# *‘ἐμήδισαν προθύμως οὐδ᾽ ἔτι ἐνδοιαστῶς’: Thessalian medism and its repercussions*

Article

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# ‘ἐμήδισαν προθύμως οὐδ᾽ ἔτι ἐνδοιαστῶς’: Thessalian medism and its repercussions

## Introduction

In many ways, modern historians run the risk of overstating the impact of the Persian Wars on Greece. Doing so would, to some extent, follow an ancient tendency established by Herodotos whose intellectual achievement rested (as ancient historians’ often did) upon the magnitude of the conflict he described.[1] None the less, we should hesitate to accept wholesale a picture of seismic change applying equally to all regions.

Thessaly’s role in the invasion of Xerxes was not a slight one. According to Herodotos, some Thessalians, the Aleuadai of Larisa, actually solicited it.[2] The rest of the Thessalians, we are told, objected to this scheming and announced themselves willing to resist as long as the Hellenic League stood with them.[3] After, however, the League withdrew its forces from Tempe on Thessaly’s northern border in favour of holding the pass at Thermopylai to the south, the Thessalians as a whole capitulated to the invader *prothumōs*, enthusiastically, and thereafter became *andres chrēsimōtatoi* – extremely useful, or the most useful, men – to Xerxes as he conducted his attempted subjection of Greece.[4] Their soldiers fought on the Persian side at Thermopylai[5] and at Plataia;[6] after Thermopylai the Thessalians led the Persian forces south, encouraging them to damage Phokian property as much as possible *en route* to settle an old score.[7] Mardonios overwintered in Thessaly with his forces in the winter of 480-79.[8] Though Herodotos toys once or twice with the possibility that the Thessalians will turn on the Persians when the latter are in a weakened state, nothing of the sort seems actually to have occurred.[9]

Like others in Greece, then, Thessaly backed, so to speak, the wrong horse. This is not surprising; black-and-white conceptions of loyalty to Greece and opposition to Persia are probably best regarded as as much a product of the invasion as a condition which would have prevailed when it happened. Thessalians may have had Persian guest-friends; in any case, they would not have felt

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[1] Herodotos famously commences his narrative by giving as its purpose ‘ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται’ (‘So that events caused by man should not become lost to memory over time, nor the great and wonderful deeds, those displayed by Greeks and those by non-Greeks, should not lose their renown’). It has been noted that by presenting himself as preserving the *kleos* of the Persian wars Herodotos aligns the conflict with the Trojan War and his own contribution with Homer’s. See Marincola (2006). Cf. also Thuc. 1.21.2: the Peloponnesian War is of greater magnitude to those which have gone before.

[2] Hdt. 7.6.2.

[3] Hdt. 7.172.

[4] Hdt. 7.174.

[5] Hdt. 7.233.2: the Thessalians with Xerxes testify that the Thebans are sympathetic to the Persians, even though they have been, up until that point, fighting against them.

[6] Hdt. 9.31.5.

[7] Hdt. 8.27-32.

[8] Hdt. 8.113.1.

[9] Hdt. 7.191 and 9.89.

any automatic loathing of the outsider (nothing like the loathing they felt for their southern neighbours, the Phokians).[10] Still, in the immediate aftermath of the Greek victory, if not before, the Thessalians, like other communities who actively aided the Persians, would have encountered some opprobrium and censure. As I have argued elsewhere, their stance in the Persian war was one factor behind a tendency to label the Thessalians, if not as *barbaroi* themselves, then perilously like them in certain significant respects.[11]

What difference, however, did the invasion and its aftermath *really* make to the lives of the Thessalians? As I have said, the impact could be overstated. It is important to note first that none of the formal penalties mooted at various junctures was ever actually imposed. Herodotos at 7.132 follows a list of medisers with the following claim: 'ἐπὶ τούτοισι οἱ Ἕλληνες ἔταμον ὅρκιον οἱ τῷ βαρβάρῳ πόλεμον ἀειράμενοι· τὸ δὲ ὅρκιον ὧδε εἶχε, ὅσοι τῷ Πέρσῃ ἔδοσαν σφέας αὐτοὺς Ἕλληνες ἐόντες μὴ ἀναγκασθέντες, καταστάντων σφι εὖ τῶν πρηγμάτων, τούτους δεκατεῦσαι τῷ ἐν Δελφοῖσι θεῷ. τὸ μὲν δὴ ὅρκιον ὧδε εἶχε τοῖσι Ἕλλησι.' ('Against these, the Greeks who fought the war against the barbarian swore an oath. The oath was as follows: all those Greeks who without compulsion submitted to the Persian should (if events turned out well for the Greeks) pay a tithe to the god at Delphi. Such was the oath sworn by the Greeks.') The word δεκατεῦσαι could signify the relatively mild punishment of paying a tenth part of one's material goods, or might in fact indicate a far harsher fate, complete annihilation and the consecration of a tenth part of the resulting spoil.[12] In any case, however, we cannot identify a single case of the punishment actually being meted out; certainly this fate did not befall the Thessalians.

A Spartan expedition sent north at some point in the first half of the fifth century, apparently to target the Aleuadai specifically, ended abruptly because its commander Leotychidas apparently succumbed to bribery in the form of a glove stuffed with silver; in any case, it is not certain by any means that this venture had anything to do with medism.[13] An attempt – again, Spartan in its orchestration – to remove all medisers from the Delphic Amphiktyony was deflected by Themistokles (in an episode which will be discussed further below). In purely formal terms, Thessaly seemed to have escaped unpunished.

On a connected point, there are no signs of economic disadvantage in Thessaly. While the archaeological record is too patchy to allow for certainty or a reliable overview, there is no pattern of decline in the decades following 480. Individual sites might display such a trend, but they are

[10] Plato (*Men.* 78d) refers to Menon of Pharsalos, who stayed in Athens in the later fifth century and subsequently took part in the expedition of the Ten Thousand to fight for Kyros the Younger, as a *patrikos xenos* (ancestral guest-friend) of the Persian king. How far back did this family connection extend? Did it predate the Persian invasion, or perhaps result from it? We cannot know, but it is an interesting indication of the willingness of Thessalians to form *xenia*-bonds with Persians. (See Stamatopoulou [2007], 219.)

[11] Aston (2012a).

[12] LSJ s.v. δεκατεύω.

[13] Hdt. 6.72 mentions the expedition out of context and with no details beyond the curious mention of the glove full of silver; he does not name the Aleuadai specifically. Plutarch (*de Mal. Her.* 21) identifies the targets as two individuals, Aristomedes and Angelos, persons otherwise unknown; Pausanias (3.7.9) names the Aleuadai as targets and mentions the bribe. The affair remains very obscure, but Sordi is right to note that we have no sound reason for even considering it as intended to punish medism; Plutarch cites it as an example of the Spartans acting against tyrants. (See Sordi [1958], 102; Schieber [1982].)

contradicted by others where the material remains continue or even increase in the fifth century.[14] In the decades after the invasion, several cities start to mint silver coinage, chief among them Larisa;[15] this innovation suggests neither economic hardship nor isolation.[16] The influential role of Larisa in the production of coinage also attests to the fact that, for all her seemingly dominant role in Thessaly's co-operation with Xerxes, that city lost none of its prestige or importance as a consequence of its policy. Historians have posited various shifts in the balance of power at the time of the invasion and in its aftermath, but these are not really supported by the evidence; or rather, though some changes are discernible, pinning them causally to the invasion is wholly impossible.[17] In fact, this is part of a more general point: that while really significant changes are discernible in the history and culture of Thessaly in and around the period in question, in most cases it seems very simplistic to consider the Persian invasion as a cause, let alone a dominant one.

There is, however, I would suggest, one significant exception. In this paper, I shall argue that some aspects of the religious behaviour of the Thessalians may usefully be interpreted as a response, at least in part, to the invasion and to the climate that prevailed after it. These aspects concern the role of Tempe in Thessalian cult, and its religious links with the Apollo-sanctuary at Delphi.

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[14] A case of apparent diminution is the sanctuary of Athena Itonia at Philia in western Thessaly, where there is a general pattern of peak volume of offerings in the period 750-575 BC and thereafter a marked lessening; however, this change arguably begins before the Persian invasion, and is very unlikely to be attributable to such events rather than to the shifting religious landscape of Thessaly itself. See Kilian-Dirlmeier (2002), 176-178.

[15] It has traditionally been thought that Larisa produced a pre-invasion issue bearing motifs related to the hero Jason and minted on the Persian standard, testifying to co-operation with the Persians. See e.g. Westlake (1936), 12-13; a more cautious interpretation of the weight standard and its implications was proposed by Martin (1986), 34-35. More recently, however, Kagan (2004) has offered a radical reinterpretation. He denies that the early Larisaian issues are on a different standard from the other Thessalian coins of the earlier fifth century (clearly on the Aiginetan standard); moreover, he suggests that they were minted *after* the invasion, and that their use of Jason-related motifs was a Larisaian attempt, by evoking a myth of Greek conquest in the East, to repair the reputational damage done by medism. Especially persuasive is his basic assertion that the dating of the series is not secure enough to form the basis of an argument about a change of Larisaian policy between the pre- and post-invasion periods. Moreover, that the iconography suits the later period is very plausible.

[16] Kagan (2004, 84) argues that the lighter weight of the early Larisaian issues suggests a brief period of economic hardship in the wake of the Persian invasion. While this is an attractive suggestion in some ways (he is surely right to say that the presence of the Persian army in Thessaly would have depleted the region's resources), it remains significant that Larisa started minting coins at all. Other forms of exchange and transaction existed, of course.

[17] For example, if the inscriptions of the Daochos Monument at Delphi are to be believed, 'all of Thessaly' was ruled by the Pharsalian Daochos for twenty-seven years around the time of the Peloponnesian War. (See *FD* III 4.460; Aston [2012b], 53-54.) This does seem to indicate, for all the mystery which clouds the finer details of political institutions, a different situation from that prevailing in the early fifth century in which the Aleuadai, as Pindar puts it, exercised 'πατρώϊαι κεδναὶ πολίων κυβερνάσιες' – 'careful hereditary governance of cities' (Pind. *Pyth.* 10.72). Though this shift of regional influence from Larisa to Pharsalos is significant, attributing it to the effects of the Persian invasion risks exaggerating the impact of that event just because it is one we know about, and ignoring the myriad other local factors which have disappeared from view. For an attempt to posit the Persian invasion, and the conditions it produced, as key factors, see Sordi (1958), 96-109.

1. Tempe and Thessalian medism in the narrative of Herodotos

In fact the importance of Tempe takes us back to Herodotos again, and it is important to explore the nuances of his depiction in order to identify what his particular authorial preoccupations contribute and what may, by contrast, be taken as representing *realia* beyond his account. I shall give a summary of the place of Tempe in Herodotos' conception of Thessaly's role in the Persian invasion, before going on to argue that, for all its pursuit of its own literary aims, his account does alert us to a key aspect of the Thessalian response to the invasion.

> οἱ δὲ κατηγεόμενοι, εἰρομένου Ξέρξεω εἰ ἔστι ἄλλη ἔξοδος ἐς θάλασσαν τῷ Πηνειῷ, ἐξεπιστάμενοι ἀτρεκέως εἶπον 'βασιλεῦ, ποταμῷ τούτῳ οὐκ ἔστι ἄλλη ἐξήλυσις ἐς θάλασσαν κατήκουσα, ἀλλ᾽ ἥδε αὐτή: ὄρεσι γὰρ περιεστεφάνωται πᾶσα Θεσσαλίη.' Ξέρξην δὲ λέγεται εἰπεῖν πρὸς ταῦτα 'σοφοὶ ἄνδρες εἰσὶ Θεσσαλοί. [2] ταῦτ᾽ ἄρα πρὸ πολλοῦ ἐφυλάξαντο γνωσιμαχέοντες καὶ τἆλλα καὶ ὅτι χώρην ἄρα εἶχον εὐαίρετόν τε καὶ ταχυάλωτον. τὸν γὰρ ποταμὸν πρῆγμα ἂν ἦν μοῦνον ἐπεῖναι σφέων ἐπὶ τὴν χώρην, χώματι ἐκ τοῦ αὐλῶνος ἐκβιβάσαντα καὶ παρατρέψαντα δι᾽ ὧν νῦν ῥέει ῥεέθρων, ὥστε Θεσσαλίην πᾶσαν ἔξω τῶν ὀρέων ὑπόβρυχα γενέσθαι.' [3] ταῦτα δὲ ἔχοντα ἔλεγε ἐς τοὺς Ἀλεύεω παῖδας, ὅτι πρῶτοι Ἑλλήνων ἐόντες Θεσσαλοὶ ἔδοσαν ἑωυτοὺς βασιλέι, δοκέων ὁ Ξέρξης ἀπὸ παντός σφεας τοῦ ἔθνεος ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι φιλίην.
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> 'Xerxes asked his guides if there were any other outlet for the Peneios into the sea, and they, with their full knowledge of the matter, answered him: 'The river, O king, has no other way into the sea, but this alone. This is so because there is a ring of mountains around the whole of Thessaly.' Upon hearing this Xerxes said: "These Thessalians are wise men; this, then, was the primary reason for their precaution long before when they changed to a better mind, for they perceived that their country would be easily and speedily conquerable. It would only have been necessary to let the river out over their land by barring the channel with a dam and to turn it from its present bed so that the whole of Thessaly, with the exception of the mountains, might be under water." This he said with regard in particular to the Aleuadai, the Thessalians who were the first Greeks to surrender themselves to the king. Xerxes supposed that when they offered him friendship they spoke for the whole of their *ethnos*.'[18]

This conversation takes place, in Herodotos' account, just as Xerxes is preparing to leave Macedon and enter Thessaly on his southward invasion-march. The Persian army has just drained the Macedonian river Cheidoros because of their vast numbers and need for drinking water; to the landscape of Thessaly they represent the opposite threat and one of far greater magnitude. When Xerxes learns that the vale of Tempe is the only place where the rivers of Thessaly, sending their waters into Peneios, debouch into the sea, he issues a retrospective half-threat: had the Thessalians

[18] Hdt. 7.130.

not submitted to his approach, he could have flooded their land by blocking the Peneios' outlet, turning Thessaly into a great lake or inland sea. (So, like Herodotos himself – though for different reasons – Xerxes considers that the Thessalians had no real choice but to submit.) This claim is on a par with Xerxes' other hubristic attacks on the natural world in the *Histories*, the most famous of which is his beating, branding and shackling of the uncooperative Hellespont.[19]

Xerxes does not carry out his threat to flood Thessaly: he does not need to. But in a sense, in Herodotos' account, he does defeat the natural environment of the region. He pits his horsemen in a race against the Thessalian cavalry, πυθόμενος ὡς ἀρίστη εἴη τῶν ἐν Ἕλλησι ('having ascertained that it was the best in Hellas'), and 'αἱ Ἑλληνίδες ἵπποι ἐλείποντο πολλόν' ('the Greek horses were beaten by a large margin').[20] On the one hand, the Thessalian cavalry is presented as representing *Greece's* finest; on the other, given the longstanding reputation of the Thessalians for horsemanship,[21] this is a particular defeat for Thessaly and for its most famous natural product. In the same section, Herodotos says that the rivers of Thessaly, like those of Macedon, are also depleted by Xerxes' forces, though only the Onochonos actually runs dry; copious irrigation is the key feature of Thessaly in this account (as indeed in the reality of the time). Finally, the loss of Xerxes' fleet off Cape Sepias is worth noting. While the wholesale destruction of Persian ships in the storm might count as a victory for the natural environs of Thessaly, the storm is finally calmed when the Persian Magi appeal in prayer to Thetis, mother of Achilles and a fundamental figure in Thessalian mythology. Even her demi-gods are not steadfast in Thessaly's protection.[22]

In this account, the Persian invasion represents, for Thessaly, an existential threat. As has been shown, this is part of Herodotos' wider vision of the menace which Persia constitutes for Greece. However, as I shall now go on to show, the role of Tempe in fifth-century Thessalian religion was genuinely important and reveals some ways in which the Persian invasion did indeed matter to at least some of the Thessalians.

## 2. The Petraia

Among the Thessalian coin-issues mentioned above as belonging to the decades following the invasion of 480, two types are especially telling for our current purposes. The first, minted in Larisa, Trikka, Pharkadon, Krannon and Pherai, shows on the obverse a young man in a short cloak wrestling a bull by its horns. On the reverse is a horse, often running and sometimes with reins trailing. It has long been recognised that the two sides work together to depict the Thessalian ritual called (in non-Thessalian texts) the *taurokathapsia*, in which young men rode after bulls then leaped to the ground and wrestled with the bulls on foot while their horses were left riderless as the reverse tends to show.[23] A version of this activity, now called the *taurotheria*, featured in the programme of the later

[19] Hdt. 7.34-35.
[20] 7.196.
[21] See e.g. Plato, *Men.* 70a-b.
[22] Hdt. 7.191. Thetis had an important cult near Pharsalos, one famous enough beyond the region to feature in Euripides' *Andromache.* See Aston (2009), 86; Aston (2011), 58-59; Mili (2015), 176 (note: 'Themis' here appears to be a misprint).
[23] This interpretation is preferable to any attempt to identify the human participant as a hero such as Thessalos or Jason. For discussion of this mythological reading, see Moustaka (1983), 74-76.

Hellenistic festival, the Eleutheria, an institution which sought to encapsulate Thessaly's cultural identity by reviving traditional customs.[24]

The second coin type cannot be connected securely to particular poleis because it bears, not city names, but a four-letter abbreviation of the ethnic in dialect form, ΦΕΘΑΛΩΝ/ΦΕΤΑΛΩΝ ('of the Thessalians').[25] Its obverse motif is the forepart of a horse, and on the reverse is an ear of grain. In some cases, the horse is not merely truncated as if for artistic convenience: it is actually shown springing out of a rocky mass.

Unfortunately we are reliant upon late (and, inevitably, non-Thessalian) literary sources for our understanding of the myths at work here, but taken as a whole and in combination with the numismatic evidence a reasonably clear picture emerges. (The lack of epigraphic evidence is not in itself either surprising or damning, given the very patchy record of excavation and publication in Thessaly.) The Thessalians had a myth in which the god Poseidon, in addition to cleaving Tempe and releasing the waters to produce the region's plainland, also created the first horse, either by striking the rock with his trident or by ejaculating on it in his sleep. The fullest account is that given by the scholiast on Pindar's fourth *Pythian*, explaining the fact that Jason is addressed, in the poem, as 'son of Poseidon Petraios':

> <παῖ Ποσειδᾶνος Πετραίου:> Πετραῖος τιμᾶται Ποσειδῶν παρὰ Θεσσαλοῖς, ὅτι διατεμὼν τὰ ὄρη τὰ Θετταλικά, φημὶ δὴ τὰ Τέμπη, πεποίηκε δι' αὐτῶν ἐπιτρέχειν τὸν ποταμὸν, πρότερον διὰ μέσης τῆς πόλεως ῥέοντα καὶ πολλὰ τῶν χωρίων διαφθείροντα. … οἱ δὲ, ὅτι ἐπί τινος πέτρας κοιμηθεὶς ἀπεσπερμάτισε, καὶ τὸν θορὸν δεξαμένη ἡ γῆ ἀνέδωκεν ἵππον πρῶτον, ὃν ἐπεκάλεσαν Σκύφιον.
> ἄλλως· ἐπίθετον Ποσειδῶνος ὁ Πετραῖος. φασὶ δὲ καὶ ἀγῶνα διατίθεσθαι τῷ Πετραίῳ Ποσειδῶνι, ὅπου ἀπὸ τῆς πέτρας ἐξεπήδησεν ὁ πρῶτος ἵππος· διὸ καὶ Ἵππιος ὁ Ποσειδῶν.
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> 'Son of Poseidon Petraios': Poseidon is worshipped as Petraios among the Thessalians, because cutting through the Thessalian mountains – I mean Tempe – he made the river flow out through them; previously it had run through the middle of the polis[26] and had destroyed many of the regions. … And some say that Poseidon, asleep upon a certain rock, ejaculated,[27] and the earth received the seed and gave forth the first horse, whom they called Skyphios.

[24] Graninger (2011), 77-79.
[25] Arena (1960); Franke (1970).
[26] It is not unknown for Thessaly to be referred to as a polis: see e.g. Decourt, Nielsen and Helly (2004), 677, col. 2.
[27] Poseidon strikes the rock to release the horse: *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. 'Ἵππιος ὁ Ποσειδῶν'.

Another: Petraios is an epithet of Poseidon. They say that a contest is conducted for Poseidon Petraios where the first horse sprang out of the rock.[28] And because of this Poseidon is also called Hippios.

Part of this myth is in fact recounted by Herodotos just before Xerxes' comment that Thessaly could be easily flooded by blocking Tempe:

τὴν δὲ Θεσσαλίην λόγος ἐστὶ τὸ παλαιὸν εἶναι λίμνην, ὥστε γε συγκεκλημένην πάντοθεν ὑπερμήκεσι ὄρεσι. τὰ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῆς πρὸς τὴν ἠῶ ἔχοντα τό τε Πήλιον ὄρος καὶ ἡ Ὄσσα ἀποκληίει συμμίσγοντα τὰς ὑπωρείας ἀλλήλοισι, τὰ δὲ πρὸς βορέω ἀνέμου Ὄλυμπος, τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἑσπέρην Πίνδος, τὰ δὲ πρὸς μεσαμβρίην τε καὶ ἄνεμον νότον ἡ Ὄθρυς· τὸ μέσον δὲ τούτων τῶν λεχθέντων ὀρέων ἡ Θεσσαλίη ἐστὶ ἐοῦσα κοίλη. [2] ὥστε ὦν ποταμῶν ἐς αὐτὴν καὶ ἄλλων συχνῶν ἐσβαλλόντων, πέντε δὲ τῶν δοκίμων μάλιστα τῶνδε, Πηνειοῦ καὶ Ἀπιδανοῦ καὶ Ὀνοχώνου καὶ Ἐνιπέος καὶ Παμίσου, οἳ μέν νυν ἐς τὸ πεδίον τοῦτο συλλεγόμενοι ἐκ τῶν ὀρέων τῶν περικληιόντων τὴν Θεσσαλίην ὀνομαζόμενοι δι᾽ ἑνὸς αὐλῶνος καὶ τούτου στεινοῦ ἔκροον ἔχουσι ἐς θάλασσαν, προσυμμίσγοντες τὸ ὕδωρ πάντες ἐς τὠυτό· [3] ἐπεὰν δὲ συμμιχθέωσι τάχιστα, ἐνθεῦτεν ἤδη ὁ Πηνειὸς τῷ οὐνόματι κατακρατέων ἀνωνύμους τοὺς ἄλλους εἶναι ποιέει. τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν λέγεται, οὐκ ἐόντος κω τοῦ αὐλῶνος καὶ διεκρόου τούτου, τοὺς ποταμοὺς τούτους, καὶ πρὸς τοῖσι ποταμοῖσι τούτοισι τὴν Βοιβηίδα λίμνην, οὔτε ὀνομάζεσθαι κατά περ νῦν ῥέειν τε οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἢ νῦν, ῥέοντας δὲ ποιέειν τὴν Θεσσαλίην πᾶσαν πέλαγος. [4] αὐτοὶ μέν νυν Θεσσαλοί φασι Ποσειδέωνα ποιῆσαι τὸν αὐλῶνα δι᾽ οὗ ῥέει ὁ Πηνειός, οἰκότα λέγοντες· ὅστις γὰρ νομίζει Ποσειδέωνα τὴν γῆν σείειν καὶ τὰ διεστεῶτα ὑπὸ σεισμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τούτου ἔργα εἶναι, κὰν ἐκεῖνο ἰδὼν φαίη Ποσειδέωνα ποιῆσαι· ἔστι γὰρ σεισμοῦ ἔργον, ὡς ἐμοὶ φαίνεται εἶναι, ἡ διάστασις τῶν ὀρέων.

'Thessaly, as tradition has it, was in old times a lake enclosed all round by high mountains. On its eastern side it is fenced in by the joining of the lower parts of the mountains Pelion and Ossa, to the north by Olympus, to the west by Pindus, towards the south and the southerly wind by Othrys. In the middle, then, of this ring of mountains, lies the vale of Thessaly. A number of rivers pour into this vale, the most notable of which are Peneios, Apidanos, Onochonos, Enipeus, Pamisos. These five, while they flow

[28] The establishment of the sanctuary to commemorate the appearance of the first horse is also mentioned in *Etymologicum Magnum* s.v. "Ἱππιος ὁ Ποσειδῶν'. Apollonios Rhodios in the *Argonautika* (3.1240-1245) includes in a list of poseidon's major sanctuaries one which he calls 'Haimonian Petra' or 'the Haimonian rock'; the scholiast on the passage glosses this by saying '<Πέτρην θ' Αἱμονίην>: τὴν Θεσσαλίδα Πέτραν. χωρίον δέ ἐστιν, ἐν ᾧ Ποσειδῶνος ἄγεται ἀγών, ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ τόπου Πεταῖον καλεῖσθαι.' (''Haimonian Petra/rock': Thessalian Petra/rock. This is the place in which the contest of Poseidon is held, so that he is called Petraios after the place.') It is hard of course to decide whether Petra is a place-name; no such toponym in Thessaly is otherwise securely attested. But whether or not one gives is a capital Π, the word refers to the rock which Poseidon struck or inseminated. This must have been at or near the mouth of the Peneios at Tempe.

> towards their meeting place from the mountains which surround Thessaly, have their several names, until their waters all unite and issue into the sea by one narrow passage. As soon as they are united, the name of the Peneios prevails, making the rest nameless. In ancient days, it is said, there was not yet this channel and outfall, but those rivers and Lake Boibeis, which was not yet named, had the same volume of water as now, and thereby turned all Thessaly into a sea. Now the Thessalians say that Poseidon made the passage by which the Peneios flows. This is reasonable, for whoever believes that Poseidon is the shaker of the earth and that rifts made by earthquakes are the work of that god will conclude, upon seeing that passage, that it is of Poseidon's making. It was manifest to me that it must have been an earthquake which forced the mountains apart.'

It is quite likely that Herodotos also knew of the story of the first horse, but to tell it did not suit the purposes of the narrative context, in which the motif of destructive flooding is paramount.[29]

Further corroboration that the festival of Poseidon Petraios was active in the earlier fifth century is provided by an epinician poem (unfortunately very fragmentary) of Bacchylides, celebrating the victory of one Kleoptolemos in the festival the Petraia, seemingly a hippic victory if his designation as *hipponikos* is anything to go by.[30] Putting together, then, the scattered evidence, we may create the following picture. In the fifth century the Thessalians celebrated a festival called the Petraia in honour of Poseidon, who was credited both with creating, or re-creating, their fertile plains and with the miraculous production of the first horse. This festival was surely the setting for the *taurokathapsia* shown on many coins of the period. The second coin type described above also refers to the cult, that is to its aetiological mythology: on one side, the first horse, on the other, the grain whose cultivation Poseidon's intervention facilitated.

To this synthesis we may add too the notoriously elusive festival of the Peloria, attested only by the fragmentary Hellenistic writer Baton of Sinope.[31] According to Baton, the *aition* of the Peloria was set in the primordial past when Thessaly was Pelasgian and ruled by a king Pelasgos. This man was conducting a public sacrifice when a man called Peloros ran up and announced that earthquakes at Tempe were causing the region's lake-waters to escape and extensive plains to be revealed. In the resulting jubilation, Peloros was feasted as the bringer of the good news, with noblemen competing to wait on him. The festival of the Peloria supposedly recreates this event with a public banquet at which slaves are served by masters. Though we have no other evidence for this rite, its connection, and that of the accompanying myth, with the Petraia is clear to see: both celebrate the sudden

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[29] It is interesting to note the way in which the rivers are described as 'making Thessaly one big sea' (ποιέειν τὴν Θεσσαλίην πᾶσαν πέλαγος); this chimes with the remark by the scholiast on Pindar that the Peneios 'destroyed many regions', and suggests that there may be a myth lurking behind this one in which Thessaly was inundated by a sudden cataclysmic inrush of waters before the intervention of Poseidon reversed the disaster. A hint of this is also found in Philostratos, *Imagines* 2.14, in which Peneios is presented as a decidedly obstructive figure, denying the Thessalians dry land by insisting on pouring his waters over the plains, until the matter is rectified by Poseidon.

[30] Bacchyl. *Ep.* 14, line 22. *Hipponikos* is partially restored (ἱππόν[ικον]) but the restoration seems very secure.

[31] *FGrH* 268 F 5. Baton is cited at length by Athenaios (*Deipn.* 14.639d-640a), who is interested in its resemblance to the Saturnalia, another festival of role-reversal.

availability of cultivable land. The feasting of the Peloria must in part refer to the natural abundance which the unflooded Thessaly can produce.[32]

It has been widely recognised that this cluster of myth and ritual encapsulates the essence of – as we might put it – Thessalianity,[33] and reveals a lot about how the Thessalians collectively wished to present their land in the fifth century (and later): as a land blessed by divine agency with its two crucial natural (and economic) assets, the resources for large-scale arable cultivation, and the horses that facilitated its excellent cavalry and other equestrian accomplishments. But how, if at all, does this relate to the specific context of the post-Persian-war years? It will be argued that the Petraia and related myths should be placed alongside other manifestations of the importance of Tempe and that, though a fifth-century inception cannot of course be proved, conditions after Xerxes' failed invasion did give the Thessalians certain key incentives to emphasise that aspect of their collective religious and mythological identity.

## 3. Tempe and Delphi

Thessaly's connection with Delphi were various and of long standing. Most significantly, the Thessalians held two votes on the Amphiktyonic council, and as such were represented in the sanctuary *qua* ethnos; Delphi was therefore one of the significant expressions of collective identity in Thessaly's history.[34] However, I shall return to this Amphiktyonic role shortly, but begin this section with consideration of a different Thessaly-Delphi connection, the Septerion.

It is only in the writings of Plutarch (and then only in terms of considerable obscurity) that this ritual is actually named and described.[35] It seems to have involved a kind of ritual drama taking place every eight years, in which a young man burned a hut in the sanctuary of Apollo before fleeing north and undergoing 'wanderings and servitude' (πλάναι and λατρεία, *De Def. Or.* 15) before finally being purified at Tempe. This, Plutarch elsewhere tells us, referred to the myth in which Apollo killed Python and then went to Tempe for purification. It therefore gave Tempe a role of great importance in the religious calendar of Delphi and in the life of the god, regularly re-enacted.[36]

Working backwards chronologically, Kallimachos mentions Apollo washing his hands in the Peneios to cleanse them after killing Python, and cutting laurel before returning to Delphi.[37] Stephanus of Byzantium in his gloss on the name Deipnias seems to refer to this passage of Kallimachos when he says: '<Δειπνιάς,> κώμη Θεσσαλίας περὶ Λάρισσαν, ὅπου φασὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δειπνῆσαι πρῶτον, ὅτε ἐκ τῶν Τέμπεων καθαρθεὶς ὑπέστρεψεν· καὶ τῷ παιδὶ τῷ διακομιστῆ τῆς δάφνης ἔθος εἰς τήνδε παραγενομένῳ δειπνεῖν. Καλλίμαχος δ'"Δειπνιὰς ἔνθεν μιν δειδέχαται."' ('Deipnias: a Thessalian village near Larisa, where they say Apollo had his first meal when he turned back from Tempe, purified. And it is customary for the boy who carries the laurel to go there to eat. Kallimachos in book 4: 'where Deipnias has welcomed

[32] For discussion of the Peloria, see Helly (1991), 135-138.
[33] See e.g. Mili (2015), 234–239.
[34] For discussion of Thessaly's role on the Amphiktyonic council, see Lefèvre (1998), 13-29; Sánchez (2001), 471.
[35] Plut. *Quaest. Gr.* 12 and *De Def. Or.* 15.
[36] Graninger (2009), 112-113.
[37] Kallim. frs. 87 and 89a; see Harder (2012), 715-718.

him''.) Tempe laurel was used to make the victory-wreaths for the Pythian Games every four years, another close connection between Delphi and Tempe.[38] The Septerion co-ordinated with the Pythian Games, since it was held in June/July (in the Delphic month Apellaios) and the Pythian Games were in July/August (Boukatios). It is to be assumed that every other iteration of the Pythia would fall shortly after a Septerion, and that the return of the Delphic procession from Tempe with the laurel would have dovetailed almost exactly with the Pythia in which, as members of the Amphiktyony, the Thessalians would have been extensively involved.

Moreover, earlier evidence for the Septerion is available. Rutherford notes that one of the fragmentary *Paians* of Pindar seems to refer to it (though not, in the surviving lines, by name).[39] Pindar is also our earliest surviving source for another Tempe-Delphi link: the creation of Apollo's first Delphic temple out of Tempe laurel. [40] We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility that this part of the myth is very early, but nor should we automatically suppose it. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, significantly, Apollo's first temple is the one made of stone by Trophonios and Agamedes; the laurel one is not mentioned.[41] We should certainly entertain the strong possibility that the Thessalian laurel temple was, if not actually invented in the fifth century, then at least brought to greater prominence at that time. It is also quite possible that the Septerion (whose great antiquity tends simply to be assumed)[42] was a fifth-century development.

Certainly our earliest substantial evidence from Thessaly itself for the Tempe-Delphi ritual connection is fifth century in date. From the mid fifth century comes a short dedicatory inscription found near Larisa:

Side A. Ἄπλōνι Λεσχαίῳ̄[ι]
Ἀριστίōν ὀνέθεκε κοί συνδαυχναφόροι.
Side B. Πρόνος {Πρόνōς?} ἐργάξατο.

To Apollo Leschaios
Aristion and his fellow *dauchnaphoroi* dedicated (this).

Pronos made it.[43]

*Dauchna* is the epichoric Thessalian form of *daphnē*, 'laurel', and these laurel-bearers are surely to be interpreted as central participants in the procession which carried the Tempe laurel south to Delphi. Helly posits a connection with Deipnias, the site of the ritual meal eaten by the boy in re-enactment of Apollo after his purification. He argues that the epiklesis Leschaios refers to this rite, since a *leschē* can signify a place of communal eating.[44]

The picture starting to emerge, that within Thessaly itself there was active ritual participation in the carrying of the laurel from Tempe to Delphi, is further fleshed out by a description in Aelian's

[38] See below, p. X
[39] Rutherford (2001), 201-203, discussing Pind. *Pai.* 10(a).
[40] Rutherford (2001), 217.
[41] *Hom. Hymn* 3.295-297.
[42] See e.g. Helly (1987), 139-142; Mili (2015), 191.
[43] *IG* IX.2 1027.
[44] Helly (1987), 140-142.

*Historical Miscellany* which almost certainly derives from Theopompos' *History*, a fourth century BC work.[45] The Thessalians say', we are told, that Apollo purified himself in the Peneios at Tempe after slaying Python and then returned triumphant to Delphi wearing a crown of Tempe laurel and carrying a *klados*, branch, presumably of the same material. Even more significantly, the text goes on to describe the ritual that occurred in Thessaly in commemoration of the mythical events:

> ἔστι δὲ καὶ βωμὸς ἐν αὐτῶι τῶι τόπωι, ἐν ὧι καὶ ἐστεφανώσατο καὶ τὸν κλάδον ἀφεῖλε· καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν δι᾽ ἔτους ἐνάτου οἱ Δελφοὶ παῖδας εὐγενεῖς πέμπουσι καὶ ἀρχιθέωρον ἕνα σφῶν αὐτῶν. οἳ δὲ παραγενόμενοι καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῶς θύσαντες ἐν τοῖς Τέμπεσιν ἀπίασι πάλιν στεφάνους ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς δάφνης διαπλέξαντες, ἀφ᾽ ἧσπερ οὖν καὶ τότε ὁ θεὸς ἐστεφανώσατο. καὶ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐκείνην ἔρχονται, ἣ καλεῖται μὲν Πυθιάς, φέρει δὲ διὰ Θετταλίας καὶ Πελασγίας καὶ τῆς Οἴτης καὶ τῆς Αἰνιάνων χώρας καὶ τῆς Μηλιέων καὶ Δωριέων καὶ Λοκρῶν τῶν Ἑσπερίων. οὗτοι δὲ καὶ παραπέμπουσιν αὐτοὺς σὺν αἰδοῖ καὶ τιμῆι οὐδὲν ἧττον ἢπερ οὖν ἐκεῖνοι, οἳ τοὺς ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων τὰ ἱερὰ κομίζοντας τῶι αὐτῶι θεῶι τούτωι τιμῶσι. (8) καὶ μὴν καὶ τοῖς Πυθίοις ἐκ ταύτης τῆς δάφνης τοὺς στεφάνους τοῖς νικῶσι διδόασιν.
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> 'There is an altar at that place, where he was garlanded and took away the branch. And even now, every eight years,[46] the Delphians send well-born boys and one of their own *architheōroi*. These, having arrived and sacrificed lavishly at Tempe, go back with crowns woven from the same laurel with which in the past the god was crowned. The road they take is called 'Pythian', but it leads through Thessaly, Pelasgia, Oita, and the lands of the Ainianes, Malians, Dorians and western Lokrians. These people accompany the procession with singing and with reverence, no less than those who give reverence to those carrying the sacred objects of the Hyperboreans for the very same god. And furthermore they give crowns made from this same laurel to those who are victorious in the Pythian Games.'

So there are signs of a very active ritual connection between Delphi and Thessaly, with a particular focus on Tempe, from the fifth century BC.[47] As has been said, we cannot say with certainty that the rituals did not occur earlier; however, the nature of the evidence suggests at least that they reached greater prominence in the period after the invasion of Xerxes. Is this pure coincidence? I suggest not.

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[45] Wilson (1997), 123 n. 1.

[46] This enneaeteric timing suggests that the ritual described is – or adjoins – the Septerion, rather than happening every time the Pythian Games are held.

[47] It is possible that the myth of Apollo's pursuit of Daphne, daughter of Peneios, was also created in the fifth century. The surviving literary sources are all later (e.g. Ov. *Met.* i. 452; Hygin. *Fab.* 203); however, there is a possible depiction of the pursuit on an Attic red figure hydria of ca. 450 BC (London BM 1873,0820.355). Apollo, running, reaches out towards an unnamed fleeing female; the fact that he is garlanded in laurel and carries a bough of the same material suggests that the Daphne episode may be intended. However, we cannot be certain.

4. Thessaly, Delphi and the Persian invasion

In this section I shall argue that if we examine the conditions prevailing after the invasion we may see in the fifth century rituals described a re-calibration, so to speak, of Thessaly's relationship with Delphi, an adjustment in the face of new and in some ways less favourable circumstances. In particular, the Thessalians were supplementing their Amphiktyonic role in the sanctuary, which had become somewhat problematic or unsatisfactory, with a new connection whose geographical focus, on Tempe, conveyed an important message about the territorial identity of Thessaly.

The picture of Thessalian involvement in the Amphiktyony in the Archaic period is hard to reconstruct, and we should treat with caution some of the more ambitious reconstructions of complete Thessalian dominance in the sanctuary.[48] None the less, a general scholarly consensus that Thessaly in the sixth century was an influential member of the Amphiktyonic council – influence which the region regained in the fourth century with the backing of Philip of Macedon – appears well-founded. In the Archaic period, Delphic clout would have given Thessaly considerable prestige in central Greek affairs and indeed more widely; one reading of the *Catalogue of Women* – which through heroic genealogy establishes the stemma of the Hellenes and places the Thessalians prominently within it – is that it is essentially an Amphiktyonic recipe for Greekness, allowing the Thessalians in particular to shape the evolving discourse on what it meant to be a member of the Hellenic community.[49] The fact that Hellas and Hellenes seem originally to have referred to a specific area of southern Thessaly provides plausible corroboration of this view.[50] In the sixth century, then, Delphi seems to have influenced the development of collective identity among Greek states, and Thessaly – if not actually steering Delphi – seems to have been a powerful player in the sanctuary.

To argue that the Persian invasion alone brought this situation to an end is of course far too simplistic. There are shadowy glimpses of various checks to Thessalian power in central Greece at the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the fifth, so if we believe in an aggressively expansionist Thessaly this phenomenon was probably in abeyance well before Xerxes crossed the

[48] A cautious approach: 'Morgan (2003), p. 23, 125, 129-131 et 207'. Sordi believed that the Amphiktyony's first base was at Anthela, and that at this stage it was a grouping of central Greek *ethnē* opposed to the Thessalians; its move to Delphi represented a reconciliation between the Thessalians and their erstwhile opponents, and in the sixth century BC the Thessalians were, she considers, predominant in the sanctuary. The theory of Thessalian dominance at Delphi in the Archaic period has received more recent support from Hall (2002, 130-154).

[49] Fowler and Hall believe that the prominence of Thessaly in the *Catalogue of Women* reflects her influential role in its composition: see Fowler (1998), 9-12; Hall (2002), 161-162.

[50] Hall argues that the extension of the name 'Hellenes' beyond southern Thessaly, to encompass the Amphiktyonic *ethnē* and, thereafter, all Greeks, derived from the dominance of Thessaly in the Amphiktyony. There have, however, been other theories, by no means implausible; Bury (1895), for example, related it to colonisation, and argued that a group of settlers from southern Thessaly, who travelled first to the north-east Peloponnese and thereafter to Magna Graecia, used the term Hellas first to refer to their metropolis and later of the whole of 'Greece proper'. For an interesting Hellenistic recognition of the piquancy of Thessaly, on the edge of Greece, containing the 'original Hellas', see Herakleides Kritikos, *FGrH* 369A F 3.1-8.

Hellespont.[51] However, the *symbolic* impact of the invasion is unmistakable. When the states of the Hellenic League (as modern historians term it) made their victory-dedication at Delphi at the end of the war, they appear to have identified themselves as 'Hellenes', and as Scott has suggested this constitutes an assertive claim on a kind of privileged Greekness.[52] Whereas previously the Hellenes were, first and foremost, those descended from Hellēn, now a new definition was in operation: Hellenes were those who opposed *barbaroi*. And not only did this new criterion disqualify the Thessalians, in fact the majority of Amphiktyonic *ethnē* were outside the club, so to speak, as having actively assisted the Persian invaders. According to Diodoros, several of the Amphiktyonic states actually capitulated to Persia before the Hellenic League forces relinquished the defence of Tempe.[53]

On the face of it, in practical terms it was business as usual in the Amphiktyony after the Persian defeat. In ca. 478 BC, Sparta proposed that all cities who had not actively opposed the Persians be debarred from the Amphiktyony.[54] (In effect, I suppose, this meant that the ethnos of the Boiotians, for example, would continue to be represented, but its delegates would have to come from Plataia or Thespiai; as for the Thessalians, they would not be represented at all.) According to Plutarch, Themistokles recognised this suggestion for what it was: Sparta's effort to achieve dominance in the Amphiktyony herself. The notion was therefore quickly quashed.[55] And indeed, even while the conflict was still in progress, the Amphiktyons were indicating symbolic, if not practical, support for the resistance to Persia, for example by condemning the traitor Ephialtes,[56] and by setting up at Thermopylai the several of the monuments commemorating the Greek battle-dead.[57] The sanctuary of Apollo itself was the location for a positive flurry of dedications celebrating Greek victory;[58] even though the utterances of the oracle itself had apparently been decidedly discouraging to the cause of the Hellenic League,[59] the sanctuary lost none of its potency as a place of symbolic display.[60]

None the less, it is undeniable that the climate had changed, and that the majority of Amphiktyonic communities, the Thessalians chief among them, would have lost their prestige and, we may assume, their ability to sway the decisions of the Amphiktyonic council. Certainly, by the

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[51] Herodotos himself (8.27-28) makes mention of two battles in which the Phokians worsted attacking Thessalians, shortly before the Persian invasion. He also says that the Phokians had built a wall in the area of Thermopylai to deflect Thessalian incursions: Hdt. 7.215. By Plutarch's time, this conflict had become inflated to include Thessalian occupation of Phokis, and a Phokian narrative of heroic resistance and eventual victory over the northern oppressor, a story which we should certainly hesitate to accept in its entirety (see Plut. *Mul. Virt.* 2; the tradition is further elaborated in Paus. 10.1.3-11).

[52] Scott (2010), 84. For the reconstruction of the text, see Laroche and Jacquemin (1988), 245-246.

[53] Diod. 11.3.2.

[54] Schieber (1982), 10-11.

[55] Plut. *Themist*. 20.3-4.

[56] Hdt. 7.213.2: Ephialtes flees into Thessaly to avoid Spartan wrath; the Pylagoroi at the Spring meeting of the Amphiktyony at Anthela (in 478 BC) put a price on his head. See Schieber (1982), 11, who thinks that the Amphiktyonic judgement was in response to Spartan pressure.

[57] Hdt. 7.228.

[58] Scott (2010), 81-88.

[59] Hdt. 7.140.2: the Pythia urges the Athenians to flee from the Persians since all is lost and ruin faces them.

[60] This is all the more striking if we accept the argument of Nielsen (2007) that the Hellenic League did not make victory-dedications at Nemea because of the neutral stance adopted by Kleonai and Argos. No doubt the exceptional importance of Delphi, and its potential to add greatly to the influence of states involved in its administration, made it undesirable simply to leave it out of the process of commemoration as Nemea was left out.

mid fifth century the Amphiktyony was essentially acting as a pawn in the burgeoning conflict between Athens and Sparta, during the so-called Second Sacred War.[61] The Thessalians were not out of the picture of larger Greek events in this period: they were allies of Athens, formally, and gave them decidedly counterproductive assistance at the Battle of Tanagra in 457 BC (see below). Around three years later the Athenians sent an expeditionary force up to Thessaly to try, unsuccessfully as it turned out, to install in Pharsalos a ruler sympathetic to their cause, Orestes the son of Echekratidas.[62] Their expansionist policy at this time plainly extended from central Greece to aim at influence in the north. As for the Amphiktyony, it was being pushed and pulled between Athens and Sparta with little active involvement from the majority of the Amphiktyons.

It is at first glance surprising perhaps to find that this very context gives us our first known collective Thessalian dedication in the sanctuary:[63] the statue of a horse, representing a tenth of the plunder taken at the Battle of Tanagra.[64] How this relates to the very peculiar actions of the Thessalians in that engagement is too complex a matter to discuss fully here; the important implication for our purposes is that a loss of Amphiktyonic prestige had not dissuaded the Thessalians from using the sanctuary of Apollo as a place for victory-display. Indeed, since in general the Amphiktyons themselves (apart from Athens and Sparta) tended not to be among the most energetic dedicators at Delphi,[65] we might go so far as to suggest that the collective dedication reflects a weakening of Amphiktyonic influence, and a desire to seek other sources of visibility.

If this is a conjecture too far, none the less the Tempe rituals may start to make more sense within the context here described. It is entirely plausible that Thessaly should try to supplement her weakened Amphiktyonic role by forging – or enhancing – alternative connections with Delphi; the daphnephoric rite of the Septerion, the ritual dining near Larisa, make far more sense when seen against the backdrop of depleted Amphiktyonic influence. It is interesting to consider how the addition of the daphnephoric route between Delphi and Tempe would have adjusted the geographical focus of the link between Thessaly and Delphi. Traditionally, the Amphiktyons met in Anthela in the Spring and in Delphi in the Autumn. The Thessalian Amphiktyons would have travelled south to the Spercheios valley for the spring session, back home – presumably – to their native poleis for the duration of summer, and then south to Delphi for the autumn meeting. This

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[61] Thuc. 1.112.5 (relating events of 449-448 BC).

[62] Thuc. 1.111.1. Pausanias (10.15.4) mentions a dedication at Delphi by the Pheraians in celebration of a victory over Athenian cavalry: could this perhaps relate to the Orestes episode? Could the Pheraian cavalry have contributed to Athens' failure, and decided to publicise the fact at Delphi?

[63] Indeed, only one earlier dedication by any Thessalian is known: that of the Larisaian Echekratidas mentioned by Pausanias 10.16.8.

[64] *SEG* 17.243; Daux (1958); for discussion of the inscription and its political implications, see Helly (1995), 226-233. As to the Thessalian actions in the battle, Thucydides briefly mentions at 1.107.7 that the Athenians' Thessalian allies, cavalry, switched mid-battle to fight on the Spartan side. More detail is supplied by Diodoros (11.80), who claims that the Thessalians attacked the Athenian baggage-train and killed many of the Athenians before the latter realised they were hostile before themselves being routed with great loss of life. The Spartans, however, then come to the Thessalians' aid. The Athenian expedition into Thessaly in ca. 454 must in part have been encouraged by resentment at this volte-face, though it should be noted that the alliance, rather extraordinarily, survived: in 431 BC contingents from several Thessalian poleis fought for the Athenians when the Spartans invaded Attica (Thuc. 2.22.3). Thessalian motives for their actions at Tanagra have sometimes been attributed to dissent between different factions within the Thessalian forces. See e.g. Sordi (1958), 106-107.

[65] As Scott has observed, especially grand dedications tended, in the Archaic period, to be made by East and West Greeks. Scott (2010), 45-51.

pattern did not alter in the fifth century as far as we know, but the meeting at Anthela must have been affected by the changed face of Thermopylai, a short distance away from the sanctuary of Demeter where the Amphiktyonic council met. After the battle in which Leonidas died, Thermopylai became a place of commemoration of the glorious Greek dead: those, specifically, who resisted. It must have become a problematic and uncomfortable location for the majority of the Amphiktyons, whose communities had medised. Tempe, on the other hand, had quite different resonances. It was where, according to Herodotos, the Thessalians *would have* been prepared to make a stand, had the Hellenic League maintained its original strategy of defence. Relinquishing Tempe – against the wishes of most Thessalians – left the region, as had been said, out in the cold, and triggered its capitulation. Perhaps the renewed focus on Tempe in the fifth century allowed Thessaly to reclaim the area as a source of regional pride, and to provide a more acceptable focus of ritual than the compromised Thermopylai.

The fresh emphasis on Tempe's laurel is also significant in this regard. It was used to crown Pythian winners; the Pythian Games were traditionally administered by the Amphiktyony, in whose membership, as has been said, the Thessalians as medisers had somewhat lost influence. Supplying the victory laurel, and surrounding its conveyance with elaborate rituals linked to the mythology of Apollo's slaying of Python, would have ensured that the Thessalians retained at least one important stake in the conduct of the contest.

It would be simplistic to argue that the shift of Thessaly's religious focus towards Tempe was entirely and solely triggered by the Persian invasion and its aftermath. Having an active stake in the Spercheios valley arguable suited Thessaly in the sixth century in a way it no longer did to the same extent in the fifth, for other reasons. It has been pointed out by historians that the Amphiktyonic sanctuary at Anthela stood at the head of the so-called Great Isthmus Corridor, the chain of passes running south-east through central Greece;[66] Thessalian attempts to control this corridor may lie behind the shadowy conflicts with Phokis and Boiotia which ended in a series of Thessalian defeats in the late sixth century. Perhaps, therefore, the interest of Thessalian communities turned away from her southern marches when her expansionist hopes were quashed, before Xerxes even launched his invasion. But if so, the process would only have been encouraged by the reshaping of Thermopylai as a memorial to the Greek resistance, and the use of Delphi as a locus for Spartan and Athenian ambitions and rivalry in the years following the invasion.

## 5. Conclusion

In many ways – in most ways – life for the Thessalians seems to have continued after the invasion of Xerxes much as it had been before. There were no immediate and serious repercussions of their having actively assisted the Persians, though their reputation was surely affected. No economic impact is discernible; the minting of coins greatly increased, and the archaeological record does not register any kind of wholesale falling-off in the scale or frequency of building projects or in the quality of material goods. Nor is it possible to argue convincingly that the invasion caused a shift in the region's internal politics, since the Aleuadai were not ousted nor their regional influence replaced by that of another elite group. Certainly political changes may be identified in fifth-century

[66] Szemler (1991), 106-109; McInerney (1999), 333-339; Hall (2001), 144.

Thessaly, but to regard these as necessarily the result of the Persian invasion would be stretching the fragmentary evidence too far.

However, I have tried to show in this paper, we should not dismiss the invasion and its aftermath as having no consequences for Thessaly. The power-shift within the Delphic Amphiktyony, to favour the few non-medising members (especially Athens and Sparta), and the new significance of Thermopylai in the vicinity of the Amphiktyonic base at Anthela: these developments did indeed make a discernible difference to significant aspects of Thessaly's regional life. New (or newly reinforced) links with Delphi were developed, through the carrying of sacred laurel from Tempe which would sometimes have taken place within the curious rite of the Septerion. In these rituals, Delphic officials travelled north, but the Thessalians themselves were active participants, as *dauchnaphoroi* and in the dining ceremony which took place at Deipnias.

However, the developments here described in Thessalian religion do not relate solely to how the Thessalians wished to project their identity to other Greeks, especially at Delphi; there are implications too for how they conceived and expressed their own – as one might say – Thessalianity. It was noted that the Petraia and the Peloria, which celebrated the creation of the Tempe gorge and the release of the floodwaters, expressed, with their accompanying mythology, the essential nature of Thessaly as a natural and cultural entity: a rich land, capable of sustaining the horses whose first sample Poseidon produced, capable of yielding large quantities of grain thanks to the expanse of flat and cultivable land which the receding waters left behind them. It seems, then, that in the decades after the Persian invasion the Thessalians did a great deal to articulate their collective identity, and this observation leads us, as a closing point, to wonder: could it be said that the Persian invasion actually help to produce a regional identity which had not really been developed previously?

The *Catalogue of Women*, in which, as has been said, the Thessalians feature so significantly, does not really establish a genealogical basis for a Thessalian ethnos separate from those around it. Instead, Thessalians feature as descendants of Aiolos, an expansive genealogy linking them with other parts of the Greek world and weaving them into the Hellenic stemma which the poem seeks to construct.[67] In a sense, the *Iliad*, the other great epic in which Thessalians feature to a very significant degree, conveys a comparable impression. The Catalogue of Ships in Book 2 may be seen as a muster-roll of Greeks, though constituted differently from the *Catalogue of Women* – participants in an expedition rather than descendants of primordial ancestor-figures – and set in a later period of mythological time. In the Catalogue of Ships, there is no mention of Thessaly or of the Thessalians; rather, the region features as a series of semi-independent fiefdoms whose *basileis* led their contingents to Troy.[68] (This may be contrasted with the Boiotians, for example, who are given collective mention in the Catalogue of Ships.) Though I do not believe that either Catalogue actually predates the existence of the Thessalian ethnic, it is highly significant that in Archaic epic myth is not used to draw clear boundaries around the Thessalians and their land, separating them from others and uniting them to each other.

But such boundaries are clearly present in fifth-century texts, and Thessaly as an entity is expressed in the Petraia and the Peloria. It has been observed that in the wake of the Persian war the composition of Hellenicity shifted away from the traditional recipes of epic, in which the

[67] On the distribution of Aiolid figures through Thessaly, see West (1985), 138.
[68] Hom. *Il.* 2.681-770. For discussion, see Helly (1995), 73-96; Morgan (2003), 102-105.

Thessalians were prominent, and came to be based on opposition to the Persians, in which Thessaly of course could claim no part. Could it be that in this new climate the Thessalians, left on the fringes of Greekness, responded in part by emphasising what set them apart?

It is highly significant that the Petraia is, in effect, our first clearly attested regional cult in Thessaly. We can know nothing of its range and composition in terms of who attended it, and from where. All we know is that certain poleis, mainly situated along the course of the Peneios, chose to refer to it on their coins. But as had been said its mythology was regional in its themes, and this is a seeming novelty. The sanctuary of Athena Itonia at Philia, which later served a federal function,[69] does not seem to have had a pan-Thessalian role in the Archaic or Classical period.[70] Similarly, the myth of Thessalos, the eponym of the Thessaloi, did not receive anything like pan-Thessalian application until later, arguably only in the third century BC.[71] The myth in which Thessaly takes its name and shared mythic identity from an invading group, the Thessaloi, first appears in fifth-century sources.[72] All in all, it is only from the fifth century that Thessalians seem to have taken any pains to assert collective religious, mythological and cultural identity. The seeds of this development must in part predate the Persian war and it would be foolhardy to argue that the invasion was a sole, or even the chief, cause. None the less, a sense of compromised Hellenicity, of having forfeited their former privileged position in the company of Greeks, would surely have encouraged the process.

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[69] Graninger (2011), 61-67.
[70] Mili (2015), 225-229.
[71] The first sign that the figure of Thessalos was cultivated by the Thessalians on anything like a pan-Thessalian basis comes in a third century BC inscription from Aigai in Asia Minor, mentioning a cult of the hero jointly observed by the Thessalians and the various communities in Asia Minor. For discussion, see Malay and Ricl (2009); Parker (2011); Bouchon and Helly (2013), 209-210.
[72] Hdt. 7.176.4 and Thuc. 1.12.3-4.

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