

CULTURAL MEMORY AND HISTORY IN ANTIQUITY

Cultural Memory and Identity in Ancient Societies

Edited by
Martin Bommas

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Contents

Series Preface	vii
About the Authors	ix
Acknowledgements	xiii
Abbreviations	xv
Illustrations	xvi
Introduction	1
1 The Ancient Egyptian scene of 'Pharaoh smiting his enemies': an attempt to visualize cultural memory? <i>Maria Michela Luiselli</i>	10
2 Silent Voices? Cultural Memory and the Reading of Inscribed Epigram in Classical Athens <i>Niall Livingstone</i>	26
3 'Πωμαίζω ... <i>ergo sum</i> : becoming Roman in Varro's <i>de Lingua Latina</i> <i>Diana Spencer</i>	43
4 Jewish Memory and Identity in the First Century AD: Philo and Josephus on Dreams <i>Juliette Grace Harrison</i>	61
5 Pausanias' Egypt <i>Martin Bommas</i>	79
6 Forgetting to Remember in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt <i>Anna Lucille Boozer</i>	109
7 Sculpture, Text and Recall: The Monument to Viscountess Harriet Fitzharris <i>Mary Harlow, Ray Laurence and Roger White</i>	127
Select Bibliography	143
Index	145

Series Preface

Culture as a set of shared attitudes, values and practices that characterizes a group or society – modern as well as ancient – is to a large extent based on the construction and transmission of memories. Differing from collective and individual approaches to the past, cultural memory describes a process that emerges from distant and collateral events and only appears in standardized forms once a group or society has agreed upon them. Memory is a phenomenon that – by definition – is directly related to the present. When dealing with ancient societies, Cultural Memory as a tool can be used to disclose and identify this contemporary presence of the past within ancient societies. When investigating cultural memory of past societies, key questions are how and what ancient societies remembered about events that shaped the formation of their identity, and how they built on agreed memories to create a collective present.

The term Cultural Memory was first introduced in 1992 by the German Egyptologist Jan Assmann in his book *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (trans. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance and Political Imagination*, Cambridge 2011), in which he further developed the theory of collective memory, first established in 1950 by the French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in *La mémoire collective* (trans. *On Collective Memory*, Chicago/London 1992). Although Assmann's approach was soon adopted by linguists, sociologists and anthropologists, ancient historians and classicists only slowly incorporated this term into the vocabulary of their disciplines. Today, 19 years later, Historical Studies and contiguous disciplines are increasingly reconsidering the question of history versus memory, rethinking history's border zone. The use of competing terms such as 'collective memory', 'social memory' and 'cultural memory' – all discussing the ways in which individuals remember the past and at the same time define their social experience and involvement – has led to confusion about how social connections work and where priorities lie when human beings construct their relationship with the past.

As historians, we are unable to access the mental process of culturally defined memory of the past, but only how memory is embodied in texts and objects. This new series is designed to investigate the role of physical remains, or rather material memories such as written and archaeological sources that

were regarded to have had symbolic significance by ancient societies. By identifying the ways in which the collective past was remembered by ancient societies as cultural memory encoded in archaeological and written data, this series will address and respond to the challenges that come with this term when used uncritically. Social memory, if pushed too far, inevitably represents a theoretical and idealizing picture of the past in the past, if the influences of conflict and the use and abuse of power of groups over others are not taken into account. Diverse recollections of the past can deconstruct cultural memory and hamper its integration into a collective past. In order to allow cultural memory to construct a collective past, groups of power can encourage and promote remembering, marginalize individual memories, initiate reinterpretation or even actively instruct forgetting.

Cultural Memory and History in Antiquity aims to reveal the mechanics of social connections in order to understand better the sources of collective pasts and to identify its continuative drifts rather than the connections established between generations. The motor of cultural memory is actively practiced memory based on an agreed set of data, rather than tradition. In tracing shifts of meaning within ancient society, both cultural memory and cultural forgetting offer purposeful tools to identify the courses of history through both elite and non-elite perspectives.

Martin Bommas
Editor

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Martin Bommas is a Senior Lecturer in Egyptology and Curator of the Eton Myers Collection of Ancient Egyptian Art at the University of Birmingham. After having worked as a Research Fellow in Egyptology at the University of Heidelberg, Germany from 1994 to 2001, he became Assistant Professor at the University of Basel, Switzerland before he joined the University of Birmingham in 2006. He excavated in Pakistan and led several archaeological projects for the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo in Egypt between 1990 and 2009. Bommas taught Egyptology at the Universities of Heidelberg, Basel, Zurich, and has held visiting appointments in Rome, Venice, and Sheffield. His publications include *Heiligtum und Mysterium. Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten* (von Zabern, 2005) and *Das Alte Ägypten* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011).

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Acknowledgements

The present volume, the first in this newly established series 'Cultural Memory and History in Antiquity' (CMHA) derives from the research seminar series 'Cultural Memory', which I organized together with Elena Theodorakopoulos at the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham, UK in the academic year 2008–2009. The goal of this seminar series was to bring scholars from various disciplines, nations and scholarly traditions within our Institute, the College of Arts and Law and from outside together to explore and investigate mechanics of memories and methodological questions in the ancient and modern world. Without the active support by Elena Theodorakopoulos and the encouragement of contributors, members of staff throughout our School and the enthusiasm of our Postgraduate Students of the academic year 2008–2009, this seminar series would never have taken off as the initial volume of a new series, aiming at being a critical voice in the ever increasing choir of scholars interested in cultural memory in ancient societies. As this research project is based within the Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, the present volume marks the achievement of all staff members that became interested in cultural studies and memory.

The idea of publishing the papers was supported immediately by almost all participants of the seminar series to whom I am very thankful. I am especially grateful and indebted to Anna Lucille Boozer for her willingness to contribute an article on a field of research our seminar series did not cover, even if she did not take part in the series. Juliette Grace Harrison has not only stoically mastered the task of the papers' corrections, I have also benefited largely from her diligence, productiveness and expertise as a classicist being used to working in an interdisciplinary environment. Ken Dowden in his function as Head of School has generously stepped in as a sponsor when help was needed the most. Without his interest in the field and academic acumen, this project would probably have never seen the light. I was able to put this volume together in a timely manner only thanks to the fact that in 2009 I was granted sabbatical leave by the College of Arts and Law.

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and also Alexandra Verbovsek (Munich) and Maureen Carroll (Sheffield) who not only acted as referees but also contributed to the refinement of the series and the present volume.

Last but not least I would like to thank Jan Assmann who first introduced me to the concept of cultural memory in the early 1990s.

*Martin Bommas
Birmingham, January 2011*

Abbreviations

AP	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>
CEG	Hansen, P. A., 1983. <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca Saeculorum VIII-V A. Chr. N. Berlin</i> (I); Hansen, P. A., 1989. <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca Saeculi IV A. Chr. N. Berlin</i> (II). Since numbering of poems is continuous from CEG I to CEG II, I do not specify the volume number; 465 is the last poem in CEG I and 466 the first in CEG II.
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
HE	Gow, A. S. F. and Page, D. L. (eds.) 1965. <i>The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams</i> . Volumes I and II. Cambridge.

Illustrations

1.1	Detail from wall painting in tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis	14
1.2	The Narmer Ceremonial Palette from Hierakonpolis, Naqada III period	15
1.3	Thutmosis III smiting the enemies, Eighteenth Dynasty, Karnak	17
5.1	Tithorea, the town walls of Hellenistic times	89
5.2	General view of the island of Delos	98
5.3	The sanctuary of Isis (Serapeion C) at the island of Delos	98
6.1	Map of Egypt	110
6.2	Map of the Oasis Magna	114
6.3	Plan of House B2, Amheida	118
7.1	The Fitzherbert monument, Christchurch Priory	128
7.2	Harriet Fitzharris' burial inscription in Salisbury Cathedral	128
7.3	Penelope surprised by the suitors	130
7.4	Women sewing (Mrs Flaxman and Maria Denman)	131
7.5	Tomb relief for Harriet Fitzharris in Flaxman's museum	133
7.6	Mrs Charles Augustus Tulk, with her sons Augustus and Edward	134

Introduction

HISTORY AND MEMORY

As an introduction to a volume on cultural memory in antiquity it is instructive to consider a more recent historical event. The year 2010 marked the 70th anniversary of the German Luftwaffe's first strike against Britain in July 1940 and the beginning of the Battle of Britain. In an attempt to gain air superiority, the German Air Force bombarded ports, airfields and factories from 13 August ('Operation Eagle Day') to 23 August before turning to strategic terror bombing attacks on British cities from 7 September onwards, commonly known as the Blitz. German bomber units were not withdrawn until May 1941 to prepare for the campaign against the Soviet Union and had the Luftwaffe continued to target airfields, air superiority might well have been achieved and London's defence set at risk. But despite the Luftwaffe's greater numbers, Hitler decided on 11 October 1940 to postpone the planned invasion ('Operation Sea Lion') indefinitely. Nevertheless, German attacks continued, by day and night.

Although London had been the target of German bomber attacks during the First World War (between May 1917 and May 1918), these losses have a very small part in the collective memory today, overshadowed as they are by the Blitz. At the time these bombings were considered a major threat: in 1917, the cabinet ordered two fighter squadrons from France after a German bomb hit Liverpool Street Station and a nursery school, leading to 162 dead and 432 wounded. The reason why these events play such a marginal role today and have little impact on the consciousness of modern Londoners has to do with the way we perceive, understand and process information. One of the key factors is memory.

With regard to the Battle of Britain, there are three types of memory which make this historical event stand out for present generations: individual memory, social memory and cultural memory. As long as veterans of the Battle, those serving on the Home Front and survivors of the Blitz are alive, individual memory will live on. These are memories of fellowship, victory and loss, not necessarily linked with actual historical events but part of what shaped the feeling of togetherness. During the war, Britain was well aware of the importance of individual sacrifice as can be seen in several propaganda movies. *Millions Like Us* (1943) shows a factory run by women and serves as a fine example of how morale was kept high, while *The Wellington Plane Built in One Day* (1943) shows the work force of a Welsh factory building a Wellington bomber in less than 24 hours. The latter was not only intended to be a morale

booster but also aimed to impress the Americans, as can be seen by listening to the narrator's apparent American accent.

As personal knowledge of the course of World War II is gradually fading, the process of unintentional forgetting becomes evident two generations after the historical event. However, forgetting and the loss of exact memory can also be used by later generations, as demonstrated by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009. For the 65th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, the British Government failed to secure a Royal invitation from their French counterparts although the Queen is Head of State of both Britain and Canada, two nations heavily involved in the D-Day invasion and the removal of Nazism from Europe. While it was probably Sarkozy's intention to present France as the leading nation in the fight against Nazi Germany and a close ally to the American troops, British politicians are no less culpable of taking non-historical views. In July 2010 David Cameron was criticized after mistakenly saying the UK was the 'junior partner' in the allied World War II fight against Germany in 1940, neglecting the fact that the USA had yet to enter the war.

These gaps within individual memory are, however, counteracted by social memories of those who accept historical facts as part of their own history and remember key facts as part of their cultural background. The so-called 7/7 bombings in London by Muslim terrorists in 2005 triggered a feeling of unity, in the spirit of the Blitz. These often subconscious or fading social memories are, however, often referred to, particularly by second generations who discuss individual memory in literature and art. During the 1960s, personal memories were made the focus of popular culture, with Eric Burdon's *When I Was Young* or The Who's *Tommy* being only two examples of how young members of society remembered the horrors of war individually. The more memories fade, the more dynamic becomes the shift from individual to social memory with organizations playing an increasing role in stirring up the process of memories. Heritage organizations and museums favour hands-on experiences in institutions like the Imperial War Museum which encourages the public to engage with the material culture of war and personal experiences of their great-grandparents during the Blitz. Enterprises like *Past Times* sell a variety of objects in their shops linked to Britain's historic past: much to her own surprise Vera Lynn, the so-called 'Forces' Sweetheart', hit the British pop charts again in 2010 with a compilation of her wartime songs.

SHARED HISTORICAL MEMORIES – SHARED IDENTITY IN ANCIENT SOCIETIES

In 1999 in his book *Myths and Memories of the Nation* Anthony Smith wrote about shared historical memories on which basis:

arises a shared culture, often a common language or custom or religion, the product of the common historical experience that gives rise to shared memories.¹

In this work Smith describes memory as ‘perhaps the essential element in any kind of human identity’ and sums up more than 70 years of research on memory and identity.² Based on this view, it is evident that shared experiences and interpretation form a crucial part of any group-building process, the result of which is identity. What seems to be a straightforward development is, however, in most cases a long and dynamic process which in cases can stretch over more than two generations before an agreement over shared memories can be established, by the time of which individual memories are mostly excluded.³ The arrival of a shared vision of the past has been coined ‘concretion of identity’ by Jan Assmann who first introduced the concept of cultural memory:⁴

The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ seems to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.⁵

Assmann’s definition can also be merited for what it does not or only indirectly states, such as the competition of two (or more) groups for the ownership of victory (Muwatalli and Ramesses II and the Battle of Qadesh) or ancestors (Greece and Macedonia for Alexander the Great⁶), the role authorities play (Augustus’ *Res Gestae*) or how lower, sometimes even illiterate levels of a society take part in this concretion (pyramids as state symbols in Egypt). Also, migrants wandering between different cultures play a crucial role as carriers of sometimes fragmented culture and identity (Greek settlers in Egypt during the seventh century BC) and challenge the idea of identity being paralleled by ‘political imagination’⁷ (Jan Assmann).

Different from individual identity that in ancient societies is shaped by inclusiveness through social roles (exclusiveness is a phenomenon or even cultural ideal of the twentieth century AD), cultural identity is made indistinguishable by the concretion of cultural character⁸ which is not necessarily politically

motivated.⁹ Media that encapsulate reference material for continuous identity shaping processes must allow for renewed interests in history.¹⁰ This makes cultural memory:

a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation.¹¹

Like the term social memory,¹² cultural memory refers to a collaborative approach to memory within modern or ancient groups. However, different from social memory, cultural memory is based on stored media which allow members repeatedly to access data that can be retold or re-envisioned until they become formulaic. Because, different from individual or social memory, cultural memory is based on primary sources that allow for investigations from various angles,¹³ it amplifies an active memory shaped by the societies that engage with it. Unlike reception which largely remains passive in its approach to the past, cultural memory comes with a creative change that does not aim at recalling but plays a role in cultural processes in the present, permeable and open for new perspectives. Therefore, it functions as a quality controlled membrane to a society's past and continues to thrive as long as this memory is regarded essential to the building process of a society.

MEMORY DYNAMICS

While the emergence of cultural memory is agreed on by societies, further steps can be directed by chosen or opposed authorities. During its early process, cultural memory emerges from fixed points in the past,¹⁴ usually after a circle of three generations has come to an end. If up to this point no techniques of tradition have developed, this process which Assmann called 'communicative memory'¹⁵ is usually not taken further and any given event will finally be forgotten. Structures to maintain collective memory are, as a consequence, basic and show only little signs of strategy. Should, however, societies agree to continue and establish memory by involving specialists, each point turns into a symbol which allows for retrieving these events or even developing traditions¹⁶ due to storage facilities that go beyond everyday memories. The only way in which collective memory is able to operate within the framework of cultural memory is, therefore, through the performance of rites. Here, again, certain persons watch carefully over the correct enactment and equally base themselves on text archives, *res sacrae* etc.

The element of constructed tradition is the most productive element in this process but also its weakest link: if viewers who absorb cultural memory do not engage with the original media stored, real facts degenerate into *remembered history*.¹⁷ In order to prevent historical events from being forgotten, monuments are created that generate cultural memory: the fact that memorials as signs of a shared semiotic system are erected on public places proves the agreed function they were hoped to play in their participation in the shaping of cultural memory.

HIGH AND LOW CULTURE

Cultural memory while shifting away from the stress on the social group focuses on its modes of production. This includes all levels of society not just the elite. This note is important because it reveals an apparent gap between English and American approaches on one hand and German concepts on the other. According to the German tradition, *Kultur* implies dominant cultural forms. The term *Hochkultur* which is still favoured by scholars like Jan Assmann¹⁸ opposes the concept of science of culture¹⁹ which gained importance in British²⁰ social studies as relating to *low culture*. The mechanics by which lower classes can decode cultural symbolism whether of elite or non-elite origin have hardly ever been investigated by German scholars dealing with memory in ancient societies. Models stressing exclusively high culture as a medium for cultural memory run into the danger of discarding memory remains of heterogeneous societies, multilevel societies, multiethnicity and collaborative production processes within remembering societies.²¹

On the other hand, it is certainly true that due to differently accessible media in ancient societies, historical events were less observable for larger communities than today and myths linked with semi-historical pasts were as a consequence more common. Although this process does not happen in specific parts of the society exclusively, the display of ancient cultural memory typically reflects the concerns of a literate élite that encodes information and also supplies decoding tools for non-elite levels of societies.

CONTRIBUTIONS

In identifying identity-shaping processes through cultural memories in ancient societies, the present volume focuses on the importance of the materiality of ancient sources like archaeological remains, texts and images as memory objects. The choice of archaeological and written sources presented here as memory remains are unique links within dynamic remembering processes in

Egypt, Greece and Rome which exemplify the crucial role of media within the collaborative formation of identity. This volume brings together seven fresh and original approaches to memory cultures in antiquity and beyond. Arranged in chronological order, all contributions carefully analyse and contextualize memory as the essential tool to create and shape identities.

Maria Michela Luiselli in her article 'The Ancient Egyptian scene of 'Pharaoh smiting his enemies': an attempt to visualize cultural memory?' discusses the importance of iconic images in the state building process of Early Dynastic Egypt. She shows how mythical events were declared historical facts by continuous re-enactment and schematized visualization, addressing basic decoding skills of illiterate or even foreign observers.

Niall Livingstone in his contribution 'Silent Voices? Cultural Memory and the Reading of Inscribed Epigram in Classical Athens' identifies epitaphs as memorials and investigates how stone inscriptions actualize memory through being read. By investigating an inscription by a female deceased which inevitably were occasionally read out loud by male passers-by, he reveals the mechanics of processing even private memories across the gender boundaries.

By introducing a rarely discussed passage of didactic literature by Marcus Terentius Varro writing during the first century BC, Diana Spencer examines the world of cross-cultural translations of major works of Greek philosophy by Romans in order to enrich Roman oratorical praxis. By promoting active recuperation and conservation of the ancient languages, Varro shapes Roman identity and political authority by marking up memory and mental faculties as Latin, not Greek.

In investigating Jewish minority groups and their identity in the Roman Empire, Juliette Grace Harrison introduces the term cultural imagination to describe the collection of ideas and views that exist almost unspoken within members of a particular group. Given the dominance of Greek and Roman cultures, an outsider's cultural identity was often conflicted when cultural memory and sense of identity had to be reconciled as shown in the cases of the historian Josephus, son of a Jewish priestly family, and the philosopher Philo, a Hellenized Jew.

In my own paper, I try to examine distant memories of Egypt maintained by cult communities worshipping the non-indigenous goddess Isis in Phocis during the second century AD. By confronting the Greek writer Pausanias with the archaeological and written evidence of cults for Isis in Greece, actively distorted memories can be identified which led to an astonishing variety of cult practices; inclusive with regard to their local community, worshippers of Isis in Greece apparently celebrated exclusiveness in local imprintings of rituals to create cultural identity, making each cult of Isis a unique experience for worshippers and outsiders.

In her article 'Forgetting to Remember in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt', Anna Lucille Boozer identifies and examines documentary lacunae within the archaeological evidence of Amheida, a destination of migrants over many centuries. By contrasting passive forgetting with violent forgetting, i.e. the active of erasure of past histories, she suggests strategies of forgetting that played a crucial role in nursing collective identity among migrants in Roman Egypt.

This volume is ideally rounded up by an investigation into how the reception of antiquity in nineteenth century Britain used mnemonic strategies to link with the past, written by Mary Harlow, Ray Laurence and Roger White. Through careful investigation of the Viscountess Harriet Fitzharris' Memorial at Christchurch Priory (Dorset), the authors point out how memory can be diluted even over a short period of time, thus making it a shifting object where an interest in the canonization of memories is lacking.

Notes

- 1 Smith 1999: 218.
- 2 The most comprehensive and up-to-date summary of the history of research on memory has been achieved by H. Beck and H.-U. Wiemer 2009: 9–17.
- 3 For an overview of the terminology currently in use see Beck and Wiemer 2009: 17.
- 4 On the concept of cultural memory as introduced by Assmann see Harth 2008 who in addition points to the difficulties of translating Assmann's terminology into English.
- 5 Assmann 1995: 132.
- 6 Cubitt 2007: 225.
- 7 Assmann 1997: 16.
- 8 Assmann 2006: 220.
- 9 A. Assmann paires off political with cultural memory, see Van Dijk 2007: 185, n. 26.
- 10 Such as the interest of Syrian popular culture in the visible past known as 'al-*ʿawda ila al-tarikh*' ('the return to history') referred to by paper of Heghnar Watenpaugh called 'Memory, Counter-Memory: Heritage in Modern Syria' as part of the Memory and Identity Working Group lecture series, University of California, Berkeley, 26 January 2011.
- 11 Assmann 1995: 126.
- 12 For the various types of memory research see Olick and Robbins 1998: 105–140. See also Fentress and Wickham 1992.
- 13 Bommas 2009.
- 14 On Maurice Halbwachs who kept history and memory apart see Weissberg 1999: 17.
- 15 Assmann 1997: 48–63.
- 16 Assmann 2006: 8.
- 17 Assmann 2000: 52.
- 18 In his groundbreaking book *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, Assmann states that ancient historians are reluctant to engage themselves with the theory of culture: '... nur die Altertumswissenschaftler haben

sich in dieser Debatte auffallend selten zu Wort gemeldet. Dabei dürfte ohne weiteres einleuchten, dass sich gerade in der Erforschung der frühen Hochkulturen besonders reiche Aufschlüsse für das Wesen und Funktionieren, die Entstehung, Vermittlung und Veränderung von Kultur gewinnen liessen.' (Assmann 1997: 19).

19 Bommas 2011.

20 With the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1964–2002) at the University of Birmingham playing a key role.

21 This links with the allegation of uniformity which complex societies such as the ones of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome never revealed, see Olick 2008, 158–159.

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The Ancient Egyptian scene of 'Pharaoh smiting his enemies': an attempt to visualize cultural memory?

Maria Michela Luiselli

INTRODUCTION: ON COLLECTIVE, INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY

Collective memory is a socially constructed notion. According to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs' theory, first developed in the 1920s, 'while the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember.'¹

Consequently, there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society. In other words, different social classes, families, associations and so on have distinctive memories that their members have constructed. This means that memory is socially determined and defined, and that the *collective* – and not the single individual – is the subject of remembering, thus stressing the *group* behind the act of remembering and talking about 'group memory'.² The individual memory is developed by one person only through its participation in communicative processes.³ As such, memory lives and develops through and within communication.

In addition to that, Halbwachs sharply distinguished between *historical* and *autobiographical memory*. Historical memory is testified only by written or visual records, such as photographs, but it can be kept alive through commemorations, festive enactments and so on.⁴ These celebrations reinforce the memory of a single event, even if one has not physically taken part in it. On the contrary, the autobiographical memory is a memory of events that we have personally experienced in the past. This kind of memory can, according to Halbwachs, fade passing time if one does not stay in contact with those who shared in the same past events. In the case of the historical memory, the single person does not remember, as the history is not part of her or his own previous life. However, readings and/or commemorations can store the past which is thus interpreted by a specific social group. This particular form of *collective* memory both

commemorates events through regular celebrations and is reinforced by these celebrations.⁵ According to Halbwachs the past is a mere social construction shaped by the concerns of the present.⁶ Past and present seem therefore to interact, memory being a process of reconstruction: the past does not remain the same, on the contrary, it is shaped and reorganized by the present.

These introductory notes highlight some crucial points: first, Halbwachs stresses the *social* aspect of memory, different social groups being representative of a collective memory and thus of a collective identity. In the meantime, the concept of collective memory has been applied to other groups like nations and states, thus widening the field of research.⁷ Secondly, the historical memory as part of the collective memory is continually renewed through reading, feasts and commemorations.

Alongside the 'collective' and the 'individual memory', the term 'cultural memory' was also introduced to describe processes of remembering used within a society. After first studies done by Aleida and Jan Assmann, Jan Assmann produced the first crucial publications.⁸ He based his research on Maurice Halbwachs' work, but went one step further by postulating a *cultural* basis for memory, rather than a social one.⁹ To describe the social aspect of individual memory that Halbwachs identified, Aleida and Jan Assmann proposed the term *communicative memory*, thus focusing on the 'intermediary realm between individuals; it grows out of intercourse between people, and the emotions play the crucial role in its process. Love, interest, sympathy, the wish to belong ... help to define our memories and provide them horizon'¹⁰ This communicative memory concerns the remembering of a *recent* past, something which one shares with one's own contemporaries.¹¹ On the other hand, cultural memory focuses on some fixed points in the past, each point becoming a sort of symbolic figure, on which memory is based.

What communication is for communicative memory, *tradition* is for cultural memory.¹² In that sense, Assmann disagrees with Halbwachs, who contrasted memory with tradition, the former being, in his opinion, always a *lived*, embodied memory. Within cultural memory, the past is focused on single symbolic figures, that are a focus on which memory is bound.¹³ What counts for cultural memory is not the single, real fact, but the *remembered history*.¹⁴ It is through memory that history turns into myth but, nevertheless, history does not become unreal at all. On the contrary, it gets a durative and normative strength.¹⁵ It is in the memory of its own history and past that a group ensures its normative and 'sacred' identity.¹⁶ Furthermore, according to Jan Assmann, every culture has its own cultural representatives (or bearers), for instance priests, artists, teachers and so on, and there is always a polarity between a communicative everyday memory and a cultural memory that is much more related to feasts and commemorative religious events.¹⁷

PAST AND PRESENT, HISTORY AND MYTH IN EGYPTIAN CULTURAL MEMORY: THE 'PALERMO STONE'

Against the backdrop of this introduction, the present paper deals with the Egyptian scene defined by scholars as 'Pharaoh smiting his enemies', trying to identify processes of the construction of cultural memory through *visual* sources. This approach should be considered as complementary to the one used by Jan Assmann in his studies on Egyptian cultural memory, since he based his research mainly on *written* sources, due to the highly developed Egyptian written culture.¹⁸ The hieroglyphic writing system, of which he underlines in particular the *monumental* character, constitutes the very focus of his study.¹⁹ Through the monumental use of the writing system the Egyptian kingship presented both itself and single events of particular importance in a form that Jan Assmann calls 'prospective memory', meaning that the events were displayed as a present ('Gegenwart') that the Egyptian culture understood as a 'future past'.²⁰ Consequently, presenting events in this way constituted a form of remembering that renewed and re-actualized the present in the cultural memory of Egypt.

In order to provide an illustration of what Assmann is referring to, attention must be drawn to the so-called Palermo Stone, datable to the Fifth Dynasty (2494–2350 BC).²¹ On this large rectangular slab the annals of the kingdom of Egypt from the Pre-dynastic times until the Fifth Dynasty were recorded through a precise scheme: while the Pre-dynastic kings are quoted on the first row, from the First Dynasty onwards the names of the kings are fully written in the narrow horizontal line and linked to a particular event that happened in that year, quoted in a rectangular box beneath the king's name.²² Consequently, each year is characterized by an event, mainly of a religious nature, as well as by the height of the river Nile inundation, for means of taxation, noted at the bottom.²³ The Palermo Stone was originally erected in a temple at Hierakonpolis and thus, while being a historical document, it received a sacred nature through its setting in a sacred space. According to the Egyptian concept, this meant that the past, here rendered in form of a list, became eternal and, therefore, present. The 'monumental discourse' developed at this stage was a new medium through which the kingship made itself and its established order visible. The later Egyptian historiography tradition, mainly from the New Kingdom onwards, transformed this Pre-dynastic period into a mythical time, by presenting the origin of kingship as derived from the sun god's control over his creation.²⁴ According to this tradition, the first human king, a certain Narmer-Menes, came into existence only after generations of gods and ancestral spirits. It is mainly due to Herodotus that Menes, as the first king of the First Dynasty, became, in the historical tradition, the originator and cultural founder of the Egyptian realm.²⁵

CONSTRUCTING CULTURAL MEMORY THROUGH VISUAL REPRESENTATION: THE TRADITION OF THE SCENE OF PHARAOH SMITING HIS ENEMIES

The purpose of the present paper is to analyse whether the theoretical principle of cultural memory formulated by Assmann is also applicable to visual sources. The example chosen to fulfil this purpose is certainly one of the best-known scenes of Egyptian culture, known as the scene of the Pharaoh 'smiting his enemies'.²⁶ It is attested throughout Egyptian history, that is to say over 3000 years, both in the monumental discourse and as simple decoration.

(a) First attestations: from tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis to the Narmer Palette

The very first occurrence of the scene dates to Naqada II (around 3300 BC). It is part of a larger wall painting that partly decorates tomb no. 100 in Hierakonpolis. This tomb was the first one of a larger size known in Egyptian culture, thus indicating an early social stratification.²⁷ One detail of this scene shows a man represented in enlarged scale with a macehead-like weapon held in his raised right hand while seizing three small kneeling and bound prisoners with his left hand (Figure 1.1).²⁸ The difference in size between the figures is an indication of social difference (i.e. importance) and will be a constant of this scene in all its attestations. After some few cases from the same period depicted on cylinder seals also from Hierakonpolis, displaying a large man smiting a smaller one, the first monumental and probably well-known example of this scene is on a ceremonial palette of a king who probably bears the name of Narmer (Figure 1.2).²⁹ Although still a matter of discussion in Egyptology, some scholars believe that it was this Narmer, who was either the last king of Dynasty 0 or the first king of Dynasty I (c.3100 BC), to whom the tradition of the king Narmer we have seen above refers. The Narmer palette, with its scene of the king smiting an enemy, dates 200 years later than the first occurrence on the wall painting of tomb no. 100 and on the cylinder seals. It was displayed in the temple of Horus in Hierakonpolis, that is to say in the same area of the earlier occurrences, and shows, below the two heads of a female goddess (probably Hathor or Bat), king Narmer standing with his left foot advanced and holding a mace. He is wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt, as well as a ceremonial beard attached to his chin and a short skirt. With his left hand he holds a prisoner, the name of his territory being probably inscribed next to him, kneeling with his face turned towards the king. Behind the king a male figure

– probably an official – holds Narmer’s sandals and in the register below two more enemies are depicted either dead or prostrate.³⁰ Above the enemy, a falcon is holding an oval of a personified land identified by the papyrus reeds as Lower Egypt. The verso of the palette shows in the upper register the king wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt inspecting two rows of decapitated enemies. Also, the two registers below seem to represent symbolically the unification of the Two Lands of Egypt and thus to commemorate a political event which must have been of enormous importance.

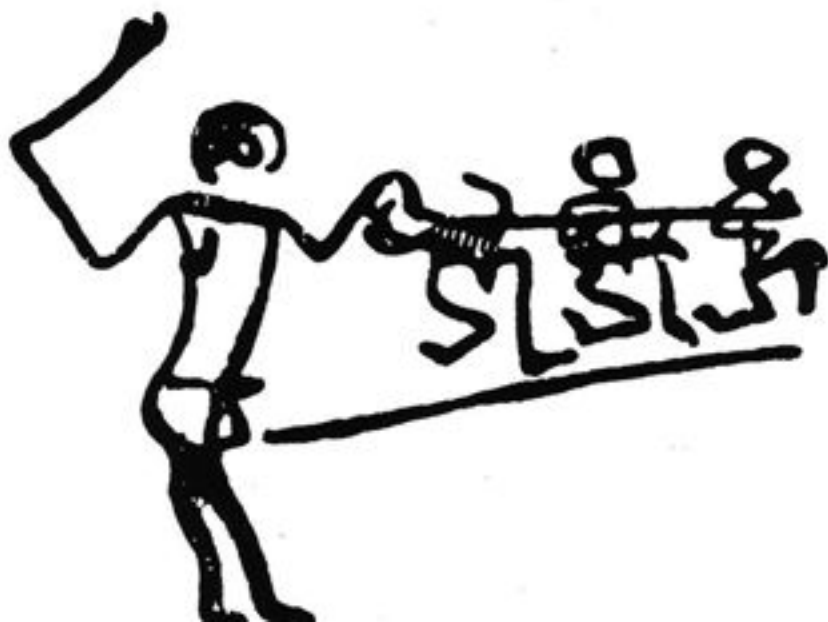


Figure 1.1. Detail from wall painting in tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis, Naqada II (sketch taken from E. Swan Hall, *The Pharaoh Smites his Enemies*, MÄS 44, Munich 1986, fig. 5).

To sum up, the palette is a monument erected in a temple and, therefore, dedicated to a god (Horus), displaying a political event of apparently crucial importance for Egyptian history. The visual language and strategies through which the supremacy over other peoples is expressed are not new, since they were, at that time, at least 200 years old, and were attested in the same place (Hierakonpolis), although not in a similar monumental context.



Figure 1.2. The Narmer Ceremonial Palette from Hierakonpolis, Naqada III period (Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 3055). Photograph from G. Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, British Museum Press, London 2008 (second edition), p. 32, fig. 25.

(b) Later occurrences

From this point of departure, numerous examples of this scene coming from various contexts and with some variants are attested.³¹ The basic structure of the scene remains the same, displaying the king in a much bigger size than the enemy or the enemies smitten and holding a weapon, usually the mace, as well as the royal insignia, i.e. the crown, the beard, sometimes the uraeus, the ceremonial necklace and the skirt. Nonetheless, there are some relevant changes to which attention should be drawn. First, some new stylistic features, already detectable in the Old Kingdom (2686–2160 BC) occurrences, that make the scene more dynamic by representing the king's body more projected towards the enemy.³² The latter, on the other hand, would be depicted almost lying at the king's feet.³³ Secondly, during the New Kingdom (1550–1069 BC), some more crucial variations appear. On the one hand, the enemies depicted multiply (Figure 1.3), thus strengthening the image of the Pharaonic power and its rule over the non-Egyptian world.³⁴ In an example dating to the reign of Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BC), the king is standing on a chariot pulled by horses and attacking a multitude of enemies, here depicted on the left side as a chaotic and formless group.³⁵ This variation on the motif, introducing the new element of the chariot and the indistinct enemies, often occurs in examples dating to the Ramesside period (1295–1069 BC), thus marking a clear development in the iconographical composition of the scene. The particular case of the relief from the temple of Karnak depicting king Thutmose III (1479–1425 BC) smiting his enemies is especially interesting as the names of the enemies are added to the scene according to the usual way in which enemies' names are recorded on Egyptian monuments: they are written in personified ovals with their hands bound at the rear.³⁶ This adds an aspect that could be defined as 'historical validity'. The scene is now deprived of its pure symbolic character, referring to real historical events. While this procedure is not completely unknown, as earlier examples already show the identification of the enemy depicted in all details during the Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BC), it is during the New Kingdom that an even more important innovation took place.³⁷ In the right corner of the Karnak scene above the smiting scene there is a figure, unfortunately not entirely preserved, with its feet directed towards the smiting scene. A parallel relief dating to king Amenhotep II (1427–1400) displays exactly the same scene and the figure depicted above, wearing the double feather crown and holding a sceptre in the left hand, is the state god Amon or Amon-Ra, in front of whom the scene is depicted, and ideally performed. This is also the case in the smiting scene from Tell el-Amarna, in which Akhenaten (1352–1336) smites his enemy in the light of the sun god Aton he worships, who watches and approves the act.³⁸ Occurrences from the Greco-Roman period show that

this innovation was taken up and became tradition. In fact, almost every scene on temple walls, depicting the king smiting his enemies, also displays a god watching the scene and thus being both the addressee of it and the protector of the king.



Figure 1.3. Thutmose III smiting the enemies, Eighteenth Dynasty, Karnak, temple of Amon-Ra, eighth pylon (copyright Maria Michela Luiselli).

‘SMITING HIS ENEMIES’ AND MULTIMEDIALITY

Leaving the stylistic and iconographical analysis of the scene and turning to its contexts and media, it will be possible to identify some aspects which are crucial to interpret the scene in the light of the cultural memory theory. Pharaoh smiting his enemies is quoted at least 90 times over 3000 years of Egyptian history. Thus, it is probably the longest-lasting and best-attested iconographical motif of Egyptian culture. From the geographical point of view, the first occurrences come from Hierakonpolis and Saqqara. Afterwards, the scene seems to be spread all over Egypt, focusing on the centres of both political and religious power, also including the boundaries of the Egyptian state.³⁹ In addition, a multiplicity of media and contexts conveying the scene can be observed. This, in particular, constitutes an aspect to which little attention has been drawn so far. The range of media is decidedly wide. The scene occurs on tomb walls,⁴⁰

cylinder seals,⁴¹ ceremonial palettes of various stones,⁴² ivory labels from tombs,⁴³ stone markers,⁴⁴ funerary temple walls⁴⁵ and wall reliefs in divine temples,⁴⁶ becoming part of the standard iconography on the façades of pylons⁴⁷ of both funerary and divine temples. Moreover, from the Middle Kingdom onwards the scene is depicted on royal jewellery,⁴⁸ on ceremonial weapons,⁴⁹ as well as on private stelae used within the performance of personal religious practices,⁵⁰ and on scarabs dating to the reigns of Thutmosis III (Eighteenth Dynasty), Ramesses II (Nineteenth Dynasty) and Shabaqo (Twenty-fifth Dynasty).⁵¹ Moreover, from the workmen's village of Deir el-Medina, in Western Thebes, come several examples of ostraca that should be understood as exercises of the apprentice artists. The ostraca depict sketches of this scene that formed part of the curriculum of a craftsman or artist.⁵² Other relevant evolutions concern the three-dimensional rendering of the scene,⁵³ which introduced a new motif in Egyptian royal statuary, as well as the use of the scene on decorated ceremonial pottery,⁵⁴ or cloths, as examples from the Greco-Roman period show.⁵⁵ In the light of all this, the modern term of 'multimediality' seems to be appropriate.

'PHARAOH SMITES HIS ENEMIES': UNDERSTANDING THE PAST AND CULTURAL MEMORY

The first *monumental* rendering of the scene of Pharaoh smiting his enemies was under king Narmer on his ceremonial palette. It is highly probable that it was this monumentalization of the scene that functioned as a motor for its adoption and evolution over time. The Narmer palette is a commemoration of the political act known as the 'Unification of the Two Lands', presented as an act of war led by a king of Upper Egypt over Lower Egypt. The two crowns that an Egyptian king wears refer to this very crucial political event and became part of the royal iconography and ideology as a double institution. Pharaoh ruled over the Two Lands and every ruler had to perform anew the ritual of the 'Unification of the Two Lands' when ascending the throne. In other words, the political event had been rendered sacred and thus became part of a past which had to be renewed and re-actualized in the present.

However, this alleged political event also indicated a cultural cut displayed by the victory of the cosmos over the chaos and thus marking the very beginning of the Egyptian culture.⁵⁶ In fact, the smiting scene on the Narmer palette was only one part of a more complex visual message conveyed by the entire monument. The obverse of the palette shows other phases of the same event: organized in three registers the king is depicted on the upper register entering the battle-field wearing the red crown and is preceded by four men holding the standard of a nome.⁵⁷ In front of them two rows of decapitated enemies are also represented.

In the middle is the emblematic scene of two monsters whose necks are intertwined, both conveying the message of the 'Unification of the Two Lands' and forming a round depression used to hold make-up, which was used in ritualistic context.⁵⁸ Finally, on the bottom register, the king is represented as a bull breaking through the outer walls of a town and trampling an enemy.

In the light of all this, when reading the smiting scene as part of the entire monument, it becomes clear that what is conveyed here is the message of the undisputed total victory of an Egyptian king.⁵⁹ By using signs (like the *serekh*) that are already attested before – although not necessarily connected with the royal sphere⁶⁰ – from this moment onwards, artificial features like the idea of the Two Lands finally unified, and the victory of Egypt over non-Egyptians on behalf of the gods shaped the Egyptian idea of state and kingship.⁶¹ Although warlike conflicts between communities to establish supremacy are to be supposed for the Pre-dynastic period at least since Naqada II, the destruction as displayed in the palette was impossible to prove by archaeological field work.⁶² As a matter of fact the high number of visual representations of wars in the Naqada III period testifies to the increasing warlike conflicts between contenders whose military and political power was probably almost equal.⁶³ Nonetheless, it is not possible to define the precise moment when one single Egyptian state merged or was founded.⁶⁴

Instead, what archaeology confirms is the slow rise of the elite and the kingship through a complex process of social hierarchization and political centralization. This was marked by different factors like the interregional and partly 'international' trade with Nubia and the Levant or the development of local hierarchies and elitarian cemeteries.⁶⁵ Moreover, the pottery confirms a progressive, but slow cultural unification which started from Upper Egypt; there is no proof of such a single political event that led to the formation of the Upper Egyptian state.⁶⁶ Therefore, modern interpretations of the Narmer palette tend to see the king as the heir of a unified political system rather than as the initiator of it. Early scenes showing a man of clearly higher rank smiting his enemies, as for instance in tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis, that were later monumentalized in the Narmer palette, convey some characteristics associated with the forming of royal ideology. Since then, every king also envisaged, as part of his kingship, this peculiar cultural inheritance which was visually displayed, adapted to new political situations and varied according to new cultural and religious features. The depiction of this scene on the temple walls was aimed at commemorating a particular political event as well as at re-actualizing and re-enacting the mythical past of the 'Unification of the Two Lands'. I believe that what can be called 'cultural memory' was thus established. Several Pre-dynastic conflicts whose extension and impact cannot be entirely reconstructed visually merged into this one monumental scene whose sacred character (the war done

on behalf of the god to whom the king was close) is suggested by its setting in the temple of Hierakonpolis.⁶⁷ Later on this scene was depicted on temple walls or generally on the outer façade of the pylon. This gave the scene another peculiar religious character as it received an apotropaic value: the representation of the king smiting his enemies was a sign of the victory of the cosmos over chaos. The scene was meant to keep the chaos of the profane world outside the temple building and away from the sacred space within the temple.

CONCLUSION

On closer inspection, the scene of the Pharaoh smiting his enemies bears different levels of interpretation. The construction of a mythical past and of a symbolic battle is an example of what Jan Assmann means by 'cultural memory' and not far away from what Halbwachs defined as 'historic memory', although no written version of it is preserved and although it cannot be connected with one historical event.⁶⁸ There is no text, no inscription and no quotation within Egyptian written sources of later periods that explains or describes this particular event. I suggest the reason for this lack of sources is that it was not regarded as necessary. On the one hand the point of reference, i.e. the single 'historical' moment to which the scene directly or indirectly referred by repeating the same iconographical pattern, is – and *was* – undisputable. The artificial construction of the point of departure of the single Egyptian state turned into a proper historical event that became fundamental for Egyptian political culture. The crucial point was its re-actualization in the present in order to establish the political and cultural order founded at the very beginning of Egyptian (cultural) history.

The 'Unification of the Two Lands' as part of the royal ideology and as an indicator of the supremacy of Egyptian kingship became part of the cultural identity of the country. The transmission of this motif was crucial for the preservation of its meaning and relevance over time. According to both Halbwachs and Assmann, there must be a group identifiable as the bearer of a memory. When asking within which group of Ancient Egyptian society the memory of the 'Unification of the Two Lands' played a relevant role, we can of course only consider the very elite of the country. The king himself was certainly aware of the ideological relevance of this feature and this becomes particularly clear when considering that a king like Akhenaten, who always presented himself as peaceful, also adapted this iconographical motif and 'smote' his enemies too. Through this scene the past received a mythical 'dress'; it was visualized in a way that conveyed a message pertaining to cultural identity and memory. It was not important whether Narmer-Menes really unified the country or not,

because within the Egyptian tradition this idea became an event and an attempt to visualize cultural memory.

Notes

- 1 Quotation taken from Lewis A. Coser, Coser 1992: 22.
- 2 Halbwachs 1992: 53.
- 3 Assmann 1997: 36–37.
- 4 Coser 1992: 23.
- 5 Coser 1992: 25.
- 6 Coser 1992: 25.
- 7 Assmann 2006: 188. The author here stresses the fact that in these cases the collective memory is constructed through different kinds of media (writing, images, monuments, etc.).
- 8 Cf. for instance A. and J. Assmann and Hardmeier Chr. 1983; A. and J. Assmann 1988; Assmann 2000.
- 9 Assmann 2000: 11.
- 10 Assmann 2000: 13.
- 11 Assmann 1997: 50. A typical example for this is the memory shared within one generation.
- 12 Assmann 1997: 8.
- 13 Assmann 1997: 52.
- 14 Assmann 1997: 52.
- 15 Assmann 1997: 52.
- 16 Assmann 1997: 53.
- 17 Assmann 1997: 53.
- 18 The specific term is the German ‘Schriftkultur’.
- 19 Assmann 1997: 169 ff. The reason for this focus is the fact that the hieroglyphic writing system was developed primarily for *political* reasons.
- 20 Assmann 1997: 169.
- 21 Wilkinson 2000. Concerning this publication see also M. Baud’s review; Baud 2003. Other annals dating from the Old Kingdom and structured similarly to the Palermo Stone are presented by M. Baud and V. Dobrev; Baud and Dobrev 1997.
- 22 This is what Egyptology also defines as ‘year-name’, a ‘formal demarcation of time, divided according to the actions of particular, named kings’ (Wengrow 2006: 128). For the events, see the Palermo stone, row no. 3. The records of Pre-dynastic kings on the first row cannot be checked nowadays due to the lack of evidence.
- 23 The meaning of the ceremonies quoted on the slab is still mostly unclear, but they seem to refer to public appearances of the king throughout the country (Wengrow 2006: 132–133).
- 24 Two are the sources dating to the New Kingdom that convey royal genealogies: the list of royal names carved in the temple of Seti I at Abydos (Redford 1986: esp. 18–20) and the Royal Turin Canon (Gardiner 1959), both dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty.
- 25 Seidlmayer 1997: 25.
- 26 Schoske 1994; Swan Hall 1986; Schulman 1988: 8–115.

- 27 Case and Payne 1962: 5–18.
- 28 Case and Payne 1962: 14–15 refer to the fact that while similar maceheads are not preserved in any other representation of the same period (the Gerzean or Naqada II period, 3500–3200 BC), they occur in Predynastic art associated with the royal sphere. Moreover, they were found in the tomb of king Djer (First Dynasty: 3000–2890 BC) at Abydos as well as in Hierakonpolis. Therefore, the depiction of such a macehead certainly refers to a person of a high social status.
- 29 See for instance Swan Hall 1986: 4 with fig. 6.
- 30 Swan Hall 1986: 5.
- 31 For an overview over the occurrences of the scene throughout Egyptian history cf. Swan Hall 1986: figs. 9–90.
- 32 Cf. Swan Hall 1986: figs. 11 onwards.
- 33 Such as in the depiction of the scene on the wall relief of Sety I in the Hypostyle Hall at Karnak (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 49) or on the interior wall relief at Abu Simbel depicting Ramesses II smiting his enemies (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 59).
- 34 The Pharaoh smiting a larger number of enemies can be seen in the scene on the southern façade of the eighth pylon of the temple of Amon-Ra at Karnak displaying king Thutmosis III smiting his enemies. The importance of his rule over the non-Egyptian world is clearly visible on the New Kingdom scenes on which non-Egyptian men are depicted as smitten enemies.
- 35 Cf. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 32.
- 36 Cf. fig. 3.
- 37 This is the case for instance in a wall relief of king Mentuhotep II (2055–2004 BC) from Gebelein. Cf. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 23.
- 38 Cf. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 37.
- 39 By depicting this scene in these areas, the supremacy of Egypt over foreign countries was ensured, although it is plausible that here the scene was also apotropaic. Cf. the conclusions of the present paper.
- 40 Tomb nr. 100, Hierakonpolis. Cf. Case and Payne 1962: esp. 13.
- 41 Cf. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 6 (Ivory Cylinder from Hierakonpolis).
- 42 Such as the Narmer palette from Hierakonpolis, discussed already (Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 3055), and the alabaster palette of king Zer from Saqqara (Swan Hall 1986: figs. 7.).
- 43 Cf. the ivory label BM 55586 of king Den coming from Abydos (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 9).
- 44 Mostly from Sinai and pertaining to various kings of the Old Kingdom. Among these, reference is done to the stone marker Cairo CG 57102 (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 13) of king Snofru (Third Dynasty) and the stone marker Cairo CG 57105 (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 17) of king Nyuserra (Fifth Dynasty) as examples for a wide type of monuments.
- 45 Such as the fragments coming from the temple of king Nyuserra (Fifth Dynasty) from Abusir and now kept in Berlin (Swan Hall 1986: fig. 18).
- 46 Mainly the temples built by king Mentuhotep II (Eleventh Dynasty) in Gebelein and Dendera (Swan Hall 1986: 23 and 25).
- 47 The scene does appear mostly on the outer façade of pylons. However, there are a few exceptions that bear this image in the inner façade of the pylon: first on the Eighteenth Dynasty temple of the god Khnum on Elephantine island (the southern part of the pylon, as identified by M. Bommas in his reconstruction of this temple (Bommas 2000: esp.

- 406–407) and, secondly, on the second pylon dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and built in the Eighteenth Dynasty, a small temple built within the funerary temple complex of Ramesses III (Twentieth Dynasty) at Medinet Habu (cf. Hölscher 1939: 53f.). I owe the reference to this pylon to Barbara Hufft (Basel).
- 48 Like, for instance, the pectoral of king Amenemhat III (Twelfth Dynasty), and an ivory arm ornament of Thutmose IV (Eighteenth Dynasty). Cf. Swan Hall 1986: figs. 26 and 31 respectively.
- 49 Cf. the ceremonial shield of king Tutankhamen (Eighteenth Dynasty, Swan Hall 1986: fig. 42).
- 50 Cf. stela Bruxelles E 4499 (Petrie 1909: pl. VIII, no. 4, also discussed in Devauchelle 1994: 40–41). Another non-private example of this scene on a stela (although rock-cut) comes from Abu Simbel. It is a huge double stela (it measures seven metres high and five metres wide) of the king's 'Son of Kush' Setau, depicting king Ramesses II (Nineteenth Dynasty) smiting his enemies in front of Amun-Re. Cf. Exell 2009: pl. 13.
- 51 Cf. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 4.
- 52 Such as O.MFA 09.289 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts): Swan Hall 1986: fig. 74.
- 53 Like, for instance, the statue of Ramesses VI (Twentieth Dynasty) from Karnak (Cairo CG 42152): Swan Hall 1986: fig. 79.
- 54 Cf. the chalice of the Eton Myers collection (ECM 1583) dated to the Twenty-second Dynasty: Spurr et al. 1999: 9 (no. 54), showing several images of the king smiting enemies.
- 55 Cf. the wall relief of Ptolemy VIII or IX from Dendera where the scene decorates the royal kilt. Swan Hall 1986: fig. 84.
- 56 Morenz 2011 (forthcoming).
- 57 The red and the white crowns are displayed together here for the first time on one single monument.
- 58 Morenz 2011 (forthcoming).
- 59 Morenz points out that to reconstruct the phase of cultural funding of Ancient Egyptian culture, Egyptologists only have sources that testify (and monumentalize) the conqueror's view with the connected propaganda (Morenz 2011, forthcoming). For the reading of the images displayed in the light of a sacralized political monument cf. Morenz 2011 (forthcoming).
- 60 Cf. Wengrow 2006: 208–212.
- 61 Wengrow 2006: 207, 208–212.
- 62 Campagno 2004: 689–690 and 698 and following. Visual representations such as those in tomb no. 100 at Hierakonpolis, as well as different forms of weapons, are taken by Campagno as proofs of the existence of Pre-dynastic wars. The object of contention was presumably the conquest of territory for local expansion that led to state-like situations.
- 63 Cf. also the study of S. Hendricks and R. Friedman 2003: 95–109 according to which not only wars but also alliances between the biggest communities led to the formation of the Egyptian state.
- 64 Modern theories tend to recognize in the Upper Egyptian main centres of Pre-dynastic Egypt, i.e. Naqada (II period), Hierakonpolis, and Abydos three different 'proto-states' that later merged into one single Upper Egyptian state (Cf. Campagno 2004: 698–699 with further references).
- 65 Like, for instance, the building of subterranean chambers with mud-bricks in several sites all over Egypt since the end of the Naqada II period and throughout the Naqada III

period (cf. Wengrow 2006: 171–175). On trade with Nubia and the Levant, see Wengrow 2006: 140 and following. Concerning the formation process of the Egyptian state and the models applied to reconstruct it, see also Köhler 2010: 36–54.

- 66 Cf. Köhler 2010: 39. Campagno 2004: esp. 698 and following refers to the multitude of conflicts in the Naqada II period.
- 67 When trying to look for traces of the conquered state or community within his study of the forming phase of Egyptian culture, Morenz analyses the conflict between Hierakonpolis and Buto on the basis of the other Pre-dynastic palettes and with respect to the religious significance of Buto in the Pre- and Early dynastic times (Morenz 2011, forthcoming). In so doing, Morenz does not refer to archaeology and archaeological data for his reconstruction, as his aim is the analysis and reconstruction of a *cultural* history.
- 68 Morenz has suggested that the depicted battle may be defined as ‘heiliger Krieg’ (Holy War), thus focusing on the religious ideology behind the act depicted and on the totality of its result (Morenz 2011, forthcoming).

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Silent Voices? Cultural Memory and the Reading of Inscribed Epigram in Classical Athens

Niall Livingstone

σῆμα Φρασικλείας, κόρε κεκλέσομαι αἰεῖ,
ἀντὶ γάμο παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο λαχὼς ὄνομα.

Marker of Phrasikleia. I shall be called a girl always
in place of marriage allotted that name by the gods.

CEG 24 = IG i³.1261; Attica, c. 540 BC?

INTRODUCTION

This chapter studies the significance from the point of view of cultural memory of some examples of verses inscribed on stone in archaic and classical Athens, epitaphs in particular. It will focus on their engagement with an implied reader, on how realistic the claim to such engagement is and on how it may be understood.

It seems clearly appropriate, and potentially profitable, to address such memorials as part of the phenomenon of cultural memory. At the moment of their creation, they are formalized, and to a considerable extent formulaic, acts of commemoration. They frequently fix in stone elements of the ritual involved in the burial of the dead. They also frequently invite re-enactment of elements of this ritual through the act of reading, a phenomenon which will be explored in more detail below. Their inscriptions make a bid for their words, and thus the deceased persons, to be given a place in the collective memory, though of course they may in fact be buried, obliterated or forgotten.¹

Insofar as inscriptions survive, they are part of the cultural archive of texts and other symbolic representations. Insofar as they are read, they find a place in cultural memory; one of the strengths of the concept is that it can take account of latency – the extent to which the potential memories which a culture encodes

exceed what is actually recalled in human minds at any given time.² As Aleida Assmann has pointed out, it is this redundancy, latency or excess of memory that is the precondition of cultural creativity.³ Before focusing on archaic and classical Attica, however, we begin with a zoom forward in time followed by a zoom back.

EXAMPLE: CALLIMACHUS ON THE DEATH OF BASILO

First, forward. The art of the funerary epigram, as of other forms of epigram, attained its greatest sophistication in the Hellenistic period, especially in Alexandria; a poem by its supreme exponent, Callimachus of Cyrene (fourth–third centuries BC), may serve as an example (*AP* 7.517 = 20 Pfeiffer = 32 *HE*):

Ἡῶοι Μελάνιππον ἐθάπτομεν, ἡελίου δέ
 δυομένου Βασιλῶ κάτθανε παρθενική
 αὐτοχερί· ζῶειν γὰρ ἀδελφεὸν ἐν πυρὶ θεῖσα
 οὐκ ἔτλη. δίδυμον δ' οἶκος ἐσεῖδε κακόν
 πατρὸς Ἀριστίπποιο, κατήφησεν δὲ Κυρήνη
 πᾶσα τὸν εὐτεκνον χῆρον ἰδοῦσα δόμον.

At break of day we were burying Melanippos, and as the sun
 was setting the unwed girl Basilo died
 by her own hand. To live when she had set her brother on the fire
 she could not bear. A twin disaster did the house behold
 of father Aristippos, and all Cyrene was cast down in silence,
 to see it bereft, that household blessed with children.

The poem presents an economical drama of the rituals of burial and invites us, as readers, to re-enact this drama, with the vowel sounds of the opening line drawing us into the mourners' cries (*ēōoi Melanippon ethaptomen, ēliou de ...*; the vowels of *dūomenou* in the next line perhaps continue the effect).⁴ In the course of the poem's development these sounds give way to silence, leaving us in the final lines with an empty house and a whole city stunned to silence. The poem is functional as an epitaph, recording the names, parentage and citizenship of the deceased and providing a cause of death for Basilo, though not for her brother. At the same time, its artistry is very evident in figures of word placement (e.g. *ēōoi* 'at dawn' and *duomenou* 'setting' at the start of lines 1 and 2, enjambement of *parthenikē* and *autokheri* 'unwed and by her own hand' from lines 2 to 3 and the grim juxtaposition *euteknon khēron* 'blessed with children – bereft' in the final line) and sound (note, for instance, the climactic

positioning of the word *didumon* 'twin', hinting without asserting that the dead siblings were twins, and the way its sounds are anticipated by *de* and *duomenou* in lines 1–2 and then echoed by *idousa domon* at the close of the poem).

The reader is thus made to feel the poignancy of the siblings' untimely death, and of the girl's death before fulfilment in marriage and to re-enact the city's reaction. It has also been suggested that the greater prominence given to Basilo than to Melanippos, and the reporting of a cause of death for her but not for him, encodes a reference to the Ptolemaic kings' practice of sibling marriage and its ideological expression in the royal title *Philadelphos*, 'sibling-loving' (a reference which may gain added point from the fact that Basilo's name comes from the root of *basileus* and *-eia* king and queen).⁵

Since both Aristippos and Melanippos are attested as names of elite citizens of Cyrene, it seems quite likely that this poem commemorates real events and it may even be a genuine epitaph.⁶ What we know for certain is that it found its way into a book roll, probably in Callimachus' own collection of his epigrams, and thus went on to be read, copied and variously anthologized.⁷ Thus we have a poem which may or may not have been inscribed but clearly was both *meant* to be read and *actually* read, and which made available a particular set of cultural memories. We may take it as a reference point as we investigate the role of the reader in earlier inscribed epigrams.

REMEMBER HEKTOR

First, though, a step back to a time – or rather, an imagined time – before the beginnings of inscribed epigram. The standard word for a grave monument in archaic epitaphs, as in the famous inscription of the Phrasikleia kore which I have placed as epigraph to this chapter, is *sēma*, 'marker' or 'sign'.⁸ Grave epigrams do not appear in the Homeric poems, but the word *sēma* does, in a number of interesting contexts. It is used, for instance, of naturally occurring marks (e.g. on a horse's forehead, *Iliad* 23.455); of the marks made by competitors in a throwing-contest (*Iliad* 23.843, *Odyssey* 8.192, 195), of identifying signs such as Odysseus' wound (e.g. *Odyssey* 21.217) or the marker he leaves over the spoils taken from Dolon (*Iliad* 10.466) and of supernatural signs and portents such as the ominous serpent at *Iliad* 2.308 and the *sēma* of a stranger who perceives an oar as a winnowing-fan in Teiresias' prophecy to Odysseus, *Odyssey* 11.127.

Sēma is also frequently used in the epics to refer to grave mounds or grave markers.⁹ The *sēma* of Ilos is a landmark on the plain of Troy (*Iliad* 10.415, 11.166 etc.). Andromache reports that, having killed her father Eëtion, Achilles raised a *sēma* over his grave (*Iliad* 6.419). The *sēma* which Achilles raises for

Patroklos becomes a focal point in *Iliad* 24 as he drags Hektor's corpse around it, demonstrating its significance in spite of the fact that it is not the actual place of burial of Patroklos' bones.¹⁰ And in his advice to his son Antilochos for the chariot-race in *Iliad* 23, Nestor draws attention to a *sēma* which turns out, interestingly, to be an ambiguous landscape-feature consisting of a tree-stump and two white stones: it is, he says, 'either the *sēma* of some mortal long since dead, or made as a turning-post in the time of men of old' (*Iliad* 23.326–332). Here we are made aware that (for want of an inscription?) memory has been lost, even in the person of aged Nestor.

The shade of Elpenor, importuning Odysseus in the underworld in *Odyssey* 11, implores him not just to perform the rites of burial for him but to 'raise a *sēma* for me by the shore of the hoary sea, unlucky man that I am, so that people in time to come may learn of me; do this for me', it says, 'and plant my oar on my tomb, the one with which, when I was alive, I rowed beside my comrades' (11.75–78). Insignificant as he was ('a very young man, neither especially brave in battle nor shrewd in his wits', 10.552 f.), Elpenor is to be remembered in death and his distinctive role in life commemorated (Odysseus and his men comply with the shade's request at 12.8–15).

The desire to be remembered by the living after death is most poignantly expressed, however, in a speech by a much more eminent figure: Hektor's challenge to the Greek champions in *Iliad* 7. He acknowledges the possibility that he will be killed and instructs that, if so, his body be returned to the Trojans for due burial (7.77–80). He then goes on to anticipate a more favourable outcome:

But if I slay him, and Apollo gives glory to me,
I will strip off his armour and take it to holy Ilion,
and hang it on the temple of Apollo the far-shooter;
but I will send back his body to the well-benched ships,
so that the long-haired Achaians give him funeral
and raise a *sēma* for him by the wide Hellespont.
And one day someone will say, even among men in times to come,
as he sails in a many-benched ship across the wine-dark sea:
'That is the *sēma* of a man who perished long ago,
whom shining Hektor once killed fighting as a champion.'
So he will speak, one day: and my glory (*kleos*) will never perish.

Iliad 7.81–91

The mound Hektor raises over his fallen enemy will preserve his memory; crucially, nautical passers-by will *name* him (and not, curiously the dead man – though of course there is a narrative motivation for this because no Greek

champion has yet stepped forward to kill Hektor or be killed by him), and thus his *kleos* will be preserved, like the *kleos* of the men whom Achilles is famously found celebrating in song by Agamemnon's ambassadors at 9.189.

The passers-by will thus, Hektor anticipates, interpret the *sēma* which they see by providing additional information, thus prefiguring the *Ergänzungsspiel* or 'game of completion' which will play such an important role in the composition and reading of epigram in later centuries. Here, however, Hektor's words raise an obvious (if perhaps rather literal-minded) question: how will the sailors know – in the absence of an inscription, and in any case from a distance – that this is the tomb of a man *killed by Hektor*? From tradition, presumably, just as the tomb on the plain of Troy is known to all as the tomb of Ilos. It is hard not to see this also, however, as a classic piece of Homeric indirection. Hektor's odd assertion that his glory, and the memory of his name, will be preserved for posterity, not by his own tomb, but by his fallen enemy's, reminds us of a much darker and more realistic speech of his in the preceding book. There, in the famous parting scene between Hektor and Andromache, Hektor's clear-sighted anticipation of Troy's inevitable fall culminates in the dreadful vision of Andromache herself being led into slavery:

... when one of the bronze-armoured Achaians
 leads you away in tears, ending your days of freedom;
 and then in Argos, perhaps, you will work the loom for another woman,
 or fetch water from Messēis or from Hypereia,
 much against your will, but strong compulsion will drive you;
 and one day someone will say as he sees you shedding tears:
 'There goes the wife of Hektor, who was the foremost in fighting
 of the horse-taming Trojans, at the time when they fought around Ilion.'
 That is what someone will say: and it will be fresh pain for you
 to be robbed of such a husband to ward from you the day of slavery.
 But as for me, may raised earth hide me below ground in death
 before I know anything of your cries as they drag you away.

Iliad 6.454–465

Here Hektor's name is spoken by an anonymous onlooker in the future not to his glory but to his shame and to his wife's humiliation. His only flinching from reality in this scene is where he *wishes* that he may be dead before this happens: a very slight evasion of the fact that the grim future scene he has conjured very clearly *presupposes* his own death (in Homeric combat, heroes of the first rank are not taken prisoner). In Hektor's challenge to the Achaians in Book 7, the hero has recourse to a more radical distortion in transferring his memorialization after death, and the crucial naming of his name, from his

own grave to his fallen enemy's.¹¹ This has the effect both of underlining his current determination to embrace the conviction that more than one outcome of the war is impossible and to remind us of his poignant acceptance, in his earlier speech, that the fall of Troy is inevitable. As Nancy Felson and Laura Slatkin have pointed out, another effect of Hektor's speech in Book 6 and its juxtaposition of the arresting images of Andromache dragged into slavery and Hektor's body lying under earth is to remind us that one of the important functions of the grave – the preservation of the *kleos* of the deceased – is something which is not routinely available to women in the Homeric poems.¹² As will be seen, this is a situation which changes in the world of inscribed epigram.

VOICES OF THE DEAD

We come now at last to archaic and classical Athens. From the sixth century BC, we find increasing numbers of inscribed stones recording the name and lineage of deceased persons, and, in some cases, verses commemorating them: hexameters in the manner of epic or – what eventually becomes the norm – elegiac couplets of hexameter and pentameter. What was the purpose of these inscriptions? As will be seen, they often imply an expectation of engagement with the passer-by as reader. Thus, to take an example more or less at random, an elegiac couplet inscribed on a marble monument base, of uncertain provenance but now in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens and thought to date from around 500 BC, reads as follows (as printed by Hansen, *CEG* 68, slightly simplified in that I have omitted dots below damaged letters):

παιδὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο Κλεοίτο τῷ Μεν|εσαίχμῳ
μνῆμ' ἐσορῶν οἴκτιρ' ὃς καλὸς | ὄν ἔθανε

or with modernized spelling

παιδὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο Κλεοίτου τοῦ Μενεσαίχμου
μνῆμ' ἐσορῶν οἴκτιρ' ὃς καλὸς ὦν ἔθανε
Of a boy who has perished, Kleoites son of Menesaichmos,
as you look on the memorial pity him, who was handsome when he died.

The stone speaks to the reader, makes reference to what the reader is already doing (looking at the stone), supplies information both functional (the dead person's name and parentage) and emotive (Kleoites' beauty and death at a young age) and instructs the reader in the appropriate response (pity).

Sometimes the dead person addresses the reader directly, as in *CEG* 89, an inscription on a marble stele from the Kerameikos in Athens dated around 410 BC, which also bears, below the inscription, a relief of a seated woman embracing an infant with her left arm and holding a bird in her right hand, and which is surmounted by the woman's name, 'Ampharete':

τέκνον ἐμῆς θυγατρὸς τόδ' ἔχω φίλον, ὅμπερ ὅτε αὐγὰς
 ὀμμασιν ἠ|ελίο ζῶντες ἐδερκόμεθα
 ἔχον ἐμοῖς γόνασιν καὶ νῦν φθιμένον φθιμένη 'χω,

or standardized:

τέκνον ἐμῆς θυγατρὸς τόδ' ἔχω φίλον, ὅνπερ ὅτ' αὐγὰς
 ὀμμασιν ἠελίου ζῶντες ἐδερκόμεθα
 εἶχον ἐμοῖς γόνασιν καὶ νῦν φθιμένον φθιμένη 'χω.
 This is my daughter's dear child I am holding, which when in life
 we saw the sun's rays with our eyes I used
 to hold on my knees, and now, dead, I hold it, dead.

The poem is simple and effective in its exposition of the accompanying picture, directing our attention to its most important detail, the gesture of embrace. Forms of the Greek verb translated as 'hold', ἔχω, appear at the centre of the first line and at either end of the last line, the final instance following the powerful juxtaposition φθιμένον φθιμένη '(it) dead' and '(I) dead'; the protective embrace endures beyond the grave. Here the reader is not directly referred to or instructed how to respond to the monument, but the sense of direct address is nonetheless unmistakable, established in particular by the deictic pronoun 'this' in the first line which explains that the infant in the picture is Ampharete's grandchild.¹³

SILENT VOICES?

The question remains, however, whether inscribed epigram's relationship with an implied reader should be seen essentially as a matter of convention, or whether people did, in fact, sometimes read an epitaph such as Kleoites' or Ampharete's, activate the memory it sought to preserve, and experience the emotion it distilled.

A prior question, obviously, is how likely it is that any given passer-by or inhabitant of a locality in which an inscription was placed would actually be *able* to read it. How widespread was literacy in Athens, from the archaic period

through to the end of the fifth century? What forms did it take, and what range of uses was made of it? Any full treatment of these large and much-debated questions would go far beyond the scope of the present discussion; for orientation in this debate, the reader is referred in particular to the excellent recent volume *Ancient Literacies: the Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, edited by William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker.¹⁴ The evidence is often hard to interpret, and due account must be taken of the complexity and multiplicity of the concept of literacy itself (hence the coinage of the term ‘multiliteracies’: Thomas 2009: 13). Thomas explores the various contexts in which literacy of one kind or another came to be important or useful in order to function at a basic level as an Athenian citizen, both economically and politically (and thus, in a kind of grade-inflation, impelled the elite to pursue higher levels of literacy). It seems likely that there were other social contexts, harder to recover, in which the use of literacies gradually spread. One case on which Thomas focuses is that of list literacy; it is worth noting, since we are here primarily concerned with grave epigrams, that such poems routinely contain the name of the deceased, and someone whose competence did not extend to making sense of a whole hexameter line might yet be able to make out the crucial detail of the name. I restrict myself here, however, to an examination of some arguments recently advanced for the view that, before the Hellenistic period at least, inscribed epigrams were in general *not* read.

In a chapter entitled ‘The Un-Read Muse?’ (Bing 2002), Peter Bing points out that ancient literary and other texts contain surprisingly few descriptions of occasions where inscribed texts *are* read – by contrast with later literature, from Dante to Cavafy and beyond, where such scenes are used to powerful effect. He suggests a number of reasons why scholars tend to assume that inscribed epigrams *were* read. First, as has been seen, the text of the epigrams themselves frequently anticipates their encounter with a reader: but this anticipation need not, in principle, correspond to any reality. Second, as habitual readers and lovers of written texts themselves, scholars simply cannot imagine that passers-by would *not* have been moved by curiosity to read inscriptions. In so doing, he suggests, they fail to take sufficient account of the fact that reading was a much less routine and pervasive activity for ancient Greeks than it is for us and was also physically much more awkward and demanding.

There is some force in these arguments, but in my view Bing overstates his case.¹⁵ To some extent he replaces one application of modern-world assumptions to the ancient world (that passers-by would read inscriptions) with another (that if they did so, such reading would be depicted in literary texts). The expectation voiced in the inscriptions themselves, and the clear assumption of ancient writers from Herodotus onward that inscribed epigrams are significant and interesting, weighs on the other side.¹⁶

There are various points at which Bing's argument depends on strained or one-sided interpretation of the evidence. For instance, with reference to the passage from the *Iliad* mentioned above in which Nestor refers to a *sēma* which may or may not be a grave-marker (23.331 f.), he observes that Nestor's uncertainty should not surprise us, because '[n]eglecting the dead has a long and glorious tradition', and refers to a range of passages in which poets reflect gloomily on the shortness of life, the grimness of the underworld and human insignificance in death (Bing 2002: 52 with n. 29). Such variations on the *carpe diem* topos must, however, be understood within their generic contexts, and they emphatically do not count as evidence (against that, not least, of the grave epigrams themselves) that neglecting or forgetting the dead was considered the norm in ancient Greek culture.¹⁷

Again, Bing observes that in spite of the widespread convention of the 'message epitaph', poems which ask the reader to bear news of a person's death to their relatives, we do not find any accounts of someone actually complying with such a poem's request;¹⁸ nor is there any ancient Greek equivalent of Shelley's *Ozymandias*, in which a traveller is reported as describing a notable monument he has seen, including its inscription (Bing 2002: 52–54). But message epitaphs do not in general ask to be repeated or described, but simply for information to be conveyed.

Bing himself reports (p. 53 n. 31) Richard Hunter's suggestion that Callimachus' famous poem beginning 'someone told me, Herakleitos, of your death ...' could be read precisely as the result of someone reading and reporting his epitaph. He rejects this as implausible 'given Callimachus' silence about his informant's source, and the unlikelihood that this person would have chanced to stop before that very tombstone and read it'. The first objection is weak (Callimachus' silence does not make one source more likely than another), while the second fails to take account of the poet's use of τις 'someone' in the poem's opening line, implying precisely a *chance* report rather than, say, an encounter with a mutual friend. This is not to deny that the requests made by message epitaphs are often implausible; they require the happy coincidence that the curious passer-by is indeed travelling to the deceased's home town, and Bing quotes the apt example of a poem which asks that news be taken to Herakleia but fails to specify which of the many Greek cities of that name is meant. This implausibility – or, to put it more positively, willingness to rely on τύχη, chance – is not, however, evidence against a practice of reading inscribed epigrams.

Returning to *Ozymandias*, while it may be true that there is no exact parallel for it in ancient Greek poetry (no *exact* parallels in English spring immediately to mind either), there *are* poems which dramatize the act of reading and interpreting an inscription, such as Alcaeus 16 *HE* = *AP* 7.429, in which the passer-by deduces that the inscription ΦΦ encodes the deceased woman's name

Pheidis, 'Phi-twice'. This is part of a sequence in the anthology of poems about enigmatic tombs (7.421–429); in the others, it is their visual symbolism rather than their textual inscription which requires decipherment. This could be taken as evidence that intriguing artwork was more likely to attract attention than text. Note, however, the opening of *AP* 7.427 = Antipater of Sidon 32 *HE*:

Ἀ στάλα φέρ' ἴδω τίν' ἐρεῖ νέκυν. ἀλλὰ δέδορκα
 γράμμα μὲν οὐδέν που τμαθὲν ὑπερθε λίθου,
 ἐννέα δ' ἀστραγάλους πεπτηότας ...

Let me see what dead person this stele will report. But I see
 no letter, it seems, carved anywhere on the stone's surface,
 but nine cast knucklebones ...

This poem suggests that the reason why puzzle epigrams focus on visual symbolism is not because text is less interesting but because text is assumed, in general, to be clearer, to tell the story straight; Pheidis' letter symbolism is the exception. And while these Hellenistic literary epigrams are, of course, highly artificial and highly conventional, that does not alter the fact that a poem such as this one simply takes it for granted that a grave stele arouses curiosity and that the natural response to such curiosity is to look for an inscription which will identify the deceased.¹⁹

Bing draws attention to a number of other scenarios of inscription reading which in his view are eccentric or implausible. One is the story told by Herodotus (fifth century BC) of how Themistocles tried to communicate with the Ionians by leaving a long and rather elaborate message inscribed on stones at their watering places (Herodotus 8.22; Bing 2002: 55 n. 34). The story is indeed highly implausible (cf. West 1985: 285–287); the fact remains, however, that its inclusion would make little sense from the point of view of Herodotus' narrative if it were obvious to him and to his readers that such an inscription had little or no chance of being read.

Again, in the Platonic or pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus* Socrates describes how the Peisistratid ruler Hipparchos (sixth century BC) set up herms at strategic locations around the city inscribed with 'memos', as it were, containing improving maxims for the improvement of citizens from rural demes (228c–229b). Socrates himself has read some of them. Bing observes that no other literary source reports these herms, and goes on to discuss the one partially surviving exemplar (whose inscription appears as no. 304 in *CEG*). He comments: '[i]t is anything but user-friendly ... cannot be scanned at a glance ... one must stop, draw near, make an effort. Perhaps it takes a Socrates to do so' (Bing 2002: 58). This interpretation seems to me to be perverse. Perhaps Socrates is no less eccentric in his reading habits than in others, but this is not

made explicit in the passage, which never suggests that there is anything odd either about Socrates reading these inscriptions or about Hipparchos expecting that people would do so in an earlier generation; in fact it presents both as perfectly natural. It is also worth pointing out that expecting the act of reading to be *easy* (cf. 'at a glance') is precisely the kind of modern assumption for which Bing takes other scholars to task; even well-produced books in antiquity required considerable effort from their readers.²⁰

I conclude this section by developing this point in a direction which I hope to explore more fully elsewhere. I believe that Bing's emphasis on the difficulty and awkwardness of reading inscription on the one hand, and the absence, on the other hand, of dramatic literary tableaux of inscriptional reading on a par with Dante before the gates of Hell, is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. This is the failure to grasp the extent to which the physical act of reading in early Greece just was, in many cases, painstaking, laborious and functional: essentially a chore, whose pay-off was the words themselves, whether spoken or simply understood. Chores tend to become subjects of ancient literature only when they have a social dimension (washing clothes or fetching water as collective activities for women, for instance) or a particular ethical or ideological significance (weaving, for example, as an expression of female domestic virtue). Ion's cleaning activities at the beginning of Euripides' play are an interesting special case, significant *for him* as an expression of his cheerful and still innocent devotion as a temple servant.²¹

WOMEN, READING AND THE GLORY OF PHRASIKLEIA

In the previous section my aim has been to demonstrate that the presence of inscriptions, including inscribed epigrams, formed a significant body of cultural memory for the ancient city, and that while our evidence as to how and when stored memories were activated or actualized is inadequate, arguments which have been presented for extreme scepticism are unjustified. I conclude by returning briefly to a theme which has been touched on earlier: the glory of women in inscribed epitaphs.

Jesper Svenbro took the name for his study of the anthropology of reading in ancient Greece, *Phrasikleia*, from the name of the girl whose epitaph I have placed at the head of this chapter. Phrasikleia's monument (mid-sixth century BC) and inscription have been much discussed, so I mention them only briefly here.²² Her epitaph, which plays on significant possible etymologies of her name (*phrasi-kleia* = 'she who indicates glory' or 'she who attends to glory'), is insistent that her name will be spoken after death and that she will be spoken of as a girl, *kore*. The iconography of her monument suggests that when she died

she was at or approaching the age to be married; the verse announces that she will receive the glory of being spoken of – in other words, that which her name contains and which is the appropriate fulfilment of a *man's* life – in place of the marriage which would, conventionally, have been the appropriate fulfilment of a woman's life.

The *kleos* of Phrasikleia is a particularly striking case of the wider paradox that epitaphs for citizen women present them, symbolically, in public and insist that their voice be heard and that they be spoken of in public, contrary to conventions that respectable women should be kept from view and public comment.²³ In an interesting recent article studying representation of women with book rolls on Attic vases, Allison Glazebrook has argued that the presence of books cannot be seen as direct evidence of female literacy. Rather, she suggests, associating books with females and with non-adult males underlines the distinction between the passive role of the book-reader on the one hand, and the active, performative oral realm of adult male citizen culture on the other. The book, she suggests, represents 'a unidirectional mode of intellectual exchange', one that is receptive rather than dialectical (Glazebrook 2005: 36–37). (The connections with Plato's critique of writing in the *Phaedrus* are evident.)

I am not convinced by all of Glazebrook's conclusions, and I hope to argue elsewhere that there is more reason than she would allow to see female literacy (or rather literacies, in Thomas's terms) in Athens as being on the increase during the fifth century. I do, however, believe that her observations about male ideological perspectives on women and books as displayed in vase painting are potentially illuminating for a case such as Phrasikleia's epitaph. Phrasikleia speaks silently in writing; her words are uttered by a public, male voice; she enters the public sphere through a male proxy: the reader – as representative of the community at large – becomes, we might say, her virtual guardian, *kyrios*, in death.²⁴

The silent, written female voice triggers the loud, spoken male voice (just as Theseus gives voice to Phaedra's silent message in Euripides' play: 'the tablet is shouting, shouting!', he shouts, l. 877). In epitaphs, the relationship between writing and reader makes it possible for women's place in the private sphere to be integrated into the public sphere. In this sense, women become fully integrated into the male world of orality and performance only through becoming, in death and through the medium of writing, part of a latent but actualizable cultural memory.

Notes

- 1 Simonides 581.5–6 *PMG* muses on the fragility of stone; Thucydides at 6.54.7 reports an inscription about a century old in his time as being hard to read, a comment to which we will presently return.
- 2 I have found the characterization ('definition' does not seem quite the right word) of 'cultural memory' in Assmann 1992: 19–21 particularly helpful. Grave epigrams are clearly examples of cultural memory both in the first sense sketched by Assmann on p. 21 (they exemplify mimetic memory, imitative cultural practice, which has also a ritual dimension) and in the second (they are memory-objects with a significance that goes beyond utility). The present discussion will be concerned with the extent to which they also exemplify the third sense: communicative memory shaped by writing.
- 3 Cf. A. Assmann 1999: 136 (tr. NL): 'The deep structure of memory with its internal traffic between actualized and non-actualized elements is the precondition of the possibility of transformation and renewal of consciousness, which would become paralysed without the background of this amorphous reserve' ('Die Tiefenstruktur des Gedächtnisses mit ihrem Binnenverkehr zwischen aktualisierten und nichtaktualisierten Elementen ist die Bedingung der Möglichkeit von Veränderung und Erneuerung in der Struktur des Bewußtseins, das ohne den Hintergrund jener amorphen Reserve erstarren würde.')
- 4 I have discussed the poem in more detail in Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 89–90; see also the more extensive and very illuminating discussion in Ambühl 2002.
- 5 Ambühl 2002: 19–22; see also Ambühl 2007: 288–292 for the wider hypothesis that (funerary) 'epigrams composed for members of the nobility or even ordinary citizens take up themes associated with the Ptolemies and thus actively participate in the process of communication' (289).
- 6 See *HE* II.190 and Gutzwiller 1998: 203 n. 45 on the identification, and White 1994: 144 f. for the suggestion that this Aristippos may belong to a philosophical dynasty descended from Aristippos of Cyrene, the Socratic philosopher credited with founding the Cyrenaic school.
- 7 On Callimachus' *Epigrammata*, see e.g. Gutzwiller 1998: 183–226, a speculative but highly persuasive reconstruction; Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004 for a more cautious view.
- 8 See Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 148. Second most common is *mnēma* 'memorial', which as she observes (148 n. 143) is a narrower term, denoting one function of the *sēma*.
- 9 For a fuller account of grave monuments in Homer, see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 108–140.
- 10 On this see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 120 f.
- 11 The importance of naming a dead person's name after their death is a motif we will encounter again in inscribed grave epigrams. The idea that being named by the living enables the dead to retain a certain kind of existence is by no means unique to ancient Greek culture, but widespread. Two examples will serve to illustrate this. Jan Assmann reports an ancient Egyptian proverb: 'A man lives if his name is spoken' (J. Assmann 1992: 63). Compare this with the following extract from the website of the *Stolpersteine* project, an endeavour by the German artist Gunter Demnig to preserve the memory of victims of National Socialism by placing stones inscribed with their names at the places where they lived before their deportation or arrest (tr. NL): 'A person is only forgotten

if their name is forgotten', says Gunter Demnig. The stones in front of the houses keep alive the memory of the people who once lived there. On the stones is written: 'HERE LIVED...' One stone. One name. One person ('Ein Mensch ist erst vergessen, wenn sein Name vergessen ist', sagt Gunter Demnig. Mit den Steinen vor den Häusern wird die Erinnerung an die Menschen lebendig, die einst hier wohnten. Auf den Steinen steht geschrieben: HIER WOHNTE... Ein Stein. Ein Name. Ein Mensch (www.stolpersteine.com/start.html, consulted 03.10.10). Here the naming of the dead is not only memorialization, but symbolic resistance against an active and brutal attempt at obliteration. In the course of a fascinating analysis of threats to memory and means by which it may be kept alive, Aleida Assmann identifies the *Stolpersteine* as an example of what she calls *Rückkoppelung*, 'feedback' (an electrical metaphor) or 'linking back'. *Rückkoppelung* in her sense is where historical memory which is in danger of losing context and becoming unreal is physically linked to the concrete world of everyday life, and thus has its meaning and place in personal memory restored (A. Assmann 2006: 248 f.).

- 12 See Felson and Slatkin 2004: 100 f. Helen does, of course, famously anticipate being a subject of songs (*Iliad* 6.358), but what she expects will be remembered is not (say) her exceptional beauty but rather the evil fate (*kakos moros*) which the gods have placed on her and on Paris.
- 13 On inscribed epigram's interaction with the reader see especially the work of Joseph Day 1989, 1994, 2000, 2007 as well as my own discussion in Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 22–30. For a very detailed analysis of the range of voices in which epigrams are made to 'speak' in the Hellenistic period, see Tueller 2008.
- 14 Johnson and Parker 2009. Particularly helpful in relation to the present discussion are Rosalind Thomas's discussion of the different varieties (as well as levels) of literacy which we encounter in the ancient world ('Writing, Reading, Public and Private 'Literacies': Functional Literacy and Democratic Literacy in Greece', pp. 13–45) and Shirley Werner's bibliographical essay 'Literacy Studies in Classics: The Last Twenty Years' (333–382). Thomas's careful study of name literacy, commercial literacy, list literacy with concomitant questions of (differential) legibility, and the literacy of democratic officials is an important step towards resolving the problem whereby disagreement about the extent of literacy turns out to be a matter of definition (see e.g. Alfred Burns' criticism of Eric Havelock's definition of literacy as 'overly demanding' (Burns 1981: 373), with the discussion of Thomas 1989: 15–34 (p. 19 n. 11 on Burns); also Harris 1989: 3–24, and Thomas 1992: 10 on the extreme case of using the ability to write a signature as evidence of 'literacy'). It is obvious enough from observation of the modern world that literacy comes in different varieties as well as at different levels, and that even someone who is entirely at home with one type of written material may be baffled by another, but this fact has not always been taken sufficiently into account in scholarly discussions.
- 15 See also my earlier comments in Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 27 n. 14.
- 16 On Herodotus' epigraphical interests see West 1985; on Herodotus as collector and manipulator of epigram, Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 31–39. Herodotus describes epigrams *in situ*; once famous epigrams start to enter collections, from the shadowy *Sylloge Simonidea* onwards, these of course become an easier place to find them – but (unless there is a direct oral tradition going back to the poet) an inscribed epigram needs to be read in order to enter the collection in the first place.

- 17 See also Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 282, index s.vv. 'memory, memory survival'.
- 18 On this sub-genre see Tarán 1979: 132–149.
- 19 See Meyer 2007 on acts of reading in Hellenistic epigram, and pp. 207 f. for discussion (and translation) of Antipater 32. Note that in line 1 Meyer prints the transmitted text ἔχει 'holds,' whereas in her translation she adopts (as I do) Herwerden's emendation, favoured by Gow and Page in *HE*, ἐπεῖ. She renders this 'reports', but strictly it is future, 'will report'. The difference of tense is not without significance, since it calls attention to the speaker's *activation* of the stone's anticipated message: it is not a matter of a timeless message passively stored on it, but of the answer it *will give* to the question he addresses to it.
- 20 On the Hipparchan herms, see further Osborne 1985: 47–57, on Hipparchos' herms and the invention of the herm (assuming that the inscriptions *are* meant to be read: cf. p. 347: 'The herm is peculiar in combining sculpture and inscription... Hipparkhos' herms perfectly exploit the combined features of the herm. They become more confusing than useful if they are not inscribed: it is not much use knowing that there is a herm halfway between the city and every village if you cannot tell which herm is halfway to which village'); Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004: 288, again treating them as a genuine attempt to use inscriptions 'to reach the wider non-aristocratic public with easily-digestible pills of wisdom'; and Quinn 2007: 93–95, on their political function.
- 21 This 'absence' of reading-scenes from literature should not, however, be overstated. One interesting example is Euripides, *Hippolytus* 856–880, where Theseus finds and reads Phaedra's message denouncing Hippolytus; see Gavrillov 1997: 66–68. It is noteworthy that Theseus – and by implication Euripides' audience, too – sees nothing remarkable in the idea that the queen has written the message herself.
- 22 See Svenbro 1993 and my own discussion in Livingstone and Nisbet 2010: 26–30, with references to other literature.
- 23 Compare also how *CEG* 84 (an epitaph for the sisters Mnesagora and Nikocharo, c. 440–430 bc) draws attention to its inability to show us the sisters themselves.
- 24 This is in a sense a modified, less radical and (I hope) simplified version of the theses of Svenbro 1993.

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‘Ρωμαίζω ... ergo sum: becoming Roman in Varro’s *de Lingua Latina*

Diana Spencer

This chapter investigates how ‘cultural memory’ enriches understanding of ancient Rome. It focuses on *de Lingua Latina* (mid-40s BC), the (now mostly lost) work on Latin written by the politico and author Marcus Terentius Varro (c.116–27 BC), and explores this linguistic study’s packaging of memory, monuments and sites in a mashup with phenomenology and semantics to give a new depth of meaning and vitality to core citizen discourse.¹ Only a small portion of *de Lingua Latina* survives reasonably intact – Books 5–10, plus some fragments, out of an original twenty-five book scheme – and in this chapter we shall primarily be looking at some material from Books 5 and 6 (that is, from the second half of the six-book unit, 2–7), dealing with the origins and applications of words, the relationship between place-words, their effect on placial entities (that is, entities intimately connected to a sense of place) and the vocabulary and semiotics of time.

SPACE AND MEMORY

Discussing funerary monuments, Niall Livingstone (in this volume) suggests that it was in the process of forgetting their ‘original’ meaning that such monuments participated in – or perhaps began to generate – ‘cultural memory’. When a memorial’s meaning is no longer explicit or self-evident, stories cluster avidly and take on a life of their own; unsurprisingly, given the turbulent era in which Varro was writing (bitter civil wars plus a few centuries of foreign conflict and a newly expanded citizen body), developing a framework for agreeing (new) meaning also seems important to him, as we shall see.² For this chapter, ‘cultural memory’ denotes ‘the collaborative production of memory and identity within a society or group: shared ideas and practices are explained and memorialized when recast as stories, and, in repeatedly telling the stories, their formulaic

(and often highly conservative) qualities tend to dominate'.³ Because what persists after two millennia is what was formulated, replicated and consumed in texts, this kind of *ancient* 'cultural' memory typically reflects élite (and literate) concerns and often uses the transmission of stories, genealogies and aetiologies to police the boundaries of identity. This kind of memory habitually weaves stories around sites, monuments and even tropes, investing them with hegemonic meaning – even though much of what Varro recounts surely also reflects or responds to aspects of non-élite day-to-day experience (or at least he feels it is plausible to claim so, asserting for example that even the non-senatorial citizen can grasp basic semantic relationships between compound words).⁴

Memories, or shared and acculturated stories, can also themselves cause the construction or articulation of monuments and space in ways that transform everyday experience, and generate new or changed awareness and understanding of the wider social or topographic frame(s) of reference. Each new 'site' or memory marks up the world it inhabits, and changes it. Returning to Niall Livingstone's comment, once realized in three dimensions, such 'concrete' memorials can simultaneously embody what has been lost, and also themselves become subject to forgetting and reinvestment with changed meaning.⁵ This generates potentially limitless arrays of individual and shared stories, rooted in what Casey (2001) formulates as 'placial memory' (discussing Bourdieu's formulation *habitus*).⁶ We also see it on display, I argue, in Varro's linguistic texturing of urban Roman topography.⁷ This chapter, however, takes the mnemohistorical qualities of Varro's exploration as its main focus and investigates how etymology, syntax and acculturation combine to tell a powerful story of what it means to speak and think like a citizen at a time when the qualities that characterized 'Romanness' were coming under heavy scrutiny – the years surrounding Julius Caesar's extraordinary dictatorship and assassination.

The syntax of space and its discursive qualities connect up with 'cultural memory' in Pierre Nora's formulation *lieux de mémoire* (sites, or realms of memory).⁸ These *lieux* or 'nodes' comprise 'ethnographically qualified zones saturated with shared (typically, historical) meanings that define a group, culture or people'.⁹ Nora's phenomenological enrichment of the discourse of memory links cultural legitimization to memory in terms particularly apt for Rome. There was an authentic Roman enthusiasm for tackling how memory works – that is, the so-called 'art of memory'.¹⁰ Nora's approach filters through Ricoeur (2004) and implicitly also feeds into recent studies of Roman historical consciousness by Flower (1996, 2006), Farrell (1997), Gowing (2005), and Roller (2010).

One of the key features of this 'Art' (known as 'mnemotechnics') is its role in making communication possible (discourse relies on a shared or consensual

semiotic palette, remembered and developed by a group of people). Nora's interest in articulating how memory separates 'us' from 'them' and 'here' from 'there' helps us to understand the act of remembering as 'an embodied site-located process'.¹¹ For mnemotechnics, this is expressed through a phenomenological approach to language which textures discourse using iconographic sites or features in order to become a multimedia memory storage and delivery system for organizing lived experience and agreeing on who 'we' are. Indeed, Assmann's formulation 'communicative memory' (2006) highlights this, digging into the problem of how Halbwachs' (1992) individual or autobiographical memory gains (but also perhaps sets limits to) wider socio-cultural currency within groups.

Taken together, these approaches link individuals to one another through an agreed understanding of what inhabiting a particular place represents (shared toponyms interlock to create shared topographic historical stories). They also illuminate another issue at the heart of Roman experience: negotiating the relationship between citizen, family and State. These different aspects of identity were not always easy bedfellows, particularly as power-hungry individuals started to chip away at the 'traditional' norms of politics and public service in the first century BC.¹² Roman 'memory' literature enthusiastically (if not, ultimately, successfully) took up the challenge of scrutinizing how individual recall (or a family's unique genealogy of successful ancestors) could also work as part of a shared – aka broadly 'citizen' (or perhaps 'cultural') – memory of what being 'Roman' should mean.

RECLAIMING THE LANGUAGE OF EMPIRE

'Memory relies upon and is generated by the manipulation of symbols.'¹³ When we perceive something we consciously or unconsciously compare it to the 'holdings' in our mental libraries. The outcome of this comparison defines how we 'tag' it. This applies just as much to a word as to an image, object or experience. Definition, understanding and cataloguing depend upon our ability to relate each new 'thing' we encounter to what we already have on file. The baseline for cataloguing is a semiotic system that structures recognition. The baseline for cultural memory is a shared semiotic system, one which allows for consensus on which particular memes get built into a group's sense of self: that system in developed form is language. Fauconnier's (cognitive linguistic) definition of 'mental spaces' encourages us to think in terms of the linguistic texture of space (the flip-side of our earlier discussion of how topography turns 'speech' into memory):

Understanding the linguistic organization involved [in metaphor, metonymy and other rhetorical devices] leads to the study of domains that we set up as we talk or listen, and that we structure with elements, roles, strategies, and relations. These domains – or interconnected *mental spaces*, as I shall call them – are not part of the language itself, or of its grammars; they are not hidden levels of linguistic representation, but language does not come without them.¹⁴

These domains in which language operates provide space for the collaborative and conscious production of memory as an act generative and reflective of identity fashioning. In the mid- to late-first century BC, when Varro was writing, but also on into the early years of the Augustan Principate, there was an extraordinary output of literature chewing away at the problem of what constituted a Roman matrix of shared values and historical hermeneutics.¹⁵ The nexus of ideas that breaks cover often operates quite explicitly at the intersections between personal memories (of the author and his audience; of the scripted characters; of the scripted characters and the text's audience). These texts also typically assume, and thereby tacitly produce, models of how ideal citizens identify and respond to particular events, ideas or entities. They make it difficult not to buy into an implied consensual understanding which accepts an alliance of sorts, however temporary, with the authorial persona.

The two big names in Roman mnemotechnics are Cicero (106–43 BC) and Quintilian (AD c.35–c.97), and their interest in memory highlights a key feature of Roman identity: performance. Roman systematization of memory was vitally important in a society that fashioned and interrogated itself by means of public oratory, both political and forensic. To speak fluently, persuasively and at length necessitated a scheme for remembering; this needed to work for any form of oratory. Tackling the highly structured and formalized discourse and goals of Roman memory means tackling how words mean the right thing to the appropriate audience, when deployed in the right order. Varro's *de Lingua Latina* is therefore a document about the shared building blocks of Roman memory. It provides the raw material for both off-the-peg *sententiae* and for one-off designer rhetoric, but we also see the problems inherent in policing the semiotics of language lurking behind Varro's comments on the tripartite nature of speech:

... cuius prima pars, quemadmodum uocabula rebus essent imposita, secunda, quo pacto de his declinata in discrimina ierint, tertia, ut ea inter se ratione coniuncta sententiam efferant, ...

[on speech – *oratio*] ... its first part is how vocabulary was applied to things; its

second, how the derivatives of these terms achieved separate forms; its third, how through a reasoned conjunction of these words, they yield complex meaning.

Varro, *Ling.* 8.1

Things have terms attached to them, these terms spin-off derivative word-forms; a linguistic set (vocabulary) is made complex by new patterns of association generated through the range of possible word forms and combinations. One issue that develops from this is the role of metaphor in producing and enriching memory, an issue that Ricoeur (1977) homes in on.¹⁶ This is of huge significance for Book 7 of Varro’s study – where he tackles poetic language – but that would take up a whole other chapter.

Returning instead to Book 5 (the opening book of the second ‘triad’), Varro formally restarts his project with a separate dedication: to his contemporary and fellow intellectual, Cicero. One of Cicero’s most memorable projects was to make a cross-cultural translation of the major works of Greek philosophy, reinventing Greek intellectual debate in ‘manuals’ designed to enable and enrich Roman praxis. In oratory too, much of Cicero’s output danced around the problem of how to speak effectively as a Roman when dependent upon rhetorical paradigms developed in the Greek world. There was also a political edge to this problem. Too close a self-alignment with extravagant and ‘foreign’ modes of speech and thought models opened one up to critique as insufficiently Roman, in an era when political crises and accusations of power-brokering among Rome’s new Mediterranean provinces (e.g. Pompey, Antony) were common currency:

In his ad te scribam, a quibus rebus uocabula imposita sint in lingua Latina, et ea quae sunt in consuetudine apud (...) poetas. ... unius cuiusque uerbi naturae sint duae, a qua re et in qua re uocabulum sit impositum ..., priorem illam partem, ubi cur et unde sint uerba scrutantur, Graeci uocant (ἐτυμολογίαν) [sub. for non-word ‘ethimologiam’; the Greek orthography reappears elsewhere, e.g. 5.29], illam alteram περι<i> σημαינוμένων.

In these [Books] which I address to you, find from what things the assignment of Latin language vocabulary proceeds, as used amongst (...) [and] the poets. ... each and every word exists as a duality, comprising what it comes from and what it is applied to as a term ..., the former of these two – where they examine why and whence words are – the Greeks call *etymology*, the latter they call *semantics*.

Varro, *Ling.* 5.1–2

Here, Varro immediately hits us with one aspect of this thorny debate: how linguistic hermeneutics, and in particular, dependence on Greek paradigms,

affects Roman epistemological authority. To delve into how Roman language works (something like Saussure's signified and signifier, 2006) at its most basic level means confronting Greek control of the linguistic toolbox. This terminological issue is highlighted by the choice of Greek orthography: to follow Varro's linguistic research into Latin means remembering one's schooling and being *au fait* with Greek characters as well as Latin's employment of Greek loan words (where a Greek term is transliterated rather than translated) – signing up to a social group which at least assumes a gloss of bilingualism. It involves, therefore, a command of what translation studies calls code switching.

'Things' (*res*) generate and are defined by vocabulary, but as Varro quickly acknowledges, the cause/effect or give and take between these two processes are hard to pin down:

Quae ideo sunt obscuriora, quod neque omnis imposito uerborum extat, quod uetustas quasdam deleuit, nec quae extat sine mendo omnis imposita, nec quae recte est imposita, cuncta manet (multa enim uerba li<t>teris commutatis sunt interpolata), neque omnis origo est nostrae linguae e uernaculis uerbis, et multa uerba aliud nunc ostendunt, aliud ante significabant, ...

These [the relations between etymology and semantics] are quite obscure for the following reasons: not every word that has been in use now exists – lapse of time has erased some; and not every word that exists has been applied without error; nor does every word which has been used correctly retain its integrity (for many words are transformed by changes in spelling). Moreover, not every word has its origins in 'our' language from native vocabulary, and many words indicate one thing now, but meant something different in the past ...

Varro, *Ling.* 5.3

We see that language taken in terms of the continuum of existence is mutable and more words have existed or will exist than do currently. In addition, linguistic semiotics is not always wholly consensual, nor do all members of a group with shared language necessarily have full command of the 'correct' (that is, the most widely agreed for a particular context) usage. Furthermore, even when 'you' and 'I' agree a meaning or usage for a word, 'our' ability to deploy and share this meaning textually can be compromised by memory itself: if a shared-usage word is written in a spelling or orthographic variant too far from the most widely recognized one, then context and individual mnemonic processes and lived-experiences will cause its meaning to shift.

Varro's first 'triad' of words for discussion comprises the nouns *pertinacia*, *hostis* and *inpos*. If we start with *pertinacia* (defined as pig-headed obstinacy, 5.2), we find that its usage is as a negative quality, and one which draws meaning

from the verb *pertendere* (to persist). A whole other word is then needed to identify the verb's contrasting positive derivative quality: 'steadfastness' (*perseuerantia*). So to make sense of *pertinacia* (in Varro's scheme) we have to recognize and refine its relationship to the verb *pertendere*.

Hostis comes next.

ut hostis: nam tum eo uerbo dicebant peregrinum qui suis legibus uteretur, nunc dicunt eum quem tum dicebant perduellem.

take *hostis*: at one time they meant 'foreigner' by this word, someone subject to his own laws [not 'ours']; now they term the same person *hostis* whom once they termed *perduellis* (someone with whom one is at war, or more specifically, an enemy of the people).

Varro, *Ling* 5.3

Here, we see an inkling of how terminology meshes with territorial change – *hostis* has, perhaps, changed meaning because there is no longer a pressing need to speak about foreigners outside the scope of Roman law but operating their own legal system. Conceptualizing Rome's imperial expansion as unstoppable, as seemed increasingly the case through the first century BC, means that enemies by default were more typically internal than external to the Roman worldview; that is to say, they were characterized relationally to Rome rather than as a political and cultural group in their own right. Otherwise they were not of interest (or at least needed to be formally conceptualized in that way).

Varro's final example in this introductory section begins again – it opens his discussion of the derivation of words where the origin is more clearly evident, and the word he chooses is all about the semiotics of power (*Ling*. 5.4). It seems counterintuitive that he first confronts us with the nominative noun *inpos* ('lacking power'), which looks miles distant from *potentia* ('power'), yet the former (Varro argues) draws on the latter. This is only recognizable, however, when we 'remember' the declension of *inpos* in the accusative case: *inpotem*. Armed with this, the family likeness becomes much more evident. It gets worse: if one says the evidently related (but fairly uncommon) noun *pos* ('having the power/ability') in speech, the likely signficatory connexion might easily lead to *pons* (bridge) (which would make nonsense of a sentence) rather than to *potens* (powerful). These three words could also be argued to sum up a certain view of Roman identity: Romans are one way *or another* persistent; in the process of this they made their world subject to their political agenda (empire and its implications), and they have done this through the exercise of power in complex, not always self-evident ways.

Taking these three terms and the way inflection, use and transmission alters or refines them, showcases the wider nuances of Varro's project. Romans in the first century BC were exceptionally conscious of how the forces of memory and genealogy could be deployed to shore up and redefine social cohesion, and also to legitimize elite and oligarchic identity and control. As we saw Varro implicitly observe, and as he raises again at 7.2 ('much remains hidden,' *tamen latent multa*) there is a prototype Marxist 'mystification' in this model of language-as-discourse whereby cultural memory, in effect, seeks to define and restrict any given socio-ethnic group's available linguistic palette and decoding tools. Nevertheless at the same time, Rome's educated elite had by this time been trained to recognize that a fixed and immutable language connotes a fossilized culture in which progress is impossible.

PEOPLE LIKE US

Returning to Fauconnier's idea of 'mental spaces' we can perhaps rethink etymology as a laboratory activity for studying the relationship between sophisticated high cultural language markup and a more typical and commonplace citizen vernacular. As Roman interest in historiography and, in particular, with exploring the relationship between cyclical and teleological historical models, gained political bite, interest in etymology too developed a political edge. It is frustrating that Varro's analysis of the cases against and for etymology (*Ling.* 1, 2) are lost, but his later tantalizing observation that the man who makes pointful statements concerning etymology is intrinsically 'one of us' (*bonus*, 7.4) showcases both the performance expected of people like us and the need to make interventions designed to enhance the right sort of experience of language.

This suggests that to be one of the good men, or *boni*, as conservative Romans termed themselves in this era, one needed to be aware of how close language is to oblivion, of the need to be a linguistic detective or hunter-gatherer and to keep making a connexion back from present use to the full range of past meanings, in order to continue to remember who it is that one is meant to be. Ricoeur's vast three-volume study (1984, 1985, 1988) of time and narrative offers wide-ranging insights into how perceptual and culturally constructed ideas of time are constantly in dialogue with narrative structure and narratology itself, but Evans (2004) has useful things to offer here too, tying in the linguistic dimension. The scheme that Varro proposes encourages and demonstrates awareness of this wider ancestral 'reservoir' of words and meanings, and through the discourse of memory claims it, positioning the right reader securely within the continuum of worthy ancestors that every patrician family drew identity and authority from.¹⁷

This was more than just an idea, as Flower (1996) discusses in detail: the houses of important, old Roman families typically displayed wax images of noteworthy ancestors (whom the Romans termed *maiores*) in their atriums to make clear each family’s continuity of tradition and mainline to Republican authority. This takes us back to Ricoeur’s comments in *Memory, History, Forgetting*:

to the past is tied an ambition, a claim – that of being faithful to the past ... In this respect, the deficiencies stemming from forgetting ... should not be treated straight away ... as dysfunctions, but as the shadowy underside of the bright region of memory

Ricoeur 2004: 21¹⁸

Without the prospect that the past can be (and constantly, in part, is) forgotten, the specific choices and historical processes that lead to selective memorialization become redundant. To put it another way (a way which develops the ideas in Niall Livingstone’s contribution to this volume), a totalizing, gapless memory is not possible – what makes memory possible is our awareness of the gaps between the pegs upon which we hang experience or events or ideas, and from which we recall them. One way of exploring this in Roman terms is Flower’s 2006 study of the process of *damnatio memoriae*, whereby names and images of disgraced citizens were physically and practically obliterated.¹⁹ These often literal ‘gaps’ defined and produced new configurations of the past and its impact on the present and future.

There is of course a difference between memory generated by experience and memory operating as a recall of things expressly learned. This is Bergson’s (1950) formulation of *mémoire-habitude* (memories created through a process of physical or intentional repetition; rooted in everyday practice) versus *memoir-souvenir* (involuntary memories, rooted chronologically in particular experiences or emotions).²⁰ Varro’s interest in language crosses this spectrum:

Vetustas pauca non deprauat, multa tollit. Quem puerum uidisti formosum, hunc uides deformem in senecta. Tertium seculum non uidet eum hominem quem uidit primum. Quare illa quae iam maioribus nostris ademit obliuio, fugitiua secuta sedulitas Muci et Bruti retrahere nequit. Non, si non potuero indagare, eo ero tardior, sed uelocior ideo, si quiuero. Non mediocres enim tenebrae in silua ubi haec captanda neque eo quo peruenire uolumus semitae tritae, neque non in tramitibus quaedam obiecta quae euntem retinere possent.²¹

There are few things which the passage of time does not distort, and many which it eliminates. The one you once saw as a beautiful boy, you now see twisted by old

age. The third generation does not see a person in the same way as the first saw him. Therefore those things which oblivion has taken even from our ancestors, these escapees not even the assiduous pursuit mounted by Mucius and Brutus could recover. Even if I myself am not able to hunt down this quarry, I shall not on this account be the slower, indeed I'll even be swifter if I'm able. For there is no trifling darkness in the wood where these are to be captured and they leave no well-trodden paths to take us to where we want to go. Nor indeed do the tracks lack obstacles which can delay the hunter.

Varro, *Ling.* 5.5

Here we see how long duration (*uetustas*) introduces error and distortion (*deprauo*). *Vetustas*, however, connotes not just the passage of time but also, specifically, the passage of time from the remote past. Varro's choice of metaphor to explain the process works counterintuitively on the face of it because it first maps this process onto an individual lifespan as perceived by one person (encoded by the use of second person singular verbs: *uidisti*; *uides* – you saw; you now see). This span is then reframed in different terms, shifting us connotatively at least from individual perception/memory to the process whereby collective memory (owned by a generation – *seculum*) exists in relation to and thereby differentiated from previous generations. Here Varro reaches a striking problem: if we accept this, then how can 'we' (or his intended audience) plug ourselves directly into the approved ancestral mainline? He addresses this head on: 'our' understanding of what worthy Roman forebears represented and who they were is defined by a generational process of shedding data. *Maiores* too are constantly being refashioned to reflect each generation's exemplary needs. 'Mucius' and 'Brutus' were (probably) late second-century BC jurists and legal writers, whom Varro is calling to mind as examples of painstaking researchers.²² The figurative language that he uses, however, recasts the pursuit of fugitive memories in terms of the hunt for wild beasts (*indago*). This vivid image makes sense of his comment that he'll be all the quicker for the hindrances thrown down by time: the excitement of the chase has his adrenaline flowing in a way that recalls daring exploits rather than the scholar's desk.²³

Anyone familiar with Eco's *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (1994) should find it no surprise when Varro turns to the woodland shadows in his metaphorical pursuit of mnemonic game. Big 'names' in the Roman pantheon, set up by him to take the fall, have failed, but Varro's woodland is alive with likely targets whose paths are trackless and obstacle-strewn. Game hunting was one of the few traditionally acceptable elite forms of recreation – it recalls the world of Greek epic and maps Roman aristocratic practice onto a landscape where the natural world and humankind struggle productively. Even the most resistant reader, I suspect,

could hardly fail to see how Varro manipulates us into approving his semantic and etymologic ‘pursuit’ of the relationship between language and identity. Cast now in terms that guarantee that he will succeed where the iconic ‘Mucius’ and ‘Brutus’ failed, this is not just an airy-fairy Greek intellectual game with no practical application; this is about action, about pragmatics and about the competitive instinct within Roman culture which encourages each generation to look to the past for examples to outdo.

Words, says Varro, are divided into three classes.

Igitur quoniam in haec sunt tripartita uerba, quae sunt aut nostra aut aliena aut obliuia, de nostris dicam cur sint, de alienis unde sint, de obliuiis relinquam: quorum partim *quid* ta<men> inuenerim *aut* opiner scribam.

So since words are divided into three categories (those which are ‘ours’, foreign, or lost to oblivion) I shall talk about why those that are ‘ours’ are as they are, where those with ‘foreign’ origin come from, and I’ll leave those lost words to themselves. [*Except I won’t*]: I will in fact write about some of them, recording what I have found out and what I conjecture.

Varro, *Ling.* 5.10

The text in this section is in some dispute, but the basic sense is that words defined as ‘ours’ (I cautiously suggest that here he means at least *Latin*, but one could read ‘Italian’ in with confidence) need causes for their origins;²⁴ words defined as ‘foreign’ in origin need to be provided with a derivation; and some but not all forgotten words need the bright light of Varro’s research played on them. Why? Well, a handful of lines earlier (*Ling.* 5.9) he commented that the words of deeply archaic mytho-historical figures such as Kings Latinus and Romulus are, through his own role in their recovery, more vividly and meaningfully his own than the ancient but artful and already perfect texts produced by big names in the Latin literary pantheon: Ennius (c.239–c.169 BC) and Livius Andronicus (c.285–c.215 BC). Studying Ennius is no more valuable, Varro observes, than researching King Latinus’ long-obliterated words; even more pertinently, he says, the words of legendary Romulus (Rome’s first father) are directly and vitally part of his patrimony – Rome’s founders live on in (Varro’s excavation of) what Barthes (1986) might term the ‘rustle’ of the living language. Livius’ poetry is by contrast a static entity, which through status as a ‘classic’ can be annotated but does not encourage modification (and thereby, perhaps, stagnates). Hence one angle for Varro’s choice of approach emerges: Rome (and Latin) needs him because he recognizes which aspects of ancient language require active recuperation and conservation rather than simple annotation, and why. In effect, he thus articulates a difference between the

objects of memory (the acculturated literary canon) and their fixed expression in language which generations of scholars interpret for new audiences, and the living experience of language in use, a kind of natural inheritance that needs to be husbanded and actively made available to successive generations of Romans.

We noted earlier that Varro's first triad of terms for discussion – *pertinacia*, *hostis*, *inpos* – seemed strikingly chosen in terms of contemporary Roman anxieties. The verbal threesome with which he commences this book's study proper is similarly evocative: *ager*, *agrarius*, *agricola*.²⁵ Famously, Romans imagined themselves as 'a community of farmer citizens whose identity was rooted in the land'.²⁶ Sallust's nostalgia-tinged narrative of the recent Catilinarian Conspiracy makes a stirring call-to-arms for a governing class confronting radical political and cultural change: imperial expansion from the mid-Republic onwards had led to Romans losing touch with the countryside and its laborious agenda (or so conservative *communis opinio* suggested). Anxiety about the nature of the bond between citizenship and the site of Rome also made it harder to lean on the idea of autochthony when parsing a shared, collaborative set of ideal Roman qualities, an idea discussed at some length by Dench.²⁷ Positioning this trio of words at the beginning of the new section in his linguistic survey suggests programmatic significance. With hindsight, we know that Varro goes on to write forcefully about the relationship between the agricultural landscape and citizen identity (Varro, *Rust*, 30s BC), but even here he points up how this agrarian set is paradigmatic:

Sed qua cognatio eius erit uerbi quae radices egerit extra fines suas, persequemur. Saepe enim ad limitem arboris radices sub uicini prodierunt segetem. Quare non, cum de locis dicam, si ab agro ad agrarium hominem ad agricolam peruenero, aberraro.

[on the primal classes of words] But wherever the family of the word we're interested in should be, even if it has forced its roots out beyond its natural territory, we'll still follow it. For often the roots of a tree close to the property line will have advanced out under a neighbour's cornfield. For this reason, when I speak of places if I move from *ager* (field) to an *agrarius* (agrarian) man I still won't have gone astray.

Varro, *Ling.* 5.13

As he comments, even to schematize how the project works draws upon the recognizably placial qualities evoked by agriculture. Like a tree, a word sends out roots which cross property lines and also blur definitions – here, the cornfield is host to an underground root system with imperializing tendencies – the boundary-less forest rather than circumscribed farmland.

Varro returns to *ager* at 5.34. A field is called thus, he tells us, because the noun *ager* derives from the verb *agere* meaning to drive – a field is therefore a place from or into which one drives livestock. Others, we are told, trace the term out of Latin and back into Greek – making it a near transliteration of the Greek ἀγρός. Of course the explanation that Varro omits is that both words may connect etymologically in sibling fashion to a separate common root. Instead, he *implies* a complete separation by using the ‘others say’ (*ali<i> dicunt*) formula to distance and prioritize the potential derivations – we need to choose. Varro also gives no space to the verbal relationship between *ago* (Latin, ‘I drive’) and the clearly similar Greek: ἄγω. It is stretching the bounds of possibility, I would argue, to believe that Varro authorizes a Greek etymology for the noun, but can see no connexion between the highly similar Latin and Greek verbs (when he returns to *agere* at 6.41–42, again no non-Latin roots are mentioned). A speculative answer to the conundrum would be that when it comes to (talking up) action (that is, the verb form), Roman roots need to be paramount, but for representation (that is, the noun), a Greek origin is acceptable?

REMEMBERING IN LATIN

To conclude with one final example, Varro takes on the terminology of memory itself:

Cogitare a cogendo dictum: mens plura in unum cogit, unde eligere possit ... A cogitatione concilium, inde consilium; quod ut uestimentum apud fullonem cum cogitur, conciliari dictum. Sic reminisci, cum ea quae tenuit mens ac memoria, cogitando repetuntur. Hinc etiam comminisci dictum, a con et mente, cum finguntur in mente quae non sunt; et ab hoc illud quod dicitur eminisci, cum commentum pronuntiatur. Ab eadem mente meminisse dictum et amens, qui a mente sua discedit

Cogitare (to consider) is said to come from *cogere* (to gather together; convene; harvest; compress; give form): the mind gathers together a set of things in one place, from which it can make a selection ... From *cogitatio* (consideration) comes *concilium* (council), and thence *consilium* (counsel). Hence, when a garment is *pressed* at the laundry it’s said to be *put into proper shape*. Thus *reminisci* (to call to mind) denotes those things which are held in the mind and memory and brought out of storage by deliberation. From this also comes the designation ‘to fabricate’ [or invent a story] (*comminisci*): deriving from *con* (together) and *mens* (mind), this is when things which have no existential reality are devised in the mind; and from here we reach what is termed *eminisci* (to think up; imagine), when the

commentum (pretence) is spoken aloud. From this same *mens* (mind) we have the terms *meminisse* (to remember a fact, speech or experience) and *amens*, used of someone who has taken leave of his senses.

Varro, *Ling.* 6.43–44

As you can see, we have moved into Book 6 – that is, the Book concerned with the names of times and temporally specific acts (6.1). This passage's etymological story again reinforces the Roman quality of what is at stake here: memory and mental faculties are all marked up as Latin through and through, transforming command of the past, and of discursive power, into Roman (not Greek) traits. We see no Greek etymologies on offer for *cogitare*, and with *concilium*, *consilium* and *conciliare* too he is apparently on solidly Roman ground.

Reaching *reminisci*, however, a difficulty arises. Maybe Varro would argue that his ideal audience has been sufficiently lulled into confidence in his authority that they should swallow this one too, but I suspect not. Varro is writing not just for Cicero, but also for men who are at least familiar with Greek even if not completely bilingual.²⁸ For such an audience, and even given his attempt to link the explication of the verb *reminisci* to *cogitare* using the adverb *sic* (thus), it would be hard not to recall for example the Greek 'memory' verb μνησκόμαι ('to remember', 'to remind oneself of something'). Sticking with Varro's scheme, however, Roman ownership of the terminology of memory marches on. The noun *mens* (mind) is presented without a Greek antecedent, and we might see in this a tacit support for Varro's similar decision to elide μνησκόμαι from the linguistic genealogy. The verb *comminisci* draws together the prefix *con-* and *mens* to energize the process of recall, redefining it as a creative act.

Turning formally then to the linguistic family of *mens*, Varro works up the verb-noun pair of *meminisse* and *amens* ('out of one's mind'). *Meminisse* poses the same hermeneutic problems as *reminisci*, but perhaps by setting it after *mens* Varro attempts to convince through an apparently artless ordering of material (that is to say – he suggests to us that this is to some extent a 'natural' language nexus in which the acceptance of *mens* as Latin makes inevitable the Latin rather than Greek qualities of *meminisse*) to make it harder for his audience to make unauthorized etymological connexions. Varro continues his discussion of memory by linking *memoria* (memory) to *monimenta* (monument/memorial).²⁹ In doing so he further elucidates the complexity of linguistic archaeology: memory, he goes on to say, is all about excavating what's already present in the mind, but to understand the buried code of deep memory (the implication seems), physical reminders are needed – by building monuments, Romans make possible the decoding of their ancestral selves. This version of Latin is both subaltern (that is, self-consciously and anxiously indebted to

Greek linguistic models and thereby Greek frames of reference) and culturally imperialistic (it seeks to overwrite Greek roots where the vocabulary at stake has particular cultural value for Roman identity; it develops the landscape, imprinting Roman edifices on the world to tell a story of Roman endurance).

In conclusion, this chapter has aimed to introduce some material that adds to our appreciation of what ‘cultural memory’ can offer to the study of ancient Roman models of identity. Varro’s complex and at times opaque meander through Latin semantics is often relegated to the ‘reference’ shelf, rather than considered as a literary endeavour in its own right, and some of the bigger questions posed by this chapter aim to spark further debate. What was Varro aiming at? Asking such a question may trigger paroxysms of horror at its apparent naïveté, but posing the question does raise some subtle issues that hint at a high level of narrative sophistication. Varro’s study of Latin fits into a Hellenistic tradition of didactic literature, literature which at times pretends to present practical manuals, but frequently displays acute attention to style, structure and literariness at the expense of utilitarianism. This kind of didactic features most obviously in the works of Vergil and Ovid, but Varro’s choice of prose by no means excludes him from the genre games. His study also fits into a culturally lively discourse at Rome whereby key men were exploring the active role of literature is shaping not just identity but political authority. Control of the semiotics of language might, arguably, be the most potent control of all.

Notes

- 1 The edition of Varro used is Roland G. Kent’s two volume edition in the Loeb Classical Library series (revised 1951), published by Harvard University Press. Underlining is used within quotations from Varro to emphasise particular key words and phrases; by contrast, italics and pointed brackets reflect suggestions presented by Kent in his version of the Latin text, which is occasionally very difficult in the primary manuscript.
- 2 Citizenship was only extended throughout Italy in the early first century BC; Gabba 1994 is a useful introduction.
- 3 Spencer 2010: 9.
- 4 Varro, *Ling.* 5.7.
- 5 Stein-Hölkeskamp and Hölkeskamp 2006, and Larmour and Spencer 2007 (eds.) collect up a wealth of examples of how this operates for Rome; Spencer 2007 looks in detail at how Livy (late first century BC) textures his account of the Lacus Curtius ‘memorial’ in the Roman Forum.
- 6 Bourdieu 1977; cf. Niebisch 2008.
- 7 E.g. *Ling* 5.41–54; on Varro, *Ling.* and the city: Zehnacker 2008; Spencer 2011.
- 8 Nora 2001.

- 9 Spencer 2010: xv. Cf. della Dora 2008: 218, 220–221.
- 10 E.g. Cic. *De or.* 2.299 (is it ‘better’ to remember or forget?), 351–354, 357–358 (techniques); Quint. *Inst.* 11.2; or *Rhet. Her.* 3.29–30, 32. The seminal studies are Yates 1966 and Blum 1969, but more recently Small 1997 has made thoughtful interventions into how we understand ancient mnemotechnics.
- 11 della Dora 2008: 229.
- 12 Key players helping to destabilize politics in this era include Sulla, Pompey, Catiline, Caesar, Clodius, Antony, to name a few.
- 13 Spencer 2010: 9.
- 14 Fauconnier 1994: 1. Cf. Brockmeier 2002; Spencer 2010: 47–56.
- 15 Other big names from this era whom we haven’t mentioned include e.g. Sallust, Livy, Vergil, and Ovid.
- 16 Important work has also been done by Lakoff and Johnson 2003 in their still influential and now revised study. For something more of the moment, I suggest Nerlich *et al.* 2003.
- 17 If Varro treated *lacuna* (‘cavity’, ‘hollow’, ‘pool’, ‘gap’) in his linguistic study, the discussion is lost. Interestingly, his semantic derivation of *lacus* (‘lake’, ‘cistern’) from *lacuna* (*Ling.* 5.26) emphasizes phenomenology – something that is ‘gappy’ (or deficient somehow – in English: lacunose; see Varro, *Rust.* 2.1.28) is also something that can contain (*contineo*) something famously hard to control: water.
- 18 See also Brockmeier 2002: 15.
- 19 Roller 2010 develops this further.
- 20 Cf. the German terms *Gedächtnis* and *Erinnerung*.
- 21 On this passage, see also Spencer 2011.
- 22 P. Mucius Scaevola and M. Junius Brutus; but see Spencer 2011 for the problems in pinning them down. Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 130.
- 23 Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 12.1.6.
- 24 See e.g. *Ling.* 5.29–30 for discussion of ‘Italic’ vocabulary. Cic. *De or.* 3.43 and Varro, *Ling.* 5.97 discuss the difference between urbane and rustic accents in Latin.
- 25 Spencer 2011 discusses this in detail; cf. Casey 2001.
- 26 E.g. Varro, *Rust.* 2, *Praef.* 1–2; cf. Cato, *Agr.*, *Praef.* Spencer 2010: 13; cf. 2010: 31–46.
- 27 Sall. *Cat.* 2–3, 10–13; Livy 5.54.3. Dench 2005: 37–92 sums up the various issues.
- 28 See Adams 2003.
- 29 Varro, *Ling.* 6.49. See Spencer 2011 for discussion.

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Jewish Memory and Identity in the First Century AD: Philo and Josephus on Dreams

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Identity is a complex issue. There are many factors that come together to create a person's cultural identity, their sense of themselves as part of a wider cultural group. Among the most important might be their date of birth (or rough time period if the date is not known), their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, the languages they can read, write or speak, their home, birthplace, the nationality with which they identify (which may or may not be connected to either home or birthplace), their religion, social class, occupation and so on.¹ Any one of these categories could and should bear further investigation; ethnicity, for example, is no simple matter and the categories by which we define such a group should be and have been questioned and re-evaluated.² For the purposes of this paper, however, we will focus on the importance of cultural and autobiographical memory.

Cultural and autobiographical memories are major factors contributing towards a person's cultural identity. Assmann emphasized the importance of *collective* memory, the second of his three types of social memory, as a vehicle for transmitting a collective identity within a particular group.³ However, *cultural* memory, which goes beyond the three-generation cycle of living memory, can be even more important to a person's sense of identity, especially if it connects them to an ancestral homeland or way of life from which they themselves have become removed.

Sometimes, there may be a conflict between the different aspects of a person's identity that go together to make up the whole. With which group, for example, should a Protestant born in Northern Ireland who has since converted to Catholicism identify? Or a child born in England who speaks little English? The various aspects of a person's identity interact in different ways, depending on circumstance, to produce a sense of self within that person. In this paper, I explore the conflict and interplay of identities within Philo and Josephus, two members of the Jewish diaspora in the Roman Empire whose Jewish cultural memory and sense of identity had to be reconciled with a Greco-Roman literary

output. Rajak has observed that in the 'group memory', rare occasions of tension may loom as large as cultural links.⁴ Such occasions of tension were particularly fresh in the minds of Philo (writing following the annexation of Judaea in AD 6) and Josephus (writing following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70). In Philo's case we are looking mainly at the interplay of different but not necessarily hostile identities – as Niehoff has observed, Judaism and Hellenism in particular are not necessarily mutually exclusive.⁵ However, as Barth puts it, a 'reduction of cultural differences between ethnic groups does not correlate in any simple way with a reduction in the organizational relevance of ethnic identities, or a breakdown in boundary-maintaining processes' – Philo may have been Hellenized to a great extent, but the division between Jewish and Greek remains.⁶ In Josephus' case, conflict, particularly between Jewish and Roman, is central to understanding his work.

Philo was a philosopher and writer who lived in Alexandria. He was probably a Roman citizen.⁷ We do not know a great deal about his life and his dates are uncertain, but we do know that he led an embassy to the Emperor Gaius (Caligula), protesting against the wrongs done to Alexandrian Jews by the prefect Avillius Flaccus, around AD 39/40. Most of his works are essays on Biblical themes, with a large number on Biblical exegesis. He also wrote several more general philosophical treatises and some historical apologetic works. He was familiar with all the major philosophical schools, but seems to have particularly favoured Platonism, while in his works of Biblical exegesis, he seeks to reconcile Greek philosophy and Jewish theology.⁸ Philo's first language was probably Greek, and he consistently refers to the Septuagint, rather than the Hebrew Bible, and refers to Greek as the language 'we' speak.⁹ One of the most important issues in all scholarship on Philo concerns whether he was a Jewish thinker with a Greek education, or a Greek philosopher with Jewish learning.¹⁰

Josephus was an historian from a priestly Jewish family, who had initially tried to gain an important position through the Pharisees. In AD 64, he went to Rome and gained favour with Poppaea Sabina. By AD 66, when war broke out, he had returned to Jerusalem. He was commander-in-chief of the Jewish forces in Galilee, but, having escaped the massacre at Jotapata, he tried to win favour with Vespasian by predicting his victory. He was made prisoner, and released after Vespasian became emperor in AD 69. He was with Titus at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Afterwards, he was made a Roman citizen and he devoted the rest of his life to writing and enjoyed imperial favour until his death during the reign of Trajan. The *Jewish War* and the *Life*, of course, contain no small amount of apologetic material for his actions during the war.¹¹

This paper is about cultural and autobiographical memory within a subaltern culture. As members of a conquered people living under foreign rule, Philo and Josephus both belonged to a subaltern community. The use of the term

‘subaltern’ in postcolonial studies derives from Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who used the term to describe non-hegemonic classes, those classes which are subordinated by those in power and excluded from any meaningful role in the regime.¹² Within current scholarship, it is most often used in a postcolonial context to refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes, though some scholars define the term more specifically than others.

Philo and Josephus were both members of Jewish subaltern culture, under the political domination of the Roman Empire. They themselves were not subaltern in the strongest sense, as they both played vital roles within the regime of power, but if the term is used in a wider sense, to mean anyone belonging to a group of people who are politically subordinate to another group, then as Jews living under Roman rule they may be described as belonging to a subaltern group. In this paper, I will explore Philo and Josephus’ interactions with two dominant cultures; for, in addition to the political power of Rome, Philo and Josephus lived and wrote under the intellectual dominance of Greece. Politically as subaltern as Jewish culture, Greek culture was, nevertheless, intellectually dominant, in terms of philosophy and literature, especially in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire. Hebrew literature played as much of a subaltern role in the shadow of Greek literature as the Jewish people did in the shadow of Roman political power. The existence of a dominant intellectual culture separate from the politically dominant culture complicates any attempt to determine whether the colonized speak in voices ‘borrowed from their masters’, as Lomamba puts it, or their own.¹³

One way of defining oneself, especially in a subaltern culture, is to identify an alternative Other and make it clear that one is separate from such a group. When Philo was writing, Palestinian Jewish writers tended to identify themselves in opposition to Greeks and Greekness; as Rajak has observed, maintaining the cultural memory of crisis points between Jews and Greeks strengthened their Jewish cultural identity.¹⁴ For Philo himself, the position was somewhat different; as an inhabitant of Alexandria, he was living in an overwhelmingly Greek cultural setting and had to reconcile the tendency towards opposition to Hellenism from other Jewish writers with his own Greek literary approach.¹⁵ Living in Alexandria also introduced yet another potential cultural identity into the mix; Philo himself identifies most strongly with Jewish and Greek culture and against Egyptian culture.

As Rajak has observed, the situation in Palestine changed ‘quite dramatically’ following the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, as the focus shifted to identifying oneself against the ‘idol-worshipper’ and with the wisdom of the Greeks.¹⁶ However, for Josephus, living in Rome as a Roman citizen and protégé of the Emperor, identifying himself as a Jew against the Romans was more difficult. Indeed, Josephus identifies with the Romans more often than

any other group, though his primary interest is in reasserting the cultural value of his Jewish identity. If anything, Josephus defines himself against the Greeks, emphasizing the superiority of Hebrew and Jewish culture to Greek in several works.¹⁷

Since full exploration of these issues is far beyond the scope of a single paper, here we will centre on Philo and Josephus' writing on dreams as a focal point. This subject was of particular importance to Josephus, who considered himself to be a skilled interpreter of dreams and used his own dreams to explain the actions that resulted in his being branded a traitor by many Jewish people at that time. The subject was also treated in some detail by Philo, who wrote a philosophical treatise on dreams and another on Joseph, the dream interpreter. Direct comparison of individual dream reports will be limited, however, as there are very few dreams reported by both Philo and Josephus, though both provide useful descriptions of Joseph, the Biblical dream interpreter.¹⁸ Dreams will be a useful tool to think with; a single lens through which to explore the interplay of identities in these writers' work.

Dreams and divine dreams play a significant role in Hebrew, Latin and Greek literature. In the Old Testament, as in ancient Near Eastern literature in general, the majority of divine dreams are sent by God to deliver a message to the recipient that the dreamer must then act on. Their literary function is often to legitimate a ruler or, in the case of the Old Testament, a prophet.¹⁹ These dreams are straightforward messages, usually delivered in a speech by a divine figure. There is little use of symbolism, as it is important that the dreamer understand the message clearly, so that they can act on it. Dream interpreters and dream interpretation were important in ancient Near Eastern society, but dreams in historical literature rarely need extensive interpretation, as this would inhibit their function as divine support for the rule of the dreamer.

Archaic Greek literature, chiefly represented by Homer, shows some similarities with ancient Near Eastern literature in this respect, but Classical Greek literature tends to favour symbolic dreams, which confuse the characters while proving dramatic irony for the benefit of the audience or reader. Correct interpretation becomes essential to understanding the dream, and many characters in Greek literature suffer for their inability to interpret their dreams correctly. The dream reports themselves become increasingly complex, and simple message dreams much less common.²⁰

Both types remained popular in the Roman period in both Greek and Latin literature. Literature of this period shows a great variety in the use of dreams, but certain particular dream stories appear over and over again, and these may reveal some general trends. The dream of Titus Latinus is reported in three surviving Latin sources and two Greek from this period (Cicero, *On Divination*, 1.26.55; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 7.68; Livy, *History of Rome*, 2.36; Valerius

Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 1.7.4; Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 24–25). The story appears in one of Plutarch's Greek and Roman *Lives*, in the 'Roman' *Life of Coriolanus*, and so forms part of a discourse which is deliberately 'Roman'. The retelling of the dream in Cicero is the oldest surviving version, but Quintus observes that the story is told by all 'our' historians (*omnes hoc historici*) and he names in particular Coelius as his source.

A few things make this dream particularly 'Roman'. The story is part of Roman history and is concerned with things that were at the heart of the Roman state – the Great Games, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, the Senate. In all versions, the Senate interpret the dream for themselves, though Plutarch notes that the action they take is in agreement with the priests. Dionysius, Livy and Plutarch refer to the dream as the reason for the repetition of the Great Games, making the story an aetiological one (though Cicero, with his different emphasis, does not and Valerius Maximus does not give so much detail). This dream, then, was treated by those who reported it as a specifically 'Roman' event, which provides an aetiology for a Roman custom. Other frequently reported dreams in the Roman period revolve around important figures making decisions that will have an impact on the whole Roman world; for example, the dream of Calpurnia which failed to prevent Caesar from attending the Senate on the day he died and the physician's dream which prompted Octavian (later Augustus) to leave his tent before the battle of Philippi.²¹ Essentially, dreams were most commonly used to enhance the memory of an event that loomed large in the Roman cultural memory. When recording events which were fundamental to the cultural memory and identity of the Roman people, authors frequently considered it possible, even essential, that the event was preceded by a divine omen, often in the form of a dream. There is a similarity here with Near Eastern literature, in that these dreams are often connected with the rise to or fall from power of political leaders, but for the Roman writer it is the culturally remembered event and its consequences that is the main point of interest, as the popularity of the dream of Titus Latinus, unconnected with any one leader, testifies.

Niehoff has observed that the impact of Rome on Philo and on his philosophy has been relatively neglected in scholarship on the philosopher.²² This may be because Rome seems to be of little objective interest to Philo, except on those rare occasions where he was brought into direct conflict with Rome as the ruling power (in the *Against Flaccus*, for example). Philo's interest in dreams is chiefly philosophical.

Philosophical theories on the nature of dreams and dreaming varied. Plato has Socrates explain that if a man goes to sleep full of food and drink, the wild part of his soul springs up and he dreams unnatural things, but if a man goes to sleep in a temperate state, the rational part of his soul dominates and his

dreams will be full of noble thoughts (Plato, *Republic*, 571d–572b). Aristotle wrote treatises on *Sleep and Waking*, on *Dreams* and on *Divination in Sleep*. In *On Sleep and Waking*, he establishes that sense perception, sleep and waking all belong to both the body and the soul, and that all animals need both periods of sleep and of being awake (Aristotle, *On Sleep and Waking*, 1.453b–454b). In *On Dreams* he establishes that we do not see dreams through normal sense-perception and concludes that dreaming belongs to the sensitive faculty, but through the imagination (Aristotle, *On Dreams*, 1.458b, 1.459a). Aristotle opens the next treatise, *On Divination in Sleep*, by saying that it is not easy either to despise or to believe in divination which comes from dreams (Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 1.462b). The experiences of those who have had divinatory dreams suggest it is possible, but the fact that it is difficult to see an underlying cause for the phenomenon causes doubt. He says that dreams cannot be sent by the god, because some of the lower animals also dream, and common men see prescient dreams; this is because they respond to lots of different visual stimuli and so chance upon a version of events similar to reality (Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 2.463b). Aristotle argues that, in order to explain dreams, one must be able to detect likenesses; because the images are like reflections in water, the interpreter needs to be able to discern the separate images in the distorted reflection, in order to determine their origin (Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 2.464b).²³

One treatise on dreams by Philo has survived. The essential point about dreams for Philo, the aspect of a dream that he uses to categorize them, is whether or not the dream must be interpreted and by whom. He explains that there are two types of dreams; the first, dreams which are sent by God for His own reasons, he has discussed already (in a work which unfortunately seems to be lost) (Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.1). The second type of dreams occurs when the human mind comes under the influence of divine forces, and is able to see future events (Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.2). At the beginning of Book 2 of this treatise, Philo suggests that there are, in fact, three kinds of dreams which are sent from God. He repeats his definition of the first and second, adding that the second are not immediately obvious in their meaning, but can be interpreted without difficulty (Philo, *On Dreams*, 2.1–2.3). The third type are dreams which are so difficult to interpret that they can only be interpreted by a specialist dream interpreter; he suggests the dreams of Joseph, the Pharaoh, the baker and cup-bearer from the Biblical story of Joseph in Genesis as examples (Philo, *On Dreams*, 2.4; Genesis 37.2–47.12).

Philo's focus on interpretation as the key difference between different types of dream is unusual. Interpretation was an essential part of dream theory for many ancients, but the usual way of categorizing dreams was not according to how clear or obscure they were, but simply according to whether they came true

or not.²⁴ This is certainly not a Roman approach to dreams; in several of the most common examples of Roman dreams, including those discussed above, it is made clear that a member of the Roman elite should be able to interpret his own dream and not rely on others to do it for him.²⁵ Philo's approach has more in common with the Greek tradition of dream interpretation, though even this was a tradition practised by commercial interpreters like Artemidorus; the elite tend either to interpret their own dreams, or to use another form of divination (usually extispicy) to confirm or clarify the dream.²⁶ Dream interpretation, in the Greco-Roman mindset, was associated with the East.²⁷ This would suggest that Philo's approach to dreams as a philosopher is primarily a Jewish (Near Eastern) one. Philo also associates skill in dream interpretation with moral worthiness, which also suggests a Jewish point of view (see below). However, his focus on obscure symbolic dreams and their interpretation has the most in common with Greek dream literature. Philo's two intellectual identities, Jewish and Greek, are thoroughly enmeshed here.

Greek philosophy plays an important role in Philo's conceptualization of dreams. In a different treatise, Philo explains why dreams are prophetic; he says that when the mind is relaxed in sleep and can explore itself freely, it can look at the smooth surface of the liver as if it was a mirror and can see all the parts of the intellect and identify any wrong parts, and so by dreams can obtain a prophetic vision of the future (Philo, *On the Special Laws*, 1.39.219). The influence of Aristotle is clear here. It is also important to recognize that the function of dreams – the reason for discussing them at all – is a Greek one in Philo's writing. He describes dreams in the context of a philosophical discourse which is designed to explore Jewish theology within a Greek framework, working from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

Philo's attitude towards the best-known dreamer from the Septuagint, Joseph, differed according to the purpose of each treatise, though overall he was fairly negative. Philo discusses Joseph in two works; *On Dreams* and *On Joseph*. In *On Dreams*, he discusses the language used in the Joseph story, where Joseph often says 'I thought' I saw something in a dream, rather than simply 'I saw' in a dream, as Jacob does, and argues that this is because Jacob is more virtuous and less effeminate than Joseph (Philo, *On Dreams*, 2.17–2.20) (it is important to note that the language he is discussing here is that of the Greek Septuagint). He sees Joseph's early visions as the result of vanity, rather than true divine revelation and suggests that Joseph's brothers were right to reject him at first and that Joseph could only be a leader when he no longer dreamed of night, or of slavish work but, having rejected an Egyptian woman, saw truth instead of vain imaginings (Philo, *On Dreams*, 2.104–2.108). In his treatise dedicated to Joseph, he re-tells the story and then interprets it in allegorical terms. He describes Joseph's brothers calling him a dreamer and seer of visions, seemingly

as an insult (Philo, *On Joseph*, 3.12). He has Joseph himself, however, describe dream interpreters as interpreters of divine oracles and prophets of divine will (Philo, *On Joseph*, 18.95).

Several theories have been put forward to explain Philo's somewhat contradictory attitude towards Joseph. Niehoff has suggested that the reason for the differences in Philo's representation of Joseph is that Philo is writing from a different point of view in each case; that in *On Joseph*, Philo views events from Joseph's own point of view, while *On Dreams* views him from his brothers' point of view.²⁸ Whitmarsh has argued that the reason for the much more positive portrayal of Joseph in the *On Joseph* is that this text is modelled as a *peri basileas*, a treatise on the idealized virtues of the figure of the ruler.²⁹ Cazeaux has observed that Philo's life of Joseph owes something to the Hellenistic *encomion*, as well as containing allegorizing material, which would seem to corroborate that theory.³⁰

However, it is most likely that Egypt is the key to understanding Philo's awkward relationship with Joseph. Joseph was an important figure for Jews living in Egypt and the name 'Joseph' was more popular there than elsewhere in the diaspora.³¹ Philo's position as a Greek-educated Jew with Roman citizenship living in Egypt created a mass of cultural identities in which something had to give, and that something was any sense of cultural affinity he might have felt with Egypt. Philo is willing to be Roman by political affiliation, Jewish by cultural identity and Greek by education, but he is not Egyptian. So, as Mendelson has observed, in Philo's biographies of Moses and Joseph, both are praised for not letting go of their ancestral customs or becoming assimilated into Egyptian culture.³² Philo's Jewish cultural identity and cultural memories and Greek cultural education were much stronger than any sense of belonging that might come from mere geographical location, though it is this very geographical proximity that leads him to focus so strongly on identifying himself and his fellow Jews against Egyptians.³³

Philo is not entirely uninfluenced by Rome. He writes about Rome occasionally, when necessary, but these works, the *Against Flaccus* and the *Embassy to Gaius*, are not at the heart of his work, neither do they contain dream reports.³⁴ Of the three other cultural groups he interacted with, Romans, Greeks and Egyptians, Philo mentions the Romans least often and he treats them, as Graesholt has put it, 'in a neutral way'.³⁵ Niehoff has argued that Philo adopts a Roman worldview in much of his work, applying Roman categories to Greeks, including a Roman-style critique of Alexander the Great.³⁶ It is possible that Philo sometimes wrote from a subconsciously Roman point of view, resulting from a Greco-Roman rhetorical education. This would be closer to an example of the cultural imagination, the collection of ideas and views that exist almost unspoken within members of a particular group, than to the

more self-conscious process of actively engaging with cultural memories.³⁷ However, Philo's use of dreams reflects no special interest in entering into a particularly Roman discourse on the subject. He is more strongly influenced by the geographically relevant Egyptian culture he is so keen to distance himself from than by the distant Romans. Philo was not politically inactive, but in his writing he chooses to skim over that aspect of his identity and prefers to focus on religious and philosophical subject matter. Philo's use of dreams is all about reconciling his politically and intellectually subaltern Jewish identity with the intellectually dominant Greek culture and he is less interested in actively engaging with the politically dominant Roman culture.

Josephus' cultural identity was less determined by geographical location, and his relationships with the Greek and Roman dominant cultures were much more complicated than those of Philo. He also wants to engage with the dominant intellectual Greek culture, but his personal history – his autobiographical memory – means all his work is unavoidably political.

Josephus had a problem. A war veteran who deserted his own side, his autobiographical memory was filled with this traumatic and identity-shattering experience. He needed to rebuild his identity as a Jew following his actions in the war. Furthermore, he knew that the war and the destruction of the Temple would live on in Jewish cultural memory for a very long time and he needed to create a place for himself within that cultural memory as a good Jew, despite his actions. Josephus chose dreams as the means by which he would rehabilitate himself within the cultural memory.

Josephus is quite defensive about his fondness for reporting various divine dreams in his works. In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus includes a note justifying his inclusion of dreams in his history, giving two main reasons. The first is that the dreams he has just recorded (in the preceding paragraph) concern royalty, and are, therefore, worth recording. The second, more important, reason is that these stories provide examples of something concerning the immortality of the soul and the way in which God becomes involved in men's lives. Josephus somewhat tersely adds that anyone who does not believe these things is welcome to his own opinion but should not interfere with one who disagrees (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 17.354).³⁸ In places, he even inserts dream reports where they do not exist in other versions of the story; for example, God tells the prophet Nathan in a dream that he is angry with David, but Nathan decides to be more tactful, and uses a parable-like story to show David he has done wrong (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 7.147). The Biblical version of this story does not include the dream (2 Samuel 12.1); it seems that Josephus has added his favourite form of divine revelation to the story to explain Nathan's actions and attribute the ultimate force behind these actions to God.

Josephus needed to emphasize the historical importance of divine dreams because he claimed it was because of a divine dream that he abandoned his own people for the Romans during the war. Since this is a particularly important paragraph, we will reproduce it here in full:

ὥς δ' ὁ τε Νικάνωρ προσέκειτο λιπαρῶν καὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς τοῦ πολεμίου πλήθους ὁ Ἰώσηπος ἔμαθεν, ἀνάμνησις αὐτὸν τῶν διὰ νυκτὸς ὀνείρων εἰσέρχεται, δι' ὧν ὁ θεὸς τὰς τε μελλούσας αὐτῷ συμφορὰς προεσήμαινεν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τὰ περὶ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἐσόμενα. ἦν δὲ καὶ περὶ κρίσεις ὀνείρων ἱκανὸς συμβαλεῖν τὰ ἀμφιβόλως ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου λεγόμενα, τῶν γε μὴν ἱερῶν βίβλων οὐκ ἡγγόνει τὰς προφητείας ὥς ἂν αὐτός τε ὧν ἱερεὺς καὶ ἱερέων ἔγγονος ὧν ἐπὶ τῆς τότε ὥρας ἔνθους γενόμενος καὶ τὰ φρικώδη τῶν προσφάτων ὀνείρων σπάσας φαντάσματα προσφέρει τῷ θεῷ λεληθυῖαν εὐχήν, κάπειδὴ τὸ Ἰουδαίων, ἔφη, φύλον ὀκλάσαι δοκεῖ σοι τῷ κτίσαντι, μετέβη δὲ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἢ τύχῃ πᾶσα, καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐπελέξω τὰ μέλλοντα εἰπεῖν, δίδωμι μὲν Ῥωμαίοις τὰς χεῖρας ἐκὼν καὶ ζῶ, μαρτύρομαι δὲ ὥς οὐ προδότης, ἀλλὰ σὸς εἰμί διάκονος.

And as Nicanor persisted in entreating him, and Josephus came to understand the threat of the enemy numbers, a recollection came to him of his dreams at night, through which God had signalled to him in advance both the impending misfortunes of the Jews and what was going to happen in relation to the emperors of Rome. And indeed he was competent enough in the interpretation of dreams to understand what was said ambiguously by the deity; he was certainly not unfamiliar with the prophecies of the Holy Books, being himself a priest and a descendant of priests. He became inspired by them on this occasion, and, taking in mind the terrifying apparitions of his recent dreams, offered to God a secret prayer, saying, 'Since it seems good to you, who founded it, to let the race of the Jews sink down, and all good fortune has passed over to the Romans, and you since chose my soul to tell what would happen, I give my hands willingly to the Romans, and live; but I call you to witness that I am not a traitor, but your servant.'³⁹

Josephus, *On the Jewish War*, 3.351–354

Josephus claims that, in addition to receiving divine dreams, his upstanding character and skill gave him the ability to interpret them correctly. Both Philo and Josephus associate the ability to interpret divine dreams correctly with moral character. Dream interpreters in the Hebrew scriptures hold a position analogous to that of prophets; they are men chosen by God to be granted a special form of wisdom not revealed to most people. Philo describes good, contemplative people as always thinking about God, so that they do not even see anything else in their dreams apart from divine beauty and power, and these people may speak in their sleep, telling doctrine of sacred philosophy from

their dreams (Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 3.26–27). Josephus emphasizes the wisdom and learning of Daniel, along with his God-given gift of the ability to interpret dreams. Philo, in line with Greek philosophy, emphasizes the good results that come actively from the good person, while Josephus emphasizes the grace from God given to a more passive good person, but both emphasize the importance of moral character.⁴⁰ For Josephus, desperate to earn a respected place within the cultural memory, this issue was especially urgent.

That this self-rehabilitation was an overriding concern for Josephus in his work becomes clear when we consider the parallels he creates with his own story in other places. Josephus describes a dream which persuaded the high priest Jaddus to open Jerusalem up to Alexander the Great, because God appeared to him in his sleep and told him to do so (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.326–328). However, other sources suggest that Alexander left for Egypt straight after taking Gaza.⁴¹ Josephus also suggests that Alexander saluted the Jewish high priest, because he had seen the priest in his sleep and believed that his victory was attributable to the Jewish God (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.334–335). The parallel is plain to see; Josephus has the Jewish high priest surrender to the Greek forces because he is told to do so in a dream – immediately calling to mind his own surrender to the Romans on the same grounds.

Josephus' actions during the war, defecting to the Romans and betraying his own people, resulted in his being seen as a traitor, and it is clear from his explanation in *On the Jewish War* that he was anxious to correct that view by presenting himself as a good Jew obeying the commands of God. His insistence on his own ability as a dream interpreter, and his interest in his namesake, Joseph, are the direct result of his choice to use a dream to justify his actions.⁴² He, in his own testimony, is privileged, and has been given a command by God not understood by others, and has carried it out faithfully. He also records a dream of his own in his autobiography, in which he thought that a figure spoke to him, telling him to cheer up and not to be afraid, and that he woke up feeling much better (Josephus, *The Life*, 208–210). The continuing importance of dreams to his representation of himself is clear here.

The question of whether Josephus really predicted the accession of Vespasian (reigned AD 69–79) and the Roman victory before they occurred has been the cause of some scholarly debate, and is, ultimately, impossible to solve. He does have some corroborating evidence to back him up from Suetonius, who records that Josephus claimed that Vespasian would become emperor and, at a later date, that he himself would be set free from prison, though Suetonius does not say how Josephus claimed to know this (Suetonius, *Divine Vespasian*, 5.6).⁴³ It is fairly clear, though, that in both the *Jewish Wars* and the *Life*, Josephus' main concern is his representation of himself.⁴⁴ Josephus' work as an historian is ultimately an attempt to rehabilitate himself within the cultural memory of the

war. His desire to reconcile his own memories with a hostile collective memory of his actions during the war is the driving force behind his work. His own dreams are so central to his defence of his actions that it is not surprising to find that he values dreams as part of history in a wider sense.

Josephus' justification for including dreams in his historical works is a Near Eastern (and Hebrew) one. His insistence on the importance of recording anything relating to royalty reflects a very un-Greco-Roman interest in and acceptance of monarchy.⁴⁵ His theological interest in dreams might be said to parallel a Greek interest in the immortality of the soul, but it is the Jewish God's involvement in men's lives that he wants to emphasize. His records of his own dreams, however, demonstrate a more Roman concern with his place in the cultural memory of future generations. His dreams are omens relating to political leaders and which establish himself as a prophet, and as such, they are not incompatible with the Near Eastern/Hebrew tradition. But his chief concern in recording his own dreams is only secondarily the legitimization of Vespasian. His one overriding concern is to legitimize himself and his own actions, and to transform an uncomfortable autobiographical memory into a positive cultural memory. In focusing on the cultural memory of the events he was involved in and trying to reconcile his subaltern Jewish identity with the dominant Roman power he had become part of, he produces some very Roman dream reports.

Josephus also engages directly with the intellectually dominant Greek culture, but he is much less apologetic and much less conciliatory towards the dominant power in this case. Like Philo, Josephus writes Greek literature in Greek forms of discourse, but he does so not to reconcile Hebrew learning with Greek, but to demonstrate its superiority. Although he opens *Jewish Antiquities* by declaring that it is aimed at a 'universal' audience (which, Whitmarsh has argued, we should understand as implying a Greek audience) like *Against Apion*, the overall message of this text is that Hebrew literature and Jewish culture is superior to Greek.⁴⁶ Goodman has argued that in places Josephus uses a subtly Roman point of view (as Philo also did on occasion), demonstrating that Judaism is superior to Hellenism by picking points similar to the aspects of Roman morals and ideologies usually stressed by Latin authors.⁴⁷ In *Against Apion* (1.50) and *Jewish Antiquities* (20.263, 1,7) Josephus claims he learned Greek only after coming to Rome and he bases his historical persona and claims for authenticity on not being Greek, claiming the Jewish war is a translation into Greek from 'my own language' (Josephus, *On the Jewish War*, 1.6).⁴⁸ As Rajak has observed, when Josephus talks about 'Greek', it is usually as part of a them-versus-us dichotomy (despite the fact he sometimes also uses the traditional Greek terminology of a dichotomy of Greeks versus barbarians).⁴⁹

Josephus' dreams have little in common with dreams in Greek literature. *Jewish Antiquities* describes Jewish cultural memory to a Greek audience, but

make little concession to that audience beyond writing in the Greek language. As we have noted, his interest in the immortality of the soul might be said to be in line with Greek philosophy, but for the most part, his use of dream reports represents a straightforward blend of Near Eastern and Roman. This can be seen particularly in his rewriting of certain dreams from the Hebrew Bible in *Jewish Antiquities*. As we have seen, Near Eastern dreams tend to be quite straightforward message dreams, while the Roman elite are expected to be able to interpret a symbolic dream for themselves – a particular interest in the interpretation of obscure symbolic dreams might be said to be a Greek trait. Josephus, confronted with certain dreams from the Bible which were more complex and required interpretation, claimed that the ruler who received the dream had, in fact, understood it at the time, but forgot. Describing a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, Josephus claims that God revealed the meaning of the dream to the king in his sleep, but that the king forgot it when he woke up (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 10.195). He reports the same problem in the story of Joseph, claiming that Pharaoh saw the explanation of both his strange dreams at the same time as the dream, but when he woke up, he had forgotten the explanation, but remembered the dream (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.75). This is an addition to the account in Genesis, which simply records the dreams and makes no mention of an explanation given before Joseph interprets them (Genesis 41.1–8). Most of the dreams Josephus records are straightforward message dreams, not requiring interpretation.⁵⁰ This attitude towards significant dreams, which assumes that dreams sent by God are easily understood, as their message needs to be understood and acted upon, is quite Near Eastern. Greek ideas about dreams and the uses of dreams in Greek literature play no part in Josephus' use of dreams. Josephus' engagements with Greek culture are all about demonstrating the intellectual superiority of his subaltern Jewish identity.

As we have observed, in terms of language and education, Philo is Greek. Even his understanding of Hebrew scriptures is filtered through Greek translation, and he is a Greek philosopher, apparently by profession. However, he is also a Jew, proud of his Jewish heritage and keen to study the Jewish religion, albeit in translation. He applies the principles and methods of Greek philosophy to promote a deeper understanding of Jewish theology, on dreams as on other subjects, and works to blend the two cultures as harmoniously as possible. Philo is able almost entirely to ignore the politically dominant culture of Rome. He engages with Rome when it directly and adversely affects himself, as his *Embassy to Gaius* and *Against Flaccus* can testify. But he feels no pride in being an inhabitant (possibly a citizen) of the Roman empire and his chief concern is with his own subaltern culture, with the Egyptian culture he came into contact with regularly and with the politically subaltern but intellectually dominant Greek culture.

Philo is much less interested in the Romans *because* he does not have the weight of an unpleasant autobiographical and potentially hostile cultural memory pressing down on him, as Josephus does. Like Philo, Josephus uses a Greek medium to explain cultural memories of the Jews. However, for Josephus, the whole endeavour is overshadowed by elements of his own, autobiographical, memory. His defection to Rome hangs over all his work, and his notable interest in dreams is symptomatic of his constant and overriding concern, to deal with and justify that decision. The underlying shame of his actions and his desire to reconcile his own memories with a hostile group memory of his actions during the war becomes the driving force behind his work. He is not ashamed of being Jewish, but he is perhaps ashamed of his actions during the Jewish War and seeks to convince himself, as much as anyone else, that he was in the right.

Josephus is forced to engage with the politically dominant culture by his own past actions. He acknowledges the intellectual dominance of the Greeks, writing in Greek ostensibly for a 'Greek' audience, but even when he seems to be talking about Greece, as in the story of the high priest and Alexander, his primary concern is with his own interactions with Rome. His attempt to write a history of his own, subaltern culture is dominated by not one, but two dominant cultures, forcing him to write Roman history in a Greek form of discourse and mediate his description of his own heritage through both of these powers. His competing identities are at odds with each other, his claim to be a loyal Jew at odds with the actions that led to his becoming a Roman citizen. And so his work mixes up all three elements, driven by the need to reconcile these different parts of himself and present a coherent whole to the world.

Notes

- 1 The construction of ethnic and cultural identity is a popular topic at the present time and has been treated by a number of scholars; see Niehoff 2001: 2–5 for some of the most important recent theories.
- 2 See for example Barth's deconstruction of how we define ethnicity – an ethnic group being one which is mainly self-perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, makes up a field of communication and interaction (usually with a particular language) and in which members self-identify and are identified as belonging to the group – and his discussion of which elements could or should be emphasized in the study of ethnic groups; Barth 1969: 10–15.
- 3 Assmann 2000: 17 (see also Assmann 2006: 6–7). The three stages of social memory, according to Assmann, are 'communicative memory' (*kommunikatives Gedächtnis*), by which individual, autobiographical memories are transmitted between individuals, 'collective memory' (*kulturelles Gedächtnis*), shared memories whose task is to transmit a collective identity, and 'cultural memory' (*kulturelle Gedächtnis*), shared memories which become part of a tradition, beyond the three-generation cycle of communicative memory; Assmann 2000: 13–19 (see also Assmann 2006: 3–8).

- 4 Rajak 2002: 6–7.
- 5 Niehoff 2001: 138.
- 6 Barth 1969: 32–33.
- 7 See Niehoff 2001: 8.
- 8 For a detailed introduction to Philo's work, see Royse 2009.
- 9 See Graesholt 1992: 98.
- 10 Hilgert offers a summary of scholarship on this subject and concludes that he was both 'a loyal Jew and a Hellenist'; Hilgert 1995: 15.
- 11 A useful brief biography of Josephus can be found at Freedman 1977: 17. See also Rajak 1983.
- 12 See Gramsci 1971: 20.
- 13 Loomba 1998: 231. Loomba also questions whether the intellectual can represent the voice of the subaltern in general; this is an important point to bear in mind, but outside the scope of this paper, as the two case studies we are dealing with are firmly intellectual and can only be taken to represent the interests of intellectuals.
- 14 Rajak 2002: 7.
- 15 Jews were well established in Alexandria and Alexandrian Jews seem to have been on equal social and economic footing with everyone else in Alexandria, living in all five districts and found in all social classes (see Graesholt 1992: 97–98). However, the 'main' culture of the city could be said to be Greek.
- 16 Rajak 2002: 8.
- 17 This theme can be read in both *Jewish Antiquities* and *Against Apion*; see Dench 2005: 345 and Whitmarsh 2007: 80.
- 18 One dream that is reported by both is Jacob's dream of the ladder. Philo discusses this dream, along with other dreams of Jacob, at length; Josephus, on the other hand, mentions it only briefly (Philo, *On Dreams*, 1.6–1.188; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.278–283; see also Genesis 28.10–22). Feldman has noted that it is surprising that Josephus does not seem particularly interested in Jacob and suggests that this is because Josephus identified Esau with Rome, and therefore wanted to play down the importance of the struggle between Jacob and Esau because of his own pro-Roman interests (Feldman 1988: 102). However the case may be, the fact remains that only the two writers' depictions of the dream interpreter Joseph offer a real chance for direct comparison of dream reports in their works.
- 19 See Harrison 2010: 92.
- 20 For a more detailed description and comparison of Near Eastern and Greek dreams, see Harrison 2010: 89–101, 107–125.
- 21 Calpurnia's dream appears at: Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 1.7.2; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 2.57.2; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63; Suetonius, *Divine Julius*, 81.3; Appian, *Civil Wars*, 2.16.115; Julius Obsequens, 67. Octavian's doctor's dream is reported briefly at Appian, *Civil War*, 4.14.110; Suetonius, *Divine Augustus*, 91.1; Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, 2.70.1; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, 1.7.
- 22 Niehoff 2001: 7.
- 23 A number of other philosophical ideas on dreams mentioned in Cicero's *On Divination*, 1.20.39, 1.29–1.30, 1.33.72, 2.48.100, 2.49–2.52, 2.58, 2.65.134. See also Harrison 2010: 65–72.
- 24 See Harrison 2010: 68–70.

- 25 See Harrisson 2010: 285.
- 26 See Harrisson 2010: 276.
- 27 Harrisson 2010: 286.
- 28 Niehoff 2001: 66.
- 29 Whitmarsh 2007: 84.
- 30 Cazeaux 1995: 47.
- 31 See Niehoff 2001: 63.
- 32 Mendelson 1988: 22. The treatise on Moses is more positive overall. Mendelson points to a particular passage in the *On Joseph* in which Jacob expresses concerns about the influence of Egyptians over the youth, which has no Biblical parallel and which Mendelson therefore interprets as Philo's own thoughts, arguing that the temptation to assimilation was a concern to Philo and that Philo felt that maintaining ancestral Jewish traditions was essential (Philo, *On Joseph*, 254; Mendelson 1988: 22–23). See also Cazeaux, who identifies this passage as a key part of the *On Joseph* (Cazeaux 1995: 63). Cazeaux argues that the difference between Abraham and Moses on the one hand, and Joseph on the other, for Philo, was that Joseph chose to settle in Egypt; this is what makes him less worthy than the other two (Cazeaux 1995: 77).
- 33 Josephus also displays an antagonistic attitude towards Egyptians, but for him this is a less immediate concern; see Dench 2005: 357.
- 34 A brief reference to Flaccus' nightmares and a metaphorical reference to dreams are not substantial enough to constitute dream reports (Philo, *Against Flaccus*, 164–165, 177).
- 35 Graesholt 1992: 109.
- 36 Niehoff 2001: 146, 155–156. Niehoff also argues that Philo criticizes classical symposia using Roman-style rhetoric and that, where Philo denied Greek identity and culture to the Egyptians, he identified the Romans with it; Niehoff 2001: 150, 158.
- 37 On the cultural imagination, see Harrisson 2010: 236–243.
- 38 In this justification, we can see all the different elements of Josephus' identity engaged with one another; a concern with royalty that is much more Near Eastern than Greek or Roman, an interest in the immortality of the soul that suggests an interest in Greek philosophy, and an interest in dream-omens relating to political leaders that is characteristic of Roman period history and biography.
- 39 Thanks to Niall Livingstone for assistance with this translation.
- 40 See further Gray, who argues that Josephus implies that dream interpreters need a special kind of wisdom (Gray 1993: 67).
- 41 See footnote in the Loeb edition (Marcus 1937: 471).
- 42 Josephus often seems to identify with the Biblical Joseph, and Gray has argued that Josephus projected his own 'experience of revelation' through dreams onto the Old Testament (Gray 1993: 28). See also Niehoff, who suggests that Joseph in particular was often portrayed as especially wise (Niehoff 1992: 88).
- 43 See further Rajak 1983: 186–187.
- 44 See for example Rajak on the *Jewish Wars* (Rajak 1983: 188).
- 45 Writers from Classical Athens and Republican Rome, naturally, display a marked antipathy towards the idea of monarchy and monarchs and this ideology persists into the Roman Empire, despite the fall of the republic. Ancient Near Eastern dream reports, on the other hand, are frequently concerned with legitimizing monarchy; see Harrisson 2010: 90–93.

- 46 Whitmarsh 2007: 78.
- 47 Goodman 1994: 335.
- 48 See Dench 2005: 354–355.
- 49 Rajak 2002: 139.
- 50 Occasional exceptions include the dream of Archelaus, told twice and each time requiring interpretation by Simon the Essene (Josephus, *On the Jewish War*, 2.111–113; *Jewish Antiquities*, 17.345–348). For a complete catalogue of dreams recorded by Josephus, see Harrison 2010: 348–349.

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Pausanias' Egypt

Martin Bommas

The Greek historian and traveller Pausanias lived and wrote in the second century AD when ancient Greece was under Roman rule. His work *periegesis* ('description') is the most extensive and richest text on mainland Greece surviving from Antiquity. It serves as an encyclopaedia with intensive remarks on local customs and traditions, rather than a traveller's experience.¹ Arranged as a topographical account, Pausanias' *periegesis* consists largely of descriptions of places, buildings, monuments and works of art, including historical and mythical accounts linked with the sites he describes.

In true encyclopaedic manner, the author only rarely shines through with his own opinions allowing the *periegesis* to be a remarkably neutral travelogue of Greece, her monuments and her religious cults during Roman occupation. There can be little doubt that Pausanias was mainly interested in religion in its various forms and local peculiarities, as long as they were of some importance to the history and identity of the *poleis* he was discussing.² Since Pausanias' focus was to a great extent on traditions or legends (*muthoi*) and sights (*theoremata*), his accounts deserve attention within the larger context of memory and its various ways of storage. This concept is made clear by the author himself, who explains the rationale behind his work that might have occupied him for up to 15 years between the late AD 160s to about AD 180,³ if not longer:

These in my opinion were the things most worth knowing at Athens, the legends with the sights: from the beginning my discussion has picked out from the masses of material the things that should belong to history.

Paus. 1.39.3⁴

When describing the overwhelming amount of noteworthy monuments at Delphi he admits:

I shall record those of the dedications that seemed to me most memorable.

Paus. 10.9.1⁵

Although scholars generally agree that Pausanias' methods led to a reliable account of *polis* history, it 'seems sometimes difficult to explain mistakes or omissions'.⁶ Despite the impression of Pausanias as a man confident in his own abilities and knowledge, a number of questions arise when confronting his travelogue with, for example, archaeological data. This is even more remarkable since Pausanias' work is apparently based on a detailed work plan, including prior knowledge of sites to be visited and later described by him personally.⁷ At places where archaeological remains are absent and Pausanias' evidence cannot be challenged, his accounts have to be taken with a pinch of salt which leaves his modern readers, especially, sometimes unsatisfied. However, the overall assessment of Pausanias' reliability is positive throughout: Pausanias is generally regarded as trustworthy in all those cases where he cannot be proven to have gone wrong.⁸ Deservedly, Pausanias' *periegesis* counts as 'the most important tool of the archaeological coverage of Greece'.⁹

This study does not aim to challenge Pausanias' trustworthiness in 'all things Greek'.¹⁰ Rather it shall examine only those passages in which Pausanias reveals his take on the cult of Egyptian gods in ancient Greece, which reached its peak when Pausanias travelled the country.¹¹ As an outsider who was not initiated into the mysteries of Isis, Pausanias' account has to count as a neutral bystander's observation of the Egyptian cults within the *polis* societies of the time, with special focus on Boiotia and Phocis. Since Pausanias is mainly concerned with history and social and religious identity, this study will examine the extent to which cultural memory as a tool can help to identify the intellectual background against which the acceptance of Egyptian cults in mainland Greece remained successful until the end of the fourth century AD. With regard to the sanctuary for Egyptian gods at Tithorea and amplified by Pausanias' point of view, we may hope to gain an overview of how ancient Greek societies continuously shaped cultural identity by focusing on religious ritual, even if the cult practice was of long forgotten foreign origin. It does not aim to offer a complete interpretation of Pausanias' view on ancient Greek memory techniques but, rather, dig some trenches across this under-investigated Pausanian site to identify his and his contemporaries' memories of Egypt.

READING PAUSANIAS ARCHAEOLOGICALLY

By the time Pausanias travelled Greece Egyptian cults had been fully integrated into Greek religious culture for over six centuries already. Characterized by two main waves of conquering the religious scene in the Aegean world during the

third century BC and the second century AD, the Egyptian cults focusing on the worship of Isis, Serapis, Harpocrates and Anubis had successfully reached the hinterland during the second century BC.¹² These having become the most important foreign cults in Greece, it is little wonder that Pausanias mentions holy places where Egyptian gods are worshipped alongside classical Greek sites. In total, Pausanias presents seventeen *poleis* throughout his work where Egyptian cults were practised. His main criterion for qualifying as an entry is the presence of cult places like temples or shrines or even statues, i.e. *res sacrae* that are generally regarded as immobile.¹³ It should probably be said that no other approach leads to any result, since mobile religious objects, like small altars, statuettes etc, do not allow for any conclusions about cult practices, religious intentions or the identification of places and their worshippers.¹⁴ The following overview shall present the passages within Pausanias' *periegesis* that refer to Egypt and the Egyptian mystery cults. As opposed to previous discussions of these passages,¹⁵ actual archaeological remains will be mentioned where necessary:

(1) At Kenchreai (Paus. 2.2.3), the eastern harbour of Corinth, Pausanias mentions a sanctuary of Isis:

In Kenchreai is a shrine of Aphrodite with a stone statue, beyond it by the sea-wall a bronze of Poseidon, and on the other side of the harbour sanctuaries of Asklepios and Isis.¹⁶

This sanctuary, well known for serving as the location for Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (otherwise known as the *Golden Ass*), Book XI, is archaeologically attested.¹⁷ From the sanctuary's architecture it becomes obvious that initiated followers of Isis and a non-initiated audience of rituals had different access possibilities to the building.¹⁸ The latter group, to which Pausanias belonged, was only allowed to enter two forecourts which led to a rostrum on which the publicly accessible rituals were carried out by priests. Although correct as far as Isis is concerned, the mention of Asklepios in Apuleius probably refers to Serapis. The Graeco-Egyptian god Serapis, who later became a dynastic god for the Ptolemies, was often equated with Asklepios in his capacity of a 'healing and hearing god'.¹⁹ Due to the sanctuary's restricted access, Pausanias fails to describe any details of the cult.

(2) At Corinth Pausanias mentions four sanctuaries for Egyptian gods:

Akrocorinth is the crest of the mountain over the city (...). On the way up to Akrocorinth there are enclosures of Isis, one called Pelagian Isis, the other Egyptian Isis, and two of Sarapis, one of them Sarapis in Canopus.

Paus. 2.4.7²⁰

As a matter of fact, a fifth chapel was found within the business quarter in the southern *stoa* of Corinth dating to Roman times, of which Pausanias makes no mention.²¹ Apart from this chapel, no other sanctuary for Egyptian cults has been excavated so far. The details presented by Pausanias identify him as a knowledgeable author: *Isis pelagia* is probably the most widespread form of Isis in the Aegean and linked with seafaring. However, the location of this chapel on a mountaintop is rather unusual, though not without parallel.²² Also, sanctuaries for the 'Egyptian Isis' were not common in Greece. On the other hand, *Serapis Canopus* also links to the Egyptian origins of these cults, but is better attested,²³ and may therefore be taken as a further hint of the possibility that Corinth had Egyptian cults available. How 'Egyptian' they really were cannot be said with any certainty, but like the island of Thera, the Corinthian sanctuaries might initially have been linked with Ptolemaic activities in the Aegean.²⁴

(3) Concerning Epidauros, Pausanias mentions:

a temple of Egyptian Health, Egyptian Asklepios, and Egyptian Apollo.

Paus. 2.27.7²⁵

The Egyptian Asklepios is most likely another form of Serapis while Apollon refers to Horus and also to Harpokrates (Horus-the-child, i. e. the child of Osiris and Isis). Most probably, 'Egyptian Health' (Hygieia) is to be taken as an euphemism for Isis, thus arriving at the classical triad Osiris (Serapis)–Isis–Horus. The temple in question has not been identified with any certainty. However, a building of the second century AD located 20 metres north of the Roman cistern²⁶ is a likely candidate for a cult building in which holy water played a major role.²⁷

(4) At Sparta, Pausanias mentions a 'temple for Sarapis' (Paus. 3.14.5) describing it at the most recent temple there. Since no further details are given²⁸ and, moreover, apart from some theophoric names from the second century AD,²⁹ his conclusions do not receive any backing from archaeological remains, Pausanias' view is impossible to verify.

(5) At Patras, Pausanias knows of two sanctuaries:

In the grove at Patrai there are also two sanctuaries of Sarapis, in one of which is the memorial of Aigyptos son of Belos.

Paus. 7.21.6³⁰

None of these sanctuaries are archaeologically attested.

(6) In Aigeria, Pausanias mentions the 'most ancient temple of Apollon' (Paus. 7.26.3). Due to the fact that the cult statue is described as being naked, this can either refer to Apollon or a statue of Harpokrates:³¹

There are some standing statues of Asklepios in a temple, and elsewhere a Sarapis and Isis in Pentelic stone like the others. Their principal cult is the Heavenly goddess but no one is allowed inside her sanctuary. They enter the sanctuary of the Syrian goddess on special days, observing ritual purity beforehand in various matters, including diet.³²

As observed by Rusch, there is no certainty as to whether these statues, including the one of Asklepios, were indeed placed in the temple of Apollon.³³ Given the fact that Pausanias frequently relates Asklepios with Serapis (see above entries 1 and 3), the author is most likely referring to the temple of Apollon/Harpokrates.

(7) At Mesene, Pausanias refers to a temple of Sarapis and Isis in the vicinity of the theatre (Paus. 4.32.5) and to Egyptian statues (Paus. 4.32.1). To date, there are no archaeological data to confirm this observation.

(8) A shrine of Isis is said to exist in Megaron (Paus. 1.41.4) but no archaeological remains confirm this view:

Not far from Hyllus' memorial is a shrine of Isis with one of Apollo and Artemis beside it.³⁴

(9) At Phlious, a temple of Isis is said to be centrally located at the Omphalos:

The Naval-stone is not far off, the centre of the entire Peloponnese if what they say is true. When you have gone past the Naval-stone they have an ancient sanctuary of Dionysos, and one of Apollo and another of Isis. The statue of Apollo is visible to everyone and so is that of Apollo, but only priests are allowed to see the one of Isis.

Paus. 2.13.7³⁵

A seemingly interesting point to Pausanias is the dichotomy between publicly open cults and the hidden mystery cults personified by the cult of Isis. As usual, Pausanias does not express his own views but prefers to mention one of the prominent places of the Peloponnese instead, where Greek cults are openly accessible while foreign cults are not. Here, Pausanias subliminally highlights differences between native and foreign cult practices which, however, become less apparent in the light of the mysteries of Eleusis and others. His intention to amplify national traditions of ancient Hellas has often been observed by modern scholars as being closely linked with Pausanias' view of history.³⁶

(10) At Methana, Pausanias mentions a temple of Isis (Paus. 2.34.1) but fails to give further details.

(11) At Troizen Pausanias refers to a shrine of Isis:

(...) you can see a shrine of Isis and one of Supreme Aphrodite above it, built here in the mother-city by Halikarnassians. (The statue of Isis was dedicated by the people of Troizen).

Paus. 2.32.6³⁷

The cult community of Isis and Aphrodite is well attested at other places³⁸ while the shrine for Isis is not.

(12) While describing ancient Hermione, Pausanias mentions cult places still existing (Paus. 2.34.10), among them a sanctuary for Athena with a collapsed roof and:

one built to Sarapis and Isis.³⁹

This sanctuary is equally not attested archaeologically.

BOIOTIA AND PHOCIS: HIT AND MISS

Boiotia, to which Pausanias refers in his book 10, is seemingly described in a different way than the outline of his preceeding chapters. While mainland Greece is dealt with in ways that suggest continuous travel, Boiotia seems to have been explored by Pausanias in return trips starting off from Thebes.⁴⁰ This has most probably to do with the fact that Thebes was the location of well-known Greek myths and an important capital for a long time in classical Greece and, therefore, had plenty to offer to the *periegesist*. Whether a lack of suitable accommodation in rural Boiotia added to Pausanias' focus on Thebes is difficult to determine.

Boiotia became a hotspot for Egyptian cults at a rather late date. Although the first cult communities were built up by freed slaves during the second century BC, the formerly isolated cult centres were much better organized by the start of the second century AD.⁴¹ Prominent sacred places in Boiotia and Phocis where Isis and especially Serapis were honoured were Hyampolis, Chaironeia, Orchomenos and Daulis. One reason for the spread of the Egyptian cults in the rural hinterland of mainland Greece was definitely a high number of freed slaves, some of whom were expressly grateful to Serapis and his benevolent intervention.⁴² Boiotians, on the other hand, also made up a considerable number of immigrants to Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy I (305–285 BC). Back in Egypt, they were regarded as skilful horsemen⁴³ and most of them were employed in the Egyptian army, especially in the cavalry. Among the new settlers in Egypt, they were apparently rather traditional in stressing the importance of their roots, but those who returned to their home country might have brought the religious concept of the Hellenized cult of Isis.

It is hardly surprising that Pausanias came across the prominent cult of Isis and Serapis when travelling in Boiotia and Phocis. Here, he gives accounts of not less than four temples, which leads to a high density in comparison with other regions. What makes both regions stand out against all the other landscapes described by Pausanias is the fact that the only lengthy treatise on the rituals of Isis he attempted is based on a temple located in remote Tithorea in Phocis. In addition, Pausanias did not describe all sanctuaries of Isis, nor even consider completeness. In fact, Boiotia and Phocis probably deserve attention for the sanctuaries of Isis Pausanias failed to mention, rather than for the single one he described with surprising enthusiasm.

For example, he mentions Orchomenos and Opus and the high road in between the two (Paus. 10.35.1) but fails to refer to the prominent cults for Egyptian gods located at this road's junctions,⁴⁴ hard to miss for any traveller. Also links to Isis in Koroneia are left out, even though the place is mentioned in his *periegesis* (Paus. 9.34.3). Although this can be taken as a hint that the cult centre no longer existed,⁴⁵ this is rather unlikely given the importance of the spot. Also Chaironeia is described (Paus. 9.40.5) but the shrine of Isis is left out, although of considerable importance for the region.⁴⁶ Daulis in Phocis is mentioned in detail (Paus. 10.4.5–7) but no reference is made to the sanctuary that certainly thrived there during the second century AD; at Hyampolis the cult of Artemis is mentioned (Paus. 10.35.4) but no reference is made to other cults.⁴⁷ Altogether, it is probably fair to say that Pausanias' account of Egyptian cults in Boiotia and Phocis is patchy and incomplete.

THE CULT OF ISIS AT TITHOREA ACCORDING TO PAUSANIAS

Incomplete as his account is, Pausanias seems to have been taken by a place in southern Phocis, called Tithorea.⁴⁸ Archaeological remains support the existence of a sanctuary for Egyptian gods of little importance other than to libertines. Therefore it is difficult to determine why Pausanias paid so much attention to this site. Taking into account that book 10 is regarded as ending abruptly and being less detailed than Pausanias' preceding descriptions,⁴⁹ his account of Tithorea clearly stands out for its length and detailed analysis. According to his own words, Pausanias visited the place in autumn over a period of three days which corresponded with the duration of the festival *inventio Osiridis* (*heuresis*), celebrated between 29 October and 2 November.⁵⁰

Surprisingly, Pausanias' report on the festival of Isis at Tithorea hardly received attention as an outstanding and unique description of the festival for Egyptian gods;⁵¹ apart from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* Book XI, this is the

second most important contemporary account of rituals for Egyptian gods in antiquity.

In the following, the complete passage (Paus. 10.32.13–17) will be presented in translation with a short commentary:

(a) The inaccessibility of the holy place

Five miles or so from Asklepios is a precinct with a sanctuary consecrated to Isis, the holiest sanctuary ever built by Greece for the Egyptian goddess. The Tithoreans have a sacred tradition that no one should live here, and no one can go into the holy place except those chosen by Isis and summoned by visions in their sleep. The gods of the underworld do the same in the cities on the Maiander, sending visionary dreams when they wish a man to enter the holy places.

Pausanias seems to have been fascinated by the fact that the cult of Isis was only open to initiated worshippers. Also in his description of Phlious (entry 9), he refers to this fact. His observation that the Egyptian gods appear in the dreams of their future worshippers is attested elsewhere, most prominently in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, a book that Pausanias could have known since it may have been written before the second half of the second century AD, although there is some debate about its actual date. His assertion that the sanctuary for Isis was the 'holiest sanctuary ever built by Greece' explains his reasons for going into all these details. There can be no doubt, however, that Pausanias' assumption is far fetched and lacks any proportionality, especially in the light of the sanctuary of Cenchreai where Pausanias must have witnessed a vivid, prosperous and wealthy cult society. As if he was aware of his exaggeration, in the postscript of his report on Tithorea he refers to background information gained from a Phoenician (Paus. 10.32.10), in order to strengthen the authority and reliability of his account.

(b) Cyclic continuity

At this Tithorean sanctuary, they celebrate a festival to Isis twice a year, one in spring, the other in autumn. Two days before each festival, those allowed to enter clean out the holy place in a way not to be spoken about, always bringing any remains they may find from consecrated victims thrown in at the last festival to the same place to be buried; I reckon the spot as about a quarter of a mile from the holy place.

It is a well-known fact that the festivals for Isis were held regularly and attended by large communities.⁵² Her festival in March/April during full moon, the *navigium Isidis (ploiapharia)*, was a spring festival to celebrate the annual reopening of the navy after the hibernal storms. The autumn festival (29

October–2 November) is known under the name *inventio Osiridis* (*heuresis*). Both were festivals which enjoyed international diffusion.⁵³ However, the Tithoreans' interest in burying the remains of the preceding season's sacrificial animals is not attested in any other place and is, therefore, difficult to assess. Most probably, this has to do with Pausanias' recollection of ancient Egyptian animal worship, of which he probably knew that sacred animals were regarded as divine, and therefore received Osirian burials. However, the two cannot be mixed since sacred animals were never sacrificed in Egypt. Whether the late burial of the animal bones has to do with a faint understanding of the lengthy burial rites in ancient Egypt, usually involving mummification, is unknown but at least probable. Whether the Tithoreans followed this unique interpretation of ancient Egyptian rites themselves or whether Pausanias made this up, possibly while observing the mopping up of the preceding festival's remains, is impossible to say.

(c) Public festival

That is what they do in the sanctuary on that day, on the next the traders make their booths out of reeds or any other material handy. On the last of the three days they hold a fair, selling slaves and cattle of every kind, and even clothes and gold and silver; then from mid-day they turn their attention to sacrificing.

Although the essential elements of these festivals were part of the mystery cult, cult officials organized public festivals as part of the main religious festivals in spring and autumn. These were not only popular among the worshippers of Egyptian gods but always drew non-initiated guests like the local community and tradesmen, too. Festivals are integral aspects of social groups and markers of identity.⁵⁴ As with other mystery cults in ancient Greece,⁵⁵ the candidness of the Egyptian cults towards the non-initiated was a general feature and probably one of the reasons for the remarkable success the Egyptian cults enjoyed in the known world, including Egypt itself.⁵⁶ Pausanias gives a hint concerning the time schedule of non-religious activities when pointing out that the market sales were held only on the second day and the morning of the third day.

(d) Sacrifice

The more prosperous people slaughter cattle and deer, the less well off even slaughter geese and guinea-hens, but the use of sheep, pigs, or goats would be against the sacred law. Those who burn the victims ... send into the holy place ... must wind the victims in long bands of silk or linen, this is the Egyptian way of preparing them. Everything sacrificed goes in procession, some of them walk with the victims into the holy place while the others incinerate the booths in front of it and rush away.

Even the fondest reader, so far inclined to accept a glimpse of truth in Pausanias' observations, must confess that the author most likely was taken away by the exotic feel of the cult of Isis during the afternoon rites of the third day. Most of what follows in his fourth paragraph does not match with any cult practice attested so far. Scholars who have discussed this passage have described it as being 'inconvenient'⁵⁷ and 'unusual'.⁵⁸

Indeed, pigs, sheep and goats were never on the menu of any cult practice that called itself Egyptian and therefore might not be worth mentioning. The reason Pausanias stresses this point still might have to do with its unusual character when compared with other Greek mystery religions: the sacred meal of the 'Holy Men' which took place in the sanctuary of the Great Goddess in Messene consisted of pigs, rams and sheep.⁵⁹ This, again, can be taken as an example of Pausanias' familiarity with the concepts of comparative religious studies.

Other sections of his account are even less convincing. It is probably fair to say that wrapping the victims after their killing with long straps of linen is implausible since the conservation of bodies of dead animals was not a requisite of the sacrificial arrangements in ancient Egypt, nor Greece. The reader is obviously being led to believe that the practice observed is authentic because it has something to do with mummy binding, an ancient Egyptian practice the major outlines of which were probably known among Greek cult communities. Again, this does not stand the test of comparison with true Egyptian rites since sacrificial animals were never burnt in Egypt, nor were they conserved in mummy wrappings: sacred animals were wrapped in linen and bindings only in order to prepare them for the transformation into their netherworldly existence.⁶⁰ Pausanias, instead, calls this way of preparation of offering 'the Egyptian way,' although it seems to be fairly impossible that he has witnessed such a procedure himself. His description can be dismissed as belonging to a world of make-believe rooted in a Greek misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian religious cults.

(e) Secrecy of cult practices

They say an unsanctified man with no right to go down to the holy place once went inside out of curiosity and daring, as the fire was just beginning to burn. He saw the spirits of the dead thronging everywhere: he went home to Tithorea, told the story of what he had seen, and breathed his last.⁶¹

While presenting himself as an eye witness over the first four passages, the additional account given by Pausanias in the fifth passage depends on hearsay. According to his report, victims offered in the cult of Egyptian gods were regarded as unveiling their divine aspects during the process of being burnt, or, in other words, burning the offerings turned them into divine. Divineness, therefore, must have been thought to be triggered by man. Apart from the fact

that Pausanias stands in stark contrast to ancient Egyptian cult practice and even to rituals belonging to the cult of Hellenized Egyptian gods, this passage exemplifies the highly flexible productiveness of cult practices that are not based on tradition but interpretation. Once more, Egyptians are presented as both religious and cunning.⁶²

THE EGYPTIAN CULT AT TITHOREA, PAUSANIAS' VIEW OF A NON-INITIATED VISITOR

Due to the diffusion of the cults of Egyptian gods in the Mediterranean and consequently the high amount of literary, epigraphical, numismatic and other archaeological evidence, the majority of sanctuaries for Egyptian gods in Greece are attested by an overlap of sources. Only rarely is a sanctuary or its cult community known through one attestation only and without supporting evidence from buildings, *res sacrae*, dedications or even theophoric names.⁶³ In Tithorea two altars with dedications to Isis, Sarapis and Anubis have survived, as well as eleven contracts of enfranchisement.⁶⁴ The altars date to the second century AD and can be described as contemporary to Pausanias' visit to the place. No earlier evidence has survived.



Figure 5.1. The town walls of Hellenistic times are the only visible ancient remains of Tithorea (photograph M. Bommas)

The lack of further archaeological data is probably due to the fact that Tithorea is a place not well excavated. Still today, the inhabitants of Ano Tithorea or Velitsa live within the impressive ancient fortifications which date to the Hellenistic period (Figure 5.1).

Why Tithorea?

It is difficult to establish why Pausanias chose Tithorea to make his point about Egyptian cults. It was a relatively recent addition to well-established centres of worship in the region, hardly thriving before the second century BC. Describing Tithorea as 'the holiest sanctuary ever built by Greece for the Egyptian goddess' can be disqualified as exaggeration. In the past, scholars have characterized Pausanias as writer who 'compensates for his lack of knowledge by making himself out to be a model scholar'⁶⁵ and dismissed his account on Tithorea as an '*unbequemer Einzelbeleg*'.⁶⁶ Whether true or not, this does not explain Pausanias' surprising focus on Tithorea as a place which – as far as we know – had nothing to make it stand out against other Isiac cult places.

Pausanias' restrained reception of Plutarch

From Tithorea it is only a small step to refer to Plutarch, an older contemporary to Pausanias.⁶⁷ First, Plutarch lived in Chaeronea, a then rather important town with a sanctuary for Isis and Serapis, only 18 kilometres away from Tithorea. Secondly, Plutarch wrote a ground-breaking work on Isis and Osiris (*De Iside et Osiride*) in which he made a serious contribution to the research on and re-discovery of the roots of the Isis religion.⁶⁸ Thirdly, Pausanias was apparently familiar with Plutarch's oeuvre, although probably not without some disapproval, as can be seen in other instances. Habicht points to the fact that Pausanias distanced himself from Plutarch's treatise 'On the Malignity of Herodotus', in which he tried to show that Herodotus falsely maligned the Boiotians when he described them as having been compliant allies of the Persians.⁶⁹ Unlike Herodotus, Pausanias excuses the Boiotians and clearly states that they failed in that duty.

After having exercised this exclusion principle, it seems plausible that Pausanias targeted Plutarch simply by having chosen Tithorea, in fact a remote spot. Only recently established and therefore being an insignificant addition to the established places of worship for the Egyptian gods in Phocis, one is well advised to doubt Pausanias' view of Tithorea as Greece's main sanctuary for Isis. Whether his deliberate exaggeration is aimed at minimizing and ridiculing

Plutarch's achievement in his own backyard by pointing the less intellectual, practical side of Egyptian cult practice is difficult to establish with certainty, but at least likely.

At this time, Plutarch was probably the most outstanding non-Egyptian authority on Egyptian religion and it seems unlikely that Pausanias, being familiar with others of Plutarch's works, did not know of his studies on Egyptian religion.⁷⁰ In fact, Pausanias' account of the myth of Osiris coincides with Plutarch's explanations, and moreover, both agree with the dating of the festival *inventio Osiridis* in autumn.⁷¹ Apparently being unable to add to Plutarch's outstanding academic achievement, the unusual Tithorean cult practice as described by Pausanias was probably an all too welcome opportunity to reduce Plutarch's rather academic approach to absurdity. In order to support his view and prove the soundness of his meticulously collected and verified evidence, he cites a Phoenician eyewitness (Paus. 10.32.18) rather than the scholar Plutarch who already during his lifetime enjoyed a 'decisive impact'⁷² and would have been the obvious point of reference. By opting for a rather ethnographical approach, Pausanias does not just find himself in a long tradition of Greek writers.⁷³ Indirectly, Pausanias points out that researching an actual cult practice as an eye witness enjoys advantages against Plutarch's academic approach.

MOCKERY: AN ANCIENT GREEK ANSWER TO FOREIGN TRADITIONS

Scholars have repeatedly used Pausanias' remarks on sanctuaries for Egyptian gods to prove his averseness against Isis and Serapis.⁷⁴ However, it is probably fair to say that if he disfavoured the foreign gods against traditional Greek divinities, this never shines through. His account of the cult practised in Tithorea, biased and exaggerated as it is, never aims at deconstructing the cults of the Egyptian gods and their importance, if only because the majority of his readers were probably educated worshippers of Isis themselves.⁷⁵ Mockery of ancient Egyptian customs and religious beliefs, on the other hand, has a long tradition,⁷⁶ starting with Herodotus and Aischylos, who even mocked Herodotus' mockery.⁷⁷ It is broadly accepted that mystery religions led to cult communities and efficient networks⁷⁸ which helped to promote financial and social success. Members of mystery cult communities most likely accepted mockery as an outsider's way to unwillingly support the subject of their laughter. Since the examples of mockery known are not offensive, these views formed part of the self-affiliation of members of non-native cult communities. To a great extent, this identity was shaped by cultural memory of society as a whole.

FAILED MEMORY OR A SHIFT IN MEANING?

As shown above, Pausanias' account of mainland Greece includes seventeen mentions of cults of Egyptian gods. His report is far from being complete but it gives an important overview of the acceptance of a cult which first settled in Greek harbour cities and on islands before conquering the hinterland. Moreover, it shows that although Pausanias' main interest might have been in places belonging to Greece's prehistory and what is known as classical Greece, including ancient traditions and customs,⁷⁹ he also kept an eye open for contemporary religious developments. When we consider the inclusion of cults of Isis, Spawforth's view that Pausanias 'had only slight concern for objects after 150 BC'⁸⁰ must be challenged. What has been overlooked in the past is the relevance of Pausanias' account for the various fields of operation of memory. At first glance, the *periegete* earns credit for bringing Isis on the map for non-initiated readers: this map can be described as a virtual mental map which confirms the *status quo* but also serves as an aide for future generations to identify places of religious and historic importance.⁸¹ Pausanias made Isis part of Greece and helped to shape the memory of Egyptian cults for centuries to come. Undoubtedly, some places described by Pausanias had assumed meaning beyond their initial relevance by his time. The mechanics of this shift of meaning and the reasons for it have to be investigated first if Pausanias' report on places like Tithorea is to be seen as describing the common, rather than the 'unusual'. Otherwise, one would accuse Pausanias of having distorted the facts willingly in order to mislead his audience about the religious and social values of his observations. The key to the solution of this problem is the role played by institutionalized memory and its extent.

One has to accept that all ancient objects and texts have experienced a shift of meaning at least once in their lifetime. For example, an ancient Greek statue copied in a Roman workshop, excavated in Rome during the seventeenth century, displayed today in a museum and accessible to school pupils has successfully lived through five meanings, dependant on the viewer's own perspective, interest, education and memory. Another example is the well-known bust of Queen Nefertiti, excavated in 1912 at Tell el-Amarna and kept in Berlin today. For the inhabitants of Berlin it may stand as a symbol of the city surviving the bombings of WWII: proudly displayed on posters and even 70 Pfennig stamps during the 1990s as a heroine of the Germans' survival after years of war, Neferiti's bust has today become a symbol of struggle over cultural property.

Memories that endure or are expected to endure must change according to the ever-shifting requirements of those who hold them, making memories part of a dynamic process rather than a stagnant one. On the other hand, memory

is a volatilizing element of every society. If not stored properly or refreshed by appropriate media it will not survive the struggle of events applying for a constant place in any society's daily reality. Memory stored by suitable media by those capable of taking care of it is essential to provide a society with an agreed pattern of 'memorable' events that shape its identity in a distinguishable form.

Not all events are suitable for memorization. In fact, it is only those experiences that keep a substantial part of their meaning while allowing for change at the same time that survive. Those places of memory that stand the test of time are places with cultural meaning, some of them can even become symbolic. They stand out because they do not suffer from updating or modernization: architecture (such as the Eiffel Tower after receiving an elevator), legal texts (such as the *code civile*, parts of which were integrated in the German civil code, the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* of 1900), religious texts (such as the Bible in its various translations), songs (such as Chuck Berry's *Johnny B. Goode* in a version by Jimi Hendrix from 1968), paintings (such as the variations of the *hodigitria* motif in the Orthodox Churches of Greece and Russia), and even everyday objects such as cars (such as the current model of the Mini Cooper). Stored and established memory of a social group that has the ability to adapt to changing realities, independent from time and space, is cultural memory, even if its basic elements have changed in a substantial way and separated it from its original meaning, which might be recognizable only in isolated words or phrases. Memory that can adapt to new realities is creative and, therefore, to be separated from reception which aims at re-invention by using well-established isolated patterns mostly for aesthetic reasons, often without engaging with meaning. While reception is based on individual research with a defined aim, cultural memory is unintended in its movements, if guided by neutrally operating media and located in the minds of social groups.

MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Another aspect of memory is also worth exploring: the ancient Greek memory of the Egyptian past. Pausanias not only invites his readers – ancient as well as modern – to investigate the ancient Greek past, but introduces a foreign culture, nowhere else as successfully as with his account on Tithorea. Here, a new dimension is added which is purposeful in the way his Greek audience's identity is reflected by observing the identities of outsiders. For modern scholars, this approach is even more challenging, since the accessibility of storage media is obviously limited. The deeper scholars dive into history, the more intriguing it is to investigate how past societies experienced their own past,⁸² let alone how they perceived the past(s) of others. Pausanias' view on Egypt can add to this

discussion by introducing memory culture as a tool to distinguish between individual memory and socially agreed memory within a defined context. The most obvious link between Pausanias' description of Tithorea and memory is the three-day festival itself. Celebrating and remembering goes hand in hand with shaping identity and an awareness of history, provided festivals are organized by social communities such as *poleis* and not by politicians.⁸³ The awareness of a community's history and identity, including religious self-expression, is mainly expressed by rituals which function as promoters and stabilizers of memory.

As indicated above, three instances can be identified that refer to views on ancient Egypt embedded in contemporary Greek culture and understanding: animal worship, mummification and the burning of offerings. All three topics are meaningful aspects of what was perceived as parts of Egyptian rituals and are therefore focal points for the understanding of Pausanias' view of Tithorean identity. There can be no doubt, on the other hand, that the majority of non-Egyptians never had the chance to witness Egyptian religious practice themselves or were familiar with the studies of Herodotus and the likes of him. How did the ancient Greeks come to know what they learnt to remember? How does memory of culture function if it is not personally experienced? Which evidence fuels memory (and which does not) and how is it stored in the case of highly illiterate societies? And finally, in the face of Pausanias' obvious indebtedness to Herodotean story-telling techniques, is this what local myth would have looked like – deeply rooted in cultural memory rather than research? While indigenous myths have naturally developed over time and are embedded within a society's memory, it seems obvious that in ancient times the same model was used when 'new' myths made their appearance. Instead of investigating the adopted cults or religions, *interpretatio Graeca* helped to overcome cultic misconceptions by translation rather than conscious transformation. It is obvious that this approach was supported by Egyptian *pastophoroi* who ministered the earliest cults for Egyptian gods in the Aegean,⁸⁴ presumably due to their sometimes doubtful understanding of ancient Egyptian ritual practice and their failure to correct the religious opinions of those who paid their salaries.

MEMORY AND RITUAL: ANIMAL WORSHIP AND MUMMIFICATION IN EGYPT

Cultural memory⁸⁵ – as opposed to individual memory – describes the ability of societies to organize, code and store memory, sometimes with considerable expenditure. In principle, this storage function can be fulfilled by a variety of modern media: photographs,⁸⁶ monuments, repeated documentaries on television and movies as well as by publicly available books, the internet and

in some cases even archives. Ancient societies, however, were not information societies and access to media was restricted due to illiteracy, remoteness of settlements or a general lack of monuments. Visitor's graffiti from Egypt, on the other hand, give proof that where these media existed – such as in form of funerary monuments – people were eager to visit and comment on them.⁸⁷

However, in most cases defined by a lack of accessible media, myth takes over the role of an explanatory guide to the outside world and shapes what is regarded as memorable.⁸⁸ Myth has the advantage that it can be performed and made visible to a certain extent on which decision makers have to agree first; the performances of myth could either be restricted (for example the cult of Demeter at Eleusis) or open to the public (such as the Osirian funerary procession rites in Egypt).

In ancient societies, religious events were prime venues for members to congregate, whether or not the worshipped divinity was according to one's *religio*. Here, people would observe those parts of the ceremonies or rituals that were open to the public without any further restrictions. But because these performances of whatever origin were based on myth of which, especially in urban areas like ancient Rome, widespread knowledge can be assumed,⁸⁹ they were regarded as reliable and reflecting religious identity. Religious feasts, festivals or celebrations which involved a public audience were not limited in time, location and audience: funerals took place whenever someone died and were sometimes accompanied by processions, like ancient Egyptian burials that lasted from sunrise to dawn and re-enacted the myth of Osiris. Festivals of Isis in the Mediterranean were celebrated twice a year on agreed dates while, for example, the festival of Venus described by Ovid (*Fasti* 4.133–138) during which women removed the goddess' jewellery to be washed and dried only took place once a year.

It is through the observation of religious events that members of ancient societies shaped their religious knowledge but also their identity, distinguishable from other social groups who followed different patterns. One obvious aspect of Egyptian cults that caught the interest of Greeks and Romans alike – although largely disfavoured⁹⁰ – was animal worship. Apuleius (AD c.125–c.180) in his colourful description of the festival of Isis at the Corinthian harbour of Kenchraeai in his *Metamorphoses* book XI, describes in detail the presence of animals in the cult of Isis as obvious to any observer:

I also saw a tame bear dressed as a lady and being borne along in a litter; a monkey in a cloth cap and saffron-coloured Phrygian dress to look like Ganymede the shepherd-boy and holding a gold cup; and an ass with a pair of wings fastened to him walking along with a lame old man, recognizable as Pegasus and Bellerophon respectively, a comic duo.

Apuleius, *Met.* 11.8⁹¹

Carnavalesque appearances like the one described by Apuleius are what shaped the memory of ancient Egyptian animal worship outside Egypt more than religious meaning. Deliberately used as crowd pullers, colourful public processions displaying exotic animals and Egyptian dresses were probably among the most visible signs of Egyptian cults in the Aegean and, later, Rome. This does not mean that the public always agreed with what was presented during such a spectacle: Ancient Egyptian animal worship was also probably the biggest obstacle for the spread of Egyptian religion in the Aegean.⁹² Not only that the depiction of some Egyptian gods in animal or combined animal-human form aroused amusement and even contemptuousness among Greek observers. Although Roman, Augustus' well-known remark following his declination of an invitation to visit the Apis bull by saying that he was accustomed to worship gods and not cattle⁹³ probably expressed Greek feelings, too.⁹⁴ However sceptical Greek views on animal cults were, unforgettable encounters with animal mask-wearing priests certainly helped to distinguish Egyptian cults from other religious practices in Greece and shaped their identity.

CONFIRMING PREJUDICES: ALLUSIONS TO MUMMIFICATION IN OFFERING RITUAL

As opposed to the presence of animals in Isiac processions, mummification was not practised in ancient Greece and therefore not to be observed outside Egypt.⁹⁵ In ancient Egypt, a dead individual's body had to be treated physically and linguistically in order to be prepared for his otherworldly existence. The physical treatment consisted of the mummification, the preservation of the body, while recitations consisting of incantations and glorifications accompanied the rituals involved.⁹⁶ Factual knowledge of all this has never left Egypt. This, however, does not mean that there was not some awareness of this phenomenon, especially given the outstanding reputation Egyptian medics enjoyed in antiquity, based on mummification. Apart from Herodotus,⁹⁷ Diodorus Siculus,⁹⁸ a re-enactment of a mummification process in Achilles Tatius⁹⁹ and a passage in the *Ephesiaca*,¹⁰⁰ no literary sources are available and it is difficult to assess how widespread the ones mentioned really were.

On the other hand, two isolated instances from private contexts show that images of the mummified and resurrected Osiris were known outside Egypt. One comes in the form of an oil lamp from the Athenian agora, showing the mummified Osiris.¹⁰¹ The other one is a Pompeian painting of a sacred landscape including a sanctuary where the mummified Osiris is shown standing in an upright position on a pedestal. The god is flanked by the lid and underpart of his coffin and a black priest is offering on an altar before him.¹⁰² Unfortunately,

the depiction of Osiris is too schematic to make out further details. But this is not what Pausanias was concerned with, since he is talking about animals wrapped in linen, not gods.¹⁰³

Although there is no archaeological proof available, it is probably fair to suggest a Greek awareness of the ancient Egyptian practice of producing mummified animals on an industrial scale.¹⁰⁴ It is difficult to imagine that this thought-provoking practice would have escaped Greek attention or that visitors did not return from Egypt once in a while with a mummified falcon, cat or ichneumon (coll. 'Pharaoh's rat') in their luggage. Herodotus reports the mummification of cats, dogs, ichneumons, falcons, ibises and even bears and wolves,¹⁰⁵ and it seems at least likely that the Greek perception of mummified animals derives from accounts like his.

As for Pausanias' account, the problematic cult practices at Tithorea are not only linked with mummification. His isolated report on wrapping food prior to burning it seems at least likely to point to the possibility that Pausanias embroidered passages he has read before imposing his 'knowledge' on the cult practice of Tithorea, the secrets of which remained otherwise inaccessible to him. Presumably, this section of Pausanias' account can be identified as his personal add-on, rather than a commonly agreed understanding of hard facts of religious practice within cults of Egyptian gods.

CULTURAL MEMORY AND KNOWLEDGE: THE BURNING OF OFFERINGS

Once the dead victims were wrapped in linen, according to Pausanias, they were burnt in the *adyton* where a fire was lit. To prove his view, he refers to an allegedly Tithorean local story of a non-initiated man who entered the *adyton* out of curiosity, where he witnessed the burning.¹⁰⁶ It is by all means difficult to imagine that offerings were burnt inside a sanctuary's *adyton*, supposedly a closed room with no windows as in sanctuaries such as Delos (Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Apart from one literary source,¹⁰⁷ archaeological evidence is especially rich on altars outside the temples. Frescos from Herculaneum¹⁰⁸ and Pompei¹⁰⁹ show priests burning offerings on altars in the open. Remains of sanctuaries for Egyptian gods like the ones in Dion¹¹⁰ or Delos¹¹¹ attest outside altars in exactly the same positions¹¹² and confirm the visual evidence, suggesting that offerings were burnt in front of temples and not inside.

Obviously, not having been allowed into the holy precinct and therefore unable to observe the burning of the offerings himself, the non-initiated Pausanias assumed that this ritual must take place inside the temple *adyton* as, first, he did not witness this practice outside the temple, and secondly, he



Figure 5.2. General view of the island of Delos. The sanctuary of Isis (centre) with its facade still standing is among the best preserved sacred buildings of the site (photograph M. Bommas)



Figure 5.3. The sanctuary of Isis; view through the portico (photograph M. Bommas)

had oral confirmation to which he refers. Being, on the other hand, familiar with the mysteries of Eleusis, Pausanias knew well about the importance of the secrets of these cults, like probably most of his educated contemporaries. Here, individual knowledge mingles with the common memory the educated classes of ancient Greece certainly had. Pausanias refers to these memories himself when mentioning the man who disrespected the secrecy and died after having confessed his sacrilege. Using the words 'they say' points to the fact that the inhabitants of Tithorea based themselves on a common knowledge embedded into what they remembered of Egypt as a place that does not reveal any of its secrets.¹¹³

PAUSANIAS' EGYPT BETWEEN MEMORY AND IDENTITY

In his novel *Aethiopica*, Heliodorus of Emesa describes the interrogations of an old Egyptian by a Greek audience (II 27, 3). He sees himself confronted with specific questions which presume some detailed knowledge by his audience:

And at first there were divers questions touching many matters moved among us. For some would ask after what fashion we Egyptians honoured our gods, and another, why divers countries worshipped divers kinds of beasts, and what was the reason in each case. Others enquired of the structures of the pyramids and of those winding vaults in which our kings are buried. In a word they left nothing that appertaineth to Egypt unsearched. For Grecian ears are wonderfully delighted with tales of Egypt.¹¹⁴

Probably like no other, this little-known passage throws some light on the Greek reception of Egypt as shaped by the dichotomy between curiosity and memory. Ancient Egypt always fascinated grateful audiences and the ancient Greeks made no exception to this rule. Paired with some knowledge gained within circles of educated men, this curiosity fell on fruitful ground, constantly fuelled by mainly three aspects: first by former settlers that returned to Greece and their stories of distant splendour, secondly by public processions where priests and *pastophores* displayed the exotic and thirdly, perhaps to a lesser extent, by authors such as Herodotus who was a main influence on later authors studying Egypt.¹¹⁵ All of these sources stereotype Egypt more or less to a picture of how Greece wanted Egypt to be;¹¹⁶ none of these categories obviously led to hard facts which on the other hand were never aimed at.

The absence of first hand experience or knowledge acquired through research in a post-seventeenth-century AD sense, however, does not contradict a social group's memory. Often there is a tacit agreement rather of how certain facts

or experiences are to be interpreted than what they really consist of. In any modern society, facts are stored as media in archives, libraries and cultural collections and films, but these are rarely the basis for cultural memory.¹¹⁷ For the functioning of cultural memory it is first enough to *know* that these details are stored in appropriate ways. Secondly, a certain event is remembered by a respectable majority of users in the same and commonly agreed way. Anyone who does not agree or pointlessly disagrees with the parameters outlined by a social group identifies himself as an outsider because he/she does not share the same social values.¹¹⁸

Because cultural memory is neither based on individual experience, nor on hard facts that have to be learnt by a community, it frees itself from two major points: time and factual knowledge. The human brain is able to remember events that have not been experienced by his owner, such as the Holocaust two generations after Europe allowed it to happen. Those who are born after these events remember this tragedy through monuments, public speeches, museums, TV and radio documentaries and movies, in most cases presumably without remembering facts such as specific numbers. Since only a few who suffered from the effects have survived until today, and those who were held responsible for their deeds faced trials or kept silent, living memory is increasingly replaced by timeless, media-led memory controlled by authorities.¹¹⁹

Although not as well advanced, ancient Greek societies had similar mechanics at their command, if not in form of written manuscripts like Pausanias' encyclopaedia of places and religious customs then at least through symposia held in sanctuaries¹²⁰ where similar works were held available for consultation. Accuracy was certainly not the main focus of the average treatise. Also, Pausanias' references to the cults of Isis are – as shown above – characterized by a mixture of (sometimes dubious) facts. Regarding Pausanias' mentions of the cults of Isis as a list, rather than an account, it becomes evident that his take is incomplete and unbalanced in the way he overrates the importance of sanctuaries mentioned and marginalizes other well-established sanctuaries by not referring to them. Regardless of these shortcomings, Pausanias' merits would clearly lie in the fact that he attempted a list of contemporary sanctuaries of Isis in mainland Greece, had he not engaged himself with the interpretation of Egyptian secrets in Tithorea. Although certainly welcomed by a grateful audience 'wonderfully delighted with tales of Egypt', his treatise to a large extent does not stand the test of counterproof. But did this really matter to a Greek audience? Has Pausanias' view of Egypt in Greece to be dismissed at all? Certainly not, if one is prepared to assess his accomplishment of describing the techniques of memory and, as a consequence, the shaping of memory at his time. His *periegesis* gives an unparalleled account of what was remembered of Egypt and the Egyptian mysteries that were, after all, a Greek invention.

CONCLUSION

Whether or not the Tithorean cult of Isis was as different from the usual practice as described by Pausanias, it certainly formed part of the Tithorean identity. The fact that the Egyptian cults were foreign cults in the fourth century BC, when they were first introduced to Greece, obviously did not play any role 500 years later. Egyptian cults were fully integrated into Greece's religious life and although being mystery cults by definition, they were open to the public in all their non-secret aspects.

Through this observation a whole new sequence of conclusions becomes apparent. First, the fact that festivals and rituals form identity is one of the results that can be drawn from Pausanias' account. Followers of Isis did not create inaccessible clubs for hand-picked important men, the community as a whole was invited and even more so attracted by fairs and several other forms of entertainment. The cult of Egyptian gods is by no means an isolated case: generally, mystery religions play an important role in defining group identity.¹²¹ Secondly, identity shapes cultural memory as well as cultural memory is forming identity: they are intrinsically tied to each other. The mechanics of this process, including people involved, *res sacrae* and eye witnesses, is rolled out before his readers' very eyes by Pausanias' report on Tithorea. The account of Pausanias, dismissed by scholars as unusual, in fact teaches his attentive readers a lesson about how ancient Greek society, even in a remote place like Tithorea, shaped *polis*-identity by constantly renewing local cultural memory.

Notes

- 1 Pausanias' own view of his work was probably not that of a travel account but historiography (Pretzler 2007: 45). The overly emphasized term travel account has recently been challenged and confronted with new aspects, such as 'literary construct' (Elsner 2001) and 'pilgrimage' (Rutherford 2001) to name just a few.
- 2 The view that Pausanias was a sort of a pilgrim as suggested by J. Elsner 1992: 8 was rejected recently, eg. Hutton 2005: 293–295 who accepts the term pilgrimage if used without a religious connotation (p. 296).
- 3 Pretzler 2007: 8
- 4 Levi 1979: 110. For the sake of availability, all translations are those of Peter Levi.
- 5 Levi 1979: 426.
- 6 Pretzler 2007: 2.
- 7 Hutton 2005, 25–28.
- 8 Hölscher 2002: 74.
- 9 Diehle 1998: 340.
- 10 Pretzler 2007: 11.
- 11 Bommas 2004.
- 12 On the chronology of the development of the Egyptian cults in the Aegean, see Bommas 2005a.

- 13 It is important to note that Pausanias is not describing cult societies throughout his work. Research has shown that cult communities can only be reconstructed to a small extent by theophoric names or coins. This methodology, in addition to the failure to include funerary monuments, is hardly suited to earn merits in the reconstruction of spread and development of cult organizations (e.g. Bommas 2005a against Dunand 1973a-c).
- 14 Alexandria is probably the best known example of a city where Isis played an important role but no sanctuaries or hints on the organization of Isis worshippers have survived, s. Bommas 2010a.
- 15 Dunand 1973b: 173–176; Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005.
- 16 Levi 1979: 134.
- 17 Smith 1977: 212.
- 18 Bommas 2005a: 109–112; Bommas 2005b: 234.
- 19 Witt 1971: 185–197.
- 20 Levi 1979: 141.
- 21 Smith 1977: 219–220.
- 22 At the island of Thera, once a Ptolemaic naval base, Isis was also worshipped at the peak of the mountain, probably alongside Serapis, see Bommas 2005a: 43–44 (including further literature).
- 23 In Canopus, a famous sanatorium of Isis existed where Serapis interpreted dream oracles and became associated with Asklepios, s. Merkelbach 2001: 200–201.
- 24 Hiller v. Gaertingen 1904: 96.
- 25 Levi 1979: 195.
- 26 Tomlinson 1983: 69.
- 27 Bommas 2005a: 112. On the importance of water see Wild 1981.
- 28 Also, a temple for Ammon is mentioned at Sparta but said to be of older age (Paus. 9.16.1).
- 29 Dunand 1973b: 166 n. 1.
- 30 Levi 1979: 284.
- 31 See the statue of Harpocrates in the Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki (Bommas 2005a: 99, fig. 119).
- 32 Levi 1979: 301.
- 33 Rusch 1906: 36–37. Dunand 1973b: 156 states that one can hardly think of any other solution.
- 34 Levi 1979: 114.
- 35 Levi 1979: 162.
- 36 Lasserre 1979: 572.
- 37 Levi 1979: 209.
- 38 Dunand 1973b: 112–113; Pedley 2005: 23 mentions the example of Dion. His view that the second century AD sanctuary of Isis at Dion had an ‘Egyptianizing’ plan is incorrect. It is a typical Roman podium temple, unknown to ancient Egyptian architecture. The podium is mentioned in Apuleius’ *Golden Ass* but also very well attested through archaeological remains, Bommas 2005b: 233–234.
- 39 Levi 1979: 215.
- 40 Pretzler 2007: 72 even speaks of the ‘Theban countryside’, a view that is very much supported by Pausanias’ own approach.
- 41 Bommas 2005a: 104–105.

- 42 Bömer 1960: 63–68, 129–133.
- 43 Hennig 1989: 182.
- 44 For Orchomenos see Dunand 1973b: 30–32; for Opus, see Totti 1985, 34–45; Merkelbach 2001: 126–127. Obviously, junctions played an important role in establishing new sanctuaries, especially when Isis conquered the Greek hinterland between the second century BC and first century AD.
- 45 The cult of Isis was established during the second century BC already, see Bommas 2005a: 70.
- 46 Fossey 1986: 150.
- 47 Fossey, 1986: 149; Bommas 2005a: 105.
- 48 At times the modern city is referred to as Velitsa or Neon.
- 49 Pretzler 2007: 8; Pritchett 1982: 147.
- 50 The Isis festival described by Apuleius is a spring festival.
- 51 Until six years ago, when studies by U. Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005, 259–280 and Bommas 2005a: 105–108 – both including a translation of the relevant passage into German – were published simultaneously, this passage never invited detailed research. K. Kleibl 2009: 141 mentions Tithorea in a different context only briefly and with irritating results, see below. Because her work concentrates on space, she apparently uses the term ‘archaeological’ exclusively in combination with architectural remains and neglects *res sacrae* found in Tithorea. As a matter of fact, Pausanias discusses the aspects of religious space in Tithorea in detail.
- 52 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2000: 52–55.
- 53 Malaise 1972: 217–228; Dunand 1973c: 223–238 ; Merkelbach 1973: 45–54; Merkelbach 2001: 131–146; Kleibl 2009: 141.
- 54 Beck and Wiemer 2009: 30.
- 55 Bowden 2010: 141 on ‘experiencing mysteries ‘together with other people in the cities’.
- 56 Bommas 2003. For the interpretatio aegyptiaca see Merkelbach 2001: 231–241; Bommas 2008a: 234–237.
- 57 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 274.
- 58 Bowden 2010: 164.
- 59 Graf 2003: 244.
- 60 Rosenow 2006: 92–96.
- 61 Levi 1979: 492–3.
- 62 Morgan 1982: 236.
- 63 For an excellent overview see Bricault 2001.
- 64 The first dedication to Sarapis, Isis and Anubis comes from a limestone altar found in Velitsa (second century AD) containing seven contracts of enfranchisement, see. Vidman 1969: SIRIS 68; Bricault 2005: RICIS 106/0401–0408. The second source consists of three fragments containing parts of four contracts, see Bricault 2005: RICIS 106/0409–0413.
- 65 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 263.
- 66 ‘Inconvenient single document’, see Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 274.
- 67 Bommas 2005a: 108.
- 68 Griffiths 1970.
- 69 Habicht 1985: 111.
- 70 E.g. Plut. *Is.* 366C–F, esp. 366D describes the *inventio Osiridis*, to which Pausanias refers, in full detail.
- 71 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 265 wrongly suggests that Pausanias understands *inventio Osiridis* as a festival linked with the inundation of the Nile during summer time.

- 72 Lamberton 2001: 188–195.
- 73 On travel books during the Greek Archaic period see Diehle 1994: 22–35.
- 74 For an overview see Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 261.
- 75 See Bommas 2011.
- 76 Junge 1979 (with older literature).
- 77 Bommas 2005a: 33.
- 78 This important factor has recently been stressed by Johnston 2007: 106–111.
- 79 Hölscher 2002: 74; Hutton: 2005, 296 goes even further when spotting a distinct preference for the history, monuments, and artworks of Greece's pre-Roman past over those of his own time.
- 80 Spawforth 2004, 525.
- 81 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 270 refers to Hänger 2001.
- 82 E.g. Tait 2003.
- 83 Beck and Wiemer 2010: 34.
- 84 Merkelbach 2001: 123–124.
- 85 For a bibliographical overview on cultural memory in antiquity see the introduction to this volume.
- 86 Sontag 1979.
- 87 Navrátilová 2007.
- 88 The written word is not a prerequisite for cultural memory in societies based on primordial myths.
- 89 Rives 2007: 31.
- 90 Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984: 1852–2000 and 2337–2357 (register of sources).
- 91 Transl. Kenney 2004: 200.
- 92 Merkelbach 2001: 127–128.
- 93 Cassius Dio, *History*, 51.16.5.
- 94 On sources discussing sacred animals like falcons, cats, dogs, he-goats and baboons see Merkelbach 2001: 128, fn. 1.
- 95 Witt 1971: 251 mentions one example.
- 96 Bommas 2010b: 35–62.
- 97 *Histories* II.85–90.
- 98 For a discussion of Diodorus Siculus' account of the process of mummification see Merkelbach 2001: 24–28.
- 99 Merkelbach 2001: 373.
- 100 Witt 1971: 250.
- 101 Witt 1971: Pl. 16.
- 102 Merkelbach 2001: 505, fig. 24, including a bibliography.
- 103 For the ability of gods to change their outer appearance see Lucian of Samosata, *Dialogues of the Sea-Gods*, 11: 'But what's come over Hermes, that he's changed himself and given up his own fine face for that of a dog?' (trans. MacLeod 1969: 219).
- 104 Rosenow 2006. On animal mummies see Ikram 2007: 282.
- 105 *Hist.*, II.67.
- 106 There seems to be quite some misunderstanding about this fact. Bowden 2010: 164 suggests that the offering animals 'were not burnt: instead they were killed, wrapped in linen and then left in a sunken chamber in the sanctuary, presumably to rot'. Kleibl 2009: 141 does not discuss this aspect but suggests that the market traders offered their huts to the gods.

- 107 Apuleius, *Met.*, 11.20: 'The priest meanwhile was making the rounds of the various altars, worshipping and offering the customary prayers at each (...)' (Kenney 2004: 206).
- 108 From Herculaneum two frescos are known: one shows a Nubian dancing on the pedestal of the temple of Isis (Naples, Mus.Arch.Naz. inv. 8919, 50–79 AD; Merkelbach 2001: Pl. V; the latest publication of this fresco in colour is Nava et al. 2008, 151), the other one focuses on the autumn festival *inventio Osiridis* (Naples, Mus.Arch.Naz. inv. 8924, 50–79 AD; Merkelbach 2001: Pl. IV; Nava et al. 2008: 152).
- 109 See the sacred landscape, located in Egypt, from the 'Casa dell'Efebo' which shows a priestess engaged in some action in front of an altar outside the temple precinct (Merkelbach 2001: 561, fig. 82).
- 110 Bommas 2002, 136; Bommas 2005a: 100 and fig. 122.
- 111 Bommas 2005c, 639.
- 112 Bommas 2005c: 321.
- 113 Assmann 2000: 35–42; for the concept of secrecy in texts and architecture see Bommas 2005d: 321.
- 114 Translations by Thomas Underdowne 1587; Morgan 1989: 349–588.
- 115 A fourth category, the romances in which Egypt plays some part, are excluded here, partly because Merkelbach 2001: 335–485 believes these were spread only among followers of Isis. This view, however, is not entirely convincing. If the role of Egypt is accepted to enhance the dramaturgy, there is no reason not to suggest that romances with plots taking place in Egypt were spread among a wider audience, not initiated into the mysteries of Isis.
- 116 Schmidt 2005: 276.
- 117 The festival of Woodstock stands as a synonym for love, peace and music at the cultural peak of the 1960s but little to nothing is known about the actual facts that made this festival such a prominent landmark in world history, such as 32 bands and musicians playing for an audience of 400,000–500,000. Voted by *Rolling Stone* as one of the 50 Moments That Changed the History of Rock'n'Roll, its place in cultural memory is unlikely to be altered by the fact that the festival did not take place in Woodstock but on a dairy farm at Bethel, 43 miles away.
- 118 Bommas 2008b: 62, n. 24.
- 119 Where memory is organized by large authorities it runs the risk of being prone to manipulation. A well-known example – although largely under-investigated by West German scholars – is the handling of victims of the GeStaPo by the GDR, see e. g. Danyel 1995: 31–46.
- 120 Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2005: 271 points to the fact that prominent sanctuaries had libraries available which made them favoured meeting points for the elite.
- 121 Graf 2003: 246.

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Forgetting to Remember in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt

Anna Lucille Boozer

When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of the tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting.

Benjamin 1973: 202

INTRODUCTION

The corollary to memory is forgetting.¹ When we select certain aspects of our past to remember, we allow other aspects to be forgotten. While remembering may be critical for the construction and constitution of both individual and group identities, forgetting also facilitates the crafting of identities, particularly in situations involving the incorporation of new social groups into a region.² The following pages examine evidence of forgetting from a range of Romano-Egyptian sites and documentary sources deriving from the Dakhleh Oasis in Egypt (Figure 6.1). This oasis was the focus of multiple waves of migration throughout its long history as a zone for human settlement and, yet, the origins of these immigrants remain remarkably unclear to archaeologists working in the region. I aim to show that many of the immigrants to the Dakhleh Oasis allowed memories of their regions of origin to fade and that this act of forgetting was constitutive for a particular way of life that these individuals wished to cultivate and maintain in their new locale.

The Dakhleh Oasis contains a dense concentration of remarkably well-preserved material remains dating to the Roman occupation of Egypt. It includes some 200 sites within the 2000-square-kilometre radius of the oasis. Most of these Roman-period sites appear to date to the first–fourth centuries AD, although they often rest on top of, or alongside, material from earlier periods, as many of these same sites were continually reused for settlement for at least three millennia. This occupational history appears to have shifted towards the end of the fourth century AD, when there was a general contraction in the presence



Figure 6.1. Map of Egypt (M. Matthews)

of sites in the oasis as well as the complete abandonment of some of the major cities in the oasis in favour of other areas. This occupational history leaves us with numerous exposed Roman ruins, often without significant disturbance or subsequent occupation. The high level of preservation in Dakhleh, combined with the intensive survey work conducted here in the 1970s and 1980s, has provided archaeologists with unparalleled access to settlement data for the Roman period in Egypt (Mills 1979, Churcher and Mills 1995). New data from ongoing excavations are constantly emerging from this oasis and therefore this

contribution serves both as an interpretation of what has already been produced as well as a suggestion for future lines of research in this region.

While the documentary and archaeological data suggest that Dakhleh was the destination of numerous migration waves over many centuries, the material culture of the oasis does not preserve distinct memories of other regions within Egypt or further afield.³ Rather, in the Roman period we find an intertwining of Roman, Greek and Egyptian material culture in combinations suggestive of a specifically Dakhlan way of being. This evidence – and lack of evidence – suggests that the individuals who moved here did not carry with them strong signatures of their regions of origin and, in so doing, forgot specific regional associations from their past. Such ruptures with the past are perhaps unsurprising, although they are potent reminders that forgetting is a significant component of identity construction and that an exclusive focus on memorial practices reveals only part of the story about how individuals relate to the past. It is well understood that memory cannot be transmitted across generations without continual revision and refashioning and that this process of revision requires moments of modification and amplification in order to make new meanings possible (Küchler 1993). The counterpart to this memory crafting is forgetting, since individuals have to discard aspects of their personal history in order to amplify other facets of their identity. What emerges from focusing on the forgetting component of memory in Dakhleh is that Dakhlan may have had a flexible attitude to the past and that their relationship to their individual pasts might represent a palimpsest of memories that were continually revised to meet the changing needs of their identities over time. As local Dakhlan concerns became more important than their origins, individuals allowed past regional specificities to fall by the wayside in favour of symbols that expressed their relationship to their current community and locality. These symbols seem to have drawn from a complex array of motifs from Greek, Roman and Egyptian traditions (Boozer 2010), suggesting that ethnicity and status may have been more important than local Egyptian origins among Dakhlan (Boozer 2007). I suggest that this forgetting was strategic and that it indicates that individuals viewed their migration as a positive change rather than a coerced diaspora.⁴

HARMONIZING FORGETTING

Social memory has received a good deal of scholarly attention since the 1980s and has grown increasingly nuanced in the scholarship, but few scholars have addressed memory's dependence upon forgetting.⁵ Forgetting is essential for memory both because it serves as an impetus for individuals to memorialize and also because it makes way for new memories to be forged and rearticulated

for current concerns. This dual role of forgetting ensures that it is an important precondition for memory. In addition to recognizing the necessity of forgetting, the distinctions between different types of forgetting can help us to draw attention to different societal attitudes towards the past, the present and the future. I suggest that there are three primary ways in which societies forget the past – passively, violently and strategically. It is important to recognize the distinctions between these types of forgetting so we can understand the attitudes involved in forgetting as well as choose the most appropriate methodologies to apprehend them. In so doing, I hope to highlight the particular characteristics of strategic forgetting among the individuals who moved to Dakhleh during the Roman period and worked towards establishing a collective local identity.

Passive forgetting is perhaps the most self-evident type of forgetting among societies.⁶ Forty describes it as the decay of an imprint (Forty 1999: 2), suggesting a natural and slow erosional process. In the same vein, Bradley has argued that it is reasonable to suppose that people from pre-industrial societies could not have remembered particular events and individuals more than 200 years deep into the past (Bradley 2002). In such scenarios it makes sense that mythologies of past origins would take over from what our current ideals would tell us are the ‘facts’ of origins. These mythologies revised dimly remembered facts of identities and origins in order to explain and correspond to present-day concerns. This process of forgetting is involuntary and occurs naturally among groups with few means at their disposal for accurately and exhaustively recording the past.

The second type of forgetting – violent forgetting – entails an active erasure of past histories in preference for a revised identity in the present. This obligation or compulsion to erase the past intentionally and violently removes images and records that cannot be reconciled with present understandings. This type of collective oblivion is often a delicate enterprise and involves myriad decisions about what to destroy, how and why. Some individuals and groups may believe that the collective health of a society depends upon selectively removing signatures of certain pasts (Lowenthal 1999), although not all stakeholders will agree about what should be preserved and what should be expunged (Groarke and Warrick 2006, Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2009). There are numerous examples of collective oblivion from antiquity, such as the iconoclasts who removed images of a pagan or idolatrous history from monuments (Aston 1988: 256, Barber 1995, Sauer 2003) and the Roman practice of *damnatio memoriae*, which legally and systematically removed the memory of individuals from pictorial and documentary records (Flower 1998, Varner 2004). We also have ample examples from our own recent past, such as the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas (Meskell 2002) and the tearing down of Saddam Hussein’s statue, supporting the suggestion that all successful revolutions end with statues

coming down (Lewis and Mulvey 1997, Forty 1999: 10). These violent moments of erasure tend to leave deep scars on monuments and in the landscape, often drawing attention to what was forgotten rather than facilitating memory loss.

The type of forgetting I wish to explore in these pages lies between the passive loss of history and the violent erasure of the past. Rather, I explore forgetting as a strategic and positive force that makes way for new memories in order to forge a collective identity among the inhabitants of Roman Dakhleh. Identity is fundamentally bound to a sense of belonging (Díaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005) and therefore an individual chooses to remember and forget specific components of their personal history in order to express and encourage this sense of belonging. Because identity is fundamentally contextual, individuals awaken different aspects of themselves depending upon different social pressures (Given 2004: 8–25, Hodder 1982: 187), thereby forming a place for themselves in which they can experience belonging in each different setting. Forgetting opens up a space for new memories to be created and implanted among individuals who move to a new locality. In this sense, forgetting can be understood as the requisite discard of certain past memories because it can help groups forge an identity more appropriate to present concerns. As Heidegger argues, forgetting complements the memory process and can do so in a positive manner, so it is not necessary to view it as a destructive force (Heidegger 1962: 311–317). The primary difficulty with this type of memory loss for archaeologists is finding evidence of it in the material record. I suggest that we may interpret this discard by looking at what memories replaced the spectral voids left by strategic forgetting.

Multifaceted groups, such as individuals living in Roman Egypt, developed traditions that reflected their particular setting within Egypt and developed traditions not found in other areas of the Roman Empire. This variety of social construction involved a complicated interplay of social memory and forgetting along with the reuse and reinterpretation of the material landscape, images and settings to suit the enhanced multicultural identity found in Roman Egypt. As Ricoeur argues, forgetting should not be seen only in terms of distortions of memory and the effacement of the past but also as paradoxically so close to memory that it should be considered one of the conditions for memory (Ricoeur 2004: 426). The complicated intertwining of Egyptian, Greek and Roman pasts that we find in Dakhleh provides us with a material example of this paradoxical relationship between memory and forgetting, in which certain past histories were discarded in favour of an identity that would promote a strong Dakhlan identity enmeshed within the particular social conditions of Roman Egypt.

MIGRATING AND FORGETTING IN THE DAKHLEH OASIS

Although the Nile Valley was the most densely occupied portion of ancient Egypt, the Western Desert occupies two-thirds of the land within Egypt's current national boundaries (Figures 6.1, 6.2). A string of oases dotted through this stark expanse represent the only possible areas for sedentary human occupation in this vast arid zone. This landscape held a particular place within both Roman and Egyptian social consciousness as a result of the extreme environmental conditions of the region (Boozer forthcoming). The Dakhleh Oasis itself is a depression contained within an area of some 2000 square kilometres in the Western Desert. A great limestone escarpment forms Dakhleh's northern and eastern boundaries (Schild and Wendorf 1977: 12), while the southern portion of the oasis merges with the Saharan sands and extends into what is known as the Great Sand Sea (Mills 1985: 125). The floor of the Dakhleh basin is approximately 100 metres above sea level, although it varies in elevation across the depression. The low-lying areas within this basin provide access to the Taref Sandstone, the aquifer that provides groundwater to this oasis and makes sedentary life possible. Cultivation areas occupy scattered spaces along the lower land surface, stretching from Teneida in the east to approximately 100 kilometres to the west of it (Schild and Wendorf 1977: 9–12),

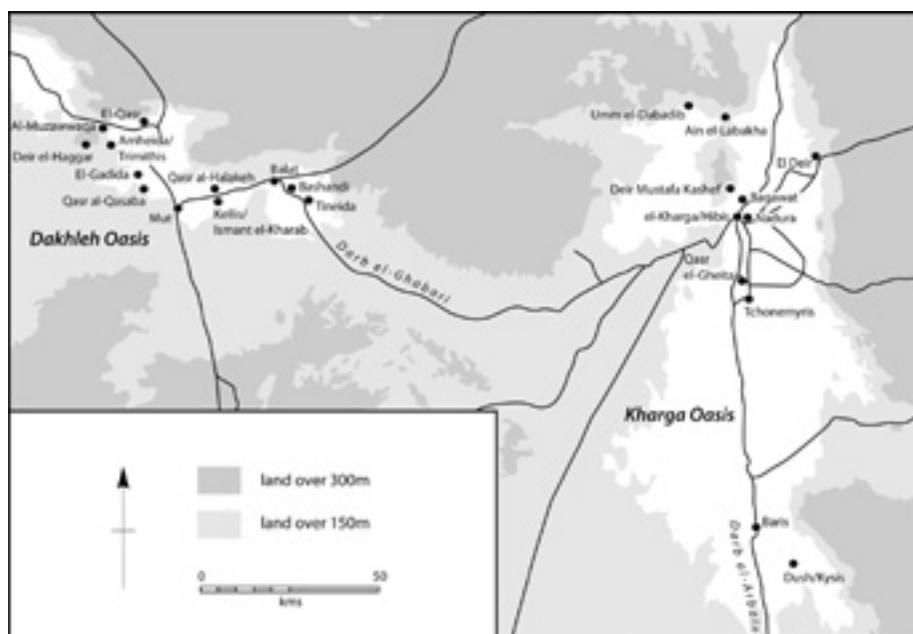


Figure 6.2. Map of the Oasis Magna (the Great Oasis) (M. Matthews)

while settlements are built almost exclusively on the higher patches of landscape in order to preserve as much land for cultivation as possible.

The arrival of the Romans in Egypt had a particularly strong effect upon this isolated region, as is indicated by the considerable increase in archaeological sites dating to the Roman period. For example, there are in excess of 200 Roman and Byzantine sites as opposed to the forty-nine sites found to represent three millennia of occupation from the Pharaonic era, and most of which date to the late Old Kingdom (Mills 1993: 194). The post-conquest conditions established by a Roman presence in Egypt catalysed this massive population increase in Dakhleh, although it is unlikely that this population increase can be explained by a sizeable incursion of Romans. The Romans established restrictions against certain groups immigrating to Egypt, namely military veterans, because they feared that Egypt might be used as a locus for mustering political and military support against the empire. Although we might rule out Rome as a source of immigrants to this oasis, it is unclear where these immigrants came from as it is certainly possible that they came from a variety of locales within Egypt as well as further afield.

It is likely that economic reasons motivated individuals to resettle in the Dakhleh Oasis, because mass migrations are often inspired by changed economic circumstances. Documentary sources corroborate this conjecture since they indicate that Dakhleh was a wealthy locale in Roman Egypt (Bagnall and Rathbone 2004: 262) and would therefore offer a tempting destination for individuals looking to increase their economic standing or to improve upon depressed economic conditions in their place of origin. Further, Mills has suggested that the Roman government expanded Egypt's agricultural output through a policy that encouraged farmers to migrate to the Dakhleh Oasis in order to take advantage of its agricultural potential. The introduction of the *saqia*, or 'Persian water wheel,' may have aided such hypothetical imperial designs as it added considerable tracts of previously inaccessible land to the land already under cultivation (Mills 1993: 193, Trigger 1965: 123). Mills also cites the evidence of set housing plans, such as those found among the columbarium farmhouses in the western part of the oasis, as indications of mass migration to the region for agricultural purposes (Mills 1993: 194–195).⁷ Despite the uncertainties of these conjectures, the sheer mass of sites dating to the Roman period makes it clear that this region was highly developed under the Romans.

Although the Romans left the most imposing imprint upon Dakhleh's landscape, this oasis had been colonized for thousands of years prior to the Roman conquest and throughout its occupational history. During the Pharaonic era, the numbers of Egyptian colonists fluctuated in correspondence to Egyptian political and economic cohesion, with Dakhleh becoming more appealing as a zone to colonize during periods of greater unity and prosperity

along the Nile Valley (Giddy 1987). The Sheikh Muftah peoples, the youngest of the pre-historic cultural units, seem to have had a longer occupancy in the oasis than most other groups and can be distinguished in the material culture by fine as well as crude quartz and shale wares, mostly consisting of large, deep bowls without decoration (McDonald 2001). The identities of the Pharaonic immigrants are more difficult to disentangle because the material or documentary sources do not indicate cohesive connections with any regions except for Thebes, which appears to figure strongly in Dakhleh's development and management over the course of its history (Kaper 2008).

The Roman colonization of Dakhleh is more pronounced than the Egyptian colonization of the region, but the sources of these colonists are equally as murky as those of the Pharaonic era. The documentary sources currently known to us do not provide the origins of these colonists and the nascent archaeological data allows only limited conjectures. The connections with Thebes, as well as its surrounding region, seem to have persisted from the Pharaonic era, as can be seen in the form of Deir el-Haggar, a stone temple in the western part of the oasis, which was dedicated to the worship of Theban deities in local guise (Kaper and Worp 1999b). This range of data may indicate continued connections with – and potential migrations from – Thebes for agricultural purposes, but these conjectures are by no means certain. Although it is clear that Roman rule amplified the long-existing status of Dakhleh as a zone of colonization, Thebes remains the only Egyptian region with any strong ties visible in either in the material or documentary evidence left to us in Dakhleh.

Lacunae in archaeological data provide inherently unstable ground for engineering arguments: one day we may find the evidence to fill these holes and our edifice may come tumbling down as a result. Despite this inherent vulnerability, I suggest that the material and documentary lacunae for Roman oasis origins are critical for understanding conceptions of self among people living in the Dakhleh Oasis during the Roman period. The lack of data pointing towards the origins of migrants may indicate that individuals focused on cultivating a shared Dakhlan identity that reached beyond the parameters of any of the local origins of the colonists in order to create the new Romano-Egyptian social conditions we find in this oasis. Indeed, the material conditions found in Dakhleh indicate an identity specific to this oasis, which suggests that individuals set aside specific pasts in order to cultivate a Dakhlan present.

UNSEEN PALIMPSESTS: FORGETTING FOR A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Unlike memory, it may be difficult to find material evidence of forgetting. Violent forms of oblivion, such as iconoclasm, often leave deep scars in the material world, which can be read and interpreted long after their creation. Strategic forgetting, by definition, entails a lack of materiality left behind, so absence must serve as a primary signature of disregard. By examining the material indices of collective identities we may be able to detect the memories that replaced the voids left during the forgetting process. It is this unseen palimpsest of forgetting and re-forging that I wish to explore in order to access the processes and purposes of forgetting. In the Dakhleh Oasis we find a strong local identity in the archaeological and documentary records, which indicates that the individuals who migrated to Dakhleh forgot their recent regional pasts in favour of local traditions. The voids of past local identities became filled with a new regional identity that smoothed over differences of origin between migrant groups. I will look at two different components of Dakhlan daily life that show clear signs of localism – houses and religion – in order to suggest that these local signatures reflect the community identity that replaced forgotten pasts.

Houses are important for exploring questions of individual and community identities because households are the result of the interaction between larger social forms and the individual (Cowgill 1993, Dobres and Robb 2000, Johnson 1989). Houses provide an invaluable lens for exploring the intersection between individuals and the broader community because they interpenetrate with other social institutions in communities. As such, they can serve as highly responsive barometers of social processes, explaining the forms and consequences of broad social changes on the microscale (Hendon 2004: 279). Because the house serves as a locus of individual and family life and also shapes and reflects broader social norms (Bourdieu 1966, Bachelard 1994, Donley-Reid 1990, Hillier and Hanson 1984) it serves as a useful perspective for exploring the role of forgetting in the construction of a community identity in the Dakhleh Oasis.

Since the 1980s archaeologists have excavated a range of Dakhlan houses (Hope 1988) and nascent data provide substantive evidence of daily life in the oasis. This growing body of data suggests that Roman Dakhleh cultivated a locally specific housing type that combined Egyptian with Roman Mediterranean housing traditions (Figure 6.3). For example, results from excavations at Ismant el-Kharab (ancient Kellis) indicate that Roman Dakhleh domestic architecture of the second, third and fourth centuries AD typically consisted of a single-story structure with barrel vaulted roofs and a central room that was often partially or potentially completely unroofed (Hope 2006: 29). Food preparation areas

in Dakhleh show greater variability; sometimes they are integrated into the house while at other times they have been added on to the house or are located behind the house proper. We can discern some variations in this plan over time in the oasis, as can be seen by comparisons among houses excavated at Ismant el-Kharab and Amheida (ancient Trimithis). For example, the earlier houses in Area C at Kellis tend to have flat roofs, while the later houses in Area A tend to have vaulted side rooms and two central rooms that may be vaulted or covered with flat roofs (Hope and Whitehouse 2006: 317, Hope 2003: 238).

This housing type is different from the majority of houses that were found in the Fayum, which remains the most comprehensive source for Romano-Egyptian



Figure 6.3. Plan of House B2, Amheida (N. Warner)

houses. The University of Michigan thoroughly excavated several towns in this region in the 1930s and the ample data that they and other projects have produced have made this region into the cornerstone of Romano-Egyptian housing studies (Boak and Peterson 1931, Boak 1935, Gazda 1983, Husselman 1979, Davoli 1998).⁸ Because these houses are well known to archaeologists they are often held up as the paradigm for Romano-Egyptian housing, but it is important to recognize that there was a spectrum of housing types in Roman Egypt and not all regions conformed to the Fayumic standard. Houses from the Fayum are typically multistorey structures with linear paths of access between rooms (Davoli 1998: 53, 85), rather than the clustered plan evident in Dakhleh. This linear layout reflects more traditional Egyptian housing styles than does the clustered plan. Houses in the Khargeh Oasis, near Dakhleh, appear to be situated between these two ends of the Romano-Egyptian domestic spectrum. For example, the unexcavated Roman houses of Umm el-Dabadib are laid out in regular blocks and consist of at least two storeys of barrel-vaulted rooms (Rossi 2000: 335, 341–342). Likewise, the North Kharga Oasis Survey revealed that most domestic units were multistorey (at least a ground and a first storey) with barrel-vaulted roofs. A central room appears to have been a particular characteristic of this architecture (Ikram and Rossi 2004: 80–81), which provides some overlap with the domestic forms found in Dakhleh. This range of domestic styles reflect local traditions within a general housing spectrum, with Dakhlan houses reflecting more classical origins while the houses of the Fayum are more linear and traditionally Egyptian in style. Like most Mediterranean cultures, Dakhlan houses adapted classical styles to their own locality and Egyptian characteristics are evident within the structures, such as under-stairs storage areas and the pervasive use of rooftops for functional tasks.

The decorative motifs found in Dakhlan houses complement this architectural data. A growing number of excavated houses in Dakhleh reveal decorated zones that reflect Greek and Roman traditions to a greater extent than Fayumic houses, which tended to be more informally executed and relied on a significantly darker palette than that found in Dakhleh (Husselman 1979: 35–36). These Dakhlan decorations include a range of styles, most of which are wall-paper motifs that were common in the Roman Empire but not attested elsewhere in Egypt (Hope and Whitehouse 2006: 317, Hope 2003: 238, Boozer 2010). House B1, from Amheida, is the most elaborately decorated house exposed thus far because it displays figural scenes that recount Homeric myths (Mills 1980, Leahy 1980, Boozer 2010). Indeed, Homer appears to be a prominent focal point among the elite in the oasis (Boozer 2007, Boozer 2010) and new evidence produced by Colin Hope's team at Kellis has revealed the decorative display of lines from Book 1 of Homer, strengthening this argument (Hope 2010).

The evidence from houses suggests that Dakhlan domestic architecture follows locally specific housing traditions that adapted to Roman rule more acutely than regions such as the Fayum or the neighboring Kharga oasis. Dakhlan may have employed classical motifs because they pervaded the Roman Mediterranean at this time and would appear more geographically neutral than regionally specific housing norms from within Egypt. The prominent use of Homer among some of the Dakhlan elite likewise signals incorporation into the broader Roman Mediterranean and draws from a literary background that would also be regionally neutral for migrants from other regions within Egypt. This data may suggest that individuals migrating to Dakhleh gave up their own locally specific house designs and decoration in an attempt to blend in with other groups in the oasis.

The second line of data that reveals practices of forgetting depends upon the religious landscape of Roman Dakhleh. Religious and commemorative practices are important events that integrate communities by providing links between individuals who may normally unite along different lines (Bakhtin 1965, Meskell 2003). By cross-cutting other social institutions, religious practices can promote community identities in a strong and cohesive manner. These unifying practices can be particularly significant in sites of migration as they can unite the disparate groups that have little else to unite them. Recent excavations have shown that Roman Dakhleh sustained a strongly regionalized identity with respect to its religious pantheon and festivals, which may have served to promote a local identity.

The local cult topography of Dakhleh suggests that the temples within this oasis are strongly interrelated and self-centred, because they almost exclusively depict local Dakhlan deities (Kaper 1997b: 51, Kaper 1997a: 213). The pictorial emphasis upon local gods provided temples with an inventory of local deities, which potentially may have served to complement a festival in which all of the gods of the region participated (Kaper 1997b: 52, Kaper 1997a: 211–212). The known history of the temple cults in Dakhleh and Khargeh suggests that the second century AD may be understood as the high point of usage in these cults (Kaper 1998: 151–152). Moreover, most of the informal devotional paintings found on these monuments appear to have been added during the second century AD during major religious festivals (Kaper and Worp 1999a: 237). The dating of these temples would place them in the early stages of the population expansion that occurred in this oasis. These data suggest that inhabitants of the Dakhleh Oasis promoted self-contained religious and festive practices much like other regions in Egypt (e.g. the Nile Valley and the Fayum) in order to reinforce their own regional identities. In this manner the temples and festivals supported a cohesive regional identity among Dakhlan.

The gods worshipped in Dakhleh included locally specific gods as well as local gods who tapped in to broader Egyptian mythologies. For example, the god Amun-nakht appears to be unique to the Dakhleh Oasis. Amun-nakht made his first appearance in Dakhleh under the reign of Ptolemy IX (lived c.143–81 BC) and appears to have remained popular for at least 200 years. According to local mythology found on the temple walls at Ain Birbiya, Amun-nakht pursued the enemies of his father Osiris across the desert (Kaper 1997a: 208) and had a great deal of power over the ‘inundation’ of the oases (Kaper 1997b: 81). Amun-nakht’s mythology links the god to the particular locality and fertility of the Dakhleh Oasis, thereby reinforcing geographical ties to gods, but also linking him to one of the most pre-eminent gods in Egypt: Osiris. The god Seth is another prominent local deity, although he was certainly well known in the Nile Valley. The cult of Seth, god of chaos and confusion, persisted in the temples and tombs of Dakhleh long after its demise in the Nile Valley from at least the Third Intermediate period into the Roman period (Te Velde 1977: 115–116, Osing 1985: 229 n.2, Kaper 1997a: 210–211, Kaper 1997b: 55–65). Seth’s defensive attributes were particularly pronounced in Dakhleh, and most especially with respect to his defense of the sun god, Horus (Kaper 1997b: 65). Seth, like Amun-nakht, helped Dakhlans to promote their particular regional landscape with gods emblematic of the oasis, but also drew from the well-established cults of the Nile Valley, which would have been more broadly familiar to immigrants.

Architecturally, the temples from Dakhleh conform to a regional type found in the Great Oasis (Dakhleh and Kharga) in which the temple plan is somewhat elongated and contains a line of mostly vaulted chambers replete with painted plaster (Kaper 1997a: 204). This regionalism in terms of temple design is reminiscent of the regionalism found in housing forms – there is recognizable continuity between forms in Egypt but also strong regionalism found within this spectrum.⁹ Of particular interest is that both the domestic and the religious landscape show greater continuity between Dakhleh and Khargeh than with other regions in Egypt, but that each oasis still maintained its own norms (Kaper 1998).

In exploring the domestic and the religious spheres of Dakhleh, it becomes clear that locals focused on traditions embedded within this oasis rather than further afield. These traditions embraced the particular geographical emplacement of Dakhleh but also reached towards the greater Mediterranean through the use of Classical motifs and designs and towards the Nile Valley through the local pantheon. Together, this evidence suggests that locals gave up past traditions in order to promote a strong regional identity within the Dakhleh Oasis and that broader Roman and Egyptian traditions helped to buttress these new local traditions. This process of forgetting appears to have

been successful in uniting the populace because it is difficult for archaeologists to delve deep into the past to determine the origins of the migrants to this oasis.

CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that the process of forgetting enabled immigrants to the Dakhleh Oasis to develop stronger links to one another and to cultivate a local identity instead of holding on to their place of origin. This type of forgetting served as a positive force within the local community and therefore it did not leave visible scars in the material world that archaeologists find easy to read. The major problem with exploring instances of strategic forgetting is that we must rely upon an absence of scars and material culture in order to construct our arguments. The archaeological and documentary evidence are already replete with lacunae, which makes the task of seeking out voids of forgetting a difficult undertaking. I have suggested that a potential way forward would be to examine the traditions that filled these voids so we can understand the objective of forgetting among the immigrants. In other words, what did immigrants to Dakhleh forget for?

I suggest that the immigrants to Dakhleh came from a range of Egyptian (and potentially more distant) regions and that the evidence from houses and temples suggests that individuals were willing to forget their divergent pasts in favour of cultivating a strong group identity. This new collective identity relied upon idiosyncratic local traditions paired with neutral, pan-Mediterranean and pan-Egyptian traditions. Together these new traditions reinforced a strong identification with the physical locality of Dakhleh, but they also tapped into more broadly understood and recognized traditions, which would have felt familiar to many individuals living across Egypt – and further afield – during the Roman period. In a situation involving forced migration, mementos serve as an essential coping strategy for individuals to hold on to their pasts (Parkin 1999). The lack of mementoes in the archaeological record suggests that the migration to Dakhleh was voluntary rather than coerced and that immigrants saw their transition to Dakhleh in a positive light, perhaps due to the economic incentives to be found there.

Today the Dakhleh Oasis has approximately 70,000 inhabitants and rising. This population density is nearly twice what it was in the 1970s and represents the effect of the New Valley scheme in which the Egyptian government has attempted to relieve population pressures from the Nile Valley by resettling families to the oases in the Western Desert. Despite the abrupt rise in Dakhleh's population density, the inhabitants of this oasis continue to have a unique identity in Egypt. Nile Valley inhabitants continue to view the desert with

significant apprehension and the Dakhlsans continue to carry out somewhat different architectural, dress and social traditions. Perhaps they have also set aside their own recent pasts in favour of their current local identity, mirroring the last time Dakhleh experienced great waves of immigrants.

Notes

- 1 This paper serves as a counterpart to my previous paper on social memory, which described an elite Romano-Egyptian family who crafted their identity through their memories of a shared Roman Mediterranean past (Boozer 2010).
- 2 Halbwachs developed the concept of ideological forgetting alongside his concept of collective memory and, in so doing, shows how individuals sustain common interests through selective memory practices (Halbwachs 1992).
- 3 The link between material culture and memory is complicated and multilayered. Several volumes on material culture address this issue and suggest that objects carry associations with them throughout the course of their life histories. These issues can be explored in more detail in Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, Hoskins 1998 and Borić 2010.
- 4 See Parkin 1999 for the use of mementoes as a coping mechanism in situations of forced migration.
- 5 There are several key articles and volumes on forgetting that have been particularly useful for the present paper. For example, Forty and Küchler 1999, Lowenthal 1993, Casey 1987, Eckardt 2004 and Ricoeur 2004.
- 6 Freud suggests that forgetting is active and intentional rather than passive, and that the process of psychoanalysis is to uncover buried pasts (Freud 1960), but this argument is more suited to individuals than societies. The distinction between individuals and societies is important, even if we do not always remember to make that distinction in our discussions of memory and forgetting (Forty 1999).
- 7 'Columbarium' farmhouses have a pigeon loft incorporated into the structure of each of the houses, which gives them this name.
- 8 Unfortunately the excavators published their excavations typologically rather than contextually, making it more difficult to link up the architecture with the artefacts. We cannot say much about how different material culture types co-occur with the architecture and, in turn, the families who occupied these structures.
- 9 For example, the temple of Deir el-Haggar was dedicated to the Theban triad but the order in which these deities were presented shows local adaptations of this norm (Kaper 1997a).

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*Sculpture, Text and Recall: The Monument to
Viscountess Harriet Fitzharris (Christchurch Priory,
Dorset)*

Mary Harlow, Ray Laurence and Roger White

Free-standing group on a block with (worthwhile) inscription. She is seated on a Grecian chair, her youngest child in her lap, the older boys standing. Very domesticated, and feelingly carved.

Pevsner and Lloyd 1967: 176

No one who enters Christchurch Priory in Dorset can fail to be drawn to the large sculptural group situated to the south of the chancel beneath one of the arches of the aisle (Figure 7.1). Not only does the strikingly domestic group appear unusual in such a context – one expects a supine bishop or bombastic general – but the long inscriptions covering the tall plinth on two sides suggest there is a story to be remembered. The mother tenderly cradles one child on her lap, her head resting gently on his, while two older boys, their arms around each other, are at her knees, reaching out to her. She wears a simple long dress, her hair tied up on top of her head with curled locks on her forehead, her face serene. The inscription reveals love, an early death borne without complaint and the loss keenly felt by a husband left bereft of his young wife and wishing to monumentalize her for the wider community, even though she was originally buried elsewhere (Figure 7.2). Like any tragedy, the reader wishes to know more. At the time of construction viewers knew of the tragedy and contextualized its meaning within their community. At the time, they (unlike us today) could remember her and integrate her into their community. The monument as an object accompanied by its long inscription encapsulated and provided a mnemonic to remember a woman who is so different to those of other women commemorated in the church.¹ Some of these memories were transmitted through the publication of an early guidebook to the Priory by a local architect some ten years after the monument was constructed (Ferre 1834). This chapter



Figure 7.1. The Fitzherbert monument, Christchurch Priory, Dorset (formerly Hampshire) (photograph R. White)



Figure 7.2. Harriet Fitzharris' burial inscription in Salisbury Cathedral (photograph R. White)

explores how the monument creates memory of the deceased, the commemorator, and the sculptor; as well as the transmission of local memories from the point of construction to the present day via the medium of the guidebook produced locally but marketed to visitors and interested parties further afield.

THE SUBJECT AND PATRON

We know very little of Viscountess Harriet Fitzharris other than what is recorded on her inscription. She was the wife of James Edward Harris, Second Earl of Malmesbury and Viscount Fitzharris whose seat was at Heron (Hurn) Court, Christchurch. Unlike his diplomat father and his first son, both also called James, he had only a minor political role serving as under-secretary for foreign affairs under Canning in 1807 and then governor of the Isle of Wight. His chief interests were literature and sport (*DNB* 1975). Following his marriage to Harriet Susan Dashwood from Lincolnshire, they had three sons, the first being born in 1802, a second in 1804 and the third in 1813. James Edward Harris died in 1841.

THE ARTIST

Of the artist who created this monument we can say a great deal more. John Flaxman (1755–1826) was one of the greatest applied artists of his age. Competent to work as a sculptor in stone, silverware and ceramics and a fine draftsman with pencil and watercolour, he was one of only two British artists to have been honoured with a museum dedicated solely to his work: the other was John William Mallord Turner. (Flaxman's museum is still at University College, London.) Unusually, he was also greatly honoured on the continent by contemporary artists and writers.

He was the son of an artist, also John, who created plaster casts and models for sculptors and industrialists, including Josiah Wedgwood and Matthew Boulton, contacts that would prove invaluable as he embarked on his career. At the age of 14 he was enrolled at the Royal Academy School and was talented enough to win a silver medal in his first year of study, 1769 (Irwin 1979: 5). The titles of his early works in plaster and wax demonstrate a predilection for classically inspired art, a taste that led to his first real commissions: portrait medallions of eighteenth-century worthies ('illustrious moderns') executed in Jasperware by Wedgwood (Irwin 1979: 19). Even more explicitly classically inspired were the Wedgwood bas reliefs used alone or for decorating furniture or fireplaces and the 'Etruscan urns' that are now so stereotypically associated with Wedgwood. The form and decoration of these latter were based

on Hamilton's collection of Etruscan vases which were acquired in 1772 by the British Museum. 'The Apotheosis of Homer' (1778) is perhaps his most famous vase whose composition was heavily influenced by the Hellenistic original but which added a delicacy of moulding and detail lacking in the painted original. Hamilton himself commented to Wedgwood that 'your bas relief astonishes all the artists here [in Italy], it is more pure and in a truer antique taste than any of their performances though they have many fine models before them' (Irwin 1979: 23–24).

The traits of clean lines and simplicity of modelling were to be seen in the next stage of Flaxman's work, his illustrations. These were executed in Italy where Flaxman and his wife established themselves for eight years from 1787. It was the illustrations above all else that established Flaxman's artistic reputation on the continent since they were seen by a far larger audience than his sculptures ever would be. As a result, according to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, he was the 'idol of all the dilettanti' (quoted in Irwin 1979: 67). Commissioned to illustrate the works of Homer, Aeschylus and Dante, the results were deemed by critics to be of the highest quality because they so faithfully followed the simple linearity of style seen in the original Greek art (Irwin 1979:67). Yet the composition of the scenes sometimes also demonstrates the inspiration of a domestic source. Some of the scenes – Penelope at the loom for example (Figure

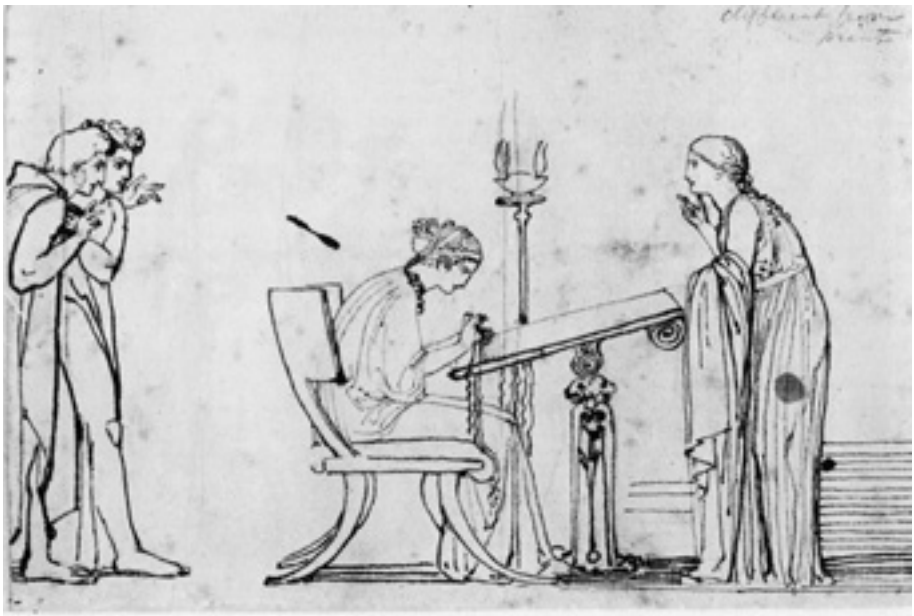


Figure 7.3. Penelope surprised by the suitors (after Irwin 1979 pl. 91)



Figure 7.4. Women sewing (Mrs Flaxman and Maria Denman) (after Irwin 1979 pl. 93)

7.3) – show a composition that could easily have been inspired by observation of household activities (Figure 7.4). This is especially true when women are depicted with infants, for example, and was also a trait seen in his work for Wedgwood, as in a jardinière decorated with putti playing ‘Blind Man’s Buff’ (Irwin 1979: pl.33). With his illustrations for Dante’s *Inferno* Flaxman’s style became even more sparse in terms of line: ‘draped figures are represented by an outline that distils them into almost abstract shapes’ (Irwin 1979: 97). Here the effect was drawn once again from life, in this case the ‘common cloaks of the lower classes of Italy’, as Flaxman’s wife recalled (quoted in Irwin 1979: 98).

Flaxman’s return to London saw him established as a sculptor more than as an illustrator. While in Italy he had undertaken some commissions, most notably the group of *Aurora visiting Cephalus on Mount Ida* (now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool) which was created as a centrepiece for a room in a house in London and the powerful study of *The Fury of Athamas*. Both pieces

were intellectually inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, while the latter group was artistically inspired by the famous antique group of the *Laocoön*. The patron, the Earl-Bishop of Bristol and Derry, commented that Flaxman's piece 'even exceeded the *Laocoön* in expression' (quoted in Irwin 1979: 57) while Irwin himself notes other parallels in this group that Flaxman would have seen and sketched including the *Gaul killing his wife and himself*, the Niobe group in Florence and, to a degree, the Farnese Bull (Irwin 1979: 57–58). However, it was two other commissions he received in Italy that were to mark out his future career more accurately: the tomb relief for the poet William Collins and the freestanding monumental group to commemorate Lord Mansfield that, since 1801, has stood in Westminster Abbey. For the rest of his career, Flaxman largely concentrated on tomb monuments, although the secular commissions also continued, and thus we can now turn to the monument to Harriet Fitzharris.

Flaxman's monumental group exhibits many of the features we would now expect to see: a classically inspired appearance in terms of dress, accessories (the chair) and cleanliness of line that recalls the epitome of Attic gracefulness. However, also present is the keen observation of how children and their mother interact with each other: there is above all a natural tenderness and pathos that no-one can fail to observe. It is this that lifts the group and draws the viewer to discover what one senses to be the tragedy behind the domesticity. This naturalistic approach, cloaked in classicism, is the essence of Flaxman's work, as he himself recognized and demonstrated clearly in his sketchbooks where intimate portraits of women sewing or reading or embracing children appear again and again as the basis for figures in his monuments, metalwork or illustrations. Writing to one of his sisters from Italy when she expressed an interest in learning how to draw he exhorted:

that she will observe attentively the actions of people engaged in conversation or employed in any other way that affects the passions or affections, to consider their countenances, the contour of their figures and their draperies, and particularly to habituate herself in making perfect sketches from nature in a few minutes; that when she makes a drawing she may get some of her friends to sit for each of the figures, never to produce anything without studying nature in this manner.

Quoted in Irwin 1979: 47, see also 118–122

When it came to the execution of the final work there is clear evidence that Flaxman originally intended to work the commission as a relief since that is how the group appears in Flaxman's museum in University College (Figure 7.5) but instead he ended up creating a freestanding group on a high plinth,

while retaining the general composition (Figure 7.6). The result was 'the finest expression of family affection in Flaxman's sculptures' (Irwin 1979: 141). As Irwin points out, maternal affection was an important theme in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art which is related to the evolving attitude to children that saw less repression and a greater interest in their education, as is indeed made explicit in the inscription (Irwin 1979: 145). Nicholas Penny comments too on this aspect, noting that the 'closely-knit domestic unit is a charity group dignified by children anxious for learning, rather than scrambling for the breast' (Penny 1977, 158). This gets to the heart of Flaxman's intentions in creating this monument. As he commented in his lecture '*On Composition*' 'Parental affection and Domestic Charities are cherished much more powerfully in the Christian Dispensation than in the Grecian codes ... there are no equivalents in antique art to the Holy Families, and the charity groups of the Renaissance' (Flaxman 1838, 160). In this case, the education is clearly reading from the Bible: a good Christian foundation for their children, which bore tangible fruit in that the youngest of the three became a Bishop. Flaxman's surviving sketches demonstrate clearly the care that he took to get the likeness of the children and also the observations of other women with their children that gave his sculpture such naturalness. Flaxman continued to tap this rich vein of grief and tenderness in many of his tomb monuments but never again as a freestanding group.



Figure 7.5. Tomb relief for Harriet Fitzharris in Flaxman's museum, UCL (photograph M. Harlow)



Figure 7.6. Mrs Charles Augustus Tulk, with her sons Augustus and Edward (after Irwin 1979 pl. 199)

THE MONUMENT AND ITS INSCRIPTION

Harriet Fitzharris died in 1815, but it was not until 1821 that the monument was completed and her remains were reburied at Christchurch (Ferrey 1834: 42). It is notable that the construction of the monument came after a period of piecemeal, but sustained, restoration of the Priory that included the opening of blocked up windows, removal of ceilings, the construction of ceilings, replacement of pews and removal of partitions. This work did not cease in 1821 and we find through the next decade that the west window was restored,

galleries for the poor were constructed and an altar table was donated. When we visit the Cathedral today, we see some of this restoration work and as visitors assume that the Priory had always been in this architectural form from the period of its construction in the Middle Ages. Nothing could be further from the truth; much of the Priory's interior is a product of the nineteenth century Gothic Revival.² During this period of restoration, in 1821, the Earl of Malmesbury, the owner of the Crypt, converted this space into a 'catacomb' for 'the reception of his family' that could contain a total of eighteen incumbents (Ferrey 1834: 42). The Fitzharris monument in the upper church commemorates his mother, the ancestor of his family interred in the 'catacomb' below. The inscription is worth quoting in full. Immediately beneath the sculpture:

Sacred to the Memory of HARRIET SUSAN, Viscountess FITZHARRIS Daughter of Francis Bateman Dashwood Esq of Well Vale in the County of Lincoln and wife of James Edward Viscount Fitzharris of Heron Court in this Parish, where she departed this life on Monday Night September the 4th 1815 in the 32nd year of her age.

Below the above, on the main body of the plinth, on the long side:

Gifted by nature with uncommon beauty of person and countenance, possessing manners equally dignified and engaging, she never allowed herself to be influenced by the flatteries and allurements of the world, but enjoyed with rational cheerfulness those hours which she could spare from the performance of her domestic duties. The care and education of her children were her darling objects. On them she equally bestowed the vigilant fondness of a mother, and the successful efforts of a well cultivated mind: while all who shared her love and attachment experienced in the various relations of a wife, a daughter, a sister, and a friend, unceasing proofs of the amiable and endearing qualities of her disposition, so deeply impressed with the feelings and confidence of a true Christian was this pious and excellent woman; so fully prepared was she at all times for another World, that the sudden and unexpected approach of death could not disturb the sweet serenity of her mind. Nor did one repining word escape her thro' fourteen days of acute suffering, but awaiting her end with the utmost composure and resignation she calmly gave up her soul into the hands of her creator, quitting all she loved with these words 'I have had my full share of happiness in this World.' Her remains lie interred in the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, but her afflicted husband has raised this marble to her memory, persuaded that where she was best known there would her many virtues longest live in the recollection of her friends and neighbours.

On the short side:

James Howard Harris, born March 25th 1802 Edward Alfred John, born May 20th 1804. Charles Amyand, born August 4th 1813. Of these boys, the eldest, James, became Earl of Malmesbury, and in 1852 and 1868 was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and later Lord Privy Seal to Queen Victoria in the administrations of Lords Derby and Beaconsfield. The second, Edward, an Admiral was for many years minister plenipotentiary at Berne and at The Hague. He died in 1858. The youngest, Charles, became Bishop of Gibraltar, and died in 1871. The above James Howard, 3rd Earl of Malmesbury, died at Heron Court May 12 1883.

At the back (according to Richard Warner who saw it in the 1820s, p.84)

Her children arise and call her blessed;
Her husband also and he praiseth her.

The manner in which Harriet's life is recorded and the memory of her created and controlled by the inscription is instructive. Although her son commissioned the monument it is unclear whether he actually composed the epitaph. We can assume he had both input and final approval as it states he was persuaded that 'her many virtues longest live in the recollection of friends and neighbours.' The way in which these virtues are framed reflects the preoccupations and hierarchy of values of early nineteenth century society. While she is named, Harriet is defined first as the daughter of her father, then the wife of her husband. Then follows a description of her appearance and character – the one being a reflection of the other. Every line describes a paragon of controlled womanhood: she was not influenced by flattery or the distractions of the wider world; any moments away from domesticity – assumed to be her natural world – were 'enjoyed with rational cheerfulness.' The stress here is on rational as opposed to irrational – she was not flighty, over emotional or victim to temptation. She cared for and educated her children as an ideal mother should with a 'vigilant fondness', not an over indulgent love. Her 'pious Christian qualities' were felt equally by relations and friends; these qualities were such to enable to face her final illness and death with serenity and composure.

On one level we see a very traditional life course of an upper class woman recorded here: marriage followed by motherhood; domestic virtues coupled with beauty and charm and modesty. The birth of sons, depicted as children on the monument, would also have enhanced her status. Even in death she is closely associated with her sons: the sculpture shows them in an intimate domestic setting, a mother reading scripture to her young children. The later inscription recording their careers on the short side of the plinth, adds to her

reputation, as well as commemorating theirs. Harriet is very much remembered within the framework of her family and idealized domestic feminine virtues.

Memorials such as this of course record the very public face of the individual. The formulaic nature of funerary monuments rarely allows access to the individual commemorated but it does expose the values and preoccupations of the social class it memorializes. The creation of memory here is enhanced by the interplay of the sculpture and the inscription and their links to the classical world – or the idea of the classical world as it existed in the period.

The virtues listed here for Harriet at the start of the nineteenth century reflect the cult of domesticity that had been evolving since the mid-eighteenth century. By the early nineteenth century the preferred model of marriage for the landed aristocracy was moving away from the patriarchal to the companionate partnership envisioned here (Tuite 1999: 131). For women this meant a world centred on the family and care of children. The rise of the idea of the domestic brought with it tensions as it did not for the most part imagine women outside this realm. However, the description of Harriet as ‘rational’ is a compliment and a nod to the Enlightenment. It is hard to imagine the Harriet recorded here as having much in common with some women of the Enlightenment such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) her near contemporary (see Wollstonecraft 1787 on the education of daughters).

The sculpture and wording of the memorial also produce other associations in the educated viewer’s mind. The classicizing nature of Flaxman’s portrayal and the content of the inscription resonate directly from the classical world and particularly from stoicism – all the tropes found there are echoed in the portrayal of Harriet’s life here.

Below is a rather typical epitaph for a woman from Rome dating to second century BC. Dedicated to Claudia who is unknown apart from this inscription, it exemplifies many other epitaphs of this type and highlights both the virtues prized in a Roman wife and the demographic realities of her time:

Friend, I have not much to say – stop and read it. This is an unbeautiful tomb for a beautiful woman. Her parents gave her the name Claudia. She loved her husband with all her heart. She bore two sons. One of them she left on earth, the other she put beneath it. She was pleasant to talk with and she walked with Grace. She kept house. She worked in wool. That is all. You may go.

CIL VI. 15346

From the early second century AD a letter of Pliny the Younger records the death of Minucia Marcella age thirteen, the daughter of his friend Fundanus:

She had not yet reached the age of fourteen, and yet she combined the wisdom of

age and the dignity of womanhood with the sweetness and modesty of youth and innocence ... she applied herself intelligently to her books and was moderate and restrained in her play. She bore her last illness with patient resignation and indeed, with courage. She obeyed her doctor's orders, cheered her sister and her father and by sheer force of will carried on after her physical strength had failed her. This willpower remained with her until the end, and neither the length of her illness nor her fear of death could break it.

Letters 5.16. 2–4

While this is a eulogy of a much younger girl, inferences of her sweet nature and strong character echo those found on Harriet's memorial. More pertinent is the attitude to illness and death. Pliny's letter is a work of literary art which manages to convey both the youthfulness of Minucia and the mature woman she might have become. The self-possession and heroic fortitude shown in the face of illness are also characteristic of stoic doctrine and remind us of the phrases used on Harriet's epitaph (for the legacy of stoicism see Sellars 2006: 139–156).

Roman women are stereotypically defined by their relationship to men and their families. They are ideally submissive, obedient, skilled at domestic work – exemplified by weaving – and the bearers of children, particularly sons. Of course, not all women fit or indeed aspired to this model (nor is it the only model) but it is a very pervasive one through several centuries of the Roman empire.

These memorials embody common ways of characterizing women, despite the discrepancy in their ages and the time span between them. The way a society chooses to remember women plays into, and indeed is creative of stereotypes. The choices made reflect social traditions and the epigraphic habit of commemoration, both of which are formative in the way a society views itself – and given the prominent placing of some of these monuments – Harriet Fitzharris in the church at Christchurch, Claudia who speaks directly to passers by – these virtues were presumably internalized by some viewers.

The Fitzharris monument couples the values of its own time and those of the classical world. The tradition of memorials and the use of Flaxman's talent say as much about the aspirations of the family as the commemoration of Harriet. Indeed Harriet's memorial is about so much more than the woman herself.

We do have other sources which record how devastated her husband was at Harriet's death. His great grandson recalls that the Earl was so inconsolable at her death that 'not a plant in her garden ... nor a trinket in her boudoir was ever changed' (Aflalo no date: xxix).

The monument has created a number of responses over time – Richard Warner in his *Literary Recollections* (1830: 82) – records standing in front of the monument:

‘to the memory of that angelic woman; and further that he felt himself personally moved: to a husband and father the group is one of the most affecting I have ever contemplated.’

THE GUIDEBOOK

Benjamin Ferrey was a pupil of Pugin, the famous Gothic revival architect. He worked throughout his career as an architect on church interiors. Not surprisingly, he carefully documents the changes to the interior of the Priory at Christchurch. However, what makes his guidebook so intriguing, is that it was published just after the Great Reform Bill (widening the franchise from thirty-six to 400 of the 5000 inhabitants) had been passed with costs defrayed by subscription from 216 members of either the architectural profession, such as John Dobson, but also local benefactors from Christchurch and its region. All of the latter’s other donations of money for the restoration of the Priory were carefully noted in the Guidebook. This factor causes the guidebook to be in a quite different form from, say, a Pevsner description of the Priory. The book was also dedicated to the Earl of Malmesbury – the son of Harriet Fitzharris. Ferrey’s 1834 guidebook is in fact a eulogy to the Priory, the history and archaeology of the area (including Hengistbury Head), and to the prominent gentlemen who had in the past and in the present donated money to the Church. In so doing, there is much story telling to explain what can be seen or participated in. For example, in discussing the monument set up to Gustavus Brander and the commemorative service held on 3 August, Ferrey quotes the will of the deceased to explain why this was held:

as an everlasting memorial and as expressive of my gratitude to the Supreme Being for my preservation in the year of 1768, when my horses ran violently down Temple Lane in London and down three flights of steps into the Thames, in a dark night; and yet not horses, or carriage, or myself, or servants received any injury; it was fortunately low water.

Ferrey 1834: 61

Story telling is the essential component here, but unlike the Fitzharris monument, Gustavus Brander’s tomb does not recall the person or incident. Interestingly, Ferrey is rather brief on the Fitzharris monument observing that it is a composition by Flaxman and that the image shows Harriet Fitzharris ‘instructing her children from Holy Scriptures in their religious and moral duties’ and then quotes all the inscriptions without further interpretation, apart from noting that the inscriptions to her sons were added at a later date to the

monument (see above). Ferrey brings together concepts of the sculpture, the inscription and the person to create a mother, who is domesticated, contextualized in a family and integrated into a community. Harriet Fitzharris was to be remembered as a dutiful mother, which thus establishes the characters of her two sons – one of whom set up the monument – as religious and moral men.

By the 1840s, Ferrey was working at Bournemouth with a view to developing 'a watering place' and the 1841 edition of his guidebook was revised by John Britton³. Gone are many of the long digressions, particularly that at the end concerning the relationship between Norman architecture and Vitruvius' *De architectura* (Ferrey 1834: 72–89). The edited version has much more in common with a modern guidebook, but Ferrey's description of the Fitzharris monument was retained. There were other guidebooks appearing, as nearby Mudestone developed as a resort. Greater numbers of visitors came to the area (and, as a result, new guidebooks appeared that referred to the Fitzharris monument, as is detailed below). Most depend on Ferrey's 1834 guidebook, but introduce more information from further afield that might appeal more to visitors from London and elsewhere.

To give an example, in the *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Town and Borough of Christchurch*, we find the following account:

On the south side of the chancel, under an open arch, near the altar, is erected a monument to the late Harriet Susan, Viscountess Fitzharris, the affectionate consort of the present Earl of Malmesbury. It is a group, the size of nature, representing this estimable lady instructing her infant sons in the most essential of all knowledge, that of the Holy Scriptures. The work is from the chisel of Flaxman, and is allowed to be one of the best productions by the artist. It was exhibited in the Spring of 1817, in the Royal Academy, Somerset House, and stood in the centre of the sculpture room, between two statues of Hebe and Polyhymnia by the Marquis Canova. The inscription on the pedestal is from the pen of Lord Fitzharris, and details the domestic excellence of the lady here commemorated, whose remains are deposited in one of the catacombs in the vault beneath, the ancient crypt of the priory church. Her ladyship died at Heron Court, September 4, 1815, in the 32nd year of her age.

Anon. 1840: 19

Unlike, Ferrey, the author of this guidebook had developed the succinct style of writing that we today associate with such works. He does not include the text of the inscription, but includes rather more than Ferrey on the artistic significance of Flaxman's work.⁴ The reference at the end of the quote above to her place of death, allows the guidebook writer to move swiftly on to describe Heron Court – a Gothic revival residence designed by William Garbett, who had also designed the 'catacombs' in the crypt for the Earl of Malmesbury.

Other guidebooks did appear, notably Walcott's work *Memorials of Christchurch-Twynham, Hants, Past and Present*. The 1883 edition was revised by the architect in charge of the restoration committee, B. Edmund Ferrey – the son of the writer of the first guidebook. This work brings up to date the restoration work on the Cathedral, but strangely does not mention the Fitzharris monument, yet can include that of the Brander family thus:

There are several monuments in the aisle and processional path to members of the families of Walcott, Rose and Brander, including one of a Mr Gustavus Brander FSA, the well-known geologist and antiquary, who founded an annual sermon in commemoration of his preservation from drowning in the Thames, and gave an organ at a cost of £500.

Walcott 1883: 49

In some ways, the memorial and its personage had been forgotten and, perhaps, upstaged by James Weekes' (1854) memorial to Shelley (London 1993 for discussion of the monument). Certainly, by 1890, a guidebook to Hampshire noted of this statue:

The tower at the west end of the nave is Perpendicular, and contains a beautiful but inappropriate memorial sculpture for Shelley the poet ... The workmanship is admirable, but the design of the monument is painfully suggestive of an Italian *pieta* (where the Virgin supports the body of the Saviour). A greater objection is that it is totally at variance with the real facts of the poet's death.

Anon. 1890: 115–116

By this point the guidebook had developed as a literary form from Ferrey's 1834 eulogy of the region and his subscribers to a cultural critique. The guidebook focuses on the value of visiting, rather than simply presenting information for the reader to absorb, whilst celebrating the philanthropy of religious and moral men involved in the restoration of a Gothic Cathedral in Ferrey's book.

Local or cultural memory becomes diluted and even confused, as non-participants in its local production (i.e. outsiders) retell the stories associated with monuments. Just as verbal retelling of stories or rumours accumulate and lose meaning, so that their content becomes unreliable, the later guidebooks re-tell the stories of an area, often with omissions and additions. In so doing, cultural memory can be seen as a shifting object that is not fixed but will preserve elements that can be traced back. For readers of guidebooks, the abbreviated style developed over the nineteenth century to create portable books created a quite different form of knowledge – in which the recall of people became

subservient to the measurement of artistic quality. A phenomenon that caused Flaxman to outshine Harriet Fitzharris, yet the text of the inscription continues to inform visitors of a prominent woman who died young.

Notes

- 1 E.g. 'Here lieth the body of the first and beloved wife of Augustus Welby Northmore de Pugin, Architect, who departed this life at London on the 27th day of May, 1832, R.I.P. Amen.' Notice she has no name, but is in fact Anne Garnet, who died during childbirth in 1832 and later he donated the table. She was grand-daughter of Dayes the artist. Married her when 19 and hence under age. See Ferrey 1978: 68–70.
- 2 See Ferrey 1834 for full details of restorations.
- 3 Ferrey 1841.
- 4 In writing the entry, he also muddles his Earl of Malmesburys – since the monument was not erected by Harriet's husband but her son, a point established by Ferrey.

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Index

- Aischylos 91
 Akhenaten 20
 Amenemhat III 23
 Alexander the Great 71, 74
 Amun-nakht 121
 animal worship 95–6
 Apuleius 95–6
 Aristotle 66
 Assmann, Aleida 11, 27
 Assmann, Jan 3–4, 11–13, 20, 45, 61
 Athens 6, 26, 31–2, 37
 Augustus 96
 autobiographical memory 10, 45, 61, 69

 Barth, F. 62
 Barthes, R. 53
 Battle of Britain 1
 Battle of Qadesh 3
 belonging, sense of 113
 Benjamin, W. 109–23
 Bergson, H. 51
 Berry, Chuck 93
 Bing, Peter 33–6
 Boiotians in Egypt 80, 84–5, 90
 Boiotia 84–5, 90
 Bradley, R. 112
 Brander, Gustavus 139
 Britton, John 140
 Burdon, Eric 2
 burning of offerings 97–9

 Callimachus of Cyrene 27–8, 34
 Cameron, David 2
 Casey, E.S. 44
 Cazeaux, J. 68
 Christchurch Priory 7, 127, 134–5, 139 *see also*
 Fitzharris Monument
 Cicero 46–7, 65
 code switching 48
 collective identity 117–22
 collective memory 3–4, 10–11, 26, 52, 61, 72
 Corinth 82

 cultural identity 61–3, 68–9
 cultural imagination 6
 cultural memory 3–5, 11–13, 19–21, 26–8, 36–7,
 43–5, 50, 57, 61–3, 71–2, 80, 93–4, 100–1, 141;
 definitions of 3–4, 43–4
 culture, *high* and *low* 5

 Dakhleh Oasis 109–23
damnatio memoriae 112
 Deir el-Haggar 116
 Dench, E. 54
 Dionysius 65
 domesticity, cult of 137
 dreams and dream interpretation 64–73

 Eco, Umberto 52
 Egypt 6–7, 12–21; map of 110 *see also* Dakhleh
 Oasis
 Egyptian cults 80–101
 Ennius 53
 Epidauros 82
 epigrams 27–37
 ethnic identity 61–2
 Eton Myers collection 23
 etymology 50, 55–6
 Euripides 36–7
 Evans, V. 50

 Fauconnier, G. 45–6, 50
 Felson, Nancy 31
 Ferrey, B. Edmund 141
 Ferrey, Benjamin 139–40
 festivals 86–7, 94
 Fitzharris Monument 7, 127–9, 132–42
 Flaxman, John 129–33, 137–8, 142
 Flower, H.I. 51
 forgetting 109–22; and collective identity 117–22;
 in the Dakhleh Oasis 114–16; harmonization
 of 111–13; types of 7, 112–13
 Forty, A. 112

 Garbett, William 140

- gender 6, 61
 Germany 5
 Glazebrook, Allison 37
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 130
 Goodman, M. 72
 Graesholt, G. 68
 Gramsci, Antonio 62–3
 Greek literature and culture 63–4
- Habicht, C. 90
 Halbwachs, Maurice 10–11, 20, 45
 Heidegger, Martin 113
 Hektor 29–31
 Heliodorus of Emesa 99
 Hendrix, Jimi 93
 Herodotus 12, 33, 35, 90–1, 94, 99
 hieroglyphics 12
 Homer 64, 119–20
 Hope, Colin 119
 houses, study of 117–20
 Hunter, Richard 34
 Hussein, Saddam 112
- identity: and memory 93–4, 101 *see also* collective
 identity; cultural identity; ethnic identity
The Iliad 29–31, 34
 Imperial War Museum 2
inventio Osiridis 85, 87, 91
 Irwin, D. 132–3
- Jacob 67
 Jerusalem 62, 71
 Joseph 67–8, 71, 73
 Josephus 6, 61–4, 69–74
- Kenchreai 81
- literacy, concept of 32–3
 Livius 53
 Livy 65
 Lloyd, D. 127
 London bombings (7 July 2005) 2
 Loomba, A. 63
 Lynn, Vera 2
- mémoire-habitude* and *memoir-souvenir* 51
 memory: and identity 93–4, 101; storage of 92–5,
 100 *see also* autobiographical memory;
 collective memory; cultural memory; social
 memory
 Mendelson, A. 68
 Menes, King 12
 Mesene 83
- Millions Like Us* (film) 1
 Mills, A.J. 115
 mnemotechnics 44–5
 mockery of customs and beliefs 91
 mummification 96–7
 Muwatalli 3
 mysteries 80, 83, 99–100
 myth 94–5
- Narmer palette 13–15, 18–19
navigium Isidis 86
 Nebuchadnezzar 73
 Nerfitti's bust 92
 Niehoff, M. 62, 65, 68
 Nora, Pierre 44–5
- oratory 46–7
 Ovid 57, 95, 131–2
- Palermo Stone 12
Past Times 2
 Pausanias 6, 79–101
 Penny, Nicholas 133
 Pevsner, N. 127
 Philo 6, 61–74
 Phocis 84–5 *see also* Tithorea
 Phrasikleia's monument 36–7
 Plato 37, 65–6
 Pliny the Younger 137–8
 Plutarch 65, 90–1
 poetry 27–8, 35
- Quintilian 46
 Quintus 65
- Rajak, T. 62–3, 72
 Ramesses II 3, 18
 Ramesses II 23
 Ramesses VI 23
 religious events and practices 95, 120–1
res gestae 3
 Ricoeur, Paul 50–1, 113
 rituals 3, 6, 18–19, 26–7, 80–6, 89, 94–7, 101
 Roman civilization 43–57, 65, 67
 Romans in Egypt 95, 115
 Rome 43–57, 62–5, 70, 73, 92, 95–6, 115, 137
 Rusch, A. 83
- Sallust 54
 Sarkozy, Nicolas 2
sēma concept 28–9, 34
 semiotics 45, 48–9, 57
 Seth, cult of 121

- sexuality 61
- shared memories *see* collective memory
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe 34
- Slatkin, Laura 31
- Smith, Anthony 3
- smiting of enemies 13–20
- social memory 2, 4, 61, 111, 113
- Socrates 35–6, 65–6
- Sparta 82
- Spawforth, A.J.S. 92
- subaltern cultures 62–3, 69, 73–4
- Suetonius 71
- Svenbro, Jesper 36
- Thebes 18, 84, 116
- Thomas, R. 33
- Thutmosis IV 16
- Tithorea 85–94, 97–101
- tradition 11
- Tutankhamen 23
- Varro, Marcus Terentius 6, 43–57
- Vergil 57
- Vespasian 71–2
- Walcott, M.E.C. 141
- Warner, Richard 138–9
- Wedgwood, Josiah 129–30
- Wellington Plane Built in One Day, The* (film) 1–2
- Whitmarsh, T. 68, 72
- Who, The 2
- women, role and status of 37, 137–8