



STRATEGIES OF REMEMBERING IN GREECE UNDER ROME

(100 BC - 100 AD)

EDITED BY
TAMARA M. DIJKSTRA, INGER N.I. KUIN,
MURIEL MOSER & DAVID WEIDGENANT



PUBLICATIONS OF THE
NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE AT ATHENS VI

Source reference:

Dijkstra, T.M., I.N.I. Kuin, M. Moser & D. Weidgenannt (eds) 2017: *Strategies of Remembering in Greece under Rome (100 BC - 100 AD)*, Publications of the Netherlands Institute at Athens VI, Leiden (Sidestone Press).



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Published by Sidestone Press, Leiden
www.sidestone.com

Publications of the Netherlands Institute at Athens VI

Co-financed by the SFB 1095 “Discourses of Weakness and Resource Regimes” of the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft

Imprint: Sidestone Press

Lay-out & cover design: Sidestone Press
Photograph cover: Akropolis, photo: byrefresh(PIX) (stock.adobe.com)

ISBN 978-90-8890-480-6 (softcover)
ISBN 978-90-8890-481-3 (hardcover)
ISBN 978-90-8890-482-0 (PDF e-book)

SFB
1095

*Schwächediskurse
und Ressourcenregime*

DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft

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Roman Greece and the 'Mnemonic Turn'. Some Critical Remarks

*Dimitris Grigoropoulos, Valentina Di Napoli, Vasilis Evangelidis,
Francesco Camia, Dylan Rogers and Stavros Vlizon*

Abstract

Since E.L. Bowie's seminal article on the Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic, the study of Greece in the Roman Empire has been experiencing what has been described in other areas of social sciences and the humanities as a 'mnemonic turn'. The purpose of this article is to rethink the role and scope of these approaches by revisiting some of their assumptions and by posing a series of related questions: was the Roman conquest a catalyst for the emergence of phenomena of mobilization of the past in Greek societies? If such phenomena articulated conscious local responses to the imperial situation, how uniform were these responses across the Greek mainland? Were Greeks unique in this respect compared to other provincial societies across the empire? Did every use and representation of the past always have an ideological significance that can be read from the available textual and material evidence? Can we classify and describe all these phenomena by using the 'language of memory'? By examining these issues, we wish to highlight the complex nature of the evidence and the need to take into account its potential and its limitations when making inferences about remembering as a social and cultural strategy.

Keywords: Roman Greece, memory studies, tradition, Roman provinces

1. Introduction

Several social scientists and cultural historians have observed that since the 1980s the study of culture is undergoing a 'mnemonic turn' or even a 'memory boom' (Huyssen 2000; Klein 2000; Berliner 2005; Köresaar 2014; Bachmann-Medick 2016, 279). From the rediscovery of the work of Maurice Halbwachs in the 1980s to the explosion of cultural memory studies from the 1990s onwards, this turn has led to the emergence of memory as a category of analysis and as a fundamental concept of culture (Fentress & Wickham 1992; Assmann 2002; Assmann 2008; Hasberg 2004; Olick & Robbins 1998; Klein 2000; Berliner 2005; Radstone 2008). The impact of this broader development has been (and continues to be) strongly felt in the study of mainland Greece and the Aegean following its conquest by Rome; in the last decades, this part of the Roman world has seen an extraordinary amount of work devoted to the power of the past and the role of memory in local provincial societies (e.g. Bowie 1974; Arafat 1996; Alcock 1997a; 2001; 2002). Starting as an attempt to de-construct discourses of nostalgia in Greek literature

of the Imperial period, a wide range of phenomena of uses of the past as well as diverse material and textual evidence have been increasingly examined through this lens (e.g. Alcock *et al.* 2001; Galli & Cordovana 2007; Schmitz & Wiater 2011; *cf.* also Galinsky & Lapatin 2015). A central thesis of most such work has been that these phenomena have much to say not simply about how imperial Greeks viewed and interacted with the past, but also about how they structured their relations with Rome as a subject people. Under the prism of discrepant experience, the Greek past has been viewed as a resource through which local provincial communities could negotiate their status with respect to the Roman authorities, sometimes even as a channel for voicing dissent and as an expression of resistance to the centre (Alcock 1997a, 109-110). The 'turn to memory' marks, therefore, a fundamental shift in how we approach more overarching questions relating to the impact of Roman conquest and the extent of cultural and social change in Roman Greece (Francis 2004, 355).

Here a crucial question arises: is this increased interest a reflection of a shift in modern academic pursuits, related to the broader 'memory boom' as outlined above, or did the phenomena that we study in Roman Greece have the intrinsic significance and magnitude that we wish to ascribe to them? To claim that the one or the other answer alone is right would of course be simplistic and generalizing. After all, terms such as *memoria* and *mneme* were in common use in Rome and Greece during the Imperial period, even if they were not necessarily invested with the same meanings and implications that memory, as defined by modern academics and with its various prefixed adjectives (social, cultural, collective, etc.), has nowadays (Fentress & Wickham 1992; Assmann 2008; Erll 2008; 2011, 101). That said, outside the study of the ancient world the use of (cultural) memory as a conceptual and interpretative tool in historical thinking is coming under increased scrutiny (Kantsteiner 2002; Radstone 2008). Indeed, some of the most vocal critics have branded memory as a post-modern catchword that does not account for the richness of human experiences of, and interaction with, the past (Gedi & Elam 1996; Klein 2000; Berliner 2005; Algazi 2014). More recently, critical voices have also been raised by classical archaeologists working on other periods of the Greek past about the difficulties (and pitfalls) of identifying the workings of memory behind material remains (Morgan 2014).

Even if one does not agree with the above criticisms, the wealth of studies dedicated in one form or another to the role of memory in Roman Greece suggests that the time is ripe for a critical appraisal. The purpose of this article is to rethink the role and scope of these approaches by revisiting some of their assumptions and by posing a series of related questions: was the Roman conquest a catalyst for the emergence of phenomena related to the power of

the past and its mobilization in the present? If such mobilization served to articulate conscious local responses to the imperial situation, how uniform were these responses across the Greek mainland? Were Greeks unique in this respect compared to other provincial societies across the empire? Did every use and representation of the past always have an ideological significance that can be read from the available textual and material evidence? Can we classify and describe all these phenomena by using the 'language of memory' (Algazi 2014, 26)? In what follows, we examine these questions one by one, drawing upon an (both chronologically and geographically) extensive range of archaeological and historical examples and case-studies. Our aim is not to debunk previous work or to downplay the socio-cultural significance of the past in Roman Greece (or any human society, for that matter), but to review the potential and the limits of this discourse and to suggest alternative paths for engaging critically with the evidence.

2. The pre-Roman background

Recourse to the past has been repeatedly described as a phenomenon that characterizes the Imperial period as a consequence of the incorporation of Greece into the Roman Empire, epitomized by the literary and rhetorical production labelled the Second Sophistic (Bowersock 1969; Bowie 1974; Swain 1996; Alcock 1997a; 1997b; 2002; Galli & Cordovana 2007). If it is true, however, that 'the Greeks of the early Roman Empire were magnificently obsessed with their past' and that this phenomenon was 'an active cultural strategy on the part of an unusual subject population' (Alcock 2002, 33), it is likewise true that valorisation and mobilization of the past were not at all unprecedented in earlier Greek self-perception and self-presentation. There is little doubt that long before any experience of foreign conquest the ancient Greeks attempted to locate themselves in the flow of history by narrating and interpreting the past and developing a historical consciousness. Several studies have been devoted to investigating the complexity and variety of these phenomena in ancient Greek cultural and social life. In the following paragraphs, we investigate some examples spanning a large temporal frame of the Greek past, from prehistory down to the early post-conquest Late Hellenistic period, which, as will become evident, have relevance for situating and understanding several practices attested in the Early Imperial period.

Case studies from Greek prehistory speak in favour of the memorialisation of places from very early periods (brief review in Sporn 2015, 71-76). It has been argued, for instance, that the area of the central court in the monumental Middle Minoan IB so-called 'first palace' of Knossos was an 'arena for memory' already during the Early Minoan period, when ceremonial activities involving

the consumption of food and beverages took place (Day & Wilson 2002). Also, the so-called 'Building T' at Tiryns, dating to the Late Helladic IIIC period, preserves a clear trace of the destroyed, earlier *megaron*, whose floor and throne were replaced with new ones (Maran 2001; 2011). Speaking explicitly about memory in these early contexts and without supporting textual sources may be risky. These examples, however, at least show that material traces of the past were actively drawn upon as symbols of emerging social and political structures. Similarly, for the Early Iron Age, Carla Antonaccio (1995; see also Morris 1998 and Whitley 1998), in her study of the practice of hero or tomb cult, which reached its peak especially in the 8th century BC, has argued on the basis of archaeological evidence that social and historical motivations can explain this phenomenon. As several other studies have suggested, for the emerging poleis and *ethne* it was extremely important to have control over time even more than over space, and that descent was crucial for determining group membership.¹ Furthermore, studies of oral tradition and the Homeric epic poems have reached the same conclusion, arguing that Greek communities of the Iron Age insisted on kinship and descent as a vital element for defining group identity and orienting collective social memory.²

Archaic Greece, which saw the birth of the polis and the attempts of aristocratic families and local communities at legitimizing their power, offers more evocative examples. Scholars agree about the importance of hero cults as core symbols of group identity (Bremmer 2006; Forsdyke 2011), and several communities tried to connect themselves to the heroes of the Greek epics in order to find their place in the Panhellenic cultural landscape. Middle Helladic tombs in the area of Eleusis (Mylonas 1975, vol. 2, 153-154, 262-264, pl. 145), whose original occupants had been forgotten, came to be associated with the fallen leaders of the Seven against Thebes and became the focus of a newly established hero cult. This might have happened in the mid-6th century BC, when a *heroon* for the Seven was built at Argos (Pariente 1992), apparently to boost the city's claim to leadership in the Peloponnese (Forsdyke 2011, 151-154). Pausanias (1.39.2) confirms that still in the Roman Imperial period the graves of the Seven leaders were visible on the road from Eleusis to Megara. Both the cult at Eleusis and the one at Argos may

therefore be read in light of a competition between the two poleis, against the general background of inter-city rivalries of the Archaic period.³ The same phenomenon of competing cities explains the birth of foundation myths, invented by Greek poleis in order to find their place in a wider political landscape, a phenomenon that is well-attested in Roman Imperial times (Leschhorn 1984; MacSweeney 2014; Scherrer 2014, esp. 114-116, on the foundation myth of Ephesus).

Competition for honour and the legitimization of power, however, were not the only purposes for which the past was invoked and manipulated in the Greek polis. Around 500 BC the new-born Athenian democracy decided each year to bury the war dead in a common tomb, the *Δημόσιον Σῆμα*, thus physically reminding all citizens that it was worth dying for Athens. Shared remembrance in 5th-century Athens was manifest in the creation of collective burials for the war dead and in the elaboration of new spaces and symbols, which strengthened the sense of community and inspired new generations of citizens (Arrington 2015). Likewise inspiring were the ruins of the temples destroyed by the Persians, left to public view in the northern wall of the Acropolis (Ferrari 2002; Kousser 2009); but also, on a less disturbing and traumatic level, public victory monuments scattered on the sacred space of the Acropolis, which celebrated power and pride, or religious festivals, dramatic and rhetorical performances that served as carriers of Athenian social memory in the Classical period in that they were linked to key historical events.⁴

By the time of the Hellenistic kingdoms, civic commemoration had become a deeply ingrained cultural institution that, despite the deep political and social transformations that Greek cities were undergoing in that period, continued to produce new heroes who acted as role models and were added to the long line of local ancestors. This was the case with Eugnotos, for whom around 280 BC a statue was erected in the Boeotian city of Akraiphia, commemorating the battle during which he had lost his life fighting on the side of the Boeotian League. The last two lines of the long epigram inscribed on the statue base urged the Akraiphian young soldiers to bravery: 'But, young men, thus in glory become fighters, thus become

1 As argued in Morgan 1991. An example at Geometric Naxos is found in Lambrinoudakis 1988.

2 On Homeric poems, see Grethlein 2010, with bibliography. On Hecataeus and the birth of historiography, see Bertelli 2001. On the use of myth and history in ancient Greece, see Gehrke 2001; 2007. 8th- and 7th-century BC Corinth shows how the Bacchiad and Cypselid dynasties used local epic poems, the arts, and urban landscape in order to control collective social memory; for more see Dubbini 2012.

3 Steinbock 2013, 159-162 affirms that the shift in meaning at Eleusis occurred in the mid-6th century BC. Coldstream 1977, 351, Burkert 1985, 203 and Janko 1992, 163 suggest that this *heroon* was dedicated to the Seven already in the Late Geometric period, when a peribolos wall was built that surrounded the tombs. Bremmer 2006, 15-20, however, is skeptical about the presence of any cult activity at the site. Clarke 2008 shows the vitality of tradition at the time of the formation of the polis.

4 Steinbock 2013 focuses on the use of the past in Athenian public discourse of the 4th century BC. On Athens as 'place of memory', see Hölscher 2010.

brave men, defending the city of your fathers'.⁵ One century later, around 180 BC, the same statue was re-inscribed with conscription lists for the Boeotian League, the act of which spurred the young citizens to follow in the footsteps of Eugnotos. Further conscription lists were even added in the 140s BC, at a time when the Boeotian League had been dissolved by the Romans, and when Akraiphia had to call in Megarian arbitrators in a territorial dispute with an unnamed neighbouring city. The statue of Eugnotos thus functioned as a monumental canvas, upon which several important episodes relating to Akraiphia's existence and civic identity were marked over time.

Political integration of cities into the domain of Hellenistic kingdoms, especially in the case of living rulers (and not those of the past, such as was the case before), frequently meant the creation of new forms of commemoration and their integration into existing institutions. When Teos was taken into Seleucid control, around 203 BC, King Antiochos III and Queen Laodike III bestowed on the city many privileges, which are recorded in great detail on two decrees found close to the entrance of the temple of Dionysus.⁶ The Teians wished to 'be seen to return appropriate tokens of gratitude, in every occasion, to the king and the queen'.⁷ For this purpose, they set up several statues of Antiochos and Laodike in central locations of the city, built a monumental fountain named after the queen in the agora, and instituted a festival in honour of the ruling couple. Civic rituals were addressed to the bronze statue of Antiochos placed in the *bouleuterion*, which included sacrifices offered by the magistrates, the crowning of the statue by the ephebes, and the offering of seasonal agricultural products. The sacrifices are particularly worth mentioning, as the decree states that magistrates and priests should 'perform in the *bouleuterion* a sacrifice upon the common hearth of the city to the king and the Charites and to Memory'.⁸ This ritual, which stands out for the explicit presence of the personification of Μνήμη, anticipated many festivals of the Roman Imperial period, such as the procession established by P. Vibius Salutaris in 1st-century AD Ephesos (Rogers 1991).

This concise and, inevitably selective, overview demonstrates that long before the Roman Imperial period Greek communities mobilized and manipulated the past in various ways for legitimating the present and

for shaping their sense of belonging. It is important to note that this was not the case just in periods of trauma or great internal stress but an apparently permanent feature of public and civic life; to use Susan Alcock's (2002, 23) words, 'the Hellenes were a memorious people'. In fact, it would appear that it was precisely the physical environment and the political and religious institutions of the polis that from the beginning fostered the development of a 'culture of remembrance' and provided the prime context of memory formation and commemorative practices. The polis was also the context in which the material mechanisms of this culture, such as monumental architecture, sculpture, and the epigraphic habit, were developed. By the Hellenistic period, this culture had been enriched by new commemorative institutions, such as the cult of the rulers, and crystallized into a set of traditions and practices, which were locally specific and contingent upon the political, cultural, and social dynamics of each polis.

3. Non-elite, non-Achaean, non-Greek: Some examples of the heterogeneity of mnemonic audiences in Roman Greece

While the role of the polis as the framework that enabled the formation and reproduction of shared memories cannot be denied for both before and after the Roman conquest of Greece, modern interpretations run the risk of essentializing perceptions of the past in Early Imperial Greece by reducing them to the experiences of elite urban audiences. Indeed, our knowledge of such practices revolves almost exclusively around the behaviours of the members of a specific group (i.e. the political and intellectual local elites) from a specific socio-cultural component of one province (i.e. the cities of Achaia), where such attitudes have been mapped by means of the available textual and archaeological evidence (Zoumbaki 2008). Nevertheless, when speaking about the 'Greek past', we should be aware of the potentially different perceptions by communities with different historical trajectories and status and by individuals with diverse ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds that would have experienced and interpreted the physical remains of the past differently (Alcock 2002, 69).

Tracing the mnemonic behaviours of these diverse audiences is not always an easy task, especially when there is no direct material or textual evidence, as indeed for the majority of the non-elite population, which encompassed a wide range of people from poor farmers to what Mayer (2012) describes as 'middle class', people who were not slaves or very poor, but economically autonomous such as merchants, artisans, and craftsmen (Alcock 2002, 69-70). Depending on their social status, these people may or may not have participated in the culture of public commemoration and institutionalized remembrance in their com-

5 ἀλλά, νέοι, γί[ν]εσθε κατὰ κλέος ὅδε μαχηταί, | ὅδ' ἀγαθοί, πατέρων ἄιστεα [ρ]υόμενοι. Original text is in Perdrizet 1900, 70-73, with extensive commentary and translation in Ma 2005.

6 SEG 41.1003, I & II, both commented in Ma 1999.

7 SEG 41.1003, I, lines 40-42. Trans. Ma 1999, 310.

8 SEG 41.1003, II, lines 33-34. Trans. Ma 1999, 315; see also the discussion by Ma 2009, 251.

munities, but their perceptions were possibly shaped more by local myths, tradition, and oral culture, and their participation in ritual behaviour.⁹ Still, Plutarch (*Mor. Prae. ger. reip.* 814c) did not fail to notice, in a rather dismissive tone, that in his time the masses were getting too excited by narrations of the Greek victories at Marathon and Plataea, suggesting that sometimes such stories triggered feelings of unsuitable patriotism or civic pride: '[...] but Marathon, the Eurymedon, Plataea, and all the other examples which make the common folk vainly to swell with pride and kick up their heels, should be left to the schools of the sophists'.¹⁰

In one case, intellectual tradition and emphasis on Athenian patriotism managed to mobilize the Athenians against the Herulian invasion (Millar 2004, 293-294). At the same time, it is highly unlikely that the classicism and connoisseurship, reflected in the texts of the Second Sophistic and in the lifestyle of the elite, was something shared or understood by the common people.

Still, for Achaia at least, the clichéd image of ordinary people as passive participants in an elite game of self-promotion is not consistent with the role of the demos as a constituent part of a civic system for which the past played an important role (Zuiderhoek 2008, 436; 2014). As explained above, remembering the past was an intrinsic part of the ancient Greek polis, and the urban landscape was laden with commemorative messages through its monuments, statuary, public and sacred spaces (Mylonopoulos 2006, 87) that formed an important part of the everyday life of the people.¹¹ In this context, elite behaviour, such as donations for repairs of ruined buildings or the revival of ancient rites, cannot simply be explained by a will for self-aggrandizement or as a communication channel with the central authority, but rather has to be viewed as a response to a widespread significance attached to the past in the context of civic life (Millar 2004, 297).

Similarly difficult to discern are behaviours in Greek regions outside Achaia and the traditional commemorative framework of the old city states. In provinces such as Macedonia and Epirus different narratives not only prevailed, but additionally, contrary to southern Greece, physical traces and monuments of the Classical

past were also absent. The large Ionic peripteral temple of the Early Classical period that was reconstructed with the addition of new material sometime during the Early Imperial period in Thessaloniki is a rare example; its reconstruction in the provincial capital arguably represents an engaged intervention that enhanced the potential of the city as a memorial space by showcasing Classical architecture, a practice more on par with Roman metropolitan tastes.¹² Indeed, one may wonder whether such a reference to the Classical past through the reconstruction of iconic architectural forms is sufficient to demonstrate mnemonic behaviour in a region where one would expect that memories of the past were mostly (and inextricably) related to the period of the old Macedonian Kingdom. In the years that followed Pydna (168 BC) control of these memories probably proved essential for the stability of the province, especially when at least three successive uprisings were tied to the legacy of the lost Antigonids (Nigdelis 2007, 53-54). During the Imperial period, the memory of the Hellenistic kingdom and its monuments seems to have gradually been (selectively or forcefully) forgotten or neglected. What probably contributed significantly to this is the gradual decline and disappearance during the Augustan period of the two large power centres of the old Macedonian kingdom, the capitals Pella (Akamatis 2011, 403) and Aigai (Drougou 2009), where such dynastic, patriotic memories could have thrived.

The disjunction between memories of the old Macedonian kingdom and the new reality of Roman Macedonia finds a strong manifestation in the gradual abandonment and looting during the Late Republican to Early Imperial period of many of the great burial mounds that marked the resting place of the land-owning aristocracy of Macedonia (Schmidt-Dounas 2016). This was a phenomenon clearly linked to the disappearance of the old elite after the conquest, but the significance of these imposing monumental landmarks for local societies remains largely unknown. Besides treasure hunting spots, these were sites that could have been used for local rites, for reburials in the tomb itself or along the tumulus as 'tourist' attractions or simply as taboo sites engulfed by mystery (Curta 2016). By way of exception, the 4th-century BC Macedonian Tomb D at Pella (Chrysostomou 1994, 56-59) seems to have been visited frequently after its looting, sometime at the beginning of the 1st century BC, by individuals who left graffiti with obscene language and pederastic content. After the clearance of the main entrance in the late 2nd

9 For the perception of past in oral societies, see Assmann 2008, 112, who summarizes the work of the anthropologist Vansina 1985. For the differences between memory and tradition, see Morgan 2014, but also Jones and Russel 2012. For oral tradition and other temporal information in the context of families, see Foxhall 2012.

10 Plut. *Mor. Prae. ger. reip.* 814c: τὸν δὲ Μαραθῶνα καὶ τὸν Εὐρυμέδοντα καὶ τὰς Πλαταιάς, καὶ ὅσα τῶν παραδειγμάτων οἰδεῖν ποιεῖ καὶ φρυάττεσθαι διακενῆς τοῦς πολλούς. Trans. H.N. Fowler.

11 Ma 2009, 251; Price 2012, 16; Steinbock 2013, 48-99. See also Elsner and Squire 2016 about the connection between sight and memory.

12 The identification and exact date of the temple is a matter of debate, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2012, 275-276. For the superstructure of the building, older architectural members were used plus supplementary material that was carved in a style so as to imitate the Early Classical style of the older material. For the itinerant temples at the Athenian Agora, see Alcock 2002, 54-58.

century AD, however, the tomb was made more accessible to visitors who added new graffiti to mark their presence. Among them, a dedication to the hero Alexander and to Cassander indicates that the tomb might have been perceived by some as a physical remain from the period of the old Macedonian Kingdom. Interestingly, this coincides with the revival of the interest in the Macedonian kingdom and the commemoration of Alexander the Great that swept the province of Macedonia at the time of the late Antonine and Severan periods.¹³

Varied motives seem to have dictated the mnemonic behaviours of yet another until recently 'obscure' audience: the inhabitants of a number of Roman colonies that were founded on Greek soil during the late 1st century BC as part of a Caesarean and later Augustan grand strategy (Rizakis 1997, 15). The establishment of these colonies over pre-existing cities with a long history and a developed architectural environment inevitably evoked a range of responses towards the local pre-Roman past and its physical remains that go further than what Renato Rosaldo (1989) described as 'imperialist nostalgia'. Practical reasons, especially during the first years after their establishment, led to restoration, reuse, and preservation of pre-existing buildings and monuments (e.g. the Archaic Temple or the South Stoa in Corinth), which only by their presence were *a de facto force of memory*. Religiousness, superstition, and piety also seem to have played a role in the selective preservation of sites and relics (Engels 1990). After all, the foundation of the colony was an act with a deep religious content.¹⁴ Preservation, however, of civic history documents (e.g. the decree of Alexander granting land in Philippi, see Missitzis 1985), remembrance of mythic founders like Patreas in Patras (Paus. 7.20.7 and Dijkstra in this volume), restoration of sacred sites and exhibition of ancient relics as the *xoana* of Dionysus Bakkheios and Lysios at Corinth (Paus. 2.4.7) offered a channel of communication with the broader socio-cultural environment of the province.

Although these colonies were cities with extensive privileges, the link with the past still might have been a central decision for their further success and their ranking in the hierarchy of power. Yet the motives behind the preservation of some monuments are more complex and thus more difficult to be categorized as purely political, religious, or practical. This is the case with the salvage and exhibition at a prominent spot along the main thoroughfare of the Roman colony of Dion of an architectural frieze depicting cuirasses and shields, a frieze that

originally belonged to an important pre-Roman public building. The original Hellenistic building from where it was salvaged has been identified as a *bouleuterion* or as a hall that might have sheltered the *apella*, the armed congregation of the Macedonian people. The building seems to have continued to function as one of the main public buildings of the colony over the long period between the 1st century BC and the late 2nd century AD, when the renovation programme began (Christodoulou 2000; 2007). One can only speculate about the motives behind its preservation and public display: was it an attempt to present the Roman basilica as a successor of the old building, a reference (given the characteristic military inspired theme of the frieze) to the Macedonian past, or simply an act of reverence towards a building that was probably an important landmark of the city from the time of its foundation? Both seem possible explanations, which, if nothing else, highlights the complexity of the mnemonic behaviours of the citizens of these cities towards the pre-Roman past.

4. A view from the rest of the Empire

Even if Achaia is often presented as a special case of a society obsessed with its pre-conquest legacy, it was by no means the only part of the Roman world where the past carried significance. The ways in which individuals and communities in the western and eastern provinces interacted with their local pasts is beginning to attract an increasing amount of scholarly attention (Eckardt 2004; Galinsky & Lapatin 2015; Boschung *et al.* 2015). These works, while emphasizing the differences between the two parts of the empire simply relating to the nature of the evidence, also recognize significant contrasts in the responses and processes by which these attitudes were shaped in the post-conquest period. Certainly, the absence of any deep-rooted admiration for local cultural legacies by the Romans (with the possible exception of that of Pharaonic Egypt) and the eventual suppression of (or indifference to) much of whatever persisted in most conquered areas makes a blatant contrast to the situation in Achaia. That said, other Roman provinces were not devoid of material remains and monumental sites of previous times that were no less imposing, which invited provincial populations to interact with them in various ways (Bradley & Williams 1997; Bradley 2002; Díaz-Guardamino *et al.* 2015).

On a first level, comparisons between Achaia and other provincial settings can be drawn on the basis of continuities and shifts in frameworks of official remembrance and the agents that were responsible for sustaining them. For Roman Gaul, Greg Woolf (1996) has emphasized the destruction of traditional frameworks of memory and their gradual replacement with Roman institutions as the

13 Gagé 1975; see also Despinis *et al.* 1997, 120, n. 17. For the image of Alexander under the Antonine and Severan dynasties, see Asirvatham 2010, 113 and Chatzinikolaou 2011, 163-165, 337-338, cat.no. 214 (cult of Alexander).

14 Verg. *Aen.* 5.775-6; Tac. *Ann.* 12.24; Briquel 2008.

main reasons behind the apparent indifference towards the pre-conquest past. As already noted in the case of Roman Macedonia, this can perhaps be understood as an effect of the disappearance of the native Late Iron Age elite after the conquest, including the learned classes that would have controlled narratives, modes of representation, and knowledge about the past. In other parts of the Roman world, where a certain degree of continuity in elite structures from the pre- to the post-conquest period is documented, such traditional frameworks seem to have persisted or to have been moulded into new forms of commemorative practice.

A case in point is the commemoration of native rulers in areas that prior to their conquest by Rome were ruled by client kings, as in the region of western North Africa that later became the provinces of Mauretania Tingitana and Caesariensis. During the time of the Numidian kings and under Juba II, at the latest, a Hellenistic-style dynastic ruler cult had been established, while other sources indicate that deification of rulers was also common among Berber populations (Gonzalbes 1981; Coltelloni-Trannoy 1992). The last client king of Mauretania, Ptolemy, was the last in the dynasty, who is said to have set up a cult of his father Juba II (and perhaps also of his grandfather Hiempsal II (Roller 2003, 156; *ibid.* 27, n. 112). Together with his father, Ptolemy was venerated even after his brutal murder by Caligula and the annexation of the province in AD 40. Statues of both kings were apparently in public display until Late Imperial times, as for instance in the western baths of Iol Caesarea (Cherchel) that were built in the Severan period (Landwehr 1992; Coltelloni-Trannoy 1997, 198-199). Literary sources of the 3rd century AD suggest that by that time Juba II may have been counted amongst the local gods (Roller 2003, 155). At Sala in Mauretania Tingitana, there is evidence for a temple in the forum that was dedicated to the two kings and used down to the 4th century AD (Coltelloni-Trannoy 1997, 198-199).

Another suggestive example is known from the Alpine region between Gallia Narbonensis and Cisalpine Gaul. This was the territory of the Liguri, a tribal kingdom that was ruled by king Donnus at the time of Caesar's campaigns in Gaul and later by his son Cottius (Haeussler 2016, 184). This ruler had retained his kingdom under Augustus as an ally of Rome receiving the title of prefect, a title which he then passed on to his son, Cottius II, until Nero created the province of Alpes Cottiae in AD 60. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions that he saw the tomb of the client king at Segusio and notes that it was venerated devoutly down to his day (Amm. Marc. 15.10.2, 7; Barnes 1998, 98). Segusio was Cottius' royal capital, and excavations in the 19th century have brought to light a temple-like building dating to the Augustan period with a stone urn placed in the cella, which has been interpreted

as the king's tomb (Brecciaroli-Taborelli 1994; Haeussler 2016, 184). The tomb's form and its location suggest that Cottius indeed received special honours from his subjects after his death. Veneration of Cottius continued for generations, certainly under the rule of his son, the last king of the tribal kingdom, and even after the formal provincialization of the kingdom under Nero, until the time of Ammianus.

Similar phenomena can be also observed outside Italy and the Mediterranean, as in the case of the ceremonial complex at Folly Lane in Verulamium (St. Albans) in southeast Britain. Verulamium evolved as an urban centre after around the 60s AD, but its urban origins stretch back to the late 1st century BC, when a series of sub-rectangular enclosures were established (Haselgrove & Millett 1997; Niblett 1999). Sometime after the Claudian invasion of AD 43, and by AD 55 at the latest, the enclosure at Folly Lane received a high-status burial, accompanied by military gear and luxury items. The special care shown in the burial rites and the military accoutrements suggest that this person was an important Briton with close connections to the Romans, possibly a client king of the conquest period or an immediate successor (Niblett 1999). The burial itself became the focus of commemoration in later times. In the Claudian-Neronian period, the Iron Age trackway that had connected the lower enclosure with Folly Lane became the main axis on which the town was laid out. In the Flavian period a temple-shrine was erected on the cremation pyre, while in the mid-2nd century AD a new theatre was connected to Folly Lane by means of a processional way. Folly Lane thus became fully integrated into the landscape of Early Roman Verulamium as a focus of communal remembrance, which involved rituals, performances and votive deposition (Creighton 2006, 128-130).

Although it would be simplistic to generalize, the examples considered above share many common traits. As Ralph Haeussler (2009; 2010) has argued, a common thread seems to be the role that the honorands played in securing the future relationship of their communities with Rome at a turning point in their history. Another common feature is the chronological extent of these practices, lasting several generations. Not least, in none of the above cases was there any attempt by the Romans to suppress or discontinue such practices. Even in the case of the last king of Mauretania, whose memorable tragic end under Caligula may have carried a subversive undertone (Gonzalbes 1981, 158), his commemoration appears to have flourished after the Roman annexation of the old kingdom. These examples show that several societies with different cultural backgrounds and trajectories upon becoming part of the Roman Empire experienced similar pressures, and responded in ways that in many respects can compare to the evidence from Roman Achaëa and

other areas of the eastern empire (see Fouquet *this volume*; Noreña 2015).

Beyond such cases of official remembrance, people in every part of the Roman world interacted with inherited landscapes and pre-existing material remains. In the last decades, archaeological evidence of Roman-period activity at pre-conquest sites is beginning to emerge from several areas across the eastern and western provinces. From Palaeolithic cave sites (Basch 1956; Alfayé 2010, 195-204; Simón 2013) and megalithic monuments in Iberia (Bradley 2002, 116-118; Sanjuán *et al.* 2007; 2008; Sanjuán & Díaz-Guardamino 2015), Brittany (Vejby 2015) and North Africa (Sanmartí *et al.* 2015), to the Bronze Age megalithic towers, or *nuraghi*, in Sardinia (Blake 1997; 1998), the Iron Age barrow cemeteries in Gallia Belgica (Fontjin 2015) and Hittite rock art in Anatolia (Rojas & Sergueenkova 2014) – the range of sites and landscapes with traces of Roman-period interaction is vast. Such interaction could take various forms and leave various traces (e.g. epigraphy, pictorial representations, material remains), while even within a certain region or type of monument there can be much variation. In Sardinia, for instance, the evidence for Roman reuse of Bronze Age *nuraghi* suggests a wide range of functions, from domestic, to cultic and funerary (Blake 1997; 1998). The chronological span of such later activity is equally wide, with several monuments either being reused for the first time only in the Roman period, or continuing an already established pattern from previous centuries, or showing reuse within one or more phases of the Roman era.

What are we to make of all this? In the absence of literary or other epigraphic information, much of the Roman material recovered from such sites poses several problems regarding its chronology, nature, and interpretation (e.g. Vejby 2015; Fontjin 2015, 195-196). In cases where more source material and finds are available, there are potentially more associations to be established. A case in point is the megalithic tomb known as Petit Mont overlooking the bay of Morbihan in Brittany (LeCornec 1985; 1987; Vejby 2015, 172). This impressive Neolithic chambered cairn has yielded more Iron Age and Roman material than any other such tomb in Brittany, which has one of the largest concentrations of megalithic tombs in Western Europe. Excavation at the entrance also revealed a Latin-inscribed stone mentioning a *votum* by the son of Q. Sabinus (Sanquer 1983, 286-287; LeCornec 1985, 62-64; 1987); the latter is identified as the Roman lieutenant responsible for leading the Roman forces in the final sea battle against the Veneti and their allies during Caesar's campaigns in Gaul. The wider area of the bay was the theatre of this dramatic event described in the *Gallic Wars* (3.11-16), which led to the crushing of the last pocket of local resistance. The altar provides a compel-

ling indication that this megalithic complex, which was already significant for the local Iron Age communities, was appropriated for commemorating this decisive battle (LeCornec 1994, 94; Vejby 2015, 172).

Rather than reflecting native responses, this example is perhaps more indicative of the intentions of the Roman victors who sought to make a statement of domination and control. Other examples, however, have led scholars to interpret evidence for Roman activity at prehistoric monuments as an expression of cultural memory or a form of local resistance to the centre (Blake 1997; Blake 1998; Sanjuán *et al.* 2007; Sanjuán *et al.* 2008; Sanjuán & Díaz-Guardamino 2015). Here it is important to ask if any type of later material attested at pre-existing monuments is adequate for inferring intentional remembering; and, above all, if we concur with Jan Assmann's (2008, 110) definition of cultural memory as something exteriorized and objectified, what was being invoked and remembered? Such experiences were often disjunctive, as noted by Lynn Meskell (2003, 48-52; *cf.* Montserrat & Meskell 1997) for Deir el Medina, a New Kingdom settlement close to the Valley of the Kings in Upper Egypt. In the Ptolemaic and Roman periods this became a pilgrimage site where visitors made *proskynemata*, or written obeisances, to the local gods. Overawed by the dramatic landscape and Pharaonic ruins, these visitors could not understand that what they were venerating were the remains of a village of pyramid builders. These practices, according to Meskell (2003, 50), cannot constitute an expression of social or cultural memory; they were rather 'hybrid forms of commemorative practice' that appropriated the locale without any affective contact to its previous function or meaning.

Given that cultural memory is loosely defined as something which can accommodate diverse representations and practices relating to our relation to the past (Erl 2008; Assmann 2008), it may appear of little consequence to distinguish between them. It is important, nevertheless, whenever possible and if only for analytical reasons, to make a distinction between experiences, in which pre-existing monuments due to their perceived properties fascinated later generations and triggered various responses, and those that involved conscious acts of remembrance and commemoration. Admittedly, it cannot be excluded that visits to ancient sites, or the rediscovery and reuse of material remains enabled speculation about the local past (Alfayé 2010, 196-197), or even the expression of alternative local identities and 'counter-memories' at a personal level. What becomes evident, however, is that both in Achaia and in other provinces formalized remembrance at the level of the community lay primarily in the hands of the local elites and provincial ruling classes, and it is they who ultimately shaped the specific ways in which the local past would (or would not) be remembered and celebrated.

5. Problematizing remembrance

Our remarks aim at opening up a more fundamental discussion, which has important implications for studying memory in the Roman world. It is generally accepted that material remains allow a less elite-centred and more bottom-up approach than written (including epigraphic) sources, but at the same time they are inherently ambiguous: their meanings are not readily apparent or are heavily determined by interpretation. A similar problem has been recently emphasized by Jás Elsner (2017, 266-267) in the context of the archaeological study of pilgrimage. These qualities do not reduce the value of archaeological material as an evidentiary basis from which to infer commemorative behaviours and intentional remembering, but certainly make it more difficult and challenging. If for Petit Mont no epigraphic evidence or historical sources were available and we were left with only the excavated Roman-period finds, how would it be possible to link the archaeologically observed patterns of reuse with intentional commemorative practices?

These problems are no less acute in cases where ample archaeological and textual source material is available, as for instance in the case of the imperial cult in Roman Greece (Kantiréa 2007; Lozano 2010; Camia 2011; 2012). The socio-political motives behind the integration of the imperial cult into the traditional framework of the Greek poleis are straightforward enough. Imperial cult permitted the Greek communities to accommodate the emperor in their own symbolic world. To treat the emperor like a god is a way to negotiate with his autocratic power, so as to experience external authority in a more familiar way and according to Greeks' cultural horizon and tradition.¹⁵ In Greece, new temples or other cult buildings specifically conceived for the emperors were rarely built. With the exception of the *monopteros* of Roma and Augustus on the Athenian Acropolis celebrating Augustus' Parthian campaign of 20 BC (Kantiréa 2007, 125-127; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2008, 21-23; Dally 2008; Fouquet 2012), in most cases emperor worship was 'hosted' in pre-existing structures, which constituted an integral part of cities' religious and cultural heritage (Camia 2016).

There remains, however, one essential question to be addressed: does the practice of associating Roman emperors and Greek gods always suggest an actual act of remembrance? The choice of pre-existing architectural spaces bears an immediate economic advantage, which becomes more explicit when a collapsed building is used in order to create an independent cult place for the emperors, as happened for example with the re-con-

secration of the *Metroon* in Olympia in the Augustan age (Hitzl 1991; Hupfloher 2006, 240-242; Kantiréa 2007, 147-153; Lo Monaco 2009; Bol 2008). In this context, the use – or reuse – of pre-existing places of worship was difficult to avoid, and regarding each case as a conscious and deliberate evocation of the past can be misleading. The fact that the old *Metroon* was most probably in ruins at the time of the re-consecration and that it was rededicated to Augustus alone, who thus replaced – rather than being associated to – the Megale Meter, warns us against assuming in every case an ideological motivation, although the latter cannot be *a priori* excluded even in those cases when practical advantages seem to be predominant. Needless to say, in some cases both practical and ideological motives will have coexisted (and in the aforementioned case single individuals may still have associated the new temple re-consecrated to Augustus with the old deity). Recognition of such aspects is very important in considering such accommodation as an actual mnemonic act or not.

A well-known evocative example is the altar dedicated to the imperial cult discovered in the Late Helladic tholos tomb at Orchomenos, known as the 'treasury of Minyas' (Antonaccio 1995, 127-130; Alcock 1997b, 28, with further bibliography). This was evidently a deliberate act that reclaimed a local prehistoric funerary monument as a place of emperor worship. Nevertheless, the insertion of the altar seems hardly out of place, since this tomb had already been the focus of cult activity (possibly of local hero Minyas and other gods) already by the Hellenistic period. From a functional point of view, then, this would hardly have created a break with past practice, and indeed this might have been the actual intention, namely to embed the emperor into a web of local pre-existing cult practices. Whether such practices demonstrate the workings of cultural memory, or if we should better call them tradition, or perhaps even an 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; cf. Busch & Versluys 2015), is better left open to debate. In this case, however, what matters is that it was not so much the presence of an ancient monument *per se* that determined the accommodation of the imperial cult, but the fact that this tomb had already been a focus of local worship and thus was associated with established practices of the Orchomenians.

As Jan Assmann (2008, 113) notes, 'cultural memory reaches back into the past only so far as the past can be reclaimed as 'ours''. He goes on to underline that knowledge about the past in itself does not necessarily signal memory, unless the former is bound to some concept of identity. Developing this point (but from a different perspective) further, Gadi Algazi (2014) emphasizes that remembering is not only just about cognition, but also about recognition: not just knowing about the past but internalizing this knowledge, respecting obliga-

15 Beard *et al.* 1998, 158: 'the Greeks employed traditional forms to articulate their position in a new world'. Cf. also Price 1984, 52, and for Athens Evans 2011, 90: 'Athenians came to worship Roman emperors by following age-old patterns'.

tions that arise from it and making appropriate gestures. It is thus important, when considering the symbolic or ideological motivations behind patterns of reuse and its evidentiary potential for tracing cultural memory, to take into account of the specific local historical and cultural parameters. Seen from this perspective, cultural memory is not a given, something which is ready to be unlocked in all material remains or sites that exhibit traces of later activity or appropriation. In this context, it is crucial to bear in mind the caveat expressed by Catherine Morgan (2014, 115) that 'there is [...] a potentially important distinction between objectified memory (formalized episodes of remembrance and forgetfulness) and the practice of ritual whereby what is inherited (itself an act of selection and definition) is responded to, positively or negatively, in whole or part, consciously or unconsciously. Understanding the function of tradition and memorialisation, recognizing them case by case, requires sensitive examination of the whole fabric, rather than assumptions about ancient perceptions'.

6. Conclusion

In recent years memory has emerged as a central theme that can shed light upon the processes of incorporation of Greece into the Roman Empire. This development invites us to place the paths opening up for this kind of study in a broader historical (diachronic) and comparative (synchronic) perspective. Greek provincial experiences, for all their richness and apparent intensity, were neither unprecedented in Greece itself, nor unique amongst other conquered societies of the empire. By the time of the Roman conquest Greek communities had already developed the frameworks, elements and specific practices through which perceptions of the past were shaped and materialized. In a sense, then, what we are observing is the persistence and reproduction of a set of traditions of commemoration, which, because of the burgeoning importance attached to Greek culture within Roman imperial ideology, acquired

an added significance as cultural capital for Greek provincials. This is what differentiates Achaia from other provincial cultures, and this is where a key difference between the pre-conquest era and the Imperial period lies. In the course of the early empire, control of the past and its representations became a key element in the creation of a provincial socio-political order, a process during which Greek elites progressively aligned themselves with the Roman state and imperial ideology (Spawforth 2012). By celebrating their local civic past and thus learning to appear more 'traditional' and 'canonical', the Achaean ruling classes responded to Roman cultural expectations.

In this sense, there was something opportunistic (or better perhaps, strategic) about showcasing and manipulating local heritage. The crucial question to ask, therefore, is if this kind of behaviour that seems to have been in agreement with (or sometimes even dictated by) the conquering power can be taken to reflect the sum total of cultural memory of the provincial population. Given that much of the source material by default reflects the views of elites and centres on urban experiences, we should be cautious in either assuming that such perceptions were uniform across the Greek mainland or that they were even shared by all social groups and communities within Achaia. It is also important to emphasize that encounters with the past were complex phenomena in Roman Greece and in other provincial societies alike. Even when textual sources exist, interpreting such experiences by reference to cultural memory may not be always so straightforward. Our observations are not meant to debunk the 'mnemonic turn'; far from this, approaches to Greece and the Roman world under this prism are not only legitimate and intellectually challenging but, as the examples discussed above show, have still a lot to offer. Yet, if this 'mnemonic turn' is to become a paradigm, it is important to review the scope of the subject and to revisit the applicability of concepts by examining if and to what extent they help us to better understand the material and textual evidence.

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