

PLATAEAN REMEMBRANCES:  
THE MONUMENTS OF THE BATTLE  
FROM THE IMPERIAL PERIOD  
[AND] BACKWARDS\*

By Christel Müller

**Summary:** This article focuses, in a regressive approach going back in time from the Imperial to the Classical period, on the physical markers which became places of commemoration on the territory of Plataea after 479, and their significance in terms of the memory of the battle and the persistence (or otherwise) of a Panhellenic landscape. These markers fall into three categories: trophies, the altar of Zeus Eleutherios, and the graves of fallen soldiers. Trophies, initially ephemeral monuments celebrating a victory, were monumentalised before 380 BC to become concrete manifestations of Panhellenic values. The punctual sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios on the agora was perpetuated by the construction of a marble altar and was enriched by the addition of a goddess, Homonoia, at least in the Hellenistic period, but perhaps as early as the end of the 5th century BC. Finally, the tombs of dead soldiers were the object of sacrifices that seemed to change in nature between the Classical and Imperial periods, with the *enagismos* ritual so well described by Plutarch. Two ceremonies are also discussed, the *Eleutheria* and the *dialogos*, which further encapsulate the memorial importance of the battle, perhaps as early as the end of the 4th century BC for the contest and the end of the 2nd century BC for the *dialogos*.

The battle of Plataea, in September 479, is a historical event that can be readily reconstructed and has brought with it an endless stream of commentaries, especially military or historical.<sup>1</sup> But it has the particularity

\* This article, an oral version of which was delivered at the Delphi conference in May 2022, has benefited from the careful reading and suggestions of Kostas Buraselis, Christian Mann, and Anthony Snodgrass, whom I am happy to thank warmly here.

1 The latest volume published is the one edited by A. Konecny & N. Sekunda in 2022, precisely on the anniversary of a battle “that shaped history” (p. 7). On the battle itself, see Shepherd 2019: 388-460.

of having also aroused, certainly more than other events of the same nature, a memorial will of which the present volume, 2500 years later, still bears the trace because of the two flagship ideals to which it contributed: those of *eleutheria* and *homonoia*, freedom and concord. The memory of Plataea occupied the Greeks from the day after the event: as Herodotus writes, they buried their fallen, and some cities even built cenotaphs τῶν ἐπιγινομένων εἵνεκεν ἀνθρώπων, “for the men who would come after” (9.85), while the Plataeans every year honoured the graves of these men, as Thucydides recalls (3.58.4). But it increased from the 380s onwards, with the gradual invention of the Persian Wars as a moment of Panhellenic unity despite the deep disagreements of Greek cities both during and after the battle: the memorialization of the event itself “became a focal point of contention among eternally rivalrous Greeks and their cities”,<sup>2</sup> making Plataea a major stake in the perpetual tension between unity and disunity among *poleis*.<sup>3</sup>

Plataea is thus exactly what Pierre Nora called a *lieu de mémoire*. This is what Michael Jung rightly states in his thesis on the two battles of Marathon and Plataea.<sup>4</sup> But what is a *lieu de mémoire*? First of all, it is a place of which there is a will to remember, and this is indeed the case here: this event has become a Panhellenic *mnemeion*. Moreover, places of memory “are places (...) in the three senses of the word: material, symbolic and functional, but simultaneously, only to varying degrees”.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a place of memory is both “closed in on its identity and closed in on its name”, and “constantly open to the range of its meanings”.<sup>6</sup> In other words, a *lieu de mémoire* is a kind of niche or spatio-temporal bubble taken from

2 Cartledge 2013: 124. – In this work, the author analyses in detail the Oath of Plataea, supposedly pronounced just before the battle, but in fact engraved around the 3rd quarter of the 4th c. BC from a text set in the political context of the middle of the 4th c. BC (see RO 88). Already Jung 2006: 282-95 uses the expression “Kampf um die Erinnerung an Plataiai”.

3 For this haunting theme about Plataea, see Buraselis’ contribution in this volume (p. 4).

4 Jung 2006, who nevertheless emphasises memory, *Erinnerung*, more than places. The expression is also used by Knoepfler 2004-2005: 609. See also Buraselis’ contribution to this volume (pp. 3, 11 and 15).

5 Nora 1997: 37.

6 Nora 1997: 43.

historical time, on which subsequent generations carry out two operations: commemoration on the one hand, and re-semanticisation on the other. A *lieu de mémoire* is a place where an event is replayed tirelessly, almost obsessively, and where the event is constantly enriched with new, more or less stratified meanings.

This is exactly what happened to the ‘Plataean event’ from the Classical period down to the Roman Empire, which is fully in line with what the editors of a recent volume devoted to war memorials call “cultures of commemoration”.<sup>7</sup> I will start precisely from the imperial period in a regressive approach, by going back in time, in a way that is undoubtedly iconoclastic for a historian, but with heuristic advantages. It allows us to place ourselves directly in the shoes of the authors of this period, notably Strabo, Plutarch and Pausanias. And it allows us to see how, in these texts, the past and its previous reactivations are negotiated both in the narrative itself and in the commemorative events they report. The commentaries so far have largely focused on the symbolic aspects, i.e. on the evolving re-semanticisation of the event: the meanings produced by this commemoration during the Hellenistic period and under the empire have already been partly analysed by Shane Wallace,<sup>8</sup> Anthony J.S. Spawforth,<sup>9</sup> or Onno van Nijf.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the two other dimensions identified by Nora, material and functional, have been much less emphasised. It is these that interest me here in a spatial perspective, such as that opened by Susan E. Alcock in 2002 in a very stimulating book, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past*: as she argues, “memories are (...) embedded and supported within a material framework. To examine that framework is to expand the range of commemorative practices and impulses we can actually recognize and study, giving back to peoples in the past – if only ever partially – some of the vigour of their remembrances”, instead of doing as if dead populations “had no memories at all.”<sup>11</sup>

7 Low & Oliver 2012.

8 Wallace 2011.

9 Spawforth 2012: 130-38.

10 Van Nijf 2005.

11 Alcock 2002: 2. See also Ma’s 2008 approach to the monuments of the battle of Chaeronea in 338, with a much more topographical and archaeological orientation (the author speaks of “topographies of commemoration”), which can be explained by the

It is therefore a question of seeing what the physical markers of commemoration have to tell us about the memory of Plataea and the persistence (or not) of a Panhellenic landscape.<sup>12</sup> The most famous monument commemorating this victory is not Plataean: it is the so-called Serpent Column, consisting of a bronze column formed by the bodies of three snakes, which supported a golden tripod carrying a cauldron and on whose coils were inscribed the names of the 31 cities that had fought against the Persians.<sup>13</sup> But the Plataean monuments themselves did not enjoy the same celebrity despite their interest: not preserved or at least not exhumed, they are primarily monuments encapsulated in narratives. On a civic territory marked after 479 by its at least theoretical inviolability, these markers are three in number: the trophies raised following the victory, the altar of Zeus Eleutherios and, of course, the collective tombs of the warriors who died in battle.

### I. The trophies

Let us begin with the trophies. Pausanias mentions one: *τρόπαιον δέ, ὃ τῆς μάχης τῆς Πλαταιᾶσιν ἀνέθεσαν οἱ Ἕλληνες, πεντεκαίδεκα σταδίοις μάλιστα ἔστηκεν ἀπωτέρω τῆς πόλεως*, “the trophy which the Greeks set up for the battle at Plataea stands about fifteen stades from the city” (9. 2.6). It is now known with certainty that Pausanias himself visited Boeotia and in particular Plataea: he came from Eleusis and Eleutherae and thus arrived by the eastern route.<sup>14</sup> If he mentions a trophy, it is because he saw it, but the problem is that he mentions only one. In Plutarch, in fact, there are two trophies: the Athenians, the author explains, had refused the Spartans in 479 the *aristeion*, the collective *prize of excellence*, which went to the victorious city in a war (*Arist.* 20.1-2). After the Greeks

preservation of the two funerary monuments associated with the event: that of the Macedonians and that of the Thebans.

12 However, there is no question of analysing the topography of the battle here, which has been done many times, most recently by Jones 2019 and Konecny 2022.

13 On this monument and its inscription, see the excellent commentary by Jacquemin, Mulliez & Rougemont 2012: no. 17 and, most recently, Stephenson 2016 and Patay-Horváth 2022: 250-58.

14 Knoepfler 2019: 28.

had finally agreed to give this prize to the Plataeans, “then the Lacedaemonians set up a trophy (*tropaion*) on their own account, and the Athenians also separately”, ἔστησαν δὲ τρόπαιον ἰδίᾳ μὲν Λακεδαιμόνιοι, χωρὶς δ’ Ἀθηναῖοι (*Arist.* 20.3). In the inscriptions, there is mention of a single trophy, from which the runners of the hoplite race set off. In a Milesian honorary inscription of ca. 20 BC, the exact phrase is ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου (*Milet I 9, 369, l. 7*).<sup>15</sup> Going back even further, there is also mention of Plataean trophies in the plural in Plato’s *Menexenos* (245a)<sup>16</sup> and especially in Isocrates’ *Plataikos* (14.59). In this imaginary speech by a citizen of Plataea to the Athenians after the third destruction of the city in 374/3 or 373/2 BC, the latter explains that the Thebans have every reason to destroy these trophies, “since memorials of the events of that time bring shame to them”, τὰ γὰρ μνημεῖα τῶν τότε γενομένων αἰσχύνη τούτοις ἐστίν. These are certainly not in any case the original trophies, since no allusion to monuments of this kind is found in Thucydides, nor before him in Herodotus.

There are thus three problems to be solved here: how did the Greeks manifest victory at the time and during the century that followed 479? What is the value of the trophy or trophies erected in the 380s, at any rate before 373? What did Pausanias see? The answer to the first question remains a hypothesis, albeit a likely one: the Greeks might have erected temporary trophies at first, intended to signal their victory, without any particular notion of long-term commemoration, or any mention in the sources. These ephemeral trophies must, however, have been strong

15 *Milet I 9, 369, ll. 5-9* (ca. 20 BC, for a victor whose name is lost): καὶ Ἐλευθέρια τὰ ἐν Πλαταιαῖς | [τὰ τ]ιθέμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἄνδρας [στά]διον καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου ἐνόπλιον δρόμον | [καὶ] ἀναγορευθέντα ἄριστον τῶν Ἑλλήνων πρῶτον | [καὶ] μόνον τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας, “and at the *Eleutheria* of Plataea organized by the *koinon* of the Hellenes: (having won) the men’s *stadion* as well as the race in arms from the trophy and having been proclaimed *aristos ton Hellenon* the first and only one among the competitors from Asia”. For this inscription, see Mann in this volume (pp. 54; 56-60).

16 But this plural is distributed over three sites, Marathon, Salamis and Plataea: τὰ τρόπαια τὰ τε Μαραθῶνι καὶ Σαλαμῖνι καὶ Πλαταιαῖς (*Menex.* 245a). See also a contemporary of Plato, Eudoxos of Knidos, fr. 311 Lasserre (*Steph. Byz. s.v. Plataiai*), who mentions τάφους καὶ τρόπαια ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν, “tombs and trophies of men of value”.

enough to have lasted for some time after the battle. The Greeks were later able to build lasting trophies in stone, as the Athenians had done for Marathon and Salamis. It was then that these trophies acquired a clear memorial value: in Isocrates, they are properly called *μνημεῖα τῶν τότε γενομένων*, “memorials of the past”.

The question remains as to why only one *tropaion* is mentioned afterwards. The inscriptions are unmistakable proof of the fact that the place from which the competitors in the hoplite race took off at the *Eleutheria* competition had only one *tropaion*: if there had been several there, it would have been easy to write in the plural *ἀπὸ τῶν τροπαίων*. On its location, the only certainty, mentioned by Pausanias, is that it was set up 15 stadia from the city, but the text does not specify in which direction. It is unlikely that it was located along the route taken by the Periegetes at the time he talks about it: the *tropaion* is mentioned at this point in the text not as a topographical marker of the journey itself (“I am at the foot of the trophy”), but as an implicit starting point for the arms race. He may therefore have seen it at another point when leaving Plataea to go north towards Thebes or on a possible excursion east towards Hysiai, in other words closer to the battlefield near the Asopos. But the use of the plural *tropaia* in Isocrates and Plutarch implies that there was at least another one, perhaps installed in connection with the battlefields.<sup>17</sup> The Athenians and the Spartans must thus have erected, each on their own, a monument on the place where their own troops were deployed.<sup>18</sup> The question is what Pausanias saw. William C. West has suggested that Pausanias’ trophy was “a replacement for the original trophies”<sup>19</sup> and that it had been erected around the beginning of the 4th c. BC after the peace of Antalkidas under Spartan influence. He would therefore have seen the Spartan monument, although it is not clear what happened to the Athenian monument. At the time of the Periegetes perhaps only one trophy remained, considered as the general trophy of the battle without distinction of cities, a kind of trophy emblematic of the victory.

17 One will recall the much later case (86 BC) of the trophies erected after the battles of Chaeronea and Orchomenos won by Sylla against the troops of Mithridates: see Müller 2019: 167-72.

18 West 1969: 18; Rabe 2008: 106.

19 West 1969: 18.

The struggle for the *aristeion* and the splitting of the trophies show in any case that the division between Athens and Sparta undermined the union of the Hellenes from the Plataean moment onwards. But above all, they are in a way the matrix in which two other commemorative events are inscribed, which had the function of replaying the initial events and of which we have traces essentially in the imperial period. The first event is the ritualised staging of the conflict between Athens and Sparta in another type of contest, which took place every four years in the month of Metageitnion (August-September), in the middle of the interval between two sessions of the *Eleutheria*: the *dialogos*. It was a competition between the two cities for the *propompeia*, the ‘leading of the procession’. The term *dialogos* is difficult to translate, as it refers both to the “oratorical joust” between the candidates, which was about the glorious events of the past and the question of who, of the Athenians or the Spartans, had fought better at Plataea,<sup>20</sup> but also, and above all, to the “arbitration” by the Council of Hellenes, modelled on that of 479. In Plutarch, when the Plataeans receive the *aristeion*, the Athenians and Spartans, thanks in particular to the efforts of Aristides, are then reconciled, οὔτω δὲ διαλλαγέντες (*Arist.* 20.3), with perhaps a pun (?) between the linguistic families of διαλλαγή and διάλογος. This event, known from the end of the 2nd c. BC,<sup>21</sup> could have been established after the Achaean War in 146, when the two cities started to reactivate their ancient traditions while being friends of Rome. In the second half of the 2nd c. AD, Athenian ephebes and, most probably, their Spartan equivalents, also attended.

The second event is directly related to the main trophy and how it was recognised as the starting point of the hoplite race. This event was part of the gymnastic competition of the *Eleutheria* and consisted of an armed race with the carrying of a shield for about three kilometres (15 stadia) from the trophy.<sup>22</sup> Philostratus in the 3rd c. AD gave an eloquent description of this event.<sup>23</sup> It was extremely difficult because of the length of the race, the wearing of an armour that covered the athlete

20 Robertson 1986. See also Jung 2006: 351-60 and Chaniotis 2012: 50.

21 *IG II/III*<sup>2</sup> 3189a (*add.* vol. 3.1, p. 349; Peek’s version).

22 On this competition, see Mann in this volume (pp. 57-61).

23 Philostr. *Gymn.* 8.

down to his feet and a rule instituted by the Plataeans, but highly implausible: if a competitor failed after having already won the race once, he was condemned to death and had to give pledges on his body, in order to avoid any temptation to flee, one must suppose!

Replaying Plataea thus had a potential impact on the bodies themselves. Victory gave the winner a specific title, directly linked to the question of *aristeion*. This title, here individual, was, indeed, during the *Eleutheria*, that of *aristos ton Hellenon*, “the best of the Greeks”, as Louis Robert once showed.<sup>24</sup> It is attested from the 20s BC in the inscription of Miletus already quoted,<sup>25</sup> and we find it quite late under the Empire, until the 3rd c. AD.<sup>26</sup> We can see that this title, in principle reserved for victorious athletes as shown by the inscriptions, ended up acquiring an additional dimension, that of a devotion to the Roman Empire through athletics, as shown by Onno van Nijf.<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the *Eleutheria* more generally, Diodorus (11.29.1) explains that the Greeks had promised themselves, even before the battle, to hold them if they were victorious. Strabo (9.2.31) says that they were instituted the day after the victory as a “stephanitic gymnastic contest”. As for Plutarch, he invokes a notorious forgery, the decree of Aristides, who proposed after the battle “to celebrate the *Eleutheria* contest every four years.”<sup>28</sup> In reality, this contest is only attested from the 3rd c. BC, perhaps for the first time in the work of the epigrammatist Poseidippus, who

24 Robert 1929.

25 *Milet* I 9, 369, ll. 5-9, with the commentary of Robert 1949.

26 For attestations of the title *aristos*, see the list compiled by Schachter 1994: 141 n. 1. The title *pratos Achaion* in *SEG* 11.338 does not seem to me to be the ancestor of *aristos*. It is simply an allusion to the fact that the man was the first of the Achaeans to win this victory: Ἐλευθέρια ὀπλίτ[α]ν τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου πρᾶτος Ἀχαιῶν ll. 6-7.

27 Van Nijf 2005. On the other hand, one cannot accept anymore that the contest took as a second name that of *Kaisarea*, since the mention of the Ἐλευ[[θήρ]ια τὰ καὶ Καισάρηα in the honorary inscription *IG* XII.4, 935 (Cos, late 1st c. BC) does not refer to Plataea, but to a local Coan contest founded around 30 BC, as Rigsby 2010 has well shown (against Robert 1969, 57 [*OMS* VII, 763]).

28 The supposed decree of Aristides, which organizes what modern historians have called the Covenant of Plataea, is, in the words of Cartledge 2013: 129, part of the Plataean *mythopoiesis*; far from belonging to the aftermath of the battle in the 470s, it rather finds its place, like the Oath, in the 4th c. BC and, more precisely, probably at the time of the third destruction of Plataea in 373 (this time by the Thebans).



writes that Plataea becomes a real city only during the *Eleutheria*, so extinct is it in ordinary times.<sup>29</sup> These *Eleutheria* are therefore the result of a “tradition invented”<sup>30</sup> during the Macedonian period, perhaps as early as the end of the 4th century BC at the time of Alexander’s destruction of Thebes in Boedromion 335 as suggested by Shane Wallace, because it was also the 144th anniversary of the battle itself and Plataea had just been refounded in 337.<sup>31</sup> Denis Knoepfler, on the other hand, has proposed a date later than 287, presumably in connection with the establishment of the Hellenistic Boeotian *koinon*.<sup>32</sup> There are about thirty testimonies (notably catalogues of victories) for the *Eleutheria*, between the 3rd c. BC and the 3rd c. AD,<sup>33</sup> which is not negligible and confirms Pausanias’ statement that, in his time, the Greeks still celebrated this penteteric competition (9.2.6). The fragments of winners’ lists show classical athletic events such as *stadion*, *dolichos*, and *pankration*. But it was the armed race that made its success and its profound originality.

An essential question concerns the exact place where these games were performed. This question seems to be directly evoked, according to Roland Étienne and Marcel Piérart, in the famous decree of the *koinon* of the Hellenes at Plataea, passed between 262 and 246 BC in honour of the Athenian Glaukon son of Eteokles, who occupied a choice position at the Ptolemaic court.<sup>34</sup> It mentions in ll. 21-24 τὸν ἀγῶνα ὃν τιθέασιν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἀγωνισαμένοις πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐλευθερίας, which they translate “the contest which the Greeks celebrate on the grave of the heroes who died fighting against the barbarians for the freedom of the Greeks”. But, the

29 Poseidippus fr. 31 (29 Kock = PCG VII [1989], 577-578): τὸ πολὺ μὲν ἀκτὴ, τοῖς δ’ Ἐλευθερίοις πόλις, “generally a [deserted] promontory, and at the time of the *Eleutheria* a city”. The text dates from the first half of the 3rd c. BC: Jung 2006: 318.

30 Van Nijf 2005: §9. On the *Eleutheria*, besides Mann in the present volume (*passim*), see already Prandi 1988: 161-79.

31 Wallace 2011: 153-54.

32 Knoepfler 2004-2005: 611. For the founding date, see in this volume Mann (pp. 46-47).

33 The attestations are listed in this volume by Mann (p. 49 n. 23).

34 *Ed. pr.* of the document in Étienne & Piérart 1975, also reproduced in SEG 61.352, Jung 2006: 299-320 and Bencivenni 2017. For the dating of the inscription in the middle of the 3rd c. BC, see Buraselis 1984.

translation of ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς by “on the grave of the dead heroes”, instead of its classical meaning “in honour of the dead heroes”, would imply that this *agōn* would have taken place directly on or near the graves: such a hypothesis seems complicated if one considers the very nature of the events, especially the different types of races, which could only take place in a stadium, even of a basic construction.<sup>35</sup> In fact, this topographical interpretation seems to have been dictated mainly by the passage in Pausanias where he writes that θεοῦσι δὲ ὠπλισμένοι πρὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ (9.2.6), “the competitors run in armour before the altar”. Since the altar was not far from the tombs (9.2.5), the expression πρὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ was taken literally to show that the athletic events were held there.<sup>36</sup> In reality, Pausanias mentions in this passage only one event, the most famous one, the *hoplites* or *hoplitodromia*, and the altar is not to be confused with the tombs themselves either. Denis Knoepfler has therefore rightly deduced that the expression πρὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ was wrong and that the text here should be corrected to πρὸς τὸν βωμόν,<sup>37</sup> “towards the altar”: this race started from the trophy and ended up in front of the altar of Zeus.

This race was emulated elsewhere in Boeotia. The exact same expression ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου is found in a winners’ list of the *Sōteria* of Akraiphia dated 1st c. BC,<sup>38</sup> just after the Mithridatic War, to mark the starting point of two racing events: the double *stadion* called *diaulos* and the quadruple *stadion* called *hippios*. Insofar as it is a duplicate of the Plataean event, I have hypothesized that this race also ended before an altar placed on the agora, that of a Zeus similar to the Eleutherios of Plataea:

35 See in this volume, Mann (p. 53).

36 Étienne & Piérart 1975: 55: if we compare the decree with the text of Pausanias, “it is thus on the very place where the fighters of Plataea were buried that the contest took place, which is in keeping with our interpretation of the expression”.

37 Knoepfler 2004-2005: 612.

38 See Müller 2019: 172-74, for this inscription IG VII 2727 (winners’ list at the *Soteria* in Akraiphia, ca. 80 BC (ll. 32-34, end of the list): τὸν ὀπλίτην ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου | [Ὀλ]ύμπιχος Ἀριστί[δ]ου Θηβαῖος, | [τὸν ἵππιον ἀπὸ τοῦ τροπαίου (the rest is missing). An example probably imitated from the Plataean race is that of the *Epitaphia* of Athens which, in the 2nd c. BC, starts “from the *polyandreion*” (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1006, l. 22, honorary decree for Athenian ephebes in 122/1 BC), which was a cenotaph commemorating the dead of Marathon: see Chaniotis 2012, 48.

the Zeus Soter of Akraiphia. This evocation provides an excellent transition to the second place of memory of Plataea: the altar of Zeus.

## II. The altar of Zeus Eleutherios

The altar of Zeus Eleutherios was located, again according to the Periegetes, οὐ πόρρω δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων (9.2.5), “not far from the common grave of the Greeks”. Pausanias is then κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἔσοδον μάλιστα τὴν ἐς Πλάταιαν (9.2.5), “roughly at the entrance into Plataea”. This can only be one of the eastern entrances and we are obviously outside the walls.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the stele bearing the decree in honour of Glaukon had been erected παρὰ τὸν βωμὸν τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ἐλευθερίου καὶ τῆς Ὁμονοίας, “near the altar of Zeus Eleutherios and Homonoia”, as the penultimate clause of the text states.<sup>40</sup>

When the inscription was discovered in 1971, its inventor, the archaeologist Th.G. Spyropoulos, deduced that the altar must not have been very far from the *Fundort* of the stele.<sup>41</sup> He carried out excavations on the Dekkas field, “100 meters north of the modern road to Kokkla (‘Plataea’)”,<sup>42</sup> not a very precise location. But this excavation did not reveal any Hellenistic altars, only late installations from the 5th c. AD. Spyropoulos concluded that the stele had been used as building material and had been moved from its *Standort*. Further excavations 200m further north in the Makris field, along the road crossing the site towards the modern village, probably close to the ancient road and not far from the eastern wall of the rampart, revealed various constructions: tombs, some of which were from the 5th c. AD, but above all the conglomerate foundations of a structure measuring 15m x 4m.<sup>43</sup> The archaeologist interpreted them, with caution, as those of the altar of Zeus, who would have had to undergo, in his words, a “*damnatio memoriae*”,<sup>44</sup> a paradox for such

39 On the routes to Plataea from Eleutherae and Megara and on the route taken by the Periegetes, see Pritchett 1982.

40 SEG 61.352, ll. 39-40.

41 Spyropoulos 1973a: 375-79 and 1973b: 2-3.

42 Spyropoulos 1973b: 2.

43 Spyropoulos 1973a: 377-78.

44 Spyropoulos 1973b: 3.

a commemorative symbol. Why such a *damnatio*? The reasons are not clear, nor is the identification of the structure with the altar. To my knowledge, there has been no further investigation into the altar since then, including during the excavations carried out by the Austrian Archaeological Institute in collaboration with the Ephorate of Boeotia and the University of Minnesota, the results of which were published in 2013.<sup>45</sup> This Panhellenic object *par excellence* is therefore completely unknown today in the field, which does not prevent us from asking questions about it.

First question: when was it erected? If we are to believe Aelius Aristides in the *Panathenaic oration* (189-190) when he recounts the past deeds of the Athenians in the struggle against the barbarians, the altar of Zeus was erected in the wake of the victory ἐπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ τόπου τῶν ἔργων, “on the very spot of the events”. It would have had from the outset the two values that the Greeks of the imperial period undoubtedly recognised in it: that of being both a thanksgiving to the god and a memorial in honour of the victors: αὐτῷ τε τῷ θεῷ χαριστήριον καὶ τοῖς κατορθώσασι μνημεῖον. Before him, Plutarch reports in the *Life of Aristides* that the erection of the altar of Zeus was a prescription of the Delphic oracle after the victory and that it had been necessary to obtain pure fire taken from the altar of Pythian Apollo for this purpose (20.4), but the anecdote told on this occasion has all the trappings of a forgery.<sup>46</sup> According to Strabo (9.2.31), the construction would have taken place at the same time as the institution of the *Eleutheria*, again after the victory. If we go back even further, in addition to the mention of it in the decree of the 3rd century BC in honour of Glaukon, one finds an interesting expression in Thucydides, when the Plataeans beg the Lacedaemonians in 427 not to hand them over to the Thebans: the former invoke the “gods at whose common altar all the Hellenes worship”, θεοὺς τοὺς ὁμοβωμίους καὶ κοινούς τῶν Ἑλλήνων (3.59). This sentence has generally been interpreted as an invocation to the gods common to all Greeks wherever they are. Yet the invocation could be more precise and refer in particular to Zeus Eleutherios whose cult and altar the Hellenes shared

45 Konecny, Aravantinos & Marchese 2013. The latter research has focused on the wall and fortifications, which are indeed spectacular at Plataea.

46 Cartledge 2013: 130-31.

at Plataea. What might tip the balance in favour of a precise reference is the mention of the tombs of the forefathers in the following sentence, which undoubtedly alludes, as in the previous paragraph (3.58), to the funerary monuments of the local fallen soldiers at Plataea: *ικέται γιγνόμεθα ὑμῶν τῶν πατρῶων τάφων*, “we become supplicants before your ancestral tombs”. In an earlier passage, Thucydides (2.71) refers not to the time of the siege of Plataea in 429–427, but to the time of the Lacedaemonian Pausanias who defeated the Persians in 479: he writes of him that, after liberating Greece, he offered *ἐν τῇ Πλαταιῶν ἀγορᾷ ἱερά Διὶ ἔλευθερίῳ*, “in the agora of Plataea a sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios”. This mention shows, it seems to me, that the founding event of the later cult was a single sacrifice: it was performed not on an altar that did not yet exist, but in the very heart of the city in the public square,<sup>47</sup> either on an ephemeral altar, or on an altar, for example, dedicated “to the gods” as is known in many cities. It was only afterwards, between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, that the cult was really installed with a specific *bomos* included in a *hieron*, a “sanctuary” according to the term used by Strabo (9.2.31). In any case, there is nothing in Herodotus either about a possible altar or even about a sacrifice to Zeus, although the absence of mention is not necessarily significant. The historian of the Persian Wars was only interested, as we shall see, in the war dead and their tombs.

The question of a second deity remains, since Thucydides’ expression *theoi homobomioi* is in the plural. From the Hellenistic period onwards, we see the Concord, *Homonoia*, associated with the cult of Zeus Eleutherios, as shown once again by the Glaukon decree, which mentions her three times in association with her *paredra*: there is a *hieron*, mainly of Zeus, with which *Homonoia* is associated, who also shares with him, as one would expect, both the sacrifice and the altar.<sup>48</sup> But can we specify the date of this association? G. Thériault, in his study on the Concord, agrees with Étienne and Piérart in attributing to it a relatively late emergence in Plataea. He insists on the fact that this cult was in any case not as old

47 Prandi 1988: 62, speaks of a “fundamentale sacrificio”.

48 Étienne & Piérart 1975 (*SEG* 61.352).

as the initial one.<sup>49</sup> But curiously he neither quotes nor analyses the somewhat enigmatic expression of Thucydides, *theoi homobomioi*. Yet the same Thériault shows very well, following Jacqueline de Romilly, that the very term *homonoia* (and the ideology that accompanies it) appears for the first time precisely with Thucydides in the context of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>50</sup> It is therefore not impossible, even if the hypothesis must be stated with great caution, that Homonoia was added to Zeus Eleutherios as early as before 427: this would give full meaning to the expression “gods sharing the same altar and common to the Hellenes” at the date of the Plataean siege. After the Hellenistic period, the association of the two deities continued to flourish in the imperial period, in the 2nd c. AD, with epigraphic attestations of the priesthood of “Zeus Eleutherios and Homonoia”, notably in Athenian inscriptions.<sup>51</sup> But we have an even more interesting honorary inscription: dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD, it comes from the city of Plataea and celebrates a *corrector* of Achaia, L. Egnatius Victor Lollianus.<sup>52</sup> Admittedly the stone was moved to Thebes, but it evokes the place where the statue was installed, *παρὰ τῷ Ἐλευθερίῳ Διὶ καὶ τῇ Ὁμονοίᾳ τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, “near Zeus Eleutherios and the Homonoia of the Hellenes”: according to Thériault, the phrase would mean that the statue of Lollianus had been installed in the sanctuary of the two deities,<sup>53</sup> but one cannot exclude that the expression refers to specific objects and not only to the sanctuary itself: but which ones?

49 Thériault 1996: 115. See, more recently, on the addition of the Concord from the Hellenistic period onwards, Chaniotis 2012: 58.

50 Thériault 1996: 7 and n. 18.

51 The documentation is collected by Thériault 1996: 118–29. An example is the dedication found in Sparta, which refers to Ti. Claudius Attalos Andragathos, an Athenian citizen from Synnada in Phrygia (*IG* V.1, 452, now *SEG* 45.280, with S. Follet’s restitution; Hadrianic period): [Ὁ ἱερεὺς τῆς Ὁμονοίας τῶν | [Ἑλλήνων] καὶ τοῦ Ἐλευθερίου [Διὸς] | [καὶ Διὸς Ὀλυμπίου Κλαύδιος Ἄτταλος Ἀνδράγαθος, “the priest of the Homonoia of the Hellenes and of Zeus Eleutherios as well as of Zeus Olympios, Klaudios Attalos Andragathos etc”].

52 *IG* VII 2510. See *PIR*<sup>2</sup> Egnatius 36.

53 Thériault 1996: 123.

This point leads to the next, which concerns the appearance and arrangement of this sanctuary outside the walls and the objects it contained. It is again to Pausanias (9.2.5) that we must turn to understand this. On the altar was engraved, according to him a poem by Simonides preserved by Plutarch,<sup>54</sup> which would tend to lend credence to the idea of an early construction of the altar, even if the engraving need not be contemporary with the writing. But the text of the *Periegetes* is here partially corrupted. There is a gap in the manuscript after the location of the *bomos*: οὐ πόρρω δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων Διὸς ἐστὶν Ἐλευθερίου βωμὸς \*\* τοῦτου μὲν δὴ χαλκοῦ, τοῦ Διὸς δὲ τὸν τε βωμὸν καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα ἐποίησαν λευκοῦ λίθου.<sup>55</sup> It is understood that the altar of Zeus and his statue are made of marble: the text thus confirms the presence of an *agalma* of the god, repeated a little further on (9.2.7) and of which a first mention was necessarily in the lacuna.<sup>56</sup> But one must wonder about the nature of the object placed, in the lacuna, just after the *agalma* of Zeus and which is said to have been made of bronze. Four reconstructions have been proposed so far:<sup>57</sup> a statue of Hermes Chthonios, a statue of Citheron, a statue of Nero himself who became Zeus Eleutherios after AD 67<sup>58</sup> and, finally, an altar of Homonoia. This last proposal is due to Denis Knoepfler, who suggests that such an altar was installed by Hadrian who wanted to embellish the sanctuary, “he who rightly advocated the concord of the Hellenes within the Panhellenion of Athens”.<sup>59</sup> The main justification for this proposal is that restoring βωμὸς at the end of the gap

54 The text of the poem (*Arist.* 19. 6) is as follows: τόνδε ποθ' Ἕλληνες νίκας κράτει, ἔργω Ἄρης, | Πέρσας ἐξελάσαντες ἐλευθέρῃ Ἑλλάδι κοινὸν | ἰδρύσαντο Διὸς βωμὸν ἐλευθερίου, “Here did the Hellenes, flushed with a victory granted by Ares over the routed Persians, together, for Hellas delivered, build an altar of Zeus known as Deliverer” (transl. slightly modified from B. Perrin, Loeb Classical Library, 1914).

55 Text from the Italian edition by Moggi & Osanna 2010.

56 As Knoepfler 2004-2005: 610 rightly points out.

57 As the *apparatus criticus* of the Italian edition shows.

58 For Nero as Zeus Eleutherios, such a cult can be seen in Akraiphia, alongside Zeus Soter, in connection with the granting of freedom in AD 67 to the province of Achaia, as shown in *IG VII* 2713 (Müller 2014: 215). The assimilation is almost made already in AD 61/62 in Athens (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1990, with the mention of a high priest of “Nero Klaudios Kaisar and Zeus Eleutherios, that of the Greeks” (Jung 2006: 360-68).

59 Knoepfler 2004-2005: 611.

causes a repetition and thus a potential jump “from the same to the same” which would explain the omission of an entire line by the copyist. Knoepfler adopts, on the other hand, the reading τοῦτον instead of τούτου for the pronoun, which would thus take up βωμός. His proposed restitution is the following: Διός ἐστὶν Ἐλευθερίου βωμός <καὶ ἄγαλμα – ἔστιν δὲ ἐνθαῦτα καὶ τῆς Ὁμονοίας βωμός -> · τοῦτον μὲν δὴ χαλκοῦ, τοῦ Διός δὲ τὸν τε βωμὸν καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα ἐποίησαν λευκοῦ λίθου. Despite the syntactically satisfactory nature of the restitution, is it a likely conclusion to consider that there was a bronze altar in this shrine? The proposition seems rather difficult to accept, for lack of obvious parallels, and the most likely bronze object remains a statue representing Homonoia. But the hypothesis that it could be a statue clashes with the pronoun, τούτου or τοῦτον, which is difficult to understand, and which should then be corrected to τοῦτο in the neuter, even if the term is not found in the manuscripts. I would therefore propose to restore: Διός ἐστὶν Ἐλευθερίου βωμός <καὶ ἄγαλμα – ἔστιν δὲ ἐνθαῦτα καὶ τῆς Ὁμονοίας ἄγαλμα -> τοῦτο μὲν δὴ χαλκοῦ etc.<sup>60</sup>

Therefore, it seems to me that there might have been two statues, one of which was of Zeus (from what date we do not know), but only one altar that made Zeus Eleutherios and Homonoia *homobomioi* gods, and this, perhaps as early as the time of Thucydides, even if one must remain very cautious about the introduction of the Concord. This altar received sacrifices, but it was Zeus who was their main recipient in the texts. Plutarch points out that “down to the present time (...) the Plataeans sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios for the victory”, ἧ καὶ νῦν ἔτι (...) θύουσι τῷ Ἐλευθερίῳ Διὶ Πλαταιεῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς νίκης (*Arist.* 19.7). This passage incidentally tells us that not everyone sacrificed to Zeus, contrary to what the idea of a Panhellenic practice might suggest. One can speak of a delegation of the *thusia* to the Plataeans, which fits perfectly with the fact that the prize of excellence, the *aristeion*, was given up to them after the battle. In another passage, the author traces this attribution of the performance of the sacrifice to the Plataeans back to the (false) decree of Aristides. They were, so to speak, the representatives of the Greeks in the ceremony from the moment a *thusia* was performed. This sacrifice took place every year on

60 I am aware that restoring *agalma* instead of *bomos* makes the mistake less understandable without the “jump from the same to the same”.



the anniversary of the battle, that is to say on the 3rd (or 4th) Boedromion in the Attic calendar, the equivalent according to Plutarch of the Boeotian 25th Panamos (Plut. *Arist.* 19.8).<sup>61</sup> It was also on this anniversary that, according to the same text, τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐν Πλαταιαῖς ἀθροίζεται συνέδριον, “the *synedrion* of the Hellenes met at Plataea”. To reconcile all the data transmitted by the tradition and also include the *dialogos* in the proceedings, Wallace suggests that these festive events (annual sacrifice and meeting, *dialogos* every four years, *Eleutheria* every four years) took place from the end of Metageitnion and continued in Boedromion to culminate in the meeting of the *synedrion* on the 3rd (or 4th) of that month, the anniversary day.<sup>62</sup> In any case, judging from the regular holding of the *Eleutheria* organised by the Hellenes, this is a fascinating resurgence at regular intervals of an institution, the *synedrion*, which never seems to have really disappeared since the Congress of Corinth in the 5th c. BC, and then the League of Corinth of 337, when it was revived under the aegis of Philip of Macedon. But, given the evidence of the imperial period, the meeting itself may have been reactivated under Hadrian in connection with the creation of the Panhellenion, of which it may now have been a mere emanation.

In any case, the sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios is to be distinguished from the ceremonies and sacrifice that took place in honour of the heroes who died in battle.

### III. The graves of the dead heroes

I now come to the memorials that were to arouse the most emotion in travellers and spectators: the graves of the warriors.

Before mentioning those of the Greeks, it is worth recalling that in the time of Pausanias the Periegetes (9.2.2), the supposed tomb of Mardonios, the defeated Persian general killed in 479, was still being shown.<sup>63</sup> It was situated on the right side of the road leading from Plataea to Thebes,

61 On the date of the battle and the correspondence between the Athenian and Boeotian calendars, see Roesch 1982: 37-39.

62 Wallace 2011: 154.

63 On Mardonios, see Wiesehöfer 2022.

which explains its location by Nikolaos Papachatzis to the north-west of the modern village of Kriekouki (act. Erythres).<sup>64</sup> Its location does not seem to have a direct relationship with the location of the Persian camp, since the latter was supposed to be located beyond the Asopos.<sup>65</sup> This monument, or rather the idea that it was in the vicinity, was still important in 1955-1956, when William K. Pritchett was told that the church of the Anargyroi, located west of Kriekouki, had been built some ten years earlier on ancient blocks and then moved because the elders of the community objected that “this was an ancient monument locally identified with the tomb of Mardonios”,<sup>66</sup> which they probably considered ominous. In the case of Mardonios, as Herodotus explains (9.79), the Spartan general Pausanias had refused to dismember the body of his opponent, a totally barbaric practice. The result was that the body of Mardonios disappeared (9.84) and many people in different places claimed to have buried it. Only in Pausanias (9.2.2) does his tomb, *mnèma*, emerge on the Plataean ground, perhaps erected by his son Artontes with the help of Greeks paid for the occasion. As for the hero who had killed the Persian and who bore the name of Aeimnestos (Hdt 9.64), the memory of his deed was celebrated through another monument visible in the precincts of Plataea, the temple of Athena Areia, which in turn appears to be an offering intended to celebrate the victory and which was erected thanks to 80 talents taken from the booty (Plut. *Arist.* 20.3).<sup>67</sup> At the feet of the

64 Papachatzis 1981: 30 n. 2.

65 Konecny 2022: 205-8.

66 Pritchett 1957: 14-15. An Australian team conducted a quick surface survey in 2018 at this site, without identifying anything conclusive: Jones 2019: 175-82.

67 With commentary by Knoepfler 2004-2005: 612. This interpretation is only valid if one retains the *ῥκοδόμησαν* reading, ‘have erected’, instead of the one retained by commentators in general *ἀνῥκοδόμησαν*. Jung 2006: 257 and n. 109 writes that it is not possible to decide.

statue of Athena, Pausanias (9.4) had seen an *eikon*, “portrait statue” according to Knoepfler’s term,<sup>68</sup> of this Aeimnestos (rather than Arimnestos, a misreading of the Periegetes),<sup>69</sup> who was the commander of the Plataeans (rather than a Spartan) in the fight against Mardonios and had even killed the latter.

The tombs of the Greek fighters, on the other hand, were situated, as Pausanias reminds us (9.2.5), very close to the entrance of the city, just outside its walls, and the tomb “common to the Greeks” was more precisely located not far from the altar of Zeus. What Pausanias observes, however, corresponds only imperfectly with what Herodotus describes, as some tombs may have disappeared or been reorganised over time. It is clear that there were several collective graves, but the distribution differs according to the sources, as for the trophies. According to the Periegetes, there were three: one common to the Greeks, one for the Athenians, one for the Lacedaemonians. Strabo (9.2.31) notes without further elaboration that the ταφῆ δημοσία were still shown in his time. Isocrates (*Plat.* 61) refers, between 373 and 371, generally to the honours due to fellow Greeks who died on the battlefield. As for Thucydides (3.58), in the Plataean debate of 427, he of course only mentions the tombs of the Lacedaemonians since it is a speech addressed to them. But, according to Herodotus (9.85),<sup>70</sup> there were in fact many more: three for the Lacedaemonians who had buried their dead according to their personal status, the *irenes* or soldiers aged 20, the Spartans and the helots; one for the people of Tegea; one for the Athenians; two for the people of Megara and Phleious, that is to say, at least seven tombs full of remains, but some cities also erected cenotaphs, wishing to conceal the shame of not having taken part in the battle. The Aeginetans are said to have built a fictitious tomb ten years after Plataea! This passage from Herodotus, as we know, aroused the deep anger of Plutarch, who saw in it a sign of Herodotean

68 Knoepfler 2004-2005: 612.

69 Knoepfler 2004-2005: 612 has rightly made the comparison between Pausanias’ text and that of Herodotus (9.64.2, which mentions Aeimnestos): he has thus rectified the name, but on the mistake the most probable hypothesis seems to me that Pausanias misread the name on the basis of the statue and took an E for a P which can be explained quite easily

70 About these graves as a symbol of disunity, see Buraselis in this volume (pp. 8-9).

‘malignity’, as the title of one of his treatises indicates.<sup>71</sup> The presence of the epigram of Simonides engraved on the altar, which celebrates the glory of the Hellenes as a whole, “flushed with a victory granted by Ares” (*Arist.* 19.7),<sup>72</sup> seems to him to show that it was indeed a Panhellenic victory and not that of only three cities, Athens, Sparta and Tegea. Plutarch is obviously not the first to retain from the experience of the Persian Wars the idea of a triumphant Panhellenism worthy of celebration: the revival of this idea is rooted precisely in the poems of Simonides himself, of which a series of fragments containing a Plataean elegy dating from 478 or 477 were published in 1992.<sup>73</sup> The Panhellenism intrinsic to the Persian Wars that Plutarch chooses to show rather than the enduring conflicts of the Greeks, especially at Plataea, fits perfectly with the Panhellenic ideology proper to imperial Greece under Roman rule. This epigram was not the only one, and Pausanias mentions, for his part, those that appeared on the two *taphe* of the Athenians and Lacedaemonians, whose text has probably been preserved in the *Palatine Anthology*.<sup>74</sup> Archaeologically, the excavations carried out by Spyropoulos in 1972 revealed, in the Makris field already mentioned, not only a monument that could be identified with the altar, but also cist tombs: while most of them can be dated to the first centuries AD, another one is characterised by the presence of the remains of nine to ten skeletons placed there after the decomposition of the bodies. It could be interpreted, but without any certainty, as containing the bones of some of the dead of the battle transferred there from their initial burial.<sup>75</sup> The only thing that can be said for sure is that the place of discovery is compatible with the location given by Pausanias for the altar and the tombs.<sup>76</sup>

71 *De Herod. Mal.* 872f-873b.

72 A slightly different version is found in the *Palatine Anthology* (*Anth. Pal.* 6.50). See Jung 2006: 265-66.

73 POxy 3965: see Boedeker & Sider 2001, especially Rutherford’s linear commentary 2001: 38-50, on fragments W2 10-18. See also Jung 2006: 225-41.

74 *Anth. Pal.* 7.251 and 253, with the commentary by Aloni 2001: 98-99.

75 Spyropoulos 1973a and 1973b; Papachatzis 1981, 33, n. 3.

76 On the other hand, the sarcophagi illustrated by Papachatzis 1981: 32-33 (figs. 15 and 16), scattered to the south-west in the vicinity of gate 5 (map p. 28), certainly have nothing to do with the tombs of the Plataean warriors.

These public graves were the object of exceptional celebrations, performed every year, again by the Plataeans. Deborah Boedeker has remarkably shown that the dead of Plataea were the object of a progressive heroization, the ground for which is present as early as the 5th c. BC, notably in Simonides.<sup>77</sup> These ceremonies are mentioned by several authors, starting with Thucydides (3.58.4): to the dead were offered, according to his testimony, clothes, ritual offerings and the first fruits of the harvests carried out on the Plataean territory: ἐσθήμασί τε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις νομίμοις, ὅσα τε ἡ γῆ ἡμῶν ἀνεδίδου ὥραϊα, πάντων ἀπαρχὰς ἐπιφέροντες. They were to be honoured, τιμᾶν, as befits dead heroes. The garments were to be burned or laid together somewhere in the sanctuary.<sup>78</sup> A little later, Isocrates refers to the “heroes and gods” who may no longer receive the traditional honours due to them if the Plataeans are subjected to Theban law (*Plat.* 61).

But the most eloquent description of the ceremony in honour of these heroes is found much later, in Plutarch, who certainly witnessed the event (*Arist.* 21). This ceremony took place not on the anniversary of the battle, as one might expect, but on the 16th of Maimakterion (equivalent to the month Alalkomenios among the Boeotians), in other words at the end of November-beginning of December. Why such a date? It is not impossible that the monuments themselves took some time to be erected, after the bodies had been collected and sorted, and that the date of commemoration was the date of their erection. The ceremony begins with a procession that is supposed to originate in the heart of the city near the *grammatophulakeion*, the archive building, from which the archon has taken a hydria. This procession crosses the city and ends with two very intense moments at the graves of the dead, which clearly appeal to the emotions of the spectators:<sup>79</sup> on the one hand, the purification of the grave markers by the archon, who “washes off with his own hands the gravestones, and anoints them with myrrh”, αὐτὸς ἀπολούει τε τὰς στήλας καὶ μύρω χρίει; on the other hand, the sacrifice of a black bull by the same magistrate transformed into a sacrificer for the occasion, since

77 Boedeker 2001: 152-53.

78 Ekroth 2002: 179 and 202.

79 On emotions and ‘emotional communities’ that are connected through cults and tributes paid to the war dead, see Chaniotis 2012.

he slits the beast's throat on an *ad hoc* pyre, which cannot be the altar of Zeus even though one of the prayers is addressed to the latter. Two tones emerge from this spectacular description, the military tone,<sup>80</sup> with the trumpet sounding "the signal for battle" and the sword held by the archon, and the funerary tone, which is very marked thanks to two elements: the colours evoked (including the black of the sacrificed animal) and the use of the verb ἐναγίζειν. The two tones are joined in the purple colour of the archon's tunic which signals that the honoured dead were soldiers. The climax of the ritual consists in the bloodshed and drunk, at the banquet, by the dead heroes themselves during the αἵμακουρία, the blood offering. The spilled blood serves to invite the heroes to participate in the funeral banquet.<sup>81</sup> As Gunnel Ekroth has well demonstrated, the verb ἐναγίζειν, which is particularly prevalent in imperial writers, not only implies a sacrifice to the dead, but also the idea of an ancient cult for fallen soldiers in more remote periods.<sup>82</sup> This may have been a way to show the glory of a vanished past,<sup>83</sup> which fits perfectly with the Plutarchean discourse and the reactivation of the memory of Plataea under the empire. The interest of the comparison between Plutarch and Thucydides is that one perceives an evolution in the ritual itself: there is absolutely no question of bloody sacrifice in the classical period and there is no reason for Thucydides to have disguised the nature of the ritual. In other words, the *enagismos* is likely to be a later, perhaps imperial, addition.

## Conclusion

To conclude: just as there is a progressive stratification of the meanings attributed to the battle of Plataea, so there are changes in the objects and ceremonies serving as concrete support to this memory of the event,

80 Ekroth 2002: 96 n. 310.

81 On the verb ἐναγίζειν, the αἵμακουρία and the banquet offered to the dead, see Ekroth 2002: 102 and 267.

82 Ekroth 2002: 96.

83 As Ekroth 2002: 124 writes, "the link between *enagizein* sacrifices and the war dead could be seen as an attempt to evoke the glorious past of the independent *poleis* that did not exist any longer"; also, see Ekroth 2002: 262 n. 229.

which I have deliberately focused on here. The trophies, which are probably at first ephemeral monuments celebrating a victory, are monumentalized before 380 BC to become material manifestations of Panhellenic values; the punctual sacrifice to Zeus Eleutherios on the agora is perpetuated thanks to the construction of a marble altar and is enriched by the addition of a goddess, Homonoia, at least in the Hellenistic period but perhaps as early as the end of the 5th c. BC; two commemorations, the *Eleutheria* and the *dialogos*, further crystallize the memorial significance of the battle, perhaps as early as the end of the 4th c. BC for the contest and the end of the 2nd c. BC for the *dialogos*; finally, the tombs of the dead heroes are the object of sacrifices that seem to change in nature between the 5th c. BC and the imperial period, with the ceremony of the *enagismos* so well described by Plutarch. We can see here a clear division in this evolution: if the form of the monuments undergoes modifications during the classical period, the modes of commemoration change from the Hellenistic period onwards into the imperial period. In other words, after a while, the monuments themselves were left untouched and one of them, the trophy of Pausanias, may even have become a kind of generic monument celebrating victory without distinction between cities. As Susan E. Alcock points out in a more general reflection, “the Persian War battlefields (...) do not appear to become a subject for monumental embellishment. Existing memorials, not fresh elaborations, were taken to be the acceptable foci of attention”.<sup>84</sup> The monuments were thus treated as relics, so to speak, around which an impressive number of commemorations were organised, serving to regularly renew the meaning to be given to *eleutheria* and *homonoia*.

## ABBREVIATIONS

PCG: *Poetae Comici Graeci*, eds. R. Kassel & C. Austin, here vol. VII. Berlin 1989.

RO: P.J. Rhodes & R. Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*. Oxford 2003.

84 Alcock 2002: 79.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alcock, S.E. 2002. *Archaeologies of the Greek Past. Landscape, Monuments, and Memories*. Cambridge.
- Aloni, A. 2001. 'The Proem of Simonides' Plataea Elegy and the Circumstances of its Performance' in Boedeker & Sider 2001, 86-105.
- Bencivenni, A. 2017. 'Decreto onorario del *koinon synedrion* dei Greci per Glaucone' in C. Antonetti & S. De Vido (eds.) *Iscrizioni greche*. Rome, 270-74.
- Boedeker, D. 2001. 'Paths to Heroization at Plataea' in Boedeker & Sider 2001, 148-63.
- Boedeker, D. & D. Sider 2001. *The new Simonides: context of praise and desire*. Oxford.
- Buraselis, K. 1984. 'Γλαύκων Ετεοκλέους Αθηναίος μετηλλαχώς' *ΑΕφ* 1982, 136-59.
- Cartledge, P. 2013. *After Thermopylae: the oath of Plataea and the end of the Graeco-Persian wars*. Oxford.
- Chaniotis, A. 2012. 'The ritualized commemoration of war in the Hellenistic city: memory, identity, emotion' in P.A. Low *et al.* (eds.) *Cultures of commemoration. War memorials, ancient and modern*. Oxford, 41-62.
- Ekroth, G. 2002. *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods*. Liège.
- Étienne, R. & M. Piérart. 1975. 'Un décret du *koinon* des Hellènes à Platées en l'honneur de Glaucon, fils d'Étéoclês, d'Athènes' *BCH* 99, 51-75.
- Jacquemin, A., D. Mulliez & G. Rougemont 2012. *Choix d'inscriptions de Delphes*. Athens.
- Jones, R.T. 2019. *The Prospect of Reconstructing Ancient Battlefields in the 21st Century: A Case Study Using the Battle of Plataea (479 B.C.E.)*. Diss. Newcastle University (Australia): <https://nova.newcastle.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:36249>
- Jung, M. 2006. *Marathon und Plataiai: zwei Perserschlachten als "lieux de mémoire" im antiken Griechenland*. Göttingen.
- Knoepfler, D. 2004-2005. 'Épigraphie et histoire des cités grecques' *Annuaire du Collège de France* 2004-2005, 605-24.
- Knoepfler, D. 2019. 'Les voyages de Monsieur Pausanias en Béotie. Le regard de l'observateur et la mémoire de l'érudit dans le livre IX de la



- Périégèsis*' in T. Lucas, C. Müller & A.-C. Oddon-Panissié (eds.) *La Béotie de l'archaïsme à l'époque romaine: frontières, territoires, paysages*. Paris, 26-73.
- Konecny, A. 2022. 'The Battle of Plataiai. Topography and Tactics' in Konecny & Sekunda 2022, 167-210.
- Konecny, A. & N. Sekunda (eds.) 2022. *The Battle of Plataiai 479 BC*. Vienna.
- Konecny, A. & V. Aravantinos & R. Marchese 2013. *Plataiai. Archäologie und Geschichte einer boiotischen Polis*. Vienna.
- Low, P.A. & G.J. Oliver 2012. 'Comparing cultures of commemoration in ancient and modern societies' in P.A. Low *et al.* (eds.) *Cultures of commemoration. War memorials, ancient and modern*. Oxford, 1-11.
- Ma, J. 2008. 'Chaironeia 338: topographies of commemoration' *JHS* 128, 72-91.
- Moggi, M. & M. Osanna 2010. *Guida della Grecia. 9 Libro IX. La Beozia/Pausania*. Milan.
- Müller, C. 2014. 'Les Romains et la Grèce égéenne du Ier s. av. J.-C. au Ier s. apr. J.-C.: un monde en transition' *Pallas* 96, 193-216.
- Müller, C. 2019. 'L'empreinte de Sylla: les conséquences de la première guerre mithridatique sur les territoires et paysages béotiens' in T. Lucas *et al.* (eds.) *La Béotie de l'archaïsme à l'époque romaine: frontières, territoires, paysages*. Paris, 155-77.
- Nora, P. 1997 (1984). 'Entre mémoire et histoire, la problématique des lieux' in P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris 1997, 23-43.
- Papachatzis, N. 1981. *Pausaniou Ellados Periegesis. 5. Boiotika kai Phokika*. Athens.
- Patay-Horváth, A. 2022. 'Commemorating the Victory' in Konecny & Sekunda 2022, 249-62.
- Prandi, L. 1988. *Platea: momenti e problemi della storia di una polis*. Padova.
- Pritchett, W.K. 1957. 'New Light on Plataia' *AJA* 61, 9-28.
- Pritchett, W.K. 1982. 'The Roads of Plataiai' in W.K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography, Part IV (passes)*. Berkeley & London, 88-102.
- Rabe, B. 2008. *TROPAIA; τροπή und σκῦλα - Entstehung, Funktion und Bedeutung des griechischen Tropaions*. Rahden.
- Rigsby, K. 2020. 'A Victory List from Cos' *Nikephoros* 23, 171-74.
- Robert, L. 1929. 'Recherches épigraphiques' *REA* 31, 13-20.
- Robert, L. 1949. 'Un athlète milésien' *Hellenica* VII, 117-25.

- Robert, L. 1969. 'Inscriptions d'Athènes et de la Grèce centrale' *AE*, 1-58.
- Robertson, N. 1986. 'A Point of Precedence at Plataia: the Dispute between Athens and Sparta over Leading the Procession' *Hesperia* 55, 88-102.
- Roesch, P. 1982. *Études béotiennes*. Paris.
- Rutherford, I. 2001. 'The New Simonides. Toward a Commentary' in Boedeker & Sider 2001, 33-54.
- Schachter, A. 1994. *Cults of Boiotia* 3. London.
- Shepherd, W. 2019. *The Persian War in Herodotus and other ancient voices*. Oxford.
- Spawforth, A.J.S. 2012. *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge.
- Spyropoulos, T.G. 1973a. 'Εἰδήσεις ἐκ Βοιωτίας' *AAA* 6, 375-95.
- Spyropoulos, T.G. 1973b. 'Some Boiotian Discoveries' *Teiresias* 3.1, 2-6.
- Stephenson, P. 2016. *The Serpent Column: A Cultural Biography*. Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190209063.001.0001>.
- Thériault, G. 1996. *Le culte d'Homonoia dans les cités grecques*. Lyon.
- van Nijf, O. 2005. 'Aristos Hellenôn: succès sportif et identité grecque dans la Grèce romaine' *Metis* 3, 271-94. <http://books.openedition.org/editionsehess/2159> (last accessed on 06.03.2023).
- Wallace, S. 2011. 'The Significance of Plataia for Greek *Eleutheria* in the Early Hellenistic Period' in A. Erskine & L. Llewellyn-Jones (eds.) *Creating a Hellenistic world*. Swansea, 147-76.
- West, W.C. 1969. 'The Trophies of the Persian Wars' *CPh* 64, 7-19.
- Wiesehöfer, J. 2022. 'Mardonios' in Konecny & Sekunda 2022, 71-78.