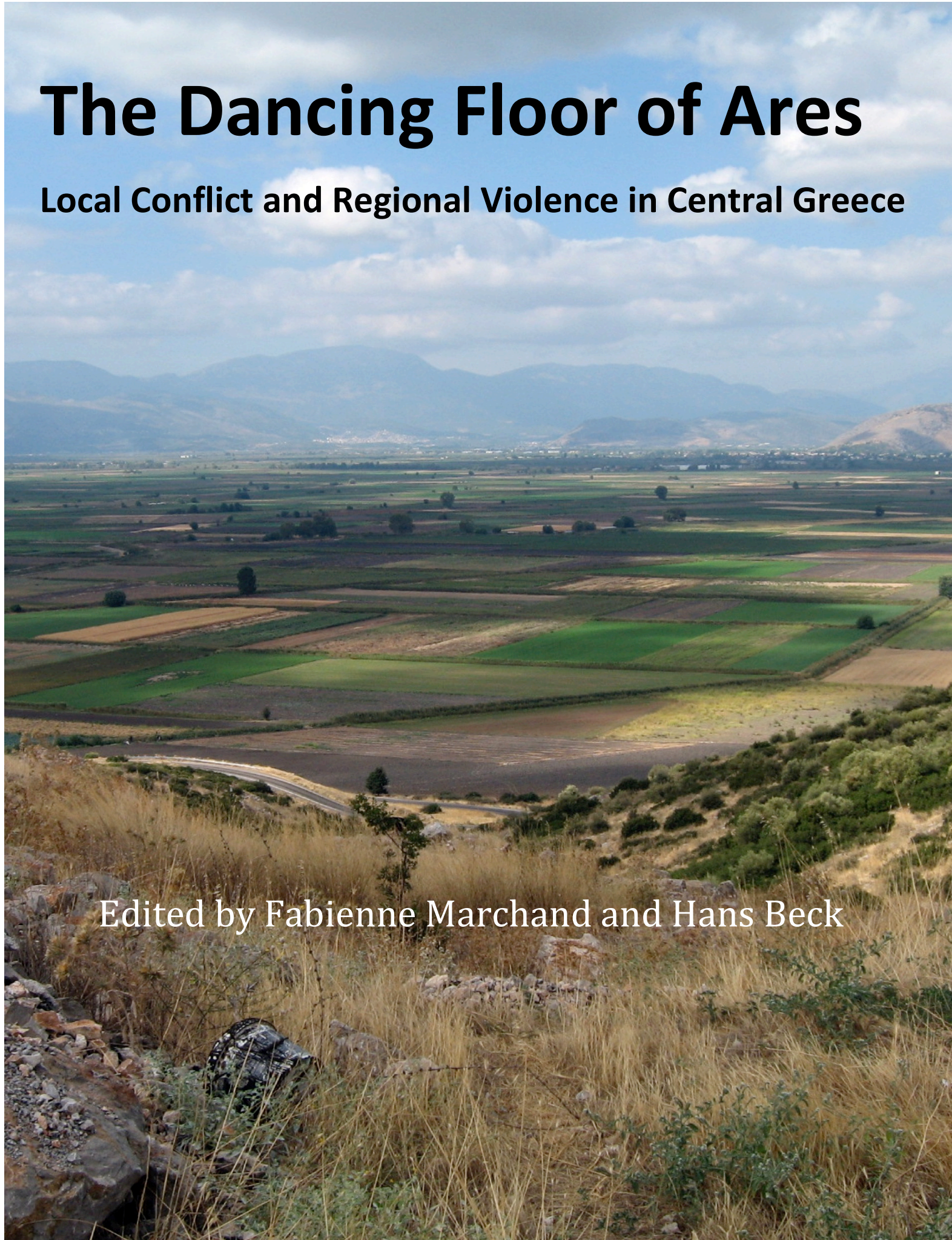


The Dancing Floor of Ares

Local Conflict and Regional Violence in Central Greece

Edited by Fabienne Marchand and Hans Beck



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Preface

The present collection of papers stems from two one-day workshops, the first at McGill University on November 9, 2017, followed by another at the Université de Fribourg on May 24, 2018. Both meetings were part of a wider international collaboration between two projects, the *Parochial Polis* directed by Hans Beck in Montreal and now at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, and Fabienne Marchand's Swiss National Science Foundation *Old and New Powers: Boiotian International Relations from Philip II to Augustus*. The collaboration was further facilitated by a Swiss National Science Foundation Short Visit Fellowship that brought Fabienne Marchand as a Visiting Professor to McGill University in the fall of 2017.

Famously dubbed, according to Plutarch, the “Dancing Floor of Ares” by the 4th century Theban general Epaminondas (Plut. *Life of Marcellus* 21.2), the region of Boiotia hosted throughout Antiquity a series of battles that shaped the history of the ancient world, such as the battle of Plataia – which ended the Persian Wars in 479 – and the battle of Chaironeia, won in 338 by the Macedonian king Philip II and his son Alexander the Great over a coalition of Greek states. The present volume is devoted to different dances of Ares. Rather than discussing seminal battles through the lens of military history, it investigates regional conflicts and local violence in Central Greece, with a particular focus on the region Boiotia, through the complementary approaches, conceptual approaches and synergies offered by the two research projects. This double perspective allows us to explore the crucial role played by conflict in the shaping of the Boiotian experience. At the same time, the region's relations with various foreign powers (the Achaian *koinon*, the Macedonian kings, the Romans among others) as well as with its neighbours, such as Athens, Lokris, and Euboea, become visible. Organised as a series of thematic studies involving mythology, genealogy, federalism, political institutions, and geopolitical strategies, our inquiry starts with the Mycenaean period, and runs down through the Classical and Hellenistic periods to conclude with the involvement of the Romans in Central Greece.

The Montreal workshop received funding from the Anneliese Maier Research Prize that was awarded to Hans Beck by the German Humboldt Foundation, as well as from the John MacNaughton Chair of Classics, which he held at McGill University at the time. The Fribourg workshop was supported by the Université de Fribourg Fonds du Centenaire and the Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines. The respective teams of research assistants in Montreal and Fribourg did a magnificent job to turn both workshops into a wonderful experience: Corey Straub, Cyrena Gerardi, Emilie Lucas, Daniel Whittle, and Roy van Wijk. As the papers were prepared for publication, we received insightful comments from the anonymous peer-reviewers. Tim Howe offered helpful advice to improve the manuscript of this first volume in the new AHB Supplement Series. To all we offer our heartfelt thanks.

Fabienne Marchand and Hans Beck

May 2019

Mythologizing Conflict: Memory and the Minyae

Chandra Giroux¹

Abstract: This paper seeks to explore how one mythological people of Boiotia, the Minyae, were recast by another, namely, the Thebans. Theban reworking of Boiotian legends shaped the Minyae as aggressors and was used both to justify future Theban expansionist policy into the Minyae hometown of Orchomenos, and to later define the historical narrative of Boiotian society. I wish to suggest that the myth of the Minyae was not just a story for nationalistic pride, or one that only explains a past war. Instead, we can take this one step further and argue that the myth was used to justify future Theban policy against Orchomenos through the creation of a societal collective memory of an aggressive “other”. With this view, I will show how conflict can be mythologized for the creation of a cultural memory that fuels both the tension and the separation of identities between these two *poleis*, and that ultimately affects the future narrative of the history of Boiotia.

Keywords: Boiotia, Thebes, Theban Orchomenos, Minyae, Herakles, Erginos, “other” / “othering,” Collective Memory, Mythology, Narrative Constructions, Identity

In the first century CE, Diodorus Siculus tells us an interesting tale of the youthful Herakles. He says,

Herakles, because of his upbringing and education, and especially because he had been thoroughly taught and laboured in physical gymnasia, surpassed everyone in bodily strength and was famous for his nobility of spirit. When he was at the prime of youth, he first freed Thebes, offering thanks, as was befitting to his fatherland. Since the Thebans were under the rule of Erginos, king of the Minyae, and were paying an ordained yearly tribute, Herakles, not intimidated by the superiority of the overlords, dared to accomplish a famous deed. For when the Minyae representatives arrived to demand the tribute and insolently exacted the payment, Herakles cast them out of the city after mutilating them. When Erginos

¹ I must begin by thanking many people who commented on this paper. First, Hans Beck, Fabienne Marchand, and the audience of the *Dancing Floor of Ares* workshop at McGill, particularly John M. Fossey, all offered indispensable advice on the initial stages of this paper to help sharpen my thoughts. While all translations are my own, William Gladhill graciously took the time to edit them. I am also very grateful for the generous revisions provided by Albert Schachter, without whom several key points would have been ineffectual. Lastly, I would like to thank the reviewer for the *Ancient History Bulletin* for their insightful and constructive feedback that led to the improvement of this paper.

demanded the one responsible, Kreon, the ruler of the Thebans, panicked by the burden of Erginos' authority, was prepared to surrender the culprit of the accusations. But Herakles, having persuaded the young men to free their fatherland, he gathered from the temples suits of armour affixed to their walls, which their ancestors had dedicated to the gods as spoils. For it was not possible to find throughout the city any personal weaponry on account of the fact that the Minyae had disarmed it so that those throughout Thebes might undertake no consideration for revolution (4.10.2-4).²

This narrative presents a dichotomy between powerful overlords who are superior and insolent, against one youthful demi-god who is prepared to fight for the freedom of his homeland against all the odds. It is a powerful vision, an underdog story that sets the tone for the dramatic Theban fight for liberation. In another bizarre anecdote, we have the descendants of Minyas, the founder of Orchomenos and the Minyae, described in Plutarch's *Greek Questions*:

They say that the daughters of Minyas – Leukippe, Arsinoe, and Alkathoe – having been driven mad, desired human flesh and drew lots for their children. With Leukippe being chosen to hand over her son Hippiasos, they tore him apart. Their husbands, because they were ill-dressed as a result of their grief and suffering, are called “Psoloeis”, and the women are called “Oleiai”, that is, “deadly ones”. And even now the Orchomenians call women from this family the same thing. And a flight and pursuit of them happens yearly during the Agrionia by a sword-wielding priest of Dionysos. It is permitted to kill these women if they are captured, and during our time, Zoilos, the priest, killed one (*Greek Questions* 38).³

Plutarch's account demonizes the Minyae by describing them as insane, cannibalistic, and murderers. This is another good tale, one that gathers force when combined with that of

² ὁ δ' Ἡρακλῆς τραφεῖς καὶ παιδευθεῖς καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τοῖς γυμνασίοις διαπονηθεὶς ἐγένετο ῥώμη τε σώματος πολὺ προέχων τῶν ἄλλων ἀπάντων καὶ ψυχῆς λαμπρότητι περιβόητος, ὅς γε τὴν ἡλικίαν ἔφηβος ὢν πρῶτον μὲν ἠλευθέρωσε τὰς Θήβας, ἀποδιδούς ὡς πατρίδι (3) τὰς προσηκούσας χάριτας. ὑποτεταγμένων γὰρ τῶν Θηβαίων Ἑργίνω τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν Μινυῶν, καὶ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ὠρισμένους φόρους τελούντων, οὐ καταπλαγεῖς τὴν τῶν δεδουλωμένων ὑπεροχὴν ἐτόλμησε πρᾶξιν ἐπιτελέσαι περιβόητον· τοὺς γὰρ παραγενομένους τῶν Μινυῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπαίτησιν τῶν δασμῶν καὶ μεθ' ὕβρεως εἰσπραττουένους (4) ἀκρωτηριάσας ἐξέβαλεν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως. Ἑργίνου δ' ἐξαιτουόντος τὸν αἴτιον, Κρέων βασιλεύων τῶν Θηβαίων, καταπλαγεῖς τὸ βάρος τῆς ἐξουσίας, ἔτοιμος ἦν ἐκδιδόναι τὸν αἴτιον τῶν ἐγκλημάτων. ὁ δ' Ἡρακλῆς πείσας τοὺς ἡλικιώτας ἐλευθεροῦν τὴν πατρίδα, κατέσπασεν ἐκ τῶν ναῶν τὰς προσηλωμένας πανοπλίας, ἃς οἱ πρόγονοι σκῦλα τοῖς θεοῖς ἦσαν ἀνατεθεικότες· οὐ γὰρ ἦν εὐρεῖν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἰδιωτικὸν ὄπλον διὰ τὸ τοὺς Μινύας παρωπλικένας τὴν πόλιν, ἵνα μηδεμίαν λαμβάνωσιν οἱ (5) κατὰ τὰς Θήβας ἀποστάσεως ἔννοιαν.

³ Τὰς Μινύου θυγατέρας φασὶ Λευκίππην καὶ Ἀρσινόην καὶ Ἀλκαθόην μανείσας ἀνθρωπίνων ἐπιθυμῆσαι κρεῶν καὶ διαλαχεῖν περὶ τῶν τέκνων· Λευκίππης λαχούσης παρασεῖν Ἴππασον τὸν υἱὸν διασπάσασθαι κληθῆναι τοὺς μὲν ἄνδρας αὐτῶν δυσσεματοῦντας ὑπὸ λύπης καὶ πένθους “Ψολόεις,” αὐτὰς δὲ “Ὀλείας” οἷον ὀλοάς· καὶ μέχρι νῦν Ὀρχομένιοι τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους οὕτω καλοῦσι. καὶ γίνεται παρ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν τοῖς Ἀγριωνίοις φυγὴ καὶ δίωξις αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱερέως τοῦ Διονύσου ξίφος ἔχοντος. ἔξεστι δὲ τὴν καταληφθεῖσαν ἀνελεῖν, καὶ ἀνεῖλεν ἐφ' ἡμῶν Ζωίλος ὁ ἱερεύς.

Diodorus and other ancient writers who describe the Minyae. From these accounts, we are meant to see this ancient people in a negative light – beyond civilized – one to be both feared and rightly prosecuted for their actions. But is it possible to see beyond these narratives? Can we, instead, view them as the artificial result of a victor crafting a negative picture of the people with whom they were in conflict and thus justifying their actions?

This article argues that the memory of the Minyae was the victim of mythologized conflict by the Thebans used to legitimize their movements in the Boiotian arena. I am proposing first to add to Albert Schachter’s article *Creating a Legend: the war between Thebes and Orchomenos*. In this work, Schachter traces aspects of the myth of the Minyae to argue both that Thebes and Orchomenos really did go to war in the sixth century and that in the fourth century Thebes adjusted the details of the story to make it reflect their recent acts to instill a feeling of pride in their youth and to transport their leaders into the heroic age.⁴ I wish to suggest, however, that the myth of the Minyae was not just a story for nationalistic pride, nor one that only explains a past war. I believe that we can take this one step further and argue that the myth is used to justify Theban foreign policy against Orchomenos through the manipulation of local memory to create an aggressive “other”. The success of this collective memory is made evident through late descriptions of the Minyae like those above. With this view, I hope to show how conflict can be mythologized for the creation of a cultural memory that fuels both the tension and the separation of identities between these two *poleis*.

Second, alongside Schachter’s work, are Angela Ganter’s studies on mythology and identities in Boiotia. Ganter focuses on local myths and their importance to the creation of landscapes of memory and, more significantly for her work, Boiotian *ethne*.⁵ She stresses the preservation of local *poleis* identities, the tension that this creates with Theban constructions in relation to regional ethnicity, and what this means for the regional identity of the Boiotians and the local Thebans.⁶ This article will thus aim to connect Schachter’s thesis of a real battle reimagined through myth with Ganter’s work on *ethne* by suggesting that this myth can be seen as an active battle on an imaginary plane. It is a rally cry against the Orchomenians by the Thebans, one which not only establishes the identity of the Theban *polis*, but which does so by looking outwards and creating an “other” through the *topos* of the fight for freedom.

To establish this, this article will examine four themes to collect evidence for the strategic manipulation of Theban memory. It will first briefly look at Orchomenos to situate the Minyae

⁴ Schachter 2014a: 84. Similarly, Mackil (2013: 167), argues that, “This myth can only be read as a way of making sense of the past. of the (correctly) remembered shared use of the sanctuary of Poseidon at Onchestos, of Theban supremacy, and of Orchomenos’s resistance to it.”

⁵ Ganter 2014. See also her 2006 monograph (published under the name Kühr), *Als Kadmos nach Boiotien kam*, especially pages 274-285 for Orchomenos and Thebes. For a discussion on this and its significance to scholarship see Beck 2014: 21-22.

⁶ Ganter 2014: 238, 231. Larson (2007) and Mackil (2013) also cover Boiotia and the development of *ethnos*. See Franchi’s work (2015 and 2016) on the conflict between Phokis and Thessaly and its subsequent retelling of the past for a similar discussion of evolving narratives in Boiotia that adapt myth and memory to fit current political needs, desires, and aims. For examples focused on the reworkings of Theban myth, see Berman 2002, 2004, and 2007. For another conflict in central Greece and its possible invention in later times, see Robertson (1978), who explores the possibility of the narrative of the First Sacred War being invented in the fourth century BCE, and later, Davies (1994) for a response to Robertson (see, esp. 197-198) and a dissection of the sources of this tradition.

in a spatial context. Then, it will describe the tensions between the Minyae and Thebes before moving into a discussion of sociological theories on collective memory. Lastly, it will apply these theories to the mythologized conflict between Thebes and Orchomenos. By the end of this article, we will be able to trace where we can see violence, hostility, and conflict in the myths, in order to show how it evolved and for what purposes.

Placing Orchomenos

Orchomenos is located in the north-west of Boiotia, approximately 35 km away from Thebes. Traditionally, scholars divide the land of Boiotia by its two great basins, that of Orchomenos in the north, and Thebes in the south, separated by the ridge of Onchestos.⁷ It is said to have been established by the Minyae with their eponymous leader, Minyas,⁸ the name of the city being derived from his son, Orchomenos.⁹ The patron god of the Minyae, worshipped at Orchomenos, was Zeus Laphystios, who is presented both as a sky god and as a god of the underworld.¹⁰ Archaeologically, there is evidence of settlement in Orchomenos beginning in c.6000 BCE and significant developments occurring in c.2000 BCE with the appearance of wheel-made pottery and the rectangular and apse-ended megaron.¹¹ During the Bronze Age, Orchomenos was a centre of power with a renowned palace.¹² It boasted a tholos tomb, known as the Treasury of Minyas, something that reflects its wealth in the ancient sources, being described in the *Iliad* (9.379) as “wealthy” and in the *Odyssey* (11.283) as “mighty”. Their wealth seems to have depended on the crops grown in the Kopaïc basin, a region managed through Mycenaean hydraulic works.¹³ This made Orchomenos very rich and kept its attention focused on regional agriculture, a contrast to Thebes, where imports are found in abundance.¹⁴ However, this does not necessarily mean that Orchomenos isolated itself from international affairs. Possible evidence for this includes the oral tradition of Orchomenos sending ships in Homer’s *Catalogue of Ships* (2.511).¹⁵ Further, some scholars argue that the Minyae, separate from Thebes and

⁷See, for example, Buckler 1980: 4. The division between the two *poleis*, then, even manifests itself through the natural landscape.

⁸ See, for example, Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.1077ff; Strabo 9.2.40; Pausanias 9.36.4.

⁹ Ridgeway 1896: 105. See also Pausanias 9.36.6.

¹⁰ Schachter 2014a: 68-69.

¹¹ Castleden 2005: 58.

¹² Beck & Ganter 2015: 133.

¹³ Castleden 2005: 58-59; Schachter 2016: 5.

¹⁴ Kramer-Hajós (2016: 116) says that no such imports have been found in Orchomenos. Yet Nilsson (1963: 146-147) argues that there is still evidence of significant trade being conducted by the Orchomenians, with their regional wares being found in many areas outside of central Greece.

¹⁵Although it must be admitted that the *Catalogue* may not present a historical reality of Orchomenos having international concerns in the Mycenaean era, it nevertheless presents an important notion of the memory (whether constructed or real) of involvement in international affairs during this age. For a discussion of the *Catalogue of Ships* as containing Mycenaean elements blended with different historical periods, see briefly Jasnow et al. 2018: 33 (see also pp. 5-8 for the organization of the *Catalogue* and its relationship to memory, and pp. 35-40 for the Boiotian contingent).

Boiotia, may have been a trading people, citing evidence of wares from this region being found elsewhere in the Mediterranean, as well as Herodotus' mention (4.145) of the crew of a ship being descendants of those of the Argo, who were Minyae. It has therefore been suggested that their reputation as a warring people is a direct result of epic poetry's focus on valorous deeds.¹⁶ In order to see if this is true, we must now turn to an investigation of the Minyae and their supposedly war-like tendencies.

Placing the Minyae

The study of a local myth is problematized through its derivation from images of the mind, collectivity, moments of belonging, and by the imagined space in which it takes place, for, as Angela Ganter points out, "The transmitted versions are singular manifestations out of a myriad of variants, of innumerable stories told within a stream of oral tradition extending over hundreds of years."¹⁷ And so, myths become important for how a group may have imagined their past and the place they occupied within it. The myths created by the Thebans concerning the past of the Minyae, as will become clear, occupied an important place in the political discourse of Boiotia.

Thucydides says (1.12) that the Minyae came to Boiotia from Thessaly, driving out the native population and settling there.¹⁸ In a relatively short statement, we already see something interesting: in the fifth century BCE, there was a tradition of the Minyae as being outsiders in central Greece who fought for their land in the area of Orchomenos. Although this may be seen as a violent beginning, they were not always the aggressor, as a fragment of Hellanikos tells us. In this passage, the Minyae were later expelled from Orchomenos by the Thracians,¹⁹ or, according to Nikolaos of Damascus, by the Phokians.²⁰ Whoever forced them to leave, leave they did, and the narrative has various traditions of where the Minyae went, including the Peloponnese²¹ and the coast of Asia Minor.²² Nevertheless, there seems to be some sort of durability in their association with Orchomenos after these raids, evident in the opening of the 14th *Olympian Ode* of Pindar:

You who protect the waters of the Kephisos, who dwell in the place of beautiful horses, oh Queens famous in song, Graces of rich Orchomenos, Guardians of the ancient Minyae, hear me, for I am praying. (14.1)

¹⁶ Nilsson 1963: 150.

¹⁷ Ganter 2014: 230.

¹⁸ Nilsson 1963: 152. See also Harland (1948: 94-95) for an interpretation of the "destruction" layer as evidence for a mingling of the newcomers with the native population.

¹⁹ Hellanikos *FGrH* 3 F 42(b). See Buck 1969: 289-290.

²⁰ Nicolaus of Damascus 75 *FGrH* F51, see Buck 1969: 290.

²¹ Buck 1969: 291.

²² Nilsson 1963: 153. See Herodotus 1.146, Pausanias 7.3.6, and Strabo 14.1.3.

The coupling of the Graces in this poem with the ancient race of the Minyae and the city of Orchomenos has been interpreted by Charles Segal as stress on the continuity of local Minyae habitation.²³ While I am unsure that we can draw such a strong conclusion from these lines, I do believe that this passage remains important for recognizing the consistency of the association of Orchomenos with the Minyae. What is likely, however, at the time that Pindar was writing, is that Thebes had not yet manipulated the memories concerning the Minyae, since Thebes was not involved in any of the above conflicts, or had any history, yet, of violence with Orchomenos. Instead, we find a tradition reaching into the Mycenaean Age of Thesalians and Phokians fighting with the Minyae. Some scholars even suggest that this provides enough evidence that we cannot point to any tension at this time between Thebes and Orchomenos.

Two thoughts concerning the Theban and Orchomenian relationship during the Mycenaean period separate scholars: the first being that the lack of evidence for conflict suggests just that – that there was no conflict – and that the drainage works that were completed at this time were the result of peace between them.²⁴ The other argument, advanced by Hariclia Brecoulaki, is that the fragments of lapis lazuli found in frescos in Gla may be a connection to the Kassite seals found at Thebes, and thus suggest cooperation between Thebes and Orchomenos in draining the basin.²⁵ We cannot be certain whether or not this was a joint effort, as none of the evidence available so far tells us anything concrete about Theban and Orchomenian relations during the Mycenaean period,²⁶ but we can theorize that it is likely that Thebes and Orchomenos, at this time, were not at odds.

One of the first mentions that we have of conflict between them in the literary record comes from a rather late source, namely, the fifth century BCE Athenian tragedian Euripides. In his play *Herakles*, Amphitryon speaks as follows, “Oh you land of Kadmos, for to you I will now speak, distributing words full of reproach: is this how you defend Herakles and his children? Herakles, who stood in battle against all the Minyae and thus enabled Thebes to clearly see with free eyes” (217-221). Elsewhere, Amphitryon mentions a physical commemoration of this conflict. He says, “...so that the children of Herakles may not die, I am placing myself with their mother at the altar of Zeus the Saviour, which my noble son erected for his glorious victory in defeating the Minyae” (45-51). These two passages do not stress any sort of violence towards the Minyae, but we do witness a General briefly reminding us of the singlehanded feat of Herakles that set Thebes free. It seems that in these passages it is not so much the battle that Euripides wished to emphasize, but the legendary feats of a young Herakles. Yet the brief, in passing, mentions made by Amphitryon of this conflict, with no elaboration or explanation, indicates that Euripides expected his audience to be familiar with this tale and to understand it as significant for the Thebans.

I argue that Euripides’ audience would also be familiar with a sense of “other” between Thebes and Orchomenos. The differences between them would have been evident through their foundation myths and patron gods, two details that do not necessarily actively “other”

²³ Segal 1985: 205.

²⁴ Hope Simpson & Hagel 2006: 209; Kramer-Hajós 2016: 118.

²⁵ Brecoulaki 2010; Kramer-Hajós 2016: 118. See also Sergent (1994) for a discussion of Thebes and its territory during the Mycenaean age in relation to Orchomenos, and the likelihood of conflict between Boiotia and Attica at this time.

²⁶ Schachter 2014a: 66.

another community, but ones that do give unity to the *polis* and its inhabitants, and thus may passively create distance between groups.²⁷ The Minyae, whose patron god was Zeus,²⁸ were said to have come from Thessaly, and one of their legendary rulers, Athamas, belongs both to Orchomenos and Thessaly, strengthening this bond.²⁹ This makes Orchomenos, in some mythic tales, the only *polis* in Boiotia not founded by the Boiotoi, lore that likely developed out of the rivalry between Orchomenos and Thebes.³⁰ The legendary Theban city-founder, in contrast, was the Phoenician Kadmos, said to be one of the first humans in the region of Boiotia and the one who created the population of Thebes by sowing a dragon's teeth.³¹ In another mythic vein, we see Amphion and Zethos, autochthonous heroes, establish the walls.³² The Thebans thus differ from the Orchomenians not only in the origins of their leaders, but, more importantly, in their autochthonous nature, establishing a sense of "other" from their very beginnings, and, since they were born of the land, lending Thebes legitimacy through primordiality.

The Thebans also separated themselves through their divinities. For example, their patron god was not Zeus, but rather Demeter and Dionysos Kadmeios.³³ However, it is the Theban temple to Apollo Ismenios that comes to most strongly symbolize the divide between Thebes

²⁷ Hall (1997: 25) comments, "...I would suggest...that the connection with a specific territory and the common myth of descent are more distinctive characteristics of ethnic groups."

²⁸ See above p.4.

²⁹ Schachter 2014a: 67. Although, Schachter (2014a: 67) does warn that, "The legendary genealogies of the ruling houses of Orchomenos, as related in the Hesiodic catalogues, and by later writers, especially Pausanias, are extremely complex, and obviously derive from a variety of sources, and were no doubt compiled at different times in different places to suit the demands of the moment." For the many links between Orchomenos and Thessaly, see Schachter 2014a.

³⁰ Mackil 2013: 170 n.94.

³¹ Berman 2004: 2. Kadmos is often linked to Phoenicia and this, as Ganter (2014: 234) suggests, "...provided Thebes with both regional connections and international links." Similarly, Thebes also developed regional and international links through their hero, Herakles, whose name "glory of Hera" harkens back to the Argolid (Schachter 1967: 5; Schachter 2014a: 66, 68). Like Athamas, however, Kadmos is a complex figure in Greek mythology, and it is likely that his genealogical line and mythical story was also compiled at different times to suit different purposes. For this reason, Kadmos' origins are often debated, see, for example: Edwards 1979: 18- 50; Kim 2009: 42-43; and Vian 1963: 51-69.

³² *Odyssey* 11.263-265. See also Kühr 2006: 369 and Ganter 2014: 234. For a discussion on the two foundation stories, their origins, and how they changed over time, see Berman 2004 and Berman 2015. For how the story of Kadmos' foundation of Thebes was transmitted and changed, see Berman 2013. See Mackowiak 2016, for her interpretation of the role of the autochthonous Spartoi, born from the dragon's teeth, in Theban mythology in fixing socio-behavioural boundaries. See, in particular, pages 21-22 for how the two foundation myths both play on the idea of containing savagery.

³³ Identifying the *poliouchos* of Thebes with certainty is a complicated matter. For Demeter as the *poliouchos* of Thebes, see Hansen 1996: 108; Schachter 2000: 13; Schachter 2014a: 83; Schachter 2014b: 327. Hansen (1996: 108) also points to Pindar *Isthm.* 7.1-5 as evidence that Dionysos Kadmeios was another patron god of Thebes. Interestingly, it seems that Pindar (*Isthm.* 7.1-5) considers Dionysos as a later addition to the city's protective deities: τίνι τῶν πάρος, ᾧ μάκαιρα θήβα, καλῶν ἐπιχωρίων μάλιστα θυμὸν τεὸν εὐφρανας; ἧ ῥα χαλκοκρότου ἀρεδρον Δαμάτερος ἀνίκ' εὐρυχαίταν ἄντειλας Διόνυσσον; "In which previous glorious deeds of your country, oh blessed Thebe, was your soul most gladdened? Was it the time when you raised wide streaming-haired Dionysos up to sit beside Demeter of the brazen cymbals?" See also, Berman (2015: 111-113) for the deities represented in Thebes in Athenian tragedy, as well as Demeter's place on the Kadmeia.

and Orchomenos.³⁴ Through its oracle, the annual festival of the Daphnephoria, and the practice of dedicating tripods, this site was very important to the construction and development of the Boiotian community, though it did possess, as Emily Mackil points out, a hegemonic tone.³⁵ However, Orchomenos was still seen as, “...among the most resistant of the Boiotian cities to the project of unification...”.³⁶ It is therefore Apollo Ismenios and the association of the Daphnephoria with territorial conquest and Boiotian unification that ultimately delimits the Theban “Boiotians” from the Orchomenian “Minyae”, who were viewed as being resistant and thus outside of this community and its spaces.

Their differences are so acute from an early age that the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships* has them listed separately: Orchomenos recorded as a dominant power in the region and the Boiotoi mentioned apart from them and as divided among five chieftains.³⁷ Archaeologically, we can also see a continuation of this separation with Orchomenos focusing on agriculture and Thebes on trade, as well as Orchomenos’ issuing of coins. We find that Orchomenos mints small denomination coinage with an ear of grain on the obverse, unlike the Boiotoi, who had the so-called Boiotian shield.³⁸ Therefore, we seem to have two separate peoples, with a desire for separate identities in this regional space; the Thebans and Orchomenians thus defining themselves as distinct even as early as their foundational beginnings in central Greece.

This divide deepens with the elaboration of the story of Herakles and his battle against the Minyae. Pseudo-Apollodorus tells us that Klymenos, king of the Orchomenians, was wounded by a Theban at Onchestos and once he was carried back to Orchomenos, he, with his last breath, charged his son Erginos to seek revenge (2.4.11). Erginos then took up arms and defeated the Thebans, having them confirm an oath to pay a tribute for twenty years. At this point, the tale becomes a little more violent. Pseudo-Apollodorus says,

When Herakles met with the heralds who were leaving for Thebes to collect the tribute, he outraged them: for he cut off their ears and noses, and after he tied

³⁴ See Berman (2015:156) for the regional rivalries between Thebes and Delphi that led to the diminishing of Apollo Ismenios’ importance in literature.

³⁵ Mackil 2013: 167-168. Mackil (2013: 170) states that, “Apollo Ismenios was regarded as the source of civic order at Thebes, because he was remembered as presiding over the Boiotian conquest of the region, including Thebes, and the truce achieved with the city’s former inhabitants who were driven out to the Orchomenos region.” For the dedication of tripods in Boiotia, see Papalexandrou 2008, in particular pages 262-271 for a discussion of collective dedications of tripods and the link of these tripods to political and territorial power in Boiotia.

³⁶ Mackil 2013: 171. See Mackil (2013: 170-171) for an explanation of how myth, specifically that associated with Apollo Ismenios, differentiated the “Minyae” Orchomenians from the “Boiotian” Thebans.

³⁷ Homer *Iliad* 2.493-510, 511-516. Schachter 2014a: 70. Ganter (2014: 232) suggests that this list is evidence of a Boiotian *ethnos* in the seventh century. One which does not include the Orchomenians. Beck (2014: 24-27) shows through inscriptional evidence that a Boiotian *ethnos* was “on the map” by the sixth century, though he stresses caution in identifying their group-disposition (28-29).

³⁸ Beck 2014: 34. Schachter 2014a: 74. For a connection between the Boiotian shield and Boiotian culture, see Larson 2007: 67-109. For more on the regional coinage, see below, page 15.

these from their necks with a small rope, he told them to carry this spoil home to Erginos and the Minyae. (2.4.11)³⁹

Erginos was incensed to the point where he gathered his forces with the intention of punishing the Thebans. It is at this juncture in the narrative where we find the passage from Diodorus where Herakles convinces the young men to stand up for their fatherland and to fight. And since the Minyae had taken all the Thebans' weapons, Herakles and his band of warriors remove arms that had been set up as a dedication to the gods in order to fight, "for the freedom of their fatherland". In some traditions, it is Athena,⁴⁰ perhaps Athena Itonia, the patron goddess of the Boiotoi,⁴¹ who provides the weapons. This version emphasises the mythological element of the "other", having a goddess justifying their actions through the symbolic gesture of the gifting of weapons as divine approval. Herakles then meets Erginos in battle, slays him and almost all his men, burns Minyae Orchomenos to the ground, floods their land, and forces them to pay tribute to Thebes.⁴²

Something has changed in the way the Minyae are presented. The rhetoric between Thebes and Orchomenos is now filled with conflict and violence. Schachter suggests that this reflects a sixth century conflict that is not related in any of the sources, but which we can speculate on through inscriptions. He points to the mid-sixth century amalgamation of the worship of Athena and Zeus at Koroneia, once a territory of Orchomenos, as evidence of this Theban take-over.⁴³ Similarly, we see the introduction of a sanctuary to Herakles on Mount Laphystion, very near the *temenos* of Zeus Laphystois, the ancestral god of the Minyae. Schachter examines Herakles' epithets at this new sanctuary and argues that the names "bright-eyed", "fierce", "grim", or "Charops" suggest that he was not the original god in this location, but that he had usurped it, as he had usurped Orchomenos for Thebes.⁴⁴ The epithets suggest an underworld god, and as pointed out above,⁴⁵ the Zeus that the Minyae worshipped was one who was also connected to the underworld.

Herakles' appropriation of worship in Minyae lands seems to be the rule rather than the exception, as Albert Schachter pointed out in his 1967 article *The Theban Wars*. Here, Schachter shows the numerous sanctuaries of Herakles around Lake Kopais:

Lake Kopais is surrounded by sanctuaries connected with Herakles: there is the tomb of Alkmene at Haliartos or Okaleia; a sanctuary of Herakles surnamed Charops on Mount Laphystion and nearby at Koroneia; Herakles at Orchomenos

³⁹ ἐπὶ τοῦτον τὸν δασμὸν εἰς Θήβας τοὺς κήρυκας ἀπιόντας συντυχῶν Ἡρακλῆς ἐλωβήσατο: ἀποτεμῶν γὰρ αὐτῶν τὰ ὄψα καὶ τὰς ῥίνας, καὶ διασχοινίων τὰς χεῖρας δῆσας ἐκ τῶν τραχήλων, ἔφη τοῦτον Ἐργίνῳ καὶ Μινύαις δασμὸν κομίζειν.

⁴⁰ Pseudo-Apollodorus 2.4.11.

⁴¹ Schachter 2016: 44.

⁴² Diodorus 4.10.2, 4.18.7.

⁴³ Schachter 2014a: 69.

⁴⁴ Schachter 2014a: 75. See also Pausanias 9.34.5.

⁴⁵ See page 4.

(Paus. 9.38.6); Herakles at Hyettos, north of Lake Kopais (Paus. 9.24.3). At all of these places, there are also connections with the Argolid in the identities of the eponymous heroes: Hyettos is an Argive; Thersandros son of Sisypchos is the father of Koronos and Haliartos. We have already met one Thersandros, son of Polyneikes, at Thebes (1967:7)

For Albert Schachter, this rightly signals the importation of Herakles to this region by the Thebans.⁴⁶ It seems then, that Thebes succeeded in taking over the religious spaces of the area.

Besides religious annexation, Schachter provides three inscriptions from Olympia of dedications of armour by the victors, showing that there was some sort of conflict in the Kopaic basin at this time.⁴⁷ Further, we also have a joint dedication in Delphi by the Boiotoi and the Lokrians, Lokris previously being in Orchomenian territory, thus suggesting a domination of that region.⁴⁸ Lastly, the coinage of the time also reflects this, with *poleis* around Lake Kopais, including Hyettos, what was once a dependency of Orchomenos, minting coins with the Boiotian shield on the obverse.⁴⁹ What is more telling is the inclusion of Herakles on these coins, typically in warlike actions and guises. Emily Mackil and Peter van Alfen describe Herakles' iconography on these coins as displaying, "...a variety of belligerent attitudes – advancing to combat, kneeling or standing to string a bow..., carrying off the Delphi tripod, or strangling snakes as a child..."⁵⁰ These coins also shift their legends from individual *poleis* to explicit references of Thebes.⁵¹ This not only recalls the famous deeds of Herakles, but is also a reminder to the observer of the power of Thebes, as they took control and gradually shifted the iconography of the coinage to represent their *polis*.

It would not be unreasonable to interpret the choice of the subject on the regional coinage as representing Theban military interests and aspirations, while also harkening back to the victories that Herakles brought for Thebes, including that over the Minyae of Orchomenos. Interestingly, we find Orchomenos persisting in minting their own coins, ones without the likeness of Herakles, but instead depicting an ear of grain on the front.⁵² This reinforces the

⁴⁶ See Schachter (2016: 117-119) for an overview of Thebes' annexation of religious spaces and symbols in the fourth century to show their dominance in the region. This includes (Schachter 2016: 117) a festival set up by the Thebans in ancient Orchomenian territory to commemorate their victory at the Battle of Leuktra.

⁴⁷ Schachter 2014a: 72.

⁴⁸ See Niemeier 2016: 8-10 for a brief summary of recent excavations that produced evidence of Orchomenian control over much of the Kopaic basin, and eastern Phokis and Lokris. Niemeier explains (2016: 8), "...mit seiner Lage das Kopais-Becken beherrschend, das mykenische Zentrum von Orchomenos in Bötien mit den Indizien für die Existenz eines freskengeschmückten Palastes und einem monumentalen Tholosgrab, das nur im sog. Schatzhaus des Atreus in Mykene eine Entsprechung findet und wohl vom gleichen Architekten oder der gleichen Bauhütte errichtet wurde." And speculates, based on the archaeological evidence, that (2016: 9), "Wahrscheinlich dehnte Orchomenos seinen Machtbereich in die östliche Phokis und die opuntische Lokris aus."

⁴⁹ Head 1884: xxxvi; Mackil & van Alfen 2006: 226-228; Schachter 2014a: 73-74.

⁵⁰ Mackil & van Alfen 2006: 229. See also Schachter 2014a: 81; Head 1884: xxxix; Hoover 2014: 391-394.

⁵¹ Mackil & van Alfen 2006: 229.

⁵² Head 1884: xxxvii; Hoover 2014: 371-373; Schachter 2014a: 74; Beck & Ganter 2015: 138; Meidani 2008: 157. Head (Roberts and Head 1974: 18) contemplates the significance of the iconography, suggesting that the grain of corn was, "...referring, as a religious symbol, to the extraordinary productiveness of the Orchomenian plain, the fertility of which even in our own days is so remarkable that Leake was able to count as many as 900 grains in a single ear of corn."

idea of Orchomenos as an “other” in Boiotia, both politically and financially differentiated from Thebes and its allies.⁵³ And so, we can conclude that Thebes was victorious in some sort of conflict at this time,⁵⁴ which reduced the power of Orchomenos, though no ancient author tells us this.

One suggestion, made by Robert J. Buck, is that the tales of Thracian or Phokian aggression against the Orchomenians was transferred to Thebes as an anachronistic error relating to the power that they held much later.⁵⁵ Albert Schachter follows this, though makes it more deliberate on the Thebans’ part, by suggesting that in the fourth century, the Thebans retrojected current events into the past to cast them in a heroic mould and make them appear greater in order to instill nationalistic feelings.⁵⁶ If this is true, then we can see the present tensions between Thebes and Orchomenos being mythologized into the distant past, with Thebes replacing the original legends with a new collective memory that emphasized the conflict between these two local “others” in order to justify their current actions.

Thebes’ choice to rally its people and its allies against Orchomenos through a rewriting of their legends can be explained both as a result of their competitive past,⁵⁷ and their opposing sides in the fourth century.⁵⁸ As John Buckler and Hans Beck remark, “Greece was a notoriously small natural environment. In light of this, regional violence spread quickly from its local origins to the state system in general. Vice versa, ongoing ambitions of superpowers to establish a systemwide hegemony fueled regional conflicts.”⁵⁹ When tracing events leading up to the Corinthian War, regional conflicts and tensions with Sparta come at the forefront of the conflict and seem to play a large role in Thebes instigating the war.⁶⁰ Since Orchomenos was an ally of Sparta, the regional tensions must have been high, and the “ongoing ambitions of superpowers to establish a systemwide hegemony” may be seen through the alliances,

⁵³ Mackil and van Alfen (2006: 203) rightly warn of placing too much emphasis on coins as evidence for a Boiotian “league” or, “...as expressions of a collective political will (or, less optimistically, of the subordination of less powerful communities by a mightier hegemon).” They stress (2006: 203-204) that coins are primarily monetary instruments and that we must consider them in this context, including the importance to simplifying transactions involved in military alliance (227), trade (228), and religion (228). However, they agree (2006: 229) that the shift in the coins to a Theban legend and depictions of Herakles reflects, “...Thebes’ increasingly hegemonic and belligerent role in the *koinon* of Boiotian *poleis*.” For Boiotian coinage, see Hoover 2014: 342-406, in particular, pages 368-373 and 385-401 for Orchomenian and Theban coinage, respectively.

⁵⁴ We also learn (see Castleden 2005: 62) from archaeological remains that the drainage system around the basin was blocked at one point. Whether this was a result of conflict, or of natural clogging from vegetation and silt because of neglect, we cannot say. It does, however, seem that the plain turned back into a large shallow lake sometime after the Mycenaean period. But this is much too early for the sixth century conflict that Schachter points to.

⁵⁵ Buck 1969: 291.

⁵⁶ Schachter 2014a: 81, 84.

⁵⁷ Buckler & Beck (2008: 19) explain that their political rivalry harkens back to the sixth century and that it was only the equal distribution of power in the Boiotian League of 447 that contained the two *poleis* for a temporary period.

⁵⁸ Orchomenos sides with Sparta, and Thebes with Athens: Xen. *Hell.* 3.5.7-8; 3.5.17-18; Buckler 1980: 19-23.

⁵⁹ Buckler & Beck 2008: 18.

⁶⁰ Buckler & Beck 2008: 44-58, see esp. 48.

divisions, and conflicts in the area during the fourth century. It thus becomes unsurprising that Thebes would want to retell past events both to establish an ongoing “otherness” to Orchomenos that was based in duplicity, and to justify Theban actions against Orchomenos, such as the destruction of the city in 364.⁶¹ It seems that the Thebans were successful in the fourth century in this endeavour to turn the minds of their allies and influence those around them, as the majority of the Boiotians in the fourth century consented to Thebes’ actions and leadership.⁶² It is likely, then, that the revisions to the mythological tradition occurred around this time, with Thebes at its zenith. Having thus established a tense history in a small geographical arena and the motivation to rewrite the past in the fourth century, we must now investigate whether we can understand this as a case of a constructed collective memory by Thebes to mold Orchomenos as an aggressive “other”.

Collective Memory

Studies in collective memory originate from two strands developed in the 1920s. One derives from Maurice Halbwachs work, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, in which he defined collective memory as the creation of shared versions of the past. He describes collective memory as focused upon the identity formation of a group who are oriented in a strict chronological and spatial zone. Their memory is both highly evaluative and hierarchical and is concentrated on the interests of the group and in how they project their image and identity. This projection, however, changes over time.⁶³ Since the framework is reliant on identity formation, events that represent similarities and continuity of the current group are emphasized. And because Halbwachs argued that collective memory is oriented towards the needs and interests of the current group, reconstructing memory and re-remembering the past becomes a staple in its formation in order to fit this need.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Diod.15.79.3-6; Buckler 1980: 182-184; Schachter 2016: 113-114. As Buckler (1980: 20) argues, “The Thebans were able to identify their own interests with those of their countrymen, and they made separatist elements appear as traitors. The claim that Thebes was fighting as much for Boiotia as for itself was a valuable tool of propaganda...” This fits Hall’s (1997: 31) thesis that, “...a group senses that it holds a ‘negative social identity’, it will attempt to gain a positive identity by one of three strategies. Either it will assimilate culturally and psychologically as a whole with the dominant group; or it will redefine positively characteristics that were previously negatively defined; or it will create new dimensions of comparison to bypass those by which it was formerly disadvantaged.” Here we can see two strategies being employed: the Thebans both redefine their territorial pursuits in Boiotia in positive terms by molding the Orchomenians as aggressive and thus Theban actions as justifiable, and they create modes of comparison between themselves and the Orchomenians in, for example, coinage and mythological beginnings.

⁶² See Schachter 2016: 113-119, who traces Thebes’ influence throughout Boiotia, especially in religion.

⁶³ Halbwachs 1935, esp. 369-401. Halbwachs (1935: 320) reminds the reader that, “Les cadres de la mémoire sociale se sont modifiés d’une époque à l’autre.” See Halbwachs 1935: 391 where he explains that memories are both within and without chronological sequences. See also Halbwachs 1980: 140 and 156-157, Erll 2011: 17, and Olick 1999: 334.

⁶⁴ Halbwachs 1935: 392. Halbwachs (1935: 392) explains, “C’est pourquoi la société tend à écarter de sa mémoire tout ce qui pourrait séparer les individus, éloigner les groupes les uns des autres, et qu’à chaque époque elle remanie ses souvenirs de manière à les mettre en accord avec les conditions variables de son équilibre.” See also Halbwachs 1980: 43, 80-86, 118-120; Erll 2011: 14-17. See further, Bommas (2011: 3) who agrees that “shared

Where Halbwachs took a sociological path to investigate collective memory through memory and groups, Aby Warburg took an art-historical one in his unfinished, long-term project *Mnemosyne*.⁶⁵ Warburg was primarily focused on exploring moral questions, including those surrounding memory. In his *Mnemosyne*, he interpreted memory and the language of cultural forms through his interest in a European memory of images.⁶⁶ Despite its unfinished nature, his work is still regarded as foundational to current memory studies, where he remains responsible for many terms used in the field today, including Jan Assman and John Czaplicka's "retrospective contemplativeness", derived from Warburg's *retrospektiven Besonnenheit*.⁶⁷

We now find the two perspectives combined in many sociological works. Take, for example, one definition of cultural memory, offered by Jan Assman:

Concretion of identity means that social groups constitute a Cultural Memory, from which they derive their collective identity. Cultural Memory's capacity to reconstruct takes into account the insight that every memory is related to the present situation: Cultural Memory is a retrospective construction (Assman's view [1995: 130-32] as explained by Erll 2011: 29-30)

In this way, Assman asserts, cultural memory is founded on its distance from the everyday, on myths which orient the present and provide hope for the future, while simultaneously creating "others" through the peculiarities in a group's self-projected image in relation to another.⁶⁸ Here we see Halbwachs' understanding of groups and identity combined with Warburg's idea of retrospection. We also have a new focus: that of myth. Astrid Erll builds on this, explaining that,

Myths tend to exhibit both a foundational as well as a contra-present dynamic. The myth provides the fundament for and legitimizes existing systems when it is perceived by society as an expression of a common history, from which present circumstances derive (Erll 2011: 34)⁶⁹

experiences and interpretation form a crucial part of any group-building process, the result of which is identity". For a more modern interpretation on the difference between individual and collective memory, see Anastasio (2012: 55) who explores how collective memory is necessarily different from individual memory.

⁶⁵ For more on this project, see Gombrich 1986: 283-306, and Johnson 2016.

⁶⁶ Assman & Czaplicka 1995: 129; Erll 2011: 13.

⁶⁷ Assman & Czaplicka 1995: 129. Gombrich (1986: 281) translates *retrospektiven Besonnenheit* as "retrospective reflection".

⁶⁸ Assman 1995: 127-129, 131. See also Hogg 2012: 504-506 and Páez 2015: 106-108.

⁶⁹ See also Price (2012: 21) who explains that "The articulation of local identity through the iconography of local mythologies is a form of memory, linking the community to privileged moments of the past." Nora (2001, vol. 1: xiv) describes collective national history as, "a legend – but one that acted as a driving force for social integration, cohesion, and promotion."

Or, as Aurelie Campana explains, “Myths create and consolidate a specific collective imaginary through which a group perceives its distinctive traits.”⁷⁰ In other words, Campana argues, myths are “tools manipulated by identity entrepreneurs”.⁷¹ This then fuels the actions of the group who frame the myth against what they construct as the “other”.⁷² But how do these groups build a successful collective memory?

Sociologists point to four overlapping contexts in which these collective memories are constructed: [1] through objects and representations; [2] in places; [3] in ritual behaviour; and [4] in textual narratives.⁷³ This collective construction can then have an impact on its target audience leading to a shaping of their perception, or even political action.⁷⁴ However, this newly constructed memory can only thrive with support from these four criteria.⁷⁵

Collective Memory and the Minyae

The myth of the Minyae as constructed by fourth century Theban “identity entrepreneurs” has all four of the criteria set out by scholars of collective memory.⁷⁶ First, we have objects and representations. Pausanias tells us that, “There is a stone lion in front of the temple of Artemis Eukleia. It is said that Herakles dedicated it after his victorious battle against the Orchomenians and their king, Erginos, son of Klymenos” (9.17.2). Similarly, we have possible representations in art. Albert Schachter points to a marble relief in the Vatican that depicts four exploits of the youthful Herakles, including Herakles fighting Erginos.⁷⁷ Perhaps we can also understand the emission of Theban coins showing Herakles in warlike guises as another allusion to this feat.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Campana 2009: 43.

⁷¹ Campana 2009: 44.

⁷² Páez 2015: 109.

⁷³ Price 2012: 17. For space and collective memory, see Halbwachs 1980: 128-157, especially 131, where he emphasizes the importance of spatial reminders for both the past and the present of a group’s memory, “Of course, extraordinary events are also fitted within this spatial framework, because they occasion in the group a more intense awareness of its past and present, the bonds attaching it to physical locale gaining greater clarity in the very moment of their destruction”. Similar to Halbwachs, see Nora (2001, vol. 2, esp. Roncayolo’s contribution [343-382]), where locations and landscapes are deemed as part of, and deriving from, national memory.

⁷⁴ Erll 2011: 155. Beate Dignas (2012: 2) argues that these four contexts can be observed in Greek patterns of thinking and in their “desire to link the present to the remote past”. For Mnemosyne, Attilio Favorini (2003: 99) reminds us, is the mother of the Muses, one of whom, Clio, is the Muse of history, thus offering “a mythological foundation for the generation of history out of memory”. See also, Ghoshal 2013: 332; Olick 1999: 333; Páez 2015: 105; Shain 2010: 213; Tepora 2014: 491.

⁷⁵ Ghoshal (2013: 340) argues that the success of the new collective memory also depends on the combination of tragedy and triumph. We can sense tragedy through the oppression of the Thebans, and triumph in their fight for freedom.

⁷⁶ See Berman 2015 for an account of how Theban space and place is portrayed from different perspectives as a result of different motivations, and that myths subsequently change because of these rival representations.

⁷⁷ Schachter 2014a: 78-79, note 2.

⁷⁸ For an explanation of the coins, see Schachter 2014a: 81. For the coins themselves, see Head 1911: 349-350 and Hoover 2014: 391-394.

In terms of place, we can understand Euripides' play *Herakles* as depicting an actual space in Thebes.⁷⁹ One that was imbued with meaning through the altar to Zeus the Savior said to have been set up by Herakles to commemorate his victory over the Minyae (45-51). Here we have a place where ritual occurred, gathering the community together for a shared experience, one that surrounded a space defined by a collective understanding of victory over an aggressive, oppressive "other".⁸⁰ And in this space, we can see where the second and third criteria overlap. Namely, the crossover of place and ritual behaviour. We can presume a similar overlap in the sanctuaries of Herakles around the Kopaic basin and in the local sanctuaries of deities that are usurped by Herakles, like that of Zeus/Charops on Mount Laphystion.

Lastly, we have textual narrative. The literary accounts that we have briefly surveyed here are all examples of this reshaping of collective memory in action.⁸¹ These grow in violence and complexity after the fourth century BCE conflicts in the region, until we have accounts like that of Diodorus, firmly rooted in what is most likely the successful Theban rhetoric for their identity formation that was constructed to justify their foreign policy against a local "other".

But this would not succeed without the concept of forgetting. Sociologists explain that forgetting, "permits the negotiation of political or religious change" through an intentional mnemonic replacement.⁸² This is supported by Jan Assman's assertion that collective memory is constructed through the distance from the everyday, and thus generally in the mythological realm.⁸³ And so, I suggest that rather than understanding this Heraklean myth as an anachronistic error, as advanced by Buck, we can agree with Schachter's more deliberate theory and see the "forgetting" of Phokian and Thessalian conflict with Orchomenos as a more purposeful political negotiation by Thebes.⁸⁴ I argue, moreover, that Thebes replaced one shared historical understanding with a mythological construction of an oppressive "other".

And to ensure that this forgetting was successful, they played on an historical *topos* to rebuild their collective memory. Fighting for their fatherland is reminiscent of both Herodotus, where the Greeks fight for the freedom of Greece,⁸⁵ and of Thucydides, where the Spartans claim to fight for the same thing.⁸⁶ We see here a literary trope that is making its way

⁷⁹ See Berman (2015: 46), who argues that, "...myth has the ability - really, the mandate - to adapt to its narrative, or enunciate, environment."

⁸⁰ Berman (2015: 99), however, suggests that we must not expect to find the details for a location in Thebes that can be placed on a map when reading the outside perspective of the Athenian stage, "The heroic monuments and tombs that populate Thebes on stage create in some ways a similar impression to their counterparts in the Thebes of Pindaric lyric poetry, though on the Athenian stage there is even more of a tendency toward representations of monuments without specific locations."

⁸¹ For a detailed account of the myths associated with Thebes and how they shape each other and the landscape of Thebes, see Berman 2015.

⁸² Price 2012: 27-28.

⁸³ See also Berman (2015: 142), who argues that, "...myth is by its very nature set in the past, and the physical setting of mythic narratives represents, in some way, this fixed and distant temporal relationship with the present."

⁸⁴ For Thebes' motivation in doing so, see pages 14-15.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Hdt. 6.11, 8.143.

⁸⁶ Thuc. 1.139.

through historiography to be transported into a Theban space and a mythologized battle. So, what was likely a fight for domination of the Kopaic basin was altered in the literary record to reflect this trope of fighting for freedom against an oppressive foe. However, the fight for freedom is not something that lies simply in the literary world, but can also be observed in collective constructions of an “other” in order to define a group. Take, for example, the modern Chechen separatist ideology. Campana finds that the rhetoric surrounding the ideas of courage and of fighting for freedom has led to the easy association of Chechen culture with violence.⁸⁷ Similarly, some scholars of the Middle East and the Muslim worlds point to radical Islamists and their rewriting of both political vocabularies and the past as perpetuating a notion of victimization in a never-ending struggle for freedom. To do this successfully, they build an enemy and conflate terms both to serve as an “other” and to justify violent actions.⁸⁸ We observe this same phenomenon in the myths surrounding the Minyae, where Herakles fights for freedom against an aggressive “other”, one who has great power, is superior, is an overlord, and is insolent. The youths banding together provide a collective identity against this “other”. This leads to the violent account of the mutilations of the tax collectors as well as the slaying of almost the entire Minyae army. And yet, for the purpose of this collective memory, the construction of this rhetoric and the idea of freedom justifies the violence, something that the Minyae cannot claim before this, as their violent nature in this imagined constructed space was one built out of oppression.

Mythologized Memory

The success of this collective memory can be measured in its endurance. We can see it in its ability to take two local identities and create regional “others” where one becomes the dominant voice, projecting itself into the global discourse of Greece, its history, and its peoples. Orchomenos became, for the Thebans, the mythological and current aggressive “other” that they needed to fuel their expansion and to justify their foreign policy. For Thebes, immediate supremacy of Boiotia was a goal, and they ensured that their collective memory was developed to follow suit. They used a mythological space for another battle, one waged through collective memory and commemorative landscapes where they took up the pen and the sword and solidified their victory through stone. Maybe the Dancing Floor of Ares is not quite apt for Boiotia, perhaps instead, we should see this as the Dancing Floor of Thebes.

Bibliography

⁸⁷ Campana 2009: 49. For more on war and the construction of “legitimate” violence, see Páez 2015: 118-119.

⁸⁸ Shain 2010: 217-218. Shain (2010: 213) describes memories as rhetorical weapons and adds (2010: 217) that “By perverting the language of Islam, especially that of infidels and tyranny, and conflating those terms with the alien, colonialism, and imperialism, Islamic radicals in the last century have constantly created a set of enemies from within or without.”

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