hinder the Spartan return by sea. The translation of the participle ‘περιπλεύσαντες’ (Thuc. 1.107.3; *CT I* 170) suggests the Athenian ships were already in the Gulf, rather than having to sail around the Peloponnese.

³⁵⁴ Thuc. 1.103.3; Diod. 11.84.7. I follow Thucydides in putting the capture before Tolmides’ expedition against the Peloponnese; Diodorus places it in the same campaign: Kallet 2016: 16 n. 5.

³⁵⁵ Kallet 2016. For Naupaktos’ importance within the Corinthian Gulf: Freitag 2005: 67–93, 338.

³⁵⁶ Badian 1990: 367–8. ³⁵⁷ Freitag 2005: 336.

attempt to create a landed empire in Central Greece, deviating from their maritime credo focused on the Aegean.³⁵⁸ I would contend that the control of both Boiotia and Phocis had less to do with the creation of a land empire, and was more in line with the maritime outlook of the Athenian empire, by securing harbours around the Corinthian Gulf.³⁵⁹

Such a 'maritime interpretation' also accords better with the Athenians' strength, their navy and their goal of neutralising threats from Corinth and the rest of the Peloponnese. This interpretation takes on added importance in the wake of Diodorus' remark that the Athenians failed to take charge of Thebes in their period of domination (458–446). According to the first-century historian, the general Myronides became master of all the cities of Boiotia:

A battle took place at Oinophyta in Boiotia, and since both sides withstood the stress of the conflict with stout hearts, they spent the day in fighting; but after a severe struggle the Athenians put the Boiotians to flight and Myronides became master of all the cities of Boiotia with the exception of Thebes.³⁶⁰

Considering the centrality and importance of Thebes within the construct of Boiotia as a region, this may seem unlikely. But his remark makes more sense if it occurred after the collapse of a pro-Athenian regime in Thebes, perhaps shortly after Oinophyta ([Chapter 3.2.3](#)). Keeping these rebels in check would require the instalment of a garrison and accompanying costs. Allowing *stasis* to continue, however, neutralised the possibility of a strong Thebes and prevented its inhabitants from exerting its gravitational pull on its neighbours, leaving the rebellious elements in Boiotia without a central city to rally around.

Strategically, Boiotia could be controlled without holding Thebes. The city could be bypassed en route to the Corinthian Gulf. Nor did it control all routes from Attica into Boiotia. The roads through Tanagra and Plataia were viable options that ignored Thebes altogether.³⁶¹ This stresses the importance of the coastal areas of Boiotia (and Phocis), rather than the inland poleis. This interpretation illuminates why in his 446 campaign

³⁵⁸ Cartledge 2020: 106; Conwell 2008: 64; Green 2010: 84 n. 110; Hornblower 2011: 33; Mackil 2013: 33. The Athenians campaigned against Thessaly to install a befriended ally (Thuc. 1.111), but I contend this aimed to secure Thessaly with an eye on the Chalkidike rather than to create a land empire.

³⁵⁹ Hence the occupation of Phocis. The decision to take prominent Opuntian Locrians as hostages fits into this scheme (Thuc. 1.108). If a landed empire was the intention, Locris would have been occupied, rather than neutralised.

³⁶⁰ Diod. 11.83.1. ³⁶¹ For the routes: Fachard and Pirisino 2015.

against rebels in Boiotia, Tolmides targeted Chaironeia as a base of operations, rather than Orchomenos. It was about re-asserting control in the poleis that controlled the passage into Phocis and the routes to the Corinthian Gulf, while Orchomenos exerted influence on neither.³⁶² The occupation of Boiotia and Phocis had less to do with creating a landed empire and more to do with capturing harbours on the Corinthian Gulf, a vital advantage against the Spartans.

The Spartans realised this too. It explains their decision to intervene in Boiotia after the Battle of Tanagra and transform it into a hostile enclave on the Athenian doorstep, but also to deny the Athenians further access to Boiotia's harbours. In the peace treaty ending the First Peloponnesian War, the Spartans demanded the Athenians relinquish most of their harbours along the Corinthian Gulf, such as those in Achaia. The Athenians had already lost Boiotia's harbours thanks to the Boiotian rebellion.³⁶³ Control over the Corinthian Gulf was one of the pivotal disputes of the First Peloponnesian War, as shown by the Spartan demands. Kleon's demands for the return of these harbours in the peace negotiations of 425 is equally revealing:

He [Kleon] persuaded them [the Athenians] to give this answer: That they in the island ought first to deliver up their arms, and come themselves to Athens; and when they should be there, if the Lacedaimonians would make restitution of Nisaia and Pagai and Troizen and Achaia, which they had not won in war but had received by former treaty when the Athenians, being in distress and at that time in more need of peace than now, then they should have their men again, and peace should be made for as long as they both should think good.³⁶⁴

These demands were a fancy of Kleon's, but the Gulf's importance did not wane in subsequent decades. The Athenians maintained Naupaktos, which continued to serve as an important naval base for their operations, especially during the Peloponnesian War (431–404).³⁶⁵ A firm presence in the Corinthian Gulf was not only more pertinent with the rise of Corcyra as

³⁶² The importance of Chaironeia is shown by its early sophisticated fortifications, signifying its role in guarding the crossing between Phocis and Boiotia: Fossey 1988: 375–9. Chaironeia formed a key component in the Athenian campaign in Boiotia in 424, probably because of its accessibility from the Corinthian Gulf: Thuc. 4.89.

³⁶³ Thuc. 1.115.1–2. They retained control over Naupaktos. The harbours in Boiotia had already been lost.

³⁶⁴ Thuc. 4.21.2–3. The Spartans could not hand over control over Boiotia, as the Boiotians were a 'free' and 'autonomous' member of the Peloponnesian League: Bayliss 2017.

³⁶⁵ Kallet 2016.

a potential Athenian ally; it equally served as the foundation to launch new attacks on Boiotia during the first decade of the war. On two occasions, the Gulf acted as the conduit for Athenian troop movements *into* Boiotia. In 426, aided by the earthquakes ravaging the Peloponnese that handicapped the Spartans, the Athenians set out on a ambitious new aggressive policy.³⁶⁶ Attacking Boiotia formed part of it, as they were adamant about reintegrating it into the empire. One example is Demosthenes' campaign in Aitolia. His campaign aimed to subdue the Aitolians with the future prospect of marching into Boiotia unopposed.³⁶⁷ The second example is the illustrious Delion campaign of 424. A two-pronged attack on the Boiotian seashores was supposed to create Athenian enclaves to further deconstruct the cohesion of the *koinon*. Demosthenes would land forces on the Corinthian Gulf promontory, where two towns – Chaironeia and Siphai – were to be betrayed to him, but the plan was revealed to the *koinon*, thwarting its execution.³⁶⁸ Regardless of the outcome, the outlines of the plan reveal the importance of the Corinthian Gulf as a conduit for warfare. Control over the Gulf meant the Athenians could launch devastating attacks against the Boiotians, with the aim of subduing their neighbour and concluding the war against the Spartans in their favour. The disastrous end to the Delion campaign put an end to Athenian aspirations of conquering Boiotia and, with it, the Corinthian Gulf as an entrance into Boiotia.

From now on, the Athenians were dependent on obtaining the goodwill of the Boiotians for the use of the harbours, as they would during the Corinthian War (395–386). Perhaps it was with the strategic importance of the Corinthian Gulf in mind that the Spartans decided to decimate the *koinon* and establish garrisons in Plataia and Thespiiai after the King's Peace. These not only served as buffers against Theban expansion, but simultaneously offered the Spartans unhindered access into Boiotia by way of the Corinthian Gulf, should the overland route be blocked. These pro-Spartan enclaves and the fortress at Mavrovouni ensured a safe landing and entry of troops into the Boiotian heartland.³⁶⁹ The wisdom of this strategy

³⁶⁶ Thuc. 3.89; Diod. 12.59.1.

³⁶⁷ Thuc. 3.95. A full-scale attack on the Tanagraike was simultaneously launched from Athens, both by sea and by land. This was probably the precursor to the two-pronged naval attack on Boiotia in 424.

³⁶⁸ Like many Boiotian harbours, Siphai was a good natural harbour for boats, but offered more difficulties for armies trying to reach the plains: Farinetti 2011: 176.

³⁶⁹ The fortress at Mavrovouni can be dated to the period of Spartan occupation in the 370s: Fossey 2019: 95–135. The decision to construct a fortress at an uninhabited place must have

was proven in the Boiotian Wars (379/8–371). With the passes at Mount Kithairon obstructed by Athenian and Theban forces, the Spartans constructed a plan to starve Athens into submission by blocking the Piraeus with a fleet, while at the same time landing forces in either Phocis or Kreusis.³⁷⁰ In response, the Athenians acted upon a Theban request for aid by sending a fleet around the Peloponnese to raid the territory of the Spartans and their allies. This diversion prevented the Spartan naval plan from materialising and led to the Athenian victory at Alyzia, which instigated the peace negotiations.³⁷¹ If the Athenians would have had access to the Boiotian harbours at Kreusis or Siphai, the Spartans would not have been able to land troops in Boiotia. The vulnerability of these harbours was realised by the Boiotians. After their break with the Athenians in 369 (Chapter 3.1.3) significant effort was put in fortifying the harbours on the Corinthian Gulf, ensuring its defences were capable of withstanding invasions and taking away the possibility of hostile troop landings.³⁷² In wars against the Peloponnesians, the Boiotians were thus a valuable ally not just because of their armies, but equally because of their harbours on the Corinthian Gulf promontory.

4.2.2 The Euboian Gulf

The best harbours were found on Boiotia's eastern seaboard. The finest natural harbour in the Euboian Gulf was Aulis, where Agamemnon once launched a thousand ships against Troy.³⁷³ Other harbours included Anthedon, further north, and Oropos and Delion to the south.³⁷⁴ These harbours provided safe havens along the strait's treacherous waters and temperamental winds.³⁷⁵ These harbours were useful commercial bases for ships navigating this important channel. Militarily, they appear of subsidiary importance for a long time from the Boiotian perspective. These harbours were mostly exploited by foreign powers, until the decision to create a substantial fleet in the 360s. In contrast to the harbours on the

been deliberate to dominate this part of the territory. The Thebans realised its potential after Leuktra (371). They took over and constructed a Boiotian-style tower within the walls of the Spartan enclosure: Fossey and Tomlinson 1970: 260–1.

³⁷⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.60–2. ³⁷¹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.62–6.

³⁷² Cooper 2000 overviews this fortification scheme, though he controversially incorporates Aigosthena and Pagai into the scheme.

³⁷³ Buckler and Beck 2008: 180–98; Gehrke 1992.

³⁷⁴ Harbours such as Larymna or Halai, while situated on the extensions of the Euboian strait, were only Boiotian possessions for shorter periods of time and will therefore not be treated.

³⁷⁵ Gehrke 1992.

Corinthian Gulf promontory, harbours like Delion, Anthedon, Oropos and Aulis did not receive substantial fortifications, despite repeated Athenian attacks in the fifth century. The inhabitants of Aulis and other coastal towns were *synoikised* with the Thebans in the early phases of the Peloponnesian War, but no other measures were taken. Perhaps the collaboration with the Euboians from 411 onwards safeguarded these harbours. A similar situation may have existed after the Battle of Leuktra in 371 (Chapter 2.5). Maybe the fortifications did not survive for posterity. Or another reason for the lack of fortifications on this promontory is that, unlike their counterparts in western Boiotia, these harbours were never fully integrated into the Theban *chora*, with the exception of Aulis.

From Where Agamemnon Once Sailed: Aulis

Aulis was the harbour on this coastline most suited for military ventures and should be viewed as *the* military harbour for the *koinon*.³⁷⁶ The harbour was known in antiquity for the launch of Agamemnon's massive fleet to besiege Troy. Due to its current-day dimensions, that seems striking, but geoarchaeological investigations revealed the extent of the harbour in ancient times, which was substantially larger than its contemporary size.³⁷⁷

These military connotations suggest that the twenty-five Boiotian ships constructed for the Peloponnesian fleet during the Peloponnesian War were likely stationed at Aulis. The *synoikism* with the Thebans during that conflict would make it the ideal harbour for launching ships into the Aegean. The purpose of the proposed fleet was to convince wavering Athenian allies to rebel and support the Euboians in an uprising (Chapter 4.1.3).³⁷⁸ The Spartans also chose Aulis as their main naval base for their campaigns in Asia Minor in 396. While Agesilaos wanted to emulate Agamemnon, the decision to sail from Aulis was equally based on logistics, as it could house a substantial fleet and was the best departure point for Asia Minor.³⁷⁹ The Athenians included the Thebans in their Second Athenian Confederacy because of similar considerations, besides matters of reputation and long-standing collaboration (Chapter 3.4.3).

³⁷⁶ Buckler and Beck 2008: 180–98 contra Fossey 1979, who prefers Skroponeri, located between Anthedon and Larymna.

³⁷⁷ Ghilardi et al. 2013. ³⁷⁸ Thuc. 8.3.2; 106.3.

³⁷⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.3. The choice for Aulis was not just predicated by strategic concerns, as it could be used for propagandistic purposes as well: Cartledge 1987: 212; Cawkwell 2011: 245–6.

They are the only polis in the list of members that can plausibly be termed 'land-locked', unlike the other members, who had a more maritime character because they were island or seaboard poleis. The *synoikism* of Thebes with various smaller Boiotian poleis during the Peloponnesian War included the famous port of Aulis, annulling the land-focused nature of the Theban war effort.³⁸⁰ Their access to the Euboian Gulf must have been a major boost to the Confederacy. The Boiotians utilised Aulis as their base to launch their own naval campaign in the 360s against the Athenians, demonstrating that the harbour continued to occupy an important role in neighbourly relations.³⁸¹ The strategic importance of the harbour would later be acknowledged by Macedonian generals, who chose Aulis as the main port to station their fleets.³⁸² In sum, Aulis was *the* military harbour for the *koinon* as it was easily defensible, properly suited for stationing large fleets and perfectly located to influence the Euboian Gulf and the Euboian poleis. Hence it was less useful for the Athenians, who possessed good natural harbours from which to sail the Cyclades and Euboian Gulf. Aulis nevertheless posed a daunting challenge whenever the harbour was used by hostile forces.

The Other Harbours: Oropos, Delion and Anthedon

In contrast to Aulis, the other harbours on the eastern seaboard of Boiotia – Oropos, Delion and Anthedon – fulfilled different functions along the Euboian Gulf. Anthedon, for instance, left very few archaeological traces and those that remain date to the sixth century CE.³⁸³ The harbour seems to have been of local economic importance, as can be gathered from the fish pricing lists found in Akraiphnia. It concerned the transport of salt-water fish to this inland polis, and the most likely origin of these fish is Anthedon. As Emily Mackil argued, the town of Anthedon was exceptional as its economy was heavily dominated by the extraction of marine resources, based on the fish lists and the description of the third-century traveller Herakleides Kritikos.³⁸⁴ This town and its harbour mostly served to provide the rest of Boiotia with salt-water fish, emphasising its economic role in the *koinon*'s economy.

³⁸⁰ Hell. Oxy. 20.3 (Behrwald). I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this insightful remark, which transforms the inclusion of Thebes in the list. Nevertheless, the epithet 'land-locked' refers to the polis' inland location. Regardless of the expanse of their power, their urban environment had no harbour attached to it.

³⁸¹ Van Wijk 2019. ³⁸² Diod. 19.77.4; 77.1; 20.82.4; 100.5; Liv. 35.51.6.

³⁸³ Buckler and Beck 2008: 187. ³⁸⁴ Mackil 2013: 269–70. Her. Krit. 23–4.

Delion and its harbour remain more enigmatic. It was probably the main port of the Tanagraians until they took control of Aulis in the later fourth century. Throughout the Classical period, Delion consisted only of a sanctuary, with archaeological evidence for settlement from the Hellenistic period onwards.³⁸⁵ Thucydides' narrative of the Battle of Delion appears to confirm this image.³⁸⁶ Its strategic value as a possible enclave on Boiotian soil was recognised by the Athenians in the Delion campaign of 424, but this failed attack is the only attempt to capture the harbour and sanctuary. The lack of any infrastructure on site before the Athenian landing suggests the harbour was of lesser importance than other Boiotian harbours at the time.

A more convincing angle to pursue is the religious one. Delion was the harbour for Apollo's sanctuary. Its relative lack of infrastructure and the dearth of references indicate that the sacred function of the harbour outweighed any other function it might hold. This appears to be supported by Herodotus' account of the retrieval of Apollo's statue in 470 from Delos, which created a ritual link between Delion and Delos, and Boiotia and the Delian League (Chapter 3.5).³⁸⁷ Perhaps the lack of strategic and military importance made Delion an intriguing option for the Athenians in 424, as a landing would not be expected nor defended that easily.

A final area of interest was Oropos. Its biggest harbour was presumably located near the town and was the place where the foodstuffs from Euboia and other products from elsewhere arrived, to be transported overland to Athens.³⁸⁸ Its military purpose was limited. We hear of no 'landings' or other endeavours at this harbour. On the contrary, what is stressed is its 'economic' function. Supporting this notion is the inscription from the 450s detailing the ferry fees for ships sailing between Oropos and Euboia.³⁸⁹ It details the payments required for a safe voyage, the Athenian efforts to control the Euboian Gulf and the 'economic' traffic flowing from Oropos. Clearly, the Athenians were aware of Oropos' economic potential in the maritime network of the Euboian Gulf. Another

³⁸⁵ Farinetti 2011: 214–15; Schachter 2016a: 80–112. ³⁸⁶ Thuc. 4.90. ³⁸⁷ Hdt. 6.118.

³⁸⁸ Thuc. 7.28.1; Horden and Purcell 2000: 128.

³⁸⁹ IG I³ 41 ll.67–71:

ξ [στο δε τῶι πορθμεύοντι ἐκ Χ]-
 [α]λκίδος ἐς Ὀροπὸν πρ[άττεσθαι τρεῖς ὀβολός· ἕαν δ]-
 [έ] τις ἐχς Ὀροπὸ ἐς ἡεστ[ίαιαν ἢ ἐς Δῖον ἢ ἐκεῖθεν ἐ]-
 ς Ὀροπὸν πορθμεύει, πρ[αττέσθω ἡεπτ' ὀβολός· ἕαν δ]-
 ἐ τις ἐκ Χαλκίδος ἐς ἡε[στ]ίαιαν πορθμεύει, πρ[αττ]-
 ἐ σθω τέτταρας ὀβολός[ς21]

aspect of its appeal was the sacred harbour leading to the Amphiareion, the Delphinion,³⁹⁰ which was a smaller harbour whose sole purpose was to provide an accessible landing spot for pilgrims wanting to visit the Amphiareion. This could mean that the harbour was initially of minor importance, but with the growth of the cult's popularity, it is easy to envision the harbour becoming an intriguing part of the Oropia's appeal for external powers, especially since this harbour was closer to Athens than the town.

The Euboian Gulf as a Strategic Conduit for the Athenians

For the Athenians access to the Euboian Gulf was less important, since they could bypass the strait altogether to reach the Black Sea region. What the Boiotian harbours on the Euboian Gulf did offer to the Athenians, however, was an entry point into Boiotia when the overland routes were obstructed. Another appealing point was the close connection between the Euboian harbours and their Boiotian counterparts. The Athenian hold over Euboia was always precarious, especially with the small body of water separating Chalkis from Boiotia. The Boiotians could therefore easily threaten the Athenian hold over the Euboians. Both aspects of the harbours will be briefly analysed here.

The first point is perhaps the most vital and another reason why it was imperative for the Athenians to maintain firm control over Boiotia. The small body of water separating the two geographical regions led Ephoros to comment that 'Euboia has been made a part of Boiotia by the Euripos, since the Euripos is so narrow'.³⁹¹ It was probably with that in mind that the Athenians established a cleruchy at Chalkis in 507/6: to secure their grasp over the island and hinder access to Euboia for the Boiotians.³⁹²

Two examples of Boiotia's influence on Euboia illustrate the devastating effects its hostility could have on the Athenian empire. In 446 the fire of rebellion spread from Koroneia to Euboia, prompting the Euboians to revolt against the Athenians. Since Euboian exiles participated in the Boiotian revolt, the latter likely returned the favour. This situation is unimaginable without the Athenians losing control over Boiotia in 446. Although they subdued the Euboians eventually, it came at a great cost of

³⁹⁰ Cosmopoulos 2001: 59–60; Str. 9.2.6.

³⁹¹ Strabo 9.2.2: προστίθησι δὲ ὅτι καὶ τὴν Εὐβοίαν τρόπον τινὰ μέρος αὐτῆς πεποίηκεν ὁ Εὐριπὸς οὕτω στενός. Even 'sea-hating' Hesiod had no qualms in sailing from Aulis to Euboia: Constantakopoulou 2007: 224.

³⁹² Coulton et al. 2002; Igelbrink 2016: 175–84.

manpower and resources without ever neutralising the danger Boiotia posed to the island.³⁹³ Another example is the aftermath of the Athenian garrison's expulsion from Oropos in 411. With the Athenian presence in the strait diminished, the Euboians revolted, working in tandem with the Boiotians. They constructed a bridge across the narrowest point of the Euboian Gulf to ensure unhindered cooperation and prevent the Athenians from isolating the Euboians from their mainland supporters.³⁹⁴ While the bridge did not pose a terminal threat to Athens – the grain fleets arrived at Oropos by 'island hopping' through the Cyclades – it was a physical manifestation of defiance at a time when Athenian hopes were spiralling downward. It demonstrated the damage the Boiotian-Euboian collaboration could inflict. The blockage prevented the Athenians from crossing into the northern edges of Boiotia to raid the coastline, as they had done in 413 with their barbarous attacks on Mykalessos.³⁹⁵ Supporting the revolt was the fleet of the Peloponnesian League, which was stationed along the eastern seaboard of Boiotia.³⁹⁶ Without the help of these marine contingents, the revolt would have succumbed. If Boiotia had been an Athenian possession or ally, as envisioned by the attacks on Delion, the Spartans could never have employed these harbours as bases to erode Athenian power in Euboia and the Aegean.

Another example of the Boiotian maritime threats is the naval programme of the 360s. Although its success rate has been debated, the route travelled by Epameinondas shows that the proximity to Attica affected not only the borderlands but the Cyclades as well. Setting out from Aulis, the Boiotian fleet probably instigated a rebellion on Keos and may have stirred the people of Delos.³⁹⁷ The success in dislodging the Byzantines from the Athenian alliance, a serious blow to their grain supply, shows the naval ramifications of a hostile relationship with the Boiotians.³⁹⁸

Conversely, Boiotian harbours offered the Athenians entry points into Boiotia and locations for establishing footholds in the region. Even during hostilities, these harbours, for example, Delion, allowed the Athenians to play to their own strengths and create bulwarks against the *koinon* from which to expand in the region. This became particularly pertinent in the Delion campaign of 424. Two years prior they had utilised their own

³⁹³ Thuc. 1.114.3; Diod. 12.7; Plut. *Per.* 22.1–2; *AIO* papers 8 and 9.

³⁹⁴ Diod. 13.47.3–4; Bakhuizen 1970. No other primary source mentions the construction of the bridge.

³⁹⁵ Thuc. 7.29–30; *CT* III 598. ³⁹⁶ Thuc. 8.3.2; 5.2; 106.3; Freitag 2005: 342.

³⁹⁷ Delos: Tuplin 2005: 55–8; Keos (*RO* 31). ³⁹⁸ Russell 2016.

harbour at Oropos to land troops and march overland to Boiotia, but the strategy this time was different. The aim was to create a stronghold at Delion that could be supplied by the Athenian fleet.³⁹⁹ This vulnerability to maritime attacks was perhaps one of the incentives for the Thebans to *synoikise* with towns on the eastern seaboard, to shield them from the Athenians and prevent these harbours being turned into enclaves from which to launch further attacks.⁴⁰⁰

Whereas the eastern seaboard was of less immediate strategic interest to the Athenians, the eastern Boiotian harbours still constituted an additional benefit and a reason to either control or befriend the Boiotians. The close connections with the Euboians could prove troublesome, as their geographical proximity could hardly be thwarted. Keeping the Boiotians on friendly terms ensured these harbours were not used by enemies to base their fleets, denying them direct access into the Aegean and the base of Athenian power.

Conversely, the Boiotian influence on Euboia could be beneficial. The Thebans concluded an alliance in 377/6 with the Histaian, on the north point of Euboia, granting them full mastery over their new ally (Chapter 2.5).⁴⁰¹ The town had defiantly resisted any inclusion into the newly formed Second Athenian Confederacy – the only Euboian city to do so – and was released from the Spartan grasp in 377.⁴⁰² The Thebans presumably convinced the town to become a member of the Confederacy in 375.⁴⁰³ If the date of the *hagamonía* treaty is correct, it is a testimony to the efficiency of the Theban-Athenian synergy of those years and the manner in which Boiotia's eastern seaboard could work to the benefit of the Athenians.

In sum, Boiotia's marine connectivity should not be overlooked when approaching the region's value to Athens. In contrast to other Greek powers, such as the Spartans, the Boiotians offered direct access to the Corinthian Gulf, and with it, north-western Greece. Further afield, Italy and the Adriatic beckoned. Similarly, the eastern Boiotian harbours granted the Athenians a more defensible path to invade the region during times of hostility. These harbours could act as bases for hostile fleets to launch attacks on Euboia and the Aegean. Keeping the Boiotians friendly, or even subduing them, was predicated on two elements: first, the

³⁹⁹ The support of fleets is suggested by the Athenians fleeing to their ships after the battle: Thuc. 4.96.7–8; Diod. 12.70.4; Pl. *Sym.* 220d–221c.

⁴⁰⁰ Hell. *Oxy.* 20.3 (Behrwald). ⁴⁰¹ Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012. ⁴⁰² Diod. 15.30.

⁴⁰³ RO 22 l. 114: [Ἔσ]τιαιήσ.

advantages the *koinon* offered the Athenians in terms of maritime warfare and, second, the defence of the Attic hinterland, to which we shall now turn.

4.3 Keeping the War from Attica's Borders: Boiotia as a Buffer

Courtesy of its geographical location, Boiotia was the ideal buffer for the Athenians. It was positioned at a crossroads between northern Greece and the Peloponnese and shared a long border with Attica, stretching from the Corinthian Gulf to the Euboian Gulf. While the idea of creating an impenetrable wall on the outskirts of Attica was not completely unrealistic, the porosity of the borders made it impossible to control roads into Attica or block an invading army (Chapter 4.1). Most defensive structures in Attica were aimed at protecting the fertile areas surrounding it, rather than opposing any significant hostile forces.⁴⁰⁴ Additionally, the costs of garrisoning, constructing and maintaining numerous fortifications on the border was a significant investment, even for a wealthy polis like Athens.⁴⁰⁵ With no guarantee of staving off invading armies from ravaging the countryside, it was better to keep the war away from Attica altogether. Far from an *ex novo* conception in the fourth century as a result of the psychological and economic devastation caused by the invasions during the Peloponnesian War, as Josiah Ober holds, there were already discernible concerns to protect the countryside in an earlier phase of Attica's history.⁴⁰⁶ A key role in that scheme was performed by the Boiotians. In fact, the Periclean scheme during the Peloponnesian War – the withdrawal behind the Long Walls and the reliance on the navy to supply Athens – was an anomaly and should not be regarded as the common defence strategy of the Athenians.⁴⁰⁷ During the first half of the fifth century in particular this was an untenable strategy: the Long Walls were yet to be

⁴⁰⁴ Munn 2010; Fachard 2013. ⁴⁰⁵ Fachard et al. 2020a.

⁴⁰⁶ Ober 1985a discerns a more stringent concern with protecting the Attic countryside in the fourth century. His views were severely criticised: Harding 1988; 1990; 1995; Lohmann 1987; Munn 1986; 1993. Admittedly, in a footnote in *Fortress Attica*, and an article that appeared in the same year, Ober acknowledges that border defence was a pressing problem before the fourth century: Ober 1985a: 65 n. 28; 1985b. Daly 2015 interprets Athenian fortifications in the sixth century as reflections thereof. He regards these structures as capable of withstanding significant armies. The structure he mentions on the Megarian border could be dated to the fourth century, however, as Sylvian Fachard informs me.

⁴⁰⁷ Spence 1990.

constructed, leaving Athens and its harbours vulnerable to enemy attacks.⁴⁰⁸

Ensuring the enemy never reached the borders of Attica was therefore necessary to safeguard the city and its hinterland. That is the conventional concept of the buffer defence strategy. Josiah Ober, in his seminal work *Fortress Attica*, follows Adcock and Mosley when he gives this description of the buffer strategy for protecting the countryside:

It is predicated on persuading – through alliances – or coercing the states on one's borders to resist the [incoming enemy]. These poleis therefore serve as buffers against the enemy, who must fight through the marshes before reclining one's own state. The idea is, of course, to exhaust or defeat the enemy within the buffer before he ever reaches the frontier.⁴⁰⁹

Enter the Boiotians. The Athenians shared their longest border with them. They could act as the perfect buffer state, especially since armies were nominally required to ask for permission to cross a polis' territory.⁴¹⁰ A cordial relationship was especially vital in the case of an invading army from the north, like the Persians in 480/79 or the Macedonians in 339/8. Boiotia also shielded Attica from invasions from the Peloponnese. Attacking Attica with a hostile Boiotia in the back would leave any invading army in a precarious situation and worked as a deterrent.⁴¹¹ Convincing its inhabitants, whether voluntary or forcefully, to shield the Athenian hinterland was key. Another aspect was the provisioning of armies. Greek armies were dependent on the goodwill of neutral or friendly polities to provision their troops while on campaign, for instance, through markets. In most cases, the presence of such markets had to be requested. Breaking with the established norm was seen as a gross violation. Demanding provisioning was possible only with overwhelming force, something unattainable even for the Spartans at the apogee of their power.⁴¹² Therefore, rather than view the Athenian occupation of Boiotia in the 450s, or their sudden alliance with them in 339/8, as predicated by the circumstances, I contend that maintaining a fruitful relationship with

⁴⁰⁸ Conwell 2008: 37–63.

⁴⁰⁹ Ober 1985a: 72, basing himself on Adcock and Mosley 1975: 131–2.

⁴¹⁰ Mosley 2007. Thuc. 4.78 on Brasidas needing his *xenoi* from Pharsalus to escort him through Thessaly.

⁴¹¹ Alluded to by the Athenian general Hippocrates on the eve of the Battle of Delion in 424: Thuc. 4.95.1–3.

⁴¹² O'Connor 2022.

the neighbours, either through direct occupation or alliance, was a common thread of Athenian relations with Boiotia.⁴¹³

Initially, the Athenians employed smaller poleis, like Oropos and Plataia, as buffers to hold off Boiotian advances. That mentality changed with the approach of the Persian King Xerxes and his army in 480. At the onset of the war, Boiotians and Athenians stood together against the invaders (Chapter 2.3). Either the border disputes were laid to rest for the time being, considering there was a larger threat looming, or perhaps the Athenians and Boiotians had to stand together because neither would survive on their own.

It was decided to halt the Persian advance at Thermopylai, since its narrow passes formed an ideally defensible position and, when supported by a navy on its flank, could not easily be circumvented (Chapter 2.3). When this plan failed and Boiotia medized, there was no stopping the Persian troops from entering Attica and destroying the countryside and city. What's more, the Spartans decided to retreat to the Peloponnese to form a line of defence at the Isthmus, leaving the Athenians defenceless:

The Athenians requested them to put in at Salamis so that they take their children and women out of Attica and also take counsel what they should do. They had been disappointed in their plans, so they were going to hold a council about the current state of affairs. They expected to find the entire population of the Peloponnese in Boiotia awaiting the barbarian, but they found no such thing. They learned that they were fortifying the Isthmus instead and considered the defence of the Peloponnese the most important thing, disregarding all the rest.⁴¹⁴

Herodotus might be retrojecting attitudes here. By painting the Spartans as unreliable, the Athenian decision to stand against the Persians shines all the more brightly. His account is nevertheless not to be rejected, since his embellished portrait of the Athenians still depicts a genuine concern of the population. This Spartan unreliability – though understandable – confronted the Athenians with the harsh nature of their position in mainland Greece, and their dependency on their neighbours' goodwill, since others

⁴¹³ Van Wijk 2020. [Xen.] *AP* 2.5 underlines the notion: 'those who rule over land cannot travel many days' journey from their own land. For journeys are slow, and it is not possible to carry provisions for a long time if one travels on foot. An army traveling on foot must either pass through friendly territory or fight and conquer.' Translation by Osborne 2004.

⁴¹⁴ Hdt. 8.40.1–2. The Athenians continued to hold this against the Spartans: Queyrell-Bottineau 2014b.

would not commit to Attica's defence.⁴¹⁵ The Boiotians' role as a guardian was crystal clear: with Boiotia overrun, Athens was unable to keep the invaders from their doorstep.

This realisation probably lay at the root of the Athenian-Boiotian rapprochement after the Persian Wars. Whereas the Spartans could sail a more confrontational course in Central Greece, as changes in the political landscape affected the Peloponnese less, it was the reverse for the Athenians (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1).⁴¹⁶ The Persian threat had not dissipated yet, nor were there guarantees the Spartans would come to Attica's aid. Keeping the Boiotians friendly could pay dividends in the future. Perhaps a more reconciling attitude concerning the disputed border areas like the Skourta plain fitted that purpose (Chapter 4.1.1). With a friendly Boiotia at the doorstep, any prospective opponents could be met outside of Athenian territory.

The need to maintain a friendly or firm grasp on Boiotia re-emerges during the initial hostilities with the Spartans in the First Peloponnesian War (460–446). The Spartans had despatched an army into Central Greece in 458 with the intention of protecting its kin in Doris against overbearing Phocian neighbours. Their intervention was successful, but according to both Thucydides and Diodorus, a maritime return to the Peloponnese by way of the Corinthian Gulf was no longer an option. The presence of an Athenian fleet prevented it, so they could intercept the Spartan forces on their march home, as Thucydides writes: 'The route by sea, across the Crissaian gulf, exposed them to the risk of being stopped by the Athenian fleet (Ἀθηναῖοι ναυσὶ περιπλεύσαντες ἔμελλον κωλύσειν) that across [Mount] Geranea seemed scarcely safe, the Athenians holding Megara and Pagai. For the pass was a difficult one, and was always guarded by the Athenians.'⁴¹⁷

Diodorus, however, implies the Athenians took the initiative to attack the Spartans on their march home from Phocis, inevitably ending up in Boiotia if the route went overland:

⁴¹⁵ The Isthmus at Corinth is one of the few cases where a significant investment of resources and manpower could create an impermeable defensible position: Pettigrew 2016.

⁴¹⁶ Cozzoli 1958 argues the opposite, namely, that the Spartans kept the Boiotians intact as a counterweight to Athens. In a sense this proves the centrality of the Boiotians' goodwill for Athenian safety.

⁴¹⁷ Thuc. 1.107.3. *CT I* 170 comments on the translation of the participle 'περιπλεύσαντες' as the fleet already present. This contrasts with other translations that view the naval interception as a possibility.

When the Athenians learned that the Lacedaimonians had concluded the war against the Phocians and were about to make their return home, they decided to attack the Lacedaimonians while on the march. Accordingly they dispatched an army against them, including in it Argives and Thessalians; and with the intention of falling upon them with fifty ships and fourteen thousand men, they occupied the passes about Mount Geranea.⁴¹⁸

Considering the placement of these troops and the probable route to the Peloponnese, the plan to induce a battle in the Parasopia, near their Plataian allies, is not inconceivable. But the Spartans marched to Tanagra, forcing a change in plans (Chapter 3.2.3).⁴¹⁹ The assertive defensive manoeuvre could nevertheless be a worthwhile gamble if successful. Hence the Athenians went out in full force (πανοδημει). It shows they preconceived the idea to use Boiotia as a buffer, as confirmed by the presence of Thessalian and Argive troops since Boiotia occupied the middle ground between them.⁴²⁰ The Athenians were simply unwilling to let the Spartans approach the Attic borders and effectuate a revolt or, worse, attack the city. In both cases Boiotia acted as a shield, either in Plataian territory or, as it transpired, in the Tanagraike.

One may assume the Boiotians were on friendly terms with the Athenians to allow them to march their troops into the Tanagraike.⁴²¹ The Spartan victory threw the plans into disarray, and anti-Athenian regimes were installed throughout the region. Confronted with a hostile Boiotia, the Athenians marched back into Boiotia only sixty-two days after the Battle of Tanagra, defeated the new regimes at Oinophyta and regained control over the region (Chapter 3.2.3). They wasted no time and reinstalled friendly elites. Not only did they restore their friends; they prevented the Spartans from marching in and out of Central Greece on their own volition and forced them to wage the war on Athenian terms.

⁴¹⁸ Diod. 11.80.1–2. Holladay 1982 makes a convincing case for the implausibility of blocking the Megarid and preventing a passage. For Mount Gerania passes occupying the routes from Boiotia: Pettigrew 2016: 49.

⁴¹⁹ Diod. 11.80.2. Perhaps this was permissible because the Thebans were now on the Spartan side, unlike before.

⁴²⁰ The Argives sent a thousand men. A substantial amount of them fell, as can be perceived from the casualty list dedicated in their honour after the battle: Papazarkadas and Sourlas 2012. Ober 1985a: 192 regards it more as an offensive measure to trap the Spartans, rather than a defensive measure to safeguard Attica's borders. Yet I would contend that the notion of trapping the Spartans in central Greece was meant to shield Attica, as evidenced by the decision to march to Tanagra before the Spartans gathered at the Athenian borders.

⁴²¹ During the 426 campaign (Thuc. 3.91), the march into the Tanagraike from Oropos presumably took place during the night (. . . ὑπὸ νύκτα δὲ σχόντες εὐθύς ἐπορεύοντο οἱ ὅπλιται ἀπὸ τῶν νεῶν πεζῆ ἔς Τάναγραν τῆς Βοιωτίας).

With Boiotia secured, there would be no more Spartan attacks on Attica. After the battle, the Spartans appear relatively lacklustre in their attempts to venture outside the Peloponnese *in toto*, eventually leading to a truce with the Athenians shortly after.⁴²²

The events after the Battle of Koroneia (446) put the Athenians in a predicament again. Not only did the revolt inspire rebellions in Megara and Euboia; it also removed their safety blanket against Spartan incursions. That became more apparent during the (Second) Peloponnesian War (431–404). During the first five years of the war, the Athenians were beset by invasions of their countryside. When an earthquake in 426 put a temporary halt to these Spartan invasions, the Athenians immediately set their sights on re-establishing a foothold in Boiotia. Aitolia was attacked with the prospect of invading Boiotia by land, whereas the full Athenian army invaded the Tanagraike to test Boiotian defences.⁴²³ The Boiotians responded adequately, providing useful intel for the Athenians to further develop their plans.

The plan to conquer Boiotia came to fruition in 424. The Spartans were momentarily incapacitated due to their misfortunes at Sphacteria. The Athenians now saw an opportune moment to attack Boiotia on three fronts. The three-pronged attack was supposed to create friendly enclaves in the region, to subsequently undermine the *koinon* and eventually remove it from the Spartan alliance. The general Hippocrates invokes the foundational motive of the plan when he exhorts his men prior to the Battle of Delion in 424: 'If we win [at Delion], the Peloponnesians will never invade your country without the Boiotian cavalry, and in one battle you will conquer Boiotia and in that manner free Attica.'⁴²⁴

The campaign and the battle ended in unmitigated disaster. But that a general on the verge of battle evokes the safety of Attica as the consequence of a victory on Boiotian soil is a telling testimony to its strategic importance for the defence of Attica and its function as a buffer against Peloponnesian incursions. A victory at Delion would have radically altered the war in Athens' favour. Transforming Boiotia into a friendly enclave, akin to the 450s, would have constricted the Spartans to the Peloponnese, reducing the

⁴²² Thuc. 1.112–13.

⁴²³ Thuc. 3.91. Thuc. 3.95: 'To this plan Demosthenes consented, not only to please the Messenians, but also in the belief that by adding the Aitolians to his other continental allies he would be able, without aid from home, to march against the Boiotians by way of Ozolian Locris to Kytinium in Doris.'

⁴²⁴ Thuc. 4.95.2.

theatre of war significantly and perhaps concluding the war in the Athenians' favour.⁴²⁵

From Thucydides' narrative we can gather the conquest of Boiotia took precedence over other pressing matters. The Spartan general Brasidas was about to campaign in Thrace at the time of the Delion campaign.⁴²⁶ The target of the march was Amphipolis, a vital source of wood and metals for the Athenians. But rather than invest in the protection of Amphipolis and its resources, the Athenians prioritised the capture of Boiotia. Although Thucydides presents it as a strategic error of great proportions – the eventual loss of Amphipolis had personal ramifications for the general and certainly coloured his assessment – the overthrow of the pro-Spartan regimes in Boiotia could have cut off Brasidas' possibility to return overland, or isolated him in Northern Greece and given the Athenians the opportunity to launch a full-scale defence of Amphipolis after the Delion campaign.⁴²⁷ A pro-Athenian Boiotia thus also acted as a buffer against Spartan ambitions in Northern Greece.

The Corinthian War (395–386) proved the advantages of a pro-Athenian Boiotia when the Athenians and Boiotians were working in unison against the Spartans (Chapter 2.5). The terms of their collaboration were particularly striking. The alliance of 395 was agreed between the *Boiotoi* and the Athenians. At that time, the Thebans had annexed Plataia and integrated Oropos into the *koinon* (Chapters 4.1.2, 4.1.3).⁴²⁸ The question remains as to why the Athenians were willing to relinquish their territorial ambitions. One part of the answer is the recent help the Athenians received from the Thebans, a point Thrasylbulus himself makes in the Assembly (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.2).⁴²⁹ The other reason lay in the strategic value of Boiotia. During the Peloponnesian War, the neighbourly hostility had led to a host of vicissitudes for the Athenians and a Boiotian alliance prevented a repeat. With the Long Walls still under (re)

⁴²⁵ Cawkwell 1997: 51 notes the Spartans would have been confined to the Peloponnese, thereby altering the entire outlook of the war.

⁴²⁶ Thuc. 4.78.1: Βρασιδᾶς δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον τοῦ θέρους πορευόμενος ἑπτακασίοις καὶ χιλίοις ὀπλίταις ἐς τὰ ἐπὶ Θράκης. Thuc. 4.70.1: Βρασιδᾶς δὲ ὁ Τέλλιδος Λακεδαιμόνιος κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἐτύγχανε περὶ Σικυῶνα καὶ Κόρινθον ὄν, ἐπὶ Θράκης στρατείαν παρασκευαζόμενος. Thucydides' narrative of Delion is interrupted by the description of Brasidas' campaigning in Thrace, suggesting the decision to attack Boiotia was related to the Spartan plans in northern Greece.

⁴²⁷ CT 256–7 noted the impact of Thucydides' personal experience on his assessment. For Amphipolis' resources: Kallet 1993: 176.

⁴²⁸ RO 6. ⁴²⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.17.

construction, the city was more vulnerable to Spartan attacks, heightening the need for a buffer defence.⁴³⁰

The shared hostility towards the Spartans would be a simple answer, but to interpret the alliance as the result of one against the other would, in my mind, be an oversimplification of the geographical dynamics between the Athenians and Boiotians. It ignores the repeated Athenian attempts to integrate Boiotia as a buffer for Attica from the Persian Wars onwards. Just before the alliance was concluded in 395, the Theban ambassador reminds their hosts of the potential the neighbourly collaboration would have: 'And we were certainly valuable allies to the Lacedaimonians, as you so well know, but now we can be expected to be of even greater service to you [Athenians], more than we were to the Lacedaimonians' (my translation).⁴³¹

In my opinion, the ambassador realises that a neighbourly alliance fulfilled a long-cherished Athenian wish. Of course, it was precipitated by their recent friendly cooperation, alluded to by Thrasybulus. But at the same time, the Athenians knew they could not risk warring with the Spartans without the help of the Boiotians. Attica would again be overrun, and leaving the Boiotians to battle the Spartans alone could lead to a situation similar to the Peloponnesian War, negating any possibility of rising against the Spartan hegemony in the future. Considering the dire situation the Boiotians were in at the time of their approach – the Spartan armies were on their doorstep – the Athenians could have pressed for considerable compensation should they have wanted to. From a Realist perspective, that would have made sense. The concessions, for instance, restoring Plataia or handing over Oropos, would have strengthened the Athenians, even if it came at the expense of a potential ally.

Yet none of these proposals were made. For the Athenians, Boiotia held the keys to the kingdom and retaining their support would probably lead to a re-establishment of the empire. The Boiotians – the contested territories in the Oropia and Plataike included – could become a part of that empire, as subtly suggested by the Theban ambassador.⁴³² The delegates were

⁴³⁰ The finishing of the Long Walls has been variably dated, but the consensus places it in 394 after the battle of Haliartos: Conwell 2008: 116. The Boiotians were particularly helpful in assisting with the reconstruction: *RO* 9b = *IG* II² 1657; *Xen. Hell.* 4.8.9–10; *Diod.* 14.85.2–3.

⁴³¹ *Xen. Hell.* 3.5.14.

⁴³² *Xen. Hell.* 3.5.10, 14–15. Whether the Athenians had fallen for the conviction that a land-based hegemony was more sustainable than a maritime-based one, as prevalent in the writings of contemporary writers such as Xenophon and the author of the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (Occhipinti 2016: 116–30) is unclear. Hopes of extending the Athenian nexus of influence in familiar territory can be perceived from their alliance with the Eretrians in 394: *Tod* II 103 = *IG* II² 16; Knoepfler 1980.

aware of long-cherished Athenian hopes not only of recapturing their empire but also of controlling Boiotia. Because it was one of the last arguments made, one must assume its weight was substantial, as it would resonate best with the audience. The flattery of Athenian feelings of justice notwithstanding, it was the tantalising allure of regaining their empire through the help of the Boiotians that mattered.

I would add that the Athenians must have realised the importance of keeping the Boiotians friendly, and that territorial ‘concessions’ would be beneficial for harmonious relations in the long run. That made the restoration of Plataia less important. In exchange for accepting the status quo in Boiotia, they received the strategic benefits of the entire *koinon*.

Those benefits became clear in the opening phases of the war. The first major battles against the Spartans were fought at Haliartos and Koroneia, far from the Attic borders. On both occasions the Athenians sent troops to the defence of the *koinon*, but also to ensure the Spartans did not reach the border.⁴³³ In both cases, these Spartan armies were meant to be intercepted by an allied army. Although there were different outcomes to these battles, the Athenians clearly utilised Boiotia as a swamp in which to strand Spartan forces.

These battles were remembered in Athenian memory as instrumental in defending their country. In his *Funeral Oration* from the 390s, Lysias praises the fallen men for having safeguarded Attica, keeping the war away from its lands by giving up their lives on foreign soil.⁴³⁴ While the delivery of the eulogy is questioned due to Lysias’ *metic* status, the speech shows the awareness of these lands – Boiotia and the Corinthia – acting as buffers.⁴³⁵

The sentiment that the Boiotians were vital allies, and essentially fighting for the preservation of Attica, is also echoed in [Andocides’] *On the Peace* of 391. Its authenticity is debated, but that matters less here, as invocations of Boiotia as a defender of Attica still mattered at a later time for the possible imposter to use it as an example (Chapter 3.4.2). In this oration, the author pleaded with his countrymen to accept the agreed-upon peace treaty with the Spartans. His entreaties are made under the pretence that the Boiotians had accepted the Spartans’ peace offer. Despite this false

⁴³³ The Athenians were too late to participate at Haliartos. Dem. 18.96 still it remembered as a heroic feat. The Long Walls of Athens were probably finished after Haliartos (Conwell 2008: 116).

⁴³⁴ Lys. 2.70.

⁴³⁵ Todd 2007: 149–64 for the status of the text and its date. He persuasively argues to assign authorship to Lysias and proposes that the *Funeral Oration* was a display piece, rather than meant for delivery.

claim, the argument remains upright. He repeatedly places the Boiotians on a pedestal compared with other allies in the war, ranging from the joyous day when the alliance was concluded to their efforts in the war.⁴³⁶

It was presumably with this role in mind – Boiotia as a buffer for Attica – that the Spartans pushed for a dissolution of the *koinon* after the Corinthian War. Splintering the *koinon* into loyal pro-Spartan enclaves was aimed not only at weakening the Thebans; it weakened the Athenians too. With the major routes through Boiotia under Spartan control, the Spartans were guaranteed to have entry points into Attica, rendering the neighbourly cooperation less effective. This emerges most clearly in the campaign leading to the instalment of a pro-Spartan junta in Thebes in 382 (Chapter 3.2.3). Spartan armies easily moved between the Peloponnese and the Chalkidike to prevent Olynthian expansion, while keeping Athenian ambitions in the region in check.

Despite these profound changes to the political and physical landscape of Boiotia – the re-establishment of Plataia the most prominent among them – the Athenian desire to employ Boiotia as a buffer remained unchanged (Chapter 4.1.3). Throughout the years of Spartan juntas (386–379) the Athenians were in contact with the Thebans, who were one of the founding members of the Second Athenian Confederacy after the expulsion of the Spartan garrison in 379. The Thebans are the only participating polis in the list of allies that can plausibly be termed ‘land-locked’, despite the possible inclusion of Aulis in their *chora*, whereas the other members are either island or coastal poleis. The notion of attaining a strong land power to act as a buffer for a renewed claim to power – the Second Athenian Confederacy – therefore had stuck, partially explaining the Thebans’ inclusion (Chapter 4.2.2). The impetus for forming the tighter bond may have come from the Athenians. Additionally, the Thebans appear to have occupied a special position within the Confederacy (Chapters 2.5, 3.4.3). Their membership was thus not a convalescence of fortunate events, bringing together two befriended enemies of Sparta. The Athenians had worked to ‘re-obtain’ their buffer before ensuing hostile actions against the Spartans and in return granted the Thebans a special place in the Confederacy’s structure.

Following the expulsion of the Spartan garrison from Thebes in 379, the subsequent conflict – the Boiotian Wars – was mostly fought in Boiotia. The fighting was concentrated on the Theban plain, demonstrating the

⁴³⁶ And. 3.24–5.

Spartans' awareness of its inhabitants' centrality to Athenian defences. The Spartan plan was to starve the Thebans by occupying their fields and preventing the harvest, facilitated by the garrisons at Plataia, Thespiai and Tanagra and the fortress at Mavrovouni.⁴³⁷

The Athenians willingly complied with this strategy by steering the conflict towards Boiotia because fears over the possibility of a Spartan invasion of Attica lingered.⁴³⁸ The Corinthian War had demonstrated the benefits of fighting the Spartans away from Attica, but the situation had changed. This time the only other co-belligerent was Thebes. The Spartans had loyal enclaves in Boiotia pinning down the Thebans, making a defence in the entirety of Boiotia unlikely. Either the Spartans would march on Cadmus' city or they would take a page from the book of the Peloponnesian War and invade Attica. With Athenian and Theban forces defending the vicinity of Thebes, it was necessary to prevent the Spartans from marching to Attica. Athenian forces guarded the passes over Mount Kithairon at Eleutherai, forcing the Spartans to take a route into Boiotia that would lead away from Athens.⁴³⁹ The other preventive measure was the construction of the Dema wall, obstructing the passage between Mount Parnes and Aigaleos. Supported by enough troops, the wall could withstand a much larger army and halt the advance of the Spartan army beyond the Eleusinian plain.⁴⁴⁰

The war was eventually won through Athenian naval victories, with the war grinding down by thwarting the Spartan plans in Boiotia. Their naval assertiveness was in part supported by the security blanket offered by the Thebans. The latter started to assert themselves more within Boiotia after the renewal of war, leading to the destruction of Plataia in 373. Yet Isocrates, the staunch anti-Theban orator, proclaims in his acerbic *Plataicus* in 373:

and to those who wish to speak on their behalf only this that Boiotia (ἡ Βοιωτία) is defending your country (τῆς ὑμετέρας χώρας), and that, if you put an end to your friendship with them, you will be acting to the detriment of your allies; for it will be a matter of great consequence if

⁴³⁷ Fossey 2019: 95–135, 156–71.

⁴³⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.19; later sources: Plut. *Pel.* 14.1; Dem 2.24; 4.3; 9.47, 20.76. Sphodrias' attempted raid of the Piraeus must have played on their minds.

⁴³⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.14. The Spartans bypassed Eleutherai and climbed the mountains by the road leading to Plataia. This is Hammond's 'Northern Road' (Hammond 1954). According to Ober 1985a: 211, the Spartans avoided Athenian territory, although he wrongly assigns an Athenian status to Eleutherai at this time.

⁴⁴⁰ Munn 1993: 98–102 for a 370s date of the Dema Wall and its strategic benefits.

the city of Thebes takes the side of the Lacedaimonians. (my translation adapted from the Loeb edition)⁴⁴¹

Considering the proclamation was made after Plataia's destruction, there must have been a considerable proportion of Athenian leadership unwilling to defend the Plataians against the Thebans, as the latter were fighting on their behalf. The wording employed by Isocrates is of importance here. It is *Boiotia*, rather than the *koinon* or the Boiotians, that is defending the Athenian *chora*. The benefits of having Boiotia as a buffer for the Attic hinterland outweighed the plight of the Plataians. This resolve was strengthened by the Plataians' recent collaboration with the Spartans, who were the target of the Confederacy.⁴⁴² To risk a vital alliance over the fortunes of a treacherous polis was not an option. In harsh *Realpolitik* fashion, the Athenians preferred the comforts of a Boiotian buffer over the emotional appeals of the Plataians.

Only after the demise of Spartan power did the Athenians reconsider this outlook, swapping the protection offered by Boiotia for a far-away friend. What previously had been a boon to the Athenians suddenly became a bane (Chapter 3.1.2).⁴⁴³ The repercussions of this change are reflected in local sources. Throughout the period of Athenian-Boiotian hostility, roughly from 369 to 339, there are numerous references to a possible Boiotian invasion of Attica and its consequences.⁴⁴⁴ And while these fears never materialised, they testify to the dangers a hostile Boiotia posed to the Athenians.

The utility of Boiotia for Athenian designs became more apparent during the Third Sacred War (357–346). Fighting on opposite sides, the Athenians and Boiotians were remarkably reluctant to engage each other directly. Matters changed when Philip, already at war with the Athenians, joined the war on the Boiotians' side in 353 (Chapters 2.6, 2.7). The first premonitions of a possible Macedonian invasion tormented the Athenians, prompting Demosthenes to suggest a rapprochement with the Boiotians to prevent it. He even notes that the Boiotians have always shown themselves more valuable collaborators than the Spartans, and perhaps this notion is

⁴⁴¹ Isoc. 14.33. ⁴⁴² RO 22 ll. 9–12. ⁴⁴³ Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.39.

⁴⁴⁴ Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.4; *Eq. Mag.* 7.1–2. Aeschin. 2.105–6 later claimed Epameinondas intended to remove the Propylaia from the Akropolis and place them on the Theban Cadmeia. Later authors echo the sentiment. Polyaeus 3.9.20 mentions a planned Theban invasion of Attica, which became public knowledge when the Athenian general Iphicrates revealed to the Assembly that he was planning to orchestrate a coup in Thebes. According to [Plut.] *Mor.* 193e, Epameinondas claimed he would cut all the trees in the Athenian *chora* to cook the meat Alexander of Pherai, a Boiotian enemy, had granted the Athenians.

related to their role as a guardian of Attica (Chapter 3.4.4).⁴⁴⁵ The difficulties of dealing with a hostile Boiotia and the threat of a powerful northern enemy became clear in the wake of the Macedonian victory at Crocus Field in 352. The Athenians were so alarmed they sent a significant force to occupy the Thermopylai pass. This was possible only with the support of the Phocians and Spartans and, more importantly, the weakened state of the *koinon* due to their strained finances and vicissitudes suffered in the war.⁴⁴⁶ The blockade worked, yet showed the difficulties the Athenians encountered to slow down Macedonian advances now that the Boiotians were hostile to them.

The fears of a 'barbarian' invasion, abetted by the Boiotians, were also expressed in the Ephebic Oath and the Oath of Plataia, which were inscribed on a stele in the deme of Acharnai. Although there are doubts about the historicity of these oaths, they reflect the contemporary fears of a devastation of the countryside. In no situation shall the ephebes abandon their fatherland against foreign attacks, not to mention the explicit mention of the prospective punishment of the Thebans after the repulsion of the barbarians (Chapter 5.2.8).⁴⁴⁷

The war ended without a Macedonian invasion of Attica, much to the relief of Athenian leaders. Yet unease remained. Embers of discontent between the enemies continued to burn, accentuating the Boiotians' role as buffer in the Athenian mind-set. Demosthenes was aware the Boiotians would suffer in an ensuing conflict due to their central geographical position:

For if we should hereafter come to blows with Philip, about Amphipolis or in any private quarrel not shared by the Thessalians or the Argives or the Thebans, I do not believe for a moment that any of the latter would be dragged into the war, least of all hear me before you shout me down – least of all the Thebans. I do not mean that they regard us with favour or that they would not readily oblige Philip, but they do realize quite clearly, for all the stolidity that people attribute to them, that if they ever fight you, they will have to take all the hard knocks themselves, and someone else will sit quietly by, waiting for the spoils. Therefore they would never make such a sacrifice unless the war had a common cause and origin.⁴⁴⁸

This common cause could be resisting the ambitious king. Regardless of the cause, however, they would suffer severely because in every situation they would bear the brunt of the war because of their geographical

⁴⁴⁵ Dem. 16.29. ⁴⁴⁶ Diod. 16.37.3, 38.1; Dem. 19.84, 319; Schachter 2016a: 113–32; 2016b.

⁴⁴⁷ RO 88. ⁴⁴⁸ Dem. 5.14–15. Demosthenes was a *proxenos* of Thebes: Aeschin. 2.141–3.

situation. War with the Macedonians was renewed in 340, but fortunately for the Athenians, there was increased friction between the king and his Boiotian allies, opening the possibility for a neighbourly rapprochement (Chapter 3.4.4).⁴⁴⁹ Little help could be expected from the Spartans. Therefore it was important to the Athenians to convince the *koinon* to function as a shield. The *koinon*'s leadership saw the writing on the wall. The Athenians were a logical ally – their hostility towards Philip combined with previous fruitful collaborations against common enemies – but certain issues needed to be ironed out before they would accept the approach.

The ensuing deal with the Athenians shows the acute awareness of the *koinon*'s leadership in recognising their powerful position, by demanding the Athenian acknowledgement of its claim over Boiotia. It prohibited future claims for the release of poleis such as Oropos or Thespiiai, or the restitution of Plataia, and was an implicit acknowledgment of the status quo. These Boiotian towns had been primary *topoi* in the Athenian Assembly, with Macedonian sympathisers regularly arguing for these measures to be taken against the *koinon*. It demonstrates the Boiotians could be assuaged to act as an Athenian ally and protector by concessions over disputed lands. Sacrificing Plataia and Oropos in exchange for Boiotian support was a small price to pay, especially as it constituted an acknowledgement of the status quo, rather than a transfer of disputed lands. Effectively, it was a repeat of the situation of 395, only this time the Boiotians held the cards. That makes their relative leniency all the more striking. Perhaps this suggests the neighbours were more favourable to each other and how their geographical entwinement inevitably placed them together as natural allies, rather than enemies.

The Boiotians now had no choice but to defend their borders, making it easier for the Athenians to keep Macedonian armies away from Attica. The defence was drawn up at Chaironeia. The loss of the battle, however, had severe repercussions for the neighbours. The Macedonian king's interventions in the political and geographical landscape of Boiotia demonstrate his acute understanding of the geopolitical dynamics of Central Greece.⁴⁵⁰

Thebes was punished for its insolence by the instalment of a Macedonian garrison. Outside the city, other measures were taken to curb

⁴⁴⁹ If Ober's thesis of road-control would stand, the advancements in artillery warfare in the fourth century made fortifications more fragile than their fifth-century predecessors. Ober 1985a: 219 concedes Philip's advancements made the notion of defending the borders futile; see also Gabriel 2010: 88–93.

⁴⁵⁰ Gartland 2016b.

their power. Orchomenos and Thespias were reinstated as independent poleis. Oropos was granted its independence and detached from the *koinon*. The pièce de résistance, however, was the intended restoration of the Plataians (Chapters 2.7, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 5.3). These modifications aimed at muzzling the Thebans. Yet the ramifications of these changes went beyond the borders of Boiotia, as the instalment of pro-Macedonian enclaves throughout the region meant that the Macedonians could march on Attica at any given time. This ‘puncturing’ of the region neutralised the Athenians’ strongest ally and took away their buffer against any Macedonian incursions. While neither Philip nor his successor Alexander saw the full effects of their recalibration of Boiotia, the Diadochoi fighting for the Macedonian throne enjoyed the advantages of these friendly enclaves in Boiotia during the Hellenic War of 323, in which the Athenians initially struggled to unite with their allies and were eventually defeated.⁴⁵¹ Interestingly, in the aftermath of the war, Phocion, Demades and others were sent to negotiate with Antipater in Boiotia. They explicitly requested the Macedonian general to stay in Boiotia and *not* invade Attica, which he accepted.⁴⁵² Their request demonstrates the functionality of the region as a buffer.

But what about the Boiotian perspective? Insofar as it is possible to reconstruct, the Athenians wanted to maintain a good relation with the Boiotians because of the strategic advantages the region offered as a buffer. On numerous occasions, however, the Boiotians were willing participants. The question remains why. That question might be harder to answer considering the scarcity of sources detailing their viewpoint. Combing through our sources nevertheless allows for an insight into possible motivations.

The early roots of Boiotian acquiescence can be retraced to the Persian Wars. Notwithstanding the lack of a concerted, region-wide effort to counter the invading threat at Thermopylai, the overall negligence of the Hellenic League to confront the Persians outside of the Peloponnese with the full force of its military power troubled both Boiotian and Athenian minds. Even if the *koinon* was deemed an untrustworthy ally, the same could be said of the Thessalians. Yet the defence of the Tempe valley involved a much larger force. The relative ease with which Central Greece was abandoned by the Peloponnesians, much to the chagrin of its inhabitants, confronted these peoples with the necessity of figuring out

⁴⁵¹ Habicht 2006: 56–61.

⁴⁵² Plut. *Phoc.* 26.3; cf. Diod. 18.18.3.

their own defences.⁴⁵³ Herodotus offers a glimpse in his eighth book when he tells of Athenian hopes of setting up a common defence in Boiotia to protect the poleis east of the Isthmia that then fell flat, with the Peloponnesians withdrawing to the Peloponnese.⁴⁵⁴

A defence of Central Greece materialised only in the latter stages of the war. Yet the Battle of Plataia was an offensive manoeuvre, not a defensive one. If the Boiotians participated in the Tempe valley defence, combined with the contribution of *some* elements of Theban society to the mission at Thermopylai (Chapter 2.3), there must have been disappointment among their ranks about the lack of enthusiasm to defend Central Greece, even if Herodotus is here portraying the Athenian dejection. Although this is speculation, it is not too far-fetched to imagine that the Boiotians, who were willing to fight the Persians, were dejected at the Peloponnesian selfishness. The Athenians, on the other hand, may have been perceived as like-minded people when it came to the defence of Central Greece. The Persian Wars, despite the various outcomes and the dissipation of an advanced defence, may have sowed the seeds of mutual trust for a committed defence. Of course, this could conveniently be forgotten when the situation was called for, but Spartan abandonment equally remained vivid in the Athenian *imaginaire*.⁴⁵⁵ The Athenians could at least be trusted to defend areas away from their borders against invasions from the north, unlike the reluctant Peloponnesians, whose epichoric outlook dominated their decision-making.

So what was it in for the Boiotians to act as the wall of Attica? Obviously, they were to suffer the consequences of war on their soil. However, the region's fertility would at least mitigate these cauldrons of destruction by providing a safety net for the incurred destruction. A more salient point, in my opinion, is that it granted the Boiotians the lead in decision-making. Their central location within the geography of Greece bound them to a destiny as a stomping ground for crossing armies. Nothing could be altered about that. By assertively approaching the Athenians they could at least enjoy a form of autonomy in steering the outcome of wars fought on their soil. That way they were assured of support instead of having the war inflicted upon them. Another benefit was their knowledge and familiarity of the terrain, an aspect that should not be underestimated.⁴⁵⁶ Unlike the invading armies, familiarity with the terrain and its natural environment

⁴⁵³ The Tempe valley was easier to defend than Thermopylai, since there was not a possibility for a 'backstab action': Robertson 1976.

⁴⁵⁴ Hdt. 8.40. ⁴⁵⁵ Queyrel-Bottineau 2014b. ⁴⁵⁶ Konijnendijk 2017: 72–94.

granted an advantage during battle. A prime example of this is the ambush laid by the 'Orchomenizers' for the Athenian army under Tolmides, which resulted in the expulsion of the Athenians from Boiotia.⁴⁵⁷ These factors explain at least part of the Boiotian disposition to act as a buffer for the southern neighbours under the right conditions.

Their actions in 395 best exemplify that attitude. An anonymous Theban ambassador presents the Athenians with the option of fighting against the Spartans with the Boiotians and elaborates their utility to the neighbours:

And we certainly were valuable allies to the Lacedaimonians, as you so well know; but now we can be expected to support you altogether more stoutly than we supported the Lacedaimonians then; for it is by no means on behalf of islanders or Syracusans, or in fact of any alien people, that we shall be lending our aid as we were then, but on behalf of our own injured selves.⁴⁵⁸

The ambassador here demonstrates a keen insight into the psyche of his audience, but also evinces a distinctly Boiotian perspective on the upcoming war. Acting as a buffer was less of a burden, since it would be in defence of their own country. Regardless of the Athenian decision, war was destined to reach his home region, with a Spartan army on its doorstep. Rather than having to face the danger alone, Athenian support could be obtained by keeping the wars from *their* borders. Additional support also guaranteed, or created more of an impetus, to keep the battlefields from the 'embryonic core' of Boiotia, roughly the Theban plains, as can be seen in the locations of the main battles of the Corinthian War: Koroneia, Haliartos and further afield. Neither can be deemed the 'Theban' heartland of Boiotia.

A final factor is prestige, which emerges most strongly in the anti-Macedonian alliance of 339/8. The opportunity to lead a 'Panhellenic' alliance against a new foreign, barbarous invader led the *koinon* to act as the last gate to southern Greece. This chance granted a long-cherished wish, as this entailed an implicit acknowledgement of the Boiotians' role as hegemon of Greece (Chapter 3.4.4). Their disposition to act as the buffer for not just Athens, but all of Greece, was thus instilled by an acknowledgement of their central role in Greek affairs. The costs for the Athenians

⁴⁵⁷ Thucydides reveals little, but Diodorus (12.6.2) writes: 'Tolmides, the Athenian general, seized Chaironeia. And when the Boiotians gathered their forces and caught Tolmides' troops in an ambush, a violent battle took place at Koroneia, in the course of which Tolmides fell fighting and of the remaining Athenians some were massacred and others were taken alive.'

⁴⁵⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.14.

this time were certainly more cumbersome than earlier collaborations, as evidenced by the concessions given, but demonstrate that the Boiotians could be buoyed into acting as a buffer. Mostly this came at their own instigation and therefore demonstrates that fighting on their own soil with the support of others was the result of the Boiotian understanding of their unavoidable fate as the 'Dancing Floor of Ares'.

4.4 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to delineate how geopolitical considerations affected the Atheno-Boiotian relations from the sixth to the fourth centuries. From a geographical point of view, Boiotia was a natural ally for the Athenians. The *koinon* held the keys to the kingdom for the Athenians because of their role as a possible buffer, their access to the Corinthian Gulf and the influence they exerted on Euboea. Keeping the Boiotians as friends safeguarded the Athenian empire, while at the same time providing invaluable protection against potential enemies. Despite these geographical elements thrusting the neighbours towards collaboration, their proximity also caused friction. Control over the borderlands such as Oropos or the Skourta plain, with their economic advantages, often formed a bone of contention between the neighbours. Although these disputes could disrupt the peaceful co-existence or cooperation, the chronic emphasis on the *negative* effects of these borderlands overlooks the manners in which these disputes could be resolved. Mainly, it was the delineation of boundaries or the affirmation of unequivocal agreements over the exploitation of the fertile lands that stabilised and harmonised the neighbourly relations. War did not sprout from territorial disputes. Frustration over territorial claims frequently remained dormant, only to emerge when hostilities had already broken out.

The military and strategic importance of Boiotia was often an impetus for the Athenians to (temporarily) relinquish their claims to the borderlands, if it meant obtaining an alliance with the *koinon*. This 'buffer' function against incoming forces proved a more sustainable strategy to protect the hinterland than military structures could provide. The 'sacrifice' of contested territories was an easy one to make for the benefit of the *koinon*'s alliance. Another benefit of friendly relations was the direct access it granted to the Corinthian Gulf, of vital strategic importance throughout the Classical period as it provided a direct connection to the Peloponnese and beyond, an essential advantage in the struggle against the Spartans.

In sum, the geopolitical situation of Attica and Boiotia may have caused friction and disputes, but there was an undeniable entwining of their fortunes, which made collaboration a far more profitable endeavour. It was a realisation that seems to have remained a common thread throughout the Classical period, especially in times of shared troubles. As such, Boiotia can plausibly be termed an advantageous neighbour for the Athenians, which was only truly disrupted by the emergence of the Macedonian kings who recalibrated the political landscape of Central Greece according to their preferences, thereby equally impacting the natural synergy between the Athenians and Boiotians.

5 | Contested Memories

Remembering the Atheno-Boiotian Relations at Panhellenic and Local Spaces

Examine only how we acted after the departure of the Mede and the recovery of the constitution; when the Athenians attacked the rest of Hellas and endeavoured to subjugate our country, of the greater part of which faction had already made them masters. Did we not fight and conquer at Koroneia and liberate Boiotia, and do we not now actively contribute to the liberation of the rest, providing horses to the cause and a force unequalled by that of any other polis in the *koinon*?

—Thuc. 3.62.5

[T]hey (the ephebes) went to the Amphiareion and asked about the sanctuary's history from the start of its control by the demos, sacrificed and continued to march through the *chora* that same day.

—IG II² 1006 ll. 70–2

How do these neighbours recall their past interactions? The examples above demonstrate the malleability of social memory. The Theban speakers during the Plataian trial (427) present a concerted effort by the *koinon* at the Battle of Koroneia (446), which actually involved only a band of exiles (Chapter 2.4). The example of the ephebes shows how sanctuaries acted as mirrors for neighbourly interaction. These young men visited the Amphiareion in search of a past that was related to them by the priests, the dedications, and inscriptions gathered throughout the temple's history. In this chapter, both the 'spoken word' and the arenas for commemoration, such as civic and sacred spaces, will be analysed to uncover what they reveal about the neighbourly relations.

The neighbourly past was commemorated at three 'levels': Panhellenic sanctuaries such as Delphi, local sanctuaries like the Theban Herakleion and, finally, contested sanctuaries, like the Oropian Amphiareion (see Figure 5.1). This threefold approach has the added advantage that the intended audiences of the monuments, orations and other forms of commemorations at these sites are relatively similar, as opposed to a disparate picture of varying topographies, audiences and historical considerations. This relative homogeneity illuminates the differences between

commemorating in different venues and can help detect common denominators in these processes. Seminal tropes of the Atheno-Boiotian relations such as their behaviour in the Persian Wars will be interwoven into the descriptions of the commemorative practices at the various sites. That means that accusations of medism, for instance, will be viewed differently at Panhellenic sites than at Athens or local venues.

In some cases their collaborative efforts ended in defeats, making it less likely they wished to preserve that memory. In others, the evidence does not refer to the neighbourly relations.¹ What is important to keep in mind, especially with regard to the Athenian side, is the agency and impetus behind inscribing monuments. Different memorial cultures co-existed within the polis, preventing a monopoly on what constituted the fine lines of history and memory from forming. The moment an individual in the Assembly moved to have an inscription made meant that an individual memory or view could become part of a collectivised memory, both negatively or positively.² The impetus for memorialisation was therefore not always an initially broadly shared view. The memory that these monuments reflected was constantly negotiated and changed, through destruction, erasure or other means. Only a snippet of all the decrees moved or accepted in the Assembly have survived, either in literary sources or on stone. The ones that survived on stone add another layer of analysis, since these decrees or treaties were deemed important enough to be immortalised and given a prominent place at ‘cosmopolitan spaces’ such as the Akropolis or the Agora, as Peter Liddel describes.³

Another caveat concerning the memorial structures is that the Boiotians did not achieve their victories over the Athenians when they were at the apogee of their power in the mid-fourth century. This obliquely influences the observations on memorial culture in this chapter. A discernible change in the Boiotian impact on the Amphiareion during their zenith is noticeable, demonstrating that the preference for the local was a mainstay and not a result of limited influence or power.

¹ E.g., the Corinthian and Boiotian Wars. There was a possible Athenian victory monument at Delphi and Athens, but these refer to Naxos (375), a naval victory without Boiotian participation. Another example is Chabrias’ statue in the Athenian Agora. This statue was linked to Naxos, rather than exploits with the Boiotians, even if he was depicted as a crouching hoplite in reference to the fight against the Spartans: Buckler 1972. Another case without context is the possible state burial for Boiotians in Athens: Arrington 2010: 514–15; Schilardi 1980. But this relies on interpreting two fifth-century Boiotian *kantharoi* as indicating a state funeral for foreigners and remains too conjectural to offer plausible interpretations.

² Low 2020; Rhodes 2018. ³ Liddel 2020: II 65–6; Matuszewski 2019: 48–62.



Figure 5.1 Places of dedication except Olympia.

5.1 Commemorations for Panhellenic Audiences

The Panhellenic sanctuaries were the ideal platform to disseminate messages across the Greek world. Through buildings, statues or other offerings to the gods, these sanctuaries became loci of intensive competition between the Greek poleis. This form of peer polity interaction meant most of the Greek world could view or engage with the offerings on display.⁴ Zeus' sanctuary at Olympia and Apollo's temple at Delphi witnessed a flurry of offerings from the eighth century BCE until the end of Antiquity.⁵ One would expect sanctuaries such as Delphi and Olympia and, in a lesser manner, those at Isthmia and Nemea would be teeming with dedications related to the Atheno-Boiotian conflicts of the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries. Delphi's position in Central Greece, in particular, renders it an appealing option.

In reality, however, there is a remarkable dearth of evidence. This absence could be a result of survival, but the sites at Delphi and Olympia are well excavated. The reason for the lack of any significant visible influence on the dedicatory landscape of these sites should therefore be found

⁴ Scott 2010. ⁵ Morgan 1990.

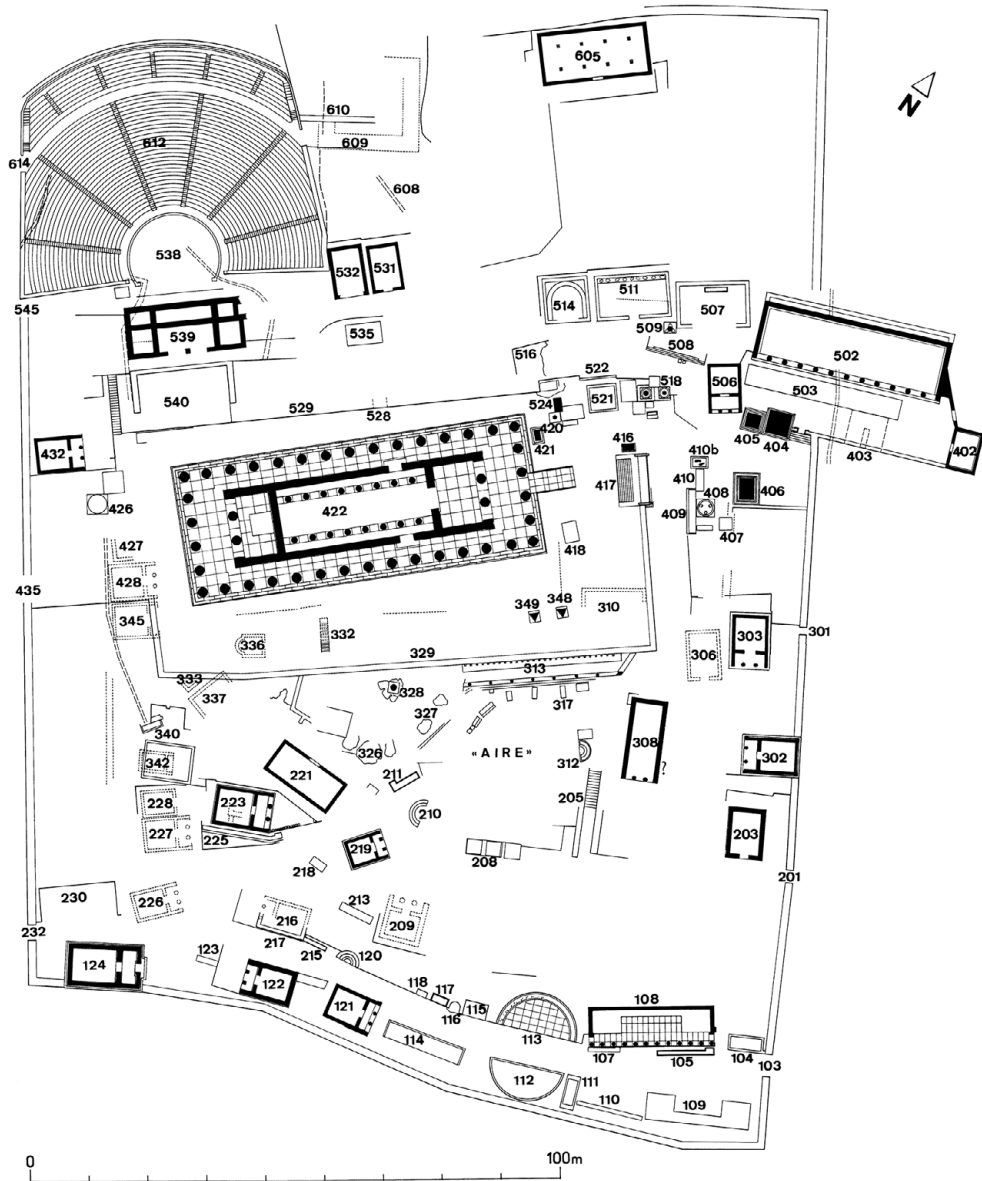


Figure 5.2 Map of the Sanctuary at Delphi (after Bommelaer 1991). 103: Southeast Entrance; 109: Aegospotami monument; 110: Marathon Statue Group; 112: Base of the Seven against Thebes and Epigonoï; 124: Theban treasury; 223 and 225: Athenian treasury; 226: ‘Archaic’ Treasury of the Boiotians; 232: Southwestern Entrance; 313: Athenian portico; 326: Base of the Boiotians; 407: Base of Serpent Column; 422: Apollo temple.

(Source: Reproduced with the kind permission of the École française d’Athènes)

elsewhere. My explanation is that indications of neighbourly rivalry on a Panhellenic stage were the result of their involvement in wider conflicts that involved other participants like the Spartans. These other combatants were mostly responsible for using Panhellenic sanctuaries to disperse the message of victory and their leading role within it.

That does not exculpate or exclude the participation of Athenians and Boiotians in these ‘allied dedications’. What it does reveal is that the Panhellenic platform was preferred only in cases involving other parties.⁶ These dedications are all related to the expression of hegemonic ambitions by poleis in Greece, starting with the Spartans after the Persian Wars and ending with the Boiotians in the mid-fourth century.⁷ What unites these dedications is their challenging nature: whenever a monument was dedicated to a victorious alliance, particularly at Delphi, it aimed to counter earlier dedications by the previous hegemon promulgating their Panhellenic credentials (see [Figure 5.2](#)). Another feature of these dedications is the frequent omission of defeated hegemons or other parties, making direct interactions with the defeated less obvious than in localised memorial landscapes. Only after the Third Sacred War (457–446) did the names of the defeated find their way onto the inscriptions accompanying the dedications at Panhellenic shrines. Finally, these dedications inevitably flow forth from the Persian Wars and the prestige attached to it. These set the tone for future dedications and therefore form the start for a diachronic investigation of hegemonial contests at the Panhellenic shrines.

5.1.1 *The Serpent Column at Delphi and the Zeus Statue at Olympia*

The first examples are the dedications made by the victorious Greek poleis after the Persian Wars in 480/79: the Serpent Column at Delphi and the Zeus statue at Olympia.⁸ These dedications celebrated warding off the invading Persian army and proudly proclaimed the role of the

⁶ The Athenian treasury at Delphi is omitted because the scholarly consensus dates the treasury’s construction after Marathon and links it to that battle: Amandry 1998; Scott 2010: 75–81. Others date the treasury to the late sixth century as a monument dedicated to the victory over the Boiotians and Chalkidians: Funke 2001: 8–10; Hering 2015: 83–4; Jung 2006: 101–3; Partida 2000a: 52. Schröder 2019: 58–62, partially following Rausch 1999: 131, dates the treasury to the late sixth century, but views it as a monument to the new Kleisthenic reforms. Another example are the shields dedicated by Asopichios after Leuktra: [Chapter 5.1.3](#).

⁷ Philip’s conspicuous displays at Olympia and Delphi may fit that tradition: Scott 2010.

⁸ There are numerous dedications at Delphi relating to the Persian invasion of 479, but these reflect an epichoric view of the conflict and were not made by this study’s protagonists. Similarly, NIO 5 does not commemorate the Persian Wars: [Chapter 2.3](#).

victors.⁹ In light of the common tropes surrounding the recollections of the event, such behaviour would be unsurprising. The memory of the Greek victory over the Persians ensconced itself in the annals of Hellenic history and formed a reference point for the inhabitants of those poleis that had resisted the invaders. History was less kind to the Greeks caught on the wrong side of the divide, the medizers. Their reputation was tarnished in the eyes of their fellows because of their treacherous behaviour. One way of promulgating this view was through the trophies and monuments set up by the victors at Delphi, Olympia and, on a lesser scale, Isthmia or Nemea. Framing the conflict with the Persians as a seminal event and as a unified effort by patriotic Greeks determined to resist subjugation and a loss of freedom helped to delineate between them and the medizers, traitors to the Greek cause. The Boiotians – sans the Plataians and Thespians – and Athenians ended the war fighting on different sides of the conflict and, accordingly, found themselves on opposing sides of the commemorative spectrum (Chapter 2.3). Where better to advertise this divide than at the famous stomping ground of Apollo in Central Greece and frequented by Athenians, Boiotians and the whole Greek world alike?

This interpretation of the memory of the Persian Wars and its recollection, however, does not align with reality. The picture was substantially more complex. The Greek world was not divided into good and bad, and the story of many medizing poleis was more complicated than the sources allow for. Nor is it possible to speak of a common commemoration of these wars. David Yates demonstrated that the epichoric outlook of this seminal conflict dominated the Classical period, instead of a notion of a unified war.¹⁰ That notion became dominant only during the fourth century when Panhellenic ideology permeated accounts of the Persian Wars.¹¹ Philip and Alexander, the Macedonian kings, were the first sponsors of a homogenised version. Even after they established their rule over Greece, their version was repeatedly challenged. Poleis were more focused on propagating *their* version of the war, rather than believing in a shared Greek struggle against the Persians.¹² This has repercussions for how we should view the Serpent

⁹ The current chronology of the dedications views the Zeus statue as the first dedication in 477, followed by the Serpent Column several months later: Gauer 1968: 97; Stephenson 2016: 90.

¹⁰ Yates 2019. There is one possible example of a unified dedication at Delphi – the Salamis Apollo – but its reconstruction and the restoration of the accompanying inscription is problematic: Proietti 2021: 123–215. An example of the epichoric outlook is Megara: Beck 2009: 61–8; Yates 2018. Barringer 2021: 114–15 still views the Serpent Column as ‘Panhellenic’.

¹¹ Marincola 2007; 2010.

¹² AP 6.344 for the example of the Thespians returning from Alexander’s campaign.

Column and Zeus Statue. These were not the proud proclamations of a Hellenic League wishing to emphasise the divide among the Greeks, nor do they present a homogenised picture of their defeat of the Persians.

The history of the Serpent Column shows that quite clearly (see [Figure 5.3](#)). The initial inscription on the tripod base, according to sources such as Thucydides, *did* emphasise a communal effort and stressed the role of the Spartan king Pausanias as the leader of an alliance of ‘Greeks’ or ‘Hellenes’ defeating the Persians: ‘When the leader of the Greeks defeated the Persians / He, Pausanias, raised this monument, so Phoebus might be praised.’¹³

Following Pausanias’ fall from grace, however, Thucydides mentions that the dedication’s inscription was immediately (εὐθὺς) altered. Instead of reading the *Hellenes*, the tripod now listed the poleis that had contributed to the defence of Greece, headed by the engraved statement that it was dedicated by ‘those who fought the war’ (το[ῖδε τὸν] πόλεμον [ἐ]πολ[έ]μεον).¹⁴ This enumeration aimed to demonstrate the contributions of *each* polis, thereby stressing the epichoric outlook of the monument. This was the result of pressure partially from the other poleis wishing to emphasise *their* role and partially from the Spartans wishing to cover up Pausanias’ hubristic claim after his fall from grace.¹⁵

The list of victorious poleis emphasises defeating the Persians and the role of the Greek poleis that participated in that glorious victory. An almost similar list was partnered with the Zeus Statue at Olympia, as shown in [Table 5.1](#).

Considering only a small fraction of Greek poleis committed to the defence of Greece, the lack of references to the medizing Greeks is striking. Not even the Persians are mentioned according to this restoration. The emphasis is on those poleis that had contributed to winning the war and the glory they shared. Some notable poleis are missing from the list, making their role in the war instantly recognisable as dubious at best. Argos, for instance, is nowhere to be found, a result of both their neutrality

¹³ Thuc 1.132.2–3; Yates 2019: 31–44.

¹⁴ The Persians are conventionally mentioned in dedications from the Persian Wars: Gauer 1968: 134; Steinhart 1997: 60–1. Perhaps the Serpent Column’s first line should read ‘τὸν Μέδων πόλεμον ἐπολέμεον’. Naming practices shed a light on the date of the Athenian Stoa at Delphi. Its celebratory inscription (ML 25) lists equipment taken from ‘the enemies’ (τὸν πολε[μίων]) but the Persians go unmentioned. Amandry 1978; Baitinger 2011: 19; Gauer 1968: 102 regard the stoa as a Persian War memorial. But Walsh 1986 downdated the stoa to post-458.

¹⁵ This fits with the Spartan desire to frame the Battle of Plataia as *their* victory: Schachter 2016a: 227–35. Plutarch relates the Plataians prosecuted the Spartans to change the epigram: Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 873c.

Table 5.1 Comparison of inscribed names on Serpent Column (Delphi) and Zeus Statue (Olympia)

Serpent Column (ML 27): Translation		Zeus Statue (Paus. 5.23) Translation	
το[ἰδε τὸν]	From those who fought the war	Λακεδαιμόνιοι	Lacedaimonians
πόλεμον [ἐ]-	Lacedaimonians	Ἀθηναῖοι	Athenians
πολ[έ]μεον	Athenians	Κορίνθιοί	Corinthians
Λακεδ[αιμόνιοι]	Corinthians	Σικυώνιοι	Sicyonians
Ἀθαναῖο[ι]	Tegeans	Αἰγινῆται	Aeginetans
Κορίνθιοι	Sicyonians	Μεγαρεῖς	Megarians
Τεγεᾶ[ται]	Aeginetans	Ἐπιδαύριοι	Epidaurians
Σικυόν[ιοι]	Megarians	Τεγεᾶται	Tegeans
Αἰγινᾶται	Epidaurians	Ὀρχομένιοι	Orchomenians
Μεγαρεῖς	Orchomenians	Φλιοῦντα	Phliusians
Ἐπιδαύριοι	Phliusians	Τροίζηνα	Troizenians
Ἐρχομένιοι	Troizenians	Ἑρμιόνα	Hermionians
Φλειάσιοι	Hermionians	Τιρύνθιοι	Tirynians
Τροζάνιοι	Tirynians	Πλαταιεῖς	Plataians
Ἑρμιοῖες	Plataians	Μυκλήνας	Mycenaens
Τιρύνθιοι	Thespians	Κεῖοι	Keans
Πλαταιεῖς	Mycenaens	Μήλιοι	Melians
Θεσπιεῖς	Keans	Ἀμβρακιῶται	Ambracians
Μυκανεῖς	Melians	Τήνιοι	Tenian
Κεῖοι	Tenians	Λεπρεᾶται	Lepraians
Μάλιοι	Naxians	Νάξιοι	Naxians
Τένιοι	Eretrians	Κύθνιοι	Cynthians
Νάξιοι	Chalkidians	Στυρεῖς	Styraians
Ἐρετριεῖς	Styraians	Ἥλειοι	Elians
Χαλκιδεῖς	Elians	Ποτιδαῖοι	Potidaians
Στυρεῖς	Potidaea	Ἀνακτόριοι	Anactorians
Φαλεῖοι	Leucas	Χαλκιδεῖς	Chalkidians
Ποτειδαῖοι	Anactorium		
Λευκάδιοι	Cynthos		
Φανακτοριεῖς	Siphnos		
Κύθνιοι	Ambracia		
Σίφνιοι	Lepreum		
Ἀμπρακιῶται			
Λεπρεᾶται.			

during the war and their inveterate rivalry with the Spartans. Others who did initially engage the Persians, such as the Thebans, are omitted.¹⁶ Such omissions implicitly reveal those who had collaborated with the Persians.

¹⁶ Yates 2019: 124–5, 257.



Figure 5.3 Replica of Serpent Column at Delphi. (Source: Didier Laroche, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons)

Yet they were not explicitly mentioned, nor were the medizers openly condemned.¹⁷ Worse, there are some, like the Thespians, who are lacking from the Olympian list altogether. Since their polis was burned to the ground for its resistance to the Persians, its omission is perhaps the most noticeable.¹⁸ Earlier commentators perceived the difference between the lists as sloppiness from a copyist or negligence by Pausanias.¹⁹ But he is generally regarded as a careful and honest reporter with regard to

¹⁷ Steinbock 2013: 108 for a more stringent condemnation.

¹⁸ Hdt. 8.50.

¹⁹ *ML* p. 59; Jung 2006: 256.

monuments, especially when it comes to the Persian Wars. Moreover, the Greeks' attention to detail in honorary inscriptions is well known.²⁰ The answer to this conundrum probably lies elsewhere.

First, these dedications were not representative for the Persian Wars *in toto*, as argued by Michael Jung, Russell Meiggs and David Lewis.²¹ Instead, they expressed the victories at Plataia and Salamis.²² These grandiose gestures represented only a small portion of the conflict, not coincidentally those in which the Spartans played a prominent role. These monuments reflect *their* perspective, not a communal Greek one. The list is not a genuine reflection of all the participating poleis, nor a proper summary of all those poleis that joined the Hellenic forces at Salamis or Plataia.²³ That discrepancy is best reflected in the omission of poleis like Croton or Seriphos that did contribute to both battles, but were left off the list.²⁴

Similarly, the snub towards Thespiiai and its later inclusion suggests some sort of lobbying to be written onto the list at Delphi occurred; arguably, the Serpent Column presented something of a 'finalised list'. The Thespians possibly received backing from the Athenians, as the latter were instrumental in rebuilding the city after the war and appear to have supported Thespian efforts to establish their Panhellenic credentials on other occasions as well (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1). That inclusion mattered, even in later times, becomes clear from the Plataian Debate in 427, recorded by Thucydides. During their trial before a Spartan jury, the Plataian place on the Serpent Column is evoked by its inhabitants as a reflection of virtue and proof of their excellence during the Persian Wars: 'it will seem a terrible thing for the Lacedaimonians to destroy Plataia – for your fathers to inscribe the city on the tripod at Delphi for its excellence, but for you to erase its houses and all from all of Greece on account of the Thebans'.²⁵

²⁰ Habicht 1985: 28–63, 149; Hutton 2005; Schröder 2019: 281–301. That overlooks the melting of the golden tripod by the Phocians during the Third Sacred War (357–346): Paus. 10.13–19. Initially, the names were inscribed on the tripod, before being inscribed on the base (Liuzzo 2012). That could have given other poleis an opportunity to inscribe their name, in the wake of Panhellenic fervour that Philip and Alexander promoted after the Macedonian victory at Chaironeia (338).

²¹ *ML* p. 59; Jung 2006: 254.

²² Hdt. 9.81.1: 'Having brought all the loot together, they set apart a tithe for the god of Delphi. From this was made and dedicated that tripod which rests upon the bronze three-headed serpent, nearest to the altar; another they set apart for the god of Olympia, from which was made and dedicated a bronze figure of Zeus.'

²³ Yates 2019: 43–4. Many other omitted poleis presented their own version of events in competition with the Serpent Column, such as the Eretrian bronze bull: Yates 2019: 61–98.

²⁴ Hdt. 8.46.4; 47. ²⁵ Thuc. 3.57.2.

The Plataians are here speaking to the Spartans directly, but there are other clues that Spartan leadership determined places on the monuments. They replaced Pausanias' epigram on the Serpent Column. While that does not exculpate other parties from having a role in, or sharing the same view of, these events, it hints that agency behind the dedication and edits lay with the Spartans above all.

The relatively limited scope of the Persian Wars on the monuments is shown by the Tenians' inclusion, whose sole merit was the defection of one trireme during the Battle of Salamis. According to Herodotus, *that* was the reason for their inclusion on the Serpent Column.²⁶ Their contribution pales in comparison to some other members of the Hellenic League and even those notorious turncoats, the Thebans (Chapter 2.3). Apparently, the Thebans had forfeited their right to be inserted on the list after their *volte-face*, although they had provided troops for the defence of Thermopylai and provided more help to the Greek cause than some of the poleis on the Serpent Column could claim.

It is tempting to view these dedications at Olympia and Delphi as reflections of Athenian hostility to the Thebans and those Boiotians that medized. The Athenians' prominent position on the inscription, as well as the notable location of these dedications, implies this.²⁷ Yet the focus on the Battles of Salamis and Plataia contradicts this notion. These battles occurred after the Thebans' surrender to the Persians, rendering their previous help irrelevant. This explains their omission. It places the agency for this dedication with the Spartans, whose ambitions vis-à-vis the medizers differed. Sparta's allies in the Peloponnese had not medized, and its nemesis, Argos, had played a dubious role. Implicating the medizers played into their hands, but does not necessarily reflect the Athenians' disposition. Most of their recently joined allies in the Delian League had medized. Advertising a hostile attitude towards medizing on a Panhellenic stage seemed inadvisable or counterproductive (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1).

That does not mean the Thebans and other medizers were openly forgiven for their sins, but there was little emphasis on the role of other Greeks in the fifth-century Athenian commemorative practices at Athens and the Panhellenic sanctuaries. That reluctance was not necessarily institutionalised to spare medizers for political expedience, but also was the by-

²⁶ Hdt. 8.82.1.

²⁷ *ATL* vol. II: 96–100 claims the sequence on the list aligns with the internal structure of the Hellenic League. Steinhart 1997: 66–9 believes information for the sequence was provided by the Delphic Amphictyony. Neither theory has received much support: Yates 2019: 42.

product of commemorative practices. The Athenians focused their efforts on the commemoration of the Battle of Marathon, for which they could bask in the glory by themselves without having to share it with a welter of other poleis, particularly, the Spartans.²⁸ The effort to monopolise leadership vis-à-vis the Spartans became stronger after 462/1 when the Thessalians and Argives took the place of the Spartans as allies.²⁹ Both had a troubled role during the Persian Wars. The desire to emphasise the Battle of Marathon where no other Greeks besides the Plataians were present might therefore have had a political reason. Moving away from a focus on the wars of 480/79 and focusing on Marathon killed two birds with one stone: it allowed the Athenians to plausibly claim prominence in the leadership against the Persians, while conveniently leaving out the troublesome relationship some Greeks had with the memory of the later Persian invasion.

In most of these recollections, the Plataians' share in the Battle of Marathon was forgotten, in both Athens and the Panhellenic shrines. It was more a matter of convenient amnesia than spite towards the Plataians.³⁰ Similarly, the omission of the medizers in these recollections of the Battle of Marathon were an expedient result of the focus on a battle in which there were *no* mainland medizers. Athenian efforts at Panhellenic shrines were aimed at promulgating their righteous place as the leader of the Greek fight against the Persians, rather than stigmatising the Thebans and others.³¹

The surviving monuments commemorating the events of 480/79, or 490 for the Athenians, understated the notion of medism. In addition, the Spartans were the agents behind these subtly implicating monuments, not the Athenians. These monuments thus cannot be viewed as Athenian condemnations of the Thebans or other medizing Boiotian poleis. Does that exculpate the Athenians from involvement or from holding similar stigmatising views as the Spartans? As far as our sources can indicate, it

²⁸ Yates 2019: 119–22. The Athenians erected two monuments to Marathon at Delphi: a treasury and adjacent group and a statue group. Additional expressions were found in Attica, as in the Stoa Poikile and at the battle site, where they replaced the original trophy with a marble column: Shear 2016: 13–14; SEG 55.14 for a possible re-inscription of the trophy after the original dedication of the 460s. For other examples: Castriota 1992: 76. The Thebans may have tied in with the commemoration of Marathon: Chapter 3.5.

²⁹ Thuc. 1.102.4. This played itself out along the Sacred Way, with the Argives dedicating images of the Seven against Thebes next to the Athenian Marathon monument: Yates 2019: 122–5.

³⁰ The Plataians were blessed by the Athenians publicly at the celebration of Great Panathenaea: Hdt. 6.111.

³¹ The case of the Golden Shields taken from Plataia will be treated in Chapter 5.1.3.

does not. Ultimately, the Spartans as leaders of the Hellenic League provided the impetus for the dedications remembering the Battles of Plataia and Salamis.³² Moreover, the monuments' implication of the medizers was subtle enough that it was not obviously related to any Atheno-Boiotian hostilities.³³

Interestingly, the next seventy-five years witnessed little activity of a neighbourly nature at the Panhellenic shrines, despite the Apollo sanctuary at Delphi being transformed into what Michael Scott termed 'a living memorial to Athenian supremacy'.³⁴ The period in question witnessed enough hostility, even resulting in Athenian domination of their northern neighbours, yet that enmity was not translated into dedications at the Panhellenic sanctuaries. Only with the birth of a conflict that tore the Greek world apart in various factions, the Peloponnesian War, is the Atheno-Boiotian conflict attested in a Panhellenic sanctuary. It was the echoes of the Persian Wars and Athenian claims to supremacy that were contested by the victorious Spartans and their Boiotian allies.

5.1.2 Defeating the New Persians: The Aegospotami Monument

The Persian Wars were an era-defining event in Greek history, mostly because of their effects on the self-perception of many poleis, their history and that of their neighbours. The echoes of the Persian Wars rang loudest during the Peloponnesian War, which pitted large swaths of the Greek world against each other. These echoes reverberated the strongest in the ideological battleground. The Athenians had used the notion of Greek freedom (*eleutheria*) as a building block for the empire that emerged out

³² It is interesting the Athenians chose to dedicate a permanent trophy for the victory at Salamis on Salamis itself, similar to their monumentalising of the original trophy at Marathon: Shear 2016: 13–14.

³³ The Thebans appear to have bounced back relatively quickly after the Persian Wars (Schachter 2016a: 69–70). There were individual offerings from Boiotians at Delphi in this period. These were located near a possible sixth-century Boiotian treasury and probably aimed at Boiotian visitors. One was Epididalos' dedication: Ἐπιδιδάλως τόπιό[λλονι] Βοιότιος : ἔχς Ἐρχ[ομενῶ] [ἡ]υπατόδορος : Ἀρισστ[ογείτων] ἔποεσάταν : Θεβαίο. (Epididalos a Boiotian (to Apollo?) from Orchomenos; Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton made this, from Thebes). *FD III 1.574* dates it to 475–450 but see *SEG 48.596*. The date relies on letter forms and the sculptors' *floruit*: Daumas 1992: 259–62. Another Theban dedication (ἀνέθεκε : Θεβαῖος, *FD III 1: 499*) Amandry 1987: 121–4 dates to c. 500. The sixth-century 'Boiotian' treasury is located across from the later Theban treasury: *FD III 1 219–20*; Bommelaer 1991: 128; Partida 2000a: 19; 2000b. The older structure's Boiotian origin is doubted, as is its function: van Effenterre 1997; Jacquemin 1999: 145; Neer 2001: 276.

³⁴ Scott 2010: 106.

of the vestiges of the Hellenic League. Yet the Spartans and their allies now flipped the narrative by employing that slogan against the Athenians. The idea of *eleutheria* became a unifying war cry for those Greeks who felt oppressed by the Athenians. In anti-Athenian eyes, they had overstepped the old threshold between Greek and barbarian and had started to act as the *new Persians* by enslaving their fellow Greeks, a hubristic act made worse by the fact that the Athenians *were* Greeks.³⁵

The defeat of these oppressors was a cause for celebration in various places across Greece. In these celebrations the notion of *eleutheria* repeatedly found its way into the discourse. Xenophon writes about the end of the conflict, with a heavy dose of irony:³⁶ ‘the Peloponnesians with great enthusiasm began to tear down the walls [of Athens] to the music of flute-girls, thinking that day was the beginning of freedom for Greece’.³⁷

The reference to *eleutheria* reflects the attitude of the victors and their allies. In a similar fashion, the victors officially disbanded the Delian League by granting the Delians their independence. Their independence effectively ended the Athenians’ foundation for empire that had centred around Delos as the religious heart of an Ionian alliance forged to fight for Greek *eleutheria*.³⁸

The Aegospotami monument at Delphi should be viewed in this context. The Battle of Aegospotami in 405 decided the Peloponnesian War in the Spartans’ favour.³⁹ To commemorate the victory at Aegospotami, a magnificent monument was set up at Delphi at the left of the Sacred Way, right next to the Athenians’ Marathon monument near the entrance.⁴⁰ This was a deliberate placement. The Marathon monument aimed to promulgate Athens’ claim to hegemony and was the first monument one encountered entering the Sacred Way. In front of the monument there were thirteen figures: Apollo, Athena, the general Miltiades and ten Athenian heroes.⁴¹ The Aegospotami memorial now blocked that view and outdid its competitor.⁴² Its placement was aimed at ‘correcting’ the Athenian claim by

³⁵ Thuc. 1.139.3; Dimitriev 2011: 16–25; Raaflaub 2004: 193–202. This call for *eleutheria* against the Athenians returns in an example of local commemoration, the Battle of Delion (Chapter 5.2.6).

³⁶ Krentz 1989: 189. ³⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.23; Plut. *Lys.* 15.

³⁸ RO 3; Smarczyk 1990; Constantokopoulou 2007: 70. ³⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.1; Diod. 13.106.1.

⁴⁰ Paus. 10.9.7–10; OR 192. Pausanias’ assertions about the monument’s location were initially doubted, but see Habicht 1985: 71–5.

⁴¹ Paus. 10.10.1. For the Athenian claim: Ioakimidou 1997: 18–27; Miller 1997: 32; Zahrnt 2010: 119–20.

⁴² Bommelaer 1981: 16; Hölscher 1974: 77–9; Ioakimidou 1997: 283; Krumeich 1997: 101.

diverting attention away from it at a prominent location within the Delphic sanctuary.

The Aegospotami memorial overshadowed its illustrious Athenian counterpart in every aspect. Thanks to its dimensions (18 metres long by 4.5 metres wide), it towered over its competitor. The possible addition of a stoa across from the statues would have amplified the competition between the Spartan monument and the Athenian Marathon monument.⁴³ Its sculptural programme established a visual link between Aegospotami and the naval victory over the Persians at Salamis.⁴⁴ In terms of statues, the thirty-eight to forty in the Aegospotami monument outdid those of the Marathon counterpart, which numbered only thirteen. The winning admiral, Lysander, was flanked by more gods and heroes than his Athenian opposite Miltiades, emphasising the divine support the Spartans received. Lysander was accompanied by numerous statues of his allies, emphasising the broadness of the anti-Athenian alliance, like that of the Serpent Column.⁴⁵ Whatever the Athenians had done for the freedom of the Greeks, the Spartans boasted to have done more by defeating the contemporary threat to Greek *eleutheria*.

What brings this monument into the scope of the current investigation is the inclusion of a Boiotian admiral among Lysander's partners.⁴⁶ Some Boiotians thus intended to propagate their contribution to the Athenians' downfall, perhaps similar to how poleis vied to be included on the Serpent Column. The focus on one general, rather than a communal dedication, should not necessarily detract from that. Jean-François Bommelaer believes the placement of the Boiotian admiral is significant.⁴⁷ The monument starts with the Boiotian statue sharing the limelight with a Spartan, and finishes with two statues of Spartans, emphasising the importance of Athens' two most powerful enemies.

An interesting distinction between the Boiotian statue and the others is in the ethnics attached to the names. Whereas the other admirals are identified as members of a single polis, Erianthes or Arianthios, the

⁴³ Vatin 1981 doubts the stoa's date and connection to Lysander.

⁴⁴ There were subtle references in the Aegospotami monument to the dedications made by the Aeginetans at Delphi to commemorate their role at the Battle of Salamis, such as the Dioskourai and stars: Yates 2019: 130.

⁴⁵ Nafissi 2004: 74 compares Lysander's willingness to integrate allies in the victory, as opposed to Pausanias' unacceptable epigram. Bommelaer 1991: 108–10 provides a reconstruction of the monument.

⁴⁶ Paus. 10.9.9. ⁴⁷ Bommelaer 1971: 54.

Boiotian admiral, is referenced as being ‘of the Boiotians’.⁴⁸ Was this admiral perceived as a representative of the entire *koinon*, by omitting his city ethnic, or did he follow established conventions? Did eschewing polis identities in this case reflect an increased centralisation of the *koinon*? At Delphi, there was a habit of Boiotians presenting themselves in this way to the outside world, but there were exceptions.⁴⁹ It seems the reference to ‘the Boiotians’ reflects dedicatory conventions, rather than a representation of the *koinon*’s involvement in the monument.

Perhaps we can push the argument further. The Spartans were behind the dedication and oversaw possible additions, just as they did with the Serpent Column. Pausanias’ account supports Spartan agency. He mentions that the monument was paid for by the spoils from the battle of Aegospotami. Plutarch adjusts that view, stating that some of the individual pieces were dedicated by Lysander personally.⁵⁰ A combination of their accounts is acceptable and provides an insight into the process behind this impressive dedication. Most of the monuments and statues would then have been built by the Spartans, with some of the statues paid for by Lysander and individual admirals.⁵¹ Lysander was after all a prolific dedicator at Delphi and other sites such as Delos and the Athenian Akropolis.⁵² The inclusion of the Boiotian admiral may then have been a personal investment to stress his own contributions in a battle against the Athenians, the new Persians, who wreaked so much havoc on Boiotia during the war. The admiral was made responsible for the proposed eradication of Athens after the Peloponnesian

⁴⁸ OR 192 fr. D, l.3: [...]θιος [Λυσσι]μαχιδαο [Βοιω]τῶν. *ML* 95 add ν[αύαρχος].

⁴⁹ Schachter 2016a: 58–9 but see n. 1279. ⁵⁰ Paus. 10.9.7; Plut. *Lys.* 18.1.

⁵¹ The epigram found in Delphi emphasises Lysander as the dedicant (OR 192 fr. C.) but there is a strong possibility this entailed a later (mid-)fourth century addition: Jacquemin, Mulliez and Rougemont 2012: 51–2; Pouilloux and Roux 1963: 59. Day 2018: 90–4 views the epigram as directly responding to the Arcadian monument set up after 369. OR 192 omits the possibility of the later addition. The epigram runs as follows:

Lysander set up this statue on this monument when, victorious
 With swift ships he destroyed the power of the children of Kekrops
 Crowning Sparta, the never-sacked Akropolis of
 Greece, fatherland of fine dancing
 Ion from sea-girt Samos constructed the verse. (trans. OR 192)

The emphasis on the individual is quite un-Spartan for the fifth century. In the dedication after the Battle of Tanagra and another early classical era dedication at Olympia, the emphasis is on the collective: Paus. 5.10.4 (‘The temple has a golden shield; from Tanagra. The Spartans and their allies dedicated it’); *ML* 22 (... with a heart favourable to the Spartans); Schröder 2019: 68–70. The emphasis on the individual fits with fourth-century practices: Brown-Ferrario 2014: 234–59.

⁵² Bommelaer 1981: 1–22.

War and was part of a vehemently anti-Athenian clique in Thebes, making his personal involvement in the monument more likely.⁵³

The inclusion of a Boiotian admiral on the monument was a firm statement, meant to demonstrate to the Greek world that the victory over the Athenians was not a singular Spartan achievement. Michael Scott views Erianthes' inclusion as part of a Boiotian 'renaissance' in Apollo's sanctuary at the end of the fifth century.⁵⁴ The *koinon's* renewed presence at the shrine constituted a deliberate attempt by the Spartans and their allies to expand their profile to reflect the new political reality: 'from a living memorial to Athenian supremacy, it had become a memorial of her defeat'.⁵⁵ There are two expressions of this change. One is a possible niche that replaced the older Boiotian treasury in the south-western corner of the sanctuary. Another is the dedication made by the Boiotians to Athena Tritogeneia, which was found east of the temple terrace, suggesting it could have been placed on the terrace, a premium location within the sanctuary.⁵⁶

While the Aegospotami monument certainly fits in the trend of contesting Athenian claims and redesigning the Delphi sanctuary as a testimony to Spartan prowess, the other examples put forward by Scott are more problematic. The dedication to Athena Tritogeneia has been re-dated to the late sixth century, excluding it from a possible burgeoning Boiotian dedicatory programme.⁵⁷ Doubts can similarly be raised over the activity in the south-western corner of the sanctuary. The older treasury was not necessarily the result of communal agency: the inscriptions were inscribed on the foundation blocks, rendering them less visible to the visitors and a less likely political statement. There are reservations about whether the building functioned as a treasury, making any possible connection dubious. Additionally, the placement of the niche dedication is uncertain, as it is unclear whether it replaced the older Boiotian building. These refutations cast doubt on the alleged competition with the Athenian treasury for the attention of the visitors, as Scott holds.⁵⁸

⁵³ Plut. *Lys.* 15; Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.19. The Thebans' disavowal is problematic. It occurred in 395, when they were trying to obtain an alliance with Athens; Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.8.

⁵⁴ Scott 2010: 106–8. ⁵⁵ Scott 2010: 107.

⁵⁶ Bommelaer 1991: no. 230, p. 128; Jacquemin 1999: no. 100; p. 652. ⁵⁷ Larson 2007b.

⁵⁸ Bommelaer 1991: 128: 'D'après les niveaux relatifs, on serait tenté de dire que le Trésor disparut avant la construction de la niche *230, mais l'étude reste à faire.' Other dedications adduced by Scott can equally be criticised since they were unrelated to Athenian defeats. The possible Megarian offering in place of their treasury is dated to either 450–400 (Bommelaer 1991: 217) or pre-325 (Jacquemin 1999: 659). Other dedications include Scott 2010: nos. 173, 181 and 184. These have varying dates (Scott 2010: 330–1) and in some cases, unknown dedicators. Therefore, I am disinclined to accept the Boiotians' dedications aimed to overshadow the Athenians.

Where does that leave the Aegospotami monument? In my opinion, it stands alone in the Boiotian commemorative landscape at Delphi. It undoubtedly celebrated the victory over the new common foe but did not form part of a deliberate Boiotian attempt to contest the Athenians throughout the Apollo sanctuary. Rather, the monument should be regarded in a similar vein to the Serpent Column, set up after the Persian Wars under Spartan aegis. The monument celebrates the breadth of the alliance that brought Athens to its knees. The Boiotian participation in the monument is restricted to one statue and could reflect personal ties and connections to Lysander, rather than the *koinon's* insistence on its inclusion.

The Aegospotami monument was erected to express a Spartan victory over a common enemy as part of an allied effort. The inclusion of the Boiotians, if the *koinon* was behind it, could have been an attempt to accrue symbolic capital from the victory. The choice for a Panhellenic sanctuary probably reflects Spartan practices of proclaiming their hegemonial position to a broader Greek audience. The lack of any local Boiotian memorials suggests the battle was deemed less important for the expression of neighbourly rivalry, in contrast to other clashes, such as the battle of Delion (Chapter 5.2.6).

5.1.3 *The Athenian Golden Shields at Delphi*

The Aegospotami monument is not the last attestation of the Atheno-Boiotian rivalry at a Panhellenic shrine. That honour belongs to the golden shields dedicated on the architraves of the new Apollo temple in Delphi in 340/39. The running thread was the competing claims of hegemony and the memory of the Persian Wars. Unlike the Serpent Column and the Aegospotami monument, however, there appear to be more caveats with these golden shields. First, these shields were ostensibly a replacement of the original dedication after the Battle of Plataia in 479.⁵⁹ On closer investigation, they were more likely a later alteration. Second, this dedication was made to recollect a past victory, rather than a recent one. This contrasts sharply with the examples above.

In 340/39 the orator Aeschines travelled to Delphi to act as the Athenian representative in the Delphic Amphictyony. The situation was precarious. Tensions were running high between members of the Amphictyony over

⁵⁹ Bommelaer and Bommelaer 1983.

various issues, including the use of sacred lands (Chapter 2.7).⁶⁰ The Athenians certainly did not help matters by decorating the architraves of the new Apollo temple with golden shields. The objects themselves were hardly a matter of dispute. Decorating the refurbished temple after the calamitous earthquake in 373/2 was an unassuming action, as various monuments were re-erected in the wake of this natural disaster.⁶¹ It was the accompanying inscription that caused the issue: ‘The Athenians took this from the Persians and Thebans (Ἀθηναῖοι ἀπὸ Μήδων καὶ Θηβαίων) when they were fighting against the Hellenes.’⁶² According to Aeschines, these shields and the inscription were copies of the originals dedicated after the Battle of Plataia in 479 at the Apollo sanctuary. He mentions that the Boiotians were unimpressed by this ghost from wars past. Instead, they convinced the Amphictyony, through their Amphissan allies, to fine the Athenians fifty talents for the dedication of these shields since the new temple had not been properly consecrated yet.⁶³

The Athenians arguably attempted to tarnish the Theban reputation by openly rekindling the memory of their medism, in contrast to earlier dedications commemorating the Persian Wars that only implied their role (Chapters 5.1.1, 5.2.3). This inscription conveniently leaves out any other medizers and instead juxtaposes the Thebans with the Persians. David Yates argues that the placement of the Thebans alongside the Persians in the dedicatory inscription implies the Thebans were not Greeks but barbarians, like the vanquished enemies from which these shields were taken.⁶⁴ The onus for medism, therefore, was fully placed on the Thebans’ shoulders, as if other poleis had not taken part on the Persians’ side. This fits with the consistency bias Bernd Steinbock describes: poleis could be singled out or omitted in the recollection of the Athenians if that suited the situation.⁶⁵

Aeschines presents the inscription as part of the original dedication from the 470s. Some scholars accept this testimony *prima facie*, believing the dedication remained unchanged since the Persian Wars or at least reflects that era’s sentiment.⁶⁶ Yet an overview of (Athenian) memorials

⁶⁰ Aeschin. 3.116.

⁶¹ Partida 2017. For the funding of the rebuilding of the sanctuary and the funds acquired for it: RO 45.

⁶² Aeschin. 3.116. ⁶³ Bommelaer and Bommelaer 1983. ⁶⁴ Yates 2013: 337.

⁶⁵ Steinbock 2013: 127–42 offers a careful explanation why the Athenians omitted the Plataians and Thespians without negative intent.

⁶⁶ Barringer 2021: 145; Croissant 1996: 133; Habicht 2006: 109; Roux 1978: 30; Scott 2010: 132–3, contra Yates 2019.

commemorating the Persian Wars reveals the omission therein of medizing Greeks, making it unlikely the Thebans would have been singled out originally. An uncritical acceptance of Aeschines' testimony also ignores that the temple of Apollo was destroyed by an earthquake in 373. The time-lapse of some thirty years left ample time to change or alter the dedication and the message it was supposed to convey.⁶⁷ The language employed by Aeschines implies a *new* dedication, rather than a re-dedication. He uses ἀνέθεμεν' (dedicate) rather than the expected ἀποκατάστασις' (restore) as a later source does concerning the re-dedication of these shields.⁶⁸

This adjustment of dedications and reinvention of the Persian Wars meshes with contemporary practices. In the mid-fourth century the Athenians reinvented their relationships with other poleis through forging documents related to the Persian Wars.⁶⁹ This was not necessarily done with foul intent. These documents offer insights into the public memory of the fourth century and how they acted as fourth-century perceptions of the fifth-century past. This probably rings truer in the case of orators and thus Aeschines and the shields. The most famous example of this practice is the Themistocles decree, but one could add the Oath of Plataia from Acharnai (Chapter 5.2.8).⁷⁰ It fits with a Persian Wars-obsessed Athenian populace, which reached its peak around the mid-fourth century.⁷¹

This development coincided with a time when Atheno-Boiotian relations reached a nadir, which allowed Theban medism to occupy a central place in Athenian discourse. The renewed Spartan-Athenian alliance against the Boiotians in 369 fomented this attitude. The rekindling of the 'old alliance' against a familiar foe created the ideal breeding ground for a more antagonistic attitude (Chapters 2.6, 3.1.3). At this time, the Thebans were framed as the prototypical traitor.⁷² It was in their nature to betray justice and freedom, and to nestle themselves under the wings of a barbarian protector intent on enslaving Greece.

The alliance between the *koinon* and Philip accelerated this process. This conformed to the Athenian image of treacherous Thebans, as Philip became the new barbarian nemesis in the 350s, replacing the King of

⁶⁷ Mackil 2013: 85. ⁶⁸ Plut. *Demetr.* 13.2; Bommelaer and Bommelaer 1983.

⁶⁹ Liddel 2020: II 221–3.

⁷⁰ The Themistocles decree was initially thought to be the original copy of the decree moved by him on the eve of the Battle of Salamis in 480, but soon after it was seen as a later adaptation, fitted to purpose. Rather than describe the original decree, it was an attempt to strengthen Athenian-Troizenian ties in the mid-fourth century, if not later. Its current form dates to the early third century: ML 23; Davies 1994; Habicht 1961. A consensus continues to be elusive.

⁷¹ Hornblower 2010: 308–10. ⁷² Steinbock 2013: 143–50.

Persia. Demosthenes was particularly keen to envision the Macedonians as the new Persians.⁷³ It was in the aftermath of the Third Sacred War (357–346) against combined Boiotian and Macedonian forces that the Athenians decided to rededicate the golden shields from Plataia.⁷⁴

It came at a time when the *koinon* reached the peak of their Panhellenic prestige. They had just defended the Delphic Amphictyony against the sacrilegious Phocian trespassers, who were Athenian allies. The victory granted them the credentials to boost their profile as leaders of Greece, despite Philip's larger role in finishing the war (Chapters 2.6, 2.7).⁷⁵ The victory was celebrated in a lavish way at Delphi by dedicating a large statue of Herakles in a unique location along the Sacred Way that was destined to attract attention.⁷⁶ The accompanying inscription unrepentantly described the occasion for its dedication: 'The Boiotians dedicated this after the war which they fought against those who had defiled the sanctuary of Apollo Pythios.'⁷⁷ The main perpetrators in this war were the Phocians, who were supported by the Athenians. The Boiotians probably inferred the Athenians through association with the defilers of the Apollo sanctuary, without explicitly mentioning them. The Athenians wished to override this narrative at the Apollo sanctuary by dedicating the golden shields. They were tarnished only through association but made no qualms about associating the Thebans with the enemy par excellence, the Persians, at a time when they celebrated their victory over other Greeks obtained with the help of another 'barbarian'.

The Athenians demonstrated awareness of the right space and time for the dedication. By affronting the Boiotians at the Apollo temple in Delphi, the Athenians not only aimed to contradict their neighbours at a Panhellenic shrine, but at the same time reminded the Greek audience of their 'dubious' credentials at a place where various poleis strived for

⁷³ Dem. 9.31; 3.23–4; 3.65 for the Macedonians as the new Persians. On the ambiguity of the Macedonians' Greekness and its exploitation by the Athenians: Asirvatham 2009: 235–55; Squillace 2004.

⁷⁴ Liddel 2020: II 124–5 for the choice for enduring statements to be inscribed, a category the golden shields and the interstate repercussions belonged to.

⁷⁵ The Amphictyony honoured Philip with a statue at Delphi: Ath. 13. 591b.

⁷⁶ Paus. 10.3.6; Jacquemin 1999: 185 n. 225; Scott 2010: 127, no. 225. For the placement of the statue and its interactions with surrounding statues (mostly the Phocian counter-reaction and a Thessalian-Macedonian dedication from the late sixth century): Franchi 2016: 254–67.

⁷⁷ Trans. A. Schachter. *FD* III.3.77 [Βοιωτοὶ ἀνέθιαν μετὰ τὸν πόλεμον ὃν ἐπό]λέμισαν | πρὸς τὸς τὸ ἱερόν τῷ Ἀπολλωνος τῷ Πουθίῳ ἀσ]βεῖσαντας. The place of the dedication was perhaps the Base des Béotiens: Roesch 1984a: 447–62. Scott 2016: 114 views the statue of Herakles and this dedication as two separate monuments, which would amplify the Boiotian presence at the sanctuary.

attention in the dedicatory landscape. Delphi was where the Boiotians articulated their dominant position in the Greek world through the erection of their treasury and other dedications to commemorate the victory at Leuktra (371).⁷⁸ Perhaps the shields were dedicated shortly after the Third Sacred War, and the Athenians aimed to strike at the Boiotians' ideological message of competent leadership. Alternatively, the shields could have been dedicated shortly before the indictment in spring 339 to form part of an Athenian attempt to advertise their credentials to lead a grand alliance against a new barbarian invasion, while at the same time downplaying the Boiotians' standing among the Greeks. In both cases, the Athenians fully utilised the tainted past of the Boiotians to their advantage by reflecting upon their collaborations with a foreign invader on the grand stage of Greek interaction, Delphi, which had been the locus for advertising the localised and epichoric view of the Persian Wars.

The commemoration of the Persian Wars could be moulded (within limits) according to political expediency. This is demonstrated by the changes in emphasis in Athenian dedicatory practices vis-à-vis the Boiotians and their role during the Persian Wars. The return of a new barbarian threat in the form of Philip, a Boiotian ally, provided a perfect opportunity for the Athenians to boost their credentials as the leaders of Greece, just when the Boiotians were busy carving out their own legacy as the *prostates* of Greek *eleutheria*. The desire to wage this propagandistic war at Delphi had as much to do with the increased importance of the right Panhellenist credentials as it had with contemporary events, considering the long, bloody war that had been fought over the Apollo sanctuary.

5.1.4 Summary of Panhellenic Sanctuaries

The examples above demonstrate some key tenets of neighbourly commemorative practices at Panhellenic shrines. These threads can be summarised as follows. First, monuments dedicated to victories over the

⁷⁸ Scott 2016. I disagree with viewing the shields of Asopichios, Epameinondas' *eromenos*, in the Athenian stoa at Delphi as related to Leuktra. If Walsh 1986 correctly dates the stoa as a victory monument of the Athenians after 458 over the Spartans and their allies, a Boiotian dedication therein would be a strong condemnation of the Athenian lack of help at Leuktra, reinforcing the victory's reputation. But other dates have been put forward. Following Ath. 13.604f the shields were dedicated in the 'stoa' (ἐν Δελφοῖς ἐν τῇ στοᾷ). Is this the Athenian stoa? Amandry 1953: 120 n. 1 points out that Delphic or Phocian Greek is not the same as Athenian Greek. The common word for stoa in Phocian is πσστᾶς. He admits the dedication of the shields could explain Paus. 1.23.12 and his erroneous ascription of the stoa to Phormion, but that is not conclusive. Therefore it is not certain the Athenian stoa was meant.

neighbours appear uncommon. Whenever the defeat of Boiotians or Athenians is recollected in a Panhellenic sanctuary, it concerns a collective effort, with the dedication afterwards made by the allied poleis. We observe this tendency in the Zeus statue at Olympia, the Serpent Column and the Aegospotami monument at Delphi. Another noticeable feature is the omission of the vanquished foe: it is through the pictorial aspects of the dedications that the other's hegemonic claims are contested. The Aegospotami monument contests the Athenian Panhellenic credentials for leadership of the Greeks by literally overshadowing it, but it is only in the later fourth century an inscription accompanies it to emphasise the defeat of the Athenians in writing. Second, all dedications are somehow connected to the Persian Wars and the Panhellenic prestige derived from them. Participation on the 'right' side during this seminal conflict allowed the Athenians and Spartans to promulgate their leadership ambitions. It is these aspirations for leadership that are directly contested by the dedications after the Peloponnesian War or the Battle of Leuktra. Any monuments related to the Atheno-Boiotian relations at Panhellenic sanctuaries thus aimed to interact with the earlier dedicatory landscape and to promote a story that inaugurated a new dawn in Greece.

There is nevertheless an obvious lack of monuments detailing direct neighbourly relations. That discrepancy is all the more striking considering the willingness of both parties to dedicate at Panhellenic sanctuaries after defeating the Spartans. The Athenian stoa at Delphi, if John Walsh's date for the monument (after 458) is correct, would be an impressive reminder of their victory over the Spartans (and their allies).⁷⁹ Similarly, the *koinon* erected a treasury in the south-western corner of the sanctuary in Delphi to commemorate their victory over the Spartans at Leuktra for posterity.⁸⁰ These expressions of dominance could have been the result of a desire to topple the previous hegemon and their presence in Delphi by forging a lasting memory in the sanctuary. In that case, the dearth of evidence for Atheno-Boiotian relations at Panhellenic sanctuaries can be the consequence of coincidence. Yet the evidence from local and civic spaces

⁷⁹ Those allies ostensibly included the Boiotians, but they go unmentioned in the dedicatory inscription: *ML* 25: 'The Athenians dedicated the portico and the armaments and the figure heads of the ships that they seized from their enemies.' The contemporary Tegean stoa mentions the enemy (the Spartans); Vatin 1981: 455. The defeat of the Boiotians was celebrated separately by re-dedicating the *quadriga* on the Akropolis: Chapter 5.2.4.

⁸⁰ Jacquemin 1999: 145; Jacquemin and Laroche 2010; Michaud 1973; Partida 2000a: 192. That did not prohibit local celebrations of the victory, like the trophy at the battlefield (Stringer 2019; Tufano 2019b) and the inauguration of the Basileia in Lebadeia (Bonnetière 2003: 27–8).

suggests otherwise: there we find the declarations of neighbourly rivalry in its clearest form and at its highest frequency.

5.2 Home Is Where The Heart Is: Commemorations in Local Civic and Sacred Spaces

In contrast to the relative dearth of evidence from Panhellenic sanctuaries, the local civic and sacred spaces in Athens and Boiotia provide a cornucopia of neighbourly commemorative interaction. When considering the importance of fostering memorial communities and the central place occupied by the local in the Greek mindset, this preference is less surprising.⁸¹ The importance of the local flows forth from other aspects of community building. Conflict is ingrained in the stories communities tell themselves. To reinforce the common identity, it is imperative to embrace the heroic past and its stories of incredible exploits. Much of this historical memory relies on stories of war. To foster the cohesion of their communities, the Athenians and Boiotians depended on these stories of conflict that signified perseverance, and tales of struggle were more conducive to the creation of a common identity and strengthening of internal bonds than stories of peaceful co-existence.⁸² The ideal place for cementing feelings of unity was the local.

The local venues did not have to compete for the minds and hearts of the audience, as at Panhellenic sanctuaries. That did not prevent outsiders from viewing the dedicated monuments. Yet these mementos were aimed at the inner circle of the polis and its audience, not the visitors from afar.⁸³ The proximity of Athenian or Boiotian sanctuaries made them the prime loci for expressing collaboration. The message of friendship was thus framed so it appealed to the local populations. Recollections of conflict equally permeated the local. These memories were aimed at remembering vicissitudes or joyous occasions, rather than contesting claims, as at Delphi. The local was ideally suited for such purposes, allowing for 'naming and shaming' the opponents, since the goal was to foment hostility towards the other by strengthening the feeling of cohesion among the population.

⁸¹ For memorial communities: Yates 2019: 1–29. For the local in Greek thinking and discourse: Beck 2020.

⁸² The emphasis changes from community to individuals as historical agents from the fifth to the fourth century: Brown-Ferrario 2014.

⁸³ Liddel 2020: II 159–88 on the non-Athenian audiences of decrees.

Exemplifying this behaviour is the recollection of Theban or Boiotian medism in the Athenian *imaginaire*. It was continuously adapted to contemporary political needs, shifting from a subdued indifference shortly after the Persian Wars in speech and local spaces to an open condemnation in writing and commemorative practices from the fourth century onwards.⁸⁴ The condemnation of the Boiotians found its way into the historiography of the later fifth century, as seen in Herodotus' *Histories*. This disallowed complexity and created a more myopic viewing of these events.⁸⁵ Similarly, renewed hostilities made flagrant accusations towards the Thebans for their medism more acceptable. Therefore, we observe more references, both negatively or positively, in these places than in the Panhellenic sanctuaries.

In contrast to the Panhellenic dedications that aimed at contesting hegemonial claims, the local dedications aim at castigating the neighbour or recollecting a successful collaboration. The lack of hegemonic claims in these dedications and the articulation of the neighbour as a defeated or cooperative party sets the local perspective apart from the Panhellenic.⁸⁶

5.2.1 *A Friend among Peers: Alcmeonides and Hipparchos at the Ptoion*

The earliest attestation of interregional interactions in the memorial landscape comes from the temple of Apollo Ptoios in Akraiphnia. The sanctuary was frequented by visitors from all over Greece. Many left impressive *kouroi* to commemorate their visit and to display piety towards the deity.⁸⁷ The sanctuary was also known for a wealth of tripods (bases). The excavations of the sanctuary illuminated that the entry hall towards the innermost part of the shrine was flanked by numerous statues and tripods meant to impress visitors.⁸⁸ Among these offerings two dedications are of particular interest for the current investigation. They demonstrate how

⁸⁴ Steinbock 2013: 100–54. The examples he adduces for Theban medism in fifth-century Athenian social memory can all be differently interpreted: the Serpent Column at Delphi, the golden shields dedicated by the Athenians and oblique references in Simonides' poems. The latter solely relies on conjecture and finds no comparison in contemporary sources. The other two examples are treated in Chapters 5.1.1, 5.1.3.

⁸⁵ Thucydides was less interested in medism: Hornblower 2010: 138, 287–322.

⁸⁶ One example is left out: Pausanias speaks of a painting in the Zeus Eleutherios Stoa in the Athenian Agora, depicting the Athenians at the Battle of Mantinea in 362. They fought the Thebans there, but Pausanias provides no further information and the Athenians aided the Spartans (Paus. 1.3.3–4).

⁸⁷ Ducat 1971; COB I 52–73. ⁸⁸ Papalexandrou 2008.



Figure 5.4 Dedication of Alcmeonides at the Ptoion (IG I³ 1469).
(Courtesy Ministry of Culture and Sports. Archaeological Resources Fund.
Archaeological Museum of Thebes; photo by author)

Boiotian sanctuaries could be deployed for expressing neighbourly relations. In these cases the impetus came from befriended aristocrats, rather than poleis, but these dedications demonstrate how friendly interactions could be on show in the second half of the sixth century before hostilities commenced (Chapters 2.1, 3.1.1).

The first example is a dedication by a member of the Alcmeonid clan, Alcmeonides, dated to the mid-sixth century (see Figure 5.4):⁸⁹

I am a fair gift for Phoibos son of Leto:
Alcmeonides, the son of Alcmeon,
Dedicated me after the victory of his swift mares
Which Knopiadas, the –, drove
When there was a festive gathering for Pallas
at Athens (*ὅτ' ἐν Ἀθάναις Παλλ(λ)άδος πανέ[γυρις]*).
(trans. A. Schachter)

The text was inscribed on the capital of a column on which stood an unidentified object. The occasion was a victory in the Panathenaic games. Because of the family ties of the dedicant, scholars related this dedication to disputes in Athens. The Alcmeonids either hoped to garner political support in Boiotia against the Peisistratids or used it for propagandistic

⁸⁹ IG I³ 1469. Alcmeonides dedicated on the Athenian Akropolis for perhaps a similar victory: Raubitschek 1949: no. 317.

purposes to gain prominence, but Albert Schachter has convincingly showed this was not the case.⁹⁰

The decision to dedicate at the Ptoion was motivated by the destruction of the Apollo temple in Delphi, with much of the inter-regional traffic directed towards other Apollo sanctuaries such as the one at Akraiphnia. The Ptoion in particular benefitted from that misfortune. This Boiotian sanctuary reached its apogee in Panhellenic attraction, receiving a large share of the redirected traffic from Delphi. Because of the symbolic capital of the Alcmeonid clan in Central Greece, particularly at Delphi, their desire to propagate their victories at another famous Apollo sanctuary is less surprising.⁹¹

The Ptoion was a place where visitors from all over Greece performed cultic celebrations together. Alcmeonides was no exception. His dedication was meant to demonstrate his prowess in horse-racing to his peers and advertise his fame beyond the borders of Athens. It was here, among his fellows, that Alcmeonides' glory shone brightest. The choice for Boiotia was a logical one. Cultivating good neighbourly relations was common among aristocrats.⁹² For the Alcmeonids, the situation was no different. The right relations could prove fruitful in the future, and perhaps the early contours of their interaction with Boiotian peers in the Skourta Plain can be detected here (Chapters 3.2.1, 4.1.1). The name of the charioteer, Knopiadas, may be of interest. His origins were not necessarily Boiotian, as Schachter points out, but if the name does reflect such a provenance, his inclusion on the monument demonstrates the aristocratic friendship ties between the Alcmeonids and Boiotian families.⁹³ The choice for the Apollo shrine was not just dictated by matters of convenience; the friendly relations the Alcmeonids enjoyed in the region helped to increase efforts to dedicate at the Ptoion. Alcmeonides chose a local sanctuary with Panhellenic appeal to cultivate these ties in obedience to the norms of aristocratic competition.

Whereas Alcmeonides chose to dedicate at the Ptoion partially out of necessity, the same cannot be said about the second example: a statue base dedicated by Hipparchos, one of Peisistratus' sons. Based on its lettering, the dedication is dated to circa 520–514, with the *terminus ante quem* provided by Hipparchos' death.⁹⁴ In comparison to Alcmeonides' offering, Hipparchos' dedication was lapidary: 'set up by Hipparchos son of Peisistratus'.

⁹⁰ Schachter 2016a: 151–67.

⁹¹ For connections between Delphi and the Alcmeonid clan: Anderson 2003: 29–30.

⁹² Herman 1987. ⁹³ Schachter 2016a: 152, 160.

⁹⁴ IG I³ 1470 (520–514); SEG 50.92. The name Ptoiodoros is attested in Athens (520–510): Marchand 2011.

Most scholars ascribe a political motivation to Hipparchos' dedication.⁹⁵ In their view, the dedication reflects friendly co-existence between the Peisistratids and Thebans. Therefore, Hipparchos must have made the offering before 519, when friendly relations were severed because of the Plataian-Athenian alliance. Though I also view the dedication as politically motivated, I disagree on the date (Chapter 3.1.1). If the earlier inception date of hostilities can be ignored, we can follow Jean Ducat's assessment to date the dedication to the end of Hipparchos' life, based on his comparison of the letter forms on offerings at the Ptoion.⁹⁶

If we take the venue into consideration, the contours of political motivations become clearer. At this time, the Ptoion had passed its zenith in Panhellenic popularity. Aristocratic agonistic values therefore do not sufficiently explain Hipparchos' choice. His dedication, relatively subdued in size in comparison to all the life-sized *kouroi* and other elaborate gifts to the god, made for a less imposing statement if he meant to exhibit his wealth to a larger audience. Instead, the Ptoion was chosen because of its long-standing ties to the Peisistratid family – insofar as we can push the evidence of roof tiles at an earlier phase of the sanctuary and the role of itinerant craftsmen – and the interest of the Peisistratids to promote Apollo cults competing with the Delphic sanctuary.⁹⁷ Coinciding with the sustained friendly relations between the Theban leadership and the Peisistratids was the Theban takeover of the Ptoion, transforming the sanctuary into an ideal locus for articulating a continued friendship.⁹⁸ By dedicating at the Ptoion, Hipparchos demonstrated not only this relationship, but perhaps – and this is very conjectural – also his approval of the Theban attempts to build a common polity. If the original excavator, Léon Bizard, was correct in believing a statue of the goddess Athena graced the statue base, the message of Athenian approval for Boiotian political ethnogenesis under Theban aegis could have resonated more.⁹⁹ It would have worked both ways: Athena Itonia was an important figure in Boiotian ethnogenesis, whereas the goddess could personify the Athenian interests at the same time. Shortly after Hipparchos' dedication, we find the Thebans promulgating the notion of a common identity at the Ptoion.¹⁰⁰ Representatives of other Boiotian communities visiting the shrine would

⁹⁵ Schachter 2016a: 151–67. ⁹⁶ Ducat 1973: 66: 'vers 515'.

⁹⁷ Larson 2013. For itinerant craftsmen: Hochscheid 2015: 212; Shear 2016: 9–11.

⁹⁸ Schachter 2016a: 183. ⁹⁹ Bizard 1920.

¹⁰⁰ Ganter 2013 rightly warns against over-interpreting the existing evidence for the promulgation of the Boiotian identity at the shrine.

be aware of the continued friendship between the Athenian tyrants and the Thebans and realise the southern neighbours might approve of Theban plans.

What can be plausibly said about the dedications by Alcmeonides and Hipparchos? A minimalist interpretation would hold that Athenian elites sought out Boiotian sanctuaries to forge good relations with their peers in the neighbouring region. The evidence can probably not be stretched much further. Alcmeonides' dedication was instigated by the destruction of the Delphic temple to Apollo, re-directing much of the aristocratic traffic to the Ptoion. Hipparchos' dedication reveals the continued friendship between the Peisistratids and the Thebans. It is more in line with other dedications detailing neighbourly relations at local sanctuaries, which were preferred over the Panhellenic sanctuaries in Delphi or elsewhere. In each case, the audience was the Boiotian elites and pilgrims frequenting the sanctuary, demonstrating that Athenian elites were aware of the Ptoion's allure for reaching the largest regional or local audience. If Catherine Keesling's hypothesis of the alignment of *kouroi* in the Ptoion is correct – with the statues being rearranged in the fourth century when the temple was rebuilt, similar to what occurred at the Heraion on Samos and at Didyma – the rehabilitation of archaic statues at the end of the fourth century could have led to a renewed interest in these Athenian dedications.¹⁰¹

5.2.2 *The Earliest Conflict: The Theban kioniskos and the Athenian quadriga from the Late Sixth Century*

The overthrow of the Peisistratids in Athens inaugurated a re-organisation of loyalties and relations in Central Greece. Instead of the warm ties between the leading families in Thebes and Athens, there was a new democratic regime hoping to forge a common identity throughout Attica (Chapters 2.1, 2.2). Conflict came in the wake of the political shake-up. The first attestation of hostilities in the memorial landscape was after the attack in 507/6. It is unique among most examples, since the same event can be analysed from both perspectives. Previously, our sources were Athenocentric: Herodotus' account and the *quadriga* dedicated by the Athenians on the Akropolis, financed by the ransom of the Boiotian and

¹⁰¹ Keesling 2003: 107. If the Ptoion suffered in the wake of the destruction of Thebes in 335, the restoration of these dedications would be even stronger examples of a rekindling of old ties and friendships (Chapter 2.7). For a possible destruction of the temple: Kanellopoulous and Petrakis 2018: 185.

Chalkidian prisoners. The discovery of a *kioniskos* from Thebes changed that (see [Figure 5.5](#)).¹⁰²

This *kioniskos* was kept in a cist buried at the end of the fifth century in a suburb of Thebes, Pyri. The stone is broken off and, accordingly, the inscription is incomplete:

[-----]ος φοινώας καὶ Φυλᾶς
 [-----] ἠελόντες κέλευσῖνα
 [-----]αι Χαλκίδα λυσάμενοι
 [-----]μῶδι ἀνέθειαν

... of Oinoe and Phyle
 ... having taken also Eleusis
 ... Chalkis ... having freed
 ... dedicated to ...¹⁰³

Part of the dedication's inscription has been lost, but the remaining text refers to the capture of lands in the borderlands ([Chapter 4.1.1](#)). It is uncertain whether the Athenians were mentioned in the lost fragments of the stone. They may have been, but the origins of the opponents were probably subservient to the main purpose of the dedication, such as the ritual transfer of the territory to a god.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps these areas, while contested, were not yet perceived as belonging to Athens, and their capture need not have invoked the neighbours' name.

The omission can also be the result of putting a brave face on an abysmal defeat. Yet that betrays a distinct Athenian perspective. For the Boiotians the capture of these lands meant a measure of success. The recipient of the offering has been lost, but if it concerned the ritual transfer of territory, we may surmise the intended target was either a god or the Theban demos.¹⁰⁵ The possibility of a ritual transfer of these lands is supported by the shape of the dedication. Only the base survives, but the shape of the column resembles other Boiotian dedications reflecting similar practices, where a *kioniskos* formed the base for a statuette or tripod. The prolific usage of

¹⁰² IG I³ 501A; ML 15; Hdt. 5.77–8. For the *kioniskos*: Aravantinos 2006; Figueira 2010; Krentz 2007: 738 offered later dates for the dedication, but see BE 2008 no. 236.

¹⁰³ SEG 56.521; the translation is from Berti 2010a.

¹⁰⁴ Mackil 2023: 412–14 for the ritual transfer. Aravantinos 2006: 375 presents the following conjectural restoration of line 1: [Ἀθαναίων δάμ]ος φοινώας καὶ Φυλᾶς.

¹⁰⁵ Several restorations have been offered for line 4: BE 2006.203 suggested [Dionusvsioi Kad]moi. For a criticism of this Dionysian epithet: COB I 187 n. 2; 189 n. 2. Aravantinos 2006: 376 mentions other suggestions, including [τῶι δά]μοι.

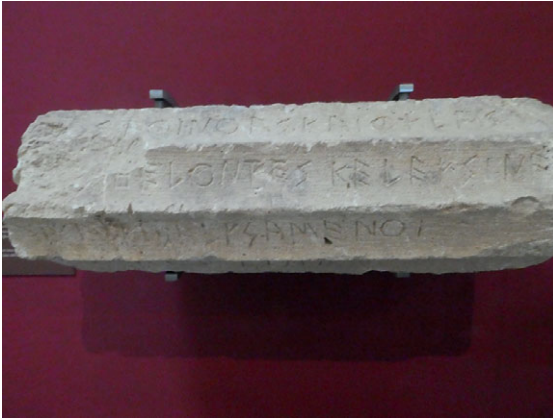


Figure 5.5 *Kioniskos* from Thebes detailing events of 507/6.
(Courtesy Ministry of Culture and Sports. Archaeological Resources Fund.
Archaeological Museum of Thebes; photo by author)

tripods in the Boiotian landscape for the articulation of territorial gains suggests the latter is more likely.¹⁰⁶

What more can be garnered from the *kioniskos*? The Boiotians or the Thebans were the likely dedicants. The ransomed prisoners demonstrating their gratitude towards their liberators is another possibility, but that makes the mention of captured territories rather irrelevant. The outcome of the quadripartite invasion warranted no grand celebrations, which is reflected in the minimal dimensions of the dedication.¹⁰⁷ The term *kioniskos* deceives the reader, however, as only part of the monumental base has survived. The actual dedication would have been substantially bigger. Unfortunately, the archaeological context provides no further clues. If the find spot was indeed near the location of the dedication, the *kioniskos* was probably erected at an athletic/military complex outside Thebes on the road to Akraiphnia, making the likelihood of foreign visitors viewing the dedication limited, thus emphasising its local focus.

This monument put a positive spin on the failed campaign by stressing the help in releasing the prisoners and the lands captured.¹⁰⁸ If it was

¹⁰⁶ Papalexandrou 2005; 2008.

¹⁰⁷ The column is 0.5702 m high, has a diameter of 0.198 m at the base level and 0.193 m at the top. The flutes around the column measure between 0.05 and 0.061 m; the letters are 0.021–0.033 m high.

¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the dedicants paid for the Chalkidian prisoners. There is a tombstone from Thisbe possibly commemorating the loss in a more private capacity: *JG VII 2247 = CEG 1.112*. The published epigram by Papazarkadas 2014: 224–32 for fallen Thebans might date to this episode, but the editor prefers a date c. 480–479.

displayed at a complex just outside Thebes, the intended audience was the inhabitants of the city and other Boiotians. This audience could have reinforced the need to emphasise the early successes of the campaign and the care taken for the prisoners. If the monument was of a more private character by the ransomed men, their message contested an Athenian narrative that viewed the campaign as a failure, by stressing early successes and demonstrating the god's good fortunes that allowed for their release.

The dedicants seem to stress the centrality of the border towns and their capture while downplaying the identity of the opponents. The places captured – except Eleusis – were in the τὰ μεθόρια whose loyalties had not been (forcibly) confirmed by the Athenians or the Boiotians. While the Athenians as an ethnic group existed at this time, we can conjecture that for the dedicants, 'the Athenians' as such were not the unified enemy of the fifth or fourth centuries. Nor did they occupy these borderlands. The common Athenian identity probably arose around this time or in the aftermath of the battle. The towns of Oinoe and Phyle existed before they officially became Athenian and were probably identified by their topographical name by the Boiotians. From their perspective, the *kioniskos* records the capture of these towns, as if it concerned a neighbourly victory, similar to dedications at Olympia that reflect the internecine rivalries in the region in decades prior.¹⁰⁹ Arguably, they viewed the new democratic regime in a similar mould to previous leadership as representing the interests of that group rather than an entire peninsula.¹¹⁰ The wars of the late sixth century were framed as a conventional conflict, a dispute over borderlands that this time ended in defeat, but did not shape views on the Athenians for the foreseeable future. Nor did it mark the start of a perpetual neighbourly struggle. Reflecting that chronic insignificance are the modest dimensions of the dedication, its inconspicuous location and its resting place, exemplified by the burial of the *kioniskos*. No exact date for its destruction is known, which prevents further speculation.

Whereas the *kioniskos* emphasises restraint through its minimal size and standardised formulaic inscription, the Athenian dedication, paid from a tithe of the ransom for the Boiotian and Chalkidian prisoners, outshone its counterpart in all facets.¹¹¹ It consisted of a life-sized bronze statue of a

¹⁰⁹ *NIO* 121; 122; 127; 128.

¹¹⁰ The political career of Cleisthenes started under the Peisistratid tyranny – he was an archon in 525/4 (*IG I³* 1031 fr. c; Pebarthe 2005) – so viewing his leadership of Athens as a new faction taking over is possible.

¹¹¹ *Hdt.* 5.77–8; *IG I³* 501.

quadriga, perhaps with driver, on top of a three-metre base to support the monument.¹¹² In addition, the base was adorned with an epigram commemorating the exploits of the Athenians:

[δεσμοῖ ἐν ἄχνύεντι(?) σιδερέοι ἔσβεσαν *húβ*]ριν·
 παῖδε[ς Ἀθηναίων ἐργασιν ἐμ πολέμο]
 [ἔθνεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων δαμάσαντες]·
 τῶν *hίππος* δ[εκάτεν Παλλάδι τάσδ' ἔθεσαν

In a painful bond of iron the sons of the Athenians quenched their *hybris*, having overpowered the hosts of the Boiotians and Chalkidians in deeds of war; as a tithe therefrom they dedicated this four-horse chariot to Pallas.¹¹³

The size and magnificence of the *quadriga* are a profuse testament to the Athenians' confidence. The chains on the Mycenaean walls behind the dedication amplified the message. At the time, the dedication would have stood out because of its location north of the later Propylaea and at the entrance of the Akropolis proper, where the sanctuaries were located.¹¹⁴ Any visitor to the holy rock would be confronted with a life-sized monument commemorating the Athenians' heroic exploits. The magnitude of the victory was strengthened by the traces of epic poetry in the epigram accompanying the dedication.¹¹⁵

With this dedication, the young democracy nestled the events of 507/6 into the Athenian collective memory. In the decades after, this space would be further transformed into a testimony of perseverance against foreign invasion.¹¹⁶ At the same time, the monument formed part of an extensive

¹¹² Schollmeyer 2001: 58 n. 39 mentions 6 m and is followed by Kluwe 2004: 274, but it probably rests on a misunderstanding. Stevens 1936: 505 deduces the life-size dimensions of the *quadriga* from the length of the inscription. Some scholars add a charioteer to the statue, based on the known instances of chariot dedications at Delphi. This cannot be certified: Kluwe 2004.

¹¹³ The text rests on a reconstruction that combined pieces of the original dedication with the (later) inscription seen by Herodotus and Pausanias: Kazcko 2016: 2. For the translation I employ Anderson's translation of 'hosts' rather than peoples: Anderson 2003: 156 contra Kazcko 2016: 2.

¹¹⁴ Hurwit 1999: 63; Monaco 2009. The location of the original dedication is debated: Paga 2017: 162–4.

¹¹⁵ Kazcko 2016: 13. The use of ἐργασιν rather than the conventional ἔργα or ἔργον is another example. The same could be said of ἔθνεα. Homer sometimes uses ἔθνεα as a simile to compare the opposing armies to 'swarms' of bees (Hom. *Il.* 2.551). Another example is the term 'sons of the Athenians' (παῖδε[ς Ἀθηναίων), instead of the more common 'Athenians': Anderson 2003: 156–7.

¹¹⁶ Paga 2017.

refurbishment of the Akropolis' sacred landscape, meant to celebrate the new democracy.¹¹⁷ It etched the importance of the democracy and its benefits as opposed to the oligarchs and their foreign supporters into Athenian minds. The *quadriga* stood out as the first communal dedication on the Akropolis, emphasising the collective over the aristocratic, individual dedications.¹¹⁸ The sculptural programme is another indication of democratic appropriation of oligarchic symbolism. Horses and chariots were typically associated with oligarchs, while *quadrigas* were reserved to commemorate aristocratic athletic victories. The Athenian dedication is the only local instance in which it was used to commemorate a military victory.¹¹⁹ The memory of democratic virtues over oligarchy survived throughout the fifth century: Herodotus describes the dedication in terms of democracy's benefits over oligarchies in warfare.¹²⁰

If the dedication served to promulgate the virtues of the democracy, what does it say about the Athenians' perception of the Boiotians? The Athenians identify them as a group acting in unison: the boast of defeating throngs of them in battle testifies to that.¹²¹ The juxtaposition of Boiotians with the inhabitants of a polis (Chalkis) is remarkable, and the invocation of the *ethnos* is probably to emphasise the number of defeated enemies. Or it specified the *foreignness* of the defeated foe, differing from the Athenians, but that does not account for the invocation of the Chalkidians. Unlike the Theban dedication, the identity of the vanquished was not subsidiary, even if the monument was enmeshed in the encomium for the democracy. The *quadriga* and its connotations were not intrinsically democratic, and the victory monument appears to have been a military monument celebrating a victory over foes.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Paga 2021: 62–75.

¹¹⁸ Another novelty was the *plinthedon* style: Keesling 2008: 50–5. The epigram stood out as only five of 330 dedicatory inscriptions on the Akropolis that reference the type of statue offered; Keesling 2003: 111.

¹¹⁹ Keesling 2010: 124 interprets the *quadriga* as appropriating athletic imagery.

¹²⁰ Hdt. 5.78. Herodotus may have retrospectively added brashness to the exploits of the democracy and its ideology: Forsdyke 2001.

¹²¹ Bakhuizen 1989: 67 viewed ἔθνεα as a cohesive union, perhaps even a political organisation. Larson 2007a: 151 regards it as a regional identity. Mackil 2013: 28, 411–12 views the *Boiotoi* as a military collective.

¹²² There are other examples of military victories celebrated in a similar form. The Rhodians dedicated a golden chariot at Delphi (Jacquemin and Laroche 1986) and one on Rhodes to celebrate their victory over Demetrios Poliorketes (Pl. *NH* 34.63). Schröder 2019: 77–8 speculates that the known prowess of the Boiotians as horsemen led to the *quadriga*. While not implausible, a focus on aristocratic credentials rather than an identification with the Boiotians is more effective in my opinion.

The desire to underline the identity of the vanquished invaders did not express an established enmity, as this constitutes the first documented clash between the neighbours (Chapters 2.1, 3.1.1). The dispute of 507/6 was not the result of a cyclical experience, but the inception of hostilities. The contents of the epigram confirm this reading. The invocation of the Boiotians' hubris in combination with the verb *ἔσβεσαν* (quenching) implies a sense of divine justice, validating the Athenian victory as a rightful course of fate.¹²³ Hubris in the context of interstate war was perceived as an act of aggression that contravened the codes of war.¹²⁴ The invasion was perceived as an unprovoked attack that broke the peaceful status quo. Perhaps the Boiotians had not officially announced their intentions to the Athenians, but they certainly did not withdraw from the war like the Peloponnesians. The location of the dedication, the Athenian Akropolis, ties into this notion. The intended audience was the Athenian citizenry. The *quadriga* acted as a memento of their resilience in the wake of foreign aggression. The association with Boiotian hostilities seems to be confirmed by the *quadriga*'s long absence from the Akropolis after its destruction during the Persian Wars.¹²⁵

The events of 507/6 were perceived differently in both regions, as reflected in their dedications. The *kioniskos* in Thebes exudes understatement, fitting of a local border conflict without profound ramifications for the community and their identity. The *quadriga* in Athens glorified their victory over the neighbours and was part of the democracy's proficiency over tyranny and oligarchy. The extravagance of the grandiose Athenian monument was more related to celebrating the benefits of the newly established democracy than to an inveterate dislike of the defeated foes. These were the useful pawns in an internal Athenian game of memorialising the virtues of the democracy and how it overcame the odds. That

¹²³ Kazcko 2016: 12. ¹²⁴ Whitley 2011.

¹²⁵ The deliberate 'destitute' state of the Akropolis after the Persian Wars to act as a memorial landscape of Athenian vicissitudes could have prevented an earlier re-dedication (Kousser 2009). But that argument still held at the time of the *quadriga*'s re-dedication (458), when the 'ghost of the Persian Wars' had not been cast (unless the peace of Kallias can be accepted: Harris 2021). The purposeful neglect of the Akropolis is debated; whether it was sacked in a destructive fashion by the Persians is doubted: van Rookhuijzen 2017. Mattingly 1982 argued for a double re-dedication: one shortly after the Persian Wars and one during the Peloponnesian War. His arguments are tempting, but the deliberate neglect of the Akropolis makes a dedication just after the war unlikely. Nor was there an occasion to dedicate the *quadriga*. Harris 2018: 106 n. 39 follows Mattingly by pointing to the re-dedication of the statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, yet that ignores these were presumably set up in the Agora, not the Akropolis. The first site was quickly re-built, but the Akropolis was not.

message would have shone even brighter if Nathan Arrington is right in arguing that the public burial of fallen Athenians had begun at this time, making the defenders of the democracy the first heroes to be so honoured as examples of courage for later generations to emulate.¹²⁶

What unites both monuments is the importance attached to local civic or religious spaces for demonstrating the protagonists' version of the story. In both cases, the preference for a local sanctuary indicates that the intended audiences were not the Greek world at large, but the inhabitants of Thebes and Athens, respectively. If the concern had been to promulgate a military victory over a neighbour as a statement of antagonistic prowess, the Athenians would have dedicated at a Panhellenic shrine, for instance, the Zeus sanctuary at Olympia, where the Thebans and other Boiotian communities had previously commemorated their military victories over neighbouring rivals.¹²⁷ This is what the Athenians did after defeating the Persians at Marathon in 490 and after capturing Lemnos in 498; on both occasions, Olympia and local Athenian shrines were embellished by commemorations of the victory.¹²⁸

5.2.3 *An Inescapable Shadow? The Neighbourly Recollection of the Persian Wars in Athens and Thebes*

The Persian Wars were a seminal event and their commemoration a localised affair. Shared dedications at Panhellenic sanctuaries do not alter that image. A salient feature of these dedications was the lack of naming the medizers. Their omission probably sufficed to evoke a memory of their collaboration. Explicit mentions of medizing behaviour were reproduced when the situation allowed it, but in the early period after the war the emphasis more often lay with defeating the quintessential other, rather than the role of other Greeks.

The memory of Boiotian medism was possibly kept alive in a stronger fashion in Plataia. The memory of the Greeks' sacrifice was sustained by the inception of a small-scale Zeus Eleutheria festival, if it was established at this early stage.¹²⁹ Other markers of the war remained intact in the Plataian landscape. Graves for the fallen around the town served as

¹²⁶ Arrington 2015: 39–49; see now Wienand 2023: 49–71. ¹²⁷ *NIO* 121; 122; 127; 128.

¹²⁸ *NIO* 144; Lemnos: Hdt. 6.137–40; IG I³ 518 (Akropolis); 522bis (Rhamnous); 1406 (Olympia).

¹²⁹ Plut. *Arist.* 21.1–2. Piérart and Etienne 1975; Rigsby 1996: 49–51; *COB* III 139 place the foundation at the turn of the fourth century. Wallace 2011: 148–9, 153 argues for 335.

Boedeker 2001: 151 prefers an earlier date, based on prize vessels. She adds the Plataians purposely left the festival out in their dealing with the Spartans in 427, because of Athenian

permanent testimonies.¹³⁰ The theme of fraternal fighting formed the main thread of the Plataians' conception of the Persian Wars, in both their speeches during the trial of 427 and the decorative scheme of the Athena Areia temple built in the 460s.¹³¹ But these references reflect the Plataian view on the wars and not the Athenian attitudes of the first half of the fifth century.

In Athens medizers were overlooked until later in the fifth century. This omission is remarkable, considering the plethora of monuments related to the Persian Wars.¹³² Yet altruistic amnesia is not to blame. The Athenians made the battle of Marathon in 490 the primary focus of their monumental recollections of the struggle against the Persians.¹³³ This battle had the advantage that the fruits of victory did not need to be shared with competitors, such as the Spartans. The lack of competitors allowed the Athenians to augment their credentials for leading the Greek alliance against the Persians without having to stigmatise medizing Greeks. Ionians and islanders may have fought in this battle on the Persian side, but they were not mainland Greeks, nor had they made 'a voluntary decision' to join the Persians. This convenient forgetfulness permitted medizers to be integrated into the Athenian nexus of influence without having to sacrifice any prestige by hammering on about the Battles of Plataia or Salamis. That does not mean there was never room for employing the accusation of medism when necessary, but this was done only when it was politically expedient. That appears to not have been the case for the Athenians in the years following the Persian invasion of 480/79.

Nevertheless, one could postulate the Thebans and other Boiotians were an easy scapegoat for accusations of medism, due to the rivalrous relationship. That seems to be contradicted by the overall demeanour of the Athenian sources of the time. Aeschylus' play *Eleusinians* narrates the burial of the Seven against Thebes. Although the play is lost, its outline can be reconstructed through Plutarch's remarks. He juxtaposes Aeschylus' version of the myth with Euripides' more hostile version in *Suppliants*.¹³⁴ Plutarch mentions this peaceful agreement is a Theban version of the myth. The *Eleusinians* formed the Argive view of the event, whereas the *Septem* is

patronage of the festival, but see Raaflaub 2004: 103. Papazarkadas 2014: 229–30 associates these prize vessels with funerary games in Thebes.

¹³⁰ Hdt. 9.85. The fallen were buried in separate tombs, arranged city by city, providing further evidence against unified commemoration. The monuments in the Plataian landscape are referred to at Isoc. 14.59.

¹³¹ Yates 2013. ¹³² Gauer 1968. ¹³³ Yates 2019: 119–33.

¹³⁴ FGrH 328 F 112 = Plut. *Thes.* 29.4–5. Ganter 2020 on the changes in the *Septem* myths.

a Theban one.¹³⁵ According to Plutarch, the main difference is Theseus' recovery of the bodies of the fallen. Aeschylus opted for a diplomatic solution. His version has been interpreted as promoting an Athenian-Theban rapprochement because it puts the Thebans in a more favourable light, compared with other bellicose versions of the myth.¹³⁶ Some 140 years later, Isocrates would do the same in his *Panathenaicus*, contradicting the claims he made in his *Panegyricus* forty years prior.¹³⁷ Despite these similarities, Bernd Steinbock rejects this possibility because 'in light of the political circumstances, it was not his [Aeschylus'] intention to spare Thebes' honour or to promote an Athenian-Theban rapprochement'.¹³⁸ But that hinges on viewing the 470s as a period of neighbourly hostility, which is a tenuous assertion (Chapter 2.3). Thebes could arguably be singled out for abuse, but the lack of any accusations in Athenian discourse diminishes that likelihood. There was no need to attack the Thebans just after the war, even in the local discourse, since this had repercussions for the stability of the Delian League (Chapters 2.3, 3.2.1). These considerations would have stymied accusations of medism.

This finds some confirmation in Aeschylus' *Persai* from 472. Steeped in Panhellenic themes like freedom and Persian hubris, the play mentions no medizers, despite referring to the Battle of Salamis where so many Ionians participated on the Persian side.¹³⁹ The play is set in Persia, making it easier to disentangle the fuzzy lines of loyalty in the Persian Wars and omitting any medizing action. The struggle between Greeks and Persians is nevertheless an emblematic piece of the play. In Persian eyes, as perceived

¹³⁵ Zimmermann 1993: 85, 96. Anderson 2015 views the tradition as an Aeschylean invention. Kühr 2006: 145 doubts whether it is a Theban version. At p. 187 she also adduces the increased 'Mad Herakles' motif in Athenian vase-painting between the 480s and 450s as perhaps reflecting a hostile neighbourly relationship. Wright 2019: 35–6 views it as reflecting contemporary political developments.

¹³⁶ Roth 2003: 198 n. 465.

¹³⁷ Isoc. 12.172–3 (diplomatic) versus Isoc. 4.55–8. This change is problematic since it concerns private pamphlets, rather than public orations. The political interpretation of Isocrates' change of heart in depicting the myth has been doubted, as the Thebans are unflatteringly depicted: Gray 1994: 96–100.

¹³⁸ Steinbock 2013: 179. Pindar represents the Theban tradition by mentioning the graves to the Seven at Thebes, implying they were buried there without dispute (Pind. *Ol.* 6.15–17; *Nem.* 9.22–4, dated to 474 and 468). But to view this as a direct rebuttal of the Athenian myth, as Steinbock 2013: 165–6 does, rather than as the epichoric Theban view of the myth, goes too far in my opinion. Many poleis claimed prominence in the myth throughout the sixth and fifth centuries: Forsdyke 2011; Tufano 2019a: 156.

¹³⁹ Garvie 2009: 63 explains how *Persai* ll. 42–3 'οἱτ' ἐπίπταν ἠπειρογενὲς κατέχουσι ξθνος' does not entail the Ionians, contrary to earlier translators. For Ionians at Salamis: Hdt. 8.85; Proietti 2021: 257–66.

through Aeschylus, the Greeks were more of a homogenous group, contrasting with their own epichoric outlook. It is framed as a battle between the Greeks and the Persian Empire, without any Greeks mentioned by name. Differentiating between medizers and ‘patriots’ would have been less problematic, since the initial audience was Athenian. The lack of any great alterations to the play for a possible performance in Sicily early on, and the (re)performance in Athens during the latter stages of the fifth century, demonstrates that artistic integrity was respected, but omission of medism was deemed acceptable as well.¹⁴⁰

The play was a *historical tragedy* and thus avoids the need for a strict observation of a mythological standard version. This allowed for plentiful discussion of dubious behaviour in the *Persai*.¹⁴¹ Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* from 467 is a good example. Geoff Bakewell recently argued that the play is not a city lament per se, but rather avoids awakening memories of the destruction of Athens in 480. Instead, the play revolves around Thebes’ narrow escape, in part due to its impressive fortifications, through ‘the wisdom of its commander and valor of its men’.¹⁴² The key here is that while Thebes came out of the Persian Wars relatively unscathed, personified by the unsacked city in the play, the piece ultimately views the events through an Athenian lens. Aeschylus follows the Athenian tendency to paint vices and virtues onto the mythological map that was Thebes, but there exists no explicit condemnation of Theban medism throughout the *Seven against Thebes*.¹⁴³ In fact, while Eteocles failed as a king, according to Lowell Edmunds, he succeeded as a military leader.¹⁴⁴ Viewed from that perspective, Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* may have offered a more nuanced evaluation of Theban conduct during the Persian Wars. This came at a time of increasing Theban rehabilitation in the Greek world and the transformation in Athenian thinking about the Persian Wars as a legendary conflict, rather than a recent trauma.¹⁴⁵

Not until renewed conflict occurred in the later fifth century – best expressed in Herodotus’ irate account – were the Boiotians, and the Thebans in particular, singled out for condemnation (Chapter 2.4). It becomes more pronounced during the Peloponnesian War. Euripides’ *Bacchae*, from the final years of the Peloponnesian War, dismisses any

¹⁴⁰ Broggiato 2014 for these various performances. ¹⁴¹ Garvie 2009: ix–xvi.

¹⁴² Bakewell 2016: 125. On the Theban walls: Berman 2015: 75–121, 162–75.

¹⁴³ Zeitlin 1990 for Thebes as an *exemplum mallum* for Athens. ¹⁴⁴ Edmunds 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Theban rehabilitation: Schachter 2016a: 69–70. Increased mystification of the war: Boedeker 2001.

Theban claims to autochthony. Instead, autochthony becomes an Athenian prerogative, whereas the intervention of the Persian King to support the Spartans and Boiotians at the end of the Peloponnesian War is hinted at by stressing Cadmus' eastern connection.¹⁴⁶ Yet even during heightening tensions there were exceptions. The first memories Athenian commanders recollected when engaging in battle with them was not the Persian Wars, but the conflicts of the 450s, as Hippocrates' speech on the eve of battle of Delion in 424 shows: 'Advance to meet them then like citizens of a country in which you all glory as the first in Hellas, and like sons of the fathers who beat them at Oinophyta with Myronides and thus gained possession of Boiotia.'¹⁴⁷

Though Hippocrates was interrupted by the approach of the Boiotian army, there is no reason to assume he would have followed with an invocation of Plataia or the Persian Wars.¹⁴⁸ Medism is evoked by the Plataians only during their trial in 427, which reflects their epic choric outlook more than it does the Athenian perspective.¹⁴⁹ Most of the reluctance to avoid open condemnations of medizers stems from the Athenian desire to focus on Marathon and the glory garnered from it, which allowed the omission of medizers; this behaviour was therefore more the result of conscious choices rather than a deliberate attempt to avoid hurting the northern neighbours' feelings. Eschewing medism was nevertheless practical and fitted in with the reconciliatory tone the Athenians struck in the first half of the fifth century, when there was a need to reintegrate and rehabilitate various medizers into their midst.

Nor does it seem to have been an unbearable presence in Thebes itself. Young Theban athletes participated in the Panhellenic games in the decade after the war, even winning events on several occasions. Thus we find Pindar with his Panhellenic fame composing epinician poetry for various Theban young athletes, as well as other Boiotians. Pindar had few qualms about praising Theban youths whose families had certainly medized. Perhaps their youthfulness exculpated them, like Dexileos in Athens was exculpated from his forbears' sins.¹⁵⁰ Nor does his provenance prevent him

¹⁴⁶ Castiglioni 2020. ¹⁴⁷ Thuc. 4.95.3.

¹⁴⁸ Steinbock 2013: 114–15, 191 believes the Athenian generals before Oinophyta would have evoked the Battle of Plataia rather than those of 507/6, but see below.

¹⁴⁹ Yates 2013. It is the only time Thucydides mentions medism: Hornblower 2010: 138, 287–322.

¹⁵⁰ Pind. *O.* 14; *I.* 3 and 4; possibly *P.* 11. Gartland 2020 makes the comparison with Dexileos (*RO* 7b). There is a Polybian tradition that Pindar supported the action taken by the Thebans in 480–479 (*Poly.* 4.31.5–6) but see Hornblower 2004: 60–3. Finley 1958 cannot decidedly prove Pindar's political proclivities.

from being rhapsodic about an Athenian victor.¹⁵¹ Part of that stems from Pindar's renown, but if medism was encumbering the *entire Theban community*, as Herodotus makes it out to be, then the athletes' swift integration into the Panhellenic community is remarkable. Pindar never lost sight of his local horizon, nor did he feel shame in his origins.¹⁵² Samuel Gartland recently argued that Thebes was simply too interwoven into the fabric of 'Greekness' for it to be ignored or castigated, as reflected in Pindar's Panhellenic fame as a Theban.¹⁵³

This does not diminish the fact that Theban society had to come to terms with recent events. Staunch medizers had been executed or had fled into exile, but a majority of the ruling classes continued to participate in civic life, for instance, Asopodorus, leader of the Theban cavalry at the Battle of Plataia, whose son Herodotus was praised by Pindar in *Isthmian* 1 (pre-458). Lines 34–8 recount how Asopodorus suffered shipwreck and ended up ashore at Orchomenos, undoubtedly as a result of his choices.¹⁵⁴ A discussion about what happened was imperative to commence the healing process. The first contours of that attitude appear in *Isthmian* 8, for Kleandros of Aigina, composed around 477. It celebrates a victor from a city that had mythological ties to Thebes, yet fought the Persian War on the Hellenic League's side. In his composition, Pindar lifts the veil a little, uncovering 'a mingled feeling of sorrow for the role of Thebes in the Persian Wars and of joy at the liberation of Greece', as Hans Beck puts it.¹⁵⁵ The poem relates how 'from above our heads some god has turned aside that stone of Tantalus, an unbearable weight for Hellas. Now the terror has gone by'.¹⁵⁶ Pindar praises the healing powers of freedom that had corrected the crooked way of life.¹⁵⁷ As Beck notes, there are various other inferences of pain and toil that air a sense of disappointment with recent Theban politics. *Isthmian* 8 therefore seems to be a first attempt by the Thebans to assess what happened during the war and what *their* story of the event was.¹⁵⁸

This appears to be reflected in Pindar's *Isthmian* 4. The poet sings the praises of Melissos of Thebes, member of a prominent Theban family.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵¹ Pind. *P.* 7; Demand 1982: 27–31. ¹⁵² Olivieri 2011. ¹⁵³ Gartland 2020.

¹⁵⁴ The Hellenistic grammarian Didymos sees it as a metaphor for Asopodorus' exile from Thebes after the Persian Wars: *Schol. Isthm.* 1.52a–b followed by Sevieri 1999; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1922: 330–1.

¹⁵⁵ Beck 2020: 192–3. ¹⁵⁶ Pind. *I.* 8 ll. 9–12.

¹⁵⁷ Pind. *I.* 8 ll. 14–15: ἐλίσσων βίου πόρον: ἰατὰ δ' ἔστι βροτοῖς σὺν γ' ἐλευθερίᾳ καὶ τά.

¹⁵⁸ Beck 2020: 192–3.

¹⁵⁹ Pind. *I.* 4 ll. 6–8: 'These men truly are spoken of as honoured in Thebes from the beginning; they have good relations with the neighbouring towns, and are bereft of loud arrogance.'

Their hearth had been robbed of four members in a single day, possibly a reference to the Battle of Plataia where the Thebans fought on the Persian side: ‘Yet in a single day / severe snow-storm of war / deprived the blessed house of four men.’¹⁶⁰

Pindar’s evasiveness in referring to the battle could be viewed as a discreet effort to avoid recollecting a dishonourable past. Elsewhere, however, Pindar glosses over a battle in an even vaguer fashion:

and he has given a share in his flowering garland to his uncle and namesake, for whom Ares of the bronze shield mixed the cup of destiny; but honour is laid up as recompense for good men. For let him know clearly, whoever, in this cloud of war, wards off the hailstorm of blood in defence of his dear fatherland by bringing destruction to the enemy host, that he is causing the greatest glory to grow for the race of his fellow-citizens, in both his life and his death.¹⁶¹

If the memory of the battle encumbered the family, we may wonder why Pindar did not pass over the incident in silence. To simply term the poet’s vagueness as a badge of shame over the Battle of Plataia is in my opinion not the solution to understanding the poem.

Nor can we be sure where it was performed. It may have been at a public event, where the victor was honoured by the polis and showered with blessings and gifts.¹⁶² One such event was proposed by Eveline Krummen: the Herakleia festival, where it would attract a non-Theban crowd, perhaps explaining why the battle was only vaguely referred to.¹⁶³ At the same time, numerous epinician poems were performed at private symposia.¹⁶⁴ Chris Carey doubts whether *Isthmian* 4 was performed at a civic festival and goes further by stating that ‘the absence of mention of civic space in most victory odes strongly suggests that state involvement

¹⁶⁰ Pind. *I.* 4.16–17. Possible ascription to Plataia: Bowra 1964: 408.

¹⁶¹ Pind. *I.* 7.24–30. Even 1958: 46: ‘L’absence d’indication précise permet de supposer que Pindare ne tient nullement à dévoiler un nom qui flétrit la réputation de Thèbes et évoque pour elle un passé chargé.’

¹⁶² Currie 2005: 139–4; Slater 1984: 241–64 argue some of Pindar’s poems must have been celebrated in this context. There appears little to suggest it was performed at a Panhellenic festival: Eckerman 2012.

¹⁶³ Krummen 1990: 33–97. She is followed by Olivieri 2011: 89–118. The extensive space the poem (Pind. *I.* 7) alludes to, ranging from Onchestos (l. 19) to Sicyon (26), from the Pillars of Herakles (l. 12) to Libya (ll. 53b–54b), perhaps demonstrates the Panhellenic appeal of the poem and family: Kurke and Neer 2019: 41–7.

¹⁶⁴ Radt 1958: 89 goes so far to state *all* epinician odes were performed at the banquet/symposium.

was intermittent at most and that most celebrations took place at a private house'.¹⁶⁵ If that was the case, it was less shameful to explicitly mention Plataia, as Melissos' family was not the only family involved with the Persians. In my opinion, there was likely no need to mention the battle in question: the death of four family members in one battle hardly requires specification, since the options would be limited. If it was Plataia, there was no need to conjure up the loss of family members who fell in a battle leading to the siege of the city. That siege was probably what burdened the Theban families the most.¹⁶⁶ The death of four members suggests they formed part of the Theban hoplite class, not the cavalry, as they escaped from the battle relatively unscathed.¹⁶⁷ The loss of these men, more than anything, played a role in Pindar's odes, but only subtly hints at participating 'on the wrong side of the divide', rather than open admittance or exculpation for the community's sins.

In other poems Pindar obliquely aims to rehabilitate the reputation of Thebes by reminding his audiences of its indelible place in Greek history. This was shown by André Hurst, who compared the references to Thebes in the Pindaric oeuvre before and after the Persian Wars.¹⁶⁸ One example is Pindar's *Olympian* 10, where he writes about Augias' defeat by Herakles: 'A fight with a stronger man is impossible to push away,' suggesting collaboration was unavoidable as the Persian military might was too potent to resist.¹⁶⁹ Pindar's works suggest the varied experiences of the Thebans in the war: from possibly confronting the Persians to ending with subjugation and collaboration through force.

This ambivalent attitude is reflected in the memorial landscape of Thebes.¹⁷⁰ Nikolaos Papazarkadas published a funerary stele from Thebes that possibly illuminates the town's relationship with its Persian War past. The original stele (Text A) was inscribed in the first half of the fifth century – though a late sixth-century date cannot be excluded – and was re-inscribed in the Ionian script during the 360s (Text B).¹⁷¹ The text runs as follows:

¹⁶⁵ Carey 2007: 203. This ties in with the notion that symposia were often the locus for reperformance of epinician poetry: Currie 2004; Grethlein 2010: 41 contra Budelmann 2012. For the performance of Pindar's works in general: Neumann-Hartmann 2009.

¹⁶⁶ The burden of medism was not seen as detrimental. Sometimes it was even employed by the Thebans when interacting with the Persians: Lenfant 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Hdt. 9.69 records that the Thebans lost 300 men at Plataia: 'πρῶτοι καὶ ὄριστοι'.

¹⁶⁸ Hurst 2018. ¹⁶⁹ Hurst 2018; Pind. *O.* 10.39–40: νεῖκος δὲ κρεσσόνων ἀποθέσθ' ἄπορον.

¹⁷⁰ In Kopai, a town on the northern shores of Lake Copais, an epitaph commemorates the death of a man near the Asopos river, possibly the Battle of Plataia: Knoepfler 1992: 500 no. 178 (Ἀσοποῖ δὲ δαμασθῆς).

¹⁷¹ Papazarkadas 2014. Stöhr 2020: 116–20 for the possible occasions for the inscription.

Text A

[-----]EPETON[.]T[.]
 [-∞ | -∞ | - | ἐν? π]ολέμῳ [θ]ανέμεν
 [-∞ | -∞ | - ∞ | -]πατρίδος πέρι Θέβας
 4 [-∞ | -]εντο ἄθλα κράτιστ' ἄρετᾶς

Text B

[-----]ΛΥ. . ἘΡΕΤΟΝ[.]ΥΤΟ
 [-∞ | -∞ | - | ἐν π]ολέμοι θανέμεν
 [-∞ | -∞ | -∞ | -]πατρίδος πέρι Θείβα[ς]
 8 [.]NA[- - -]εντο ἄθλα κράτιστ' ἄρετᾶς¹⁷²

Unfortunately, the surface of the stone is heavily worn, making it hard to reconstruct anything more than already (impressively) done by Papazarkadas. The epigram is in honour of two fallen friends or brothers and beautifully details how they fell in defence of the fatherland ('...[θ]ανέμεν...πατρίδος πέρι Θέβας'), quite possibly during the defence of the city against the Hellenic League, or earlier on the fields of Plataia, while another contemporary possibility would be Thermopylai.¹⁷³ The inscription on the stone does not allow for more precision, but Papazarkadas carefully suggested the epigram was part of a public ritual or games in Thebes for the fallen in the war. It was set up in Theban territory and at first may have been invisible to outsiders, or did not aim at a wider audience. At least it refers to the Thebans' self-image, who may have regarded the shroud of medism less burdensome than assumed by scholars.¹⁷⁴ What its effects were on a wider audience thus remains to be seen. In light of the Pindaric works and the wider Panhellenic commemoration, we can at least speculate that the Thebans, and perhaps other Boiotians, were not the target of widespread stigmatisation by the Athenians.

If these men indeed fought against the Hellenic League, either at Plataia or at Thebes, the honours granted by the polis demonstrate that the

¹⁷² SEG 64.405.

¹⁷³ Papazarkadas 2014: 232–3 prefers Plataia, but does not exclude a possibility in 507/6 or the Battle of Tanagra (458). Tentori Montalto 2017b: 128 places it 'dopo le Guerre persiane'. My preference is Thermopylai: [Chapter 5.2.8](#) *pace* Proietti 2021: 186.

¹⁷⁴ Giroux 2020 detects a hint of a Theban freedom narrative in Diodorus' recollection (4.10.2–4) of a mythical Theban–Orchomenian war, perhaps demonstrating how the Thebans integrated themselves into this narrative.

epichoric view saw these men as protectors of the native land, despite their medism. If it was Thermopylai, the epigram testifies to the local outlook that the Thebans *did* participate in the defence of Greece and deserved more merit from other Greek poleis, which in light of the Serpent Column would not be unsurprising. But even if the epigram was a private monument, this does not diminish its importance for reconstructing the Thebans' own view of the wars. Dying in the defence of one's land was an honourable act, and from the examples mentioned above the Thebans seemed (less) unrepentant in bringing their views of the war across within their own midst. What their story was outside of Thebes is harder to retrace. Nevertheless, each polis had its own story to tell of this period, and Thebes was no exception. Only when faced with Plataian accusations hurled at them during the trial of 427 do the Thebans offer some form of excuse for the actions during the Persian Wars.¹⁷⁵ Again, this concerned an internecine affair and was done in front of the Spartan jury, at a time when the credentials in the Persian Wars became increasingly important.¹⁷⁶

Shortly after the Persian Wars, there appears to have been little overt mutual hostility within the memorial landscape in both Athens or Thebes. Even in local civic and sacred spaces, the need to castigate each other appears limited. That aligns with the overall outlook of both polities at this time: the Athenians were hoping to integrate a large group of medizers into their empire; the Thebans survived the war and prospered relatively quickly afterwards with hopes of regaining its local and regional prominence accordingly. The one exception was Plataia, where hostile emotions continued to rage on, as vividly expressed in the construction of the Athena Areia temple that depicted the Persian Wars as an internecine conflict, spurred on by their continued rivalry with their Theban neighbours.¹⁷⁷

5.2.4 A Familiar Foe? Oinophyta and Its Recollection

The re-dedication of the late sixth-century *quadriga* after the Athenian victory at Oinophyta (458) is illustrative in three ways: first, the reuse of a familiar monument to re-evaluate a previous engagement and reignite a rivalry; second, because it vindicates the lack of Athenian concern for medizers in the context of the 450s; and third, it reveals the importance of the 'local' over the Panhellenic in recollecting neighbourly interactions.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Thuc. 3.64. ¹⁷⁶ Osmers 2013: 190–288; Raaflaub 2004: 195. ¹⁷⁷ Yates 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Berti 2010b; 2012 argues for a re-dedication after Oinophyta (458) contra other dates such as 446.

The monument perished in the flames on the Akropolis in 480, and the charred iron chains on the Mycenaean wall were the only memento to remind the Athenians of the statue that once adorned the entrance. To mesh the ‘new’ *quadriga* with the right context, the original epigram was rearranged. This new version was the one seen by Herodotus and Pausanias:¹⁷⁹

Of the Boiotians and Chalkidians in deeds of war; as a tithe therefrom
they dedicated this four-horse chariot to Pallas.

In a painful bond of iron the sons of the Athenians quenched their
hybris, having overpowered the hosts.¹⁸⁰

The rearrangement of the epigram was probably the result of a change in the dedication base and the detachment of the *quadriga* from the chains. In the original dedication, the first words were about the chains attached to the Akropolis wall. The discontinuity between the chains and the *quadriga* meant the words required rearranging.¹⁸¹ Working in tandem with that suggestion is Keesling’s proposal to view the changes in the epigram as a deliberate action to make the *quadriga* more identifiable to visitors of the Akropolis.¹⁸² It helped readers pick out the key words to identify this important dedication, now that it was no longer connected to the chains. What does this mean for our interpretation of the monument?

If the *quadriga* was re-dedicated in 458, some Athenians must have made a deliberate connection between that victory and the exploits of the late sixth century, and proposed to visibly recreate that memory by re-erecting the *quadriga*.¹⁸³ Although the rearrangement of the epigram was partially due to the changes in the dedicatory landscape, the emphasis on the Boiotians means the original dedication was associated with the victory of the young democracy in the minds of some Athenians.¹⁸⁴

The similarities between the two battles perhaps do not end there. If my reconstruction of events prior to Oinophyta is correct – of a friendly Boiotia before their *volte-face* prior to the battle – it would add another

¹⁷⁹ For the discussion over a possible re-location of the statue: *ML* 15; *AIO ad loc.*

¹⁸⁰ *IG I³* 501B. The text rests on a reconstruction that combined pieces of the original dedication with the (later) inscription seen by Herodotus and Pausanias: Kazcko 2016: 2. For the translation: Chapter 5.2.2.

¹⁸¹ Stevens 1936: 504–6; contra *ML* p. 29. ¹⁸² Keesling 2003: 51 n. 22.

¹⁸³ Contra Steinbock 2013: 114–15 that the Battle of Plataia would have been invoked by the Athenian generals before Oinophyta, rather than those of 507/6.

¹⁸⁴ Low 2020 on the re-erection of monuments or decrees. There must have been an impetus to re-erect the *quadriga*, after which it became part of the Athenian monumental landscape and part of the polis’ history.

layer to the commemoration. Just as before, the Athenians came out victorious from a precarious situation, since they had suffered a (disputed) defeat at Tanagra against the Spartans only two months prior (Chapters 2.4, 3.2.3). The Boiotians' change in alignment rendered the previous ties between the neighbours obsolete, and their insolence in betraying the Athenians at a moment of weakness – after the Battle of Tanagra – was rightfully deserving of divine punishment. The re-dedication of the *quadriga* was in that sense a divine vindication of the Athenian victory.

But perhaps the similarities between the situations of 507/6 and 458 goes further than a recurrence of dyadic conflict. Anthony Raubitschek identified another similarity: the combination of internal enemies of the democracy colluding with external threats.¹⁸⁵ According to Thucydides, the Spartans plotted with Athenian oligarchs to overthrow the democracy.¹⁸⁶ The element of the democracy overcoming both internal and external enemies is seconded by Herodotus. In his encomium of the origins of the Athenian democracy, written at the height of Athenian-Boiotian hostility, he frames the *quadriga* as a testimony to the benefits of democracy, not as an antagonistic monument to Boiotian insolence.¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, Herodotus regards the monument he saw as the original dedication. While it could be a matter of semantics, his observation strengthens the case for associating the *quadriga* with the democracy's early history rather than a memory of Boiotian hubris, despite the changes in the epigram.

Moreover, the ramifications of this victory went much further this time. Whereas the events of 507/6 preserved the democracy, the Battle of Oinophyta resulted in Athenian control over Boiotia. Hence, the victory was commemorated as a grandiose achievement by future generations and was invoked by the general Hippocrates before the Battle of Delion in 424 as an example to emulate.¹⁸⁸ Diodorus reveres the victory as unsurpassed by any other, even those monumental wins at Marathon or Plataia. These concerned battles against barbarians with the help of allies, whereas at Oinophyta the Athenians *single-handedly* overcame the bravest warriors of Greece.¹⁸⁹ Diodorus undoubtedly retrojects attitudes of Boiotian military prowess after Leuktra, but his ascription of importance to this battle within

¹⁸⁵ Bearzot 1985; Raubitschek 1949: 203–4. ¹⁸⁶ Thuc. 1.107.6. ¹⁸⁷ Hdt. 5.77–8.

¹⁸⁸ Thuc. 4.95.3. Myronides, the general at Oinophyta, was used as an example of bravery by the men of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* of 411 (Ar. *Lys.* 801) but the battle is not specifically mentioned. The scholiast clarifies it concerned the Myronides who won at Oinophyta: καὶ Μυρωνίδης γὰρ ἦν; Δύο Μυρωνίδας ἦσαν, ὡς ἐν ταῖς Ἐκκλησιαζούσαις δεδήλωται. ἐνθάδε τοῖνυν μέμνηται τοῦ ἐν Οἰνοφύτας νικήσαντος.

¹⁸⁹ Diod. 11.82.2–3.

the context of Atheno-Boiotian relations and Athenian military exploits is striking.

Again, the internal and external consequences of the event were celebrated in a local setting. The re-dedication of the *quadriga* testifies to the potency of such evocative memorials and shows a shift in the commemorative practice. Previously, the victory's internal aspects were emphasised – democracy over oligarchy – but now the identity of the defeated was emphasised. This rearrangement implies the perception of the Boiotians had changed: they were now seen as a rivalrous neighbour. Yet the emphasis on the Boiotians should not cloud the fact that the *quadriga* was meant to celebrate an Athenian victory and aimed to strengthen the bonds among the citizenry, recovering from a possible oligarchic coup supported by external enemies. That the *quadriga* remained on show for centuries is a further testimony to the victory's place in Athenian lore and its continued relevance.¹⁹⁰

In my opinion, this continued focus on the similarities between the battles of 507/6 and 458 demonstrates that the main memory of Boiotian antagonism in Athenian minds in the first half of the fifth century – and perhaps even thereafter – was not the Persian Wars but the original conflict at the dawn of democracy. Only when Panhellenic prestige and glory were at stake – for instance, during the Peloponnesian War or the Theban hegemony – did the memory of the Persian Wars re-emerge.

Conversely, the Battle of Oinophyta was steeped in tragedy for the Boiotians. The short-lived revival of pro-Spartan rule made way for Athenian domination, robbing the poleis of their *autonomia* (Chapters 2.4, 3.2.3). The battle was framed as a defence of the fatherland, akin to the Persian Wars. In Pindar's *Isthmian* 7 for Strepsiades of Thebes, Strepsiades' uncle and namesake is referred to. This uncle presumably perished at Oinophyta, as one who 'defends his dear country from the hailstorm of blood' for which he received the utmost respect and glory from his fellow citizens.¹⁹¹

A Thespian epitaph conveys a similar message.¹⁹² Dated to the mid-fourth century, the epitaph is inscribed with the names of members of a single family who fell in battles fought in Boiotia in the course of half a

¹⁹⁰ Paus. 1.28.2.

¹⁹¹ Pind. *Isthm.* 7.27. Bowra 1964: 412 connects the poem to the Battle of Oinophyta, but Young 1971: 3–6 doubts this connection.

¹⁹² *IThesp* 488; Schachter 2016a: 111. In line 1 only the name of the deceased has survived, but not the battle in which he perished. Considering its position atop of the list, one could postulate the battle of Oinophyta, or perhaps an earlier battle such as Thermopylai or Plataia.

century. These battles read as a summary of pivotal battles in the region's history: Oinophyta (ἐν Οἰνοφύτοις) (l. 2); Delion, identified as Oropos (ἐν Ὀρωποῖ) (ll. 3–4); and Koroneia (Κορωνεῖη) (l. 5). It is tempting to view this epitaph as emphasising the family's contributions to the *koinon* when it reached the zenith of its power, perhaps relating how the family staunchly supported pro-unionist policies. A more minimalist interpretation views it as a testimony to the struggle of the Boiotian people to keep invaders from their doors, since every battle concerned an invasion of their soil by an attacker intent on conquering them.

This recollection may have occurred on a public level as well, if the Thespians erected a public memorial in honour of the fallen at Oinophyta. A white limestone column of c. ninety centimetres high, with a flat surface cut and polished in the centre of the column, was found. On this flat surface are inscribed the names of sixteen men. Atop this list it is clarified that these Thespian men died in battle, suggesting the column formed part of a *polyandreion*.¹⁹³ Based on the letters, the monument should be dated to the fifth century. Considering the magnificent *polyandreion* consecrated by the Thespians after Delion, that battle can reasonably be excluded (Chapter 5.2.6). This leaves us with Plataia (479), Koroneia (446) and Oinophyta. If the monument is dated to 458, it is the first attestation of a Thespian public memorial for the war dead. Although future finds may alter the picture, that possible inception date underlines the importance of the Battle of Oinophyta for Boiotian history. These men were then immortalised as heroes for the polis, who gave their life to defend Boiotia's soil against the Athenian attackers.¹⁹⁴ These memorials equally impacted the Boiotian perception of the Athenians. Locals and patriots alike could point to the sacrifices made by these men, a reference point for their heroic struggle to preserve their freedom against the neighbours.

The Athenians chose to harken back to the past by re-dedicating the *quadriga* that was permeated with democratic ideology and commemorated the first victory of the democracy over the Boiotians. For the Boiotians, the loss at Oinophyta was the start of a tradition of commemorating the dyadic relationship with their neighbour in a more antagonistic way, laying the foundations for the commemoration of their struggle for

¹⁹³ *IThesp* 484. ll. 1–3: Θ[ε]σ[π]ι[α]ν[ῶ]ν ἄνδ[ρ]ων ἑξήκ[α]τ[α] τὸ δ[ι]ε[σ]π[η]σ[θ]ῆ[ναι] || ἀνέθεσαν.

¹⁹⁴ That can be gathered from the references to the Battle of Koroneia (446), where it is claimed the Boiotians regained their freedom from the Athenians. One can imagine the loss at Oinophyta was remembered as the 'opposite' of Koroneia. During the Plataian trial in 427, the Thebans implicitly refer to the Battle of Oinophyta as the time of Athenian aggression and subjugation of Boiotia: Thuc. 3.62.5.

freedom against abrasive neighbours, eloquently alluded to by Pagondas in his speech before the Battle of Delion in 424 (Chapter 5.2.6). The construction of a *polyandreion* in Thespias testifies to the intention to commemorate that fatal loss against the Athenians. In both cases, the local was the locus for commemorating these events. It demonstrates the Persian Wars were not a deterministic memory for recollecting the neighbourly relationship at this time. Rather, the Athenians' and Boiotian's local rivalry set the tone, which was reflected in the desire to dedicate in local civic and sacred spaces.¹⁹⁵

5.2.5 A New Dawn for Boiotia: The Battle of Koroneia

Oinophyta inaugurated a singular period of neighbourly history, but the sun quickly set upon it. Twelve years after Oinophyta, a group of exiles from Boiotia, Euboia and Locris endeavoured to overthrow Athenian rule and succeeded in that plot by ambushing an Athenian army near Koroneia in 446 (Chapter 2.4).¹⁹⁶ Fortune smiled on Boiotia, now free of foreign occupation. The return of the *koinon* inaugurated a new dawn for the region, carrying with it the memory of subjugation. It was certainly celebrated as such.

Near the battle site of Koroneia stood the famous temple of Athena Itonia, a focal point for the articulation of the Boiotian ethnos through its foundational *aition* closely linked to the arrival of the Boiotoi from Thessaly (see Figure 5.6).¹⁹⁷ According to Plutarch, who describes the later battle of Koroneia of 395, the victorious rebels in 446 dedicated the trophy in front of this sanctuary.¹⁹⁸ Trophies were habitually placed at the battle site itself; hence, the battle must have taken place near the temple.¹⁹⁹ That the marker apparently stood for fifty years and perhaps even longer for Plutarch to describe it in his *Life of Agesilaos* suggests the initial trophy was immortalised in a more permanent form after the event. Considering the perishable material of trophies, this was a permanent marker of victory,

¹⁹⁵ Even if the Athenian stoa at Delphi was erected shortly after 458 (Walsh 1986) the lack of any conclusive evidence linking it to the victory at Oinophyta means it cannot be considered here.

¹⁹⁶ Thuc. 1.113.

¹⁹⁷ Thuc. 1.12.3; Lalonde 2019: 87–165. The exact location of the sanctuary is hard to determine, but a consensus has been reached: Moggi and Osanna 2010: 408–9; Olivieri 2010–11.

¹⁹⁸ Plut. *Ages.* 19.2. 'For the temple of Athena Itonia was near at hand, and a trophy stood in front of it, which the Boiotians had long ago erected, when, under the command of Sparta, they had defeated the Athenians there and slain Tolmides their general.'

¹⁹⁹ Rabe 2008: 1–8.

rather than a *tropaion*. The conflation of these forms of commemoration in the imperial era explains why Plutarch uses the term, which would be remarkable since the original trophy would have hardly survived for half a century.²⁰⁰ Setting it further apart is its unique place in Boiotian history as only one of three monuments marking military battles that were erected on the site of battle. On account of the symbolic significance of both the sanctuary and the victory, and the way the victory was framed afterwards by the Boiotians, the erection of a permanent trophy is plausible.²⁰¹ One can surmise that the initial perishable trophy, set up by the victorious insurgents, was made permanent afterwards by the leaders of the *koinon* to celebrate one of the seminal events in Boiotian history in a display of historical appropriation.

Koroneia solidified the *koinon*'s cohesion after the Athenians exploited its fragility. One example of this attitude comes from the Plataian trial in 427. After the Plataians made a case for themselves by referring to the Theban medism during the Persian Wars, the Thebans retorted by juxtaposing their behaviour with the Plataians' *attikismos*, which led to the enslavement of Boiotia and other Greeks. Thanks to the Thebans – a grand exaggeration considering their limited involvement at Koroneia – the Boiotians regained their liberty from the Athenian oppressors.²⁰² Three years later (424), before the Battle of Delion, the Theban *boiotarch* Pagondas invokes a similar sentiment when encouraging his fellows to engage the Athenians in battle. The general reminds them how the victory at Koroneia had granted Boiotia great security from Athenian intermingling after a period of internal discord.²⁰³ If prominent Thebans could evoke such memories a generation later, the desire to immortalise the victory in the form of a permanent marker at a religiously important communal site is understandable.

Odes formed another layer of the celebrations. The *Daphnephorikon* by Pindar speaks of victories celebrated by the famous family of Aioladas, which furnished the *boiotarch* Pagondas. The victories of swift-footed

²⁰⁰ Schröder 2019: 195–9 explains the usage of the term *tropaion* in the Imperial age. It is a convincing case, though I disagree with her that Plutarch's remark should therefore be rejected. He was a trusted reporter and his credentials regarding Boiotian affairs should not undermine his statement.

²⁰¹ Larson 2007a: 187–8. The others were Leuktra and the Lion from Chaironeia. Marathon's permanent trophy makes for an alluring comparison: Shear 2016: 13–14.

²⁰² Thuc. 3.62.4–5.

²⁰³ Thuc. 4.92.6: νικῆσαντες γὰρ ἐν Κορωνείᾳ αὐτούς, ὅτε τὴν γῆν ἡμῶν στασιαζόντων κατέσχον, πολλὴν ἄδειαν τῇ Βοιωτίᾳ μέχρι τοῦδε κατεστήσαμεν.

horses, as Pindar proclaims, commemorates the recent victory over the Athenians, in which the family could have played a role. Similarly, there might be an allusion to the victory over the Athenians in *Pythian* 8 in honour of Aristomenes of Aegina, dating from 446. The Aeginetans were mythologically entwined with the Thebans, and there is a reference to Porphyrion, king of the Attic deme of Athmonon, who is struck dead by an arrow from Apollo's bow.²⁰⁴ If these are subtle references to the recent Boiotian victory, Pindar certainly struck a local chord to celebrate the new freedom from foreign rule in any way that he could.

To solidify this new-found freedom, 'the local elites from both sides of Lake Kopais' came together to establish a novel *koinon*.²⁰⁵ It was imperative to create a new structure that could unite the different factions and poleis within Boiotia to prevent a renewed foreign exploitation of stasis. One successful way to convey social cohesion and bind various communities together was through ritual action. And what better way than to utilise the cult at the site of victory, which was already woven into the mythological fabric of the Boiotians?

We know from later sources that the Itonia was home to a festival called the Pamboiotia. As the name suggests, this festival celebrated the cohesion of Boiotia. A pan-Boiotian appeal is certain from the third century onwards, when the Itonia became a federal sanctuary and the festival is epigraphically attested.²⁰⁶ The lack of concrete evidence for an earlier inception makes it difficult to accept a common festival at the site prior to the third century.

There are, however, snippets of information that point in that direction. From the fragments of Pindar's *Daphnephorikon*, performed sometime between 445 and 440, a celebration involving a wider Boiotian audience may be inferred. The occasion for the creation of the poem was the Theban Daphnephoria, a festival in which a boy from a prominent family was elected priest of Apollo Ismenios for a year.²⁰⁷ In this case it concerned Agasikles, from the prominent family of Aioladas.²⁰⁸ The poem runs as follows:

²⁰⁴ Beck 2020: 204. For the connection between Thebes and Aegina: Hdt. 5.79.2.

²⁰⁵ Beck and Ganter 2015: 141.

²⁰⁶ COB I 117–27. Beck and Ganter 2015: 135 argue the festival at the sanctuary commemorated the arrival of the Boiotoi as early as the sixth century, for which there is no epigraphic evidence. Lalonde 2019: 92 occupies a middle ground by claiming the Thebans were invested in the cult by the mid-fifth century and it probably attracted people from other Boiotian poleis.

²⁰⁷ Pausanias is the earliest source to describe the rituals, making a reconstruction difficult: Kurke 2007.

²⁰⁸ For the genealogical ties in this poem: Hornblower and Morgan 2007: 37. For a recent Theban inscription about the family of Aioladas and Pagondas: Papazarkadas 2018.



Figure 5.6 View from Koroneia Akropolis towards Petra, likely home to the Athena Itonia sanctuary. (Photo by P. Grigsby)

As a faithful witness for Agasikles
 I have come to the dance
 and for his noble parents
 because of their hospitality (προξενίασι), for both of old
 and still today they have been honoured
 by their neighbours (ἀμφικτιόνεσσιν)
 for their celebrated victories
 with swift-footed horses,
 for which on the shores of famous Onchestos
 and also by the glorious temple of Itonia
 they adorned their hair with garlands
 and at Pisa. (trans. E. Mackil)²⁰⁹

As Emily Mackil notes, the poem post-dates the battle at Koroneia but appears to refer to older practices and provides no information on specific cultic innovations.²¹⁰ Other aspects of the poem suggest an integration of

²⁰⁹ Pind. Fr. 94b = 41–9 (Snell-Maehler).

²¹⁰ Mackil 2013: 193. In the aftermath of the battle, we find the first attestations for Athena Itonia's (cultic) association with the migration of the Boiotoi, from writers such as Thucydides, Hekataios and Armenidas. It would have been a powerful tool to promote the unified mythical efforts of the Boiotoi: Tufano 2019a: 32–49.

these games into the fabric of the *koinon*. The Theban honourees are respected by their neighbours (ἀμφικτιόνεσσι) for their hospitality towards them as *proxenos* (προξενίαισι). In one of his odes, Pindar refers to the good standing of the Theban victor Melissos among his neighbours, which reflects both Agasikles' and Melissos' families representing the interests of neighbouring communities in Thebes.²¹¹ These terms show the importance of well-maintained relations with the neighbouring elites for one's standing in Thebes or, in other words, the pan-Boiotian credentials of a person. Leslie Kurke went a step further by claiming these *amphiktiones* could refer to those people participating in the same cult, rather than geographical neighbours.²¹²

If Kurke is right, the cult of Athena Itonia had achieved pan-Boiotian fame, or at least expanded its appeal shortly after the Battle of Koroneia. The cult's followers constituted a religious network of like-minded Boiotians, responsible for the re-emergence of the *koinon*. These games were vital for maintaining the ties between those of a 'pan-Boiotian' persuasion, as revealed by their proud proclamations of importance after the battle.²¹³ Sometime after the battle the goddess received a new bronze cult statue, made by the sculptor Agorakritos.²¹⁴ Combined with the erection of a permanent trophy, these efforts illustrate the importance of the Itonion as a sanctuary for the *koinon*.

We might go a step further. The Pamboiotia may have been celebrated in the first half of the fifth century. Prior to the *Daphnephorikon*, Pindar mentioned 'the games of the Boiotians' in his *Olympian* ode dedicated to Diagoras of Rhodes: 'The bronze in Argos came to know him, as did the works of art in Arcadia and Thebes, and the duly ordered games of the Boiotians and Pellana; and Aegina knew him victorious six times.'²¹⁵

On account of Diagoras' origin, these Boiotian games had attained widespread fame by the time of the poem's delivery in 464. Given the later fame of the *Pamboiotia*, Stephanie Larson identified these Boiotian games as the *Pamboiotia*.²¹⁶ Yet the later festival excluded non-Boiotian

²¹¹ Pind. *Isth.* 4.7–9; Mackil 2013: 162. ²¹² Kurke 2007: 90, 385.

²¹³ That the poem was written for the Theban *Daphnephoria* strengthens the message of cohesion. According to Kurke 2007: 81, the cult of Apollo Ismenios incorporated various elements of other Boiotian cults to suture the divides across the physical landscape of Boiotia, whereas Kowalzig 2007: 378–81 perceives the cult as an acquisition from the communities around Lake Kopais.

²¹⁴ Paus. 9.34.1. The cult statue may have appeared on a series of rare Koroneian obols in the early fourth century: Head 1881: 45 pl. IV. 2; Lagos 2001: 6.

²¹⁵ Pind. *Olymp.* 7.84–6.

²¹⁶ Larson 2007a: 143–4. Roesch 1982: 216–44 views the Boiotian games as the *Herakleia* of Thebes. Yet this overlooks Pindar's local outlook and leaves room for doubt. Why would the *Herakleia* be referred to as the Boiotian games, while it was never equated with the Boiotian games?

participants.²¹⁷ On first glance, Larson's identification seems wrong, but there is one option to solve this conundrum. Perhaps the festival was 'transformed' into a closed Boiotian affair after the Battle of Koroneia, explaining the emphasis on the intra-Boiotian connections prominently on display in Pindar's *Daphnephorikon*.²¹⁸ If this reconstruction is correct, the change served to strengthen the cohesion of the *koinon* by excluding other groups and offers a fresh insight into the changes of the sacred landscape after Koroneia and the victory's commemoration. This narrowing of the cult's audience served to promulgate the *koinon*'s cohesion through the exclusion of foreigners and the transformation of the Itonia cult site into the place for the celebration of the *koinon*'s military prowess. For the Boiotians, the battle was a defining moment in their history, as reflected in the changed ritual practices and the erection of an enduring monument at the sanctuary of Athena Itonia. The *koinon* thereby created a new tradition of united resistance against foreign invasion and inaugurated changes to an existent cult to mirror that unity.²¹⁹

The battle also marked a turning point in the Athenian perception of their Boiotian neighbours. It was the first significant loss after a string of military successes against them. The earliest reference to the battle after Thucydides is in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, dating to the 360s.²²⁰ In the dialogue, Socrates converses with Pericles and refers to the differences between the Athenians and Boiotians, including the developments in the neighbourly dynamics. Pericles invokes the loss at Lebadeia – by which he means Koroneia – as a defining moment in the neighbourly relationship. Instead of a submissive, weak neighbour, the Athenians were confronted with an assertive *koinon*, planning to invade Attica rather than retreat into the confines of their own lands.²²¹

One salient aspect of this recollection is the way in which the Battle at Koroneia is referred to. Socrates describes the disaster as sustained by 'Tolmides and the Thousand'.²²² This juxtaposition suggests the Battle of Koroneia found its way into lore. The fateful ending of Tolmides and his men was recollected by the Athenians, possibly through the statue of the general on the Akropolis, as well as the *polyandreion* for

²¹⁷ Roesch 1982: 217–44; Schachter 2016a: 187. ²¹⁸ Grigsby 2017.

²¹⁹ As Hobsbawm established in his seminal *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), 'invented traditions' appear in times of great change and are intended to establish cohesion, legitimate institutions and inculcate beliefs.

²²⁰ Bandini and Dorion 2000: CCXL–CCLII; Bevilacqua 2010: 25–34 offer a date after Leuktra.

²²¹ Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.4. ²²² Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.4: Τολμίδη τῶν χιλίων ἐν Λεβαδείᾳ.

the victims.²²³ The general's statue may have been erected in the fourth century. In that period, Athenian interest in the *Pentacontaetia* and its generals grew.²²⁴ Xenophon was writing at a time of heightened neighbourly tensions, and the fact that he calls into memory the Battle of Koroneia seems to confirm the lasting image of defeat it had incurred on the Athenian mind-set.

In sum, the effects of the battle were mostly psychological for the Athenians. The battle was remembered as the first sign of growing Boiotian assertiveness towards them, and perhaps sowed the seeds for their eventual dominance, if Xenophon's account is anything to go by. The Boiotians, however, revelled in the glory. Although the victory was the accomplishment of a small group of men, it was appropriated by the *koinon* shortly after. Changes at the Athena Itonia temple, and possibly its cult, helped to cement the new-found liberty of the Boiotians. The erection of a permanent victory marker placed the Battle of Koroneia in select company and was the first of its kind, firmly fixing the battle's place in Boiotian lore as a reference point, especially in relation to the Athenians.

The *koinon* focused their efforts on reproducing lasting mementos to the reclamation of liberty vis-à-vis the hated oppressor. It fostered a notion of pride and cohesion, which would find its culmination in a battle fought out during the Peloponnesian War that truly propelled the Boiotians to 'stardom'. Again the local was preferred to the Panhellenic arena to propagate the victory.²²⁵ It was a salient decision, considering the Persian War overtones permeating the ideological battleground of the Peloponnesian War.

5.2.6 A Most Momentous Victory: The Battle of Delion

The Battle of Delion (424) was fought between the Athenians and Boiotians. The latter were victorious and the battle proved a turning point

²²³ Paus. 1.27.5. Arrington 2015: 186 suggests this statue was set up by family members to commemorate Tolmides' *ethos* and character. Pausanias includes the *polyandreion* in a list of graves for great Athenian losses, but it is unattested archaeologically: Paus. 1.29.14. The funerary stele IG I³ 1163, usually associated with the fallen of the battle of Koroneia, is now connected to the Battle of Delion: Arrington 2012.

²²⁴ Ioakimidou 1997: 262–73; Krumeich 1997: 109–11 view the statues as fifth-century creations, erected during Tolmides' lifetime, but see the fourth-century attention for the *Pentecontaetia*, possibly linking Aeschines' remark on Tolmides (Aeschin. 2.75): Hintzen-Bohlen 1996: 100–2; Nouhaud 1986: 342–6.

²²⁵ This pride was externally expressed in the form of Boiotian historiography: Tufano 2019a: 29–39. It found its strongest proponents and exponents in the fourth century, but the seeds were sown after Koroneia.

in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War. It provided a boost to the Boiotians' self-image and a severe blow to the Athenian morale, as reflected in their commemorative practices.

In contrast to the foundational victory of Koroneia (446), the Battle at Delion had a more 'official' character. Unlike the guerrilla tactics of a small band of men at Koroneia, Delion involved the entire army of the *koinon* and was fought against the full weight of the Athenian army. The unified effort signified the cohesion of the *koinon* by repelling an invasion of a foreign foe that so cleverly exploited the region's divided loyalties during the 450s. The importance of a unified front against Athenian aggression was certainly not lost on the *boiotarch* Pagondas, as reflected in his pre-battle speech. He evokes the memory of Koroneia, the battle that granted the Boiotians great security by expelling the Athenians, 'at a time when our quarrels had allowed them [the Athenians] to occupy the country.'²²⁶ He describes the neighbours as foreign (*ἀλλόφυλον*) invaders of Boiotian soil, creating a semantic link between the Athenians and Persians, thereby portraying the Boiotians as defenders of *eleutheria*.²²⁷ These were recurring themes throughout the Peloponnesian War. *Eleutheria*, with its echoes of the Persian Wars era, formed one of the rallying cries of the anti-Athenian alliance and was often paired with the demonization of the Athenians as the new Persians, intent on enslaving the Greeks.²²⁸

If Diodorus is to be believed, the centrality of this victory to Boiotian identity was reflected in its aftermath. The battle's booty – a significant cache considering the number of Athenian deaths – was used to embellish Thebes. The most impressive embellishment was the construction of a grand stoa in the Theban agora, afterwards decorated with bronze statues.²²⁹ Although the stoa is unattested archaeologically, the decision to construct a large public building at the heart of the city reflects the importance of the victory. The stoa would have dominated the civic

²²⁶ Thuc. 4.92.7. Whether this *στάσις* occurred inside the cities (Gehrke 1985: 166 n. 16) or among Boiotian cities (Lewis 1992b: 116) is unclear, although the Boiotian focus in the whole speech suggests the second hypothesis.

²²⁷ Price 2001: 294–5.

²²⁸ Thuc. 1.139.3; Raaflaub 2004: 195. This juxtaposition of the Persian and Peloponnesian War returns in the Plataian trial of 427: Thuc. 3.64; *CT ad loc.* The tearing down of the Athenian Long Walls at the end of the war signalled the beginning of freedom for Greece (Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.23; Plut. *Lys.* 15).

²²⁹ Symeonoglou 1985: 138. He connects it to the porticos mentioned by Plut. *de Gen. Soc.* 33–4. There are mentions of spoils taken from the Agora during the uprising in Thebes in 379 (Plut. *Pel.* 12.1), which some connect to Delion. Yet that must remain speculation: Georgiadou 1997: 123.

landscape, and the attachment of bronze statues amplified its presence. The central place, combined with the lavish dedications and the size of the memorial, ensured that the Thebans would constantly be reminded of the *koinon*'s victory at Delion over the Athenian neighbours whenever they visited the agora. Other sanctuaries and stoas in the agora were embellished with the bronze from the Athenians' armour, transforming the entire city centre into a great testimony of the victory over the Athenian neighbours.²³⁰ While these endeavours all focused on Thebes and its civic centre, the *pièce de résistance* was the inauguration of the Delia festival, to be celebrated at the Apollo shrine in Delion.²³¹

Diodorus' aetiological explanation runs into one problem: there is no (epigraphic) attestation of the celebration of the cult before the second century. The earliest evidence is an inscription found in modern Dilesi, detailing the organisation and payment for the festival.²³² There are traces of an earlier cult at Delion. A large Doric temple was constructed, dated to the second half of the fifth century.²³³ Little can be said about the period between the construction of the temple and the battle in 424. In his account of the battle, Thucydides describes a temple and sacred spring, together with a ruined stoa. He adds the Athenians erected wooden towers in places where no part of the temple buildings was left standing. It is tempting to connect this decrepit state to prolonged disuse, but the earthquakes of 426 may have been the culprit. The lack of repairs within the two years after these earthquakes suggests the sanctuary received little attention, although the threat of invasion – for instance, Nicias' campaigns in the Oropia – could have been a reason (Chapters 2.4, 4.3).²³⁴

This dearth of attention can perhaps be related to the cult's connection to the Apollo cult from Delos.²³⁵ The links between these two cults was long established. If the Doric temple at Delion is dated to 475–450, its

²³⁰ Diodorus' description of the battle and festival perhaps reflects a Boiotian tradition. Sordi 1995: 'origine tebana o beotica o, almeno, l'ottima informazione di soe beotiche risaliva dunque a tradizioni contemporanee'.

²³¹ Diod. 12.70.5.

²³² Brélaz et al. 2007. The lack of a federal archon places the Dilesi inscription after 171. There is a possible earlier attestation of the festival from an Eleusinian decree (*IEleusis* 195 = *IG* II³ 4 281 (285–280) that honours the son of Demetrios of Phaleron, but the association with Boiotia is tenuous: *COB* I 47 n. 2; Nilsson 1906: 354 associate it with Delos. Brélaz et al. 2007: 285 n. 138 remain undecided.

²³³ Pitteros 2000: 603. However, the temple's stylistic similarities to the Great Temple at Delos, dated to 475–450, could push back the date of construction. For this temple: Shear 2016: 83 n. 16.

²³⁴ Thuc. 3.87.4; 4.90.1.2. ²³⁵ Chankowski 2008: 66; Kowalzig 2007: 108 n. 158; *COB* I 45.

construction would correspond with the re-dedication of an Apollo statue from Delos in 470, as described by Herodotus. This formed an intricate connection between the Athenians and Boiotians, possibly involving the latter's integration into the Delian League (Chapter 3.5).²³⁶ Could it be the cult at Delion became increasingly associated with the Delian League, and its popularity waned after the Battle of Koroneia (446)? We can at least be certain a cult for Apollo existed at Delion prior to 424. So how are we to interpret Diodorus' reference to the inauguration of a new festival?

There are two options. Either there was a festival for Apollo at Delion, which was changed by the *koinon* after the battle in 424 to suit political propaganda, or a new festival was inaugurated to celebrate the victory.²³⁷ Judging from Diodorus' language (ἐνεστήσαντο), the latter seems more likely. A new cultic foundation would certainly have augmented the message of victory the *koinon* wanted to emit. Could we venture further, and ascribe a pan-Boiotian character to the festivities, similar to the situation in the second century?²³⁸

Considering the importance of the victory for Boiotian cohesion in the face of Athenian aggression, the idea might not seem too far-fetched. A comparison with the Basileia festival, established after the victory at Leuktra in 371, is useful. This new pan-Boiotian festival 'fully captured the spirit of victory and unity under the aegis of Thebes' and quickly grew into a symbol of Boiotian power and prestige.²³⁹ Could something similar have occurred after Delion? This victory demonstrated the military might of the *koinon* against an opponent that had repeatedly beat them and was the strongest power at the time. Defeating the Athenians, the *koinon*'s greatest (contemporary) enemy, was a grand accomplishment. What better way to celebrate this unity than to establish a festival that involved all the Boiotian poleis?

That message would be amplified by the Delia's juxtaposition with that other famous Delia festival, celebrated in Delos. The Apollo cult in Delos was the religious epicentre of the Athenian alliance, even after the Delian League's treasure moved to Athens.²⁴⁰ Establishing a new festival at Delion was an especially significant propagandistic tool in light of the Athenians' recent actions on Delos. In 426 they had invested considerable resources to

²³⁶ Hdt. 6.118.

²³⁷ For Diodorus and Thucydides and their differing descriptions of the battle and its aftermath: Tufano 2021.

²³⁸ SEG 57.452; 61.354; Müller 2014: 132.

²³⁹ Beck and Ganter 2015: 149. Theban sponsorship of this festival: COB III 117.

²⁴⁰ Constantakopoulou 2007: 70.

purify the island.²⁴¹ It was a conspicuous move, meant to demonstrate they were in charge of the Delian League, which was set up in the name of *eleutheria* of the Greeks and the liberation of Greeks under Persian rule in Asia Minor.²⁴² The establishment of a rival Delia festival at Delion was therefore a conscious move to broadcast the victory's impact beyond Boiotia's borders. It undermined the Athenian claim to hegemony, especially considering the context of the propagandistic war over *eleutheria* during the Peloponnesian War. What's interesting is that the *koinon* employed local venues for the dissemination of that message, rather than a Panhellenic sanctuary.

The reverberations of the battle were also felt in other Boiotian cities. The Tanagraians erected a monument to the fallen, and insofar as evidence allows, it was a singular *polyandreion*, underlining the impact of the battle on their society.²⁴³ Inscribed on the local black stone with the epic choric dialect and script, it consists of four columns with the names of the fallen inscribed without patronymics. No heading remains, making the dating more tenuous, but the ascription to Delion has been generally accepted.²⁴⁴ It is possible the deceased were honoured as heroes in the polis, considering there is a small hollow at the head of the inscribed stone, where libations may have been poured in.²⁴⁵ Janett Schröder, however, argued that the hole in the stone was meant to insert a statue or to act as the base for one.²⁴⁶ This would explain the flat block on which the list is inscribed. If the fallen were part of some form of hero cult, it is a testimony to the continued importance of the battle in the local discourse, especially because the battle occurred in Tanagraian territory.²⁴⁷ Alternatively, if a statue adorned the casualty list, this separated it from other monuments or grave markers in the cemetery.

In Thespiai a magnificent *polyandreion* was constructed. In this case more can be said about the battle's impact on the city and its citizens. The Thespians lost the largest contingent of all Boiotian poleis. The extent of

²⁴¹ Thuc. 3.104. Mackil 2013: 207.

²⁴² The Athenians justified their suppression as a reward for their valorous deeds during the Persian Wars: Raaflaub 2004: 178–81; *CT* III 501–3.

²⁴³ Considering the relatively well-excavated necropoleis of Tanagra, this takes on added importance (Stöhr 2020: 114), although many of the monuments still await commentary and publication (Higgins 1986: 41).

²⁴⁴ *IG* VII 585; Venencie 1960.

²⁴⁵ Low 2003: 103–4. There are private Tanagraian monuments: Schild-Xenidou 2008: 291.57, 294.63, 289.56.

²⁴⁶ Schröder 2019: 224. ²⁴⁷ Schachter 2016a: 85.

the losses is reflected in the monument set up for the fallen.²⁴⁸ Excavations in the 1880s CE showed the monument consisted of a large wall of steles bearing the names of the deceased.²⁴⁹ Behind it was a large burial mound, the *polyandreion*, and the entire monument was crowned by the statue of a lion, guarding the fallen. The Thespian *polyandreion* deviated from ‘common practice’ by burying the (cremated) bodies at home, rather than on the battlefield itself. This feature is more familiar from Athens and the practice could stem from there.²⁵⁰

Whether it was a deliberate departure from practice is hard to determine. An earlier casualty list was found in Thespiiai that suggests a return of the bodies from the battlefield was an established local norm.²⁵¹ The men in the Delion *polyandreion* were buried about a kilometre east of Thespiiai, beside the road leading to Thebes. Its placement along a main axis of the region significantly enlarged its exposure to visitors. It differed from the other cemeteries in Thespiiai, which were commonly smaller and family-oriented, as findings from the survey suggest.²⁵² The *polyandreion* was thus a grand testimony to the sacrifice of these men for the polis, and for Boiotia as a whole.

Perhaps one could push the monument’s resonance a bit further. The motif of the lion as a guardian statue of the deceased or fallen warriors has been used since the seventh century, and the Thespian *polyandreion* forms no exception to that practice.²⁵³ Judging from the size and monumentality of the burial in comparison to other *polyandreia* in Thespiiai, the Battle of Delion profoundly impacted Thespian society and was remembered as a pivotal point in its history. Combining this monumentality with the propagandistic aspects of the Peloponnesian War – the struggle for *eleutheria* and the depiction of the Athenians as the new Persians and

²⁴⁸ The Thespians lost 300 men or at least 109, out of a total of 500 Boiotian losses: Thuc. 4.96.3; 101.2. The number of 109 can be gleaned from the casualty lists: *IThesp* 485. The impact of the losses is best conveyed by Thucydides’ emphatic description: ‘flower of their youth’ (ὄ τι ἦν αὐτῶν ἄνθος ἀπωλώλει) (Thuc. 4.133.1).

²⁴⁹ Schilardi 1977.

²⁵⁰ Clairmont 1983; Arrington 2015. However, casualty lists and burials in or near the city of origin were not exclusive Athenian practices: Low 2003; Pritchett 1974-1991: IV 140–5. The Athenian influence on epigraphic practices can be detected in Thespiiai and Megara: Liddel 2009; Schachter and Marchand 2012.

²⁵¹ *IThesp* 484; *IG VII* 1889. It was found somewhere between Thisbe and Thespiiai.

²⁵² Low 2003. Bintliff et al. 2017: 56, 58 for its uniqueness compared with other Thespian burial sites.

²⁵³ Moggi and Osanna 2010: 311; Papazarkadas 2022.

foreign invaders in Boiotian discourse – could it be possible the lion was a reflection of its illustrious predecessor at Thermopylai?²⁵⁴

The lion memorial of Thermopylai was set up by the Delphic Amphictyony for the Peloponnesian warriors who fell there, which was a snub towards the 700 Thespian casualties.²⁵⁵ Could this lion for Delion purposely harken back to that great sacrifice and place the Battle of Delion on par with the Battle at Thermopylai?²⁵⁶ Other *polyandreia* in Thespias were not of the same scale, as can be gleaned from the size of the casualty lists.²⁵⁷ Nor were the ornaments of similar monumental grandeur. This difference could be due to chance, with no other sites preserved for posterity. Another argument against this connection is that the men at Thermopylai were buried on site without the large enclosure and the casualty lists.

Yet the sculptural link with Thermopylai is hard to ignore. Another lion statue has been unearthed in Thespias, but this was much smaller and presumably not related to a *polyandreion* or a mass grave, serving instead as a marker for an individual grave.²⁵⁸ More commonly, these lions were markers for individual graves, but were not dedicated to the memory of entire groups, as is the case here and at Thermopylai. There are no traces of similar monumental *polyandreia* adorned by a lion statue in Thespias. Nor are there in Boiotia, save for the infamous Chaironeia lion.²⁵⁹ Its construction for the fallen of Delion could therefore have been an intentional demonstration to put the sacrifices by these Thespians on par with the sacrifices of their predecessors at Thermopylai, adding to the grandeur of their achievements: a victory over the new oppressor of the Greeks, the Athenians.

The care and attention with which these casualty lists were inscribed, the sculpting of the lion and the construction of the enclosure suggests some time elapsed before the *polyandreion* was erected.²⁶⁰ It must have occurred sometime after the battle, as the retrieval of the bodies and the funeral

²⁵⁴ Van Wijk 2021b. ²⁵⁵ Hdt. 7.202; 7.222, 225–6; 7.228.

²⁵⁶ Ma 2008 made a similar argument for the lion of Chaironeia.

²⁵⁷ *IThesp* 484 (first half fifth century); 486 (Corinthian War?); 487 (third century). Although the *polyandreia* belonging to these casualty lists were not excavated, the number of names inscribed on these lists suggest they were substantially smaller than the Delion *polyandron*.

²⁵⁸ De Ridder 1922: 253–5. Schilardi 1977 places them in the same tradition.

²⁵⁹ Other *polyandreia* adorned by a lion statue at Chaironeia and Amphipolis post-date Delion and cannot act as reference points for the Thespian *polyandreion*: Broneer 1941; 1961; Miller and Miller 1972; Roger 1939. Earlier dates, such as ca. 360 BCE, were posited by Balakales 1970: 291; Willemsen 1959: 56, 130.

²⁶⁰ Jeffery 1990: 94: 'a good example of the fine, sophisticated work that could be produced for a public monument by a mason with an individual style'. There is, for instance, no trace of the hasty additions found on the bottom or edges of Athenian lists: Bradeen 1969: 146–7.

ceremony would not have left enough time for the completion of the monument. The careful consideration demonstrates that Thespian leadership wished to elevate the commemoration of the battle to a higher, Panhellenic level. By placing the fallen on a pedestal and through allusion to the rallying cry of the *koinon* – the Athenians were the new Persians – the Thespians could cater to the message the anti-Athenian alliance wished to convey after the Battle of Delion.²⁶¹

Taken together with the festivities at Delion and the embellishments in Thebes, the *polyandreion* at Thespias offers an insight into the Boiotian psyche and their perception of the Athenians after the victory of 424. All these festivities and dedications served to promulgate the image of Boiotian unity in the face of foreign aggression. In this case this threat came from the Athenians, branded as the oppressors of the Greeks during the Peloponnesian War. This propaganda rang especially true for the Boiotians. Having endured a decade of Athenian dominion, they viscerally experienced that role. These local recollections of the battle were meant to strengthen regional cohesion, placing the exploits of these men on the same quasi-heroic level as those who fought the Persian Wars, in turn transforming the greatest Boiotian military victory into an achievement equivalent to the defence of Thermopylai. In this case, however, the Boiotians were solely responsible for defeating the common foe and celebrated it as such by ignoring Panhellenic shrines, instead preferring to celebrate these feats locally. The celebrations were thus aimed at boosting local pride, rather than an aspiration towards dominance in Greek politics.

Whereas the Battle of Delion constituted a source of pride and heroic admiration in Boiotia, the Athenians regarded this loss as a national trauma that left deep imprints. In accordance with tradition, the men were buried in a *polyandreion*. The sheer size of its casualty lists distinguished it from other *polyandreia*.²⁶² That notion of severe loss and admiration for the struggle is conveyed by the epigram inscribed on the casualty lists:

²⁶¹ Papazarkadas 2016 argues fourth-century Thespias followed Thebes in its epigraphic habits, voluntarily or not, contra Osborne 2017, who views the city as copying its neighbours in Boiotia and Attica.

²⁶² IG I³ 1163. Arrington 2012 disassociates the ascribed fragment SEG 52.60 from the monument and offers a convincing reconstruction of the monument. His minute and technical analysis of the form and shapes of the stones reveals the inscription is more at place as a monument for Delion. He analyses how Pausanias traversed the *demosion sema* (Paus. 1.29.4–16). The *polyandreia* mentioned by the Periegete are all related to larger defeats, demonstrating how ancient visitors were impacted by the sight of these war memorials.

Steadfast men! What a struggle did you accomplish in a battle unforeseen when you destroyed your lives so marvellously in war, not in consequence of the strength of the enemy men, but it was one of the demi-gods who stood against you in godly strife and did you deliberate harm: but [...] a quarry hard to fight having hunted for [his? your?] enemies [...] together with your misfortune he brought to completion, and for all mortals for the future made the fulfilment of oracles credible to observe. (trans. E. Bowie)²⁶³

The epigram does not hide the destruction of Athenian lives, but paints a vivid, almost horrifying picture. The unusual length of the epigram would draw viewers to it. They would read of an unforeseen battle, perhaps hinting at the course the campaign of 424 took as the invasion went awry.²⁶⁴ The haunting scenes described in the epigram paint a gruesome death for these men. But the battle's outcome is somewhat softened by the invocation of divine intervention, offering solace to mourners about the fate of the fallen. It casts the opponent as a worthy and redoubtable foe: the demigod. Far from undermining the Boiotians' achievements, they benefited from divine assistance, granting a remarkable aura to their victory and the Athenian defeat, portraying it as an epic struggle that was impossible to win.²⁶⁵ The oracles mentioned could have been the pre-battle sacrifices and omens, as Pritchett argued, and perhaps an oracle had warned of the disastrous outcome of the battle.²⁶⁶ Could the reference to godly strife be a subtle reference to the most egregious aspect of the Battle at Delion, the dispute over the retrieval of the bodies after the fighting had finished?

The unedifying image of rotting bodies on the battlefield, contrary to the 'conventions of the Greeks', continued to haunt the Athenian *imaginaire* in the following decades.²⁶⁷ Euripides, in his *Suppliants*, transformed the more convivial Aeschylean version of the burial in the *Eleusinians* into a hostile affair that portrayed the Thebans as pernicious violators of Greek

²⁶³ Bowie 2010: 369–70.

²⁶⁴ The epigram is the only epigraphically attested eight-line epigram before 400: Bowie 2010: 369–70.

²⁶⁵ Arrington 2012.

²⁶⁶ Pritchett 1974–91: III 89–90. Mattingly 1996: 124–5 argues the oracle could be Amphiaraos, who remained on the Theban side rather than the Athenian. Considering the proximity of the Amphiareion and the disputed location of the battle (Schachter 2016a: 84–8) the suggestion is merited, although it must remain conjecture.

²⁶⁷ Any correlation between the battle and the pictorial scheme of the Athena Nike temple has to be refuted (Arrington 2015: 176; Steinbock 2013: 193–6), since the temple was completed before the battle: Schultz 2009. The Boiotians possibly started the tradition of carrying tripods to Dodona as a counter-measure against Athenian accusations of *miasma*: Castelnovo 2017.

norms by denying the fallen heroes a proper burial. Despite the possibility of different versions of the epic circulating, the tenor of contemporary events could have been distinguishable in Euripides' version.²⁶⁸ There is a possible hint of the dubious and cowardly behaviour of prominent Athenian people in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, performed a few months after the battle.²⁶⁹ The outcome of the battle distinctively altered the perception of the neighbours in the Athenian mind. On stage, the Thebans became devious violators of customs. Politically, the Boiotians were again regarded as equal to the Athenians in battle. They were no longer easy prey for exploitation, but neighbours worthy of consideration, unwilling to bow down to the Athenian will.²⁷⁰

For both sides the Battle of Delion (424) was a turning point. For the Boiotians the victory was shaped around notions of internal cohesion and stability in the face of external pressure, with the invaders portrayed in a similar light as the barbarous Persian armies. In Athens the loss left a profound impact on society, not least of all in their perception of the neighbours. Supported by divine favour, the relationship between the neighbours was permanently changed. Far from the riven *koinon* 'holm oaks' of the 450s, the Boiotians were now capable of independently withstanding the full force of the Athenians.

The remainder of the Peloponnesian War witnessed few direct neighbourly conflicts that could be celebrated or mourned. The Aegospotami monument, as explained above, reflected Spartan ambitions to thwart Athenian claims for hegemony. The end of the conflict inaugurated a rapprochement between the neighbours (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.2), proving that dualistic views of the neighbour co-existed and flourished throughout the Classical period, as the next example demonstrates.

5.2.7 *Herakles Resurgent? Theban Help for the Athenian Democrats after the Peloponnesian War*

After the successful return of Thrasybulus and his followers from Thebes and the re-establishment of the democracy, they dedicated statues of

²⁶⁸ Goossens 1962: 416–522; Zuntz 1955. For the politics in the play: Vickers 2015. Whether the play directly ties in to the Battle of Delion is doubted, depending on the date of its performance: Collard 1975; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1875. Tufano 2021 shows Euripides does project or integrate Delion in the *Suppliant Women*.

²⁶⁹ Sfyroeras 2020: 73–4.

²⁷⁰ The loss was remembered as one of the battles that changed the relations between Athenians and Boiotians in the latter's favour (Xen. *Mem.* 3.5.4).

Athena and Herakles at the Theban Herakleion (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.2) (see Figure 5.7).²⁷¹ Pausanias recounts seeing the statue himself during his visit to Thebes:

The carvings on the gables at Thebes are by Praxiteles, and include most of what are called the twelve labours. The slaughter of the Stymphalian birds and the cleansing of the land of Elis by Herakles are omitted; in their place is represented the wrestling with Antaios. Thrasybulus, son of Lycus, and the Athenians who with him put down the tyranny of the Thirty, set out from Thebes when they returned to Athens, and therefore they dedicated in the sanctuary of Herakles colossal figures (κολοσσούς) of Athena and Herakles, carved by Alkamenes in relief out of Pentelic marble.²⁷²

The adjacent placement of the patron deities Athena and Herakles in the Herakleion embodied the recent Atheno-Theban collaboration. Similar invocations of polis' deities and their personification atop decrees or treaties reflect friendly relations between polities.²⁷³ The dedicants chose a familiar *topos* with roots in the mythological past. Herakles was accompanied by Athena on numerous occasions during his labours. Combined with the sculptural programme of the Herakleion – the pediments of the sanctuary covered the Herculean deeds – the dedication and shrine together formed a mental stimulus for recollecting the long-standing close (mythological) relationship between the neighbours.²⁷⁴ The subtle reference to the mythological exploits of the two deities suggests recent events were not a novelty but rather a natural extension of an enduring friendly co-existence.

In addition to the sculptural programme of the Herakleion, the decision to dedicate at this particular sanctuary was dictated by its location and intended audience. Recent excavations locate the sanctuary just outside of the Elektra gate and on the road to Athens.²⁷⁵ The temple formed the religious core of Theban military power, reflected in its possible role as the venue for displaying interstate treaties that embodied Theban political

²⁷¹ Maybe the *kioniskos* commemorating the events of 507/6 was destroyed at this time because it was no longer fashionable to be openly anti-Athenian in Thebes: Aravantinos 2006. However, it could have happened during the siege of Thebes in 479.

²⁷² Paus. 9.11.6. *COBI* 133 mentions the text is corrupt here without undermining the value of the reference.

²⁷³ A famous example is Hera and Athena embodying the Athenian-Samian relationship at the end of the Peloponnesian War: *RO* 2 pl. 1; Lawton 1995: 30, 36.

²⁷⁴ Moggi and Osanna 2010: 285; Steinbock 2013: 233–5. Athena's help was known throughout the Greek world, as the pediments on the temple at Olympia show: Barringer 2021: 129.

²⁷⁵ Aravantinos 2014: 50; Symeonoglou 1985: 133; 184.

power and military might.²⁷⁶ It is therefore tempting to imagine the Theban decree for the protection of the Athenian fugitives being erected here, which would strengthen the statues' message by visually linking the dedication to the same decrees that had guaranteed the Athenians' safety and ensured that future Athenian visitors to Thebes would be reminded of the support their ancestors received.²⁷⁷

The dedication of these statues thus served a double purpose. First, the visitors to the sanctuary would be reminded of the Athenian gratitude for the Theban support in their hour of need. Second, the statues added to the Theban prestige by acknowledging their role in the restoration of the democracy. They indirectly allude to the standing of the Thebans in the Greek world. The Athenian leadership chose the Herakleion because of its location and the mythological connections between Herakles and Athena, but it equally appealed to Theban military power, embodied in their guarantee to act as a safe haven for the Athenian refugees.

Thrasybulus' dedication acknowledged Herakles' centrality in Theban lore. Later sources speak of a discussion in the Theban assembly where the decision to support the refugee democrats was partially inspired by the polis' self-image, based on the worthy precedents set by the hero's exploits (Chapter 3.4.1).²⁷⁸ The dedicants understood how to express their gratitude by directly linking their statues to the same deity their hosts invoked to guarantee the safety of the refugees. These statues were embedded in the local culture, and the dedication demonstrates Thrasybulus' appreciation of the local topography and history.

The statues' size – colossal, in Pausanias' words – suggests they dominated the sacred landscape of the Herakleion.²⁷⁹ The word 'κόλοσός' rarely occurs in our extant sources, so the statues must have been sizeable for Pausanias to employ such terms.²⁸⁰ The statues of Athena and Herakles stood out, even at a popular sanctuary like the Herakleion where numerous pots, statuettes and other offerings would have cluttered around the

²⁷⁶ Aravantinos and Papazarkadas 2012; Papazarkadas 2016 suggest the Herakleion could have acted as the location to celebrate Theban military might.

²⁷⁷ Plut. *Lys.* 27.3; *Pel.* 6.5; Diod. 14.6.1; Din. 1.25. For the decrees' historical plausibility: Chapter 3.4.1.

²⁷⁸ Plut. *Lys.* 27.3.

²⁷⁹ Since the Perieget is a trustworthy reporter of monuments (Habicht 1985: 28–63, 149; Keesling 2003: 27–30), I have no qualms accepting his account regarding the size of the statues.

²⁸⁰ A search in the database *Logeion* revealed it occurs fewer than fifty times. In some sources it is used to simply denote a statue, but Pausanias uses it only four times in his entire work: Paus. 1.18.6; 1.42.3; 2.35.3; 9.11.6.



Figure 5.7 Map of modern Thebes with ancient sites marked.

(Source: Google Earth 2022, accessed 28 October 2022. Map created by author)

altar.²⁸¹ The Pentelic marble identified the Athenian provenance to visitors. The statues were arguably meant to overshadow other dedications at the shrine, perhaps reflecting the gratitude and debt the Athenians owed to the Thebans for helping realise the return of the democracy. Their commanding presence in the Herakleion served as a perpetual recollection of Theban-Athenian synergy, a positive reinforcement of their efforts to overthrow a Spartan-backed tyranny.

The permanence of this memory takes on added potency by considering *when* Pausanias viewed this statue. Thebes was destroyed in 335 after revolting against Alexander. In its wake the city was burnt to the ground, save for Pindar's house and sanctuaries.²⁸² The statues plausibly survived this upheaval, but it demonstrates that the memory of Atheno-Theban collaboration survived even the worst of calamities. The Athenian help in rebuilding the city would have provided an impetus for re-creating the dedication.²⁸³ Or, if it did survive, it remained a testimony to the long-standing relationship.

In Thebes, there was thus a literary and a sculptural tradition that kept this memory of collaboration alive. Pausanias must have obtained his

²⁸¹ Aravantinos 2014. ²⁸² Plut. *Alex.* 11.9–12; Arr. *Anab.* 1.9.10; Diod. 17.14.1–4.

²⁸³ Kalliontzis and Paparzakadas 2019.

information through local historians in whose works the epicoric perspective on the collaboration survived. The Athenians contributed to this survival by dedicating an impressive monument that aimed to stir Theban, Boiotian and Athenian audiences alike when visiting the Herakleion. The embeddedness of the statues in the local culture and historiography ensured its survival until Pausanias' time.

The memory of this cooperative exploit remained extant in Athenian local spheres as well. Here, the fabric of commemoration focused more on the heroic exploits of the exiled democrats. The victory at Phyle was perceived as a defining moment in Athenian history, on par with the daring exploits of the *Marathonomachoi* or the heroics for *eleutheria* at Salamis. In his *Against Ctesiphon*, Aeschines places these events on the same level as examples to be emulated by the current generation.²⁸⁴ Thrasybulus' return from exile became so ingrained in Athenian social memory that the overthrow of the Thirty could be referred to by colloquial remarks such as 'returning from Phyle' or 'leading the demos back from Phyle' by orators such as Lysias, Andocides, Aeschines and Demosthenes.²⁸⁵ The proverbial phrase also found its way into comedy, with Aristophanes alluding to it in his *Ploutos* from 388.²⁸⁶

Helping to establish and perpetuate these memories for the citizens were physical mementos located in the Athenian civic and sacred spaces, acting as constant reminders of the works undertaken by Thrasybulus and his compatriots. One example comes from Aeschines. He mentions an honorary decree and epigram set up to commemorate the exploits of these heroes.²⁸⁷ This fits with the tendency to hold up decrees of bygone eras as a paradigm of the moral standards offered by previous generations and how these should be maintained by the newer generations.²⁸⁸ The orator's account suggests that these two texts were inscribed on the same stone,

²⁸⁴ Aeschin. 3.181: 'How true this is, I wish to teach you a little more explicitly. Does it seem to you that Themistocles, who was general when you conquered the Persian in the battle of Salamis, was the better man, or Demosthenes, who the other day deserted his post? Miltiades, who won the battle of Marathon, or yonder man? Further – the men who brought back the exiled democracy from Phyle?'

²⁸⁵ Aeschin. 3.181, 187, 190, 208; And. 1.89; Dem. 19.280, 24.135.

²⁸⁶ Steinbock 2013: 240; Wolpert 2002: 75–99; Ar. *Plut.* 1146: 'Forget past injuries, now you have taken Phyle. Ah! how I should like to live with you! Take pity and receive me.'

²⁸⁷ Aeschin. 3.187–90.

²⁸⁸ Liddel 2020: II 242: 'However, decrees that were associated with bygone eras, preserved in collective memory and then instantiated in inscribed versions (or accounts of inscribed versions), such as the decree against Arthmios or that associated with Demophantos, appear to have acquired a more resilient status by being deployed as paradigms of the moral standards put in front of Athenian audiences at the assembly and lawcourts.'

which appears to be confirmed by the fragments of a decree that enumerates the names of the participants in the capture of Phyle.²⁸⁹ The decision to engrave this decision and immortalise it demonstrates the relevance of these helpers for the Athenians.²⁹⁰ New studies of the stones showed only a select group of heroes was chosen, who were subsequently honoured with rewards and a statue to commemorate their exploits. The stone with the epigrams served as a base for a possible statue of a personification of democracy or the Athenian demos.²⁹¹ Other ways of keeping the memory of Phyle alive were annual festivals, sacrifices and the erection of victory trophies, if Plutarch's account is valid.²⁹² Plutarch describes how the memory of Thrasybulus was on Theban minds in 379 when Theban exiles wished to return to their native city to topple the Spartan junta. Pelopidas implored his fellows to follow Thrasybulus' example in boldness to liberate Thebes.²⁹³

The focus on the Athenian democrats' exploits did not impinge on the memory of Theban help. One possible stimulus for recollecting the help was a decree in the Athenian Agora. The decree awards citizenship to the *xenoi* at Phyle in recognition of their sacrifice and support for the democracy. The recipients may have included Thebans and Boiotians.²⁹⁴ The decree stipulates that these *xenoi* were to be distributed among the ten tribes of Athens, where they could act as living reminders of the help provided to the Athenians. Even those supporters who joined the cause after Phyle were rewarded, albeit with honours other than citizenship. The decree helped to anchor the commemoration of Theban and Boiotian help in the minds of the Athenians and was probably a memento that orators could refer to when dealing with the memory of this event. It also helped these recipients that their rights were ensured, as it allowed them to point it out to other citizens or during trials.²⁹⁵

The memorials proved their worth in subsequent years, when an unnamed Theban ambassador referred to the memory of the help for the

²⁸⁹ SEG 28.45; Raubitschek 1941; Taylor 2002. The identification of the fragments is based on the similarity of the two beginnings of elegiac couplets (ll. 73–6) with the epigram quoted by Aeschines. Additional evidence is that five of the men honoured came from the deme of Phyle (ll. 43–7). Although little of the decree survives to warrant reconstructing it with Aeschines' speech, another decree that grants citizenship to the *xenoi* of Phyle appears to confirm Raubitschek's reconstruction: RO 4.

²⁹⁰ Lambert 2018: 47–68. ²⁹¹ Malouchou 2014; 2015.

²⁹² Plut. *de Glor. Ath.* 7 (*Mor.* 349f). ²⁹³ Plut. *Pel.* 7.1–2.

²⁹⁴ RO 4. Some scholars limit these honours to the Athenian followers of Thrasybulus, but see Taylor 2002. Some Thebans and Boiotians joined the early stages of the democratic revolt: Plut. *Lys.* 27.4; Diod. 14.32.1; Justin 5.9.8.

²⁹⁵ Liddel 2020: 139–47.

Athenian exiles to procure an alliance with the Athenians at a time when war with the Spartans was inevitable. Despite the trepidations of some of his countrymen, Thrasybulus replied to the ambassador that the Athenians would aid their neighbours – and eclipse their help of 403 – by agreeing to an alliance and defending their country from Spartan aggression (Chapter 3.2.2).²⁹⁶ Similarly, the presence of Theban exiles in Athens after the Spartan takeover of the Cadmeia in 382 buttressed the memory of their common exploits against the Spartan aggressor, as evidenced by the comments of an Athenian client of Lysias acting on behalf of his Theban guest-friend. In the trial, he recollects the help he received from his guest-friends and suggests the Athenians should do the same for the Thebans (Chapters 2.5, 3.2.3, 3.3).²⁹⁷ The appearance of these references in court suggests the neighbour's help was not suppressed. In this case it concerned a private relationship between two *xenoi*, but the award of public benefits tellingly reveals a grander investment of the entire polis in the exiles' well-being.

The memory was still present in the later fourth century. Dinarchus evoked the Theban help during the Harpalus affair in 323 in his *Against Demosthenes*.²⁹⁸ Recent events, like the alliance against Philip in 338 and Thebes' destruction in 335, must have rekindled the memory of this previous collaboration (Chapters 2.7, 3.3, 3.4.4). He recounts how Demosthenes' behaviour warrants no praise as his involvement led to the destruction of Cadmus' city. Within that context Dinarchus recounts the Theban help in 403 and reminds his audience that the decree to help them had been read aloud on numerous occasions:

The Thebans, so our elders tell us, when the democracy in our city had been overthrown and Thrasybulus was assembling the exiles in Thebes ready for the seizure of Phyle, although the Spartans were strong and forbade them to admit or let out any Athenian, helped the democrats to return and passed that decree which has so often been read before you, stating that they would turn a blind eye if any Athenian marched through their territory bearing arms.²⁹⁹

This acts as a moral standard from bygone eras that needed to be maintained, in which decrees played a vital role in forming a socially shared memory.³⁰⁰ At various stages after the original Theban support, the Athenians recollected their neighbours' help in overthrowing the Spartan-installed tyranny in 403. That becomes clear from Pausanias'

²⁹⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.16. ²⁹⁷ Lys. 286.3 Carey.

²⁹⁸ MacDowell 2009: 409–14; Worthington 1992: 41–77. ²⁹⁹ Din. 1.25.

³⁰⁰ Liddel 2020: II 242.

account of the Athenian *demosion sema*. He visits the tomb of Thrasybulus, the sight of which inspired Pausanias to anoint him ‘the greatest of all famous Athenians’:

Such are their sanctuaries here, and of the graves the first is that of Thrasybulus son of Lykos, in all respects the greatest of all famous Athenians, whether they lived before him or after him. The greater number of his achievements I shall pass by, but the following facts will suffice to bear out my assertion. He put down what is known as the tyranny of the Thirty, setting out from Thebes with a force amounting at first to sixty men; he also persuaded the Athenians, who were torn by factions, to be reconciled, and to abide by their compact.³⁰¹

Several aspects stand out about Pausanias’ account. First, the decision to bury Thrasybulus in the *demosion sema* – the public cemetery – reflects the desire of the Athenians to commemorate the overthrow of the Thirty not as the action of a factional leader but as a victory of democracy over oligarchy.³⁰² Second, that Pausanias writes about Thrasybulus so many centuries after shows the indelible mark left by the leader on Athenian social memory. The overthrow of the Thirty was arguably his greatest exploit, so for Pausanias to refer to this achievement is unsurprising. More pertinent to the current investigation is that Thrasybulus’ return is linked to his stay in Thebes. The city acts as the base for his actions, linking the Theban help to a physical place in the landscape, demonstrating that the recollection of their support had not vanished from Athenian memory. Undoubtedly, this was due in large part to the mementos and testimonies that could be found in local Theban and Athenian civic and sacred spaces.

5.2.8 *Once a Traitor, always a Traitor: Remembering Medism in the Mid-Fourth Century*

Friendly collaborations dominated the memorial and political landscape of the first decades of the fourth century, but the relationship between the Athenians and the Boiotians soured in subsequent decades. The Athenian-Spartan alliance in 369 at the expense of the Thebans (Chapter 3.1.3) allowed an old familiar trope to re-emerge: medism. A spike previously occurred during the Peloponnesian War, triggered by the animosity between the neighbours and the influx of Plataian refugees, which explains the renewed circulation of anti-Theban traditions.³⁰³

³⁰¹ Paus. 1.29.3. ³⁰² Wolpert 2002: 75–99.

³⁰³ Steinbock 2013: 115–18. For the Plataian tradition: Yates 2013. Fears over medism start to appear within the Athenian empire around this time, like the Decree for Erythrai (IG I³ 14). In

Most of these vituperations remained in the realm of words, however, with little changes in the commemorative practices.³⁰⁴ The invocations of the Persian Wars by the Spartan envoys in 369 appear to have been ineffective with the Athenian audience, perhaps reflecting that Theban medism was less *en vogue* in Athenian discourse at the time (Chapter 3.1.3).³⁰⁵ One could point to Isocrates' *Plataicus* of 373, but judging from the relative lack of impact on Athenian decision-making one may wonder how persuasive his references to medism were. That it was written from a Plataian perspective, in which Theban medism played an essential role, mitigates its representative value for Athenian discourse further.

That changed in 369. The rekindling of the 'Auld alliance' against a common foe created the ideal breeding ground for a more antagonistic attitude towards the Thebans and Boiotians. Perhaps it even triggered a general obsession with the Persian Wars.³⁰⁶ The ghost of medism re-emerged from the Athenian minds and found its way into the memorial landscape of the city and its countryside. This resurrection was not only a result of political shifts, but equally the response to the Boiotians' claim for hegemonial status, a prerogative previously reserved for the Athenians and Spartans.

This absorption with the Persian Wars had ramifications for the Atheno-Boiotian relations as the Boiotians were increasingly framed as the prototypical traitors.³⁰⁷ It was in their nature to betray justice and freedom and they preferred to nestle themselves under the wings of a barbarian protector intent on enslaving Greece. That image was 'confirmed' by their collaboration with Philip, a contemporary 'barbarian' nemesis of Athens. Demosthenes, in particular, was keen to envision the Macedonians as the new Persians, and it is during the Third Sacred War

line 26–8 a punishment for medism is stipulated (any single one of the exiles, nor [shall I be persuaded to take back?] any of those who have fled to the Medes, without the permission of the Council and the People of the Athenians; τὸν φ[υγά]δον [κατ]αδέχσομαι οὐδ[έ] μὲν α ΟΥΤΟΠΟΙΚΑΙΝΑ[... 5 ...] ΠΠΕΙΣ[.]Θ[.]Α[.] 1 – 2 τὸν ἐς Μέδος φευγόν[ν]τος]ν ἀνευ τῆ[ς] βολῆ[ς] τ[ῆ]ς Ἄθ[η]ναιον καὶ τοῦ δήμου). Conventionally it is dated to 454–450 but Moroo 2014 dates it to the 430s. The new date would support my point that medism was not central to Athenian discourse until the 430s.

³⁰⁴ Lysias, in his *Funeral Oration*, points out medizing Greeks at the Battle of Plataia (Lys. 2.46). He does not, however, name them, perhaps a reflection of the contemporary neighbourly cooperation. Todd 2007: 149–64 argues it was a show piece, not a performed oration.

³⁰⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 7.1.

³⁰⁶ Hornblower 2010: 308–10 identifies its peak around the mid-fourth century.

³⁰⁷ Steinbock 2013: 143–50.

that we find growing evidence of Athenian dedicatory practices intent on memorialising the Boiotians as medizers.³⁰⁸

This attitude is first exhibited in the famous inscription from Acharnai, detailing the ephebic oath and the ‘Oath of Plataia’ (see [Figure 5.8](#)).³⁰⁹ Tentatively dated to 350–325, it concerns a decree moved by Dio, priest of Ares in Acharnai. The ephebic oath deals with the defence of the countryside against invasion, especially pertinent among growing fears of a pending invasion of Attica. The Oath of Plataia is a supposedly historical oath taken by the Greek forces just before the Battle of Plataia (479). Its historicity is a highly controversial issue.³¹⁰ Whether there is a historical kernel of truth in the Oath is of secondary importance here. What matters is the apparent discrepancy between the earlier Athenian reluctance to identify medizers in their memorials commemorating the Persian Wars, and the stele in Acharnai: ‘And when I have been victorious fighting against the barbarians, I shall (totally destroy) and dedicate a tenth of the city of the Thebans, and I shall not raze Athens or Sparta or Plataia or any of the other cities that were allied.’³¹¹

The message reflects the contemporary situation. It evokes the Spartans and Plataians, as they could claim to have fought on the ‘good side’, unlike the medizing Thebans, who are singled out for punishment.³¹² In the context of renewed tensions and the imminent threat of an invasion of Attica, and all the destruction this would cause, the need to remember the heroic struggles of the Persian Wars and the role played by the Thebans would have become pertinent again. The place of the stele is equally important. As Danielle Kellogg pointed out, the entwining of these two oaths evokes the memory of the hinterland’s destruction during the

³⁰⁸ E.g., Dem. 9.31; 3.23–4.

³⁰⁹ RO 88. Traces of the oath can be found in Lyc. 1.80–1; Diod. 11.29.2–3.

³¹⁰ Siewert 1972 argues for its authenticity. Flower and Marincola 2002: 323–5; Habicht 1961 contend it. Krentz 2007 believes the oath refers to Marathon, rather than Plataia. Van Wees 2006 sees it as an ancient oath of the sworn bands in Archaic Sparta. See Theopompos’ (FGrH 115 F153) remarks regarding Athenian claims about the war. The Greek alliance swore an oath before Thermopylai according to Hdt. 7.132, avowing to tithe all medizing poleis. Monti 2012 dates the inscription of these oaths to Alexander’s reign after 335 to strengthen ties between the Athenians, Spartans and Plataians against the Persians, an ingenious suggestion. Yet the Athenian lamentations over Thebes post-335 make such an invocation to destroy the city somewhat remarkable.

³¹¹ RO 88 ll.31–6. Claims of ‘tithing Thebes’ (Xen. *Hell.* 6.3.20) can be refuted: Steinbock 2013: 106–13, 310–19.

³¹² According to Baltrusch 1994: 30–48 they were singled out for tithing because they left the Hellenic League against the Persians, unlike other medizers. But that assumes the defence of Thermopylai was a concerted effort by the League, which it was not: [Chapter 2.3](#).

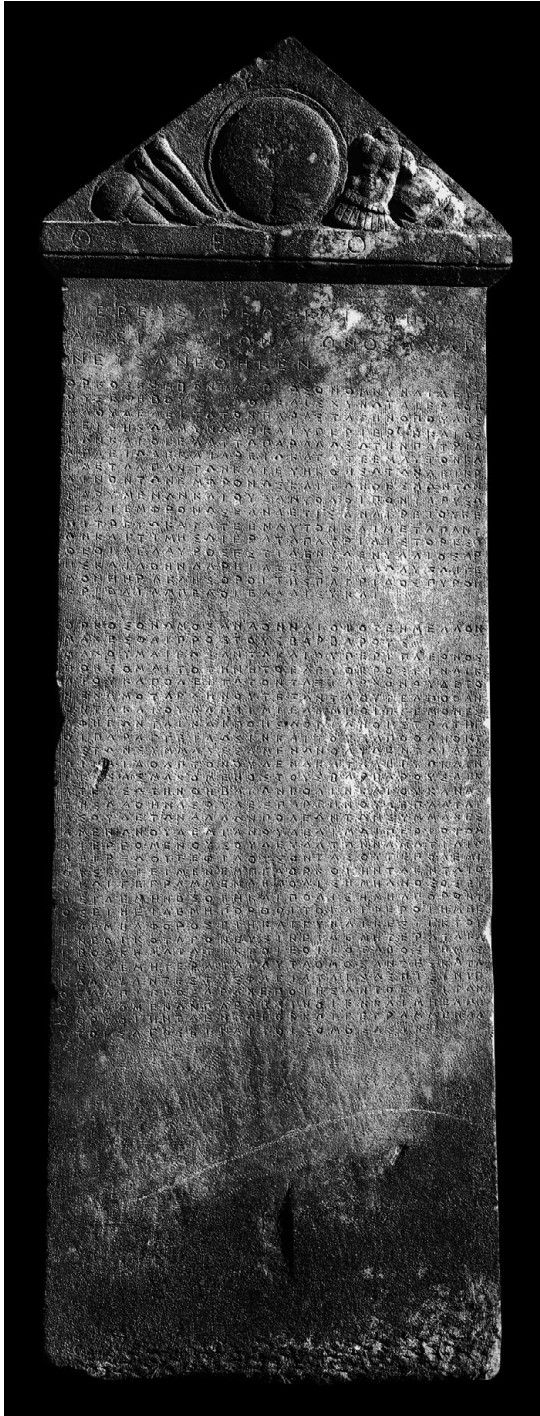


Figure 5.8 Fourth-century stele containing the Oath of Plataia and the Epeheic Oath from Acharnai.

(Reproduced with the kind permission of the École française d'Athènes)

Persian Wars, for which the Boiotians and their barbarian allies were responsible.³¹³ In this local setting the erection of this stele perpetuated the image of a treacherous Thebes.

Athenians could take it a step further and even ignore *any* Theban contribution to the defence of Greece. This was in contrast to earlier recollections, when even Herodotus could not deny their help at Thermopylai. The passing of veterans and other contemporary witnesses, combined with the lack of memorials at the battle site commemorating Theban (and Thespian) contributions, further exacerbated the matter.³¹⁴ Little remained – in Athens at least – to counter the narrative that increasingly gained traction: that the Boiotians were arch-medizers and had *always* been treacherous towards Greece and its interests.

Demosthenes, in his *Second Philippic* (344/3), decries the Boiotians' past deeds. While his main purpose is to conceptualise the looming conflict with Philip as another Persian War, the orator creates a link to the past by reminding his audience of past Boiotian behaviour:

But as to the Thebans, he believed – and the event justified him – that in return for benefits received they would give him a free hand for the future and, so far from opposing or thwarting him, would even join forces with him, if he so ordered. Today, on the same assumption, he is doing the Messenians and the Argives a good turn. That, men of Athens, is the highest compliment he could pay you. For by these very acts you stand judged the one and only power in the world incapable of abandoning the common rights of the Greeks at any price, incapable of bartering your devotion to their cause for any favour or any profit. And it was natural that he should form this opinion of you and the contrary opinion of the Argives and Thebans, because he not merely looks to the present, but also draws a lesson from the past. . . . On the other hand, he learns that the ancestors of these Thebans and Argives either fought for the barbarians or did not fight against them. He knows, then, that they both will pursue their own (or local) interests, irrespective of the common advantage of the Greeks. (adapted from Loeb edition)³¹⁵

Demosthenes frames the Thebans as archetypal traitors, unable to look beyond their local horizon and own interests, to the detriment of the Greeks en masse. The accusation resonated more since the Thebans were reinforcing their Panhellenic credentials at the time. I would contend it was

³¹³ Kellogg 2008; 2013a.

³¹⁴ The battle site of Thermopylai was monopolised by Spartan memorials: van Wijk 2021b.

³¹⁵ Dem. 6.9–12.

not necessarily an indictment of the Thebans as medizers. It is their epichoric perspective, their ‘own (ἰδιῶν) interests’, that sets them apart from the Athenians, a strong condemnation of the recent claims to Panhellenic prestige. They essentially aimed only at promoting Boiotian interests, rather than serving *all of the Greeks*.

Another example comes from Apollodorus (c. 340). He goes a step further, mixing up various elements of the Persian Wars by claiming the Plataians were the only Boiotians who fought with Leonidas:

And again, when Xerxes came against Greece and the Thebans went over to the side of the Medes, the Plataians refused to withdraw from their alliance with us, but, unsupported by any others of the Boiotians, half of them arrayed themselves in Thermopylai against the advancing barbarian together with the Lacedaimonians and Leonidas, and perished with them.³¹⁶

Maybe the influx of Plataians after the town’s destruction by the Thebans helped to foment such an attitude (Chapter 4.1.3). Other, less negative views of the Boiotians continued to exist in Athens. The negative narrative was dominant, but others were not dormant. Memory is a multi-focal experience and polis ideology could not trump everything. The contemporary political situation, however, fostered a different version of the Persian Wars to weaken the *koinon*’s prestige and reinforce the Athenian-Spartan axis.

These efforts to stigmatise the Boiotians did not come about in isolation. In an effort to bolster their Panhellenic appeal, the *koinon* made various dedications at Delphi, such as the Theban treasury and a statue of Herakles after the Third Sacred War (Chapter 5.1.3).³¹⁷ In addition to these offerings the Boiotians revived, expanded and rebuilt older temples in their city.³¹⁸ A statue of Epameinondas, accompanied by an epigram seen by Pausanias, elaborated his deeds for the greater good of Hellas.³¹⁹ Another statue,

³¹⁶ [Dem.] 59.95. For the date: Kapparis 1999: 48; Trevett 1990.

³¹⁷ Scott 2016. The Thessalians dedicated a statue of Pelopidas celebrating his efforts as ‘a destroyer of Sparta’: Brown-Ferrario 2014: 272; Harding 49.

³¹⁸ Schachter 2016a: 113–32.

³¹⁹ Zizzi 2006: 344–9; Paus. 9.15.6:

‘By my counsels was Sparta shorn of her glory,
And holy Messene received at last her children.
By the arms of Thebe was Megalopolis encircled with walls,
And all Greece won independence and freedom.’

This statue was re-erected after the destruction of Thebes, so perhaps the Panhellenic message of the epigram is somewhat muddled, compared with the Pelopidas statue in Delphi and the

ostensibly for Pelopidas and which perhaps stood alongside the statue of Epameinondas, was set up in Thebes with the following words:

[Π]ατρίς ἀριστεύουσ' ἀλκῆι δορός Ἑλλά[δος ἀλλης]
 [ε]ἶλετο τόνδ' αὐτῆς ἡγεμόν' ἔμ πολέ[μωι]
 [ο]ς ποτε κινδύνοις πλείστοις Ἄρεως ἐ[ν ἀγώσιν]
 [τ]ᾶς ἀφοβους Θήβας μείσζονας ἠύκλέ[ισεν]
 Ἰππίας Ἐροτιώνιος Διί Σαώτη ἀνέθη[κε]
 Λύσιππος Σικυώνιος ἐπόησε

The fatherland, prevailing by the might of a spear over the rest of Hellas
 Has chosen this man as its leader in war
 Who, when there were many dangers in the contests of Ares,
 Brought greater honour to fearless Thebes
 Hippias son of Erotion dedicated it to Zeus Saotas
 Lysippus of Sicyon made it. (trans. E. Mackil)³²⁰

These monuments give the impression of a confident Thebes that proclaims its rightful place as leaders of Hellas. That message was strengthened by the adoption of the Ionic script in the 360s, following Nikolaos Papazarkadas, transforming the local, introspect perspective of Boiotia into a beacon of Panhellenic prestige.³²¹ It is in light of that later remark and the motivations behind the adaptation of the Ionic script that I would hesitantly ascribe the Theban epigram from the Persian Wars to the Battle of Thermopylai, based on the date of its re-inscription.³²²

Text A

[-----]EPETON[.]T[.]
 [-∞ |-∞ |- | ἐν? π]ολέμυ [θ]ανέμεν
 [-∞ |-∞ |- ∞ | -]πατρίδος πέρι Θέβας
 4 [-∞ |-]εντο ἄθλα κράτιστ' ἀρετᾶς

Text B

[-----]ΛΥ. . ἙPETON[.]ΥΤΟ
 [-∞ |-∞ |- | ἐν π]ολέμοι θανέμεν
 [-∞ |-∞ |-∞ | -]πατρίδος πέρι Θείβα[ς]
 [.]NA[- - -]εντο ἄθλα κράτιστ' ἀρετᾶς³²³

offering to Zeus Saotas. Both focus more on the individual and the defeat of Sparta: Gartland 2016a.

³²⁰ Ducrey and Calamé 2006; BE 2009, no. 259; Mackil 2013: 416–17. ³²¹ Papazarkadas 2016.

³²² Papazarkadas 2014. ³²³ Text B is the Ionic re-inscription of the original epigram.

The phrase ‘fallen for the native land of Thebes’ (θανέμεν . . . πατρίδος πέρι Θειβα[ς]) could also apply to the defence of Thermopylai. It was after the defeat of the forces at the Hot Gates that the Thebans went over to the Persian side, but the appearance of a troop of Thebans defending the pass was a shimmer of support for the Hellenic League and testifies to the conflicting loyalties in the polis.

Herodotus’ account – despite its flaws concerning the Theban commitment to the defence of the pass – does not contradict this.³²⁴ He concedes some Thebans perished before the Persian King accepted their surrender, meaning that these would have been buried by the survivors, who could have recognised the bodies of their fallen brethren.³²⁵ The fourth century witnessed the rise of Boiotian epichoric historians writing works that reflected the local perspective on these events.³²⁶ The retelling of exploits at Thermopylai could have meshed nicely with the re-inscription of the epigram. Invoking the Theban contributions to the defence of Thermopylai, a battle that became increasingly ingrained into the common Greek *imaginaire* in the fourth century, served to promote the Theban perspective. At a time of increasing appeals to Panhellenic prestige, it countered the increasingly narrow narrative of the Persian Wars that was propagated by the Athenians and, in the case of Thermopylai, the Spartans.³²⁷

We therefore witness an increased concern with the Persian Wars around the mid-fourth century in both the Athenian and Boiotian spheres. For the first time there is a ‘propagandistic battle’ raging in both the local and the Panhellenic spheres, as evidenced by the dedications vying for attention in Delphi (Chapter 5.1.3). This could be related to the Sacred War and the control over the Delphi sanctuary. Yet the purpose in both cases differed. The *koinon* used Delphi to advertise their credentials for leading the Greeks, but without evoking the Persian Wars. Instead, they preferred to appropriate an earlier epigram and the local sepulchral spaces to locate their Persian War credentials. These efforts were aimed at a local audience, but tied into a broader scheme of Panhellenic credentials. The Athenians employed their vault of Persian War memories to challenge the Boiotians

³²⁴ Hdt. 9.67: οἱ γὰρ μηδίζοντες τῶν Θηβαίων (‘those of the Thebans that medized’). For this interpretation of the sentence: Flower and Marincola 2002: 224.

³²⁵ Hdt. 7.233: ‘They were not, however, completely lucky. When the barbarians took hold of them as they approached, they killed some of them even as they drew near.’ Plut. *de Hdt. Mal.* 31–2 equally contends the Thebans joined in a final attack against the Persians.

³²⁶ Tufano 2019a explores epichoric Boiotian historiography in the fourth century.

³²⁷ Brown 2013 for the battle’s *Nachleben* in antiquity.

head-on at Delphi through the golden shields from Plataia. This dedication, however, flowed from their increasing emphasis on medizers in the commemoration of the conflict, with a special place reserved for the Thebans. Their recollections of the Persian Wars still focused on the Athenian audience, as can be perceived from the speeches preserved in the orators or the Oath of Plataia found in Acharnai. That the latter was attached to the Ephebic Oath reinforces the epichoric importance of the monument. What we perceive here is a convergence of a Panhellenic theme – Theban medism – but employed at a local level to buttress inimical feelings, adding a layer of hostility atop the political climate in which the neighbours once again opposed each other.

That situation quickly changed, as the tides of fortune swept the Athenians into the hands of the Boiotians in an alliance against the new great threat: Philip of Macedon. The fateful outcome of that clash is the next and final example of the local commemorative practices, which repeats a confluence of Panhellenic and epichoric views. In this situation – the Panhellenic sanctuaries were controlled by the Macedonian king – the choice may have been less voluntary than in earlier times.

5.2.9 *The Embers of Freedom: Chaironeia and the Struggle against Macedon*

The effects of contemporary history on the neighbourly commemorative practices is best reflected in the lead-up to and aftermath of the battle of Chaironeia (338). Thirty years of hostilities and friction were reinterpreted in a last-minute attempt to form a united front against Philip. Yet flexibility of memory proved futile against Macedonian spears, and the Boiotian-Athenian-led coalition found its demise on the fields of Chaironeia (Chapters 2.7, 3.4.4).

In the lead-up to the formation of the anti-Macedonian pact we can detect positive changes in the Athenian commemorative sphere vis-à-vis the Boiotians. Isocrates is perhaps the best example. In his *Panegyricus* (380) he employed the antagonistic version of the *Seven against Thebes* myth, claiming the Thebans refused the burial of their fallen enemies in breach of *nomos* and were forced to surrender the bodies only after an Athenian attack on their city.³²⁸ In his *Panathenaicus* (339) Isocrates

³²⁸ Isoc. 4.55–8. This shows the multifocality of commemorative traditions. At this time there was a pro-Spartan junta in Thebes and its exiles were in Athens, demonstrating that multiple memory cultures could co-exist.

adheres to the version in Aeschylus' *Eleusinians*, which offers a diplomatic solution to the conflict. The orator openly admits that people would notice his difference in tone, demonstrating that the perception of the neighbours could be altered to fit the political climate.³²⁹

The perception of recent Boiotian behaviour could be altered too. The war against the Macedonians was steeped in the ideological tradition of the Persian Wars. The struggle with the new barbarian was already a topical discourse in Athens, where Demosthenes frequently referred to the king as the new Persian tyrant, and framed the oncoming war in similar tones. His premonition, expounded in the *On the Symmories* (353), that the Boiotians would happily erase the shame of their medism if the opportunity arose, came true in 339.³³⁰ Instead of the archetypal traitors to the cause, the Boiotians now became champions of freedom, standing up for the cherished independence of the Greeks against the barbarous tyrant from the north.

The commemorative traditions following the battle show this transformation. Demosthenes in his speech *On the Crown* (c. 330) refers to the burials of the fallen at Chaironeia and places them in a long list of feats of Athenian heroism and military valour against foreign oppressions by placing them alongside those who fought at Marathon and Salamis:

I swear it by our forefathers who bore the brunt of warfare at Marathon, who stood in the ranks of battle at Plataia, who fought in the sea-fights at Salamis and Artemisium, and by all the brave men who lie in our public memorials, buried there by a city that judged them all to be alike worthy of the same honour – all, I say, Aeschines, not the successful and victorious alone. (trans. P. Low)³³¹

Demosthenes here reframes the loss at Chaironeia as a victory and puts the exploits against the Macedonians on par with the legendary endeavours against the Persians. The outcome of the battle is less important. The key message was that these men had sacrificed their lives to protect the freedom of the Greeks against foreign oppression and had obtained the greatest honour by emulating their heroic ancestors.

It is a sentiment echoed in Demosthenes' *Funeral Oration*, delivered after the burial of the fallen.³³² Here he aimed to grab some form of victory

³²⁹ Isoc. 12.172–3. Steinbock 2013: 201–10 elaborates on the textual peculiarities that reveal Isocrates' changes in the text and reflects on the orator's own comments. The political interpretation of Isocrates' change of heart in depicting the myth has been doubted, as the depiction of the Thebans is still unflattering: Gray 1994: 96–100.

³³⁰ Dem. 14.33–4. ³³¹ Dem. 18.208; Low 2010: 353.

³³² Whether speech 60 preserved in the Demosthenic corpus reflects the original speech is doubted since antiquity: Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 44; MacDowell 2009: 7–8. These doubts were raised on

from the clutches of defeat.³³³ The orator places the exploits at Chaironeia in a long line of heroic Athenian efforts against foreign invaders, starting with the expulsion of the Amazons from Greece right down to the Persian Wars, reflecting the master narrative of the Funeral Oration.³³⁴ Like their predecessors, the Athenians at Chaironeia fought for Greek freedom (*eleutheria*) and dignity (*axioma*).³³⁵ Demosthenes even claims these men carried with them the 'freedom of the whole Greek world'.³³⁶ Their demise meant Greek *eleutheria* was buried with them. Demosthenes only refers to the Boiotians in a negative way by blaming their generals for the loss but exculpates the regular troops who thereby share in the *arete* of their Athenian brethren though the association with such a heroic exploit.³³⁷ He here follows the established norms of the Funeral Oration, where the idea of Athens was idealised and where no ambivalent or negative imagery could be distributed to the listeners.³³⁸

There is one caveat. Based on the manuscripts of the text, Max Pohlenz argued that two versions of Demosthenes' *Funeral Oration* were circulated.³³⁹ One version puts the onus on Boiotian leadership, which sent these brave men to their graves. If not for faulty generals, Philip would have been defeated and the fallen celebrated for their defence of freedom, rather than mired in misery over the last stand. Another version omits the blame altogether. The omission is rather striking, because it concerns a major aspect of Demosthenes' oration. It invites the question, why did two different versions survive?

According to Pohlenz, the answer is relatively straightforward. The first version, including the diatribe against the Boiotian generals, was the oration initially delivered at Athens. Demosthenes' farewell to the fallen took place shortly after the battle of Chaironeia, or no later than 337. It was meant for an Athenian audience only. Hence the orator was free to solely blame the generals, while exculpating the fallen Boiotians and Athenians. In that manner he honoured the fallen and simultaneously diverted blame from his own policy by insinuating that the battle would have been won

grounds of style, but judgements based on generalised stylistic values are rarely convincing: Hermann 2008.

³³³ The fact that the Macedonians did not invade Attica reflects the *arete* of the Athenian warriors, despite the defeat on the field of battle, according to Dem. 60.20.

³³⁴ Gehrke 2001: 301–4; Jung 2006: 128–65; Loraux 1986: 155–71; Parker 1996: 131–41; Proietti 2015.

³³⁵ Dem. 60.23–6. See Wienand 2023: 264–300. ³³⁶ Dem. 60.23.

³³⁷ Dem 60.22: 'nor could anyone rightly lay blame upon the rank and file of either the Thebans or ourselves'.

³³⁸ Barbato 2020: 58–65. ³³⁹ Pohlenz 1948; Clavaud 1974: 30–1.

had it been led by the Athenians. Demosthenes' words were less indicative of a dislike of the Boiotians, but were a way of boosting Athenian morale and underlining their prowess in war. The second version was released after the destruction of Thebes in 335 and tailored to a Panhellenic, rather than an exclusively Athenian crowd. In the wake of Alexander's wrath, it would have been imprudent for Demosthenes to revile Boiotian leadership. What was presented instead was a version acceptable to a larger audience, one that underlined the bravery of these fallen men, but without the accusation towards the generals. Pohlenz argues this was a reworking done by Demosthenes himself.³⁴⁰

The omission of Boiotian culpability for the failed endeavour reinforces the notion that the Athenian attitude towards the Thebans had changed, even if the generals were initially blamed. The destruction of the city transformed Thebes into a lamentable ally in the eyes of the Athenians in particular.

The epigram set up for the Athenian war dead after the battle could confirm this picture. There has been considerable debate about its contents. Various epigrams for the war dead of Chaironeia have survived in the literary tradition, most notably in the *Palatine Anthology* and Demosthenes' *On the Crown*.³⁴¹ The epigram recorded in the *Anthology* appears to have found its way into the epigraphic record, as an inscribed marble fragment containing parts of the first two lines has been found, but its archaeological context remains unclarified.³⁴² An in-depth discussion of the incongruencies between the two epigrams would venture too far for current purposes. What unites them is the reference to Greek *eleutheria* defended by the valorous Athenian men who gave their lives for it. In Demosthenes, it is stated: 'Here lie the brave, who for their country's right . . . fought and fell that Greece might still be free, nor crouch beneath the yoke of slavery.'³⁴³ In the *Palatine Anthology* and IG II² 5226 the men fell 'striving to save the sacred land of Greece, we died on the famed plains of the Boiotians' (ὡς ἱεραν σὼσιζεῖν πειρώμενοι Ἑλλάδα χῶραν)[Βοιωτῶν

³⁴⁰ That is the surviving version in the *On the Crown*. Dem. 18.216: 'And thereby, men of Athens, they showed a just appreciation of your character. After the entry of your soldiers no man ever laid even a groundless complaint against them, so soberly did you conduct yourselves. Fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in the two earliest engagements, – the battle by the river, and the winter battle, – you approved yourselves irreproachable fighters, admirable alike in discipline, in equipment, and in determination. Your conduct elicited the praises of other nations, and was acknowledged by yourselves in services of thanksgiving to the gods.' See further Dem. 18.41.

³⁴¹ Dem. 18.289; AP 7.245. ³⁴² IG II² 5226; Pritchett 1974–91: IV 222–6.

³⁴³ Dem. 18.289.

κλεινοῖς θνήσκομεν ἐν δαπέδοις]). The Boiotian sacrifices must have been appreciated and framed similarly by the Athenians, especially as it was their willingness to engage the Macedonians in Boiotia that prevented the invasion. The positive evaluation of Boiotia suggests its inhabitants received a fair share of positive publicity in Athens. By referring to it in an official capacity, the Athenians challenged the self-created narrative of treacherous Boiotians. In contemporary Athens, the neighbours could finally be revered for their heroic sacrifices for the preservation of Greece, which helped to wipe out their badge of medism in their minds.

That message is echoed more strongly in later Atheno-Macedonian conflicts. Hypereides, in his *Funeral Oration* for the war dead of the Hellenic War of 323, couches Thebes in the role of defender of Greek liberty against foreign oppression, exemplified by its ultimate sacrifice: its destruction at the hands of Alexander after they had revolted against Macedonian rule.³⁴⁴ The orator even ignores Plataia as a *topos* for Greek freedom, since the Plataians were now fighting on the Macedonians' side. The roles were thus reversed. The Thebans were the exemplary Greeks who had paid an incomparable price for their commitment to freedom, a role they shared with the Athenians, who were now doing the same. The Plataians, on the other hand, treacherously fought alongside the Macedonians.³⁴⁵ Through the Battle at Chaironeia in 338 and their subsequent struggle against Macedonian rule, the image of the Thebans in Athens morphed from the archetypical traitors to the Greek cause into the great ally that fought alongside the champions of Greek liberty against foreign tyrants.

That is also the message promulgated by the famous war memorial set up in Chaironeia for the fallen Boiotians (see [Figure 5.9](#)). The initial monument consisted of the cremated war dead, covered by a mound. One significant change came in 316 or later, as John Ma argued, with the addition of the monumental stone lion gracing the burial mound.³⁴⁶ The new date he offers for the lion statue is not just a matter of chronology. It adds a new layer of interpretation to its placement and the way it interacts with other monuments, the local topography and history. The lion's placement was a direct reference to the renowned final resting place of

³⁴⁴ Hyp. 6.17; Hermann 2009: 82; Wienand 2023: 280–300. The destruction of Thebes was lamented in other Athenian sources: Aesch. 3.128, 133, 156–7; Din. 1.18–26, 74; [Demad.] 16–17, 26, 28, 65.

³⁴⁵ Wallace 2011. Hypereides conveniently bypasses that the Athenians had neglected to join in the Theban struggle for *eleutheria* against Alexander.

³⁴⁶ Ma 2008. The *peribolos* around the burial mound was constructed at this time.



Figure 5.9 Lion of Chaironeia.
(Photo by author)

Leonidas and his men at Thermopylai, thereby placing the sacrifice of the Thebans at Chaironeia on par with that illustrious battle from the Persian Wars of 480–479. If the *peribolos* and lion statue were placed on top of the burial mound after the re-foundation of Thebes in 316, it strengthens the message the memorial was supposed to convey. The most glorious (recent) deed of the Thebans was performed at Chaironeia, when they made a final stand for Greek freedom, thus erasing the former taints of medism that hung over the city's head.

The grandiose monument indirectly reflects upon the neighbourly cooperation. The commemoration of the Battle of Chaironeia could reinforce the connotations of their common struggle against foreign tyrants wishing to subdue the freedom of the Greeks. As Ma notes, the absence of any epigram or casualty list made the lion the perfect memorial for a complex contemporary context. Boiotians of different persuasions could view it from their own perspective, while those wishing to emphasise the sacrifices made for Greek freedom could embrace the connotations to

Thermopylai and the Persian Wars and place the neighbourly collaboration in that same illustrious line of heroic deeds.³⁴⁷ In light of Athenian efforts in re-establishing Thebes in 316 and the rededication of statues that commemorated their past, that memory would be continually reinforced in the local memorial landscape of Boiotia.

5.2.10 Summary of Local Commemorative Practices

In contrast to the Panhellenic sanctuaries, there is a wealth of material from the local civic and sacred spaces detailing the views of the Athenians, Thebans and other Boiotians of one another. In most cases, these concern recollections of conflict. The uneven picture is partially the result of the characteristics of human nature and its chroniclers. Peaceful collaboration and friendship were simply less interesting to record. Conflict is intimately tied to the stories communities tell of their past to reinforce the common identity. Much of this historical memory relies on stories of war. To foster the cohesion of their respective communities, the Athenians and Boiotians depended on these stories of conflict, as they signified struggle or perseverance. Such tales were more conducive to the creation of a common identity and strengthening of internal bonds than stories of peaceful co-existence. At the same time, the co-existence of monuments and testimonies to bad and good times in Atheno-Boiotian relations embodies the duality of human experience. It is impossible to inculcate an entire population to believe only one aspect. The choice for the local was therefore a logical one. These spaces would be frequented by inhabitants of the respective communities, who were the intended audiences of these messages. Both inimical and friendly communications had to reach them. They were the ones who fostered images of themselves and the neighbours that were fuelled by, or founded on, the ideas and meanings captured by these monuments.

That leaves one more particular example: the Amphiareion in Oropos.³⁴⁸ This sanctuary was located in a contested territory between the two neighbours. It allows for a diachronic investigation of the ways the Boiotians and Athenians promulgated their dominance over this region,

³⁴⁷ Ma 2008: 86.

³⁴⁸ This sanctuary has been the subject of a recent exquisite, monograph-length investigation (Wilding 2021). Wilding's work focuses on the sanctuary itself, covers a longer period and also works on changes at the shrine in later times than my chapter will do. We frequently reach similar conclusions regarding Athenian-Boiotian interactions at the shrine. In what follows I will mostly refer to her work when there is a differing view from mine, or when she offers a remark that adds to my arguments.

knowing the audience was not limited to their own population, since the sanctuary attracted visitors from across the border. Most of the clientele originated from the immediate vicinity, meaning Attica, Boiotia and Euboia.³⁴⁹ The sanctuary is the perfect case study to reflect on the ways the shrine functioned as a mirror of neighbourly relations and how these were expressed at a locus where the audience encompassed both regions.

5.3 A Contested Sanctuary: The Amphiareion

The Amphiareion at Oropos was the famous home of the miraculous curer and warrior Amphiaraos. Originally a participant in the Seven against Thebes but having fled the scene at Thebes, he was swallowed up by the earth around Oropos. Other communities made similar claims to be the site of his final demise, but it was Oropos that emerged victorious from this ‘cultic struggle’.³⁵⁰ The Amphiareion was the locus for another struggle, in this case for control over the Oropia between the Athenians and Boiotians. Control over the region often fluctuated. Each party left their mark on the sanctuary to reflect their dominance over the Oropia. The Amphiareion offers the perfect example to investigate how the neighbours remembered changes in the political landscape, and how these were echoed in a local sacred topography. I will be peeling back the layers of ‘dominance’ in the sanctuary’s landscape and examine how these different layers interacted with preceding markers of dominance.

The sixth century, and most of the fifth, is problematic for the study of the Amphiaraos cult in Oropos as no architectural or archaeological traces were found at the site that date to these years.³⁵¹ The evidence is limited to a votive dedication to an unknown deity. The dedication is inscribed in Attic script and dated to c. 550. Another possible example is a herm with Attic lettering, thought to belong to the sixth century but habitually judged as a *pierre errante* that offers no further clues about the cult at

³⁴⁹ De Polignac 2011 argues the Amphiareion was a collaborative Atheno-Boiotian cultic foundation in the 420s.

³⁵⁰ Wilding 2021: chapter 2 for further remarks on the originality of the Oropian site. Oropos moved to its current position only at the end of the Archaic period: Mazarakis Ainian and Mouliou 2008: 24.

³⁵¹ The epigram mentioning the recovery of Croesus’ golden shield for Amphiaraos might be an exception: Chapter 4.1.2. But it’s irrelevant for expressing claims in the Oropian sanctuary as it was set up in Thebes.

Oropos.³⁵² The picture is somewhat clearer at the end of the fifth century. Remains of two small altars and an adjacent ‘theatre’ area have been found, all located in the west of the sanctuary. These were close to the later temple, which suggests interest in the cult was rising.³⁵³ Whether these constructions were built by the Athenians or the Oropians after 411 cannot be certified.

The first example that demonstrates the dynamics of control over the sanctuary is the famous law detailing the specifics of participation in the cult.³⁵⁴ An impressive tall stone, it was presumably erected during the brief period of Oropian independence after the King’s Peace of 387/6.³⁵⁵ The repeated inferences of ‘foreigners’ in the law suggests the sanctuary, and its caretakers, had to deal with an influx of visitors unacquainted with the stipulations of the cult.³⁵⁶ The distinction between foreigners and local visitors of the shrine not only indicates the growing popularity of the cult and its widespread appeal, but also emphasises the new-found independence of the polis by stressing the difference between Oropian and non-Oropian visitors. Utilising their most famed exponent – the cult of Amphiaraos – to advertise the change in political power, the Oropians understood the sanctuary was the best tool to announce their independence. Regulating the cult was one means of exercising control and demonstrating this power to the outside world.³⁵⁷ From the size of the stone we may surmise it was meant to impress and quite possibly stood near the temple for visitors to consult.³⁵⁸ The Oropians proudly pronounced their independence at a prime location in the sanctuary, with the aim of reaching the largest potential crowd to bring this message across.

³⁵² *IG* I³ 1475, 1476; Petrakos 1968: 121, no. 15; Wilding 2021: 41–2. A votive dedication from Sykamino could be added: Petrakos 1997: 488–9. In the limited survey only one Archaic sherd was found: Cosmopoulos 2001: 65.

³⁵³ Petrakos 1968: 67–8. Some scholars view the altars as evidence for the foundation of the cult in this period. There was a late fifth-century stoa (Petrakos 1968: 68–9). A mid-fifth-century fountain has been found (Androvitsanea 2019: 105), perhaps indicating the cult existed prior to the rapid expansion in the later fifth century.

³⁵⁴ *RO* 27 = *IOropos* 277; Petropoulou 1981. Lines 39–43 contain hints of Athenian epigraphic habits: Papazarkadas 2016: 128. See also *IOropos* 278, 279 with Lupu 2003.

³⁵⁵ Knoepfler 1986: 94–5; 1992: 452 proposed later dates for the law.

³⁵⁶ *RO* 27 ll. 9–10: ἄν δέ τις ἀδικεῖ ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἢ ξένος ἢ δημότης . . . ; ll. 14–15: . . . δὲ τὸν ἱερέα, ἄν τις ἰδῆι ἀδικηθεῖ ἢ τῶν ξένων ἢ δημοτέων ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς μέχρι τριῶν δραχμῶν.

³⁵⁷ It also procured funds. The sale of animal skins was a profitable endeavour, and the inference that these should be sacred and belong to the sanctuary is telling (*RO* 27 ll. 29). The erasures on the stone indicate payment for the cult was susceptible to inflation, with frequent updates to reflect these changes: Petropoulou 1981: 62–3, 54. The erasures imply the decree was meant to be read by visitors, considering the repeated adjustments to the text.

³⁵⁸ Petropoulou 1981.



Figure 5.10 Plan of Amphiareion at Oropos (north of river), showing Doric incubation stoa to the right, and temple and sacred spring to the left.

(Source: Google Earth 2021, accessed 2 October 2021. Map created by author)

From the contents of the law it follows that the sanctuary was embellished at the start of the fourth century. It now contained sleeping quarters – with furniture presumably made of wood as it has not survived – as well as a small temple and a fountain. These were located at the west end of the sanctuary – the current entry point to the archaeological site – where finds from the same period relating to the cult have been unearthed.³⁵⁹ Before the grandiose expansion of construction work at the site later in the century, the Amphiareion was limited to this core. At the beginning, the sanctuary comprised two smaller altars and an adjacent theatre for visitors to enjoy the spectacle of sacrifice.³⁶⁰ There was also a sacred spring from

³⁵⁹ *RO* 27 ll. 43–6: ἐν δὲ τοῖς κοιμητηρίοις καθεῦδειν χωρὶς μὲν τοὺς ἀνδρας χωρὶς δὲ τὰς γυναῖκας, τοὺς μὲν ἀνδρας ἐν τοῖς πρὸ ἡ[δ]ς τοῦ βωμοῦ. Petrakos 1968: 61–106; Wilding 2021: 65–7 for archaeological finds.

³⁶⁰ *RO* 27 ll. 27–8, 34–5 mentions public sacrifices, perhaps attracting larger crowds. Examples of late fifth- to early fourth-century reliefs depicting *apobates* may reflect the festival at the sanctuary: Petrakos 1968: 121–2, pls. 38–9. *I Oropos* 520, a victors' list of the Amphiareia that Petrakos dates to 'before 338 B.C.', is insufficient evidence. Knoepfler dates it to 329/8 or slightly later: *SEG* 51.585 bis(12). The current theatre dates from the Hellenistic and Roman

which Amphiaraos allegedly arose from the ground, with an adjacent fountain.³⁶¹

But changes were soon to come. Oropos' independence ended after 374 and was followed by an Athenian 'mainmise complète'.³⁶² Shortly after the takeover, the Athenians made their presence felt through Pandios' decree. Previously, this decree was dated to the 330s, but in a brilliant display of epigraphical acumen Denis Knoepfler showed it belonged to the year 369.³⁶³ The decree was set up in the Amphiareion and details the contract between the Athenian Council and the contractors for the repairs of the fountain and the baths within the sanctuary.³⁶⁴ The decree stood out in several ways. Unlike the Oropian regulations, Pandios' decree was made of Pentelic marble, a material closely associated with the Athenians, who used it for their decrees and buildings.³⁶⁵ For the initiated, the name Pandios also reflected a strong anti-Theban tendency. As Knoepfler remarked, Pandios was 'l'un des représentants les plus marquants de la tendance anti-Thébaine'.³⁶⁶ His argument relies on the 369/8 treaty between Dionysos of Syracuse and the Athenians that Pandios proposed.³⁶⁷ While the Syracusan tyrant was a Spartan ally and would enter the Athenian fold after the recent Atheno-Spartan alliance, Knoepfler views it as equally confronting the Boiotians, who recently awarded proxeny to a Carthaginian.³⁶⁸ Considering serious political capital could be accrued from successfully proposing decrees, as Peter Liddel has shown, Pandios aimed to establish himself as an influential citizen with an anti-Theban pedigree.³⁶⁹ To choose a locus that was frequented by Thebans on a regular basis would have augmented his reputation.

Although specifications for the placement of the decree are not more explicit than 'sanctuary of Amphiaraos', I would contend the decree was presumably set up near the altar, where people utilising the fountain and the (men's) baths could appreciate the physical link between the

period (Goette 1995; Sear 2006: 45, 402–3) but a wooden predecessor probably existed. This is inferred from fourth-century inscriptions that mention thymelic and athletic games at the festival; see below.

³⁶¹ Paus. 1.34.4; Androvitsanea 2019; Argoud 1985. ³⁶² Knoepfler 2016b: 234.

³⁶³ Knoepfler 1986.

³⁶⁴ *I Oropos* 290 ll. 8–9: στήλη λιθίνη καὶ καταθῆναι ἐν τῷ ἱερῶι τὸ Ἀμφιαράο. Wilding 2021: 75 argues that Athenian demotics for the contractor and guarantor marked the sanctuary as an extension of Attica.

³⁶⁵ Petropoulou 1981: 42 n. 5 expresses doubt over the ascription of 'Pentelic' to the marble used in *RO* 27.

³⁶⁶ Knoepfler 1986: 95. ³⁶⁷ *RO* 33 l. 6; *AIO ad loc* for historical context and comments.

³⁶⁸ Knoepfler 2005: 86–7 with *IG VII* 2407; *BE* 2009.261. ³⁶⁹ Liddel 2020: 77–8.

refurbished works and the contract mentioning those responsible for its completion.³⁷⁰ We know from later (proxeny) decrees that they were to be set up in the best possible place within the sanctuary (καὶ στήσαι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου ὅπου ἂν δοκῆ[ι] ἐν καλλίστῳ εἶναι).³⁷¹ Imagining a location in a premium position, especially at a time when there was less epigraphic material deposited there, is not too far-fetched. Not only would this reflect well on those responsible for the sanctuary; it manifestly represented the new power in control over the Oropia and their proper care of the Amphiareion.

The inscription moreover obliquely evokes Athenian control (δεδοχθαι τῆι βολῆι).³⁷² This emphasises that the Oropia and the Amphiareion were now administrated like an Athenian sanctuary. The description of the priesthood was another display of Athenian control. In the Oropian decree mentioned above (*IOropos* 277), there is only mention of ‘the priest of Amphiaraos’ (τὸν ἱερέα τοῦ Ἀμφιαράου), with no further identification.³⁷³ In the decree proposed by Pandios the priest is mentioned in a formula reminiscent of Athenian formulations in the first half of the fourth century. Thereby it is made explicit that control of the sanctuary *in toto* now belongs to the Athenian *demos*.³⁷⁴ Another subtle indication of the changes in political alignment are found in line 22 of *IOropos* 277, where the drachm payment is replaced by obols, a hint of the Oropia’s separation from Boiotia.³⁷⁵ Alexandra Wilding remarks that the decree stipulates that the priest of Amphiaraos, appointed by the Athenians, was to procure funds from the sanctuary’s local shops to finance the decree within the sanctuary, further signalling their grasp over the Amphiareion.³⁷⁶ The Athenians thus made their presence at the sanctuary known in two different ways. One was the physical manifestation of their control, in the form of construction works in the sanctuary. Another manner was subtler, by setting up decrees demonstrating their control over the sanctuary.

The Athenian hold over the Oropia came to an abrupt end in 366 as the Boiotians regained control over the region (Chapter 4.1.2).³⁷⁷ It has been

³⁷⁰ For the men’s baths: Petrakos 1968: 109–10; Wilding 2021: 77 on the possible placement of this decree.

³⁷¹ *IOropos* 24 (mid-third century) ll. 12–14. Similarly, *IOropos* 52 (240–180) ll. 16–18; 294 (150–100) ll. 30–1 although the same phrase is mostly restored on the basis of *IOropos* 24.

³⁷² *IOropos* 290 l.6. ³⁷³ *RO* 27 l.1.

³⁷⁴ Knoepfler 1986: n. 53. *IOropos* 290 l. 26: τὸν ἱερέα τὸ Ἀμφιαράο Ἀντικράτη Δεκελεύα.

³⁷⁵ *RO* 27 l.22: [[ἐννέ ὀβολούς δοκί]]μου. ³⁷⁶ Wilding 2021: 76.

³⁷⁷ I believe the re-inscription of the Theban epigram of the golden shield dedicated by Croesus should be dated to this period to celebrate the renewed claim on the Oropia. It fits the ‘Panhellenic’ aims of the adaptation of the Ionic script as argued by Papazarkadas 2016, as the

posited that the *koinon's* presence was less prominent, considering the archaeological and epigraphic record is skewed towards their Athenian neighbours.³⁷⁸ Epigraphically, this certainly rang true in the fourth century, but that was rectified by the ‘bombardment’ of Boiotian decrees at the Amphiareion in the third century, when they treated the sanctuary as if it was a federal shrine.³⁷⁹ The relative dearth of traces in the fourth century, however, does not equal a total absence.

The Boiotian grasp over the sanctuary is attested by a *lex sacra*.³⁸⁰ It details the payments for medical consultations at the sanctuary. Although the decree appears to have been inscribed in the Ionic script – in line with the local customs – there are hints that reveal the Boiotian provenance of the decree. In line 1 the use of ‘ἐλεξε’ rather than the Athenian ‘εἶπε’ hints at the origin of the proposers of the decree.³⁸¹ What’s furthermore striking about the decree is the payment involved, which supports a Boiotian origin: it stipulates that no less than a Boiotian drachma ([δρα]χμῆς Βοιωτῆς) should be dropped into the offertory box – a stark contrast with the earlier law, where the currency employed was presumably Athenian.³⁸² With the cult experiencing growth, an ‘economic enforced use’ of Boiotian currency is unsurprising. This facilitated taxation and prevented currency exchanges with accompanying costs, but also characterised the Amphiareion as a Boiotian sanctuary.

One problem remains, however. Scholars habitually follow Angeliki Petropoulou’s dating for this document between 402 and 387.³⁸³ But that ignores the valid points made by Denis Knoepfler against this date. He argues for a later date, in the mid-fourth century.³⁸⁴ The key is the use of ‘δεδόχθα[ι]’ in line 1. This phrase is nowhere attested in Athenian decrees (nor in Boiotian ones) before 387/6 and its appearance here is remarkable. A date somewhere between 366 and 350 would be more acceptable

epigram corroborates the Theban claim on the Oropia, which was vindicated by the arbitrators in 366.

³⁷⁸ Papazarkadas 2016: 126. ³⁷⁹ Knoepfler 2002; Wilding 2021: 121–90. ³⁸⁰ *IOropos* 276.

³⁸¹ Petropoulou 1981: 41.

³⁸² *IOropos* 277 l.22: [[ἐννέ ὀβολοῦς δοκί]μου. This replaces an earlier erased currency, perhaps during Athenian control after 371. Petropoulou 1981: 54 follows Wilamowitz in restoring the original currency as δραχμῆς δοκίμου believing this to be confirmed by *IOropos* 276, but that depends on the dating ascribed to this inscription. Nevertheless, a replacement or erasure of Oropian/Boiotian currency is plausible.

³⁸³ Petropoulou 1981; *IOropos* 276; Papazarkadas 2016: 199 n. 26.

³⁸⁴ Wilding 2021: 80 accepts this date and points to the Eretrian dialectal traces in this decree, which is known from the earliest Oropian proxy decrees, leading to a later date than Petropoulou 1981 suggests.

epigraphically.³⁸⁵ Moreover, the Ionic script aligns with the Boiotian ‘adoption’ of the script. This gradual process of linguistic appropriation was encouraged by the *koinon* to accrue Panhellenic prestige in the Greek political world.³⁸⁶ The Oropians had always utilised the Ionic script, but in an early fourth-century Boiotian decree the epichoric script would be expected. The Ionic script was in step with the Boiotian ‘epigraphic habits’ post-Leuktra (371).

The Theban presence was perceivable in other ways as well (see [Figure 5.10](#)). During this period the Amphiareion witnessed some of its most profound architectural changes. The expansion of the sanctuary was presumably a combination of Boiotian political agendas and the need to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors to the sanctuary. A larger temple of Amphiaraos arose near the altar, in the west of the sanctuary. Its dimensions (14 × 28 m) suggest a significant investment.³⁸⁷ This could be the building where the Boiotians advertised their dominance, especially if the laws enacted under their rule were set up in its proximity as a visual stimulus. Following Peter Rhodes and Robin Osborne, it might even be possible to add the stadium and a theatre to this period of expansion.³⁸⁸

The largest of the architectural changes in the sanctuary’s landscape, however, is the stoa built in the mid-fourth century.³⁸⁹ Despite its ruined state, its dimensions demonstrate its visual dominance within the Amphiareion’s physical landscape. The stoa measured 11 × 110 metres, with a Doric outer colonnade and an inner Ionic colonnade. Running alongside the interior wall was a marble bench, and at each end was a small screened room, which measured 10 × 5.5 m. In one of these rooms, evidence of two offering tables has been found. Whether these rooms were solely meant for dedications, or perhaps used for sleeping, is uncertain. What is certain is that the stoa was meant for the incubation ritual, so

³⁸⁵ Knoepfler 1986: 82. Wilding 2021: 78 indicates support for Knoepfler’s assertion but remains more agnostic.

³⁸⁶ Papazarkadas 2016. The script’s adaption of the script. Iversen 2010: 262–3; Schachter 2016b; *BE* 2009: no. 244 argue for gradual acculturation in the areas bordering Athens, such as Thespiiai. Vottéro 1996: 161–4 argued it was implemented after the liberation of the Cadmeia in 379.

³⁸⁷ Petrakos 1968: 99–107. The temple’s current state reflects its third-century form.

³⁸⁸ *RO* 27. There was likely a wooden theatre and a predecessor to the later stadium in the fourth century, considering the thymelic and athletic games at the festival, but whether these were Athenian additions or adaptations of previous games is unclear.

³⁸⁹ Coulton 1968; 1976: 26; Petrakos 1968: 77–84; Sineux 2007: 159–64.

essential to the Amphiaraos cult.³⁹⁰ Therefore it is tempting to just regard this stoa as an extension of the cult's popularity, built out of necessity rather than anything else.

Although there is no conclusive evidence linking the stoa to the Thebans, who took over the Oropia in 366, the dating of the structure to the mid-fourth century makes it nearly impossible to ascribe agency to another polity.³⁹¹ During their hegemony the Thebans embarked on an ambitious programme of revamping sanctuaries throughout the region.³⁹² Building a large stoa in the Amphiareion fits with the overall scheme. The stoa carried an impressive dedicatory inscription on its Doric frieze course, with one letter per metope. Some of the letters have small holes for the attachment of golden gilded letters.³⁹³ Few letters (Θ, Π, Ο and Ν) have remained, making any reconstruction extremely tenuous. John Coulton declares it a victory dedication after a successful military campaign. This restoration is tempting, but it cannot be followed here.³⁹⁴ If the stoa did celebrate a military victory, it certainly enhanced the Theban presence at the site. But even without the celebratory inscription, the stoa was an impressive physical manifestation thereof, demonstrating their involvement in promoting and expanding the cult. As the original entrance to the sanctuary lay on the east side – as opposed to the entrance of the modern archaeological site – the stoa was the first structure visitors would encounter upon entering the sanctuary.

The stoa adjusted the spatial dynamics of the sanctuary as well.³⁹⁵ Whereas previous structures were centred around the small temple and the altar in the west end of the sanctuary, the gargantuan stoa drew attention eastwards by its sheer size and because it was the centre of the

³⁹⁰ Petrakos 1995: 27 argues these rooms were meant for incubation and the rest of the stoa was not.

³⁹¹ Umholtz 2002: 284 remarks it is impossible to trace whether the stoa was an individual or group dedication. This seems to me beyond the point: the size of the structure, combined with Theban control over the site, points towards the *koinon*. Coulton 1968 ascribed it to the Macedonians, but changed to Boiotian agency in Coulton 1976: 48 n. 2. The stoa's date is debated. The stoa recently excavated at Amarynthos near Eretria can only be dated after 338 (Fachard et al. 2017: 174–5). Its stylistic similarities undermine Coulton's more certain date.

³⁹² Schachter 2016a: 118–19.

³⁹³ Petrakos 1997: 259: μικρές ὀπές γιὰ τὴν προσήλωση γραμμάτων ἀπὸ χάλκινο ἐπίχρυσο ἔλασμα.

³⁹⁴ Coulton 1968: 182–3; *Ioropos* 339: [οἱ Θεβαῖοι] [Ἀμφιαράωι ἀνέθ[ηκαν ἄ]πὸ [τῶν πολεμίων δεκάτα]. The reconstruction appears odd, as the Thebans preferred to dedicate memorials and erect decrees in name of the 'Boiotoi' rather than the Thebans. Of course, a reconstruction of [οἱ Βοιωτ]οι is possible.

³⁹⁵ Wilding 2021: 104 notes the western end was dominated by the Athenians prior to the construction of the stoa.

incubation ritual, which occupied an important place in the cult.³⁹⁶ Thereby, the ‘cultic centre’, though not shifting away from the altar, moved partially eastwards and now included a hitherto unused area of the sanctuary, embodied by the Theban stoa, as visitors now inevitably passed by the grandiose structure.

This shift is more apparent if the old stoa was located on the terrace where most of the dedicated bases are at the current archaeological site. If the old stoa stood on this terrace – its remains are hard to trace due to the subsequent construction phases in the area – it means the new stoa inevitably directed attention away from the west of the sanctuary towards the east.³⁹⁷ By building this stoa, the Boiotians altered the spatial allocation of the sanctuary. All visitors would now walk by their splendid construction on their way to the altar and would have to move back to it again, rather than linger on the western edge of the sanctuary if they wished to undergo incubation.

The ‘new regime’ was thus clearly established within the sanctuary. The stoa’s construction radically recalibrated the sanctuary’s landscape and created a sharp contrast with the pre-existing surroundings.³⁹⁸ In addition, the reorganisation of the costs for consulting the god transformed the cult into a base of income for the *koinon* and revealed to all visitors the new controllers of the sanctuary. The splendour of the stoa surpassed anything the Athenians had done at the Amphiareion and perhaps remained unsurpassed architecturally, indicating that the Boiotian presence at the Amphiareion was not so limited.

Their control came to a painful end in 338, when Philip declared Oropos independent after his victory at Chaironeia. For a brief interval, the Oropians enjoyed their independence. They used their sanctuary as a venue for their newly found status by setting up proxeny decrees to prominent Macedonians at the sanctuary.³⁹⁹ These decrees were erected close to the Athenian decree for Pandios, suggesting some interaction between the divergent messages was at play here.⁴⁰⁰ The awards demonstrate the

³⁹⁶ For incubation in the Amphiaraos cult at Oropos: Renberg 2017: 270–95.

³⁹⁷ Coulton 1968; Sineux 2007: 159–64. Renberg 2017: 277 concludes the dormitories referred to in *RO* 27 ll. 36–56 are the old stoa, but the evidence is too scanty to offer any insights.

³⁹⁸ There are stylistic differences between the stoa and the temple from earlier in the century: Coulton 1968: 172.

³⁹⁹ *RO* 75; Knoepfler 1993. That the Oropians started to award proxeny decrees at this time of independence indicates their intention to forge ties across the Greek world (Wilding 2015) and emphasised their ‘polis-status’ after being subjected to foreign rule for so long: Mack 2015.

⁴⁰⁰ Wilding 2021: 78.

Oropians' awareness of the sanctuary's possibility to transmit these messages to a large audience and its role as a mirror of the political landscape. Unfortunately for the Oropians, they had bet on the wrong horse. After the destruction of Thebes in 335, Alexander decided to grant the Athenians ownership over the Oropia in a bid to mollify them and to punish the Oropians for supporting Amyntas, a pretender to the throne and one of their *proxenoi* (Chapter 2.7).

Alexander's grant of Oropos realised a long-cherished wish for the Athenians. More than thirty years had passed since the loss of the Oropia, and its departure had been repeatedly lamented in public discourse. Unsurprisingly, the return of the Oropia to Athenian control was lavishly celebrated. Among a plethora of decrees and awards celebrating everything connected to the sanctuary and its cult, there is one honorary decree that stands out in all aspects: the crowning of Amphiaros in 332/1.⁴⁰¹ The document is unique in several aspects. Crowning individuals was common practice in Athens, but normally such mundane honours were reserved for mortals. In this case, however, they were awarded to a deity, an exceptional honour. In fact, Amphiaros is 'the only immortal to be voted a golden crown by the Athenian assembly'.⁴⁰² Adele Scafuro analysed the idiosyncrasies of Amphiaros' honours in comparison to the honours granted to foreigners and Athenian citizens.⁴⁰³ Her analysis revealed the significance of this award, meant to symbolise the (unequal) relationship between the Athenians and their newly acquired territory. This inequality is demonstrated in the stele by the repeated distinction between Athenians and others.⁴⁰⁴ Another indication is the agency of the Athenian officials, the *epimeletai*, who were responsible for carrying out the crowning, making clear the sanctuary was now under Athenian supervision. She concluded that the stele, dedicated at the Amphiareion, signalled that the Athenians showed due deference to the Oropians' god, by emphasising his good deeds to the demos and all the other inhabitants of the land.⁴⁰⁵ The award of the

⁴⁰¹ *IOropos* 296 = *IG* II³ 1 349.

⁴⁰² Parker 1996: 247. For crowning practices: Gauthier 1985: 112–17; 180–9.

⁴⁰³ Scafuro 2009. Papazarkadas 2011: 47 adds the example of Boreas' honours in Thuri (Aelian *VH* 12.61).

⁴⁰⁴ *IOropos* 296 ll. 13–4: Ἀθηναίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἰς τὸ ἱερόν; ll. 29–31: δήμου τοῦ Ἀθηναίων . . . πάντων.

⁴⁰⁵ *IOropos* 296 ll. 26–31: 'having announced what has been decreed to the visitors in the sanctuary, shall dedicate the crown to the god for the health and preservation of the Athenian people and the children and woman and everyone else in the *chora*' (trans. A. Scafuro).

crown was thereby an instrument of ‘reconciliation’ of sorts, expressing the return of Athenian rule over Oropos and its appropriation of the sanctuary.

It was set up in the Amphiareion, presumably flanked by several honorary awards to Athenian citizens for their involvement in the sanctuary and the cult.⁴⁰⁶ One example is the honours granted to Pytheas for his work on the fountain and the waterworks in the Amphiareion.⁴⁰⁷ Another is the honours awarded to Phanodemos for his reorganisation of the god’s festival and his legislation at the Amphiareion, granted on the same day as Phanodemos proposed the honours for Amphiaraos.⁴⁰⁸ By setting up several steles in close proximity on the platform in front of the temple, there would be no doubt to visitors that the Amphiareion was now an Athenian sanctuary.

The Athenian presence was felt in other ways as well. As mentioned before, Pytheas of Alopeke was honoured for his work on the fountain and waterworks in the sanctuary. His involvement in these works demonstrates the willingness to alter the physical environment of the sanctuary through the construction (or repair) of a fountain at the sanctuary, creating another memento of the political changes. Another feature of his works was the maintenance of the water channel and the underground conduits. As water was such an essential element in the cult and would be necessary for visitors to drink, it forms another reminder of the Athenians’ care of the sanctuary and its pious travellers.⁴⁰⁹ This concern for the maintenance of waterworks is displayed in other decrees too.⁴¹⁰

The new ownership applied changes to the cultic spheres too. The Oropian sacrificial regulations (*IOrupos* 277) were probably adjusted. The clause on the skins of sacrificial animals, previously stipulated to be sacred, was erased during the Lycurgan era.⁴¹¹ As Wilding notes, this fits in with the Athenian practice under Lycurgus of selling the skins of the animals to finance cultic activities, with Amphiaraos being one of the recipients.

The care for Amphiaraos was reflected in the grand reorganisation of the Megala Amphiareia, a *pentaeteric* festival. Instrumental in bringing about

⁴⁰⁶ Wilding 2021: 84–91. ⁴⁰⁷ *IOrupos* 295 = *IG* II³ 338 (333/2).

⁴⁰⁸ *IOrupos* 297 = *IG* II³ 1 348; Rhodes 1972: 98. Phanodemos was a prominent figure, considering he received honours because he had spoken and acted best on behalf of the Athenian Council 343/2 (*IG* II³ 1, 306 ll. 4–16).

⁴⁰⁹ *IOrupos* 295 ll. 16–17: καὶ τὴν ἐν Ἀμφιαράου κρήνην κατεσκεύασεν καὶ τῆς τοῦ ὕδατος ἀγωγῆς καὶ τῶν ὑπονόμων ἐπιμελήθηται αὐτόθι. For water at ancient sanctuaries and the placement of fountains and other water works: von Ehrenheim, Klingborg and Frejman 2019.

⁴¹⁰ *IOrupos* 291–3; Argoud 1989. ⁴¹¹ Wilding 2021: 113.

these changes was Phanodemos, who was honoured for his role.⁴¹² Which part of the festivities can rightfully be judged innovative is uncertain. The *apobates* was already celebrated in the early fourth century, speaking more for continuation than a radical break with tradition.⁴¹³ The competition did fit with the renewed focus on military capacity post-Chaironeia, including the ephebic reform. Amphiaraios' military prowess can help to explain *why* so much effort was put into the new festival, in a celebration of 'military preparedness' for their self-identity.⁴¹⁴ Whether the procession for the god and 'other events' surrounding the *panegyris* were newly implemented aspects cannot be certified.⁴¹⁵ The musical and poetic competitions mentioned in the victor's list of 329/8 could be new additions to the celebrations.⁴¹⁶ The decision to reorganise the festival was another subtle form of Athenian power, since it entailed adjusting the sanctuary and cult at their root. Of course, these festivities needed to be financed. To ensure a smooth celebration and avoid financial penury, Amphiaraios and his sanctuary were granted parcels of land throughout the Oropia to pay for these lavish celebrations (Chapter 4.1.2).⁴¹⁷ It was presumably on Phanodemos' insistence that the god was granted these lands, as he was awarded the honours mentioned above precisely because of his endeavours to make sure the *pentaeteric* festival was 'as fine as possible'.⁴¹⁸

Judging from the honours awarded to the *epimeletai* of the Greater Amphiareia after its first celebration in 329/8, they must have succeeded

⁴¹² *Ioropos* 297 = *IG* II³ 1 348 ll. 10–15: 'since Phanodemos of Thymaitadai has legislated well and with love of honour about the sanctuary of Amphiaraios, so that both the quadrennial festival may be as fine as possible, and the other sacrifices to the gods in the sanctuary of Amphiaraios' (trans. S. Lambert).

⁴¹³ Petrakos 1968: 121.16, pl. 38; 121–2.17, pl. 39, dated c. 400. For its earlier appearance: Schachter 2016a: 202 n. 20. Parker 1996: 146–7 n. 101 notes the *apobasis* competition fits Athenian practices better, yet the reliefs are dated to periods when the Oropia eluded Athenian control. There is a connection between the Panathenaia and the *apobasis*: Shear 2021: 51–65, 351–6; Parker 2005: 183, 254–6. Wilding 2021: 91 notes the military connotations.

⁴¹⁴ Wilding 2021: 98.

⁴¹⁵ *Ioropos* 298 ll. 15–19: τῆς τε πομπῆς τῶι Ἀμφιαράωι καὶ τοῦ ἀγῶνος τοῦ γυμνικοῦ καὶ ἵππικοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐπιβάσεως καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων τῶν περὶ τὴν πανήγυριν.

⁴¹⁶ *Ioropos* 520. It is interesting to note that, according to Lambert 2012: 96–7, Athenian foreign policy underwent three changes after Chaironeia, one of which was a preoccupation with the theatre in Athens. Could the addition of the poetic competition at the Amphiareia form part of this concern?

⁴¹⁷ The sanctuary owned up to 17 per cent of the Oropian lands: Cosmopoulos 2001: 74–5.

⁴¹⁸ A fragmentary law from the Athenian Agora could be Phanodemos' law moved for the re-organisation of the Amphiareia (*IG* II³ 1 449; *SEG* 32.86). But this depends on an uncertain restoration in l.33 of 'Amphiareion': Humphreys 2004: 113–14; Lambert 2012: 88. For the honours: *Ioropos* 297 ll. 12–15. A similar law for the Lesser Panathenaia, dated to the same time, offers a useful parallel: *RO* 81 ll. 5–7; Papazarkadas 2011: 45–8.

in this purpose. The stele was set up in the Amphiareion to show all visitors what a success the festival was and aimed to demonstrate the ‘Athenianness’ of the sanctuary. These managers were among Athens’ elite. Their ranks include Phanodemos, the politician Demades and the famous Lycurgus, among others.⁴¹⁹

The Megala Amphiareia were a predominantly Athenian affair, as can be gathered from the victor’s list of 329/8.⁴²⁰ From the forty events in total, twenty-five were won by Athenians. Among the rest, only one victor had a Boiotian origin – Lysandros, a Theban, in the boys’ citharist event. As these events took place after the destruction of Thebes in 335, it is plausible he was a Theban exile living in Athens. If this is the case, his victory would only add to the ‘Athenocentricity’ of the festival.⁴²¹ Nevertheless, the embellishment of the festival – through either innovation or enlargement – poignantly marked the Amphiareion as an Athenian shrine and it attracted visitors from further afield.⁴²²

To hammer the point home, several dedications were made in or around the temple. A mixture of private and public Athenian dedications adorned the sanctuary.⁴²³ One in particular stands out. It concerns a stele detailing contributors to a dedication to Amphiaraos, made by the Athenian Council. Following this list of names is a decree honouring three individuals for their responsibility in making the dedication. It was set up on a marble pillar in the sanctuary. The shape of monument was unique in this period: it was a block narrow enough to mirror a stele, but thick enough to serve as a base. Such a distinctive shape must have stood out among the other dedications. Since it concerned an official dedication, it was a symbolic reminder of the Athenian presence at the sanctuary. Their dedicators’ origins point to a regional interest in the cult, with members stemming from nearby demes or having demonstrable connections to Central Greece in other ways.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁹ *IOropos* 298 = *IG* II³ 1 355; Scafuro 2009: 59.

⁴²⁰ *IOropos* 520. Earlier dates have been given, namely, the Theban period (366–338); *COB* I 24 n. 4; later date: Knoepfler 1993; 2001b: 367–89. Manieri 2009: 35–6, 219–28 for further specifics and bibliography.

⁴²¹ *IOropos* 520 I.3: [κιθ]αρ[ιστής παῖς] Λύσανδρος Θεβαῖ[ος]. See *IG* II³ 1 929, honours for a Theban pipe player. It consists of two separate decrees; dated to 285–250 and 325, respectively (SEG 60.145).

⁴²² Wilding 2021: 99–104.

⁴²³ Wilding 2021: 91 adds the many smaller dedications made, mostly by Athenians as recorded in the fragmentary inventory lists (*IOropos* 309–17).

⁴²⁴ *IOropos* 299 = *IG* II³ 1 360 (328/7). Its official character is confirmed by: ἀνέθεκον ἡ βουλή ἡ ἐπ’ Εὐθυκρίτου ἄρχοντος (ll. 1–2). For the comments on the stone and the peculiarities of the

Another more salient feature of the dedicatory landscape of the Amphiareion is the dedications made by the Athenian ephebes. These imply the sanctuary was frequented by the young soldiers training for military duty, as well as their participation in the games.⁴²⁵ One of these dedications was especially striking. It was a limestone base inscribed on three sides, mentioning the ephebes of the Leontid tribe and the people they crowned. Considering its finding place, this monument possibly stood on the platform that would later become the ‘gallery’ for dedications in the Hellenistic period and which at that time was sparsely populated.⁴²⁶ More important than the shape of these dedications are the dedicants. These were Athenian ephebes, the guardians of the borders responsible for the protection of the Attic countryside. Their epigraphic trace at the Amphiareion and participation in the games was perhaps the ultimate sign of Athenian dominance over the sanctuary and its adjacent territory, as their presence indicated Attica’s border lay at Oropos, rather than Rhamnous.

Athenian interest in the sanctuary, its regulations and its sacred landscape continued until the Oropians were granted independence from the Athenians in 322 through royal intervention.⁴²⁷ In one decade, the Athenians had invested more effort and money into the sanctuary than all prior periods of control combined. From this striking incongruity, one would be tempted to conclude their reasons for doing so were antagonistic, aimed at wiping away the memory of previous Boiotian control. But that would be a very monolithic interpretation of the evidence. The Athenians undeniably wished to stake their claim to the sanctuary and clarify to all visitors that the Amphiareion was now theirs. Nevertheless, I believe this was equally a consequence of the context in which these changes occurred.

contributors involved: Lambert 2012: 24–30, 53. In the same year, the Athenians honoured either a citizen or a foreigner. This Ἀρτικλείδης was flanked by Amphiaraos and Hygieia in the inscription, showing Amphiaraos was appropriated by the Athenians even in decrees set up in Athens: *IG II³* 1 450; Lambert 2012: 180–1; Lawton 1995: no. 153.

⁴²⁵ *IOrpos* 353 (324/3), 352 (328/8), 354 (335–322); *SEG* 31.435. One can add *IOrpos* 348 (335–322) in which an unknown Athenian, son of Autolykus, made a dedication after defeating the ephebes in the javelin competition. Perhaps the εὐταξίαν of *IOrpos* 298 l. 45 was an ephebic event.

⁴²⁶ *IOrpos* 353. It was found east of the statue base for Agrippa. For an analysis of this ‘gallery’ and the location of later dedications: Löhr 1993. For more on ephebic dedications at the Amphiareion: Humphreys 2004–9 [2010].

⁴²⁷ For a final decree set up in the Amphiareion: *IOrpos* 300 = *IG II³* 1 385. One could add the encomium for Amphiaraos: *IOrpos* 301; *SEG* 47.498; Versnel 2011: 414. The interest in regulations is also reflected in the appearance of inventory lists in the sanctuary: *IOrpos* 309–20.

The Lycurgan period was notable for its large number of new laws, the reforms in regulations for cult, as well as the reorganisation or establishment of the *ephebeia*.⁴²⁸ The involvement at Oropos, therefore, may have as much to do with these reforms and concerns with Attic matters as with the neighbourly rivalry.

More importantly, in my opinion, is the state of the political landscape post-335. The two groups normally contesting Athenian control over the Amphiareion, the Boiotian *koinon* and the Oropians, had been punished by Alexander, with Thebes no longer in existence. Oropos' most ardent defender against Athenian aggression had been erased, and worse, the Athenian claim was vindicated by the new political leader of the Greek world. Armed with Macedonian support, the Athenians knew their grasp over the Oropia went unchallenged and forwarded that message to the Oropians in the most explicit way possible by bombarding their prized sanctuary, the Amphiareion, with decrees and dedications meant to convey Athenian ownership. The decree awarding a crown to Amphiaraos was perhaps the most impactful exponent of those efforts.⁴²⁹ Implicitly, the Athenians may have wanted to show the Boiotian *koinon* that Oropos belonged to Attica, but in my opinion, the intended targets were the locals.

This localised conflict is perhaps best reflected in the series of proxeny decrees issued by the Oropians after they regained independence in 323. Out of four decrees, three are awarded to Macedonians, showing due deference to their liberators.⁴³⁰ A more cynical endeavour was the *damnatio memoriae* exacted upon Athenian dedications. Several offerings have traces of erasure, and nearly all cases concern Athenian dedicants. In some cases, the *demotikon* of the dedicant has been replaced by the ethnic 'Ἀθηναῖος' to signify their foreignness as opposed to Oropian offerings.⁴³¹

Independence was short-lived, however, and in the following tumultuous decades, Oropos would find itself changing hands more frequently than ever before. Both Athenians and the Boiotian *koinon* left their mark

⁴²⁸ For a synoptic account of Lycurgus' reforms: Humphreys 2004: 77–130. For the *ephebeia* as a Lycurgan innovation rather than a re-organisation: Friend 2019: 8–33.

⁴²⁹ If the hypothesis of Papazarkadas 2016: 128, that the Oropia was cleansed of tombs to prevent *miasma*, is correct – he makes a convincing case – this message would have resonated more strongly with the Oropians.

⁴³⁰ *IOropos* 4–7. *IOropos* 7 is awarded to Mantidotos, but his origin has not survived.

⁴³¹ *IOropos* 341, 348, 355–9. Petrakos 1968: 30–1 shows that whenever Oropos gained independence, Athenians were prohibited from signing their dedications with anything other than 'Athenians'. On the subsequent reuse of some of these stones to advertise the Oropians' adherence to the *koinon*, with a federal decree inscribed underneath one of these dedications: Wilding 2021: 3, 122–90.

on the sanctuary in that period. The dust finally settled in 287, when Oropos became a member of the Boiotian *koinon*.

5.4 Conclusions

In this chapter we have looked at how the Athenian and Boiotians remembered and commemorated their neighbourly relations. From analysing the use of sacred and civic spaces as mirrors of interstate relations, it emerged that the local was preferred over the Panhellenic when it came to commemorating their dyadic relationship. Part of that stems from the roots of identity formation.⁴³² Politics require reflections on their past and history to coagulate into a stronger unity. Since most of these dedications were aimed at promulgating a view of the past in which the 'local other', namely, the Boiotian or Athenian neighbours, was defeated, it was imperative to the dedicating polities to reach the intended audience in the most efficient way possible. In most cases, that meant local sanctuaries and civic spaces and eschewing Panhellenic sanctuaries. Defeating one another was less important on a grander, Panhellenic stage. This ties in with Matteo Barbato's recent investigations, which clarified that different versions of the past could be presented to the same audience within different contexts in Athens.⁴³³ A common memory, therefore, did not truly exist, but was malleable, easily adaptable to the situation. The memory of neighbourly relations was no different. Memorials at Panhellenic sites involved battles or victories that were fought between larger alliances of which the two neighbours were a member. The monuments erected at Delphi incontrovertibly aimed to engage with previous Persian War memorials and were an expression of shifts and ruptures in the political landscape of Greece – most prominently dominance in mainland Greece – rather than any direct invocation of the neighbourly relations. The impetus to dedicate at Panhellenic sanctuaries was thus different from the motivations behind local commemorative practices, even in a contested sanctuary such as the Amphiareion. Direct confrontations between the two could help stimulate the self-image of the respective regions, and its effects were more profound on the local level. Fostering one's own identity is easier when contrasting it

⁴³² See Karl Deutsch's observation in his *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (1969): 'A Nation . . . is a group of persons united by a common error about their ancestry, and a common dislike of their neighbors.'

⁴³³ Barbato 2020.

with others, preferably neighbours, and the protagonists of this study are no exception. To view these as reflections of inbred animosity between them overlooks how ductile these views were and how these could be altered to fit a certain narrative. Friends of the Boiotians could always be found in Athens, and vice versa. These memorials, rather, meshed into their own particular context, with an epichoric view of the events. The Amphiareion perfectly encapsulates this dominance of the local over the 'global', as the dynamics of power between the two neighbours were crystallised with aims of demonstrating to the inhabitants of Oropos and other visitors of the shrine that the changes in their political fortune were intimately tied to the changes in power between the neighbours.

Conclusion

I began this book with Pagondas' speech before the Battle of Delion in 424, because his exhortation beautifully encapsulates the main themes for the study of interstate relations. Initially, I envisioned a work more in line with what Pagondas describes: abrasive, uncontrollable Athenians, intent on the destruction of the neighbouring Boiotians, as neighbours are wont to do. Fomenting the hostile attitude was the continual desire to procure as much as territory as possible and eliminate any obstacles towards that goal. Further fuelling the fire was their intense dislike, based on past interactions, which made any collaboration the result of mere chance, a brief intermission when interests converged due to the threat of a common foe, before returning to neighbourly hostility. My expectations, therefore, fitted the mould of Simon Hornblower's description of neighbourly relations: 'The Thessalians hated the Phokians as only Greek neighbours could hate.'¹ While there is a kernel of truth in such a supposition – the proximity to one another makes it easier, almost imperative, to distance oneself from the neighbour – it also negates the complexities of neighbourly interactions, as I have explored in the various case studies throughout this book.

It was the aim of this book to excavate and elaborate these complexities. This study provides the first extensive investigation of the Atheno-Boiotian relations in the sixth to fourth centuries. This long-term diachronic perspective helped to uncover the various nuances underlying the neighbourly interactions that often get lost in shorter-term approaches. The aim was to understand the true nature of Atheno-Boiotian interactions, devoid of the standard treatments of neighbourly relations. These often rely on Realist discourse and ignore the moralistic, ethical considerations or, worse, make them subservient to a deterministic, inexorable mutual enmity. Another recurrent theme was the compartmentalisation of these histories into grander events that were not necessarily pertinent to the Athenians and Boiotians. While some overlap was inescapable, I have employed a different division, one that appreciates and accentuates the nature of the Atheno-Boiotian interactions, rather than

viewing them as a subsidiary branch of the Spartan-Athenian or Atheno-Macedonian relations.

The chronological study in [Chapter 2](#) covered the political and military interactions in the period 550–323 and provided a background to the analysis of the conventions of neighbourly conduct. It showed the meandering fates of the neighbours shifting between peace and war. Yet that was never a predetermined outcome. Following this diachronic analysis, it became clear there were times normally perceived of as hostile times that in reality were more peaceful. Notions of perpetual hostility should therefore not be accepted a priori. [Chapter 3](#) explored how the Athenians and Boiotians came to loggerheads or, conversely, found common grounds. Analysing various aspects such as reputation, elite interactions and reciprocity revealed that far from frequently waging war on each other, the Athenians and Boiotians often found a mutual understanding. The analysis showed their rapprochements were dictated not necessarily by the rise of a common foe, but through the continued back and forth between their elites. Normative practices dictated the cadences of their relations and frequently tempered hawkish tendencies whenever tensions arose. Another, more straightforward conclusion is that in most cases whenever our sources are silent on neighbourly relations, it implies there were no hostilities. This realisation is like understanding there is a dark side to the moon that we do not always see, but is nevertheless there. One example is the period following the Persian Wars of 480–479, which scholars denounce as a time of intense friction, sparked by the divergent paths taken during the conflict – the Boiotians' medism – although there is no evidence suggesting any troubles between the neighbours. A case was made to the contrary, arguing that warmer relations may have existed between them than normally assumed, inspired by the geography in which their interactions took place, which was a far different arena than the 'Panhellenic' platform of interactions scholars normally apply.

That mention of geography inevitably conjures up the issue of borders and the thematic study of the geopolitical aspects of the neighbourly relations, as discussed in [Chapter 4](#). Their geographical entwinement meant their fortunes were tied, which had a profound influence on their interactions. Essentially, it created a mutual magnetism. There was no place to hide, and that realisation must have enabled some leaders to understand the benefits of collaboration, instead of antagonism. That equally holds for the question of disputed borderlands. Contrary to the Realist discourse and its Finleyan adherence to autarky, contested borderlands became an issue only when conventions and agreements were violated, in accordance with

the moralistic stipulations of interstate relations in antiquity. Far from the explosive concoction that could escalate local conflicts into 'system-wide wars', territorial ambitions could be negotiated, and even traded, when it suited the neighbours. Lingering hopes of restoring Plataia or recapturing Oropos never prohibited the Athenians from seeking – and agreeing to – an alliance with the Boiotians at opportune times, nor were desirable territories a constant bone of tension. When looking at case studies such as the Skourta plain, there are longer periods of peaceful co-existence without risk of war, despite the continuous draw of the fertile lands of the plain. The same applies to Oropos, where long periods of control continued uninterrupted by neighbourly interventions. Gains in the borderlands were simply not worth instigating wars over, despite the *communis opinio*. The memory of losing the contested lands may have lingered on in the minds of the Athenians and Boiotians for a long time but were swiftly forgotten whenever the situation required it, as the Atheno-Theban alliance of 339/8 demonstrates.

From the memory of lands that are lost, we jumped to how the neighbours recollected and commemorated their shared past in [Chapter 5](#). A targeted approach, with Panhellenic, local and disputed sites accorded separate investigations, disclosed the general tendencies that can be detected in the commemorative practices of the Athenians and Boiotians vis-à-vis one another. What emerged was a preference for the local over the global. In most cases, these local commemorations took the form of festivals, war memorials or dedications that aimed to illuminate and strengthen the cohesion of the community in the face of struggle, rather than foment any inherent hostile attitude towards the neighbour. Even at a sanctuary such as the Amphiareion, embodying the disputed lands of the Oropia, the layers of domination present in the surviving material demonstrate a subtler approach, whereby the past of the sanctuary is respected and incorporated, before making way for attestations of the new power.

Of course, this is not to deny that neighbourly relations could be violent, hostile and antagonistic at times, nor that normative practices of the interstate realm could avoid serious abuse of power, as Pagondas adumbrated in his speech. Yet these were the anomalies of neighbourly relations, not the rule. That was my aim in this book, and it can provide a blueprint for further investigations into interstate relations, between neighbours, and between polities further apart. Even with these insights, the ways in which each neighbourly relationship acts *sui generis* cannot be forgotten, but can inspire a different way of analysing disputed borderlands and the way they influence relations between polities, such as the Athenians and Megarians,

or the Argives and Spartans. In a sense, it could even provide us with clues on how to move forward in the world today, where the peaceful co-existence of neighbours is at risk of falling apart due to precisely those issues that Pagondas mentioned in his speech: the selfish actions of solipsist polities that ignore the mores so vital to the co-existence between states. In the end, far from the pessimist wanderings of my mind with which I started, it is my sincere belief that just as the old Dutch adage holds, the Athenians and Boiotians also realised that a good neighbour is indeed better than a far-away friend.

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Index Locorum

Aeschines

2.104: 151
3.116: 296–8
3.128–9: 67
3.137–9: 156–7
3.142–3: 159
3.181: 347

Aeschylus

Eleusinians 315–16
Persai 316–17
Seven against Thebes 317

Agora Inscriptions

XIX H1: 168
XVI 84: 223

[Andocides]

On the Peace (3)

13: 143
20: 143
22: 142, 144
24–5: 146, 269
26: 145
28: 146–7

AP

7.245: 360–1

Apollodorus [Dem.]

59.95: 355

Aristotle

Politics

7.1330a: 172

Demosthenes

5.14–5: 272–3
6.9–12: 66, 354–5
9.16: 220
16.18: 221
16.25: 240
18.208: 359–60

18.211–15: 154

18.213: 155
18.289: 361–2
19.326: 203
60.23–6: 359–61

Dinarchus

1.25: 134, 349
1.39: 131

Diodorus Siculus

11.80.1–2: 263–4
11.82.2–3: 325–6
11.83.1: 250
11.83.1–3: 115–16
12.6.2: 276
12.70.5: 335–7
14.6.2–3: 136–7
14.17.2–4: 214–15
15.25.2: 150–1
15.25.4–26.1: 130–1
15.28.2–4: 44
15.46.6: 239
15.76.1: 219
15.78.4–79.1: 56–8
15.79.1: 58–9
16.58.3: 63
17.9.5: 70
17.14.3: 134

Ephoros FG^{rh} : 70

F21: 227–8
F119: 61

Euripides

Suppliants 342–3

FD

III

3.77: 299

Hellenica Oxyrhynchia

18.3 (Behrwald) 214–15

19.3 (Behrwald) 233
 20.1–2 (Behrwald) 108–9
 20.3 (Behrwald) 236

Herodotus

1.61.3–4: 13
 5.63.3: 81
 5.74: 82, 182
 5.77–8: 310–13, 325
 5.79: 17
 6.100.3–101.1: 208
 6.108: 75–7, 163, 228–30
 6.118: 165–6
 7.173.2: 20
 7.233: 20, 357
 8.40: 275
 8.40.1–2: 262–3
 8.112: 24
 9.85: 314–15
 9.87.2: 26
 9.106: 105

Homer

Odyssey

11.235–80: 13–14

Hypereides

Fragments

Against Diondas 157–8
 6.17: 362

IEleusis

144: 203

Inscriptiones Graecae

I³

41: 212, 256–7
 501: 310–13
 501B: 323–4
 1163: 341–2
 1469: 304–5
 1470: 305–6

II²

36: 124
 37: 126–31
 40: 44, 151
 44: 150
 1006: 279
 5226: 361–2

II³

1 348: 375–6

1 349: 374–5
 1 355: 376–7
 1 360: 377–8
 338: 375

VII

585: 338

IOropos

4–7: 379
 276: 370–1
 277: 366–7, 375
 290: 368–9
 295: 375
 296: 374–5
 297: 375–6
 298: 376–7
 299: 377–8
 339: 372
 303: 225
 341: 379
 348: 379
 353: 378
 520: 376

Isocrates

4.55–8: 316, 358
 8.98: 36
 12.172–3: 316, 359
 14.9: 48–9
 14.20: 216–18
 14.33: 240, 270–1
 14.42: 91

IThesp

484: 327–8
 485: 338–40
 488: 326–7

Justin

11.4.9–11: 134

Lysias

Fragments

286.3: 349
 2.70: 268

ML

27: 286

NIO

5: 25, 81n. 36
 128: 189

OR

116: 27
192: 293

Pausanias

1.29.3: 349–50
1.38.8: 163
5.2.3: 286–8
9.11.6: 344–6
10.3.6: 299
10.9.7–10: 293–4

Pindar**Fragments**

94b: 330–2

Isthmian

1.34–8: 319
4.6–8: 319–20
4.16–7: 320
7.24–30: 320
7.27: 326
8.9–12: 319

Olympian

7.84–6: 332–3
10.39–40: 321
14: 318–19

Plato**Laws**

626a: 4

Menexenus

242b–c: 119

Plutarch**Agesilaos**

19.2: 328–9

Alexander

11.4: 70

Aristides

11.8: 162, 229
21.1–2: 314–15

De Hdt. Mal.

31: 20

Demosthenes

18.2–3: 156

Lysander

15: 294–5
18.1: 294
27.2–4: 136–7

Pelopidas

4.4–5: 41
6.3: 125–6
7.2: 150, 348

Pericles

17: 29–30

Phocion

26.3: 274

Themistokles

20.3–4: 103–4

Theseus

29.4–5: 315–16

P.Oxy

1.13: 124

RO

3: 25
4: 348
6: 112–13, 199, 265
7b: 318–19
20: 40, 124, 148
22: 45, 149–51
27: 366–7
31: 99–100
42: 60
44: 151
57: 62
67: 65
75: 373–4
81: 223
88: 272, 352–3

Scholiasts**ad. Ar. Acharnians**

242: 164

SEG

22.417: 227–8
28.45: 347–8
31.504: 227–8
33.147: 169
41.506: 14

46.82: 107, 192
 56.521: 78, 182–3, 308–9
 60.506: 184–5
 60.509: 47–8, 106, 259
 64.405: 209–10, 322–3, 356–7

Strabo

9.2.2: 243–4, 257

Thebes Mus. Inv

21393: 355–6
 35909: 80, 229
 35913: 184–5

Theopompos FGrH 115

F 12: 214
 F 328: 156

Thucydides

1.98.3: 24
 1.107.3: 263
 1.107–8: 115–16
 1.111–2: 28–9
 1.113–4: 192–3, 212
 1.132.2–3: 285
 2.2.3–4: 234
 2.71.2: 231
 3.55.1–3: 79
 3.57.2: 289–90
 3.62.5: 279, 329
 3.64: 323
 3.68.3: 235
 3.68.5: 75
 4.21.2–3: 251–2
 4.76.2–3: 121–2
 4.78.1: 266
 4.92.4–6: 1
 4.92.6: 329
 4.92.7: 335
 4.95.2: 265
 4.95.3: 318, 325
 4.118.1–2: 84
 5.17.2: 236–7
 5.26.2: 86

5.39–42: 197–8
 5.42.1: 191–2, 197
 8.60: 213
 8.98: 198

Xenophon***Hellenica***

1.7.28: 198
 2.2.19: 294–5
 2.2.23: 292
 2.3.2: 35
 3.4.3–4: 37
 3.5.8–9: 110–11
 3.5.10: 143, 216
 3.5.14: 145, 216, 267–8,
 276
 3.5.15–6: 111, 348–9
 5.1.31: 39–40
 5.2.26–7: 43, 123
 5.4.9: 150
 5.4.10–2: 131–2
 5.4.20: 45
 6.2.1: 46–7
 6.3.1–2: 49–50, 91–2
 6.3.4–5: 92
 6.3.7–9: 149
 6.3.10–17: 93
 6.3.18–20: 50–1
 6.4.20: 93
 6.5.33–7: 94–6
 6.5.39: 174
 6.5.40–2: 96
 6.5.45–8: 97–8
 6.5.98–9: 96
 7.1.33–40: 54–5
 7.4.1: 219
 7.5.27: 52–3

Memorabilia

3.5.4: 333

[Xenophon]***AP***

3.10–11: 121

Index

Note: all numbers between () imply a date. A further note concerns the use of ‘Athenians’ or Athens. For political or military actions undertaken by a polis, look for ‘Athenians, the’; when it concerns a physical space in the polis, such as the Cadmeia, look for ‘Thebes, Cadmeia’.

- Acanthians, the
support from the Spartans, 124
- Acharnai
Ares cult, 161
Ephebic Oath, 272
Oath of Plataia, 352
- Aeginetans, the
kinship tie Thebes, 17
undeclared war on Athens, 18
- Aegospotami, Battle of, 33
commemoration, 291–6
- Aeschines
Against Ctesiphon, 156
on Atheno-Theban alliance (339),
156
capture of Phyle an example, 347
criticism of Atheno-Theban alliance
(339/8), 159
honorary decree for Phyle, 347
original golden shields at Delphi dedicated,
297
turned tables on Amphissons, 67
- Aeschylus
Eleusinians, 315, 342
Persai, 316
Persai as historical tragedy, 317
Seven against Thebes, 317
- Agamemnon
emulation by Agesilaos, 37
- Agasikles
of Aioladas’ family, 330
- Agesilaos, 122
Aulis, 37, 254
Boiotian campaign (378), 45
emulation of Agamemnon, 37
insistence on *autonomia* clause, 40
Koroneia (394), 38
Panhellenism, 37
protection Phoibidas, 43
- Aioladas
family, 329
- Aitolians, the
targeted by Athenians (426), 252
- Akraiphnia
dedication at temple of Apollo Ptoios, 304
inclusion in Athenian Empire, 28
kouroi at temple of Apollo Ptoios, 303
re-arrangement *kouroi* at Apollo Ptoios
temple, 307
temple of Apollo Ptoios, 303
temple of Apollo Ptoios peaking, 305
third century fish pricing list, 255
- Alcibiades, 89
- Alcmeonid clan, 107, 305
- Alcmeonides
dedication at temple of Apollo Ptoios,
Akraiphnia, 304
- Alexander I of Macedon, 21
- Alexander III of Macedon
alleged death (335), 70
ascension, 69
death, 72
decree for Theban exiles, 134
homogenised memory Persian Wars, 284
initial leniency to Thebes, 70
quell Theban rebellion (336), 69
returns Oropos to Athens (335), 223
sponsorship Plataia, 242
- Alyzia, Battle of, 46
- Amphiareion. *See Oropos, Amphiareion*
adjustment spatial dynamics, 372
apobates competition, 376
Athenian ephebes dedicate, 378
Athenocentricity of Amphiareia festival,
377
Boiotian cult regulations, 370
changes payment, 369
contracts, 368

- Amphiareion. (cont.)
 crowning of Amphiaros, 374
damnatio memoriae on Athenian
 dedications, 379
 decree of Pandios, 368
 decree of Pandios indicating Athenian
 control, 369
 dedication Athenian Council, 377
 dedicatory inscription stoa, 372
 early history, 365
epimeletai, 374
 honours for Phanodemos, 375
 honours for Pytheas, 375
 income, 369
 lack of Boiotian presence at sanctuary (366-
 338)?, 370
 lands in the Oropia, 376
 Lycurgan programme, 375, 378
 new temple under Theban dominance, 371
 organisers of Amphiareia among Athenian
 elite, 377
 Oropian proxeny decrees (338-335), 373
 placement decrees and honours, 375
 political landscape post 379
 priest, 369
 regulations on sacrifice (387/6), 366
 stoa, 371
 use of Pentelic marble, 368
 water works and political control, 375
- Amphictyonic Council
 possible exclusion medizers, 103
- amphictyons, 67
- Amphipolis
 Athenian claim allegedly vindicated, 220
 Athenian desideratum, 53
 Athenians war with Philip of Macedon, 60
 Brasidas' campaign (424), 266
 claim acknowledged by Persian King?, 55
- Amphissans, the
 charge Athenians with impiety at Delphi,
 67
 illegal cultivation of sacred plains near
 Cirrha, 67
- [Andocides]
On the Peace a Hellenistic forgery?, 140
On the Peace historical errors, 140
 Possible Peace Conference in Sparta (391),
 141
 reference to Theban speech (395), 110
- andrapodismos*, 28
- Androkleidas, 43, 109
 assassination in Athens, 125
 flight to Athens (383), 123
- Antalcidas, 39
- Anthedon, 243, 253, 255
- Apollodoros
 Plataians only Boiotians fighting at
 Thermopylai, 355
- Aravantinos, Vassilis, 183
- Argives, the
 alliance with the Athenians (421), 89
 alliance with the Corinthians (421), 87
 Athenians fighting for Argive benefits
 according to [Andocides], 145
 mercenaries for Peisistratus, 13
 negative portrayal in *On the Peace*, 147
 support Athens at Battle of Tanagra (458),
 27
 support at Battle of Tanagra (458), 264
 unmentioned on Serpent Column and Zeus
 Statue lists, 286
- Aristophanes
Clouds, 343
Pax, 83
Ploutos, 347
 portrays Boiotians as obstacle to peace, 83
- Aristophanes of Boiotia, 20
- Aristotle
Politics on border territories, 172
 remarks on democracy in Thebes after
 Oinophyta, 120
- Arkadians, the
 walking out of peace conference (367/6), 55
- Arrington, Nathan, 314
- Artaxerxes
 stipulations King's Peace (387/6), 39
- aryballoi*
 found at Cave of Antiope, 181
 found at Mount Parnes, 181
- Asopodorus, 319
- Asopos, 206
 boundary Thebes Plataia, 228, 230
 demarcation border increases stability, 231
 Parasopia, 225
 progeny, 13
 visibility, 230
- Athenian Akropolis
 memorial landscape, 313
quadriga, 307, 311, 324
 space for commemorating perseverance
 against foreign invasion, 311
- Athenians, the
 373 breaking point in Theban alliance?, 49
 acceptance of Theban control of Plataike
 (395), 238
 Alcmeonid coup (511), 80

- alliance with the Boiotians (395), 36
 alliance with Delphic Amphictyony, 27
 alliance with the Argives (421), 89
 alliance with the Boiotians (395), 38
 alliance with the Chians (384), 124, 148
 aloofness at Theban revolt (335), 133
 ambushed by Orchomenizers near
 Koroneia (446), 28
 annually at war, 4
 arbitration at Olympia (470s), 25
 backlash over cleruchy on Samos (366), 56
 blocking Spartan return via Corinthian Gulf
 (458), 263
 Boiotian alliance accepted ‘unanimously’
 (395), 113
 Boiotian alliance treaty (395), 112–13
 Boiotian campaign (446), 28
 Boiotian rapprochement post Persian Wars,
 102–8
 border dispute with Megarians, 203
 campaign in Thessaly (450s), 28
 change in defensive mentality with Persian
 Wars (480–79), 262
 change in perception of Boiotians, 326
 changes foreign policy after Chaironeia
 (338), 68
charis relationship with Spartans (369), 100
 collaboration not restricted to democracies,
 120
 confiscation property citizens involved in
 Profanation of the Mysteries and
 Mutilation of the Herms, 33
 contra ‘land empire’ after Oinophyta (458),
 250
 cultic connections. *See* Plataia, Eleusinian
 Demeter
 decisions on deme status borderlands, 188
 Delian League, 23, 35
 Demaneitos affair, 38
 disbandment of Second Athenian
 Confederacy (338), 69
 divine justice in *quadriga* epigram, 313
 economic burdens, 370s, 217
 efforts to restore Theban alliance and buffer
 (370s), 269
 embassies to Macedon (347/6), 64
 embassy to Antipater (323), 274
 ephebes at Amphiareion, 378
 exchange Plataia for other assets, 237
 execution of generals supporting Theban
 exiles (379), 132
 expulsion of moderate elements by Thirty
 (404), 35
 financial pressure (375), 46
 five-year truce with Spartans (451–446), 28
 focus on Battle of Marathon
 commemoration, 290, 315
 fourth-century stability, 53
 friendly Boiotia a deterrent for invaders,
 261
 grievances over Spartan violations of
 autonomia, 92
 guardians of Common Peace? (371), 51
 help for Thebans (378), 44
 honours for Boiotian exiles after Cadmeia’s
 capture (382), 126
 ideal situation prior to Leuktra (371), 93
 ignore contested borderlands for Boiotian
 alliance (395), 266
 importance of Assembly in accepting
 Plataians’ plea, 78
 inauguration of general of the countryside,
 219
 incarceration of every Boiotian (431), 31
 inclusion into Peloponnesian League (404),
 35
 internal divisions (458), 116
 intervention in Corcyra, 49
 invasion 508/716
 invite Thebans to peace conference (371),
 91
 involvement Cyprus and Egypt, 144
 Ionian ideology, 105
 irresponsible pursuit of capturing
 Amphipolis, 53
 keeping war from Attica (395–386), 268
 lack of neighbourly war, 5
 loss of democracy (322), 72
 loss of Oropos (322), 72
 loss of Samos (322), 72
 Lycurgan programme, 223
 Marathon monument Delphi, 292
 marched in full force to Tanagra (458), 264
 memory of medism, 19, 29, 290–1, 355
 memory of Myronides, 318
 mythologising Persian Wars, 317
 New Persians, 335, 341
 obsessions with Persian Wars in mid-fourth
 century, 298
 only competitor Thebans after Leuktra
 (371), 53
 Overthrow of the Thirty, 36
 overthrow tyranny, 16
 panic at Macedonian takeover
 Thermopylai, 64
 participation in Theban games, 26

- Athenians, the (cont.)
- partitioning of Oropian lands (335), 223
 - paying two thirds of cost of war (339), 159
 - period of conservatism after Thebes' sack (335), 71
 - Persian Wars monument understate medism, 290
 - Plataian Alliance, 74–83
 - Plataian cleruchy in Skione, 237
 - possible aims in Corinthian War (395–387/6), 145
 - possible alliance with the Chalkidians of the Chalkidike, 124
 - possible protecting of unjustly persecuted people, 78
 - possible public support for Theban exiles (379), 130
 - possible subjugation Aitolia (426), 252
 - potential alliance with Corcyrans, 251
 - prefer Boiotian alliance over Plataian alliance, 240
 - prisoner exchange, 85
 - promise of new *arche* by Theban ambassador (395), 112
 - prostates* of *autonomia*, 49
 - protection of Heraclidae, 97
 - quadriga* focused on overcoming internal foes, 313
 - realisation Boiotia's buffer role (323), 274
 - reasons for quick settlement with Boiotians (446), 29
 - receive Oropos from Alexander III (335), 71
 - re-dedication of *quadriga* (458), 323
 - refrained from helping Theban rebellion, 70
 - rejoice over Boiotian alliance (395)?, 146
 - remember Thebans as defender of *eleutheria*, 362
 - reputation as guardian of *autonomia* (378), 152
 - reputation in Theban eyes (339), 157
 - response to Aeginetan raiding, 18
 - response to Thebes' destruction, 71
 - restoration of pro-Athenian exiles (450s), 120
 - role in supporting Theban exiles, 126
 - Rule of the Thirty, 35
 - Second Athenian Confederacy, 153
 - separate Theban alliance (379), 151
 - Seven against Thebes* mentioned in Assembly, 97
 - sixth-century border war with Tanagraians, 189
 - Social War (357–55), 60
 - Spartan alliance (369), 90–101
 - subjugation Euboian revolt (446), 29
 - success at Pylos (425), 32
 - support Boiotian exiles (378), 130–3
 - support for Ionian revolt (499), 18
 - swap Plataia and Oropos for Boiotian protection (339), 273
 - takeover of Oropos c. 216, 368
 - takeover of Oropos not to detriment of Theban alliance, 218
 - 'ten-day truces' with the Boiotians, 86
 - Theban alliance (339/8), 67
 - Theseus acting as representative of Athens, 138
 - Tribute Lists, 27
 - tyranny. *See* Peisistratus
 - undermining Boiotian prestige at Delphi, 300
- Athenocentrism, 8
- Athens
- Agora, statues of Philip and Alexander of Macedon, 69
 - Akropolis display of decree, 126
 - Akropolis display of treaty, 44
 - Amphiareion. *See* Oropos, Amphiareion
 - Athena Itonia, 168–70
 - Athena Itonia sanctuary?, 168
 - Battle of Delion commemoration, 341–3
 - Boiotian buffer, 260–74
 - Boiotian diaspora (338), 133
 - Boiotian diaspora (380s), 43, 123, 126–30
 - Boiotian proposal to raze (404), 34
 - borderlands, 175–8
 - bronze prize vessels from Thebes?, 26
 - City Dionysia, 15
 - cultic connections. *See* Eleutherai, Dionysos Eleutherios
 - decree for Erythrai, 350
 - decree for response to Mytilenean embassy (369/8), 99
 - defending Boiotian liberty at Tanagra (458)?, 119
 - defensive structures protecting fertile surrounding lands, 260
 - demosion sema*, 350
 - dependance on grain imports, 177
 - destruction 231
 - Dionysios Eleutherios, 163–71
 - Dionysos sanctuary, 15, 163
 - epigram for Chaironeia, 361
 - epigram for Delion, 342
 - food supply, 195
 - 'Fortress Attica' hypothesis, 177, 261

- fourth-century wealth, 159
 grain supply, 253
 'Greater Attica', 182
 individuals' social capital through decrees, 154
 invasion 508/7, 185–6
 issues with reconstruction of decree for exiled Boiotians (382), 129
 Law on the Lesser Panathenaia, 223
 limited territorial expansion during Peisistratid era, 184
 Long Walls, 112, 268
 Long Walls destroyed (404), 35
Nea territory in Oropos?, 223
 near completion of Long Walls, 145
 new studies decree for Phyle, 348
 Panhellenic conference? (440s), 30
 peace conference (371), 94
 Periclean defensive strategy, 260
 perimeters of *psephisma* supporting Theban exiles (379), 133
 Plataian exiles, 238, 239
 plots to invade Boiotia, 122
polyandreion for Delion, 341
 population. *See* population calculations, Attica and Boiotia
 presence Theban exiles' memory (382), 349
 Profanation of the Mysteries and Mutilation of the Herms, 33
 proposal to turn into sacred grazing territory (404), 34
 pro-Spartan plot (458), 115
 Prospectus of the Second Athenian Confederacy, 45
quadriga (508/7), 310–13
quadriga appropriating aristocratic symbolism, 312
quadriga divine justice, 325
quadriga epigram perception of Boiotians, 312
 re-arrangement *quadriga* epigram, 324
 re-invention through building programme, 30
 Spartan garrison, 35
Tatenkatalog, 30
 Theban alliance (339/8), 153–60
 Theban exile community, 71
 Theban proximity a larger threat than Lacedaimonians, 96
 Thrasybulus' tomb, 350
 Tribute Lists, 27
- Attaginus, 21
 attempts to broker a peace treaty (392), 38
- attikismos, 79
 Aulis, 254–5
 Agesilaos' sacrifice, 37
 harbour, 243, 253
 military harbour koinon, 254
 sanctuary, 37
synoikism with Thebans, 236, 254
 Autokles, 50, 92
 criticism of Spartans seizing Cadmeia, 149
 speech at peace conference (371), 149
autonomia, 140, 148–50
 ambiguity of the term, 40
 Athenian interpretation of the term, 148
 combined with *eleutheria*, 150
 fluidity of the term, 92, 148
 goal of the Second Athenian Confederacy, 150
axioma, 360
- Badian, Ernst, 18
 Bakewell, Geoff, 317
 Barbato, Matteo, 91, 380
 Basileia festival
 comparison with Delia, 337
 Beck, Hans, 244, 319
 Bizard, Léon, 306
 Boedeker, Deborah, 162
 Boiotia
 buffer function, 274–7
 connecting Northern and Southern Greece, 174
 dependance on grain imports, 177
 fortification network, 53
 harbours connected to Sicily, Adriatic and Ionic Sea, 246
 harbours with links to Hellespont, 174
 local rivalries, 21
 memorial landscape, 364
 originally an Ionian population?, 105
 part of Athenian empire again (395)?, 267
 population. *See* population calculations, Attica and Boiotia
 Boiotian games, 26
 Boiotian Wars (379–371), 46, 53, 253
 Boiotians, the
 adaptation Ionic script, 55, 356, 371
 admiral in Aegospotami monument, 293
 advantageous position in Peace of Nicias negotiations, 85
 alliance with Athenians (395), 36, 38
 anti-Athenian support in Sicily, 33
 assertiveness and control in acting as buffer, 275

- Boiotians, the (cont.)
- Athenian honours for exiles after capture of Cadmeia (382), 126
 - Athenian and Macedonian embassy (339), 155
 - Aulis as base for naval scheme (360s), 177
 - boiotarchs* intervening with Agesilaos' sacrifice, 37
 - bridge with Euboia (411), 258
 - broken treaty with Philip of Macedon, 69
 - changed perception of Athenians, 327
 - claim to prominence at Delphi, 299
 - clause to prevent future liberation of Oropos or Thespias (339), 273
 - Commemoration Third Sacred War, 355
 - communal games after Persian Wars (480-79), 26
 - dedication Herakles statue Delphi, 299
 - dedicatory practices at Delphi, 294
 - defenders of *eleutheria*, 335
 - dejection at Spartan abandonment of Central Greece (480), 275
 - diplomatic undermining of Athens (366-4), 57
 - dismay at exclusion earlier negotiations (421), 85
 - economic links with Peloponnesian allies, 61
 - elevation of status through bilateral Spartan alliance (421), 88
 - elite participation in Panhellenic games after Persian Wars, 26
 - excluded from armistice negotiations (423)?, 85
 - expelling Macedonian garrison Nicaea (339), 153
 - federal council, 109
 - fighting in Sicily, 33
 - help for Megarians (424), 32
 - inclusion in Athenian Empire, 27
 - independent members of Peloponnesian League, 82
 - insistence on bilateral alliance with Spartans (421), 88
 - introduction of Achilles cult, 160
 - involvement invasion Attica (507/6), 82
 - involvement in Lesbos' revolt (427), 32
 - isolated against possible Athenian attacks? (423), 85
 - joint dedication with Halai, 14
 - Koroneia (446) a defining moment, 333
 - lack of neighbourly war, 5
 - leadership changes (404-395), 109
 - measure of naval scheme's success, 59
 - medism, 19
 - mercenaries for Persian King, 62
 - military harbour at Aulis, 254
 - monetary fine after Persian Wars (480-79), 26
 - naval scheme, 56-60
 - naval scheme (360s), 258
 - occupation of Herakleia Trachis (420), 86
 - Panhellenic prestige, 276
 - participation in invasion Attica (507/6) a matter of revenge, 82
 - passive resistance to Spartan campaign against Olynthus (383), 42
 - perception of Athenians after Delion, 341
 - possible alliance with Locrians, 14
 - possible degradation to second-rank status (421), 89
 - possible lack of successes due to lack of personal ties, 61
 - prisoner exchange, 85
 - pro-Athenian *proxenoi*, 29
 - proposal to raze Athens made by small hostile clique? (404), 35
 - prostates* of Common Peace, 54
 - reasons for willingness to act as a buffer, 274
 - reclaim *autonomia* (446), 29
 - refusal to supply reinforcements against Athens, 36
 - refuse Orchomenians their *autonomia*?, 143
 - reject Argive alliance (421), 87
 - rejection of Peace of Nicias (421), 85
 - renting ships (364), 58
 - reputation in Athenian eyes (395-387/6)?, 147
 - resilience against Spartans, 146
 - strained relationship with Spartans (404), 34
 - support anti-Athenian revolts in Asia Minor, 33
 - suppression Thespian 'atticising' revolt, 85
 - takeover Oropos (366) useful for naval scheme, 219
 - 'ten-day truces' with Athens, 86
 - Theban ambassador Athens (395), 276
 - threat to Athenian stability, 33
 - tripodephoria* to Dodona, 191
 - willingness to act as Athenian buffer, 274
- Bommelaer, Jean-François, 293
- border sanctuaries
- places of negotiation, 163

- borderlands
 a cultural unity?, 173
 delineation of borders, 177
 different mentality than city dwellers, 172
 economic exploitation, 176
 forests, 176
 hero-cults for local identity, 187
kioniskos ritual transfer of territory, 185
 lack of military structures before mid-fifth century, 192
 part of negotiations in alliance (339/338), 204
 ritualised link, 188
 roads connecting centre and periphery, 187
 routes, 174, 180
 self-identification demes, 186
 towers and forts, 180
 Xanthus and Melanthus legend, 191
- Brasidas
 Thracian campaign, 266
- Brauron, 14
- Bresson, Alain, 187
- Buck, Robert, 118, 122, 215
- Buckler, John, 45, 110, 124, 244
- buffer strategy, 261
- Byzantines, the
 anti-Athenian support by Boiotians, 33
 Athenian anti-Macedonian support, 66
 Boiotian naval voyage, 56
 joining anti-Macedonian coalition, 66
 joins Second Athenian Confederacy, 44
 possibly renting ships to Boiotians, 58
 revolt against Athens (364), 59
 supporting rebels Second Athenian Confederacy, 60
syendroi bringing funds to Thebes, 62
- Byzantium
 Athenian food supply, 57
- Cartledge, Paul, 36, 88, 120
- Carystus
 Athenian campaign, 24
- Catalogue of Heroines, 13
- Cave of Antiope, 181
- Central Greece
 recalibration political landscape, 190
- Chabrias
 trial, 220
- Chaironeia
andrapodismos (446), 28
 Athenian capture (446), 28
 lion memorial connected to Thermopylai, 363
 part of pro-Athenian plot (424), 121
 strategic control Corinthian Gulf, 251
 supposed Athenian take-over (424), 247
- Chaironeia, Battle of, 68, 242, 273
 Commemoration, 358–64
- Chalkidians, the
 join Second Athenian Confederacy, 150
 participate in invasion Attica (507/6), 16
- Chalkidians of Chalkidike, the
 appeal to Spartans for help (383), 42, 165, 183, 190, 199, 208, 212, 257, 308
 Athenian cleruchy, 208, 211
- charis*, 139, 170. *See interstate relations, reciprocity*
- Chians, the
 alliance with the Athenians (384), 124, 148
 Boiotian naval voyage, 56
 cessation Second Athenian Confederacy, 60
 cult to Boiotian Demeter, 160
 join Second Athenian Confederacy, 44
 possibly renting ships to Boiotians, 58
- chora*, 235, 242
- Chorsiai, 247–8
 close to Phocian border, 248
 fortifications, 247
 Phocian capture, 63
- Cimon, 116
 Spartan sponsorship, 103
- Cleigenes of Acanthus, 123
- Cleisthenes, 16
 reforms, 186, 188
- Cleomenes
 invasion Attica (507/6), 16
 personal ties with Thebans, 82
 referral Plataians to Athenians, 74, 76
 refuses Plataians' supplication, 78
- Coans, the
 supporting rebels Second Athenian Confederacy, 60
- coinage
 reflection self-image, 138
- Common Peace
 (338), 69
 (367), 54
 344, 66
 360s, 221
 362, 60
 366, 55–72
 387, 39–41
 Arbitration. *See Oropos*
 no polis acted as *prostates* (362/1), 60
 standing, 54
stelai around Greece (387/6), 40

- Common Peace (cont.)
 terms. *See* *autonomia*
- Conon, 38
- consistency bias, 297
- Corcyra
stasis and Athenian intervention, 49
- Corcyreans, the
 appeal to Athens (431), 30
- Corinth
 meeting League of Corinth by Philip of
 Macedon, 69
- Corinthian Gulf, 246–7
- Corinthian War
 Athenian perception. *See* *Andocides, On the
 Peace*
- Boiotia as a buffer, 266
- continuation of Peloponnesian War, 38
- outbreak, 37
- Persian money, 37
- Corinthians, the
 accepting Pelopidas' peace, 55
- alienation with Sparta (404–395), 37
- alliance with the Argives (421), 87
- appeal to Sparta (431), 31
- Athenian maritime goals in Corinthian
 Gulf, 250
- detached from Spartan alliance by the
 Athenians, 144
- dissolution union with Argos (387/6), 40
- invasion Attica 507/6, 16, 76
- reasons for withdrawal from invasion
 Attica (507/6), 82
- refusal to accept Peace of Nicias (421), 86
- refusal Theban-led Common Peace (367/6),
 55
- settlement of Theban-Plataian
 dispute, 230
- status within Peloponnesian League, 82
- 'value' to Athenians in Corinthian War, 146
- withdrawal invasion Attica 507/6, 76
- Coulton, John, 372
- Croesus
 dedication to Amphiaraios, 209
- Cross, Nicholas, 61
- cultic diplomacy, 160
- Cyclades
 Boiotian naval voyage, 258
- D'Alessio, Giambattista, 167
- Daly, Kevin, 182
- Damophilos, 22
- Datis
 return Apollo statue to Delion, 165
- decrees
 role in accumulating social capital, 154
- Dekeleia, 33, 212
 booty, 34
 disputes over distribution booty, 109
- Delians, the
 did not return gilded statue of Apollo, 165
- Delion
Delia a new festival or an alteration of older
 ritual, 337
 fifth-century temple, 336
 not part of *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 166
 sacred harbour, 256
 settlement only from Hellenistic period
 onward, 256
 Thucydides' description, 336
- Delion, Battle of, 122, 265–6, 318
 Commemoration, 334–43
 involvement demigod?, 342
 official character, 335
 turning point, 32
- Delos
 Boiotian naval voyage, 258
 connection Delion, 336
 independence (404), 292
 political connection Boiotians and
 Athenians, 166
 religious heart Delian League, 292
 re-organisation Delia (426), 337
 retrieval statue Delion (470), 164
- Delphi
 Aegospotami monument, 292
 Athena Tritogeneia dedication by
 Boiotians, 295
 Athenian dedication of golden shields, 66
 Athenian stoa, 301
 Boiotian dedicatory practices, 294
 destruction mid-sixth-century temple, 305
 epigram Aegospotami monument, 294
 golden shields dedicated by Athens (340/
 39), 296
 heated Amphictyonic Council meeting
 (339), 66
 Herakles statue, 299
 late fifth-century Boiotian renaissance at
 sanctuary?, 295
 list of poleis on Serpent Column dedication,
 285
 locus for hegemonial claims, 283
 Maraton monument, 292
 older Boiotian treasury?, 295
 oracular response to Thebans, 17
 Peace Conference (368), 54

- political use of sanctuary, 27
 Serpent Column, 283
 Serpent Column celebrates Plataia and Salamis, 288
 Serpent Column omissions, 285
 Serpent Column reinscription, 285
 terms for usage of Apollo temple during Peloponnesian War, 84
 visual competition Aegospotami and Marathon monument, 293
 visual link Aegospotami monument and Aeginetan Salamis monument, 293
- Delphic Amphictyony
 fine Athenians, 296
 Lion Memorial Thermopylai, 340
 Macedonian takeover. *See* Philip of Macedon, control of Delphic Amphictyony
 protection medizers, 103
 Theban leadership, 61, 62
- Dema wall, 270
- Demades
 embassy to Alexander III of Macedon, 134
- Demaratus Spartan exile, 21
- Demosthenes
 Athenian decrees empty rhetoric, 158
 awareness of Boiotian buffer role, 272
 blames Boiotian generals, 360
 Boiotians better allies than Spartans, 272
 Boiotian's shame of medism, 359
 clamours for restoration Boiotian towns, 240
 compares Chaironeia to Persian Wars, 359
 different speeches Panhellenic and Athenian audience, 361
 Funeral Oration, 359
 juxtaposition Athenian and Theban outlook, 355
 local interests vs. Greek interests, 354
 mentions spurious or fabricated decree, 156
 On Behalf of the Megapolitans, 221, 240
 On the Crown, 359
 On the Symmories, 359
 Oropos' status as a desideratum, 221
 proxenos of Thebans, 154
 reconstruction of speech at Thebes (339)?, 153
 reference to Persian acknowledgement of Athenian claim to Amphipolis, 220
 Second Philippic, 66, 354
 Theban's archetypal traitors, 354
 two versions of *Funeral Oration*, 360
- Dexileos, 318
- Diadochoi, the
 profiting from earlier changes to Boiotia, 274
- Diagoras of Rhodes, 332
- Dinarchus, 134, 349
 account of Athenian support Theban exiles (379), 131
 Against Demosthenes, 131, 349
 recollection Theban help (403), 349
- Diodorus Siculus
 account on Tanagra (458), 115
 Battle of Tanagra Athenian initiative, 263
 description Athenian support Theban exiles (379), 130
 enigmatic phrasing of Boiotian naval scheme's success (364), 59
 exaggerated encomium of Oinophyta?, 325
 garbled chronology, 116
 inauguration *Delia* festival (424), 335
 inland move of Oropos (402), 214
 Plataians at fault for Theban take-over (373)?, 239
 refers to small Boiotian fleet (364), 58
- Doris
 Spartan expedition (458), 114
- Dreher, Martin, 57
- Drymos, 107, 192
 Demosthenes' plea to protect it, 203
 possible Athenian cleruchy, 188
 possible location in Skourta plain, 179
 prerogative aristocrats rather than democrats, 107
- Ducat, Jean
 date of Hipparchos' dedication, 306
- economic specialisation, 6
- Elateia, 153
 base of Philip, 67
- Elden, Stuart, 186
 criticism of, 173, 186
- Eleans, the
 rejection of Common Peace (371), 94
- Eleusis
 Boiotian counter-claim, 185
 capture 508/717
 Demeter cult. *See* Plataia, Demeter Eleusinia
 fortifications, 18
 hiera orgas, 203
 invasion 507/678
 roads, 195
 strategic crossroads Megarid and Athens, 185

- Eleutherai
 Athenian annexation, 15
 Boiotian War, 270
 construction of fortress, 201
 Dionysos Eleutherios, 163–71
 fortress built by Boiotians, 194
 Herakles cult, 193
 lack of mentions in 360s and 350s, 200
pompe to Athens, 188
sympoliteia with Thebans, 185
 κένικασε ἡ πόλις ἡ Ἐλευθερίαν
 κέλευθεραῖον], 185
- eleutheria*, 1, 30, 37, 69, 150, 359–62
 juxtaposition with tyranny, 151
 lost after Chaironeia (338), 360
 Plataia, 240
 term in Theban liberation (379), 151
 war cry for poleis oppressed by Athenians, 292
- Engels, David, 119
- Epameinondas, 41, 52
 naval voyage, 60, 258
 Statue Thebes, 355–6
- ephebes
 at Amphiareion, 378
 Ephebic Oath, 272
- Ephoros, 227, 243, 257
 Boiotians' lack of pedigree for leadership, 61
 inspired by Boiotian naval scheme (360s), 244
- epiteichismos*, 32
- Eretria
 influence on Oropos, 206
 possession of Oropos?, 209
 tyrant, Themison, 218
- Eretrians, the
 takeover Oropos (366), 218
- Erythrai
 becomes part of Plataike, 230
- EuBoia
 anti-Athenian rebellion (446), 265
 Athenian cleruchies (446), 212
 Athenian ferry fees with Oropos, 256
 Athenian-Theban skirmish (350s), 61
 Boiotian influence, 257–9
 close connection Boiotian harbours, 174
 close connection Oropos, 177
 export provisions for Athens, 243
 importance to Athenian survival (411), 213
 liberation from Athens (411), 33
 proximity to Boiotia, 257
- EuBoian Gulf
 50 meters from Boiotia, 208
 bridge across (411), 258
 network, 212
- EuBoians, the
 anti-Athenian revolt (446), 29
 bridge with Boiotia (411), 258
 collaboration with Thebes (360s), 219
 exiles in Orchomenos (446), 28
 export commodities to Athens, 211
 influence Philip of Macedon, 66
 poleis join Thebans (371), 51
- Euripides
Bacchai, 317
 hostile version Seven against Thebes, 342
 rejection Theban autochthony, 318
Suppliants, 315
- Eurymachos
 takeover of Plataia (431), 31
- Fachard, Sylvian, 175, 194, 202
- Finley, Moses, 6
- First Peloponnesian War, 120, 249, 251, 263
 five-year truce Athenians and Spartans (451–446), 28
- Funeral Oration*
 norms, 360
- Funke, Peter, 207
- Gartland, Samuel, 319
 geographical entwinement, 172
 goals of fourth-century wars, 38
- Gomme, Arnold, 85
- Gray, Vivienne, 110
- Green, Peter, 116
- Halai, 14
- Haliartos, Battle of, 38, 268
- Harris, Edward, 141
- hegemony
 claims made at Panhellenic sanctuaries, 283
- Hellenic League, 19, 21, 104
 Plataian inviolability, 231
- Hellenic War (323–2), 72
- Herakleia Trachis, 34, 86
- Herakles
 accompanied by Athena on his labours, 344
 cult Eleutherai, 193
 cult Tanagra, 165
 foundation of Apollo cult in Delos, 167
 statue Delphi, 299
 statue Thebes, 343–50

- Herodotus
 Athenian protection medizing poleis, 105
 Athenian *quadriga*, 324
 comments on inclusion on Serpent Column list, 289
 compared with Thucydides' account on Plataian alliance, 75
 connecting Delion story to Battle of Marathon, 166
 consistency bias, 21
 defence Central Greece (480), 262
 demonstrates importance of choices in Atheno-Plataian alliance, 74
 differentiation Athenians and Peisistratids, 77
 division books 5 and 6 artificial, 77
 intextuality with Thucydides, 79
 portrayal of Aeginetans, 18
 portrayal of Alexander I of Macedon, 21
quadriga a monument of democracy's benefits, 312
 retrieval Apollo statue from Delos to Delion, 165
 suggestion Oropos was Athenian in 490, 209
 Theban contribution Persian Wars, 357
 use of *πρεζω*, 228
- Hipparchos
 dedication at Apollo Ptoios sanctuary in Akraiphnia, 81
 dedication at temple of Apollo Ptoios, Akraiphnia, 305
 possible statue of Athena on dedication, 306
- Hippocrates, Athenian general, 32
 evokes importance of Boiotia for Athenian defence, 265
 march on Tanagra and Oropos (424), 32
 speech Delion, 318
- Histiaia
 Athenian cleruchy (446), 212
 uprising Theban prisoners (378), 47
- Histiaians, the
hagemonia treaty with Thebes, 47
 join Second Athenian Confederacy (375), 48
- Hornblower, Simon, 21, 61, 76, 79, 85, 88, 117, 183, 382
- Hunt, Peter, 41
- Hurst, André, 321
- Hypereides
Against Diondas, 154
Funeral Oration, 362
 new fragments, 157
 reversal roles Thebans and Plataians, 362
- Hysiai
 becomes part of Plataike, 230
 gateway to Mazi plain, 225
 not part of Attica, 182
 temple of Eleusinian Demeter and Kore, 162
- Imbros
 retained by Athenians in King's Peace (387/6), 40
- interstate relations
 arbitration, 74
 avoidance of war, 74
 balance of power (lack of), 74
 border disputes, 173
 break with diplomatic norms, 93
 breaking with norms, 18
 burial norms, 342
 changing power structures, 23
charis, 13, 170
 choice for war not taken lightly, 74
 clear agreements over disputed lands, 198
 complexity of human interaction, 73
 constitutional alignment?, 88, 120
 cultic connections, 160–70
 divine wrath if untrustworthy ally, 96
 emotional appeals, 78
 epichoric interests, 114
 fear, 87, 92, 99, 124, 150, 156, 222, 270
 flattery, 268
 force, 2
 'immoral behaviour', 69
 inviolability, 231
 oath violations, 95
 oaths, 191, 234
 perceptions of hubris, 313
 permission to cross territory, 261
presbeis autokratores, 141
 prestige, 103
 prisoner exchange, 85
proxenoi renewing truces, 86
proxenos, 102
 Realism, 2, 87, 99, 199, 267
Realpolitik considerations, 34, 271
 reciprocity, 96, 111, 125–35, 155
 regional rivalries?, 21
 reputation, 86, 97, 110, 115, 135–60, 213, 284
 risk calculation, 74
 self-image, 136
 shame, 92
 standing, 53, 54, 88–9, 156
 subterfuge, 43

- interstate relations (cont.)
 supplication, 74
 surrender and territorial claims, 236
 symbolic capital, 27
 territorial disputes, 6, 235
 territory, 173, 198
 tools for claiming disputed land, 173
 trust, 2, 86, 88, 112, 135, 140, 150, 158, 275
 tyrants, 16
xenia, 101
xenia ties, 20, 21
- invocation of demigod in defeat, 342
- Iphikrates
 campaign in Peloponnese (370/69), 98
- Isagoras, 16
 possible personal ties with Boiotians, 82
 possible restraint in integrating
 borderlands, 183
- Ismenias, 36, 109, 138–9
 accusation of medism (382), 43
 death, 42–3
 execution after sham trial (382), 43
 relationship with Thrasybulus, 113
 takeover, 136, 138–9
- Isochrates
 anti-Theban bias, 91, 239
 Boiotia defends Attica, 270
 contrasting versions of *Seven against Thebes*, 358
 indignation over ‘Theban betrayal’ after
 Corinthian War, 41
 less valuable for reconstructing Theban
 response after Athenian take-over
 Oropos, 217
Plataicus on concerns of Oropian society
 over Theban expansionism, 216
Plataicus filled with factual errors, 41
Plataicus private pamphlet, 91
Plataicus reliability on Theban ambitions, 216
 reference to Ismenias’ rise Thebes, 36
 refers to Boiotia as buffer, 271
- Jung, Michael, 288
- Justin
 ascribes Athenian culpability for Alexander
 III’s Theban decree, 134
- Kagan, Donald, 87
- Kallias, 50, 92
- Kallistratos, 50, 93, 99
 loss of influence (366), 100
 tried after loss of Oropos, 219, 220
- Kearns, Emily, 187
- Keesling, Catherine, 307, 324
- Kellogg, Danielle, 352
- Keos, 258
- Kephalos
 anti-Spartan political outlook, 132
 decree to support Theban exiles (379), 131
 mover of decree to support Theban exiles
 (379), 132
- Keressos, Battle of
 controversies concerning date, 81
- King’s Peace*. See *Common Peace*
- Kleiteles of Corinth, 95
 unjust Theban ravaging of Corinthian
 lands, 95
- Kleombrotos, 45, 50
- Kleon, 251
- Knoepfler, Denis, 207, 216–17, 368
- Knopiadas
 charioteer for Alcmeonides, 305
- Koroneia*
 Battle of (394), 38
 Battle of (446), 28, 257, 265, 276
 Commemoration of Battle of (394), 327
 Commemoration of Battle of (446), 328–34
 Heroines at Thorikos, 169
- Kreusis, 243–4, 246, 249, 253
 pro-Athenian plot (424), 247
 Thespias’ most important harbour, 247
- Krisai, Bay of, 121
- Kurke, Leslie, 332
- Laches, 58
- Lalonde, Gerald, 168
- Lamian War. See *Hellenic War (323-2)*
- Larson, Stephanie, 13, 332
- Laurion, 3
 silver supply cut off because of
 Dekeleia, 33
- League of Corinth, 69
- Leipsydrión, 80
- Lemnos
 Athenian claim acknowledged (338), 68
 Athenian cleruchy in 386, 40
 retained by Athenians in King’s Peace (387/
 6), 40
- Leonidas, 20–1
- Leontiades, 41, 101
 betrayal of Cadmeia, 42, 123
 loss of influence, 108
- Leotyichides. See *Spartans, the, Intervention in Thessaly*
- Leptines, 98

- Lesbians, the
 response to Athenian-Spartan alliance (369), 99
- Lesbos
 revolt (427), 32
- Leuktra, Battle of, 38, 48, 50
 commemoration, 300, 301, 337
 lasting Boiotian ties, 61
 Theban response, 93
- Lewis, David, 28, 288
- Liddel, Peter, 158, 280, 368
- literary sources
 reliability, 8
- local histories
 Theban epigram, 357
- local sanctuaries
 prime loci for commemorating neighbourly collaboration, 302
- localism
 importance for self-image, 302
- Locrians, the
 exiles participate in revolt against Athens (446), 28
 possible alliance with the Boiotians, 14
- Lucas, Thierry, 173
- Lysander, 35
 Aegospotami monument, 293
 dedications at Delos and Athenian Akropolis, 294
- Lysias
 client recollecting help from Theban friends, 349
Funeral Oration praise for keeping war from Athens, 268
- Ma, John, 362
- Macedonia
 overwhelming military power, 68
 Philip's reforms, 63
 succession crisis, 60
 takeover Greece celebrated by oppressed poleis?, 68
- Macedonians, the
 personal ties Thebes, 54
- Mackil, Emily, 46, 214, 228, 244, 255, 331
- Magnetto, Anna, 141
- Mantineia, Battle of, 59
 effects, 62
 lack of impact on political landscape, 60
- Matthaiou, Angelos, 107, 184
- Mavrovouni
 Spartan fortress, 252
- Mazi Archaeological Project, 193
- Mazi Plain, the
 border between Oinoe and Eleutherai, 193
 Cave of Antiope, 181
 fortifications no indication of hostility, 179–278
 increased habitation, 202
 Megarian interest, 180
 routes, 180
 secondary settlements, 179
 separation of zones of influence, 193
 strategic importance, 179–278
 thoroughfare between Attica, Megarid and Boiotia, 180
- medism
 commemoration, 29–30, 168
 hesitation to publicly indict medizers post Persian Wars (480–79), 25
 political decision, 19–21
 popularity in run-up to Peloponnesian War, 30
 possible analogy with Germany post-1945, 24
 retaliation, 26, 71, 104
 unharmed term before Persian Wars (480/79), 19
- Megakles, 107–8
 opposing Athenian citizenry's interests, 107
 ostracism, 192
- Megara
 blocked by Athens, 263
 harbours, 29
hiera orgas, 203
- Megarians, the
 anti-Athenian rebellion (446), 265
 border dispute with Athenians, 203
 dispute with Eleutherai, 180, 184
 exiles occupy Plataia, 235
 refusal to accept Peace of Nicias, 86
- Meiggs, Russell, 288
- Melissos of Thebes, 319, 332
- memorial landscape
 Athens. *See* Athens, memorial landscape
 Boiotia. *See* Boiotia, memorial landscape
 local, 283, 303, 307, 323
 Thebes. *See* Thebes, memorial landscape
- memory
 individual memory becomes part of collective memory, 280
- Messene
 independence re-established, 51
 insistence on independence in Common Peace (367), 54

- Messenians, the
 refugees settled at Naupaktos (456/5), 249
- Missiou, Anna, 143
- Mount Kithairon
 mountain passes, 177, 225, 238, 253
 mountain range, 173, 175, 231
 Thebageneis. *See* Thebes, Thebageneis
- Mount Parnes
 Dema wall, 270
 mountain range, 173, 175, 231
 Zeus shrine, 181–2
- mountains
 obstacles for communication?, 4
- Munn, Mark, 107, 191–2
- Mykalessos, 34
 Athenian raid (413), 258
 massacre, 108
- Myronides, 250
- Myronides, Athenian commander, 27
- Mytileneans, the
 join the Second Athenian Confederacy, 44
 response to Atheno-Spartan alliance (369), 99
- Naupaktos, 251
 settlement of Messenian refugees (456/5), 249
- Naxos, battle of, 46
- Nicaea
 Macedonian garrison (339), 153
- Nicomedes, 114
- Nikokrates
 Oropos as Eretrian colony, 207
- Nisaia, 197, 236, 251
 part of Thirty Year Peace, 29
- nomos, 358
- oath-takers armistice (423), 84
- Ober, Josiah, 177, 260
- Oinoe. *See* Mazi Plain
 attack by Spartans in Peloponnesian War, 196
 betrayal to Boiotians (411), 198
 identified by Boiotians through toponym, 310
 largest Athenian deme in surface area, 179
- Oinophyta, Battle of, 27, 250, 323–8
 Commemoration, 328
- Old Oligarch
 Athenian pragmatism rather than ideology, 120
- Olympia
 arbitration Athens, Thespians and Boiotians, 24
- Athenian dedication of victory over Tanagraians?, 189
- Athenian dedications after capturing Lemnos, 314
- internecine Boiotian dedications, 310
- list of poleis on Zeus statue dedication, 285
- metopes depicting Herakles and Athena, 138
- Zeus Statue, 283
- Zeus Statue celebrates Plataia and Salamis, 288
- Olynthians, the
 approach to Athenians and Thebans, 42
 extension of influence over Chalkidian peninsula, 42
- Onchestos, 331
- Opountian Locrians, the
 outbreak Corinthian War, 38
- Opuntian Locris
 hostages taken by Athenians (458), 27
- Orchomenians, the, 14, 28
autonomos in 391?, 143
 detachment *koinon*, 143
 integration into *koinon* (371), 51
proxenoi of the Athenians, 29
 Theban intervention (364), 59
- Orchomenos, 14, 28, 48, 59, 154, 215, 240, 251, 319
 attempted Theban attack (375), 90
 difficulty of interpreting ‘belongs to territory of the allies’ (371), 51
 failed Theban takeover (375), 48
 Orchomenizers (446), 276
 proposed restoration, 240
 restoration, 68
 restoration (338), 274
- Orchomenos, Athenian invasion (424), 121
- Orestes, Thessalian exile, 28
- Oropians, the
 arbitration (366), 56
 different treatment by Boiotians and Athens, 224
 integration into *koinon* (402), 215
 lack of deme status, 208
 revolt against Athens (446)?, 212
- Oropos, 206–25
 a ‘hidden’ Athenian cleruchy (369/8), 217
 Amphiareia, 369, 375
 Amphiareion, 365–80
 Athenian attack in second century, 225
 Athenian ephebic visit (122/1), 225
 Athenian protectorate?, 211

- Athenian takeover 374, 49
 Athenians' loss in 411, 33
 Boiotian claim acknowledged by Athens (395), 216
 Boiotian take-over through treason (411)?, 213
 'Boiotianisation' (402), 215
 'Boiotianisation' cemented claim to the land, 215
 buffer against Tanagraian or Chalkidian attacks, 211
 claim of utility for Boiotian *koinon* (295), 225
 Delphinion (sacred harbour), 257
 early history Amphiareion, 365
 economic benefits for Athens, 217
 Eretrian colony, 206
 Eretrian possession before 470?, 207
 external powers aware of influence on Athenian opinion, 221
 ferry fees with Euboia, 256
 ferry to Euboia, 212
 fertility an Athenian incentive to annex, 211
 garrison free imposition by Alexander III of Macedon?, 224
 granted independence (338), 274
 granted to Athens for aloofness Theban revolt (335), 71
 harbours, 211–56
 independence (338), 222
 independence 338, 68
 independence 411 linked to *eleutheria*?, 213
 independent after 387/6, 216
 inland move (402) because of Eretria, 214
 loyal buffer for Philip of Macedon against Athens, 222
 Pandios decree (369) confirms Athenian control, 217
 partitioning of lands by Athens (335), 223
 pine resin supply, 219
 returned to Athens by Alexander III of Macedon (335), 223
 sacred law, 366
stasis in 402, 213
 surrender woodlands for Athenian protection c.374?, 216
 transport artery, 33, 116, 256
 Osborne, Robin, 371
 Oxyrhynchus historian
 account of Boiotian *koinon* (395), 214
 description *koinon* (395), 233
 description political situation Boiotia (403), 122
 description Theban politics (395), 108
 Ismenias' take-over through persuasion, 136
 Paga, Jessica, 14
 Pagai, 251
 part of Thirty Year Peace, 29
 Pagondas, 1, 329, 335
Palatine Anthology
 epigram for fallen of Chaironeia, 361
 Pamboiotia, 330, 332
 a pan-Boiotian festival in mid-fifth century?, 332
 restricted access to non-Boiotians, 333
 Pammenes, 53
 Panakton, 179
 Boiotian destruction fortification (421), 197
 Boiotian marauding (420s) and takeover, 196
 date of fifth-century fortification, 195
 deme status, 186, 190
 destitute state, 204
 destruction of fortress (421), 191, 196–8
 fortification, 195
 fortification in ruins after Peloponnesian War, 198
 lack of fortification, 200
 military equipment inventory, 203
 Peace of Nicias, 85, 237
 possible Athenian cleruchy, 188
 possible restitution to Athens (421), 88
 reoccupation, 200
 road to Athens, 195
 Pandios
 anti-Theban Athenian, 368
 Panhellenic sanctuaries
 dearth of hostile neighbourly commemoration, 281
 used only for commemoration to claim hegemony, 283
 Panhellenism, 29, 145
 Athenians would help all of *Hellas* not just Sparta (371), 98
 credentials for hegemony, 283
 Delian League, 24
 fourth-century traditions in later writers, 104
 Plataia's role as *lieu de mémoire*, 239
 Papalexandrou, Nassos, 228
 Papazarkadas, Nikolaos, 169, 321, 356, 371
 Parasopia, 239
 Athenian influence, 187
 description, 225–6

- Parasopia (cont.)
 disputed land, 182
synoikism with Thebes, 215
 Theban pressure, 228
 Theban takeover, 53, 235
- Parium Marble, 15
- Parker, Robert, 164
- Pausanias
 Athenian *quadriga*, 324
 autopsy, 118
 Battle of Tanagra account, 116
 comments on Aegospotami monument's sponsorship, 294
 Eleutheraian alliance etymology, 163
 Herakleion Thebes, 344
 reliability, 287
 Spartan king. *See Spartans, the, Pausanias*
 visit to Thrasybulus' tomb, 350
- Peace Conference, 50
- Peace of Nicias, 32, 83–90, 236
- Peace of Philokrates, 65, 203
 return of Chorsiai, 248
 strained, 66
- Pegasos of Eleutherai*
 introduction Dionysos cult to Athens, 164
- Peisistratids
 control Oropos?, 207
 Cycladic expansion, 14
 Dedication Ptoion, 305–7
 friendship with Thessalians at the expense of the Thebans?, 81
 Hipparchos, 16
 Hippias, 16
 indebtedness to Thebans, 13
 Plataian Alliance. *See Plataians, the, Athenian Alliance*
 Thracian interests, 14
 tyranny, 16
- Peisistratus*, 15
 friendly elite relations, 14
 sponsorship *Odyssey* redaction, 13
- Pelling, Christopher, 14
- Pelopidas, 41, 52
 death, 59
 envoy to Susa, 56
 exile from Thebes, 123
 Liberation Thebes, 150
 peace conferences, 55
 Statue Delphi, 355
 Statue Thebes, 356
 uses Thrasybulus as example, 348
- Pelopidas' Peace (366/5)
 ratification explored, 55
- Peloponnesian War, 251, 265
 Athenian hinterland destruction, 145
 commemoration, 292
 initial fighting phase, 196
 Outbreak, 31
- peplos*
 Athenian appropriation of Boiotian ritual?, 28
- Pericles, 29
- Persian ideology, 58
- Persian King
 accepts Boiotian claim Oropos, 220
 claims in Asia Minor acknowledged (362/1), 60
 endorsement Common Peace, 54
 involvement Boiotian naval scheme, 58
 involvement Social War (357–55), 60
 possible restraintment on intervening in Greek affairs (362/1), 60
 rebellious satraps (366/5), 56
 sponsoring anti-Macedonians, 70
 summoning Greeks for peace conference, 46
- Persian War veterans
 influence on memory of conflict, 102
- Persian Wars
 commemoration, 29–30, 34, 79, 94, 103, 298, 317, 341, 351, 352
 differing goals in commemoration, 289
 epicchoric commemoration, 25
 impact on commemoration because of passing of contemporary witnesses, 354
 lack of revanchism after, 103
 plurivocal commemoration, 103
 reintegration medizers, 24
- Persians
 Conon, 38
 Greek exiles, 21
 othering, 19, 23
 rule in Asia Minor, 338
 switch sides Corinthian War, 38
 unmentioned on Serpent Column and Zeus Statue lists, 285
- Petropoulou, Angeliki, 370
- philanthropia*, 97, 100, 126, 137, 139
- Philip of Macedon, 60
 capture Athenian grain fleet, 66
 changes to Boiotia created pro-Macedonian enclave, 274
 Common Peace (344). *See Common Peace, (344)*
 control of Delphic Amphictyony, 65

- death (336), 69
- different treatment Thebans and Athenians, 63, 69
- embassies to Athens and Thebes (339), 67
- Embassy Thebes (339), 153
- expansion in Thrace, 64
- grant Oropos to Athenians?, 222
- grants Oropians independence (338), 373
- guarantor of Common Peace, 69
- homogenised memory Persian Wars, 284
- ignore pleas for help from Thebans (347), 63
- League of Corinth. *See* [League of Corinth](#)
- New Persians, 351
- prostates of autonomia*, 241
- Thracian expansion, 66
- transformation of kingdom, 63
- Phocians, the
- Athenian take-over (458), 27
 - blocking Thermopylai pass (Third Sacred War), 272
 - cause of Theban financial penury, 62
 - conduct in Third Sacred War, 299
 - defeat at Abai (Third Sacred War), 63
 - discussions for Peace in Peloponnesian War, 84
 - First Peloponnesian War (458), 114
 - naval base in Boiotia (347/6), 248
 - old friends of the Athenians, 91
 - Outbreak Corinthian War, 38
 - restoration to power by Athenians, 28
 - rivalry with Thessalians, 21, 382
 - role in Third Sacred War, 61
 - sacrilegious plunders Delphi, 299
 - separate peace treaty with Amphictyony, 65
 - support for Macedon at Chaironeia (338), 68
 - unconditional surrender to Philip of Macedon, 64
- Phocion
- negotiations with Antipater, 274
- Phocis
- Athenian control (458), 249
 - focus of Theban efforts in 350s, 62
- Phoibidas
- takeover Thebes, 123
- Phyle*, 179. *See* [Skourta Plain](#)
- annual celebrations, 348
 - Boiotian capture (507/6), 183
 - Boiotian marauding (420s), 196
 - capture by pro-democracy Athenian exiles, 36
 - capture by Thrasybulus references, 347
 - citizenship decree for foreigners, 348
 - designation as deme, 189
 - identified by Boiotians through toponym, 310
 - not monumentalised, 189
 - refurbishment (334/3), 205
 - sixth-century attestation, 181
- Pindar
- avoids reference to Battle of Plataia?, 320
 - celebrates victory at Koroneia (446)?, 330
 - composing for young Theban athletes, 318
 - Daphnephorikon*, 329
 - Hymn to Apollo*, 167
 - Isthmian* 4, 319
 - Isthmian* 7, 326
 - Isthmian* 8, 319
 - place of performance, 320
 - Pythian* 8, 330
- Piraeus, 3
- sixth-century fortifications?, 18
 - Sphodrias' raid, 45
- Plant, Ian, 116
- Plataia, 225–43
- Athena Areia, 161
 - Athena Areia temple, 315
 - Athenian reinforcements (431), 234
 - Battle of (479), 22
 - chora*, 183
 - Commemoration Delphi and Olympia, 286
 - Daidala-festival, 22
 - Demeter Eleusinia, 161–3
 - destruction, 32, 90
 - destruction (373), 270
 - destruction (480), 231
 - Eleutheria* festival, 315
 - expansion of walls after Persian Wars, 232
 - Hera Kithaironia, 22
 - integrated into Theban *chora* (480), 231
 - inviolable territory after 479?, 23
 - lieu de memoire*, 232
 - member of *koinon* (446–431)?, 233
 - no help for Peisistratids, 81
 - Oath of, 272, 352–4
 - occupied by Megarian exiles, 235
 - Peace of Nicias, 197
 - Persian Wars, 21
 - possible harbour, 229
 - proposed restoration, 240
 - pro-Theban plot (431), 234
 - refurbishment Hera temple by Thebans (427), 235
 - re-organisation Daidala-festival (427)?, 235
 - restoration, 41, 65, 68

- Plataia (cont.)
 restoration (338), 274
 restoration (386), 269
 restoration (387/6), 238
 Spartan garrison, 43, 252, 270
 strategic importance, 225
 Theban and Tanagraian interest in territory, 226
 Theban surprise attack (373), 239
topos, 362
- Plataians, the
 Athenian alliance, 16, 74–83, 230
 Athenian alliance and issues with Thucydides and Herodotus' accounts, 75
 Boiotian *koinon*, 29
 centrality of Persian Wars in epic choric history, 79
 cleruchy in Skione, 237
 clinging to Spartan alliance (373), 49
 difference Peisistratid alliance and Athenian alliance, 77
 early fifth-century dedication to Demeter, 162
 execution Theban prisoners (431), 31
 exiles in Athens, 238, 239
 importance of inclusion on Serpent Column list, 288
 local rivalry with the Thebans, 21
 no initial border disputes with Thebans, 80
 participation in subjugation of Messenian revolt (460s), 233
 Peloponnesian War, 31
 pro-Theban plot (431), 31
 reason to oppose Persians, 21
 refusal to τελέειν to the Boiotoi, 228
 removal of *horoi* with Athens?, 162
 self-image as Boiotians, 232
 Serpent Column, 289
 shared cult with Thespians?, 22
 surrender (427), 235
 Theban pressure, 228
- Plato
 Battle of Tanagra account, 116
 description Battle of Tanagra reflects his own time, 118
Laws, Interstate Relations, 73
Menexenus, 119
- Plutarch
 Aeschylean fragments. *See* *Aeschylus*, *Eleusinians*
 comments on Aegospotami monument's sponsorship, 294
 contra Herodotus, 20
Life of Themistocles, 103
 portrayal of Epameinondas as ideal philosopher-warrior, 41
 reliability, 104, 126, 137, 156, 163, 329
 remarks on influence of popular leaders, 103
 writing aims, 41
- Pohlenz, Max, 360
 two versions of Demosthenes' *Funeral Oration*, 360
- Polinskaya, Irene, 164
- polyandreon*
 Athens, 334
 Athens (for Delion), 341
 Tanagra, 338
 Thespiiai, 327, 338
- Polybius
 Spartan-Theban arbitration by Achaians (371/0), 94
 population calculations Attica and Boiotia, 177
- Preller, Ludwig, 214
- presbeis autokratores*, 141
- primitivism, 6
- Prokles of Phlius, 90
 speech at Athens (370/69), 95
- provisioning of armies, 261
- proxenos*, 102
- Pylos
 fortress swapped for Panakton, 85
- Raubitschek, Anthony, 325
- Realism in interstate relations, 2, 73, 87, 199
- Realpolitik*
 base for neighbourly rapprochement, 36
- Rhamnous, 3
 Athenian garrison (335), 224
 monumental building, 187
 monumentalisation, 208
 no longer Athenian border (335–323), 378
- Rhodes, Peter, 141, 371
- Rhodians, the
 athletics. *See* *Diagoras of Rhodes*
 Boiotian naval voyage, 56
 cessation Second Athenian Confederacy, 60
 join Second Athenian Confederacy, 44
 possibly renting ships to Boiotians, 58
- Roberts, Jennifer, 38
- Roisman, Joseph, 116
- routes
 Attic-Boiotian borderlands, 174
 through Boiotia, 250, 269, 270

- Sacred Law
 at Amphiareion, 366
- Salamis, Battle of
 in Aeschylus's *Persai*, 316
- Samos
 Athenian cleruchy (366), 56
 regain independence (322), 72
- sanctuary
 border demarcation?, 162
 demarcating border?, 229
 mirrors for neighbourly interaction, 279
 negotiatory role, 181
 ritual norms, 37
- Sardis
 peace negotiations, 39
- Scafuoro, Adele, 374
- Schachter, Albert, 24, 62, 165, 180, 189, 193, 305
- Schröder, Janett, 338
- Scott, Michael, 291, 295
- Scyros
 retained by Athenians in King's Peace (387/6), 40
- Second Athenian Confederacy, 44–6, 65
autonomia as a goal, 150
 chronology of inception, 45
 defections, 58
 disbandment (338), 69
 formation through Atheno-Theban collaboration, 133
 interpretation of clause 'in order to persuade them of whatever good they can', 151
 prospectus located next to Zeus Eleutherios altar in Athenian Agora, 150
synedrion prefers Common Peace (344), 65
- Seven against Thebes*
 different versions, 315
- Shrimpton, Gordon, 156
- Sikinnos, 105
- Siphai, 243–4, 246, 249, 253
 pro-Athenian plot (424), 32, 121, 247, 252
- Skourta Plain, the
 farmsteads, 179
 increase habitation late fifth-century, 179–278
 oaths about exploitation, 191
 routes, 180
 Tsoukrati and Limiko towers, 205
- Sounion, 18
 monumental building, 187
- Spartan-Athenian alliance (369)
 rotational scheme, 98
- Spartans, the
 abandon defence Central Greece (480), 262
 acting as abrasive as Athenians, 37
 alliance with Athenians (369), 98
 alliance with medizers, 30
 benefits of pro-Spartan Boiotia (382), 269
 Boiotian campaign (378), 45
 campaigning against Mantinea (380s), 41
 campaign against Olynthos (383), 122
 campaign in Asia Minor (397), 37
 cease invasions of Attica after earthquakes in Laconia (426), 265
 challenge to honour, 31
 clandestine negotiations (421), 87
 control over Hellespont (388), 39
 control Rhodes and Athenian grain supply, 39
 criticism of seizing Cadmeia (382), 149
 Delphic Amphictyony, 24, 104
 demand Athenians relinquish Corinthian Gulf harbours, 251
 Doris campaign (458), 263
 enforcer of the King's Peace (387/6), 42
 expedition to Doris (458), 114
 five-year truce with Athenians (451–446), 28
 forced into overland routes due to Athenian intervention (450s), 249
 goals inscribing lists at Delphi and Olympia, 289
 incapacitated due to loss at Sphacteria (426), 265
 intervention in Thessaly, 104
 of little help to Athens against Macedon, 273
 monument for Aegospotami, 292
 negative responses after take-over Theban Cadmeia, 43
 objective of Olynthus campaign to take-over Thebes (382), 42
 offer Lemnos, Imbros and Skyros to Athenians to disrupt neighbourly alliance, 142
 Pausanias, 26, 285, 289
 plan to expel medizers to Persia?, 105
 plan to resettle Ionians?, 105
 population decline, 53
 prisoner exchange, 85
 propagandistic benefit of restoring Plataia (387/6), 238
 proxies for the Persian King, 40
 proxy vote in Amphictyonic Council, 104
 reasons for Doris campaign (458), 117

- Spartans, the (cont.)
- recollection Athenian help against Messenians, 94
 - recollection of help expulsion Peisistratids, 94
 - recollection of rejecting Theban proposal to destroy Athens, 95
 - reference to 'tithing' the Thebans, 94
 - refusal to acknowledge Messene's independence (366/5), 56
 - refusal to acknowledge Messenian independence (368), 54
 - removal garrisons from Boiotia, 48
 - reputational benefits from promoting *eleutheria*, 135
 - response to expansionism in Central Greece and Macedonia, 109
 - revanchism in Central Greece after Persian Wars (480-79), 263
 - secured Peloponnese in armistice treaty (423), 85
 - speakers in Athenian Assembly (370/69), 94
 - status of Laconian *peroikic* towns, 94
 - stigmatise medizers, 24
 - take-over Cadmeia worst excess Spartan hegemony, 122
 - Theban alliance? (386), 41
 - using Boiotian harbours to erode Athenian Aegean power, 258
 - violation of King's Peace (382), 43
 - weakening the *koinon* (390s), 269
- Sphodrias, 45, 150, 152, 270
- acquittal, 45
 - raid on Piraeus, 45
- Steinbock, Bernd, 20, 34, 133, 137-9, 297, 316
- Strabo
- relies on Ephoros, 243
- strategy
- buffer, 261
- Strepsiadēs of Thebes, 326
- Strouthas
- satrap of Asia Minor, 144
- supplication
- not an automatic acceptance, 78
- survey archaeology, 9
- Susa
- peace conference (367), 54
- sympoliteia*, 185
- syntaxis*, 47, 148
- Tanagra
- Battle of, 114-18, 264
 - dialect used in Theban inscription, 106
 - Oropian border, 210
 - polyandreion* for Delion, 338
 - Skourta Plain, 182, 184, 189
 - Spartan garrison, 270
 - Spartan garrison?, 43
 - Temple of Delion, 165
 - towers, 204
 - walls torn down by Athenians (458), 117
- Tanagra, Battle of
- Spartan initiative, 116
 - Truce after, 118
- Tanagraians, the
- Incorporation of Oropos, 215
 - possible *proxeny* award for Athenian, 106
 - rejection of status as pro-Athenian hegemon (458), 118
 - sixth-century border war with Athenians, 189
- Tegyra, Battle of, 46
- Tempe valley, 275
- defence (480), 21
- Thebans, the
- 373 breaking point in Athenian alliance?, 49
 - abstained from Common Peace conference Athens (371), 94
 - affirmation of leading role in Greek affairs (339), 159
 - Asias, 109
 - Athenian alliance (339/8), 67
 - boiotarchs* involved in Plataian coup (431), 31
 - claim to Oropos through Apollo Ismenios, 210
 - defending the native soil (480-79)?, 323
 - democracy collapses after Oinophyta (458), 120
 - demographic boom, 53
 - dispute with Megarians, 184
 - distrust of Athenians' reliability after Leuktra (371), 158
 - eleutheria* connected with liberation (379), 151
 - embedment in revanchist discourse after Persian Wars, 168
 - emulation of Herakles and Dionysos (404), 136
 - exiles and their *xenia* connections in Athens, 126
 - exiles in Persian army (335), 70
 - exiles overthrow Spartan junta (379), 44
 - expansion *chora*, 235
 - financial penalty (375), 47
 - hagemonia* treaty with Histiaia, 47

- hetairaia*, 109
- insistence on swearing as Boiotoi rather than Thebans (371), 93
- integrate harbours into *chora*, 246
- interventions in the Peloponnese, 54
- invasion of Peloponnese (370/69), 52
- juxtaposed with Persians at Delphi, 297
- 'land-locked' member of Second Athenian Confederacy?, 269
- leadership changes (404-395), 109
- Macedonian garrison, 68
- majority of votes on Amphictyonic Council, 59
- medizing ringleaders executed without a fair trial, 23
- no initial border disputes with Plataians, 80
- omitted from Serpent Column and Zeus Statue lists, 286
- outrage and indignation after Spartan take-over, 43
- owned plots in the Parasopia (late sixth century), 80
- participation Thermopylai based on personal ties, 20
- persistent resistance to Macedonians, 70
- personal ties Macedonia, 54
- personal ties with Cleomenes leading to invasion Attica 507/82
- polemarchs*, 44
- portrayed by Demosthenes, 354
- pro-Macedonian exiles restored (338), 68
- prostates* of Common Peace, 58
- ransomed prisoners dedicate *kioniskos* (507/6)?, 309
- reasons for *synoikism*, 259
- recollection support Athenian democrats, 110
- reinstitution *boiotarchia*, 44
- relationship with neighbouring communities, 332
- remembered as defender of *eleutheria*, 362
- request for Athenian aid after Leuktra (371), 50
- scapegoated for medism?, 23
- separate Athenian alliance (379), 151
- serving roles in Second Athenian Confederacy, 49
- serving as *triarchs* in Athenian navy, 152
- sixth-century *sympolitēia* with Eleutherai, 185
- Spartan alliance? (386), 41
- stasis* after Oinophyta (458), 250
- structural weakness of the Theban hegemony, 62
- support Peisistratids, 13
- survivors of Alexander's razing, 70
- synoikism*, 254
- synoikism* with border towns (427?), 236
- Thebageneis, 227
- threatened with invasion after rejection of Common Peace (387/6), 40
- unwilling to contribute to maintenance of Second Athenian Confederacy fleet, 46
- vaunted wealth, 13
- Thebes
- Amphiareion, 210, 330
- Apollo Ismenios cult, 209, 227, 330
- Athenian and Macedonian embassy (339), 155
- birthplace of Herakles and Dionysos, 137
- Boiotian poleis participating in sack (335), 71
- Cadmeia take-over violation King's Peace, 43
- coinage, 138
- Daphnephoria*, 330
- death of *polemarchs* by Theban exiles (379), 130
- early attestation *boiotarch*, 106
- embellishment after Delion, 335
- Eurymachos, 31
- hagamonia* treaty with Histiaia, 259
- Herakleion, 21, 106, 138, 343-81
- inscription with *boiotarch* (500-475), 106
- integration Thespiai into *chora* (373), 48
- kioniskos* and the borderlands, 182
- kioniskos* articulating territorial gains, 309
- kioniskos* commemorating 507/6, 308
- kioniskos* focused on local audience?, 309
- list of donors for refoundation (316), 72
- new epigram from Apollo Ismenios temple, 209
- peace conference (367/6), 55
- Persian Wars epigram, 357
- reduction *chora*, 242
- refuge for in Central Greece (479), 22
- restoration by Cassander (316), 72
- sale of plots in Parasopia, 229
- Siege by Hellenic League (479), 22
- similarities 382 and 335, 133
- stasis*, 114
- statue Epameinondas, 355
- statue Pelopidas, 356
- stoa?, 335

- Thebes (cont.)
synoikism with eastern seaboard (427?), 254
 too interwoven into Greek myth, 319
 uniqueness of metric dedication to Apollo
 Ismenios, 210
 κένικασε ἡ πόλις ἡ Θεβαίων
 κέλευθερα[ο], 185
- Themistocles, 103–4
 at Tempe, 20
 Involvement Thespiai, 105
 protection medizers?, 103
- Themistocles decree, the, 298
- Theopompos, 156–7
 inland move of Oropos (402), 214
- Thermopylai
 Battle of, 19–22, 262
 Commemoration. *See* Thespiai,
polyandreion for Delion
 Commemoration of battle, 322, 357
 Pass of, 64, 272
- Thermopylai, Battle of
 all-out defence or counter-offensive, 20
 manoeuvre to slow down Persians, 20
 short-lived defence, diversion to organise a
 defence in Boiotia, 20
- Thespiai
 Athenian and Corinthian influence on
 cults, 105
 Commemoration Delphi and Olympia, 286
 Destruction, 90
 dismantling of its walls (423), 85
 family epitaph on Boiotian battles, 326
 harbours, 248
 integration into Theban *chora* (373), 48
 new citizens after Persian Wars, 105
polyandreion for Delion, 338, 340
polyandreion for Oinophyta?, 327
 proposed restoration, 240
 rebuilding (479), 105
 restoration, 68
 restoration (338), 274
 sculptural link Delion *polyandreion* and
 Thermopylai lion monument, 340
 Spartan garrison, 43, 270
 συντελεῖν μόνον εἰς τὰς Θήβας, 48
- Thespians, the
attikismos (423), 122
 clinging to Spartan alliance (373), 49
 decision to oppose Persians, 22
 medism, 21
 Olympia arbitration, 26
 omitted from the Zeus Statue list, 287
proxenoi of the Athenians, 29
 punished after Leuktra (371), 51
 Sikinnos, 105
 snub Thermopylai commemoration, 340
 subjugation by Thebans (373), 48
xenia ties with Spartan and Theban
 contingent at Thermopylai (480),
 22
- Thessalians, the
 Aleaud rule, 104
 Boiotian interventions, 59
 help for Peisistratids, 81
 intervention in Herakleia Trachinia, 86
 power vacuum, 54
 restoration exile by Athenians, 28
 rivalry with Phocians, 382
 Spartan intervention, 104
 support at Battle of Tanagra (458), 27
 support Athenians (initially) at Battle of
 Tanagra (458), 264
 supporting Philip of Macedon at
 Chaironeia, 68
Thespians, the decision to oppose Persians, 22
- Thessaly
 Athena Itonia, 168
 link with Boiotian ethnogenesis, 13
 role in Peisistratid *Odyssey*, 13
 Tempe valley. *See* Tempe valley
- Third Sacred War, 61–2, 203, 240, 271
 memory of medism, 351, *See* Delphi, golden
 shields
- Thirty Year Peace (446), 29
- Thourio
 possible settlement of pro-Athenian
 Boiotian *proxenoi*, 29
- Thrace
 Athenian objectives, 23
 Peisistratid interest, 14
 Spartan campaigns, 124, 266
 succession crisis, 60
- Thrasylbulus, 36, 114
 Athenian social memory, 343–50
 commemoration in Thebes, 350
 dedication at Theban Herakleion, 345
 exile in Thebes, 136
 relationship with Ismenias, 113
 taking risk (395), 111
 tomb, 350
- Thucydides
 against otiose uses of the past in rhetorical
 practice, 79
 alteration to Serpent Column Delphi, 285
 Boiotian take-over Oropos through treason
 (411), 213

- compared to Herodotus' account on
 Plataian alliance, 75
 cursory account Tanagra (458), 115
 description Delion sanctuary, 336
 intertextuality with Herodotus, 79
 laments loss of Amphipolis, 266
 more neutral evaluation of Boiotian role in
 peace negotiations (423-1), 84
 motive for Oropos' importance for Athens,
 213
 plot with Boiotians (415), 33
 rejection of emendation text, 75
 silence on 'Orchomenizers' motives (446),
 28
 silence on treatment of Oropos (446), 212
 Tilphousa, 63
 Timotheos
 campaigning in Ionian Sea region, 48
 Tiribazus, 39
 Tolmides, 251
 Boiotian campaign, 28
 commemoration, 333
 defeat, 276
 topography
 borderlands, 172
 Traditional periodisation Theban Hegemony,
 52
 treaties
 interpretation clause 'to persuade them of
 whatever good they can', 151
tropaion, 329
 permanence, 329
 tyrants
 political interactions, 14

 ubiquity of war, 73

 Walsh, John, 301
 Wilding, Alexandra, 369

xenia in interstate relations, 17, 101
xenoi, 348
Xenokleides
 pro-Theban speaker, 98
Xenophon
 anti-Theban bias, 38, 90, 239
 anti-Theban bias (395), 112
 Athenian and Spartan mutual fear of
 Thebes (375), 46
 claims about Theban aggression after
 Boiotian War (378-5), 46
 eleutheria and Athenian defeat (404), 292
 Hellenica's inception, 46
 historicity of Theban ambassador's speech
 (395), 110
 Memorabilia refers to Battle of Koroneia
 (446), 333
 moralist and artistic motives, 137
 neglects positive portrayal Thebans (404),
 137
 pays less attention to speeches that did not
 win over the Athenian Assembly,
 98
 scholars' preference for his account (379),
 131
 selective narrative, 142
 Theban demands in 395 excessive, 111
 use of ἄγγελον to denote foreignness of
 Thebans, 93
 Xerxes
 invasion of Greece (480/79), 19

 Yates, David, 23, 284, 297
 epichoric outlook Persian Wars
 commemoration, 284

ἄλλόφυλον
 interpretation of term, 335
ἀνέθεμεν
 meaning of term, 298

ἐκεχειρίαν δεχήμερον ἤγον
 issues with translation, 86
ἐτελεύτησεν
 use by Thucydides to describe Plataian
 alliances with Athens, 80

μολοσσούς
 at Theban Herakleion, 344

πλαταιῶν
 translation for Skourta Plain oaths,
 191
παρακινδυνεύουσιεν
 translation, 111
περιπλεύσαντες
 translation, 263
προσποιέω
 Xenophon's reference to Sphodrias' raid, 45

τά μεθόρια, 175, 177, 310
τελέειν
 meaning of, translation, 76
 translation of, 228

