

# The Epigraphy and History of Boeotia

*New Finds, New Prospects*

*Edited by*

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# Ethnic Identity and Integration in Boeotia: The Evidence of the Inscriptions (6th and 5th Centuries BC)

*Hans Beck*

*In memory of John Buckler*

The ancient Boeotians were notoriously held in low regard by their fellow Greeks. Various proverbial expressions survive that reveal a disreputable, if not downright derogatory, opinion of them, culminating in the infamous designation, “Boeotian swine.”<sup>1</sup> Much of that slander seems to have stemmed from Athenian roots; indeed, the surviving public image of Boeotia in the Classical period suggests that the negative projection was mostly a product of Athenian attempts to promote their own claims to political leadership and cultural superiority. While celebrating their valor as a citizen community and boasting of it throughout the Greek world, the Athenians tended to use their Boeotian neighbors as a negative foil: Boeotia virtually became an “anti-Athens.”<sup>2</sup> Among the many stigmatizations nurtured by Athenian propaganda, one may be appropriately mentioned here. The saying goes that the Boeotians were like holm oaks for, in the words of Perikles, “just as these are beaten down by knocking against each other, so are the Boeotians by their civil struggle.”<sup>3</sup> The simile is not ungrounded. The history of Boeotia is one of persistent strife, of integration and disintegration, of cooperation and falling apart, of rivalry, reconciliation, and then more rivalry. In the various phases of their history, the Boeotians engaged in some of the most enterprising ventures of political unity. Yet they also witnessed the bitter shortcomings of such projects, including the destruction of rival cities and the enslavement of entire citizen bodies.

Little is known about the Boeotian rebuttal of slander from Athens or elsewhere. It would be altogether naïve, however, to think that the Boeotians simply swallowed the negative reputation cast upon them by others. In their networks of communication, from Chaironeia to Tanagra, from Aulis to the shores of the Corinthian Gulf, and from the fringes of Lake Kopais to Mt. Kithairon, the ruling

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1 Pind. *Ol.* 6.89–90. Cf. Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 6.152: “There once was a time when the Boeotian *ethnos* was called swine.”

2 Cf. the influential interpretation of Zeitlin 1990 and 1993 with regard to Athenian drama.

3 Arist. *Rhet.* 1407a4–6; cf. Plut. *Vit. Per.* 33.4.

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elites of Boeotia must have projected a different image of Boeotian identity. For instance, in the aftermath of the Persian Wars, faced with the onerous legacy of Medism, the leading families at Thebes set out to reappraise their history in the years around 480 BC. This reappraisal precipitated a thriving historical narrative that responded to the charge of Medism; according to it, the Boeotians were not the perpetrators who betrayed the common cause of the Hellenes, as they were branded in the Herodotean narrative. Effectively, this narrative deeply separated Theban perceptions of the Persian War period from those in virtually any other city-state outside of Boeotia.<sup>4</sup>

This essay is concerned not so much with how the image of Boeotian identity was construed and what it entailed, i.e., what ethnic distinctiveness the Boeotians assigned to themselves and what the core of their self-perception was; instead, it investigates the question of when the Boeotians actually began to identify themselves as an *ethnos*, with a conscious understanding of tribal cohesion and a vibrant idea of common belonging. Again, the focus here is not so much on how this ethnic self-awareness came into being (although this aspect will be touched upon in passing); rather, this essay explores the actual dynamics of the integration of local communities into an overarching regional conglomeration and considers how this group identity was articulated and what its ramifications were. As an extension of this approach, it also explores the diachronic development of Boeotian ethnicity in the Classical period and discloses its impact on the various attempts to form a Boeotian federal league, a *koinon*. This essay thus targets the relation between two categorically different, yet potentially interactive forms of societal group integration: between tribe and league, or between *ethnos* and *koinon*. It explores how both patterns of integration related to one another and what their mutual interdependence was.<sup>5</sup>

The contemporary orthodox view is that the regional Greek *ethne*, including the Boeotians, were not true societal relicts of a remote past. Instead, they are regarded as essentially changing, flexible and at times fairly late constructions of ethnic cohesion. This does not exclude the possibility of a realignment of the *ethne* of historical times with remnants from the distant past of the Mycenaean world, such as surviving monuments, fragments of cultural traditions, or place names. For instance, in the 6th century BC, the Mycenaean

4 On this, cf. my forthcoming monograph contribution on “The Parochial Polis”.

5 This study is also inspired by the research network *Greek Federal States* which is directed by myself and Peter Funke at Münster University, the results of which are presently being prepared for publication (*Federalism in Greek Antiquity*, CUP 2015).

ruins at Thebes, Orchomenos, and Gla fuelled the lively imagination of ethnic linkage between the Boeotians of the present day and the original owners who had once built those palaces. Hero shrines, ritual performance, and legendary traditions had a similar impact on the formation and dissemination of mythical ancestry. Indeed, the legendary cycle of Theban myths (Kadmos, the Labdakidai, Herakles) and its incarnation in the urban topography and monumental architecture of the city offers one of the best examples of a realignment of a historical tribe with its remote past through a dense network of places of memory.<sup>6</sup>

The actual existence of late-Mycenaean tribes who, in their wanderings, gradually moved towards their new homes in central Greece has of course become doubtful. The standard position today is to dissociate the historical *ethne* from their imagined forerunners, and to date the rise of a new tribal self-awareness and formation of an aggregative identity to the Archaic period, perhaps ca. 700, if not slightly earlier.<sup>7</sup> In light of many regional variations, it offers little promise to postulate a template solution that works for all *ethne*. Moreover, depending on the criteria that are applied to define the collective identity of a tribe, the chronology of *ethnos*-formation shifts. Some scholars posit the criterion of putative primordial descent and the association of a tribe with an assigned territory, or homeland, which prioritizes the chronology of the rise of legendary traditions and 'historical' narratives. Others stress the force of culture, both material and immaterial, which follows along a somewhat different chronological trajectory.<sup>8</sup>

The complex process of ethnogenesis in Boeotia has recently been disclosed in studies by Angela Kühn in 2006, Barbara Kowalzig in 2007, and Stephanie Larson in the same year. These works show how the rise of Boeotian ethnic self-awareness was practically geared to and in turn made possible by a common set of regional cults and foundation myths that date to the late 8th century BC. The three scholars argue, independently from one another and with very different methodologies, that the ethnic integration of Boeotia was driven by vivid reflections of a shared identity. Their common point of departure is the

6 On this, cf. the magisterial account of Kühn 2006, pp. 42–46, 199–256 and *passim*. The *locus classicus* in historiography is Herodotus' brief digression on the "Kadmeian letters" which he saw in the sanctuary of Apollo Hismenios at Thebes and relates to the foundation period of the city (5.58–61). For recent archaeological finds relating to the Heracleian part of the Theban mythological nexus, see Aravantinos in this volume.

7 The classic accounts on aggregative identities in the Archaic period are Ulf 1996 and Hall 1997; cf. also Hall 2002; Siapkas 2003; Funke and Luraghi 2009.

8 Cf. Hutchinson and Smith 1996 for a summary introduction to both trains of thought.

meticulous study of narratives of joint ethnic descent. Angela Kühr shows how the diachronic development of Boeotian foundation myths betrays the existence of divergent and, at times, competing narratives of heroic ancestry. As Kühr is able to assign divergent genealogical claims to different communities (Amphion and Zethos to the regions of the lower Asopos valley, the later tradition of Kadmos to Thebes), this puts her in a position to reconnect the dynamic process of identity formation to the interaction between various communities. As a result of their interaction, these communities gradually reinforced the idea of their commonality.<sup>9</sup> Barbara Kowalzig targets the more general question of the relation between ritual and commemorative practices. In the Boeotian section of her book, she explores how the ritual performance of songs, especially Pindar's poetry, effected both social and political change in Boeotia. Triggering a collapse between mythical past and ritual present, choral performances lend themselves to reconfigurations of the social and political groups which participated in them. Consequently, Kowalzig demonstrates how chorus rituals helped to nourish the all-new idea of a shared political landscape of Boeotia.<sup>10</sup> Finally, Stephanie Larson extends this approach to considering the beginnings of the Boeotian League. In short, she argues that the political landscape of the late Archaic and early Classical period was characterized by the absence of any kind of military or political organization that embraced the various city-states of Boeotia. Rather, she points to what she calls "a loose ethnos" that was based on a remarkably consonant combination of interrelated convictions and beliefs. The key marker among them was the evolving tradition of a joint heroic pedigree of the Boeotians, the migration of their tribe and final settlement, and the emblematic link between the Boeotians and their fellow Hellenes in the Iliadic tradition.<sup>11</sup>

These studies define the new benchmark for the investigation of ethno-genesis in Boeotia. The depth and breadth of their analysis, their conceptual expertise, and the methodological skill with which each one of them is carried out make it difficult to foster an innovative research contribution to the topic. In response to this challenge, the present contribution zooms in on one aspect of identity formation in particular, in only one body of sources: the record of inscriptions. The goal of this essay is to flesh out the relation between the self-awareness of ethnic cohesion and the actual integration of multiple

9 Kühr 2006, with Freitag 2010 (a collective review of Kühr 2006, Kowalzig 2007, and Larson 2007a).

10 Kowalzig 2007, with the review of R. Seaford, *BMCR* 2008.09.25.

11 Larson 2007a, with the review of F. Marchand, *BMCR* 2010.01.26; "loose ethnos": Larson 2007a, p. 189.

groups of people who live in scattered farmsteads, villages or cities, yet nevertheless band together and act as a collective that overcomes local disparity. Epigraphic sources offer a unique opportunity to reflect upon this relationship. Through epigraphy, it is possible to pin down the first explicit reference to an ethnic group in the inscriptions as it survives—i.e., the appearance of the tribal ethnic *Boiotoi* (Βοιωτοί)—and use this as a *terminus ante quem* for the existence of that group. But terminology provides only one such clue that highlights the process of identity negotiation, and, as will be shown, not even a particularly conclusive one at that. More importantly, the overall message and meaning of epigraphic evidence, its content and context, all speak to the conception of tribal self-awareness, and how this awareness translated into collective action.

This, in turn, makes it hazardous to separate inscriptions from other categories of evidence—from non-inscribed texts, archaeology and cultural practice. The limitations of such an exercise are patent. But there is also an inherent methodological justification that defends an isolated approach. As public and, at times, official documents that were sanctioned by the community, inscriptions grant an intimate view of the pattern of belonging together and, more generally, of ethnic self-awareness. In a way, the expression of togetherness in writing separates vague assumptions of belonging together from the cognitive commitment of a group towards its collective action as a tribe, league, or community of citizens. A large number of Greek inscriptions from the late Archaic period derives from the context of religion and ritual. In many cases, they accompany communal offerings to gods and heroes such as tripods, statuettes, or other dedications. The epigraphic record thus represents only one aspect of a more complex ensemble of text, monument, ritual performance, and dedicatory space. Yet in the vast majority of those offerings, the inscriptional evidence is the only part of the ensemble that remains. Epigraphy therefore renders itself a prism through which the collective negotiation behind the dedication can be glimpsed. After the dedicators had resolved the question of the offering itself, when the costs of the artefact were cleared, and its ritual context as well as the physical environment were determined, the issue of the inscription remained. Its composition forced the group of dedicators to reflect upon the wording, negotiate terminology and meaning, and decide what spoke best to their common identity.<sup>12</sup> The question is what identity, and what group.

12 Such an approach to epigraphic evidence has recently received much attention in the field of Roman epigraphy, cf., among others, Dondin-Payre 2007, pp. 331–348; Haussler 2008.

### The Earliest Traces

The earliest epigraphic attestations of the *Boiotoi* date from the late 6th century. In Boeotia itself, a series of kouroi and tripod dedications to the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios at Akraiphnion were complemented by inscriptions that state their dedicators.<sup>13</sup> Famous among them is a small stone base with dowels for supporting two feet of a statuette, most likely of Athena as warrior goddess. The inscription chiseled in two sides of the base mentions the *Boiotoi* as dedicators and Athena Pronaia as recipient.<sup>14</sup>

Βοιωτοὶ Προνάϊαι

The consort of Apollo Ptoios marks one of the earliest sanctuaries of trans-regional importance in Boeotia. In conjunction with the shrine of Poseidon at Onchestos and the temple of Athena Itonia near Koroneia (see below), the Ptoion ranked among the most widely known cult places in Boeotia in the 6th century BC. This trans-regional prominence is documented not only by a large number of dedications, many of them of non-Boeotian provenance, but also by the attestation of visitors to the oracle from various backgrounds.<sup>15</sup> By the second half of the 6th century, control over the sanctuary had become a bone of contention between the Akraiphnians and the Thebans, and the latter seem to have gained possession of the precinct through the course of events. The Akraiphnians were henceforth reduced to a separate sanctuary for their local hero Ptoios.<sup>16</sup>

At least two more appearances of the ethnic *Boiotoi* have been posited for the late 6th century at the Ptoion, yet their attestation is not as clear as is sometimes believed. If they are authentic, then the dedication to Athena Pronaia was only one among several others made by the *Boiotoi* at the Ptoion.<sup>17</sup>

13 Cf. Schachter 1981–1994, I.52–73. For the tripod dedications in general, Papalexandrou 2008, pp. 259–260; kouroi: Ducat 1971. The site of the Ptoion is discussed by Schachter 1994, pp. 294–295; Kühr 2006, pp. 239–240; cf. also the concise account by Müller 1995.

14 Ducat 1971, p. 409, no. 257.

15 Cf. Hdt. 8.135 on the famous visit by Mys from Karia. Other attested consulters include the Athenians Alkmeonides (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 1469*) and Hipparchos (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 1470*).

16 Herodotus 8.135 states that the Thebans had assumed authority over the sanctuary by the time of the Persian War. Most likely, the Thebans already oversaw the construction of the large stone temple in the 6th century, cf. Schachter 1994, pp. 300–302, 304–306.

17 Cf. Ducat 1971, p. 419, no. 269a, who cites an inscription on the rim of a small bronze vase which, according to its excavator Maurice Holleaux, reads Βο[ιωτοὶ Ἀθαναί]αι Προνάϊαι.

Around the same time, the ethnic *Boiotoi* is indicated in a document from Delphi. In an inscription that was recently reexamined by Stephanie Larson, the *Boiotoi* appear as dedicators who seem to have honored Apollo (?) and Athena Tritogeneia (*SEG XIII 371*; Larson 2007b, pp. 99–106). The circumstances of the dedication remain unknown.

-- και τριτο --  
 κέποιεσαν --  
 Βοιοτοι χαλ --

In a similar vein, a recently discovered fragmentary inscription on a cinerary casket (*kioniskos*) from Thebes adds a new piece to the body of epigraphic evidence. The inscription, written in Boeotian dialect, is chiseled into a column drum (57 cm high) that was part of a larger dedication monument. According to Vassilis Aravantinos, who published the *editio princeps* in 2006, the dedicants of the monument and its accompanying inscription were “probably the Boiotoi” (Aravantinos 2006, p. 374):

[-- --]ος Φοινόας και Φυλάς  
 [-- --] ηελόντες κέλευσῖνα  
 [-- --]αι Χαλκίδα λυσάμενοι  
 [-- --]μοι άνέθειαν

Aravantinos relates the inscription to a historical context described by Herodotus. In 5.74–77, Herodotus records that the Spartan king Kleomenes, along with allies from Boeotia and the Hippobotai from Chalkis on Euboea, launched a campaign against the Athenians (506 BC). The Boeotians managed to raid two smaller communities on the outskirts of Attica (Oinoe and Hysiai, according to Herodotus), while the Chalkidians plundered some other territories. Yet the overall enterprise fell short before Kleomenes and his forces joined battle with the Athenians. Once the Spartans had disappeared from the scene, the Athenians turned to the Chalkidians for revenge. En route, they defeated the Boeotian army that was still in the vicinity and took many prisoners (5.77.2). Herodotus

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It does not survive. Another Boeotian dedication is referenced by Ducat 1971, p. 448, footnote 5, with no text, photo, or facsimile. Larson 2007a, p. 131, associates the *Boiotoi* with a dedication made to Athena, [-- -- άνέ]θειαν τ' Ἀθάναι. Cf. also *ibid.* p. 137, where she conjectures an even earlier occurrence of the *Boiotoi*. Ganter 2013 discusses the treacherous state of those inscriptions.

also cites an inscription from Athens that indicates that the Athenians commemorated their victory over the Boeotians and Chalkidians by dedicating a chariot to Athena on the Acropolis (5.77.4). The funds for the dedication came from the ransom money that was paid for the release of the Boeotian and Chalkidian prisoners:

ἔθνεα Βοιωτῶν καὶ Χαλκιδέων δαμάσαντες  
 παῖδες Ἀθηναίων ἔργμασιν ἐν πολέμου,  
 δεσμῶ ἐν ἀχλυσόεντι σιδηρέῳ ἔσβεσαν ὕβριν·  
 τῶν ἵππους δεκάτην Παλλάδι τάσδ' ἔθεσαν.

The verbatim quotation in Herodotus refers to the Boeotians as an *ethnos*, followed by their tribal ethnic in the genitive. If Herodotus' wording is authentic,<sup>18</sup> the Athenians labeled their two opponents as *ethnea*, each with a distinguishable group identity. The basic tenants of such a group identity have yet to be determined, but from the epigraphic record alone it becomes evident that in order to qualify as an *ethnos* a certain amount of group coherence is necessary. In the case of the Hippobotai, the defining notion of their *ethnos* must have been their status as social elite in Chalkis whose power rested on military authority. The *Boiotoi*, too, were an elevated warrior elite, yet their *ethnos* differed from that of the Chalkidians in the sense that it comprised multiple local elites who banded together and took action as a group that was larger than their individual villages and hometowns.

The inscribed *kioniskos* augments Herodotus' account by saying that Phyle was captured along with Oinoe (and Hysiai, which might have been mentioned in line 1 or 2).<sup>19</sup> By implication, the document attests to the engagement of the *Boiotoi* in the incursion into the nearby city of Eleusis; according to Herodotus, that part of the expedition was led only by Peloponnesian forces. Yet the inscription also seems to contradict Herodotus in a broader sense. The tone of the surviving fragment is clearly "strident" (Aravantinos 2006, p. 376), and although the magnitude of the accompanying monument is unknown the mere existence of a public dedication makes it obvious that the *Boiotoi* were by no means shy about the expedition, let alone embarrassed. Without a doubt the picture in Herodotus is one of utter failure on the side

18 The sketchy fragments that survive from two separate copies of the inscription, both found on the Acropolis, do in fact match with Herodotus' text, cf. Meiggs and Lewis, *GHI* 15 with commentary.

19 As suggested by Aravantinos 2006, p. 374.

of the invaders: their planning was terrible, the actual fighting a disaster, the subsequent ransom paid for the release of their prisoners a humiliation. The dedicators of the *kioniskos* monument, on the other hand, prided themselves in having participated in redeeming the allied troops (line 3) and, on the whole, thought of the affair as something worth celebrating. It is difficult to reconcile those perspectives without speculation; in any case, the quest for historical ‘veracity’ is only of minor concern here. More importantly, the *kioniskos* captures a specific moment in the ongoing identity formation process of the Boeotian *ethnos*. By the time of the dedication, the local elites who had participated in the campaign had shaped their own narrative of what had happened on the battlefield, establishing a complex ‘interpretatio Boeotiana’ that touched upon various stages of the overall campaign, from the capture of enemy sites to the ransoming of prisoners. The commemorative side of the expedition against Athens will have contributed as much to the development of Boeotian group identities as did the actual fighting.

In both the internal (the *kioniskos* from Thebes, the dedications from the Ptoion) and external (Athens and at Delphi) evidence, the Boeotians are addressed in a collective fashion. Thus by the late 6th century BC, the *ethnos* of the *Boiotoi* was on the map. To round out this picture, an inscription on a small limestone column from Delphi from about the same time attests an agreement between Boeotians and Lokrians. According to Denis Knoepfler, the inscription represents an alliance between the Eastern Lokrians and “le Koinon béotien” (Knoepfler 1992, p. 422, no. 15):

Βοιωτῶν  
Λοκρῶν

These findings present a seemingly coherent picture. Towards the end of the 6th century BC, the collective ethnic *Boiotoi* was used in inscriptions to identify a distinct group of people who both regarded themselves as Boeotians and who were regarded as such by others. The broader context of those inscriptions is warfare. Without exception, the earliest epigraphic evidence for the *Boiotoi* stems from dedications that were made to commemorate military action. From what can be inferred from other bodies of evidence, the *Boiotoi* spoke a common dialect and shared a joint material culture;<sup>20</sup> they venerated the same gods and goddesses for whom they collectively erected stone temples and cult

20 Vottéro 1998–; Larson 2007a, pp. 111–127. The standard survey of Boeotian pottery continues to be Coldstream 2003, pp. 201–206, the first edition of which appeared in 1977.

centers.<sup>21</sup> And, in the literary tradition of the 5th century BC, they fought collective campaigns against their neighbors and staunchly defended their homeland against hostile invaders.<sup>22</sup> It might even be possible to associate a distinct territory or homeland with the *Boiotoi*, which, at that point, appears to have covered the area south of Lake Kopais, from Koroneia via Thespiiai to Thebes and Tanagra.<sup>23</sup> In sum, then, the picture that emerges in epigraphy is relatively clear. Stephanie Larson concludes that, by the late 6th century, the epigraphic evidence presents “a consistent picture of the Boeotians as a collective” (Larson 2007a, p. 131).

### Mixed Messages

But one ought to exercise caution. The first caveat concerns the dynamic process of ethnic identity negotiation and its expression in tribal ethnics. To be sure, the simple existence of a tribal *ethnikon* signals some sort of group identity. Yet the *ethnikon* itself neither speaks to the character of that identity, nor does it, as such, betray its defining parameters. As has been demonstrated by Mogens Hansen and others, at least three different types of *ethnika* can be distinguished which foster a different approach towards the definition of group identity: (1) collective ethnics can be used in a regional sense, relating to a certain region and, by implication, its inhabitants; (2) they can be applied to a proper tribe, or *ethnos*, and its people; and (3) they can be used of genuine city-*ethnika*, denoting the *polis* to which a named person belonged.<sup>24</sup> So despite the seduc-

21 Cf. Schachter 1981–1994.

22 For the year 519 BC, Herodotus 6.108.2–6 (cf. Thuc. 3.68) relates a Boeotian attack on Plataea (see also below). Later sources (Plut. *Vit. Cam.* 19; *Mor.* 866e–f; cf. Paus. 9.14.2) reference a battle between Boeotians and Thessalians at Keressos, according to Plutarch's colored narrative a seminal event, which seems to date from the early 6th century BC. The tradition poses multiple challenges, cf. Lehmann 1983; Beck 1997, pp. 108–110; see also McInerney 1999, pp. 154–185 on the wider context.

23 Hdt. 5.79 suggests such an embryonic core region. Cf. Roesch 1965, pp. 34–36; Larsen 1968, p. 29; Demand 1982, pp. 18–19, and Schachter, forthcoming, with regard to the earliest coinage.

24 Hansen and Nielsen 2004: 58–70; cf. also Schachter 1994, pp. 301–306, on the inconclusiveness of the Boeotian evidence. Larson 2007a, pp. 129–163 argues for a clear difference between internal and external perceptions of the *Boiotoi*. According to Larson, to outsiders the *ethnikon* held mostly geographical connotations, while “self-identification was not a high priority for the Boeotian collective” at that time (162). Both verdicts are geared

tively consistent appearance of the *Boiotoi* in the epigraphic record, it should be acknowledged that the inscriptions leave the precise group-disposition of the *Boiotoi* mostly in the dark.

A second caveat relates to the nature of the evidence from the inscriptions itself, which is more fragile and treacherous than is sometimes believed. For instance, of the various dedications of the *Boiotoi* associated with the Ptoion mentioned above, only the one in honor of Athena Pronaia physically survives to this day. Its dimensions are so small (4.95 by 5.50 cm) that its Boeotian claims, if indeed made there, were fairly modest. The visual impact of the dedication to visitors to the sanctuary was minimal. Finally, the epigraphic record itself is too inconsistent to allow for consistent projections. For instance, in a dedication made at Delphi, the dedicator, a certain Epiddalos, identifies himself as “a Boeotian from Orchomenos” (*FdD* 3.1.574):

Ἐπίδδαλος τόπό[λλονι]  
 Βοιότιος ἔχς Ἐρχ[ομενῶ]  
 [h]υπατόδορος Ἄρισστ[ογείτον]  
 4 ἐποεσάταν Θεβαίο

The dating of the text is fairly uncontested. The letter forms point to a time around 475, which is also corroborated by the fact that the dedicated statue was made by the same artists, Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton, who later went on to craft a group of statues of the Seven against Thebes at Delphi, celebrating victory in an unknown battle around 460 BC.<sup>25</sup> The inscription thus dates about one generation later than the evidence presented here so far. But it is still close enough to speak to the same early 5th century environment that was referenced above. Curiously enough, Epiddalos refers to himself by means of two ethnic identity markers: one relating to the region or the tribe of the Boeotians, the other to the *polis* of Orchomenos. The inherent meaning of this has triggered various interpretations and explanations. While some believe that Βοιότιος indicates the existence of a true federal citizenship in Boeotia at that time,<sup>26</sup> others reject the notion of citizenship altogether; they believe that ἔχς Ἐρχ[ομενῶ] simply indicates that Epiddalos lived in Orchomenos, i.e., reference is made here to his whereabouts only. This may suggest that, to

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towards Larson's overall perception of “non-political” interpretation of the Boiotoi in the Archaic period.

25 Paus. 10.10.3–4; cf. Schachter, forthcoming.

26 See Roesch 1982, pp. 441–501.

quote Stephanie Larson, Epiddalos “was a citizen of a different *polis* in Boeotia who happened to live in Orchomenos”.<sup>27</sup> Again, one should exercise caution and not let the relatively few words of this Archaic inscription speak with too much resonance. With so little comparative evidence at hand, it is tempting but unjustified to overburden the interpretation of the text with towering constructs of established patterns and concepts. Nevertheless, a few remarks can be made. To this end, a minimalist reading that relates ἐχς Ἐρχ[ομενῶ] simply to Epiddalos’ whereabouts appears to make too much of the actual wording. At the same time, the quest for federal citizenship and, by implication, a legally-defined sphere for the conduct of Boeotian politics, is in all likelihood a red herring.

Let us first recall that the expression of *ethnika*, or of (potentially) double *ethnika*, does not necessarily imply overall coherence. The expression of ethnics can be vastly diverse and, with assignment of regional or tribal rubrics, inconsistent. Linkage to the legal frame of citizenship is only one possibility and, by the late-Archaic period, not even the most obvious one. This being said, it is remarkable that Epiddalos claimed solidarity with two distinct identity groups. Since Epiddalos acted as an individual, he was probably free to present himself as he wished. Neither was he required to negotiate the wording of his identity expression with others, nor was it superimposed upon him. In this situation, Epiddalos chose to identify himself, primarily so, as Boeotian, and then refer to his hometown Orchomenos. Note that the native city of Hypatodoros and Aristogeiton is also mentioned (Thebes, in line 4), which highlighted the fact that the ethnic Βοιότιος was a collective designation that applied to a multiplicity of constituent sub-ethnics. The label *Boiotoi*, then, was an abstract reference to an identity shared by various groups of people from different local backgrounds. It referred to a group that banded together, and perhaps pointed to a specific region that was commonly associated with that group (or to both). For Epiddalos, in any case, that group extended beyond the region that is commonly attributed to the *Boiotoi*, the southern Kopais basin. As a citizen of Orchomenos, Epiddalos expressed his association with, and belonging to, the *Boiotoi*. In the aftermath of the Persian War, at the time of his dedication, the *Boiotoi* had arrived in Orchomenos in one way or another.

The picture of group identity becomes both clearer and murkier when the *Boiotoi* are left aside for a moment and the expression of local identities is

27 Larson 2007a, p. 149. Did Epiddalos maybe share the fate of Asopodoros from Thebes, a famous medizer who, in the aftermath of the Persian War, was exiled to Orchomenos before he was allowed back to Thebes by the mid-460s BC? Cf. Pind. *Isthm.* 1.33–38 with Demand 1982, pp. 28–29.

taken into account. A late-6th century dedication of a bronze helmet to Zeus at Olympia commemorates the victory of Orchomenos over the city of Koroneia in central Boeotia, on the southern shores of Lake Kopais. The text reads:

Ἐρχομένιοι ἀνέθειαν τῶι Διὶ τὸλυ(ν)πίοι Φορόνεια[ν ἠελόντες]

SEG XI 1208; LSAG 93+95, no. 11

In similar vein, a dedicated greave from Olympia commemorates a Theban victory over Hyettos on the northern fringes of Lake Kopais, a near neighbor and traditional ally of Orchomenos:

Θεβαῖοι τῶν ἠυετίον

SEG XXIV 300; Hansen and Nielsen 2004: no. 207

Two 6th century dedications at Olympia highlight the interaction between Tanagra, on the northern banks of the Asopos river, and other communities in the region. One was made by the Tanagrans themselves, a life-size bronze shield with guilloche pattern on its rim, to commemorate victory in battle, while the other was dedicated by a Boeotian community to celebrate its victory over Tanagra.

Ταναγραῖοι τῶν [ - - ]

SEG XI 1202

[ - - ]ν Ταναγραῖ[ον ἠ]ελόντες

SEG XV 245

Finally, from around 525 BC, a *horos* stone survives from the borderlands between Akraiphnion and Kopai (SEG XXX 440). While the latter is usually considered an Orchomenian satellite, the area around Akraiphnion in the second half of the 6th century gradually came under Theban influence. As mentioned above, the construction of the stone temple for Apollo Ptoios was most likely orchestrated by the Thebans; by the time of the Persian Wars, the Ptoion was under their control.

What arises from these scattered pieces of evidence is that by the second half of the 6th century the cities sitting around Lake Kopais had entered into a relatively dense and dynamic network of interaction. Some interaction was hostile—raids of territories or quarrels over pastures and fishing grounds. Yet the possibility of a much broader background of non-violent exchange behind this should not be dismissed. In a way, military action was only the peak

of an ongoing exchange between communities that was also characterized by economic ties, the celebration of cults, and attempts at arbitration. For instance, a series of inscriptions from about the same time records dedications by citizens from other Boeotian cities to Apollo Hismenios at Thebes. The remaining fragments are extremely sketchy, but overall the picture is clear enough to suggest a vivid non-violent interaction.<sup>28</sup> Albert Schachter views those dedications “as an act of homage to the Thebans,”<sup>29</sup> given that Apollo Hismenios was the chief Theban *polis* deity at the time. This possibility should be taken seriously as it fits in nicely with what is known about Boeotian history from other bodies of evidence.<sup>30</sup> But then again, such an interpretation of the power matrix in Boeotia builds on the more basic assumption that the Boeotian communities by the mid-6th century BC had embarked on a lively trans-local exchange with one another.

Throughout their exchange, the cities of the greater Kopais region naturally advanced their identity as citizen communities; liminal action and competition with neighboring cities invigorated the sense of *polis* identity.<sup>31</sup> The thrust towards local identity was complemented by the developing processes of urbanization and political institutionalization. As their urban populations grew and the relation between city and its surrounding hinterland was (re)determined, the developing statehood of late-Archaic *poleis* manifested itself in a genuine political organization.<sup>32</sup> The city-states in Boeotia and elsewhere in central Greece all established more or less similar political offices and institutions that were empowered to govern the affairs of the community. The conduct of politics was thus transferred to an abstract realm of authority; this was clearly a landmark in the conceptual development of politics. With it came the call for strict obedience to the rule of another abstract concept, that of law (*nomos*), and a tapestry of checks and balances to uphold and reinforce the law in every-

28 *AD* 3 (1917) p. 64; *AD* 13 A' (1930–1931) pp. 105–118; *AD* 16 B' (1960) [1962] p. 147. I owe thanks to Albert Schachter for pointing these out to me.

29 Schachter, forthcoming.

30 I.e., the literary sources, which attest to the rise of Thebes as hegemonic leader of Boeotia at that time. For survey approaches to Boeotian history in the late-6th century, cf. Dull 1977 [microfilm]; Buck 1979, pp. 107–120; Larsen 1968, pp. 28–32, and Larson 2007a, pp. 165–188 *passim*.

31 This remark builds mostly on the standard account of de Polignac 1995, but see also McNerney 2006 who offers a critical modification of de Polignac's concept of liminality. In particular, McNerney highlights the potential of border sanctuaries and peripheral zones in modulating conflict between neighboring communities.

32 Cf. the survey by Hall 2013.

day politics.<sup>33</sup> The epigraphic sources mirror those trends both in an array of early legal provisions and *polis* decrees, and also in the boastful expression of city-ethnics. In all the cases presented in the section above, the dedicators identified themselves exclusively through their city-*ethnikon*, with no further identity marker attached, and their achievement was framed as communal victory over another community which, again, was addressed by its city-ethnic.

In the epigraphic record, then, the first appearance of the collective tribal ethnic *Boiotoi* is paralleled by the frequent occurrence of city-ethnics that speak to the emergence of local communities, with a very strong sense of developing local identities. Those *poleis* acquired control of their surrounding countryside, they staked their claims in opposition to neighboring cities, and they fought wars over territories and natural produce. Again, their actions were complemented by power negotiations within, where the exercise of political authority was gradually absorbed by citizen assemblies, councils and *polis* executives. The rise of the *Boiotoi* thus coincided with that of the developing local identities of, say, the Thebans (Θηβαῖοι), Tanagrans (Ταναγραῖοι) or Orchomenians/ Erchomenians (Ἐρχομένιοι). The two were interwoven and mutually interdependent. To disentangle them, it is necessary to understand the complex nature of the collective bonding of *poleis* and of their integrated identity as *Boiotoi*.

### Trans-Local Integration: *Ethnos* or *Koinon*, Tribe or League?

The nature of Boeotian integration in the late-6th century has long puzzled scholars. At the heart of this debate lies Herodotus, who famously relates an attack led by the Thebans against the city of Plataea in an attempt to compel the Plataeans “to participate in the *Boiotoi*” (ἐς Βοιωτοὺς τελέειν, 6.108.5). Later on, Herodotus refers to the leading officials of the *Boiotoi* as *boiotarchai* (9.15.1 in 479 BC). He also implies that the Boeotians held an “assembly” (ἀλία, 5.79.2) in which their joint agenda was debated. Herodotus’ account is complemented by Thucydides who speaks of an “ancestral constitution of all Boeotians” at the time of the Theban attack on Plataea.<sup>34</sup> In the later tradition, Plutarch and Pausanias both assign a major collective military operation to the *Boiotoi* in

33 Cf. the contributions by M. Gagarin, P. Fröhlich and Avilés/Mirhady in Beck 2013, each with extensive references to further reading.

34 3.66.1: τὰ τῶν πάντων Βοιωτῶν πάτρια πολιτεύειν, i.e., “participate in the ancestral ways of all Boeotians in politics”. Cf. also 3.65.2: τὰ κοινὰ τῶν πάντων Βοιωτῶν πάτρια.

the early 6th century BC.<sup>35</sup> The literary record appears to be supplemented by a large volume of coin emissions that bear the Boeotian shield on the obverse and incuse stamped monograms with the initial of the minting *polis* on the back. Uniformity in weight and style seems to indicate some sort of cooperation between the communities that participate in those emissions.<sup>36</sup> Finally, the exciting discovery of a new inscribed bronze sheet from a public treasury in Thebes independently confirms the existence of the office of *boiotarchēs* in the late 6th/early 5th century BC.<sup>37</sup>

The body of these sources has been taken by some as evidence for the existence of a 6th century Boeotian federal state, a *koinon* or a ‘prototype’ of such a league respectively.<sup>38</sup> Others advance the idea of a military alliance, a Boeotian *symmachia* that was well established at around the turn of the century.<sup>39</sup> Most recently, both these scenarios were rejected by Stephanie Larson who opts for cultic cooperation among the *Boiotoi* exclusively.<sup>40</sup> Axiomatically, those views coincide in the sense that they each foster an interpretation that prioritizes one aspect of integration in particular, whereas other facets of it are downgraded; sometimes those other facets are altogether dismissed or explicitly excluded.

Recent work in the field of ethnic identity formation suggests a more inclusive approach. Conceptually, it has become pivotal that trans-local integration is not addressed from a perspective that charts the degree of integration by separating various branches of it—integration in a tribe, in cult, in military affairs, or in diplomacy and politics.<sup>41</sup> In many pre-modern societies, and in the dynamic network of developing *polis*-communities of Archaic Greece in particular, those developments all occurred simultaneously, and they were mutually interrelated. If various branches of integration are presented as isolated in

35 The Battle of Keressos, cf. above note 21.

36 Head 1887 [1963], pp. 295–296; Kraay 1976, pp. 109–110; Buck 1972; Ducat 1973, pp. 61–62; and now the detailed analysis by Larson 2007a, pp. 67–109.

37 A photographic reproduction of this document first appeared in Aravantinos 2010, pp. 166–167 (also accessible online via the Electronic Library of the Latsis Foundation). The editio princeps is offered in this volume by V. Aravantinos.

38 Cf. Roesch 1965, pp. 34–36 (with some caution); Larsen 1968, pp. 28–29; Buck 1979, p. 124; Knoepfler 1992, p. 422; Mafodda 2000, pp. 101–102.

39 Busolt-Swoboda 1926, p. 1412; Ducat 1973, pp. 59–73; Tausend 1992, pp. 26–34; Schachter, forthcoming: “a coalition of bodies sharing a common purpose.”

40 Larson 2007a.

41 Cf., e.g., the extremely inspiring contributions of Sourvinou-Inwood and Schmitt-Pantel in Murray and Price 1990; more recently, Freitag, Funke and Haake 2006; see also the new volume Funke 2013 which fleshes out the intersection of political and religious integration.

scholarship, it should be kept in mind that such isolation is mostly a heuristic one, resulting from the practical organization of research. In 'real life,' the distinction between tribal, cultic, or political registers is never as clear as the presentation of academic research suggests.

The concerns raised here have immediate bearing on the understanding of the inherent character of the *Boiotoi* and the nature of their union. In the ongoing debate on the early Boeotian League, the defining traits of a tribe and league, and the dividing line running between them, are hardly ever discussed. In one recent notable exception to this trend,<sup>42</sup> it was held that a federal league only exists if and when a tribe adopts a specific form of territorial government that supersedes the more rudimentary structures of the *ethnos*. In other words, the political integration of a league replaces the backwater organization of the tribe. Once certain political structures are in place, it is justified to speak of a true federal state; in retrospect, anything prior to such an arrangement is labelled a loose organization, or a tribal-state. To conceptualize the relation between ethnic and political integration, this view thus argues for the advancement of genuine political patterns (such as the creation of territorial subdivisions).<sup>43</sup>

This view is certainly appealing, but it underscores that the rise of political patterns itself was determined by divergent forces. In Boeotia, and elsewhere in central Greece, the development of local citizen communities was shaped by the internal processes of urbanization and institutionalization, and was subject to outside force or hostile interaction with neighboring parties (see above). That being said, it should be kept in mind that the rise of local citizen communities never unfolded independently from the development of ethnic self-awareness. The sense of belonging to a trans-local group had a formative impact on the organization and conduct of politics in those cities. The tribe provided a frame of reference that transcended the realm of otherwise 'independent' city-states. Its members persistently interacted with each other, in the celebration of festivals, the emission of coins, the construction of regional sanctuaries; in short, in any number of trans-local communications and all sorts of concrete projects large and small. In each of those communications, the *Boiotoi* re-visited their mutual relations; in fact, the body of their members constituted itself and fermented, as it were, along the way. Throughout the process of their interaction, the members of the *Boiotoi* refined their political organization and experimented with new means of exchange with one another; and, naturally,

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42 Corsten 1999.

43 Corsten 1999, pp. 7, 9–24, and *passim*.

this trend also strengthened the frame of their interaction, their collective identity as a tribe.

In consequence, to modify the concept of advancement of political patterns at the level of the *koinon*, it is advisable to complement this with the idea of interdependence with affairs at the local level. The early *Boiotoi* were a floating group with a developing sense of belonging together. Their commonness was forged in an identity formation-process that took place both at the level of the city and the *ethnos*. And, it was steered by manifold manifestations and interaction in the multiple nodes of societal networks: in cult and ritual, the shaping of traditions and historical narratives, aristocratic competition and exchange, military, politics, and economic interaction.<sup>44</sup> The real challenge of such an approach is to craft a narrative that pays full homage to the simultaneity of multiple layers of integration.

### Towards a New Narrative of Integration

By the second half of the 6th century BC, the *Boiotoi* had emerged as an ethnic group whose members had forged all-new means of communal exchange with one another. This clearly enhanced the political profile of local communities. At the same time, it strengthened the identity of their collective. The new group identity was also fully acknowledged by their fellow Hellenes. As early as 506 BC, and most likely much earlier, the Athenians referred to their north-western neighbors, on the other side of Mt. Kithairon, as the *ethnos* of the *Boiotoi*. In doing so, it would be awkward to assume that the Athenians grappled over whether the Boeotians were a loose tribal organization, a federal league, or a military federation; or, that they thought of their enemies as merely a group that banded together for the performance of common cults. The shortcomings of such an approach are obvious. For the Athenians, and any other Greek state of the day, the *Boiotoi* were a manifest collective of people from different citizen-communities that were scattered over a distinct region. They were clearly identifiable, acted together, and they could be held responsible for their joint action.

Over the next century, this perception developed just as the basic grammar of politics and statehood did in Greece. Yet the pattern remained the same. In various inscriptions from Athens from the 5th century BC, the *Boiotoi* are attested as recipients of *proxenia*, as dedicators, or as treaty partners:

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44 The aspect of economic interaction has now been researched by Emily Mackil, cf. her contribution to this volume as well as her recent monograph (Mackil 2013).

- 429–8 BC *IG I<sup>3</sup> 383*, line 101  
 414? BC *IG I<sup>3</sup> 72*, line 5  
 395 BC *IG II<sup>2</sup> 14* [Συμ]μαρχία Βοιω[τῶν καὶ Ἀ]θηναί[ων]  
 400 BC > *IG II<sup>2</sup> 2a/b*, line 2  
 394–1 BC *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1657*, lines 8–9

At the time of the Boeotian-Athenian alliance of 395, the literary sources attest a close network of trans-local integration among the *Boiotoi*. In a famous digression, the author of the *Hellenika* from Oxyrhynchos outlines the affairs in Boeotia (19.2–4 Chambers). Curiously enough, his summary view sets out to explain the organization of local communities first and to speak about the governing principle behind the exercise of power in the Boeotian cities (19.2) before he advances to the affairs of all. Conceptually, then, the author distinguishes between the realm of local communities and that of their trans-local interaction. The distinction is reinforced at the level of language and terminology: living in separate communities (διοικούμενοι), they manage their own affairs (τὰ ἴδια) in four rotating councils, while the joint agenda is put together (συντεταγμένον) collectively.<sup>45</sup> At the level of the *Boiotoi*, he proceeds by saying that their inhabitants were divided into eleven divisions, each of which provided one *boiotarchēs*, 60 councilors, a set number of hoplites, horsemen and jurors, and a certain amount of cash funds. From Thucydides' *History* it becomes evident that the oligarchic rule that was applied in *polis*-governance was also mirrored in the overall organization of the *Boiotoi* and that the same principle of rotating councils was in place.<sup>46</sup>

Unlike the 6th-century league, the nature of this union provokes little controversy amongst scholars. The Boeotian League of the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia*, which is usually thought to have come into being after the Battle of Koroneia in 447/6 BC,<sup>47</sup> is commonly understood as a developed federal state. Indeed, it is often regarded as one of the most refined projects of representative government in Greek antiquity, propelling the idea of proportional representation of citizens from communities of different shapes and sizes and integrat-

45 *Hell. Ox.* 19.3. The idea of marked opposition between *polis* affairs and the collective agenda of all Boeotians is also highlighted by the strong μέν-δέ juxtaposition in that sentence. The Boeotian constitution as referenced in *Hell. Ox.* has naturally attracted much scholarly attention. Beck 1997, pp. 90–91 and Behrwald 2005, pp. 119–120 list the most important contributions. The latest study is Bearzot 2009.

46 Thuc. 5.38.2–3.

47 Cf. Larsen 1968, p. 33; Demand 1982, p. 18; Beck 1997, p. 90, and idem, forthcoming, on the circumstances of the Battle of Koroneia.

ing them into one Boeotian “superstate.”<sup>48</sup> The details of the Boeotian federal constitution have been investigated by many scholars before and are of no further concern here.<sup>49</sup> It is striking to learn how the author of the *Hellenika Oxyrhynchia* concludes his digression on the subject by stating that “in this manner the entire tribe governed its affairs” (τὸ μὲν οὖν ἔθνος ὄλον οὕτως ἐπολιτεύετο, 19.4). The immediate implication is that the *ethnos* of the *Boiotoi* and their federal league were, theoretically, two different entities, with two different modes of participation. Yet in practical politics of the early 4th century, both these entities had fully amalgamated and become one, with a joint common polity as its combining element. This congruency of tribe and league was once again endorsed by the fact that the exercise of political power at the league level was paralleled by the political organization of all Boeotian communities. The overall impression, then, is that the *Boiotoi*, by the early 4th century, were regarded and treated as an ethnic entity in politics, religion, warfare and so on. Whatever the qualifying criteria of state-actorhood were, the Boeotians shared in an identity that enabled them to interact with their fellow Hellenes under the aegis of a distinct, integrated political collective.

From the period between the union of the *Boiotoi* in the 6th century BC and the one attested in the *Hellenika* from Oxyrhynchos comes another exciting epigraphic document. An inscription from Olympia which, in all likelihood, dates from the mid-470s, records a decision by the sanctuary’s magistrates to rectify parts of a judgment levied earlier by two other officials:<sup>50</sup>

Ἄγαλμα Διός· Πύρρο’ γρ[α]φέας  
καὶ Χαρίξενος καὶ τοὶ μαστροὶ  
[τ]αῖρ δίκαις, ταῖρ κα’ τῶν Βοιωτῶν Μένανδρος  
4 [κ]ἀριστόλοχος τοῖρ Ἀθηναῖος ἐδικαζάταν,  
[ἀ]πέγνον καὶ τοῖ’ Θεσπιέσσιν καὶ τοῖρ σὺν αὐτοῖς  
[μ]ε δίκαιος δικαστάμεν, καὶ πὸ τῶν Θεσσαλῶν  
[ἀ]πεδίκαξαν. vacat

Offering to Zeus. Pyrrhon, secretary, Charixenos, and the mastroi have decided that the verdicts which Menandros and Aristolochos rendered

48 Cf. Cartledge 2000.

49 Cf. above note 45.

50 *SEG XXXI* 358 = van Effenterre and Ruzé 1994, no. 60. Minon 2007, pp. 104–112 offers an in-depth discussion on the dating and a full bibliography.

against the Boeotians in favor of the Athenians, were not justly rendered in favor of both the Thespians and their dependents, and they have rescinded the penalty against the Thessalians.

Transl. A. SCHACHTER

The inscription is an extremely rich historical document that touches on multiple issues and contexts in the aftermath of the Persian invasion. Much of the immediate circumstances remain unknown and the picture is somewhat shadowy; yet at the same time the text presents itself as a lens through which a specific moment in the history of the sanctuary comes to life. The decree revises an earlier verdict, or parts of it, that were rendered against the *Boiotoi*. The original judgment does not survive. Apparently the sanctuary had levied a collective fine against the Boeotians for a certain offense. In light of the context of Theban Medism, it might be conjectured that their participation in the destruction of Athens in 480–79 BC is the most likely candidate for such an offense. Albert Schachter suggests a more micro-political explanation: that a Theban Olympionikes had played foul in the games of 480 BC. The two are not mutually exclusive; it is easy to see how the latter explanation might have served as a smokescreen for a more general condemnation of the *Boiotoi* as traitors to the Greek cause.<sup>51</sup> In any case, the original decree was not taken back but it was amended that the “Thespians and their dependents” were *expressis verbis* not impacted by it. Whatever the fine that was imposed on the *Boiotoi*, the Thespians were exempt from it, most likely after they had raised an appeal. Staking their claims against the Olympian levy, the Thespians also managed to tie the Thessalians to their case somehow; like the majority of the Boeotian cities—yet unlike the Thespians—, the Thessalian communities had famously medized and supported the Persian cause in 480 BC (if deliberately so or simply because of lack of alternatives is a different question). Thessaly was thus as vulnerable to Hellenic charges as Thebes and Boeotia were, but it remains uncertain how, and why, the penalty against the Thessalians was rescinded.

The Olympian decree identifies the *Boiotoi* as collective perpetrators of something for which they were charged by the magistrates of Olympia, again, collectively. The Thespians were considered a part of that *ethnos* and hence included in the original decree—or were they? Judging from the overall course of events, the role of the Thespians in the Persian War, notably their 700-strong contingent at Thermopylae, was too prominent to have escaped the Olympian *mastroi*. In addition, in the following year, they fought staunchly on the side

<sup>51</sup> Schachter, forthcoming.

of the Greeks at Plataea.<sup>52</sup> The falling out between Thebes and Thespiai was common knowledge in the Greek world. It is therefore questionable that the council at Olympia will have been so careless as neither to realize nor acknowledge the distinct path of the Thespians. More likely, when the original levy was decreed, it must have been directed against the *Boiotoi*, on the understanding that the Thespians (and the Plataeans for that matter) were not targeted. So although it must have been clear that the Thespians were exempt, they apparently insisted on the fact that their exemption be made explicit, in order to avoid implicit association with the Medizers. The Thespians belonged to the Boeotian *ethnos*, but they were anxious to take whatever measures were necessary to prevent the group identity from being turned against them and being shanghaied into the camp of the Medizers.

Does this imply, then, that the decree from Olympia treats the Boeotians “as a political rather than merely an ethnic entity?”<sup>53</sup> To be sure, the *Boiotoi* were collectively condemned in what can be regarded as a legal case. But the collective notion of the condemnation itself was not altogether unambiguous. The Thespians were considered a part of that *ethnos*, yet, as in other Boeotian cities, their local *polis*-identity was advanced enough to put themselves in a position where they might act independently from that *ethnos*. They held their local identity against their affiliation with the Boeotian tribe—this too is referenced in the decree by the acknowledging of “their dependents” (line 5). The precise meaning of this is not clear. But Thespiai’s status as a local leader of smaller satellite communities in the surrounding country-side might appear as a forerunner of so-called Boeotian syntelies which continued to become such a vital trademark of strong local governance, even at times when the Boeotian League exercised strong federal leadership over its members.<sup>54</sup>

Now everything falls into place. Epigraphic evidence from the late-Archaic and early-Classical periods offers an extremely interesting perspective on the rise of ethnic identities in Boeotia. In light of the inscriptions presented here, it is hard to argue for a loose ethnic entity of the *Boiotoi* towards the end of the

52 Hdt. 7.202. 222. 226–227 (Thermopylae); 9.30 (Plataea). The contingent at Thermopylae apparently equaled the entire body of Thespian citizens, which added even more weight to the city’s stance.

53 As argued by Schachter, forthcoming.

54 *Hell. Ox.* 19.3 attests to a Theban syntely (cf. Thuc. 4.93.4) and one of Thespiai that included the communities of Eutresis and Thisbe. Other sources add Askra and Siphai to Thespiai’s syntely: Thuc. 4.76–77; Paus. 9.32.1; Plut. *Mor.* fr. 82. At some point, Chaironeia was part of an Orchomenian syntely, cf. Thuc. 4.76.3. On the nature of those syntelies, cf. Bakhuizen 1994; Beck 1997, pp. 208–210.

6th century BC. The inscription from Olympia, along with many other pieces of epigraphic evidence, makes it obvious that the Boeotians, as a collective, took action in a variety of fields. Much of their action was military and political, in a broad sense, but it bears little promise to dissociate these areas from joint performance in cult or ritual. The idea of a loose tribal entity is misguided, at least if it implies an inherent opposition between backward *ethnos* structures and political advancement in a *koinon*. At the same time, it would also be futile to argue for a developed federal state along the lines of later periods. The notion of ethnic integration, and how it plays out in societal action, is simply too complex to be framed in simple dichotomies of loose versus not-so-loose integration. By the late Archaic period, the *ethnos* of the Boeotians had reached the maximum level of trans-local integration that was thinkable in its times.

Yet at the grass-roots level, the *Boiotoi* comprised a series of communities that, as such, developed a strong local identity. In cities around the Kopais basin, along the main axis from Orchomenos in the northwest to Plataea in the southeast—as the citizens of those communities felt loyalties both towards their city and tribe, the relation between *polis* and *ethnos* was extremely fragile, with multiple expressions of competition and cooperation. The integration of their local citizenries into the *Boiotoi* was, therefore, *sui generis*, shaped by the twofold process of tribal identity and state-formation in the Archaic Age. The epigraphic record beautifully captures the parallel trend of *ethnos*- and *polis*-genesis, and it reveals that the two were inextricably interwoven. The attempts to unravel this complexity here are preliminary and in many ways premature. But the basic scenario should be clear enough.<sup>55</sup>

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55 I would like to thank the organizers for their generous invitation to participate in the Symposium at the Sara B. Aleshire Center for the Study of Greek Epigraphy, notably Nikolaos Papazarkadas. I also owe thanks to Angela Ganter, Albert Schachter, Christel Müller, and Alex McAuley for valuable comments and references.

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