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Religion and Society in Ancient Thessaly

Maria Mili

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MARIA MILI

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M.M.

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Abbreviations

AA	*Archäologischer Anzeiger*
AAA	*Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα εξ' Αθηνών*
ABSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
AD	*Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*
AE	*Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς*
AEThSE	*Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας*
AIIN	*Annali dell' Istituto Italiano di Numismatica*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
AM	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*
Anc. Soc.	*Ancient Society*
Anc. W.	*Ancient World*
ANSMN	*American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*
Ant. Class.	*Antiquité Classique*
Ant. Kun.	*Antike Kunst*
Arch. Class.	*Archeologia Classica*
Arch. f. Rel.	*Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*
ASAA	*Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente*
ASNP	*Annali della Scuola Normale Superiori di Pisa, Cl. Di Lettere e Filosofia*
BABesch	*Bulletin Antieke Beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*
BE	*Bulletin Épigraphique,* in *Revue des Études Grecques*
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London*
CAJ	*Cambridge Archaeological Journal*
CEG	P. A. Hansen (1983–9), *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, 2 vols. (Berlin).
CID	*Corpus des Inscriptions de Delphes*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
Cl. Ant.	*Classical Antiquity*

CPhil.	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CSCA	*University of California Studies in Classical Antiquity*
Dial. Hist. Anc.	*Dialogues d' Histoire Ancienne*
DNP	H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike* (Stuttgart 1996–2003).
EA	*Epigraphica Anatolica*
Ergo Ephorion	*Το έργο των εφορειών αρχαιοτήτων και νεοτέρων μνημείων του ΥΠ.ΠΟ στη Θεσσαλία και στην ευρύτερη περιοχή της* (Volos 2000)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICS	*Illinois Classical Studies*
ID	Inscribed Dedication
IEphesos	R. Meriç, R. Merkelbach, J. Nollé, and S. Şahin (eds.), *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* I (Bonn 1979–81)
IErythrai	H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach (eds.), *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai* (Bonn 1972–3)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*
IIasos	W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Iasos* (Bonn 1985)
IMagnesia	O. Kern (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander* (Berlin 1900)
JdaI	*Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts.*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIAN	*Journal International d'Archéologie Numismatique*
Journ. Sav.	*Journal des Savants*
JRGZM	*Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
Larisa Acts	*Πρακτικά του πρώτου ιστορικού-αρχαιολογικού συμποσίου Λάρισα: παρελθόν και μέλλον* (Larisa 1985).
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich 1981–99)
Liv. Ann.	*Liverpool Annals*
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (Paris 1969)
LSJ	H. G. Liddel and R. Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon* (1845, 9th edn., rev. H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie, 1940, suppl. P. G. W. Glare, 1996)
MdI	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
MH	*Museum Helveticum*
Mon. Ant.	*Monumenti Antichi*

Nomima	H. van Effenterre and F. Ruzé, *Nomima: requeil d' inscriptions politiques et juridiques de l'archaisme grecque* (Rome 1994)
Num. Chron.	*Numismatic Chronical*
OCD	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn. (Oxford 1996)
ÖJh	*Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien*
Op. Ath.	*Opuscula Atheniensia*
Op. Rom.	*Opuscula Romana*
PAE	*Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*
RA	*Revue Archéologique*
RE	A. Pauly and G. Wissowa (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft* (1893–1978)
REA	*Revue des Études Anciennes*
REG	*Revue des Études Grecques*
RendPontAcc	*Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia: Rendiconti*
Rev. Num.	*Revue Numismatique*
Rev. Phil.	*Revue Philologique*
Rh. Mus.	*Rheines Museum für Philologie*
RHR	*Revue de l' Histoire des Religions*
Riv. Fil.	*Rivista di Filologia et d' Istruzione Classica*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
Synedrio Theochari	*Διεθνές συνέδριο για την αρχαία Θεσσαλία στη μνήμη του Δημήτρη Ρ. Θεοχάρη* (Athens 1992).
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
ThesCRA	*Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum*, 6 vols. (Los Angeles 2004–6)
Thessalia	*Θεσσαλία. 15 χρόνια αρχαιολογικής έρευνας* 1975–90. *Αποτελέσματα και προοπτικές* (Athens 1994).
World Arch.	*World Archaeology*
ZfN	*Zeitschrift für Numismatik*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

1

Three Questions for a Regional Study of Religion

1.1. REGIONAL STUDIES OF RELIGION: QUESTIONS, STRUCTURES, AND TITLES

Thessalian religion can fascinate for multiple reasons. A long-running ancient tradition associates the area with magic and witchcraft. It both hosted strange gods, unfamiliar in the rest of the Greek world, and was the traditional homeland of some of the most prominent figures in Greek myth, including Achilles and Hellen, father of all the Greeks. Its landscape of flat plains and rolling hills distinguishes Thessaly from the more familiar Greek landscapes of sea and mountain known to visitors to southern Greece and the islands. This landscape bore fruit that made the area idiosyncratic to ancient observers and modern scholars alike: pastoral wealth, a famous cavalry, and distinctive social and political forms. This book is an attempt to explore the religion of this area, to investigate the region's peculiarities, and to assess more precisely the ways in which the religious life of Thessalians differed from or accorded with that found in other parts of the Greek world. It attempts to understand the differences and similarities by placing the region's religion in its contemporary social setting.

The borders of Thessaly are taken to be those defined in the ancient sources; a deceptively straightforward statement, since the area that constituted Thessaly changed through time. In the earliest literary source, the *Iliad*, Thessaly does not exist, in the sense that the broader area later identified as Thessaly did not have that name.[1] Many centuries later, in Strabo's writings, Thessaly extends from Mount Olympus in the north all the way to Thermopylai in the south. To the west it is bordered by the Pindus mountain range and to the east by the Aegean Sea.[2] Several fragmentary sources indicate, however, that during the Classical and Hellenistic periods that will be the focus of this book

[1] Hom. *Il.* 2.681–759. [2] Strabo 9.5.1.

the area known as Thessaly was smaller.[3] It covered two large plains divided by the low hills of Revenia and was circled by a series of mountains: Olympus to the north, Ossa and Pelion to the east, Othrys to the south, Agrapha and Pindus to the west. These mountainous regions around Thessaly had their own names: the area to the north separating Thessaly from Macedonia was called Perrhaibia; that to the east, overlooking the Aegean, Magnesia; the one to the south was Achaia Phthiotis; and even further south, in the valley of Spercheios, were Malis and the lands of the Oitaioi, the Paracheloitai, and the Ainians; while to the west were Dolopia and Athamania. The people living on the periphery of Thessaly, the Perrhaibians, Magnesians, and so on, were sometimes collectively called the *perioikoi* of Thessaly, a term that indicates, on the one hand, the existence of ties between these groups and Thessaly itself, and hints, on the other, at some form of control that Thessaly exercised over them, at least in some contexts. The precise borders between Thessaly and the perioikic areas are very fuzzy: throughout the history of Thessalian topographic studies one scholar's Thessalian settlement is another's perioikic community. Such problems of classification bring with them the issue of how we perceive these identities and the territorial borders that go with them: what difference did it make to live in a perioikic settlement rather than in a Thessalian one? Would the life of someone living in a perioikic community have been very different from that of someone living five kilometres away, or on the other side of the river, in a supposedly Thessalian settlement? We will often cross these murky borders into Perrhaibia, Magnesia, and Achaia Phthiotis, the closest of Thessaly's neighbours, to ask these questions. But we will not tread into Dolopia and Athamania, areas about which we know very little, nor will we venture to the settlements of the more distant Spercheios valley.

Regional studies of Greek religion have a history stretching back more than a century, and any scholar who embarks on such a project should not really feel in desperate need of justification.[4] It has become a truism to say that Greek religion, in many of its aspects, should be seen as the aggregate of the religions of the various communities that made up the Greek world.[5] But as a short and general statement this demands elaboration. Several questions immediately arise, starting with the question of how we define the region to be studied. Does it make a difference if it is a city, a village community, or a whole geographical region? And do political unification and a strong feeling of

[3] See in general Decourt et al. (2004).

[4] Amongst the earliest are: Immerwahr (1891); Wide (1893).

[5] The theme of religious regionalism appears regularly in many recent works on Greek religion: see for instance Price (1999) p. ix, who argues that his title *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* is designed to suggest the variety of Greek religion in time and space; Ogden (2007), who includes in *A Companion to Greek Religion* a section on regional religious systems; R. Parker (2011a) 225–36.

common identity matter? While, generally speaking, any of the above groupings could be investigated, one must concede that in each case the questions to be asked should be different. While it might make sense to examine the religious aspects of the Peloponnesian league, one can hardly speak of a Peloponnesian religion in the same way as one can speak of an Athenian one.[6] As well as charting difference and similarity in the evidence, fragmentary as it always is, we have to think more precisely about how we expect the religion of a chosen region to be similar or different from that of any other. As an extension of this we should ask ourselves whether we can progress beyond the details—all the gods, epithets, rituals—to compile the bits and pieces into a coherent picture. Finally, one has always to think about the kinds of evidence that are available and how they allow or restrict access to the topic. These three basic interrelated problems, which we could sum up as the problem of defining the unit of analysis, of describing difference, and of selecting and assessing the evidence, have always and will always face regional studies of Greek religion. Scholars have not always addressed these problems directly, but the ways in which they have responded to them have had a formative impact on their results.

The history of regional studies of Greek religion can, in fact, be seen as one of gradual development as scholars came to realize the importance of these core issues and tackle them directly. The earliest works, those by Wide on Lakonian cults and by Immerwahr on Arcadian myths and cults, were symptomatic in avoiding the term 'religion' altogether.[7] For them, their primary subject was the gods, accessed primarily through written sources and organized hierarchically, starting with Zeus. This narrow subject matter and god-focused structure was fitted into the dominant model of the time. Individual gods were directly associated with ethnic groups. For Wide, Zeus was the god of the Dorian element of Sparta's population whereas Poseidon's cult was observed by the pre-Dorian tribes. Immerwahr went further, fragmenting the gods to find in elements of their cults the influence of the various tribes that were meant to have passed through Arcadia. The result was that the religion of a region barely existed as a unified phenomenon, being simply a disparate group of cults, a palimpsest of ethnic history. As everywhere in Western academia, the ethnic element of all this fell into disfavour, but the gods remained central as the structuring principle of regional studies of religion. The work of Fritz Graf on the cults of 'north-Ionia' is perhaps the best example of its time.[8] He painstakingly collects the evidence for god after god, epithet after epithet, and follows the connections all across the Greek world.

[6] Vlassopoulos (2008) offers a review of Peloponnesian identity and its varying importance at different levels of analysis. Mylonopoulos (2003) is one example of a study that does not justify convincingly why, and in what precise ways, his Peloponnesian focus is illuminative.

[7] Immerwahr (1891); Wide (1893).

[8] Graf (1985).

The result is hardly a regional study at all. The breaking of the ethnic element left a hole that is not filled. There is little impression of the region, indeed it is never really approached directly; instead the result is a web of individual cults and their Panhellenic connections.

A new wave of regional studies has made a genuine departure from the traditions of the discipline by having topography rather than divinity as their structuring principle. For these studies the subject matter is conceived of as 'cults and sanctuaries'. The works of scholars such as Jost on Arcadia or Sporn on Crete are topographically organized, arranged by city and sanctuary, which, wherever possible, are placed within their landscape.[9] Particularly in Jost's work, the result can be markedly more successful than earlier studies in bringing life to the local topography and tying the evidence of cult to its setting.[10] But the continued avoidance of the more general 'religion' as the focus of analysis for narrower foci—'cults' or 'sanctuaries' that are perceived of as more concrete—ultimately hamstrings these works. For both Jost and Sporn the result is a highly selective use of the evidence, which Sporn does most to defend. In Sporn's work emphasis is placed on how trustworthy the evidence for cult is. A distinction between private and official cult is made and the former is sidelined—private dedications are only regarded as probable rather than certain evidence of a cult's existence. Portions of evidence are left aside, most notably those concerning household cult, burial, and the afterlife.[11]

Ultimately, the core of their approach is a conception of what religion was like. Jost is highly suspicious of the term. She argues that the search for Arcadian religion might be misguided and that instead we should perhaps think of it as a bricolage of cults and gods, appearing, developing, some dying, some surviving, almost randomly one next to the other;[12] a conclusion that surprisingly resonates with that reached by nineteenth-century scholars. The result is somehow disappointing. There is no sense of religion as it was lived, no feeling of the worshippers and their relationship with their gods. The strong suspicion must be that the fragmented sense of the religion derives from the fragmented state of the evidence and scholars' caution about extending its interpretative potential; a caution that is most clearly manifested in the scholars' concern for a thorough collection and rigid classification of the evidence.[13]

[9] Jost (1985); Sporn (2002). Earlier scholars had also structured the material in one or the other way: Immerwahr (1891) had included at the end of his study (pp. 267–75) a brief list of all the cults organized by city. Precedence, however, was given to the gods, while in the works of Jost and Sporn one has to wait until the second part of the book for a systematic treatment of them.

[10] Sporn's topographical organization seems more mechanical. Polinskaya's (2006) urging, if with a different emphasis, to think of topography in more concrete terms, is in this respect welcome.

[11] Sporn (2002) 25–32.

[12] Jost (1985) 7.

[13] Wide (1893) p. vii explicitly states as a main aim of his study the collection and cataloguing of all the available evidence, and this has remained a principal aim of most regional studies of

We have to come to the work of Parker on Athenian religion to find the individual worshipper, and not just sanctuaries, cults, and gods, having a privileged position, at the centre of his attention. How can we study the religion of an area, Parker wonders, if we do not look at the people who lived there?[14] Leaving behind the cities and sanctuaries of Arcadia and Crete, appearing as deserted remains in empty landscapes, we reach in Athens a city teeming with worshippers. Through the two dense volumes, Parker takes us on a journey: from the acropolis and its joyful pompous celebrations of proud citizens, rich metics, well-dressed maidens, and perplexed gift-bearing islanders; down the slope to the theatre of Dionysus, amidst an audience seeking a glimpse of the divine plan, which could make Oedipus' fate more bearable; through the agora, with its deliberations of seers and politicians over which animal is the best-looking and how to use the goddess' money; out to the gates of the Kerameikos at the haunts of prostitutes conjuring the infernal powers to claim back lost love; or, in the graveyard, to read inscribed on stones the grief and timid hopes of those bereaved; yet further away, in the darkness of the Telesterion to sense the tantalizingly unspoken expectations of the Eleusinian initiates. Alas! One cannot even dream of recreating all these images through a bunch of fragmented inscriptions, enigmatic images on coins, and hastily excavated sanctuaries. But the mould has been set: we have to place the worshipper at the centre of our perspective. We have, even in regions like Thessaly where the evidence is not so well preserved, to press that evidence's interpretative potential.

As the title of the book shows, I define the topic not as cults and sanctuaries but as religion, in the broadest and most general sense. This, in turn, means that I draw from a wide array of evidence, which includes the most famous sanctuaries, where honours were announced, but also includes such diverse phenomena as clusters of figurines found in houses, private dedications, myths, funerary epigrams, reliefs, and rumours about Thessalian witches. The reader will not find here a complete catalogue of everything we know about religion in Thessaly, since the artificial structures that such cataloguing necessarily dictates ultimately hinder one from exploring any issue in depth.[15] This book offers an attempt to overcome the fragmentary evidence that afflicts all regional studies of Greece outside Attica and to reconstruct the religious life of the area as a coherent, vital thing within a real and living society. Inevitably, given the state of the evidence, I will not always succeed, but I hope I will at

religion. Such cataloguing, as mentioned above, can be done in two ways, by organizing the material either by god or by city.

[14] R. Parker (1996) 1–2, who also notes that 'this neglect is a product of certain long-established demarcations in the study of the subject'.

[15] See n. 13.

least show how the lacunae in the evidence are the result of survival rather than the result of a religious and social system that was itself lacunose.

My aim is to study the relationship between religion and society, to see how the different conditions of living in Thessaly affected the religious experiences of its population. Thessaly makes an intriguing case-study for an exploration of the relationship between religion and society. In many ways it seems to emerge from the literature as a counterpoint to standard views of Classical Greek civilization. It was an *ethnos*, viewed by modern scholars as chaotic and feudal, home to competing clans and rustic townships. It was aristocratic, its wealth and sloth compared by contemporaries to that of Persia. It was magical, viewed by moderns and ancients alike as a land of witches, necromancers, and poisoners. All this goes against the vision of a rational and democratic polis that encapsulates Classical Greece in the popular mind's eye. But, at the same time, Thessaly was the well-spring of the lineages of the greatest Greek heroes; with one of its arms stretching to Olympus and the other reaching for Delphi: the fetters of Greek culture.

1.2. DEFINING THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS: POLIS RELIGION IN *ETHNE*?

The most inspiring theory that directly addresses the question of the relationship between religion and society in ancient Greece is the polis religion model, developed by Sourvinou-Inwood.[16] The model has been feverishly discussed in recent years and it seems that every scholar has a slightly different understanding of it.[17] The polis religion model starts from the fact that Greek religion lacked sacred texts and any kind of formalized separate religious authority, and poses the question of how, and at what level of social interaction, a perception of a commonly accepted religion was created. This happened, the model argues, first and foremost at the level of the polis, which was the main unit of social and political organization in ancient Greece.

The basic and most pertinent criticism of the polis religion model is that it can lead one to overstress the degree of polis control over the various parts of society, not allowing space for other points of view, and excluding from the

[16] The model is directly discussed in Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a) and (2000b). It underlies, though, much of the rest of her work on Greek religion.

[17] Woolf (1997); Bendlin (2000) for criticism concerning the application of the model in the study of Roman religion. Dignas (2002) for its application in Hellenistic Asia Minor. A conference in memory of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood held at Reading University in 2008 was dedicated to the topic of polis religion. Some of the papers presented there have now been published separately: Kindt (2009); Bremmer (2010); Eidinow (2011). See also Pakkanen (2011); R. Parker (2011a) 40–63, esp. 57–61; Versnel (2011) 88ff.

discussion whole segments of society that are either marginalized or, when discussed, only viewed from the polis perspective. In other words the model presupposes the existence of a coherent and all-encompassing religious system, whereas there might have been a lot of variety and inconsistency.[18] This criticism, which may sound like a note of reservation when it applies to Athens, becomes more disconcerting when the discussion shifts to other parts of the Greek world, the so-called *ethne*, where the salience of the polis as a unit of social and political organization has been debated for a long time.

Before picking up the discussion of what an *ethnos* is and the theoretical problems that this creates for our understanding of the role of the polis, I need to say more about the polis religion model. I believe that, in spite of the criticisms, the model, as phrased by Sourvinou-Inwood, remains the most useful to the scholar who wants to study the relationship between religion and society. The certainty with which the conclusion has been phrased has diverted attention from the separate questions asked. A lot of emphasis has been put on the authoritative statement that 'the polis provided the fundamental framework within which Greek religion operated' and not on the methodology and the series of arguments that Sourvinou-Inwood employs to argue for it. Throughout her work she urges us to examine questions of religious authority, the administration of sanctuaries and religious participation, together with the complex interrelations between the various contexts of religious life, and how the interplay of all these factors might have influenced religious perceptions.

With the exception of Athens, these questions have not been systematically asked in any part of the Greek world. The polis religion model is often invoked but rarely engaged with.[19] In the case of Thessaly, owing to the evidence available, not all these questions can be dealt with to the same degree. There is little we can say about the role of priests in Thessaly, about sacred property and the administration of sanctuaries, about the process of introducing new gods, or about the limits of piety. Questions of religious participation, however, can be explored in depth. This focus means that the subject matter is approached more from a perspective that keeps the individual worshipper in mind. This emphasis will offer a corrective to the tendency to approach the subject of the relationship between religion and society mostly in terms of authority and institutionalized control; elements of Sourvinou-Inwood's work that have been falsely privileged.

So what was the *ethnos*? One of the main meanings of the term *ethnos* in ancient sources seems to be that of a 'group' of beings, human or animal.

[18] In this respect the criticism of the polis religion model should be seen as part of a wider debate concerning the role of the polis in general in ancient Greek historiography. The debate, largely inspired by Horden and Purcell (2000) esp. 89–122, has been the theme of a monograph by Vlassopoulos (2007).

[19] See for instance Kindt (2009) 23 n. 64, who mainly cites as works based on the model only general introductory textbooks of Greek religion.

We hear for instance of the *ethnos* of the dead, of women, or of bees.[20] In addition, several sources give a political colouring to the term, though it seems to have a general meaning in these instances also, denoting all kinds of formations and unions that were larger than a polis.[21] Morgan rightly stresses that ancient uses of the word are very broad in meaning and have not been systematically studied, and modern scholars have tended to use the word with a range of associations that cannot be justified.[22] Anyone broadly familiar with some of the standard works on Greek state formation will be aware of the idea that the Greek world was divided into two different types of state, the poleis and *ethne*.[23] Both, the argument goes, grew out of a past of tribal migrations. The *ethnos* type of state, sometimes called a tribal state, was supposedly the more primitive and was to be found in areas where Mycenaean civilization had not penetrated. People lived in villages and homesteads and they preserved ways of life that city dwellers considered barbaric. Some scholars believe that the political element of the constitution of the migrating tribe degenerated over time, while others believe that it remained an element of life.[24] In either case scholars have agreed that a sense of unity remained alive through the common cult of the tribal god and through the waging of common wars. Poleis finally started developing in some *ethne*, which led to tensions between the unitary *ethnos* and the separatist poleis. In the course of time, starting in the fifth century and culminating in the Hellenistic period, many *ethne* managed to form closer unions, whose members were autonomous entities (poleis or small *ethne*), giving rise to a new type of state best described as federal.

Modern scholarship has become increasingly aware of the precarious nature of many of these presuppositions. Appeals to a tribal past or an age of migrations are now viewed with scepticism. The polis (progressive) versus *ethnos* (regressive) opposition collapses after a closer examination of the archaeological record and the ancient sources. It is clear that poleis could exist in *ethne* and they seem to have done so from very early times. The new consensus postulates that poleis and *ethne* were not opposing but alternative, or complementary, forms of organization.[25] This is an important development, which requires us to rethink not only what kind of societies early *ethne* were, but also how they changed through time, since the emphasis put on the

[20] Hom. *Od.* 10.526; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.252; Hom. *Il.* 2.87.

[21] For discussion of the ancient Greek use of the term see Giovannini (1971) 14–16; Walbank (1985) 22–4; Beck (1997) 11–12; C. Morgan (2003) 7–10 and further in this section.

[22] C. Morgan (2003) 9.

[23] For what follows see Ehrenberg (1960) 24–7, 121–31; Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977) 78–81; Snodgrass (1980) 42–7.

[24] Snodgrass (1980) 42, though, speaks of political unity by means of some periodical assembly.

[25] So R. Osborne (1996) 286 in a handbook on early Greece.

supposed late development of poleis, as a catalyst for change within them, has to be removed. No clear answer has emerged to these questions and for the scholar whose faith in old models has been undermined the lack of a well-formulated alternative is debilitating. Morgan, in her important book on *ethne*, rightly challenges many of the old presuppositions (such as tribalism, lack of cities, and the interpretative force of a past of migrations) and puts others to the test (role of religion, war). Her focus on large settlements and criticisms of the unifying elements of the *ethnos* are extremely important, but the reader is left wondering what, if anything, the *ethnos* is.[26] At the other end of the timeframe there is a great deal of discussion about what a federal state actually is, one trend asking how it differs from a league and an alliance, the other asking how it relates to the early *ethne* that supposedly preceded it.[27] Overall these debates throw into question traditional categories for political entities and by extension the history of how they developed.

Inherent in most discussions about *ethne* is the presupposition that they were some form of state. Hence the attempt to understand them in terms of what makes up a state and to grasp how the centralization of power overcame the various centrifugal tendencies evident in the *ethnos*. Even discussions that go against this statist approach, notably Morgan's, end up being restricted by it. The emphasis of the debate is again on understanding the *ethnos* against the category of state. The parameters of the debate are still set by the statist approach. This leads to the emphasis in Morgan's study on the question of when *ethnos* identity acquired political salience.[28]

Frequently in the ancient sources we find the opposition between polis and *ethnos*, sometimes triangulated with the private individual.[29] These passages have encouraged the idea that the *ethnos* is a state, like a polis, and it is because of this that scholars have attempted to understand *ethne* principally in terms of politics—through identifying and dissecting the state machinery. But the triangulation with the individual in the sources upsets this understanding. Instead, it suggests that what unifies the three entities for the ancient Greeks was simply and only the ability to act autonomously. There is no reason to believe that the Greeks saw the *ethnos* and the polis as the same class of thing in other ways, any more than they would see a person and a polis as the same class of thing.

Aristotle in his treatment of the Thessalian constitution seems to have described the constitution of an individual city in Thessaly. But in doing so

[26] C. Morgan (2003) 11 calls *ethne* 'the observable outcomes of such processes (i.e. of choice by which a tier of identity is constructed or prioritized for perceived group advantage) and thus entities rooted in place and time': a far from clear definition.

[27] Beck (1997); Corsten (1999) and the review by Beck (2001).

[28] C. Morgan (2003) 206.

[29] Polis and *ethnos*: Arist. *Pol.* $1261^{a}28$; $1276^{a}29$; $1284^{a}38$; $1285^{b}30$–3; $1310^{b}35$; Isoc. 4.70; Xen. *An.* 3.1.2. Polis, *ethnos*, and individual: Aeschin. 3.110; Dem. 18.271.

he seems to imagine such a commonality between the Thessalian cities that it is appropriate to talk about a single Thessalian constitution.[30] Some could see this as evidence that Aristotle had an understanding of the Thessalian *ethnos* as a concrete political entity. But instead, it could be seen as showing that for him, as for Morgan, the polis was at the centre of the political stage even in an *ethnos*.[31] There is, in Aristotle, a balance between a clear sense of the importance of the polis as the primary political unit and an equally clear sense of the unity of the Thessalian *ethnos*.

How can we bring all of this together? The outcome of a modern debate that assesses the *ethnos* against the category of 'state', but emphasizes, rightly, the importance of the poleis within it, is that the *ethnos* always runs the risk of being regarded as a failure. The *ethnos* is measured against the unified state that the categorization demands it to be and is inevitably found wanting. This, I would argue, is to misunderstand the Thessalian *ethnos* as it was to its inhabitants and contemporary observers.[32] Modern understandings that attempt to integrate and balance the competing elements of the polis and *ethnos* into a single unified mechanism may be missing the point. For the ancient Greeks, polis and *ethnos* seem to be coexisting arenas capable of coordinating political action, but inherently different in their fundamental nature—just as polis and person were different. It is this essential difference that may be the key to understanding the continued coexistence of the forms. Even when there was conflict, the forms were not an existential threat to one another.

The clear result of all of this discussion is that the polis should be at the centre of our view when studying Thessaly. But, at the same time, Thessaly was clearly a unified entity to contemporaries. This means that we must be equally concerned with investigating what it was that unified the Thessalian *ethnos*, and how this sense of unity worked its way through the various levels of society.

Returning to the idea that one of the flaws of the polis religion model is that it cannot be applied in *ethne*, it should be clear that, given the centrality of poleis within some *ethne*, there is no reason to assume a priori that this is the case. Nevertheless, there are certainly questions that need to be addressed concerning the religion of the polis within an *ethnos*. The polis religion model in application should be seen primarily as a way of asking systematic questions about religion and society. There are three issues that the polis religion model brings into the centre of our focus when it comes to looking at religion in

[30] Arist. fr. 497, 498 (Rose). In the *Politics*, too, Aristotle refers to the constitutions of individual Thessalian cities ($1306^{a}11$; $1306^{a}27$–31).

[31] For Aristotle's discussion of *ethne* see Walbank (1985) 23–4; Beck (1997) 14–16; C. Morgan (2003) 8–9.

[32] The theme of Thessaly as a failed state is discussed in section 5.1. In thinking about ancient *ethne*, I found that Yoffee's remarks about 'ideological confederations' had some resonance: Yoffee (2005) esp. 17–18, 44.

Thessaly: the impact of oligarchy on polis identity and religious participation; the impact of the fragility of the polis within an *ethnos* on religious life; and the interaction of *ethnos* identity with various local identities and religious systems.

First, there is the problem of oligarchy. The polis religion model has been developed mostly through the case study of Athens and this means that polis identity has been closely connected with the development of democracy. Religious participation is aligned with citizenship and political participation, to which all native Athenian men were entitled. Application of the polis religion model to an oligarchy, where political participation is restricted and where citizenship can have different connotations, obviously raises serious questions about the nature of religious participation and the differing religious lives of the various classes of society.

Secondly, there is the problem of the 'fragility of the polis'. Attention has been drawn in recent years to the fact that poleis have life cycles, they appear and disappear, they extend their territories or are subdued and incorporated by other poleis.[33] This phenomenon, which might not be salient from the standpoint of a stable city state such as Athens, becomes much more relevant in the context of an *ethnos*. In the case of Thessaly, for instance, the twenty-five poleis of the Copenhagen Polis Centre inventory hide an intricate reality of different settlements of varying size and means. The life cycles and inter-relationships of these communities produced a complex and changing web. We could broadly divide them between hegemonic and dependent cities. Cities such as Larisa, Pharsalos, and Pherai were, at least occasionally, dominant, exercising some form of control over their nearest and perhaps even over more distant neighbours. The processes by which they acquired and maintained power might have varied in each individual case. The dependent cities of Pharsalos are mentioned in sources as if they were taken for granted; Pherai's imperialistic policies towards its neighbours were particularly violent in the fifth century; texts and inscriptions talk about synoecisms and sympolities in west Thessaly; and the relationship between the great city of Larisa and its very near neighbours remains puzzling. A variety of answers can be given to the question of how these relationships impacted on religious life ranging between two extreme poles, with complete integration of a dependent polis into the religious life of its overlord, on the one hand, and the religious systems of the two poleis remaining completely undisturbed, on the other. Between these two extremes lie a variety of possibilities, which demand to us to rethink the balance of authority, participation, and identity that forms the backbone of the polis model.

[33] Horden and Purcell (2000) 94–5; Vlassopoulos (2007) 190–202.

There is, finally, the problem of how we should think about the interaction of the *ethnos* identity with various local identities and religious systems. An important question is how homogeneous religion was across Thessaly. Aristotle seems to have thought in terms of a single Thessalian constitution applicable to any of the Thessalian poleis. Should we expect to find many similarities between the various Thessalian poleis in the field of religion, too? Quite apart from the question of whether Aristotle knew what he was talking about in relation to politics, given what we know about ancient Greek polytheism we should not expect uniformity. Ancient Greek cults were closely tied to place. Myths served to ground cults in their localities. A look at the religious activities of the various Athenian demes shows that even within Attica there was considerable variety. This variety, however, did not prevent them from being part of a wider system. Local variation in cult and myth existed alongside homogeneous structures of religious life, common mythic patterns, and a distinctive overall religious emphasis, which served to produce a recognizably Athenian flavour.[34]

1.3. DESCRIBING DIFFERENCE

What makes up Thessalian religion? A well-established approach has been to fit Thessaly into an evolutionary paradigm for the development of Greek religion as a whole. The paradigm, which was very popular in the beginning of the last century, argued that magic was the earliest stage of religion, when no gods were worshipped. Those gods who were first introduced were concerned with agriculture and death and could be easily aroused to anger. These gloomy chthonian deities were only later replaced by the mild and benign Olympian gods. Traces, however, of the earlier stages of religion survived, especially in some backward areas, and it was through mythology that one could gain insights into this older, primitive world. According to this approach, Thessalian religion as attested in the Classical and Hellenistic periods was largely made up of fossilized remnants from some more primitive era of Greek religion.

Kern, in his history of Greek religion, argued that Olympian religion was first created in Thessaly; hence the centrality of Mount Olympus in Greek mythology. For Kern, Thessalian religion was a strange amalgam of old magic practices and superstitions, evolved chthonian deities, and nascent, but not fully fledged, Olympians.[35] The fight between Olympian and chthonian

[34] For religion of the various Athenian demes: Mikalson (1977); R. Parker (1987a) and (2005) 62–78; and for an archaeological perspective Baumer (2004) 12–30, 70–5, 78–9.

[35] For what follows see Kern (1926) i. 185–213, 226–9; ii. 73–6.

religion in Thessaly is reflected, according to Kern, in myth, such as in the story of the Aloads, the two brothers who fought against the gods and put Mount Pelion on top of Ossa in order to reach Olympus, or in the better-known myth of the fight between Lapiths and Centaurs. The conflict between the two religious traditions also had a social dimension: Kern saw the aristocratic world of the gods focused on Olympus, with Zeus at its centre, as the creation of the Thessalian landlords, while the old chthonian cults and superstitious beliefs were the religion of the peasants. In Kern's view, then, Zeus Olympios was the Thessalian aristocratic god par excellence, while Poseidon was one of the popular old gods who was obliged in many cases to give up his place to Zeus or Apollo. The cults of other old chthonian gods, such as Demeter and Hecate/Ennodia, were also suppressed and restrained. Demeter's cult at old centres, such as Dotion, Antron, and Pyrasos, continued but was not allowed to develop freely. For instance, it never engaged with afterlife concerns, an important development in Demeter's cult elsewhere. Indicative of the suppression of the various 'earth deities' is also the fact that the Thessalian Olympian Zeus lacked a female consort. Neither Themis (or Themisto), an old local earth deity, nor Argive Hera, whose cult was later introduced in the area, managed to become Zeus' spouse in Thessaly. His closest divine relative was the old local warrior goddess, who became Athena. Another important Olympian god, Dionysus, whose ecstatic cult was believed to have come from Thrace, never became popular; nor did other mystic religions. The rich Thessalians, who had everything, worried little about death and did not care to give to the *penestai* any consolation. Instead, superstitious beliefs flourished, like the belief in magic, reflected in the cult of Hecate/Ennodia, who, popular though she was among the lower classes, was not favoured by the Thessalian landlords. Only with the old chthonian healing god from Trikka, Asclepius, did official religion finally come to terms with an ancient popular cult.

Kern, who knew Thessaly extremely well, devoted only a few pages to its religion. A few years later Philippson wrote a monograph on the topic, ignoring several of Kern's ideas and building on the theme of how from old chthonian gods, that is from an original mother goddess and her male consort, Olympian figures supposedly developed in Thessaly.[36] Kern's work is reminiscent of that of Wide and Immerwahr in its focus on associating religious phenomena with ethnic and social groups. By the time of Philippson the emphasis had shifted away from groups of people to a more abstract conception of the evolution of religion.

There have been few systematic treatments of Thessalian religion since the 1940s, but there have been small treatises on isolated subjects. I single out here

[36] Philippson (1944) *passim*.

the works of Papachatzis and Chrysostomou.[37] Neither of these very influential studies refers to Kern, but they are familiar with Philippson's monograph. As a consequence perhaps, the division between an aristocratic and a peasant religion, which Kern had argued for, is put aside, and together with it the idea that there was, in Thessaly, a conflict between an Olympian and a chthonian religion which took on a social dimension.[38] The image of Thessalian religion that these works put forth is of a religion with strong chthonian elements common to all the population. The Thessalian gods are not any more divided into either Olympians (new/aristocratic) or chthonians (old/local/popular); instead almost all of them have strong chthonian aspects. Thessalian religion is also portrayed as obsessed with the dead and the underworld. For Kern the old chthonian gods of Thessaly had mostly to do with earthquakes, fertility, and magic. He thus concluded that the Thessalians showed no concern for the afterlife and their religion was mostly an earthy one, of the here and now. For Chrysostomou and Papachatzis the chthonian gods of Thessaly have rather a lot to do with the underworld and the dead, and the Thessalians are presented as having a strong predilection for eschatology.

This kind of evolutionary approach, whether it is that of Kern or the version of Papachatzis and Chrysostomou, has enormous pitfalls; not least because it starts from a preconception, based upon outdated theory, of how religion might have evolved, and forces the evidence to conform.[39] Moreover, the Olympian/chthonian division as a model to understand Greek religion, gods, and cults, has been seriously challenged today, and even scholars who maintain that the category might have some value in the study of ritual would not even think of using it in the way this has been done by these Thessalian scholars.[40] But we need to think why the model has such a lasting appeal. I think a large part of its success in the case of Thessaly is due to the fact that it neatly combines, even if superficially, cult, society, and ethos. It manages to tie together a lot of the evidence for cult with the image of a backward society, while giving it a place in wider Greek religion and conveying to the reader a feeling of how this religion might have felt: the gods of Thessaly can be described not only as names and epithets with strange stories and rituals, but as envious, fearsome creatures who can be appeased and propitiated. This

[37] Papachatzis (1984) and (1985); P. Chrysostomou (1998).

[38] Papachatzis (1976) 108 n. 3 mentions in passing that the worshippers of Ennodia belonged to the lower strata of society, but similar questions are not generally raised in these works.

[39] For a review of the myth and ritual school see Ackerman (1991). For a reassessment of the Thessalian evidence see section 6.2.

[40] This is a large debate we do not need to enter here. For a review of the different positions held see: Fairbanks (1900); J. Harrison (1903) 1–31; Rodhe (1925) 158ff; Guthrie (1950) 220–2; Rudhardt (1958) 251ff; Nock (1972) 578–81; Graf (1980); Henrichs (1983) 93–100; Schlesier (1991–2) 45; Scullion (1994); Ekroth (2002) 310–25; the various papers in Hägg and Alroth (2005); R. Parker (2011a) 80–4, 283–6. Also the relevant entries by R. Parker in *OCD* (1996) 329–30 and R. Schlesier in *DNP* 2 (1997) 1186–90.

combination of cult, society, and ethos should surely be an aim for any regional study of religion.[41]

One way to tackle the issue has been to choose a single god who supposedly stood for the area, and whose prominence captures something essential to the ethos of the society. Müller's study of the Dorians and Apollo is a celebrated example of associating one god with a people, but the same trend can be detected elsewhere.[42] We immediately associate Spartan religion with Apollo and Artemis, Arcadian with Pan, Macedonian with Dionysus. But this move kills the variety of religious experience and reduces polytheism to monotheism in an anachronistic way. Like Kern it makes overly naive associations between the imagined ethos of essentialized ethnic groups and an unrealistically schematized religion.

Structuralism may offer the starting point of an approach which allows us to preserve the complexity of polytheism while relating it to the ethos of a real society. It revolutionized our understanding of gods by directing our attention to their functions and modes of action. While it has been criticized as timeless, ahistorical, and abstract, by focusing attention on the functions of deities for their worshippers, it orders the pantheon in a fundamentally social way.[43] But the gods are only a part of what makes up a religion. Religions are created in communication between groups of people and in characterizing one it should be as important to include the modes of communication as the things being communicated. In other words, we should include with the pantheon consideration of Thessalian rituals and forms of participation in cult. The question which emerges is whether we could boil down the web of gods, functions, rituals, personalities, and cults into some common thread, a unifying principle, to find, if such a thing existed, the Thessalian religious perspective. The category of 'chthonian gods' fulfilled more or less the role of the unifying principle. Similar in its function is the idea of 'order' and Spartan religion.

This kind of approach can be compared to the process of creating a stereotype. It is undoubtedly over-generalizing and misses the wealth and diversity of the evidence, which it must be our aim to explore. But even if the question of boiling down the pantheon to its essentials might seem inherently simplistic, we should not dismiss it completely; not only because it might indeed capture, as many stereotypes do, a reality that, even if partial and distorted, is worth noticing, but also because the ancients themselves seem to have thought along very similar lines, not only when discussing foreigners but also when it came to thinking about themselves and describing themselves

[41] See also the comments of R. Parker (2011a) 226, and (1989) for a study of Spartan religion along these lines.

[42] Müller (1824).

[43] For recent critical discussions referring back to the seminal studies of the French School see R. Parker (2005) 387ff. and (2011a) 64–102; Versnel (2011) 23ff. Sourvinou-Inwood (1978) is the paradigmatic study of the application of structuralism to local realities.

to others. From this perspective even the equation of a group with a particular god has some resonance with how the Greeks themselves thought: we need only think of the relief decrees of Samos and Athens with Hera and Athena shaking hands. We should thus try to investigate what the Thessalians thought about their relationships with the gods. We should ask which gods and cults, which stories, came to the fore, when they thought or spoke about themselves as a group. At the same time we should examine what other ancients thought about them and their religion, how this outsider's perception relates with the evidence, and how it might have influenced and interacted with Thessalians' own perception of themselves.

1.4. ASSESSING THE EVIDENCE

Not all questions can be answered. The nature of the evidence, very incomplete in the case of Thessaly, will inevitably have a formative impact on the work as a whole. This is not only true in terms of the raw material that survives but also in terms of our choices over how to order it and over how we weigh its value.[44] It is common practice to divide the evidence following the traditional academic divisions of the discipline of Classics: there is the evidence from literature, epigraphy, numismatics, and archaeology.[45] Scholars' assessment of the value of these kinds of evidence for the study of religion sounds at times like an assessment of the value of these disciplines and of the kind of knowledge they are supposed to offer. There is a problem with dividing our sources of evidence into disciplinary categories in such broad-brush terms. While the history of a particular subdiscipline of Classics is bound to affect our perception of the evidence, the parameters of the evidence, its complexities and limitations, will not necessarily coincide absolutely with the perspectives of the subdiscipline as they have developed thus far.

In the course of this work I shall be driven by the questions I ask, mobilizing a diverse array of evidence to approach issues drawn from wider discussions of Greek religion. That being said, some classes of evidence—votives, temple buildings/sanctuaries, theophoric names, and images on coins—have a prominent place in regional studies of religion generally.[46] Of these I single out the

[44] See also section 1.1.

[45] See for instance Sporn (2002) 25–31. But Sporn is representative of a well-established trend. The Swedish Institute collective volumes on archaeology and religion, or epigraphy and religion (Hägg 1994 and 1998) rely on the same premise. See also most recently Graf (2010) on inscriptions as a source of evidence for religion.

[46] All these kinds of evidence, and yet others, are going to be mobilized in this study too, but each to a different degree. I will only occasionally, for instance, mention the existence of a theophoric name. For Thessalian personal names see Decourt and Tziafalias (2007a); García

first two, because they are inherently 'religious'. Approaches to them can tend to have a particularly formative impact on our understanding of the religion of a region and need to be considered in some depth before our examination begins in earnest. For reasons that will become obvious I will first discuss separately the Thessalian inscribed sculpted dedications and then the rest of the votive record. We should think about the kinds of evidence they are: how were these bodies of evidence formed in Thessaly; how do they compare to the evidence from other regions; and, most importantly, what is the nature of the information they offer.

1.4.1a. Inscribed Sculpted Dedications

Inscribed dedications form the most abundant source of evidence for Thessalian religion. There are around 470 inscribed dedications known from Thessaly, the vast majority of which are already published. They are a mine of information for the study of religion in the area, attesting to the cult of all major Olympian divinities, a number of local divinities, and lesser and foreign deities, as well as the big Panhellenic heroes and a few heroes of only local importance.[47]

In the vast majority of cases inscribed dedications were engraved on votive *stelai* (303). Then follow bases (53); and then altars (14). Thirty-six pieces are described as stone or plaques, thirteen as pillar/bases or *stelai*/bases,[48] eight as pillars, six as blocks, three as columns, one as a column capital, and one as an architrave, while nineteen pieces are not described; and there are also some

Ramón (2007); Decourt (2010); and especially Hunold (2009) 149–67. According to Hunold, theophoric names in Thessaly were much more rarely given to women and among the male ones very popular were those related to Zeus, Apollo, Hermes, Dionysus, Heracles, and Asclepius. The Thessalian evidence largely conforms to wider Greek patterns, as described by R. Parker (2000). A Thessalian peculiarity is the existence of herophoric names before the Hellenistic period: see also Decourt and Tziafalias (2007a). Noteworthy is also the dearth of Poseidon-, Ennodia-, and Artemis-related names, gods who are prominent in other types of material evidence, such as inscribed dedications (see later in this section).

[47] In Appendix 1 the reader can find a detailed list of the material organized by god and analysed along various parameters, such as information about the worshipper (whether male, female, priest, magistrate, or group), the date of the monument, its findspot, form, and dimensions. The appendix includes all material that mentions a specific god. Heinz (1998) gives a catalogue of all the then published evidence, including those dedicatory inscriptions that do not mention the recipient deity. Her catalogue, however, is organized according to type of monument and does not systematically break down the evidence in the parameters discussed here. I often follow her, however, as far as the chronology of these monuments is concerned, since she seems to have seen many of these inscriptions and to have studied the material in collaboration with the 'équipe of Lyon'.

[48] In a couple of examples from Phthiotic Thebes (*AD* 32 (1977) *Chron*. 128) and Pharsalos (*AD* 43 (1988) *Chron*. 283 pl. 148) small round projections, interpreted as *popana* (cakes), are represented on the top of the stele/base. There is no reason to think that other kinds of *stelai*, which had a horizontal pediment, ever carried an offering.

isolated inscribed items, such as a marble dolphin from Prinos offered to Poseidon, a herm from Argissa dedicated to Apollo, a marble phallus from Atrax dedicated to Dionysus, a *thesauros* (money box) offered to Asclepius and another to Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis, a bronze *phiale* offered to Heracles from Latomeio, and a gold ring from Kierion offered to Aphrodite. Finally in a few examples the inscription was engraved on living rock. We are dealing then almost exclusively with items of sculpture, which would have been all but certainly in open view in the sanctuary, and not stored away in some of its buildings.

The *stelai* and bases show great variability in size and form, ranging from very small and simple undecorated *stelai* made of local stone to large monumental decorated marble *stelai* in the form of *naiskoi*, and from small bases to very large ones, which seem to have carried life-size statues or tripods.[49] Heinz has presented a detailed typology of the *stelai* monuments. She distinguishes two main types: 'Shaftstelen' which were tall and narrow and 'Bildstelen' which were shorter and wider.[50] Each main type can be further subdivided into two groups, according to the formation of their upper part: those with a horizontal and those with a pedimental top. In the case of horizontal *stelai* the finial could take the form of a simple raised band or of a crown moulding. Several examples of horizontal *stelai* had a recessed panel; the margins on the shaft could be simple raised bands or, less often, take the form of pilasters. In *stelai* with pedimental crowning the pediment can be free-standing or carved in relief on the shaft of the stele, which has a triangular, horizontal, or circular termination. The shape of the pediment varied from a simple triangular projection without a cornice and with rudimentary side *akroteria* to a fully developed pediment. The shaft of the pedimental *stelai* can also have a recessed panel to receive the decoration. Finally, more monumental examples are of the *naiskos* or pseudo-*naiskos* type.[51] To be more precise about their size, close to the bottom of the scale, and a quite common size, was a height of approximately 30–50 cm, a width of 30–50 cm, and a depth of 5–10 cm. This was by no means the rule; there are several examples of larger *stelai*, some of which can reach a height of more than two metres.

The dedicatory inscription was usually engraved on the upper part of the stele, on the relief band in the case of the flat top *stelai*, or just below the pediment. Fewer examples have the inscription engraved on the base, or on the narrow side.[52] On the *stelai* of the type 'à trou carré', which are the earliest of the series, the dedicatory inscription was engraved in the middle of the

[49] Most of these monuments, however, were made of marble; local stone was used only for a few of them.

[50] Heinz (1998) 99 n. 1091 argues that the word *κίουν* was used in Thessaly to describe the 'Schaftstelen'. This is not clear to me. Helly (1973a) 172 seems to believe it is a Thessalian variation of the word 'stele'.

[51] Heinz (1998) 97–125.

[52] See e.g. ID nos. 9, 56, 314, 376.

shaft.[53] Finally, on a few *stelai*, usually those dedicated by groups, the inscription could occupy most of the front side of the stone. Only eighteen of these *stelai* had relief decoration,[54] but perhaps more would have been painted. There are remains of paint on just a few examples.[55] But von Graeve and Helly have argued against the suggestion that only *stelai* with a polished surface could have received painted decoration. They mention that recent research on painting techniques demonstrates that this was not necessary, and it is thus probable that the blank surface of the majority of these monuments once carried such painted decoration.[56] Still, there must have been some that never had any decoration at all and in these cases the dedicatory inscription would have been the most prominent feature on them, apart, of course, from their particular form. We should not, thus, rush to consider the dedicatory inscription as incidental, while taking the painted or sculpted decoration as the real 'content' of the stele.[57] The dedicatory inscriptions were part and parcel of these monuments.

The Thessalian inscribed dedications span a period from the Late Archaic to the second/third centuries AD, and their floruit was the third and second centuries BC (Table 1.1).

They have been found all over Thessaly and its perioikic areas, but there are significant variations in the number of dedications found in different settlements (Map 1; Table 1.2).[58]

Table 1.1. Chronological distribution of inscribed dedications

6th/5th	5th	4th	4th/3rd	3rd	3rd/2nd	2nd	2nd/1st	1st	1st/2nd	Hel.	Rom.	Und.
4	26	41	18	124	31	107	20	27	16	16	8	34

[53] Helly (1979a) 167–72. The chronological developments that he postulates may need to be reconsidered since Hellenistic examples have been found, such as ID no. 372.

[54] ID nos. 24, 38, 55, 56, 96, 103, 216, 295, 322, 337, 342, 407, 422, 425, 435, 437, 445, 471. There are another fifty or so votive reliefs from Thessaly that, however, do not have a dedicatory inscription: Heinz (1998) 126ff.

[55] See e.g.: a stele from Atrax (*AD* 48 (1993) *Chron*. 255 no. 27) preserving traces of a red seated figure to be identified perhaps with the god, Zeus Kataibates, to whom the stele was dedicated; two *stelai* from Mikro Keserli (Franke (1956) 183 and (1958) 337 no. 2) dedicated to the hero Aineas and portraying the hero seated on a throne holding a sceptre and accompanied by a snake.

[56] von Graeve and Helly (1987) 24. Heinz (1998) 10 believes too that most would have been painted.

[57] For 'aniconic' monuments see Doepner (2002) 148–60; Gaifman (2012). Several examples have holes on the front and/or side parts of the stele. These, it has been suggested, were used to support a metal staff from which wreaths would be suspended: Tziafalias (1984b) no. 24.

[58] The problem of ascribing the evidence to specific cities has, though, to be acknowledged: not only were several of them found in secondary use, but also there is great uncertainty concerning the identification of Thessalian cities known from written sources with the

Map 1. Distribution of inscribed dedications

The dedicatory formulae were usually very simple, consisting of the name of the dedicant and that of the deity in the dative, although occasionally one of the two could be omitted.[59] Most of the gods and a few heroes figure at least once or twice in the material. Some gods, however, received more inscribed dedications than others (Table 1.3).[60]

settlements revealed by archaeology, as well as concerning any calculation of the extent of their *chora* (see Ch. 4). These problems will be brought into the open and assessed when discussing particular cults, but they are not debilitating when broader patterns are being discussed, as is the case in this section.

[59] In the cases where the name of the dedicant was omitted the name of the deity could be in the genitive or dative and very rarely (I have found only three examples: ID nos. 15, 421, 445) in the nominative.

[60] These numbers might be slightly misleading. The big gap, for instance, between the dedications to Artemis and Apollo, Zeus and Poseidon could be balanced if we removed from Artemis the forty inscriptions that come from Gonnoi. These were recovered by Arvanitopoulos during excavations, while most of the offerings to Apollo, Zeus, and Poseidon are stray finds. Even so, Artemis would still appear to have been amongst the most popular gods likely to receive an inscribed dedication.

Table 1.2. Topographic distribution of inscribed dedications

Gonnoi	77
Larisa	68
Atrax	52
Pherai	32
Demetrias/Volos/Ligaroremma	30
Pythion	26
Mikro Keserli	19
Phthiotic Thebes	19
Pharsalos	15
Krannon	10
Azoros	9
Tyrnavos/Tatari	9
Mount Ossa	8
Mopsion	5
Polidendri/Skiatha	5
Tempe	5
Chorto	4
Halos	4
Melitaia	4
Metropolis	4
Pyrasos	4
Agia	3
Olosson	3
Soros	3
Damasi	2
Kastri Livadiou	2
Lechonia	2
Phauttos	2
Proerna	2
Scotoussa	2
Trikka	2
Apidia	1
Argissa	1
Dendra	1
Domeniko	1
Echinos	1
Eretria	1
Ermetsi	1
Evaggelismos	1
Ftelia	1
Gardiki	1
Gomphoi	1
Goritsa	1
Ithome	1
Kaprena	1
Kedros	1
Kierion	1
Korope	1
Paliokastro (Olizon)	1
Petroporos	1
Prinos	1
Stomio	1
Vlachogianni	1
Vlochos	1
Xylades	1
Unknown	18

Table 1.3. The gods mentioned in inscribed dedications

Artemis	96	Mounogone	3
Apollo	62	Moirai	2
Zeus	48	Muses	2
Poseidon	38	Megaloi Theoi	2
Ennodia	24	Hygeia	2
Asclepius	22	Helios	2
Athena	19	Agathos Theos	2
Heracles	17	Dionysus-Demeter	2
Aphrodite	14	Isis-Sarapis-Anubis	2
Various heroes	11	Harpocrates	2
Nymphs	10	Ares	1
Dionysus	8	Demeter-Mounogone	1
Mother of Gods	6	Kore	1
Pasikrata	6	Demeter-Kore-Despotes	1
Demeter	5	Dionysus-Nymphs	1
Leukothea	5	Zeus-Ennodia	1
Hermes	5	Helios-Theoi	1
Themis	5	Sarapis-Isis-Anubis	1
Sarapis-Isis	5	Horus-Anubis	1
Dioskouroi	4	Kabiroi	1
Ge	4	Ino	1
Demeter-Kore	4	Praxidikai	1
Asclepius-Hygeia	4	Agathos Theos-Tyche	1
Theoi	4	Agathe Tyche	1
Charites	3	Zeus Meilichios-Agathe Tyche	1
Parthenos	3	Zeus-Hera	1

Table 1.4. The worshippers in inscribed dedications

Men	Women	Men-Women	Priests	Magistrates	Groups	unclear	not mentioned
128	138	9	37	8	41	35	75

As far as the worshippers are concerned, patterns can be observed in Table 1.4.

Only in a few cases is the reason for the dedication mentioned. Most commonly the reason is described only generally as 'in fulfilment of a vow', as is indicated by the formula 'the so and so *εὐξάμενος/εὐξαμένη* (having vowed) to the so and so god'.[61] A group of dedications, which seem to be more specific to Thessaly, describe the offering as *λύτρον* (ransom) or as *ἐλευθέρια* (freedom). Both terms might imply a closer connection to the

[61] For dedications made to redeem a vow see van Straten (1981) 70–4.

divinity than the more usual εὐξάμενος/εὐξαμένη formula.[62] Another group of dedications (twenty-nine) were made in favour of somebody else, usually the son and more rarely the daughter of the dedicant.[63] In a couple of other instances the dedication was made to beautify the sanctuary of the god, to honour somebody for his services (these dedications were made by groups), as a thanksgiving for childbirth, healing, wisdom, and in one case, a dedication to Ares, to commemorate military victory.[64] There are also a couple of inscriptions that specify that the dedication was made in accord with an oracle, after a dream, or on instruction.[65] Occasionally we can make reasonable guesses for the occasion that prompted the votive. In the case of priests' and magistrates' dedications one could assume that they were made to mark one's term in office, or the tenure of priesthood.[66] The epithet of the deity can also be informative.[67] Several of the epithets attached to Artemis, such as Eileithyia, Locheia, Eulocheia, and Geneteira, are clearly related to childbirth. Not all cases, however, are so transparent.

Looking at how the various patterns interrelate, there are significant correlations between groups of dedicants and particular deities. Almost all the dedications to Artemis were made by women,[68] while the vast majority of dedications to Poseidon and Zeus were made by men.[69] Zeus in particular tends to receive dedications either by several men together, or very often the name of the worshipper is not mentioned. Asclepius, in those cases where the name of the dedicant was mentioned, received dedications almost exclusively from men and male priests. Other gods, such as Apollo, Ennodia, Demeter, and Dionysus, received dedications by both sexes. Groups dedicated

[62] *Λύτρον*: ID nos. 143, 169, 252, 382. For discussion about the term: Hatzopoulos (1994a) 38–9; Brulé (1997) 327–8; Graninger (2007) 159–62. *Eleutheria*: ID nos. 43, 45, 67. There are different suggestions about who might have offered the dedications described as ἐλευθέρια: Tziafalias (1984b) no. 94: slaves; Arvanitopoulos, *PAE* (1915) 171: women after childbirth; Daux, *BCH* 92 (1968) 625–8; Helly, *BE* (1988) no. 740: *hierodouloi* (sacred slaves).

[63] These dedications were made by both men and women and were offered to a variety of gods, such as Apollo (ID nos. 25, 34, 42, 65, 74), Artemis (ID nos. 138, 167, 173), Demeter (ID no. 227), Dioskouroi (ID nos. 253, 255), Ennodia (ID nos. 261, 263), Sarapis and Isis (ID no. 327), Nymphs (ID no. 356), Pasikrata (ID no. 369), Poseidon (ID nos. 381, 382, 383, 384, 391, 392, 393), and Zeus (ID no. 450). Note also ID no. 16 to Apollo by a man in redemption of a vow made by his mother and ID no. 379 to Poseidon by man after a vow of his father. ID nos. 143 and 170 were made to Artemis by men for their wives, while ID no. 437 was offered to Zeus by a man for his brother.

[64] ID nos. 24, 78, 109, 112, 171, 181, 351, 353, 362.

[65] ID nos. 327, 343, 348, 420.

[66] But see Wallensten (2003) 20, who notes that some magistrates' dedications might have been made by men claiming to have held office and who were no longer public servants. Also note that ID no. 109 associates the dedication with childbirth and ID no. 181 with healing.

[67] Especially the so-called functional epithets: R. Parker (2003).

[68] Of the few male dedications to Artemis three were offered in favour of women (ID nos. 138, 143, 170). Another six were offered to Artemis Stratia and Phosphoros.

[69] Of the women's dedications to Poseidon two were in favour of a man (ID nos. 382, 393), while one dedication by a woman to Zeus was offered to both him and Hera (ID no. 451).

Table 1.5. Interrelationships between gods and worshippers in inscribed dedications

God	M	F	MF	MP	FP	Mag	Group	Ms	Fs	unclear	Not mentioned
Artemis	7	64	1	1	4		5			9	5
Apollo	14	16	2	4			9	1		7	9
Zeus	12	2	1	1			6	6			21
Poseidon	21	3				1	1			5	6
Ennodia	6	12								2	4
Asclepius	8	1		8						1	4
Athena	1			1	1	3	6	2		3	2
Heracles	5			1		2	2	2		1	4
Aphrodite	4	5	2								3
Nymphs	3	2								5	
Dionysus	1	2		2	1		2				1
Mother	2	1			1					2	
Pasikrata		4	1		1						
Demeter	1	3			1						
Leukothea		5									
Themis		1				1					3

Note: M: male; F: female; MF: male and female; MP: male priest; FP: female priest; Mag: magistrate; Ms: several men together; Fs: several women together.

to a variety of gods, but some gods, such as Heracles and Athena, seem to have received mostly dedications from groups of worshippers, magistrates, and priests and fewer from individual, always male, worshippers (Table 1.5).

If we look at the chronological patterns of these monuments in combination with information about the sex of the dedicant, then it appears that female dedicants increase dramatically in number from the late fourth century onwards (Table 1.6).

Combining the chronological and topographic distribution of the evidence with the information about the gods is more problematic, not least because the patterns that emerge rely on very little evidence. In addition, there is also the question of whether it is meaningful, when tracing these chronological/topographical versus god variations, to treat each god as a unit, and not subdivide the deity into his/her particular epithets. Generally speaking most of the main gods (Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena, Ennodia, Heracles, Poseidon, and Zeus) received one or two dedications in the fifth century (see Table 1.6). Themis stands out in that the majority of dedications to her (three out of five) date to the Archaic and Classical periods. On the other hand, some gods first appear in the evidence only in the Hellenistic period. Such is the case with Isis and Sarapis, which is hardly surprising, since their cult was introduced in the area only then. But does the same hold true with the cult of the Mother of the Gods, Artemis, Asclepius, and Demeter who have similarly not furnished any dedications from before the late fourth century?

As mentioned, the distribution of the material is uneven, and this raises pressing questions about whether we can generalize and combine material and

Table 1.6. Fifth-century inscribed dedications

God	Location	Dedicator	Date	Dedication
Aphrodite	Apidia	M	6th/5th	B
Aphrodite	Pharsalos	M	450–430	stone
(Apollo) Aisonios	Agia (Kalamaki)	M	5th	B
(Apollo)	Atrax	*dauchnaphoroi*	end 5th	S
Apollo	Eretria	M	early 5th	B
Apollo Leschaios	Larisa(Ch)	*dauchnaphoroi*	1st ½ 5th	S
Apollo	Skiatha		5th (1st ½ 4th)	S
Apollo	Soros	F	Archaic	pillar
Apollo	Tempe		5th	
Apollo	Unknown	F	1st ½ 5th	S
Athena Agoraia	Atrax	*Archons*	5th	S
Athena	Skiatha		5th (1st ½ 4th)	S
Dionysus Karpios	Larisa		5th	S
Ennodia Astike	Larisa	F	450–425	S/B
Ennodia Strogike Patroa	Larisa	M	5th/4th	S
Harmonia	Larisa		end 5th	S
Heracles Kraterophroun	Scotoussa	M	6th/5th	B
(Hermes) Eriouneios Brychaleios	Pharsalos	F	mid 5th	S
Muses	Larisa	M	5th/4th	stone
Nymphs	Pharsalos	M	1st ½ 5th	on rock
Poseidon	Skiatha		5th (1st ½ 4th)	S
Poseidon	Ligaroremma		end 5th	S
Poseidon	Soros		early 5th	S
Poseidon	Vlochos	M	Archaic	B
Themis Agoraia	Atrax	*Tagoi*	5th	S
Themis Agoraia	Chorto (Magn.)		early 5th	stone
Themis	Tyrnavos	F	5th	stone
Zeus	Agia	M	(5th–3rd)	S
Zeus Tritodios	Atrax		early 5th	B
Zeus Homoloios	Metropolis		1st ½ 5th	S

Note: M: male; F: female; B: base; S: stele.

information from one city with the other. There is evidence for local variation coexisting with overall similarities. If we look at the complete material from particular cities as a unit, then no two cities have furnished exactly similar material. If, however, we break down the evidence from each city into individual trends then parallel patterns are found in multiple cities (Table 1.7). Take, for instance, the case of Pherai.[70] Pherai has furnished a characteristic variety of votive *stelai*, which may have been undecorated and had a very simple triangular pediment.[71] But several other types of votive *stelai* popular all over Thessaly are also found at Pherai. Moreover, many of the Pheraian dedications were made to Zeus, who was invoked with various unusual epithets such as

[70] Another case is that of Mikro Keserli: Mili (2011). [71] Heinz (1998) 110.

Table 1.7. The gods in inscribed dedications from Pherai, Atrax, Gonnoi, and Larisa

God	Pherai	Atrax	Gonnoi	Larisa
Artemis	2	15	39	7
Apollo	1	4	12	8
Zeus	7	9	1	7
Poseidon	2	4	0	12
Ennodia	6	0	1	6
Asclepius	2	1	5	2
Athena	0	1	12	2
Heracles	2	2	1	1
Dioskouroi	3	0	0	1

Thaulios and Aphrios, as well as to Ennodia and the Dioskouroi (the goddess and the twin brothers, we know from literary sources and archaeological evidence, had famous sanctuaries in the city). No dedication to the Dioskouroi or to Ennodia has been found at Atrax, by contrast, the city that has otherwise furnished the most material. Ennodia's cult is, however, attested in several other Thessalian cities and a dedication to the Dioskouroi has been found at Larisa. The cult of Zeus Thaulios is also widely attested at Atrax and elsewhere in Thessaly and there is no reason to believe that his cult was more important at Pherai, even though he is more prominently represented in this class of evidence there. The picture becomes hazier if we compare Atrax, Gonnoi, and Larisa, the three cities with the largest corpora of inscribed dedications (Table 1.7). Similar types of votive *stelai* have been found in all three and there is a feeling of overall uniformity as far as the gods represented in the material are concerned. But there are some discrepancies in the numbers dedicated to each and, if one introduces into the analysis the epithets of the gods, then the picture becomes infinitely more complex.

With chronology and topography we have already moved from numbers and patterns to problems of interpretation and methodology. Why do inscribed dedications rise dramatically in number in the Hellenistic period, and why are they unevenly distributed across Thessaly? No single satisfactory answer can be given to these questions, because a number of complex factors may have been involved: a change in the levels of literacy;[72] a change in the overall Thessalian epigraphic votive habit;[73] and/or a movement of craftsmen

[72] So have argued Stoddart and Whitley (1988), who compared the epigraphic record of Etruria, Crete, and Athens. But note that in the case of Thessaly we are not dealing with graffiti on pots or sherds, but with monuments produced by specialized craftsmen, who, in all probability, should be held responsible for the engraving of the dedicatory formula. See also Day (2010) 26–84 for a discussion of the problem of whether dedicatory inscriptions were read.

[73] All kinds of inscriptions, not just dedicatory ones, became more popular in Thessaly. Note, however, that there are patterns concerning the distribution of different types of inscription: i.e. Gonnoi has furnished many more civic decrees than has Atrax.

from Athens to Thessaly. Issues of production could partly account for the distribution of these monuments. Proximity to marble quarries and location along a major river transport route can explain the broad pattern of distribution in the cities of north-east Thessaly and along the banks of the Peneus river.[74] Whatever one thinks of these explanations, none could account for the more intricate details of the pattern. Why has Pelinna, a city just a few kilometres distant from Atrax, and seemingly very similar to it,[75] furnished so few inscribed dedications? Why have Larisa, Gonnoi, and the small settlement at Mikro Keserli furnished so many? Moreover, these types of explanation tell us little or nothing about the patterns concerning the dedicants or the gods. Clearly the various aspects of the phenomenon demand a closer exploration that takes into account the role and position of the various communities within the various networks of the region, as well as the particularities of Thessalian religion and society.

The details of the pattern then hint at the complex factors involved. When compared to other areas of the Greek world Thessaly appears unusually rich in the quantity of inscribed dedications found.[76] Crete, for instance, has furnished only around a hundred inscribed offerings and most of these are dated in the Late Hellenistic and Roman times and were inscribed on very different kinds of object, such as pots, tiles, and small bases for statuettes. Macedonia too, which was closely connected with Thessaly in the Hellenistic period, has furnished only a poor corpus.[77] This clear regional character of the phenomenon, as well as the complexity of its patterns, invites us to think about it in a more grounded and detailed way, and in the context of the particularities of Thessalian religion and society, rather than through appeal to generalizing narratives.

The lack of a grounded local perspective is what makes Heinz's description of the phenomenon ultimately unsatisfactory, although her discussion is phrased in social and religious terms.[78] She argues that, while in earlier periods large monuments of the *Schaftstele* type were dedicated mostly by the elite and officials to 'political' divinities, in Hellenistic times the habit of dedicating

[74] For marble quarries at Atrax, Chasambali, a locality some kilometres north-east of Larisa, and perhaps at other localities in north-east Thessaly, see Biesantz (1965) 47–51; Melfos et al. (2010). Note also that many of the *stelai* found in south Thessaly were made of local stone.

[75] 'seemingly very similar to it': both cities flourished after the Macedonian occupation of Thessaly and had, according to Tziafalias, who surveyed both, a similar layout: Tziafalias (1992a) and (1995).

[76] In quantity the Thessalian material closely rivals that found in Athens, the best-documented city of the ancient Greek world. If, however, the items classified as honorary statues and choregic monuments are included, the Athenian evidence becomes even more numerous. Keesling (2003) offers a useful review of the evidence, with a focus though on the material from the acropolis.

[77] A perusal of the material through the main epigraphic corpora, as well as that collected by Sporn (2002) in the case of Crete, gives a number of around 100 to 150 inscribed dedications from these areas, the majority of which date to the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods.

[78] Heinz (1998) 112–23, 156–7.

votive *stelai* seems to have opened up. Following Heinz, the *Schaftstelen* gave way to the smaller *Bildstelen*, which were mostly dedicated by women and the lower classes to deities concerned with private matters, while officials and public bodies mostly dedicated large statues set up on bases. Heinz's suggestions accord well with traditional descriptions of Hellenistic society and religion, which emphasize the more individualistic character of the society and the rise in popularity of various assisting, more easy-to-approach, 'personal' deities. There is, however, a disjunction between the Thessalian evidence of inscribed dedications and the model of change being proposed. The evidence for the rise in female dedications from the fourth century onwards is clear, but we should not be too hasty to equate the female, the private, and the non-elite. The other changes that Heinz suggests are not so clearly detectable. There is evidence for official dedications inscribed on *stelai*; many of the Hellenistic dedications were made to gods such as Poseidon and Zeus, who one would not class as private 'assisting deities', and Asclepius, the classic example of such an 'assisting deity', in fact receives mostly dedications from priests and men in what may well be an official context. If the model is to be followed, the dearth of any women's dedications to the god is puzzling.

While women dedicating to Artemis on the occasion of childbirth might appear 'normal' and in accord with 'private religion', in Crete and Macedonia inscribed dedications made by women, even to Artemis, can be counted by the handful. In Athens, too, which compares better with Thessaly in the number of inscribed dedications found, those made by women, although more plentiful, still form only a minority of the evidence.[79] Keesling has noted the dearth of female inscribed dedications from the Athenian Acropolis. But at Brauron, too, the gift par excellence to Artemis was not an inscribed sculpted monument but a garment. While women's inscribed dedications are conspicuously lacking from the acropoleis of Thessalian cities, it is noteworthy, and distinctive from Athenian votive practice, that the monuments they set up in Artemis' sanctuaries are on a par with those dedicated by men to Athena Polias.[80] These women's dedications then should perhaps be further discussed in the context of the status of Thessalian women and the importance that childbirth and marriage had in this specific society. Similarly, the male and priests' dedications to Asclepius, or male and group dedications to Athena Polias, should be discussed and explored within the broader context of these cults and the role of these groups in Thessalian society.

[79] In Athens from the fourth century onwards, when inscribed dedications outside the acropolis become more common, the number of those offered by women increases; but they are still underrepresented. See R. Parker (2011a) 241, and further bibliography in n. 46, for the opinion that women in Greece in general made fewer dedications than men, 'at least at the expensive inscribed level'.

[80] Compare for instance Helly (1973b) nos. 151 pl. xxiii and 153 pl. xxiv with nos. 162 pl. xxv and 164 pl. xxv.

To sum up, and to put the inscribed sculpted dedications in the broader context of Thessalian votives, the quantity of the evidence, in combination with the variegated quality, and presumably cost, of the monuments make it, in theory at least, possible for us to think of the 'offering of an inscribed dedication' as a popular form of religious practice, potentially shared by various elements of the Thessalian population.[81] It would be wrong, however, to see the inscribed sculpted dedications just as one possible votive among many, easily replaceable by anything else. One of their distinctive qualities is that these were publicly viewed monuments and so the commemorative aspect of the dedication, the need to perpetuate the act of the dedication, is particularly stressed.[82] Moreover, the inscribed formula, which is invariably found on these monuments, with its twin emphasis on the name of the dedicant and on that of the god (who is often specified by an epithet), express the wish to individuate both the worshipper and the deity.[83] By doing so, the inscription further enhances the two important and interrelated aspects of every dedication, which is to send a message to the human community and another one to the gods.[84] From this perspective these offerings advertise and commemorate the special relationship between particular individuals and the gods.

The details of the pattern indicate that there must have been customs that made it clear to the worshipper on what occasion and in what cults the setting up of an inscribed stele would be a suitable offering.[85] Rather than accepting these occasions as what might appear to us as merely 'normal' we should try to make sense of them in their particular Thessalian socio-religious domain. As must have become clear from the foregoing discussion, the Thessalian inscribed sculpted offerings cannot be used as a straightforward indicator to measure the 'popularity' of gods for different kinds of worshippers, not only because this approach privileges one source of evidence that happens to survive against others, but also because it fails to grasp the importance of the evidence itself. The offering of an inscribed gift was

[81] On the basis of some of the suggestions made concerning the value of similar kinds of monument in Athens, the price range for the Thessalian inscribed monuments would be from just a few drachmae to 300 or more. The suggested prices range from 30 drachmae for a simple grave stele with a standard relief (G. J. Oliver (2000) 61, 76), or 10 drachmae for a votive relief (van Straten (1974) 184–7), to 400 drachmae for a stele of the type of Hegeso (Schmaltz (1983) 143–5). See also Comella (2002) 179ff.

[82] For this use of dedicatory inscriptions see e.g. Day (1994) 40.

[83] Wallensten (2003) 17–19, 134.

[84] Note also how in some texts the act of inscribing the gift is mentioned side by side with the act of setting it up, the act of dedicating par excellence: Lazzarini (1976) no. 815; Pind. *Ol.* 3.30 and discussion by Steiner (1994) 76.

[85] Note also that the right to inscribe one's name on a votive might have been regulated by law in some cases, such as when the inscription was engraved on grand-scale architectural offerings or on offerings relating to victory in war: Aeschin. 3.183–5; [Arist.] *Oec.* 1346^{b}7–13; 1349^{a}9–13; Plut. *Per.* 14.2; Strabo 14.1.22 and the discussion by Umholtz (2002). In the case of the Thessalian evidence I am thinking more vaguely about votive habits/customs.

only one aspect of the broader practice of gift-giving to the gods, which in turn was only one of the several possible ways through which worshippers could attempt to come into contact with them. As we have seen, a non-problematized, straightforward reading of them cannot account for cases such as that of Asclepius, and will underestimate the possible significance of the seemingly normal dedications to Artemis. Their testimony has to be explored in the context of what else we know about the cult, the rest of the votive record, and the particular worshippers, as well as in the context of the practice itself.

1.4.1b. Other Dedications

From the subcategory of inscribed dedications we move to a discussion of the broader subject of Thessalian dedicatory practices. There are around forty-five sanctuaries in Thessaly and its perioikic areas that have yielded a variety of objects that could be considered as dedications.[86] The material is very unevenly distributed, a phenomenon that could be explained by appeal either to the nature of the archaeological exploration of the area, or to the phenomenon of the votive habit itself. The issue is further complicated by the fact that only a fraction of the material has been published. The votive finds of several sanctuaries are known only through summary reports and photographs. There is often no information about their date or quantity. Moreover, in the vast majority of cases, the inscribed sculpted votives discussed in the previous section, together with the known uninscribed votive reliefs, were not discovered during organized excavations, but were stray finds.

Given the state of the evidence, I present here only a brief summary of it. The earliest finds from Thessaly date to the Geometric period and come from two sanctuaries, those of Athena Itonia at Philia and of Ennodia at Pherai. Most of the finds from both sanctuaries have been published. The vast majority of them date to between the eighth and sixth century BC and consist of small bronze objects. Fibulae were the predominant kind of offering at both sanctuaries, numbered in the hundreds and thousands. There were also numerous rings, pendants of various shapes, and bronze beads, a few bronze animal figurines, and a handful of human male ones. Philia has also furnished several weapons and a few tripods, while no tripods and a smaller number of weapons have been found at Pherai. A few of the finds, fibulae and rings, reported from Neochoraki in Achaia Phthiotis are also of Geometric or Early Archaic date.

[86] More detailed discussions of some sanctuaries are found in various parts of the book and there is a detailed catalogue in Appendix 2.