

THE CULT OF THE MUSES IN THESPIAI
MA IN ANCIENT RELIGIONS – DISSERTATION

VÍCTOR GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ (2021218401)

YEAR 2023/2024

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

Declaration Form

1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Name **Víctor García Martínez**

Date **27/11/2023**

2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **Ancient Religions (MA)**

Name **Víctor García Martínez**

Date **27/11/2023**

3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

A bibliography is appended.

Name **Víctor García Martínez**

Date: **27/11/2023**

4. I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying, inter-library loan, and for deposit in the University's digital repository

Name **Víctor García Martínez**

Date **27/11/2023**

Supervisor's Declaration.

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's own efforts.

Signed: ...M. Cobb.....

Date: ...27/11/23.....

ABSTRACT:

Even though they are mentioned in the Homeric poems, it was Hesiod who first introduced the Heliconian Muses to the Western world. From the Boeotian poet onwards, Muses were no longer homeless, and mount Helicon and its surroundings would forever be thought of as their space. The town where Hesiod lived, Ascra, happened to be located by the Valley of the Muses, a territory that ended up being controlled by one of the most prominent *poleis* of the Boeotian Confederacy; Thespiai.

It is my intention to venture into this notion Hesiod planted and explore the dimensions of the cult of the Muses in Thespiai. There is archaeological evidence supporting the presence of a Sanctuary of the Muses in their Valley, although its chronology only goes back to the Hellenistic age. There appears to be, therefore, a gap between Hesiod's testimony and the third century, in which many doubts arise regarding the relationship between Thespiai and the Muses.

I will 'bridge' this gap using archaeological, literary, and epigraphical sources as a basis to construct a theoretical approach to the topic, focusing on identity as the key element to analyze in this situation. I aim to analyze the relationship between the Muses and Thespiai, in order to conclude if there was an organized cult during centuries, if their link was only symbolic, or if neither possibility can be confirmed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION.....	5
THE DISCOVERY OF THESPIAI AND THE VALLEY OF THE MUSES.....	9
CHRONOLOGY OF THE CULT OF THE MUSES AT THESPIAI.....	11
The cult of the Muses at Thespiai during the Archaic and Classical Ages.....	11
The cult of the Muses at Thespiai during the Hellenistic and Roman Ages.....	21
INTENTIONAL HISTORY AND THE MUSES. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A THESPIAN IDENTITY.....	32
Intentional History and Cultural Memory.....	32
Rites and religiosity of the cult of the Muses.....	36
Intentional History in Thespiai and the Valley of the Muses.....	39
EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THESPIAI AND ITS MUSES IN THE REST OF THE GREEK WORLD.....	40
CONCLUSIONS.....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44

INTRODUCTION:

The ancient territory of Thespiiai fluctuated throughout time but, at its core, was comprised of the urban center and acropolis, as well as a *chóra* that covered the Valley of the Muses, the villages of Ascra – identified with the modern Pyrgaki hill¹–, Eutresis and Leuctra, and the port of Creusis². This area has collectively been referred to as the «Thespike», and it was bound to the North by the hills that separated it from the plain of Copais, to the South, by the coastline between Mount Cithaeron and Siphai, and to the west by Mount Helicon. The Eastern border is diffuse and difficult to securely attest³.

Within this territory, the previously mentioned Valley of the Muses sits six kilometers West of Thespiiai and two kilometers Southwest of Ascra⁴, the closest village to the site, although the valley itself has traces of having been inhabited throughout antiquity⁵. The river Archontitza flows through the valley, known to the ancients as Permessos, and it separates the northern and southern parts of the Helicon range⁶, a geological formation that stretches above the Corinthian Gulf, as far West as Mychos Harbor in Phocis and Lebadeia, as North as Coroneia, and bounded by the East by Orchestos. It covered about 800 sq. km between the Copaic Basin⁷ and the Corinthian Gulf. The peak that towered over the Valley of the Muses was the Zagaras, at a height of 1526 metres above sea level⁸. It was this mountain which acted as the mythical Mount Helicon inhabited by the Muses sacred to Hesiod and, through him, to the Hellenes as a whole.

The Hesiodic Muses seem to have been born out of the Homeric Muses, daughters of Zeus and dwellers of Mount Olympus. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod recognizes the Boeotian deities as these same beings, calling them both “daughters of Zeus” and “Olympians”⁹. He also states that their birthplace was the Macedonian Pieria¹⁰, despite them dwelling in the Helicon at the time of his fateful encounter with the goddesses. It

¹ WALLACE, 1974, p.10.

² ROESCH, 1965, p.52.

³ ROESCH, 1965, p.52.

⁴ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.150.

⁵ Cf. ROBINSON, 2012, p.234: ‘Pausanias indicates that people were living around the sanctuary in his day’.

⁶ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.150.

⁷ ROBINSON, 2012, p.228.

⁸ WALLACE, 1974, pp.21-22.

⁹ Cf. Hes.*Theog.*25.

¹⁰ Cf. Hes.*Theog.*53.

is worth noting that a great number of toponyms found in and around the region of the Valley of the Muses also appear in the Pierian region of Macedonia, east of Mt Olympus. Not only that, but the ancients also believed that the Thracians who lived in Pieria moved to the Valley, bringing typically Thracian names like «Libethrion» and even «Helicon» itself¹¹. This might have an actual historical basis, as many authors have pondered about the migrations of northern Balkanic peoples – commonly referred to as the Dorians –, that occurred in Mainland Greece during the Early Iron Age¹², although others like Hall¹³ have a more critical view on this phenomenon. It might be this Thracian cultural mythos and foundation, alongside Boeotian local beliefs, that comprised a great number of inspirational goddesses and nymphs¹⁴, what could have birthed the Heliconian Muses.

Regardless of their origin, in the proem to his *Theogony*, Hesiod narrates his encounter with nine muses¹⁵ at the top of Mount Helicon and refers to them as daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne¹⁶. As it has been established before, through their lineage with Zeus Hesiod – either intentionally or not – forms a link between the goddesses and Mt. Olympus, as well as the surrounding region, in Macedonia. Moreover, their mother connects them with Boeotia itself, as Mnemosyne received cult at Mount Cithaeron¹⁷, not too far off from the Valley and Mount Helicon. These are the same Muses he dedicates his proem to, where Hesiod speaks of their role as singers of the deeds of the gods and messengers¹⁸ of their word to poets and *aoidoi* such as himself. He then proceeds to pass on the truth revealed by the Muses through the entirety of the *Theogony*¹⁹. Therefore, Hesiod became, through this work, a sort of

¹¹ WALLACE, 1974, p.21.

¹² ROBINSON, 2012, p.230.

¹³ Cf. HALL, 2007, pp.339-343.

¹⁴ Cf. ROBINSON, 2012, p.230: ‘they were in good company in Boiotia, a region haunted by inspirational goddesses, from other Muses on Mt. Thourion near Chaironeia, to the Charites of Orchomenos, and nymphs like the Sphragitides of Mt. Kithairon or the Libethrides high in the Helikon range (Mt. Libethrion)’.

¹⁵ Cf. SCHACHTER, 1986, p.155.

¹⁶ Cf. Hes.*Theog.*52-55.

¹⁷ Cf. SCHACHTER, 1986, p.155: ‘Hesiod has nine Muses. I do not know whether the number nine is an invention of Hesiod or not’.

¹⁸ Their lineage as daughters of a Celestial being such as Zeus and a Cthonic Titaness confers them a unique position within the cast of divine beings in Greek religion as *psychopomps* not of souls, but of truths and – in my opinion – of memory.

¹⁹ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.155.

‘Muse in Earth’, and this makes understandable his latter heroization²⁰. The proem of the *Theogony* was the ‘foundation myth’ – or at least the closest thing we have to one – for the Heliconian Muses. Through the influence of Hesiod in the greater Greek world, with time they were universalized.

Throughout this dissertation, my objective is to comprehensively dissect and digest the cult of these Muses in the *polis* of Thespiai through a diachronical analysis of the primary sources and an examination of the imbrication of this religious activity within the political life of the city and its integration within the greater context of the Hellenic world.

It is my intention to successfully answer certain research questions I have pondered about in relation to this topic. They are as follows:

- What is the chronology of the cult of the Muses at Thespiai?
- How did the cult of the Muses at Thespiai work?
- In which ways did the city of Thespiai use Hesiod and the Muses to build their collective identity?
- How was this relationship between the Muses and Thespiai seen in the rest of the Greek World?

Most of the archaeological remains are dated from the Hellenistic Age onwards, but there are some other sources that could offer an earlier date for its establishment. Moreover, the only well-known cultic activity in the Sanctuary of the Muses is that of the agonic *Mouseia*, with a large corpus of text and epigraphical data that neatly detail its innerworkings, as well as some authors who have written about them²¹. No other ritual pertaining to this cult has been properly discussed, due to the lack of sufficient sources. I will try to fill in the gaps and reconstruct what activities could have transpired within the Mouseion.

Thespiai rose to prominence during the Hellenistic and Roman era, at the same time the cult of the Muses boomed, and Hesiod experienced a resurgence. I want to analyze the role the cult of the Muses and its mythos played in Thespiai as a *polis* and as a group of people looking for an identity. Furthermore, the exogenous image of a group

²⁰ Cf. BEAULIEU, 2004, p.117: ‘[Hesiod] occupait une place intermédiaire entre les dieux et les hommes dans l’imaginaire grec. [...] On peut en conclure qu’il est vraisemblable qu’Hésiode a pu être associé à une certaine forme de culte dans certaines régions’.

²¹ Cf. SCHACHTER, 2016, pp.344-371.

is as important as the indigenous one, and as such, I deem worthy of studying this perception the outside world had of the cult of the Muses in Thespiai.

I will build my whole thesis around the concept of identity – more specifically, collective identity –, as religion is one of the defining characteristics of a group²², and the Muses themselves are deeply associated with it; they are, after all, celestial *aoidoi*, and thus brought henceforth songs, myths, and other cultural markings essential in the creation and maintaining of identity. Therefore, the building of a collective identity through the cult to the bringers of identity had to have this concept as its center point.

Cultural memory will be one of my main tools throughout this dissertation, using it in the unraveling of the research questions presented above. Moreover, I will base my methodology on Gehrke's 'intentional history'²³, that will be amply discussed further down, as I believe it played an important role in the development of the relationship between the cult of the Muses and the city of Thespiai.

Finally, I will pay close attention to the archaeological sources, as I believe them to be the most useful and reliable primary sources for this dissertation, notwithstanding other types of sources, that will also be discussed and examined. Apart from archaeology, I will also undertake an in-depth analysis of the epigraphical sources, which are prominent and abundant in the city. In 2009, Paul Roesch posthumously published *Les Inscriptions de Thespies (IThesp for short)*, that catalogues 1303 inscriptions, almost half of all texts discovered at Thespiai. I used this work as my basis for my epigraphical analysis, which consisted of the selection of all the epigraphs pertaining to the Muses found in the *corpus*: a total of 75, or 5.76% of all the texts. Out of the 75 studied texts, 26 (34.67% of the sample) mention in some way or form the *Mouseia*. I then translated and studied each of these epigraphs, and I will be discussing them further down, inserted into the diachronic analysis of the cult. Following the trend in archaeology, I want to note that, as per my preliminary analysis, the earliest examples date of the 3rd century BC²⁴, and that at least 43 out of the 75 texts – a total of 57.34% of the sample – were made under Roman rule²⁵. For this reason, I have also selected

²² Cf. OPPONG, 2013.

²³ GEHRKE, 2001, p.298.

²⁴ The earliest precisely dated examples – that is, with a dating more specific than 'third century' – are *IThesp* 58-59, (277-268), *IThesp* 60 (267-263), and *IThesp* 287 (250-240).

²⁵ That is, after the year 171 BC, according to OSBORNE 2017, p.238.

eleven inscriptions²⁶ that either attest to a cult to the Muses in earlier dates than the ones available in the Thespian *corpus*, or mention the *Mouseia* in non-Thespian contexts.

THE DISCOVERY OF THESPIAI AND THE VALLEY OF THE MUSES:

As with many other ancient sites, the first reports of the site in modern times come through the recount of western travelers to Ottoman Greece. Indeed, the earliest record we have is that of the Anglican clergyman George Wheler who visited the area in March 1676 and wrote the following words²⁷:

‘[A]bout this place and just under the Mountain are so many and great Ruins that it hath made some to suppose this place [Erimokastro, modern Thespies] to have been the ancient Thespia: But I am not of their opinion. I think rather it was the ancient Thisba, as I shall have occasion by and by to conclude, shewing by most probable testimony, where the old Thespiai was.’ (Bintliff *et al.*, 2017, pp.5-6)

He then went on to identify ancient Thespiai with some ruins north of the nearby settlement of Neochori, at the foot of the easternmost point of Mount Helicon²⁸. This seems to have remained largely undisputed for some time, although there are differing accounts to his, most notably on the Atlas compiled by Jean Baptiste Bourignon d’Anville in the mid-eighteenth century. In the map dedicated to Ancient Greece, he correctly locates Thespiai east of the Helicon and Ascra, while ascribing Thisbe near its original position²⁹. Unfortunately, we do not know what Anville’s sources were, but his Atlas proves that there were conflicting theories surrounding Thespiai’s whereabouts, and this remained the case during the eighteenth century.

This debate came to a halt, however, after the account of the British officer and later Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery William Martin Leake³⁰, at the dawn of the nineteenth century. He first visited the area in 1802, but it was its second visit, in 1806,

²⁶ IG XI,4 1061; IG IX,1 131; IG IX, 2 584; ISCM I 1; SEG 15:517; FD III 6:107; ASAA 22 (1939/40) 165, 19; IG II (2) 971; SEG 36:175; Milet VI,3 1293; Notion 16.

²⁷ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.5.

²⁸ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.6.

²⁹ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.6.

³⁰ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.8.

that became the single most valuable record of the state of the site during this time. In it, he states that:

‘In the middle of the vale, immediately below Rimokastro [Erimokastro], are extensive ruins of an ancient town, undoubtedly Thespieae, the founders of which seem to have chosen the site for the sake of the sources of the Kanavari.’ (Bintliff *et al.*, 2017, p.10).

Once he published the whole account in 1835³¹, it became uncontested as the best account of Thespieai. Shortly after, the artist Sir William Gell copied inscriptions at Thespieai and included them in what became the first modern guidebook for travellers in Greece, published in 1819³². These two works became the antecessors of the first archaeological work in the area.

This only started in the year 1882, when famed Greek archaeologist Panagiotis Stamatakis discovered, almost accidentally, the polyandrion built by the city of Thespieai to the soldiers killed in the battle of Delion in 424 BC³³, which propelled an interest on the area.

Shortly after, between 1888-1890 the French epigraphist Paul Jamot excavated several locations within ancient Thespieai, attaching his name to the most valuable, extensive, and important archaeological excavation project in the site. Among other structures, he unearthed two temples in the city center, one consecrated to Apollo, the other one to the Muses³⁴. The focus of his work, however, was not on the city of Thespieai itself, but instead lied upon the untouched Valley of the Muses³⁵. This place had received attention from earlier travelers. Nevertheless, Leake wrongly situated it near one of the many religious buildings standing in the valley to this day, the church and monastery of Agios Nikolaos. The first one to correctly deduce the area in which the sanctuary once stood, around the churches of Agia Trias, Agios Konstantinos and Agia Ekaterina, was a traveler by the name of Decharme³⁶. The Valley was excavated at first by the previously mentioned Paniagotis Stamatakis, and it was him who unearthed

³¹ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.11.

³² BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.11.

³³ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.15.

³⁴ ROESCH, 1965, p.202.

³⁵ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, pp.15-16.

³⁶ WALLACE, 1974, p.22.

the so-called altar of the Muses, and who located the theatre. Once Jamot took his place, he excavated the theatre and a stoa, as well as thoroughly studying the altar itself³⁷.

The results of Jamot's campaigns were never properly published³⁸, and thus they remained unknown to the general public and specialized researchers alike. During the mid-fifties Georges Roux visited the site and did an extensive analysis of the remains, reconstructing the plan of the sanctuary. He was the one to conclude that the Altar of the Muses, previously known as a small temple, was not any building, but a base that could have been used, among other things, as an altar³⁹. He also reported on the sight of a second stoa on the other side of the sanctuary that at that point had only been mentioned by Jamot⁴⁰.

It is worth noting that, due to the butchered methodology and technique used in the previously discussed nineteenth century excavation campaigns, the archaeology of Thespiiai will most likely never be fully recovered⁴¹. For this reason, there has been very little archaeological work done in the Valley ever since Jamot's campaigns and Roux's visit; only the archaeological field surveys of Bintliff and Snodgrass in the eighties⁴² can be mentioned here. Ever since, studies on the previously unearthed archaeological discoveries have been made, most notably on the epigraphic richness of the site, but no new archaeological campaign of any kind has taken place.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CULT OF THE MUSES AT THESPIAI:

The cult of the Muses at Thespiiai during the Archaic and Classical Ages:

Thespiiai during the Archaic and Classical Ages:

The first instance of Thespiiai in text form comes from the famous Catalogue of the Ships, in the second book of the Iliad. Employing the variant Thespeia, this *polis* is

³⁷ WALLACE, 1974, p.22.

³⁸ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.151.

³⁹ Cf. ROUX, 1954, p.26: '*Il est par conséquent impossible qu'un temple des Muses ait jamais reposé sur le soubassement, qui peut être seulement le socle soit d'une base pour groupe statuaire, soit d'une exèdre rectangulaire, soit d'un autel monumental.*'

⁴⁰ Cf. ROUX, 1954, p.36: '*Au nord de l'autel, sur la rive gauche du Permesson, Jamot signale en outre un bâtiment dont il suivit le mur de façade [...]. Il s'agit peut-être d'un second portique, délimitant vers le nord l'aire au centre de laquelle se trouvait l'autel.*'

⁴¹ LARSON, 2018, p.33.

⁴² BINTLIFF, 1996, p.193.

named as one of the twenty-nine cities contributing to the Boeotian contingent⁴³: ‘The Boeotians [Βοιωτῶν] were led by Peneleos and Leïtus, and Arcesilaus and Prothoënor and Clonius; these were they who dwelt in Hyria and rocky Aulis and Schoenus and Scolus and Eteonus with its many ridges, Thespeia [Θέσπειαν], Graea, and spacious Mycalessus’ (Hom.*Il.*2.494-498)⁴⁴. At some point during the twilight of the Mycenaean civilization or throughout the Geometric Age, up until the 8th century BCE, Thespiiai must have grown in both population and importance. This is confirmed in the archaeological findings, as there have been some dated to the Early Iron Age⁴⁵ that show a stable continued occupation⁴⁶ of the site during this time. Moreover, the Mouseion at the Valley of the Muses also shows continuous cultic activity from the 8th century onwards⁴⁷.

After Homer, the next text that mentions the city is *Works and Days*, by the Ascran dweller Hesiod, and the most famous inhabitant of this part of the Greek world. He does not mention Thespiiai by name, however, and instead writes that

‘those who give straight judgements to foreigners and fellow citizens and do not turn aside from justice at all, their city [τοῖσι πόλις] blooms and the people in it flower. [...] Often even a whole city [ξύμπασα πόλις] suffers because of an evil man who sins and devises wicked deeds’ (Hes.*Op.*225-227, 240-241)⁴⁸.

This mysterious *polis* has frequently been assumed to be Thespiiai, although the possibility that Hesiod was talking about Thebes, an independent Ascras, or some other city, should not be discarded. If we maintain the first hypothesis, however, the text reveals that this *polis* was under an aristocratic political system, a claim that can be positively proved in later stages of the Archaic period⁴⁹. It is likely that this form of government was the first, or among the first, of the political systems in early Thespiiai. Furthermore, due to the similar characteristics in their governance, in this period

⁴³ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.200.

⁴⁴ Trans. by A.T. Murray (1924).

⁴⁵ Cf. BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.201.

⁴⁶ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.201.

⁴⁷ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.163.

⁴⁸ Trans. Glenn W. Most (2018).

⁴⁹ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.201.

Thespiiai appears in sources such as Herodotus⁵⁰ as a close ally of Thebes, something contradictory with the overall relationship between the two states in Hellenic history. This can be explained by the slow growth of Thespiiai during this period, that had yet to become a power that could match Thebes hegemony in Boeotia.

By the end of the period, however, this unrelented expansion and growth had made Thespiiai a very significant player in Central Greece. The prime example of this can be found in the famous battle of Thermopylae in August 480 BCE. Fighting alongside the immensely well-known and lauded 300 Spartans, were no less than 700 Thespians, that were almost entirely wiped out during the battle, to the point that only one of them survived the fight. Nevertheless, the following September in Plataea Thespiiai was able to summon another 1800 men to the battlefield⁵¹. As Bintliff *et alii* (2017, p.203) observe, ‘any city that could muster 2500 men of military age, in all classes, within just over a year must have had a total free population of at least 12000.’ These numbers made Thespiiai a city of considerable size in the Greek world and a formidable power in central Greece. It is worth noting that, by the mid fifth century, Thespiiai had conquered and added into its political makeup the sites of Eutresis and Creusis, as well as the previously independent cities of Syphai, Thisbe, and Khorsiai⁵². Hesiodic Ascra had also been incorporated into the Thesopian state in the final years of the 7th century BCE⁵³.

Regardless, it seems that, at the onset of the Greco-Persian Wars, Thespiiai was most likely not a member of the Boeotian League, as they, alongside the fellow *poleis* of Plataea, sided with the Greeks, whereas the rest of the Boeotian cities were forcefully brought into the Persian side during the conflict⁵⁴. This was the first time Thespiiai and Thebes would clash, but it would certainly not be the last one, for their rivalry would largely affect the history of Thespiiai during these times. Moreover, after the previously mentioned Thermopylae episode, they evacuated the city looking to shelter themselves from Persian retaliation. They started by entering into alliances with *poleis* beyond the

⁵⁰ Cf. Hdt.V.79.2.: ‘when the Thebans learnt the message “that they must entreat their nearest”, they said when they heard it: “If this be so, our nearest neighbours [οικέουσι] are the men of Tanagra and Coronea and Thespieae [Θεσπιέες]; yet these are ever our comrades in battle [μαχόμενοι προθύμως] and zealously wage our wars; what need to entreat them?”’ (Trans. A. D. Godley).

⁵¹ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.203.

⁵² BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.203.

⁵³ PASCUAL GONZÁLEZ, 1996, p.129.

⁵⁴ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.204.

borders of Boiotia, namely with Athens, Sparta, and Corinth⁵⁵. This pushed the city further away from the influence and comradery of Thebes, while making itself more powerful thanks to the influx of resources their new allies shared with them. Not only that, after the defeat of the Persians in 479 BCE, the Thespians resettled the city, accepting new citizens from these new friendly poleis⁵⁶ to make up demographic loss from the war⁵⁷.

The next years were spent rebuilding and repopulating Thespiai. It was during this time when the sanctuary of Apollo was established, just outside of the city⁵⁸. By the year 395 BCE, it appears that not only was Thespiai back in the Boeotian Confederacy, but it held two of the eleven districts, putting it on par with Orchomenos and Hisias, who shared two districts, and Thebes itself, that had four⁵⁹. This meant Thespiai had the capacity to add two thousand hoplites, two hundred *hippeis*, two beotarchs, and one hundred and twenty members in the council⁶⁰. Moreover, it had the second largest area in the League, at 447,358 sq. km., constituting 18,64% of the total territory⁶¹. This new development, alongside the increase in sculptures and other elements adorning the city dated in the latter half of the fifth century⁶², indicates that Thespiai managed to recover itself from the woes of the past. Moreover, estimates record that by the year 400 BCE, Thespiai might have had a free population of around 20,000 inhabitants, with 10,000 of them living in the city proper, and the other half inhabiting the *chora* and other smaller settlements dependent of Thespiai⁶³.

Once the Peloponnesian War commenced, the Boeotian Confederacy aligned itself with Sparta, and Thespiai once more proved to play a significant part in the forces of the Confederacy: out of the 500 Boeotian hoplites killed in the Battle of Delion, at least one hundred were Thespian, as can be noted in the previously discussed polyandron built by the city of Thespiai to honour their deceased soldiers⁶⁴. This

⁵⁵ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.205.

⁵⁶ Cf. BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.205: ‘The appearance at Thespiai of new cults, earlier associated with Athens, Sparta and Corinth, has suggested that new citizens came from all three places’.

⁵⁷ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.205.

⁵⁸ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, pp.205-206.

⁵⁹ Tanagra had one; Lebadeia, Haliartus and Coroneia shared another one; and Chaeronea, Copais and Acraephia shared the last one (Pascual González, 1996, p.137).

⁶⁰ PASCUAL GONZÁLEZ, 1996, p.137.

⁶¹ PASCUAL GONZÁLEZ, 1996, p.127, table 36.

⁶² BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.206.

⁶³ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.208.

⁶⁴ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.206.

momentarily weakening did not go unnoticed by the Thebans, who took the opportunity and dismantled the fortifications in the city⁶⁵. During the rest of the conflict the Thespians continued to serve the Spartans, as they could contribute the largest amount of ships out of any other Boeotian city thanks to its three harbours⁶⁶. This was the precedent for the future close alliance between Sparta and Thespians that would greatly contribute to the wealth of the latter later.

After the war, Thespians became the second most powerful city in Boeotia, above Orchomenos and Tanagra, retaining two districts in the Confederacy⁶⁷. Despite the war and Thebes efforts, Thespians managed to stay afloat and thriving. After the Corinthian War ended and the King's Peace was imposed in 387 BCE, the Boeotian League was dissolved. Thespians lost Thisbe, Siphai and Khorsiai, but retained the strategic port of Creusis, that secured them easy communication with Sparta, their new closest ally. A Spartan garrison was established in the city to cement this alliance and contain whatever democratic tendencies might arise in Thespians. Thespians became the base of all Spartan activities in Boeotia⁶⁸ and received all the power, security, and wealth that a *polis* such as the Peloponnesian superpower could offer the Boeotian city. Authors like Schachter (1986, p.157) posit that this might have been the time when Thespians started to turn the rustic cult to the Muses into an organized sanctuary, thanks to the influx of wealth their alliance with Sparta was bringing into the city. Moreover, he also hypothesizes that the *agon* of the *Museia*, later reformed and illustrious in the Hellenistic and Roman eras, could have been instituted at this point. This competition consisted of dithyrambic, tragic and comic *agones*⁶⁹ until its reorganization in the third century.

The territory of Boeotia soon turned into a battlefield, yet again, when a democratic pro-Athenian faction seized control of Thebes and denounced Spartan activity in the region. Xenophon⁷⁰ recounts that a democratic faction came out from Thespians to stand alongside Thebans against Sparta. This paints a picture of a divided

⁶⁵ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.206.

⁶⁶ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.208.

⁶⁷ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.209.

⁶⁸ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, pp.209-2010.

⁶⁹ MCAULEY, 2015, p.321.

⁷⁰ Cf. Xen.*Hell.*V.4.45-50: 'Now not many of the Thespians [Θεσπιεῖς] were killed, but nevertheless they did not stop until they got within their wall. As a result of this affair the spirits of the Thebans were kindled again, and they made expeditions [ἐστρατεύοντο] to Thespias [Θεσπιάς] and to the other cities round about them. The democratic factions [ὁ δῆμος ἐξ αὐτῶν], however, withdrew [ἀπεχώρει] from these cities to Thebes' (Trans. Carleton L. Brownson).

city that was not wholeheartedly in favour of the Spartan alliance, with internal conflict and instability most likely brewing behind the sidelines of the grand war. When Thebes emerged victorious, Thespiiai's walls – that had been rebuilt in the year 378 BCE by Agesilaos of Sparta⁷¹ – were once again teared down, and the population fled from the urban center, taking refuge in the *chora*. A democratic government was imposed in what remained of the Thesopian *polis*, now surmised to the Theban authority⁷². Sparta, however, did not give up of its control over Thespiiai, and in the year 371 BCE the general Cleombrotos captured Creusis. Nevertheless, he was promptly defeated at Leuctra. What was left of the Thesopian government and population took refuge at the fortress of Keressos, which was subsequently sieged and captured by the Epaminondas⁷³, putting an end to all resistance efforts.

However, Thespiiai continued to be independent – although subordinated to – Theban political control, and there is a continued habitation in the site, noting that it was never fully abandoned⁷⁴, and it gradually recovered its previous population – or at least got close to that number. By the year 340 BCE Thespiiai was sending *hieromnemes* to Delphi, and in 338 BCE a Thesopian was appointed as Boeotarch. Furthermore, in 335 BCE Thespiiai aided in the destruction of Thebes by Alexander the Great⁷⁵. This propelled the status of Thespiiai as a Boeotian powerhouse, which would continue throughout the Hellenistic Age. Once the new and final Boeotian League was established by Philip of Macedon, only Thespiiai, Thebes and Tanagra held two districts, out of the seven *tele* in which the sixteen member cities were distributed. This is also the moment when Thespiians started to issue coinage of their own⁷⁶, affirming once more the prominent role of their city in Boeotia and greater Central Greece.

Epigraphical data from the Archaic and Classical Ages:

As stated previously, an ample majority of the epigraphic corpora in Thespiiai was produced in the Hellenistic and Roman Ages. There are, however, some early

⁷¹ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.210.

⁷² BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.210.

⁷³ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.211.

⁷⁴ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.212.

⁷⁵ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, pp.212-213.

⁷⁶ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.213.

examples I deemed worthy of study, as they remain very valuable to the understanding of Thespian religiosity in these earlier states of their history.

The oldest inscriptions that we have date to somewhere around the 600 BCE. They were all found at the peak of Zagaras mountain, and include dedications made by the Thespians as a body, some other private dedications, and around 30 epitaphs. In the fifth century two lists of war-dead were also found here⁷⁷. Given that in Hesiod's time this location would host the Altar of Zeus, it might have continued to function as such during the early Archaic Age or be considered a place of worship regardless of whether the altar was still in place or not.

Around the 350s BCE a series of documents have been found that attest to some form of organization in the religious activity of the city. There is notice of a cult group for Thamyris operating in the Sanctuary of the Muses. In *IThesp*⁷⁸ 313 one can read two names of 'θαμυρίδοντες' and nineteen of 'ἀγίομενοι',⁷⁹ all serving the legendary musician who dared challenge the Muses in an *agon* in exchange for the goddesses' virtues and lost his eyesight and musical genius because of his prompt defeat⁸⁰. His presence in the Valley of the Muses – as a statue of his has also been found in the sacred grove, accompanied by a poem of the Roman poet Onestes or Honestus⁸¹ – is a testimony to the power of the Muses, and a cautionary tale for anyone who dared to defy these goddesses and their arts. Another interesting cult that also took place in the valley, testified by a contemporary inscription, is that of Hermes, as in *IThesp* 282 it is stated that a group of magistrates dedicated to this cult existed by the name of 'The Eleven'⁸², akin to the ones found in Athens and elsewhere⁸³. The presence of Hermes in the sanctuary might be explained by his role in the creation of the lyre, as he is said to have made the first lyre as an infant with a tortoise shell and cow tripe, that he exchanged with Apollo for the cattle Hermes had previously stolen from the sun god⁸⁴.

⁷⁷ OSBORNE, 2017, p.220.

⁷⁸ Abbreviated form of Roesch's previously mentioned catalogue of inscriptions, *Les Inscriptions de Thespies*.

⁷⁹ OSBORNE, 2017, p.221.

⁸⁰ GRIMAL, 1951, p.490.

⁸¹ Cf. ROBINSON, 2012, p.244: 'Look upon me, the bold one for melody, now mute for song. Why did I come into conflict with the Muses? Maimed (παρόζ) beside the lyre I sit, Thamyris of Thrace; yet goddesses, I hear your memory'.

⁸² 'Τοὶ Ἐνδεκά' in the original text.

⁸³ OSBORNE, 2017, p.221.

⁸⁴ GRIMAL, 1951, p.261.

Moreover, Jamot unearthed fragments of a sculpture group in bronze that depicted Hermes and Apollo fighting over this first lyre⁸⁵.

Archaeological data from the Archaic and Classical ages.

The oldest archaeological findings in the site trace cultic activity to the Early Helladic, as some shards from this time have been found in the Valley. Moreover, a deposit was unearthed that included Corinthian aryballoi, Boeotian black-figure skyphoi, inscribed Attic black-glaze shards, and terracotta figurines⁸⁶. Pausanias⁸⁷ also recounts in his visit to the valley a collection of tripods, with the oldest one being the one that Hesiod himself⁸⁸ dedicated to the Muses after his victory in Chalkis; an epigram inscribed in the artifact was said to confirm this⁸⁹. Most of the tripods were probably Hellenistic and had to do with the Mouseia, but if real, Hesiod's tripod would not only attest to his historicity, but to a centuries long tradition of consecrating tripods won at *agones* to the Muses. A fragment rim from a *lebes* has been found in the site, dated to the seventh century BCE⁹⁰, that reinforces this idea. Some have posited that this *lebes* is the one Hesiod dedicated, but these forms of trophies were common in the area during this time⁹¹, so it is most likely just a coincidence. Pausanias also reports of a collection of lead tablets by the Hippocrene spring that contained the *Works and Days*⁹². Given the material of the tablets and the fact that it lacked the proem of the poem – that some believe to be a Hellenistic addition to the work⁹³ –, these might well could date to the Classical or even Archaic age, which could mean a continued presence of Hesiod and his influence throughout the valley. Moreover, also at Hippocrene a fragment of a bronze cauldron rim with an archaic inscription to some unknown Heliconian deity was discovered⁹⁴. This would point to an older cult that was displaced by the arrival of the Muses with the northern migration, or another way to refer to the Muses, Mnemosyne, or another similar being(s). Nevertheless, this once more proves that the Helicon was

⁸⁵ JAMOT, 1926, pp.399-401.

⁸⁶ ROBINSON, 2012, p.234.

⁸⁷ Paus.9.31.3.

⁸⁸ Hes.*Op.* 654-57

⁸⁹ ROBINSON, 2012, pp.246-247.

⁹⁰ LARSON, 2018, p.34.

⁹¹ LARSON, 2018, p.34.

⁹² ROBINSON, 2012, p.250.

⁹³ Cf. LAMBERTON, 1988, pp.498-504.

⁹⁴ LAMBERTON, 1988, p.496.

always a place with religious significance, regardless of its monumentalization or officialization of the cult. However, Larson (2018, p.33) maintains that ‘some of the early archaeological material from the site can just as easily be linked to simple habitation and farming of the area, as opposed to verifiable cult activity’.

During Thespias’s alliance with Sparta, immediately after the King’s Peace, the city minted coinage for the first time. All three dies depicted a female head on the obverse; in two of them the head was accompanied by a crescent in the field, which identified the woman as Aphrodite Melainis. The other die, however, lacked the crescent, and so it has been interpreted that this other figure depicted a Muse or even Mnemosyne herself⁹⁵. Therefore, this could be the start of the intermingling between Thespian politics and the sanctuary of the Muses. It certainly is contemporary with the first monumentalization efforts in the valley, the officialization of the cult, and the possible first instance of the Mouseia. It is most likely, therefore, that the interest in the Muses by the Thespian state that has traditionally been relegated to the Hellenistic and Roman eras started around this time.

The previously mentioned sculpture of Thamyris and the sculptural group depicting Hermes and Apollo were originally placed in the sacred grove. A great number of these have been dated to the fourth and early third century⁹⁶, which makes them older than almost all of the other epigraphic records from the site. Following Robinson’s (2012, pp.242-247) recollection of Pausanias’ stay, she argues that he tended to favour the description of Archaic and Classical artifacts over the Hellenistic or Roman ones⁹⁷, but remains skeptical that most of the statues observed by the traveler were actually that old. Therefore, I will only point out the sculptures that are more likely to be dated from the Classical age, although all these estimations should be taken with caution. Among them, Pausanias admired a statue of Eupheme, nurse of the Muses, by the road to the sanctuary⁹⁸. There were also two sculptural groups depicting the Muses themselves; the first one is attributed to Kephisodotos, father or brother of Praxiteles and active in the first half of the 4th century BCE, and the second one has three authors: Kephisodotos, Strongylion and ‘Olympiosthenes’. Knoepfler has argued that the last name corresponds

⁹⁵ SCHACHTER, 1986, pp.157-158.

⁹⁶ OSBORNE, 2017, p.227.

⁹⁷ ROBINSON, 2012, p.242.

⁹⁸ ROBINSON, 2012, p.242.

to Sthennis of Olynthos, active in the second half of the 4th century BCE⁹⁹. Apart from Apollo and Hermes, two statues of Dionysus were found in the sanctuary; one was by Lysippo, the other by Myron¹⁰⁰. Just as Thamyris, other legendary poets and singers had their space in the abode of the Muses: the argive flautist Sakadas and the son of Calliope Orpheus accompanied the most celebrated mortal in this space, the Ascran Hesiod¹⁰¹. There is mention of a Priapus statue¹⁰², although its chronology is unknown. Finally, there is archaeological evidence of either two or three other sculptural groups, even if whatever they depict remains unidentified¹⁰³.

This data brings interesting insight in the way the cult of the Muses worked, at least when it started to be officialized and monumentalized, as the altar of the Muses is contemporary to these statues. We speak, therefore, of a rustic cult centered around a sacred grove filled to the brim with works of art that remind the viewer of the religious figures the sanctuary is consecrated to.

Final Considerations on the Cult of the Muses in Thespiai during the Archaic and Classical Ages:

All of the previous analysis suggests a far older origin for the cult of the Muses in Thespiai than archaeological data may imply, if looked at in isolation. The little archaeological data for the Archaic age nonetheless reveals that there was some sort of religiosity imbued into Mount Helicon, and that ritual existed, especially concerning competitions of song and poetry. Given the later creation of the Mouseia in the 4th century, it is likely that the deities that received the consecration of the *lebes* and other trophies were the Muses themselves. Hesiod also seems to have had a presence in the site since quite early dates, given the lead tablets found at Hippocrene. The rustic nature of the cult refers to both the essence of the cult of the Muses, as one centered around natural space due to their possible origin in local nymphs and their association with Helicon; and to the status of Thespiai at the time, a newer city than others in the area that had to still grow to rival Thebes.

⁹⁹ ROBINSON, 2012, p.243.

¹⁰⁰ ROBINSON, 2012, p.243.

¹⁰¹ ROBINSON, 2012, pp.245-246.

¹⁰² ROBINSON, 2012, p.246.

¹⁰³ ROBINSON, 2012, p.243.

The further inactivity of the valley can be explained by the context of Thespiiai in the Classical Age. Thespiiai was one of the most affected poleis in all of the Greek world by the continuous conflict in Hellas during this period, and that hindered their focus on other affairs, as they had to fight for survival surrounded by hostility and infighting within the city. That is precisely why the organization of the sanctuary of the Muses and the establishment of an *agon*, as well as the embellishment of the sacred grove with dozens of statues happened during their alliance with Sparta. Acting as a sponsor for Thespiiai's religious development and providing sufficient funds for them, it was the only way the wretched city could flourish in such a short span of time. For Sparta it was beneficial, as it provided them with a secure garrison and port in the heart of Hellas, as well as publicizing themselves as magnanimous with their allies. Meanwhile, Thespiiai not only developed its main cult, but created a competition that would bring visitors and wealth into the *polis*. The city expanded on this idea during the Hellenistic Age, but this was the beginning of the politization of the cult of the Muses and its sanctuary.

The cult of the Muses at Thespiiai during the Hellenistic and Roman Ages:

Thespiiai during the Hellenistic and Roman Ages:

At the dawn of the Hellenistic age, Thespiiai was one of the most prestigious members of the Boeotian League, being represented in all of the League's functions. They also received honours in Delphi, with the presence of *proxenoi* and *hieromnemes* in the panhellenic sanctuary down to the 130s¹⁰⁴. This was most likely due to the Mouseia, the competition that brought immense wealth, notoriety, and respect for Thespiiai throughout the Greek world.

Despite their wealth and prosper, however, Thespiiai suffered the same population decline that plagued all of Greece during this time¹⁰⁵, due to the greater relevance of other Hellenistic kingdoms away from Hellas and the emergence of a new great power that was to subjugate the Hellenes: Rome. And, just like it had occurred in the past, once it was time for the Boeotian League to confirm their alliances, rifts and divisions hindered any accord. During the Third Macedonian War (171-68 BC) against Rome, Thespiiai surrendered itself to the new superpower, whereas Thebes and the rest

¹⁰⁴ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.214.

¹⁰⁵ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, pp.215-217.

of the League opposed them. At the end of the war, Thespiiai was rewarded for its loyalty with the status of ‘free city’¹⁰⁶.

During the Achaean War of 146 BCE, however, Thespiiai’s position is not clear to us, but Cicero reports that Mummius took all the statues from the city, including those of the Muses¹⁰⁷. The Sanctuary was then, most likely, ransacked and profaned. I find interesting that this action was precisely what Mummius and the Romans saw fit in order to empty Thespiiai of its power: the sanctuary was at that point not only the center of Thespiiai’s religiosity, but also of its economic and political prowess, and as such it proved the single most important place in the city, surpassing even the agora. Later on, Mummius rededicated some statues under his name¹⁰⁸, so it seems that at least some of the stolen artifacts returned to their original place after the war, or at least when the conflict was near the end.

By the 1st century BCE Thespiiai retained its free city status, with many Italian and Roman *negotiatores* that secured its prosperous state¹⁰⁹. Moreover, Sulla seems to have been greatly involved with restoring Thespiiai to his status as the leading city in Boeotia, as the Thespiians established in his honour the Erotidea athletic competition after the year 86 CE, which took place at a different time from the Mouseia and was pentaeteric¹¹⁰ like its sister games. This new *agon* made the Sanctuary of the Muses host of both singing and athletic games¹¹¹. In turn, this reported a peak in wealth and splendor for the area. Thespiiai remained one of the closest Greek allies of the Imperial power during the Roman Empire, and as such it became the city in Boeotia with the most reported Imperial cult, with statues of the emperors in the Sanctuary of the Muses and the Agora. Augustus himself had a bronze statue in the Mouseion, as he also became a benefactor and protector of the site¹¹². This was the final stage of the progressive intrusion of politics into the Sanctuary that the Thesopian *polis* had been concocting for centuries: it unequivocally became the place of the maximum political, religious, economic, and symbolic in the city. There is evidence of dedications in the Valley into the 4th century CE, but the remains suggest that it was just a faded glory.

¹⁰⁶ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.217.

¹⁰⁷ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.232.

¹⁰⁸ BINTLIFF *et al.*, 2017, p.232.

¹⁰⁹ ROBINSON, 2012, p.232.

¹¹⁰ FOUART, 1885, p.411.

¹¹¹ MÜLLER, 2017, p.233.

¹¹² ROUX, 1954, p.44.

Furthermore, Constantine used some of the works of art of the Mouseion to adorn the new capital; we know of some Muses that were moved to Constantinople that fell victim to the Chrysoston riots in 404 CE¹¹³.

Thespian's development and splendor during this time would not have happened if it were not for the Mouseia, and for that they should be further studied. As previously stated, the Mouseia can trace back its origins as early as the fourth century BCE. It was not until its reorganization in the latter half of the second century BCE when it exploded in popularity and recognition.

Knoepfler's interpretation of this reorganization is the generally accepted one in the present¹¹⁴. As his understanding of the chronology goes, between the early 220s and the later 210s the Thespians were able to elevate at least five of the thymelic categories to stephanitic and isopythic¹¹⁵ – epic poets, *auletai*, *aulodes*, *kitharistai*, and *kitharodes*¹¹⁶ –. This would change the rewards in the games; more mundane prizes would change into the prestigious and sought after wreaths or crowns. Later in the same decade, it was decided to make the *agon* pentaeteric and include dramatic competitions, and it was not until the 210s when Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III finally committed to sponsor the games. The first celebration of the renewed Mouseia would not happen until the year 204 BCE, and at least twenty-five years had to pass before the theatre in the Mouseion was given a permanent skene¹¹⁷. It is noticeable to note that in the 220s the Boeotian confederacy underwent a huge religious renewal, and that the reorganization of the Mouseia do fit into this context quite well. Osborne (2017, p.224) notes that 'we should not see Thespian initiative behind the reorganization of the Mouseia, or at least not without confederate pressure'. However, he goes on to admit that the letters from Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III in which they accepted the reorganization of the games were addressed to the Thespians¹¹⁸, and the Thespians alone. Most likely, it was a decision made by the Thespian *polis* due to the benefits they could report from it and their history with the games, and they simply used the wave of religious renewal in the League to seek their support.

¹¹³ ROBINSON, 2012, p.241.

¹¹⁴ SCHACHTER, 2016, pp.345-346.

¹¹⁵ SCHACHTER, 2016, p.345.

¹¹⁶ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.165.

¹¹⁷ SCHACHTER, 2016, p.358.

¹¹⁸ OSBORNE, 2017, p.224.

Once the Mouseia were standardized, so were the institutions that organized them. There were two major magistrates in this role: the *agonothete* of the Mouseia and the *athlothete*. The *agonothete* was the organizer of the games, whereas the *athlothete* oversaw the organization and distribution of the prizes¹¹⁹. The latter was only appointed the years the Mouseia took place¹²⁰. Moreover, the Boeotian Confederacy also sent its own magistrates to the games to supervise the panegyrics, as the Mouseia had a federal status¹²¹ and as such needed to be at least partially controlled by the League.

Other known magistrates that were in charge of religious affairs were the *ναῶν ἐπιμελητάς*. Each of them was responsible for the upkeep of a temple; there is notice of at least one dedicated to Apollo and another one to the Muses¹²². There was also a *ταμίας ἱερῶν* or sacred treasurer, probably in charge of the sanctuary funds, as well as a treasurer of the Muses (*ταμίας Μοῦσαι*) and a *ταμίας ἐπὶ τὸν καθαρῶμενον (πόρον)*, a magistrate who acted as one of the three *sitonai* in the city using the money gained from the sacred foundations to buy grain for the populace¹²³. This last magistrate proves how important was the Mouseion for Thespiyai as a whole, as it appeared to be the main economic agent in the city.

Not too late after the reorganization, in the early second century, the Mouseia obtained pan-hellenic status¹²⁴. However, during Roman times, after the collapse of the Boeotian League, Thespiyai had to organize the festivals themselves, without any federal support. They therefore invested in companies of artists or *technitai*¹²⁵, who were participating in *agones* all over Greece¹²⁶ and who helped fund the Mouseia.

It is very clear that during the Hellenistic and Roman times, the Valley of the Muses and all its religious activity was concentrated on the Mouseia. Schachter (1986, p.153) denotes that ‘after the classical period, the only cult activity at the sanctuary which was not somehow related to the Mouseia seems to have been an annual sacrifice to the Muses, preceded by a hero sacrifice to Linos’. Religion had been relegated to a

¹¹⁹ ROESCH, 1965, p.228.

¹²⁰ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.153.

¹²¹ ROESCH, 1965, p.144.

¹²² ROESCH, 1965, p.202.

¹²³ ROESCH, 1965, p.203.

¹²⁴ SCHACHTER, 1986, p.166.

¹²⁵ IG XI, 4 1061, dated to 172-167 BCE and found in Delos, mentions a group of *technitai* that participated in various *agones*, among them the Mouseia. This offers an early involvement of these groups of artists in the games.

¹²⁶ MÜLLER, 2017, p.233.

second place in exchange for the political and economic power the Mouseia provided. It also served as an intellectual center, as philosophers and poets alike gathered in the valley to pursue their interests¹²⁷ and reminisce about past artists in the grove.

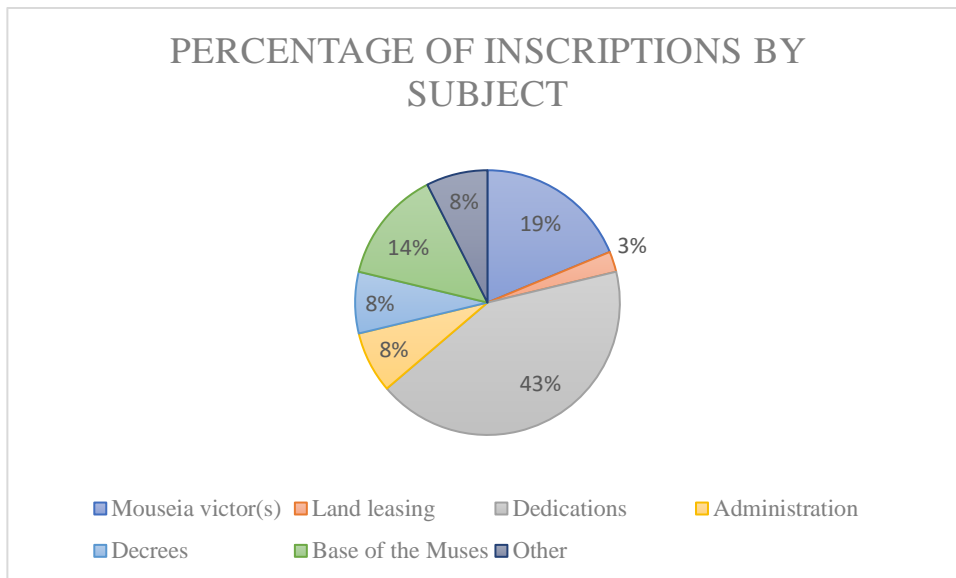
Epigraphical data from the Hellenistic and Roman Ages:

As previously stated, most of the epigraphical data in Thespiiai corresponds to the third century and beyond. These inscriptions are written in the Boeotian dialect until the disappearance of the League in the year 172/1 BCE; from there on, they are exclusively written in Koine¹²⁸. In order to paint a clearer picture of the reality of the epigraphical corpora studied for this dissertation, I elaborated the following table and graph:

SUBJECT	NUMBER	PERCENT.	DATING
Mouseia victor(s)	15	19%	210/203 BCE-212 AD
Land leasing	2	3%	230-228 BCE
Dedications	34	43%	277/268 BCE-2nd half 1st c. AD
Administration	6	8%	1st half 3rd c. BCE-1st/2nd c. AD
Decrees	6	8%	215/208 BCE-362/364 AD
Base of the Muses	11	14%	2nd half 1st c. AD
Other	6	8%	215/208 BCE-4th c. AD
TOTAL:	80		

¹²⁷ ROBINSON, 2012, p.250.

¹²⁸ OSBORNE, 2017, p.220.



Figures 1 and 2. Table and graph of the distribution of the selected inscriptions, studied in this dissertation.

As shown in these, dedications add to almost half of the 80 studied epigraphs, followed by lists of the Mouseia victors and the great Base of the Muses and similar inscriptions. Administrative texts, decrees and *miscellanea* have an adequate representation, being the land leases the least frequent ones; I would argue their presence in this list of subjects is surprising enough by itself, as will be stated below. Chronologically, they show a long timeline that spans through the Hellenistic and Roman times, except for the distinctively Hellenistic land leases. Below I will detail every listed subject.

The victor lists all follow the same format: the magistrates in charge for that particular *agon* are listed first, before the names of the different winners and categories, always in the same order. There is a notable exception, however; in *IThesp.34* there is only one victor, Quintius Braitius Soura [Κόντων Βραΐτιον Σούραν]. The reasoning behind this inscription is unknown, but he might have been a particularly wealthy winner, or his victory could have been more impressive than any other. Given his *tria nomina* and the dating of the inscription in the 87/86 BCE, this might have also been a political move by the Thespians. Another interesting text is that of *IThesp.175*, which follows the same structure as the rest of them, but names both winners and magistrates of the Mouseia and the Erotidea. This could mean that as early as the 1st century CE – when this epigraph is dated – the Erotidea and the Mouseia either took place at the same time, or that both victor lists were produced simultaneously and in the same surface. There is no other example of this happening, so most likely this was not common

practice, but it indicates that at least administratively, the Erotidea and the Mouseia were very closely related. Nevertheless, all these inscriptions constitute a valuable source to understand the reach of the Mouseia, as the origin of the victors are listed among their parentage.

The land leasing texts¹²⁹ are perhaps the most interesting ones, as they revealed a strategy perpetrated by the Thespian *polis* to accumulate funding for the progressively more expensive Mouseia and the upkeep of the Mouseion. They all date to the year 230/228 BCE, right before it is presumed that the Thespians decided to upgrade the games to stephanitic. Most likely, these land leases were involved in this decision, and point to either a carefully planned development of the games by the Thespians through the accruing of the capital necessary for the change of category; or a rushed effort to upgrade the Mouseia and get the patronage of Hellenistic kings once they realized the high cost of the upkeep. As is the case with most things, I believe that most likely both options are relevant to the future of the Museia and the relation of Thespiiai to them, as they are not exclusive from one another.

The dedications to the Muses, as previously stated, are the most common epigraphs in the Mouseion, attesting to the profound religious character of the site, at least on an individual level. There are some notable examples, like a series of dedications from various Hellenistic monarchs that remind us of the political power that was embedded in this place during these times. The first Attalid monarch, Philetairos, dedicated three different inscriptions to the Muses¹³⁰, whereas Ptolomeus IV and Arsinoe III consecrated land leases to the Muses, as the Thespian *polis* had done previously¹³¹. Most of them, however, are dedicated by less powerful people, like victors of the Mouseia¹³². There is an interesting inscription that can only be partially read and would translate to ‘The *demos* of the *Leonta*... to the Muses’¹³³. This shows that there were also foreign cities dedicating steles in the sanctuary, most likely when competing at the Mouseia. Another collective dedication¹³⁴ could possibly have been consecrated both to the Muses and Apollo, denoting the close relationship between these deities. Finally, in the Roman era there can be found dedications from the Thespians to a

¹²⁹ *IThesp.* 50, *Ithesp.* 54.

¹³⁰ *IThesp.* 58, *IThesp.* 59, *IThesp.* 60.

¹³¹ *IThesp.* 64.

¹³² Cf. *IThesp.* 205-207.

¹³³ *IThesp.* 306. My translation.

¹³⁴ Cf. *IThesp.* 310.

particular Roman figure blessed by the Muses. The sanctuary is therefore chosen by the Thespian *demos* as the location of these tokens of respect and appreciation to their benefactors, sending a message to all visitors that Thespians and Rome were close allies. Some of the Romans honoured on the sanctuary were Lucius Cornelius Lucius, son of Sulla¹³⁵, the spouse and the mother of Marcus Iunius Silanus¹³⁶, Gnaeus Acerronius Proculus, proconsul of Achaia¹³⁷, emperors Augustus¹³⁸ and Tiberius¹³⁹, and Marcus Agrippa and his extended family¹⁴⁰.

Most of the texts I considered administrative are incomplete victor lists, where only the first part is conserved, and as such only the magistrates are shown. In order, and using *IThesp.165* as an example, they are the *archon* (ἄρχοντας), the *agonothete* (ἀγωνοθετοῦντος), the priest of the Muses (Μουσῶν παράδου), the priest of the *technitai* (ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν τεχνιτῶν), the secretary (γραμματεῦντος), the *pyrphoros* (πυρφοροῦντος), a *hiereos* of each Muse (ιερέως τῶν Μουσῶν φιλλέου), and another one of Dionysus (τοῦ δὲ Διονύσου). Apart from these, *IThesp.65* attests to the creation of the *synthytes* of the *Hesiodoioi* (συνθυτῶν τῶν Μωσάων Εἰσιοδείων). This is a society particular to Boeotia¹⁴¹ that made sacrifices and practiced a cult around a particular deity or group of deities¹⁴² – as it is the case with the *Hesiodoioi* and its veneration to the Muses. A second *synthytes* dedicated to the Muses is known from a slightly later date¹⁴³, that of the *Philetareis* (συνθύτης τοῖς Φιλετηρείεσσι), founded by Philetairos of Pergamon¹⁴⁴. Unlike the magistrates depicted in the victor lists, these *synthytai* are strictly cultic in nature and have no connection to the Mouseia; their earlier date is indicative of the change in the center of the valley and its activity throughout the 3rd century BCE.

The most important decree in the *corpus* is *IThesp.156*, where the Thespians detail the process of elevating the Mouseia to stephanitic. It is worth mentioning the role

¹³⁵ *IThesp.397*

¹³⁶ *IThesp.400-401*.

¹³⁷ *IThesp.416*.

¹³⁸ *IThesp.421*.

¹³⁹ *IThesp.429*.

¹⁴⁰ *IThesp.422-423*.

¹⁴¹ ROESCH (1982, p.163) states that out of the thirteen known instances of the term *synthytes* in epigraphical records, ten came from Boeotia.

¹⁴² ROESCH, 1982, p.163.

¹⁴³ *IThesp.65* is dated to the first half of the 3rd century BCE, whereas *IThesp.60* is dated to the year 267/263 BCE.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *IThesp.60*.

of the *technitai* in the upgrade of the games, as the decree states that Thespiyai and the Boeotian League sent Hierocles as an ambassador before the *technitai* of Isthmia and Nemea, in order to get their approval. Once they got it and the games were stephanitic, Hierocles acted as the first *agonothete*. This account notes the importance of the games of Isthmia and Nemea within the Greek world, and their crucial role in the appointment of new stephanitic and pan-Hellenic games. Most likely, seeking the approval of various Hellenistic monarchs was more of a funding and prestige campaign, whereas the endorsement of fellow games was crucial in a social and even institutional and administrative way.

The base of the Muses¹⁴⁵ is perhaps the most important art piece in the valley, and in antiquity would have been the crown jewel of the art collection in the sacred grove. Biard *et al.* (2017, pp.697-752) wrote an exhaustive and very complete piece on this artifact, analyzing both its form and its content. I will not be as precise as them, but I thought I should nevertheless give basic information about this monument. It was consecrated to the Muses around the year 150 BCE, with a simple dedication of the Thespians¹⁴⁶. The monument consisted of a large base in the shape of a Π¹⁴⁷ in which the statues of the nine muses would have been erected, although most of them have not been found. During the Augustan time, the already mentioned Honestus composed epigrams for each of the muses, which were inscribed in the base on top of the previous epigraph¹⁴⁸. It was at this time when a statue of Iulia, daughter of Augustus, was incorporated into the base, alongside its correspondent epigram¹⁴⁹. This way, the Imperial power was equated with the symbols of Thespian religious, economic, and political prowess, surrendering itself to Rome and reinforcing its alliance and privilege among the empire. *IThesp.298* and *IThesp.299* attest to the existence of other bases at the sanctuary; as stated previously, Pausanias counted at least three of these groups.



¹⁴⁵ *IThesp.288-297*.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *IThesp.288*: ‘Θεισπιέες Μώσης Ἐ[λικ]ωνι ἄδε[σ]σι’

¹⁴⁷ BIARD, 2017, paragraph 44.

¹⁴⁸ BIARD *et al.*, 2017, paragraph 60.

¹⁴⁹ BIARD *et al.*, 2017, paragraph 40.

Figure 3. Reconstruction of the base of the Muses according to M. Matthaiou, E. Katsari, L. de Barbarin and G. Biard¹⁵⁰.

Finally, there are some inscriptions that did not fit into any of the other categories and thus have been deemed as *miscellanea*. Among them, there are two¹⁵¹ lists of soldiers inscribed in the ‘battalion of the Muses’, most likely a military group named after the main goddesses of the city. *IThesp.*153 is a letter from Ptolomeus IV to the Thespians, showing his appreciation for the Mouseia. *IThesp.*274 was written in the form of a poem from Euticles [Εὐτικλῆς] composed in the 3rd century BCE and appears to be an oracle that promises a good harvest to whoever follows Hesiod’s precepts. Above the text, the stele has an engraving of a cyclops that emerges from Mount Helicon of an unknown meaning. I find this example quite fascinating, as it shows devotion to Hesiod in particular, with no mention of the Muses, at a very early date, and also attests to some kind of connection between a cyclops and mount Helicon, that could point to an earlier autochthonous cult in the area. *IThesp.*312 shows the already talked about Honestus epigram to Thamyris, that would accompany a statue of the legendary musician somewhere in the sacred grove. Finally, *IThesp.*419 is a very late example – from the 4th century CE – of another epigram. Through this, we can see that the sanctuary of the Muses saw an influx of poets, musicians and other cultural representants visiting the site until the very end.

Archaeological data from the Hellenistic and Roman ages:

As stated previously, all the surviving structures in the Sanctuary of the Muses are dated to the Hellenistic period. These buildings are an altar, a portico, and a theatre. The altar of the muses was the centerpiece of the Mouseion, and as such it was situated in the center of the monumentalized area. Its dimensions are 5,80 x 9,80 m, which made Jamot misidentify it as a temple, before Roux correctly deemed it a monumental altar¹⁵². The portico, on the other hand, was 96,70 x 10 m, and ran forty meters west of the altar, north to south. It had a total of 36 Ionic columns, and at some point, the interior of the *stoa* had been divided by a wall that most likely was replacing an original middle Corinthian¹⁵³ colonnade that separated the portico into two corridors¹⁵⁴. There were also

¹⁵⁰ BIARD *et al.*, 2017, fig. 40.

¹⁵¹ *IThesp.*111, *IThesp.*116.

¹⁵² ROUX, 1954, p.26.

¹⁵³ ROBINSON, 2012, p.235.

¹⁵⁴ ROUX, 1954, pp.27-32.

some rooms most likely used as storage for fragile or valuable offerings, or even as a library¹⁵⁵. Jamot also discovered the foundation of a second stoa east of the altar, on the other side of the Permessos stream¹⁵⁶. Finally, the theatre is located 300 m SW of the first portico, using a slope as a natural *cavea*, as there have been no traces that there were any stone seats, although there could have existed marble ‘seats of honour’ at the bottom¹⁵⁷, as it used to be the case. Its dimensions were 22,20 x 10,50 m, with a proscenium 2,60 m deep. The *stylobate* was 18,30 m long and had twelve Doric semi-columns that were 1,95 m tall¹⁵⁸.

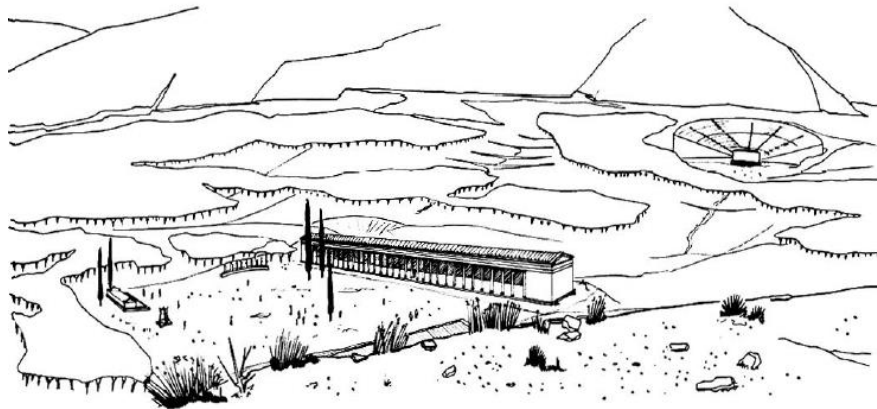


Figure 4. The Valley of the Muses according to P. Bonnard¹⁵⁹. The eastern portico is missing.

The sacred grove continued to be filled with sculptures, especially during the Roman age, when it became as a place to honour Roman figures and thus to reinforce Thespias’ close link to the Imperial power. Sulla had a statue in the grove¹⁶⁰, as well as Augustus¹⁶¹ and other emperors. Due to the Mouseia, there were also a great number of victory monuments, as well as statues that celebrated individual victors¹⁶². Other statues that we know of through Pausanias’ recount are one of queen Arsinoe II, daughter of Ptolemy I and sister-wife of Ptolemy II, seated on an ostrich, and another of Telephos suckled by a deer, most likely a Pergamene dedication given that this hero would end up founding Pergamon¹⁶³. This and the presence of Arion mounted on a dolphin, heavily

¹⁵⁵ ROBINSON, 2012, p.235.

¹⁵⁶ ROUX, 1954, pp.27-36.

¹⁵⁷ ROBINSON, 2012, p.235.

¹⁵⁸ ROUX, 1954, p.36.

¹⁵⁹ ROUX, 1954, fig.3.

¹⁶⁰ ROBINSON, 2012, p.232.

¹⁶¹ ROBINSON, 2012, p.239.

¹⁶² ROBINSON, 2012, p.242.

¹⁶³ ROBINSON, 2012, p.246.

associated with Arsinoe II¹⁶⁴, shows that the sponsoring of the Hellenistic monarchs did not only involve financial support, but also helped embellishing the Mouseion.

Final Considerations on the Cult of the Muses in Thespias during the Hellenistic and Roman Ages:

The gathering of data makes very clear how the Thespians used the cult of the Muses and, more specifically, the Mouseia, to propel their city as one of the most significant players in Hellenistic and Roman Greece, and how they achieved it. As McAuley (2015, p.322) puts it, ‘the Helikonian Muses reached the peak of their popularity only from the mid-third century onwards. There was something in the unique mix of localism and panhellenism that emerged in the third century context which benefitted the sanctuary immensely’. This was the golden age of the Valley, but paradoxically, cult to the Muses was most likely abandoned, and the Mouseion turned from being essentially a sanctuary with a religious purpose into a gathering place of poets who competed in the Mouseia, artists and philosophers who visited the sacred grove, and visitors who had heard of the valley through the games. It is interesting to know the parallel nature of this de-deified Mouseion and the Museums that emerged during the Hellenistic age, that acted as gathering places for cultural agents and artifacts under the blessing of the Muses.

INTENTIONAL HISTORY AND THE MUSES. THE CONSTRUCTION OF A THESPIAN IDENTITY:

Intentional History and Cultural Memory:

The German archaeologist Hans-Joachim Gehrke coined the term ‘intentional history’ defining it as ‘history in a group’s own understanding, especially in so far as it is significant to the make-up and identity of the group’¹⁶⁵. Intentional history is essential not only for the internal understanding of a society, but also for its coherence and its collective identity. It is made up of a common past that unites myth and history as one alongside the current circumstances, all of it becoming a single continuum and

¹⁶⁴ ROBINSON, 2012, p.245.

¹⁶⁵ GEHRKE, 2001, p.298.

representing a tradition¹⁶⁶ developed through cultural memory¹⁶⁷. Intentional history does not exist without a context that supports it, it is always part of a group's understanding, and is set in a specific climate that propels or modifies it. This also means that it does not exist within a vacuum, and that alien groups should also be taken into consideration when studying this phenomenon, as 'there can be no intentional history without unintentional history'¹⁶⁸. It must be remembered that group identity is, at its core, a force that associates members by their similarity with other people in that group and their dissimilarity with non-members¹⁶⁹. As Malmer (2011, p.40) brilliantly puts it, 'community identity is as much about inclusion as it is about exclusion'.

As Hall (2007, p.338) discusses, 'social identity [...] refers to the internalization within the individual of the knowledge that she or he belongs to a broader group, along with the value and significance that are attached to such an affiliation'. An important part of this social identity and more importantly, a mechanism to maintain it, is that of social representation. This is formed within a social context, shared by individuals that may or may not be part of the group they were produced, refer to issues pertaining society, and is manifested through artifacts that have an inherent collective aspect. It also serves a purpose within the society and can evolve¹⁷⁰ alongside the group that produced them. Social representation can be divided into three groups, according to Moscovici¹⁷¹: hegemonic representation, which is shared by all members of a group; emancipated representation, outgrown to different subgroups that have their own version of it; and polemical representation, that which is generated during a conflict or controversy and is not shared by all members of the society but is determined by antagonistic relations between parts of the group and are exclusive of one another¹⁷². Intentional history can appear in all types of social representation, as it is born from the group itself, be it all of it or a subset of people within the community.

However, communities need symbols as a cohesive and identity tool. Symbols must be meaningful and understandable to all members of the community, even when the specific context in which they were constructed changes. Therefore, they must be

¹⁶⁶ GEHRKE, 2001, pp.286, 296.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Assmann, 2011.

¹⁶⁸ FOXHALL & LURAGHI, 2010, pp.9-10.

¹⁶⁹ MALMER, 2011, p.39.

¹⁷⁰ BREAKWELL, 2014b, p.120.

¹⁷¹ Cf. MOSKOVICI, 1988, pp.211-250.

¹⁷² BREAKWELL, 2014b, p.124.

malleable enough to adapt to new circumstances, where its meaning could be changed¹⁷³ but still retain its status as a social artifact. In the context of Thespiai, I believe the Helicon first and the Valley of the Muses later, alongside the goddesses themselves, were symbols of the Thespian community, as depicted in previously discussed coinage. It is interesting how the Valley is not only a symbol, but a ‘memory theatre’¹⁷⁴, as Alcock defines them, and as such it is deeply connected with the survival of Thespiai’s social memory¹⁷⁵. It is the center of all Thespian identity and memory, and it makes it a crucial locale¹⁷⁶ in the expression of both tradition and an agenda promoted by the elites.

All identity is social¹⁷⁷, and this identity is dynamic, responding to the social context of the group throughout time and space, although it is not determined¹⁷⁸ by it. In fact, one of the core aspects of identity is precisely its malleability¹⁷⁹, which can be used by the group, be it intentional or not, to form its own understanding of itself. The most common mechanism that impulses the formation and / or change of a social identity is that of a common threat, formed when ‘the identity processes [...] are not able to operate in accordance with the identity principles to construct and maintain identity’¹⁸⁰. In Thespiai’s case, especially during the first stages of its establishment as a powerhouse in Boeotia, it had to continuously fight against external forces like the Persians, as well as maintain a tense rivalry with Thebes and keep the government in place while different factions within the city aligned themselves with oligarchic or democratic values. These factors diminished the capacity of their identity processes, and thus pushed the city into an identity crisis determined by threats and tensions within individuals and the community. Moreover, the Roman presence in latter times forced Thespiai to reconstruct itself once again.

¹⁷³ MALMER, 2011, p.40.

¹⁷⁴ Cf. ALCOCK, 2001, p.334.

¹⁷⁵ MALMER, 2011, p.42.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. MALMER, 2011, p.44: ‘Locales can be created and serve as focal points for a group and its identity. A locale may be natural features or humanly created places, [...] and are constructed through the common experiences and symbols of the group. It is a place which through group activity becomes an existential space’.

¹⁷⁷ BREAKWELL, 2014a, p.25.

¹⁷⁸ BREAKWELL, 2014a, p.25.

¹⁷⁹ HALL, 2007, p.338.

¹⁸⁰ BREAKWELL, 2014a, pp.32-33.

In the formation of a social and cultural identity through threats, the elites, due to their power within this group, act as ‘entrepreneurs of identity’¹⁸¹. They are the ones that convince the rest of how their society should run, what place does each group have in it, and most importantly, how it came to be and what is their uniting identity. Therefore, elites are the ones who control and shape intentional history within their societies, with the help – in the case of Ancient Greece – of poets, singers, and others, who were deemed as truth bearers through their link with the Muses¹⁸². It was poets, alongside historians¹⁸³, who created these perceptions of the past through myth, tradition, and history, all as if it were one. This made the Greek understanding of the past quite flexible, as anyone with sufficient authoritative power over memory and the past could make modifications to it, even mythicizing history¹⁸⁴ – the easiest way to cultivate a collective past. However, certain authors that had achieved a mythical and revered status, which was the case of Homer and Hesiod, were deemed as canonical and their understanding of the past could not be put into question¹⁸⁵.

Collective history is vital to the group because a community can only exist as one as long as it outlives its founding members. This is where intentional history and cultural memory join paths¹⁸⁶, as remembrance is the main motor of the survival of a group: history starts when tradition and memories end and are too distant to be properly remembered¹⁸⁷. To secure the existence of this society, its members anchor the justification for its existence in a time in the distant past¹⁸⁸, bridging history and myth and creating this primeval mythical time in which all fabrication is permitted. This is when cultural memory exercises its power, in the realm of remembrance. Moreover, societies are not natural entities but ‘intentional units’¹⁸⁹, and as such, they need a framework to be conformed and survive as a defined group. This framework and this necessity to conform a common identity through the practice of cultivated memory¹⁹⁰ is

¹⁸¹ CHRYSOCHOOU, 2014, p.140.

¹⁸² Cf. Hom.*Sel.*20; Hes.*Theog.*10; Bacch.5.12; and others. Baños Álvarez (2001, p.5): ‘*el aedo no habla en su nombre, no tiene voz propia, es un oficiante de la Musa*’.

¹⁸³ GEHRKE, 2001, p.299.

¹⁸⁴ GEHRKE, 2001, p.301.

¹⁸⁵ GEHRKE, 2001, p.301.

¹⁸⁶ GEHRKE, 2010, p.15.

¹⁸⁷ HALBWACHS, 2010, p.120.

¹⁸⁸ GEHRKE, 2010, p.16.

¹⁸⁹ GEHRKE, 2010, p.16.

¹⁹⁰ GEHRKE, 2010, p.17.

intentional history, and traditions are what moves this intentional history, by both being constructed and being true,¹⁹¹ at least for the people that partake in them.

During the Hellenistic period, when panhellenism and localism were contemporary and not mutually exclusive, intentional history and social memory became crucial, with an especial role of poets and historians, both past and contemporary, as well as orators and numerous monuments, mnemonic artifacts that help embed intentional histories in reality. Moreover, more festivals were created to link places to a particular identity through tradition and ritual¹⁹². Thespiai and the Valley of the Muses are perfect examples of this Hellenistic renewal of the past, as has been apparent throughout this paper.

Rites and religiosity of the cult of the Muses:

There is not much data pertaining to the specifics of the cultic activity at the Valley separated from the still religious but highly secularized Mouseia *agon*. The main rituals were performed at the altar, the single most important element in the cult of the Muses. It is believed that they generally repudiated bloody sacrifices and were only given offerings such as grain, food, flowers, or incense, but this does not preclude a prohibition of sacrifices in their temenos. In fact, *circa* 230 BCE a priest of the Muses donated 4200 drachmas to the sanctuary so the sacrifice of twenty cattle every four years for the Mouseia could take place¹⁹³. This is an example of how previous rituals and cultic activity related to the Muses could be easily altered to fit the Mouseia. The modification of the traditions of the *demos* by the elites is perfectly encapsulated in this variation in the intentional history of Thespiai.

There was a previously mentioned temple of the Muses in Thespiai proper, although it has never been fully excavated nor studied. It is implied, however, that at least at some point there would have been processions from there to the valley¹⁹⁴ at certain points during the year, like the celebration of the Mouseia, or some previous festivity we have no record of. Given the pattern of the relationship between the

¹⁹¹ GEHRKE, 2010, p.17.

¹⁹² GEHRKE, 2010, pp.28-29.

¹⁹³ ROUX, 1954, p.42.

¹⁹⁴ ROBINSON, 2012, p. 233.

Thespians and the cult of the Muses, it most likely suffered an alteration in the Hellenistic age to adequate it to the Mouseia.

It is also worth considering that a great part of the rituals and traditions surrounding the Muses, especially in earlier dates, leave no archaeological trace. Dances, songs, dramatizations, and other demonstrations of piety are invisible to the passing of time but must be considered. Therefore, even if there is little archaeological record to reflect the cult of the Muses in Thespiai, that does not necessarily preclude it was unimportant or underdeveloped, but that many aspects of it remain a mystery due to the necessary materiality in archaeological and historical analysis.

Apart from the Muses, deities like Zeus, Apollo, Dionysus, and Aphrodite also had a presence in Thespiai – the latter even appearing in coinage, denoting its strong ties to the city. Moreover, Hesiod appears throughout the sacred grove and Helicon itself, with the lead tablets found at the Hippocrene that suggest he was of great importance in the area since very early dates. However, it is not possible to attest if the Valley of the Muses acted as a *heroon* of some sort for the poet, as there are no traces of any formal cult¹⁹⁵.

Hesiod is a crucial figure in the creation of an identity around mount Helicon that was later adopted by the Thespians as its own. He was the one who canonized the link between the Muses and the Helicon, and the one who established the status of poets as bringers of truth and, in return, as makers of cultural memory. Hesiod is, therefore, vital in the Thespian construction of an intentional history. As Robinson (2012, p.230) states, ‘the story of Hesiod’s inspiration by Helikon provides the founding hierophany for the sanctuary’.

In 1988, Lamberton¹⁹⁶ published an incendiary article with this precise aspect, that of the utilization of Hesiod to construct intentional history, at the center of it. In it, he analyzes Plutarch’s recount of his visit to the Mouseion and concludes that within Hesiod’s corpora, the proems and his tale of the dedication of a tripod to the Muses are a Hellenistic interpolation, as there is very little evidence of a cult to Hesiod in the Valley previous to the second century BCE and without those passages, there would be

¹⁹⁵ BEAULIEU, 2004, p.113.

¹⁹⁶ LAMBERTON, 1988, pp.491-504.

no connection between Hesiod, the Muses, and Helicon¹⁹⁷. Moreover, he affirms that the tripod that was exposed in the valley as Hesiod's one was a fabrication¹⁹⁸, and considers that it was not until the Hellenistic period that Hesiod's work was revised and canonized, so it could have easily been trampled with¹⁹⁹. Lamberton states that 'they [the passages previously discussed] were elaborations that served the interests of the institution that had taken possession of Hesiod and his poetry – the Festival of the Muses – sponsored by the people of Thespiai in central Boeotia'²⁰⁰.

I believe his arguments are not strong enough to securely state that the discussed passages are fabrications created to promote the Mouseia and the agenda of the Thespian elite; for instance, the archaeological evidence for a cult to Hesiod in the valley is irrelevant to his viridity. As previously discussed, the valley did not have many cultic infrastructures before the Hellenistic age, and that did not make it a secular space. The lack of archaeological evidence does not preclude the absence of cult, especially at a time when there are also few findings of the main cult of the valley. Moreover, religious activity surrounding Hesiod is not of importance in the discussion of his viridity. We do not know for certain what role did the poet had in the Mouseion; we can only be certain that he was present, just as other figures like Thamyris or Orpheus. Be it a pseudo-*heroon* or not, the Mouseion was intrinsically connected to Hesiod and his work, and it is interesting to consider that this link was more artificially constructed than expected, although it does not make it less true. One argument in favour of this theory is that the lead tablets with Hesiod's work on it lack the proem²⁰¹. The reason Pausanias²⁰² gives for this oddity is that the locals deemed it inauthentic, which would contradict a Thespian-favoured fabrication of it. The proem might have originally been part of the lead tables and be retired later, closer to Pausanias' time during the Roman era, or they might always had lacked the proem; that is unknown. It is certainly interesting fuel to talk about authenticity and agendas regarding the Mouseia, Thespiai, and its intentional history.

Finally, it should be noted that the arrangement in the Valley of the Muses is not the usual in *Mouseia* across Greece. The core of *Mouseia* are the altar and the sacred

¹⁹⁷ LAMBERTON, 1988, pp.503-504.

¹⁹⁸ LAMBERTON, 1988, p.502.

¹⁹⁹ LAMBERTON, 1988, pp.491-492.

²⁰⁰ LAMBERTON, 1988, p.493.

²⁰¹ ROBINSON, 2012, p.250.

²⁰² 9.31.4.

grove. In fact, the Muses are usually found within the temple of another divinity as guests. At Olympia, for example, they had a *temenos* and an altar, and a *ιερον* both at Sparta and Troezen²⁰³. Roux (1954, p.39) notes that '*le mouseion est un «lieu-dit», consacré aux Muses; le caractere religieux n'en était point nécessairement marqué par l'érection d'un temple*'. Indeed, the presence of a temple of the Muses in the center of Thespiiai is an anomaly, as there are almost no temples of the Muses known²⁰⁴. This speaks to the significance of the cult of the Muses in Thespiiai and what it meant for the greater Greek world: Thespiiai was the center of the cult, hosting the *Mouseia*, controlling the Helicon and its Valley, and having a temple in the urban center. Unfortunately, this temple has not been properly studied nor excavated, and thus there is no exact chronology, which would tremendously help ascertain the role of the cult of the Muses in Thespian identity. It is most definitely, independent of its chronology, a symbol of the link between the cult of the Muses and Thespian politics, that is reflected in the previously discussed instrumentalization of the *Mouseia* and in the building of its intentional history.

Intentional history in Thespiiai and the Valley of the Muses:

There is an undoubtable change in the relationship between Thespiiai and the Muses starting in the fourth century until the establishment of the pentaeteric stephanitic *Mouseia* at the end of the third century BCE. This has been discussed previously as the financial push the city received under the patronage of Sparta, which prompted the monumentalization of the *Mouseion*. This sacred space had presumably existed in the Valley since its inception, with a rustic cult mimicking those in other *Mouseion*, but with the added element of Hesiod, who most likely had some sort of presence in the Valley and turned it into a place of remembrance as well as a sacred space. I believe this is what propelled the development of the *Mouseion* as a memory theatre and a crucial scenery in which Thespiians developed and modified their own identity and intentional history.

Even if by the fourth century Thespiiai had already been an active participant in wars and conflicts, it was not until the latter fifth century and early fourth century when

²⁰³ ROUX, 1954, p.41.

²⁰⁴ ROUX, 1954, p.39.

its identity was threatened. Thespiiai had to rebuild itself after the disaster at Thermopylae, and accepted people from other poleis who already had their own identities well defined and who might have clashed with the Thespian one. Moreover, the continued presence of Sparta in the city might have also sparked a sense of oppression in the Thespian populace. The elites then decided to create a Thespian identity that both assimilated the new groups and elevated the autochthonous one. Presumably, the cult of the Muses was the strongest cultural marker in the *polis*, and as such, it became the center of this social identity development.

It was the role of the *polis* to mediate its relationship with the gods²⁰⁵, and sources like the leases of sacred land could indicate a wish of the Thespian elites to both develop the sanctuary and do it while being as financially independent from the Spartans as possible. It has been previously stated that there were different political factions in the city that did not see eye to eye; they must have also been interested in the influence Sparta had on Thespian identity. The establishment and eventual upgrade of the Mouseia was the culmination of this conscious effort in the building of common traditions and identity for all the Thespiians. Moreover, it is possible that the Thespian elite saw the figure of Hesiod as another element to include in the building of their new intentional history and could have propelled the elevation and discussion of the author throughout the Greek world. Once the Romans took over, they modified the symbolical locale that had become the Mouseia to include political manifestations that sided them with their new rulers, most likely also as a response to threat.

Therefore, Thespiiai adapted itself throughout its history to survive both physically and as a group with a common identity. The Helicon and the Valley of the Muses proved to be crucial for the construction and modification of their own intentional history through tradition, symbols, and artifacts that reinforced their perception.

EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THESPIAI AND ITS MUSES IN THE REST OF THE GREEK WORLD:

²⁰⁵ OSBORNE, 2007, p.247.

The exogenous perception of Thespiai was most likely shaped by the Mouseia and their development during the Hellenistic era. As previously discussed, Hellenistic monarchs such as Philetairos I, Ptolomeus IV or Arsinoe III deemed the site important enough to have dedications in the sanctuary or sponsor the games. The lists of victors also give us important information regarding the popularity and knowledge of the Mouseia around the Greek and later Roman world. Even if most of the winners listed are Thespian or Boeotian, there are examples of winners as far as Macedonia²⁰⁶, Cyzicus²⁰⁷, Iasos²⁰⁸, or Tripolitania²⁰⁹. Despite its longevity and apparent success, the core of its winners still appears to originate from around Hellas well into Roman times.

There are some inscriptions that help illustrate the perception of the Mouseion of Thespiai in the greater Greek world. For instance, the previously mentioned *IG XI*, 4 1061 from Delos notes the involvement of *technitai* in the games since very early times after their upgrade to stephanitic status. We can attest, therefore, that *technitai* deemed the games important enough to get involved with them since at least the early second century BCE, and that by that time the Mouseia had reached Delos, a huge milestone given its importance within the Greek cosmos.

Moreover, *ISCH I* 1, a *psephismata* dated to the middle of the third century BCE, was found in Istros, a colony of Miletus off the coast of the Black Sea, in modern Romania. In it, Diogenes, an *euergetes*, donates a statue to the local Mouseion, makes a sacrifice to the Muses, and gives 300 drachmas for the maintaining of the cult itself. The Mouseia are also briefly mentioned. Given the early date and the remoteness of Istros, this presupposes a deep influence of Thespiai in this region from at least the Classical Age, if not earlier. This is also reinforced by *Milet VI* 3 1293, which sees a dedication to the Mouseia and to the Muses by Philinos in Miletus: Φιλῖνος Ποσειδωνίου / Μουσεῖα τὰ ἐν Θεσπιαῖς / Διούσῳι καὶ Μούζ[αις]. Just as the previous epigraph, it is dated to the third century BCE, more precisely the latter half. The inclusion of the Mouseia in this inscription is notable, as they had not yet been made stephanitic, and thus precludes a sizeable reach and reputation before having the public support of Hellenistic monarchs and panhellenic sanctuaries. Finally, *Notion* 16 consists of a victor list off the coast of Anatolia, near Smyrna. It seems that Anatolia was the most popular origin of the

²⁰⁶ *IThesp.* 167, l.8: ‘Δαμάτιος Ἡγησάνδρου Μακεδόν ἀπὸ Θετταλονίκ[ης]’

²⁰⁷ *IThesp.* 172, l.20: ‘Περιγένης Ἡ[ρα]κλείδου Κυζοκηνός

²⁰⁸ *IThesp.* 179, l.18-19: ‘κιτηαριστῆς Χρυσάων Φιλερήβου Ἴασεύς’

²⁰⁹ *IThesp.* 180, l.18: ‘Ἰουλιανὸς Τριπολείτης’

Mouseia winners outside of Hellas itself, which can be explained by the frequent contact between Mainland Greece and Anatolia throughout all Ancient Greek history. A further study of the geographical distribution of the found religious locales consecrated to the Muses would probably find a correspondence between the interest in the Mouseia and the extension of the cult to the Muses.

Given its notoriety through Greece, it is probable that other Mouseia were modeled after Thespiai's, especially from the fourth century onwards. Pythagoras, for example, included the worship to the Muses in his principles, and he and his followers had a *ἱερόν Μουσῶν*²¹⁰ in the academy that would probably have consisted of an altar, a sacred grove, or a combination of both spaces. Nevertheless, when the philosopher died, his disciples turned his house into a temple to Demeter, and only consecrated the adjacent *στενωπός* to the Muses²¹¹. They had the opportunity to create a temple to the Muses but continued with the tradition of sheltering the Muses in temples to other divinities. This idea could also illustrate the possibility of a sort of hierarchy within the cult to the Muses in which only Thespiai was allowed to have a temple. Without sufficient evidence and a more in-depth study, however, this can only be deemed as a conjecture.

Moreover, the most well-known *Mouseion* in the Ancient World, that of Alexandria, also lacked a proper temple, and consisted of a collection of art and a space for thinkers to express their thoughts – just like the sacred grove and the Mouseia *agon* attracted artists, philosophers, and other personalities to grace upon the art collection of this *temenos*. Roux (1954, p.41) even ponders that '*Ne peut-on penser que le Musée des Lagides, comme les musées de Platon et de Théophraste, s'inspirait d'un modèle célèbre, celui de l'Hélicon, avec lequel nous savons que les souverains d'Égypte entretenaient d'étroites relations d'amitié?*' Given the important role of the Egyptian monarchs on the financing of the Mouseia, this idea does not seem farfetched at all, and I believe that this is quite possible.

Other *Mouseia* like the one in the Academy and Lykeion in Athens²¹² were also most likely inspired by Thespiai's sanctuary. As Robinson (2012, p.232) proclaims, 'By the High Hellenistic period, the Thespian Mouseia had risen to a level of some prestige

²¹⁰ ROUX, 1954, p.39.

²¹¹ ROUX, 1954, p.39.

²¹² ROBINSON, 2012, p.232.

and recognition around the Greek World'. Given the evidence we have discussed, this is quite an uncontroversial statement. On an official level, Hellenistic kings and other panhellenic sanctuaries took interest in the Mouseion of Thespiai and actively engaged and supported it. It sat at a very accessible location for any Greek who would want to travel to the site, be it to compete in the Mouseia, assist as a viewer, or pay their respects to the Muses. Finally, it probably inspired the creation of further *Mouseia* and, through the Library of Alexandria, the concept of a museum in the modern sense, giving it an immensely long shadow in history that can be traced down to today.

CONCLUSIONS:

Ever since the Ascran poet laid down his proem in the *Theogony*, the Helicon forever became associated with the Muses. It was Thespiai, after seizing control of the area, who elevated this connection into the realm of religion and later of identity. Cult was first, with a strong rustic nature and the spirit of Hesiod always being present, looming throughout the valley throughout the centuries. When Thespiai saw its identity in danger, in the latter half of the Classical Age, they started constructing a collective memory based on this locale, commencing its monumentalization and turning it into a memory theatre and a model for future Museums. Once the Mouseia *agon* were established, cult activity started to become relegated to a second place, and the valley became the political, economic, and social center of the *polis*, remaining as such until its progressive fade at the twilight of the Roman Age.

Thespians used the valley to survive as a *polis* and gain power, but they also elevated the Mouseion to the size of the grandest of sanctuaries, and it became equated with the most illustrious panhellenic spaces, as well as celebrated by the greatest of monarchs and emperors. With time, Thespiai became indistinguishable from the Valley, and they both became a fascinating symbiotic phenomenon that I hope to have aptly ascertained during these pages. I would like to finish quoting the originator of all that has been discussed above, Hesiod himself:

‘Let us begin to sing from the Heliconian Muses, who possess the great and holy mountain of Helicon²¹³...’

²¹³ Hes.*Theog.* 1-2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Primary sources:

HERODOTUS, *The Persian Wars, Volume III: Books 5-7*. A. D. Godley (trans.). 1922. Loeb Classical Library 119. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

HESIOD, *Teogonía. Edición Bilingüe*. Emilio Suárez de la Torre (ed. & trans.). 2014. Clásicos Dykinson. Madrid: Dykinson.

HESIOD, *Theogony. Works and Days. Testimonies*. Glenn W. Most (ed. & trans.). 2018. Loeb Classical Library 57. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

HOMER, *The Iliad, Volume I: Books 1-12*. A.T. Murray (trans.). William F. Wyatt (rev.). 1924. Loeb Classical Library 170. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

XENOPHON, *Hellenica, Volume II: Books 5-7*. Carleton L. Brownson (trans.). 1921. Loeb Classical Library 89. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Secondary sources:

ALCOCK, SUSAN E. (2001) 'The Reconfiguration of Memory in the Eastern Roman Empire', in **ALCOCK, SUSAN E; D'ALTROY, TERENCE; MORRISON, KATHLEEN D.; SINOPOLI, CARLA M.** (eds.) *Empires. Perspectives from Archaeology and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ASSMANN, JAN (2011) *Cultural memory and early civilization. Writing, remembrance, and political imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ASSMANN, JAN & CZAPLICKA, JOHN (1995) 'Memory and Cultural Identity', *New German Critique*, 65, pp. 125-133.

BAÑOS ÁLVAREZ, ANA JOCABED (2001) *Inspiración de la Musa: la solución a un enigma [Inspiration of the Muse: a solution to an enigma]*. Master's Thesis: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León.

BEAULIEU, MARIE-CLAIRE (2004) 'L'héroïsation du poète Hésiode en Grèce ancienne' ['The Heroization of the poet Hesiod in Ancient Greece'], in *Kernos* 17, pp.103-117.

BIARD, GUILLAUME; KALLIONTZIS, YANNIS; CHARAMI, ALEXANDRA (2017) 'La base des Muses au sanctuaire de l'Hélicon' ['The sanctuary of the Muses at the sanctuary of Helicon'], in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 141.2, pp.697-752.

BINTLIFF, JOHN (1996) 'The archaeological survey of the Valley of the Muses and its significance for Boeotian History', in *Recherches et Rencontres* 7, pp.193-210.

BINTLIFF, JOHN; FARINETTI, EMERI; SLAPŠAK, BOŽIDAR; SNODGRASS, ANTHONY (2017) *Boeotia Project, Volume II: The City of Thespiiai. Survey at a complex urban site*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (2014a) 'Identity Process Theory: clarifications and elaborations', in JASPAL, RUSI & BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (eds.) *Identity Process Theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (2014b) 'Identity and social representations', in JASPAL, RUSI & BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (eds.) *Identity Process Theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CHRYSSOCHOOU, XENIA (2014) 'Identity processes in culturally diverse societies: how is cultural diversity reflected in the self?', in JASPAL, RUSI & BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (eds.) *Identity Process Theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FOXHALL, LIN & LURAGHI, NINO (2010) 'Introduction', in FOXHALL, LIN; GEHRKE, HANS-JOACHIM; LURAGHI, NINO (eds.) *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

FOUCART, PAUL-FRANÇOIS (1885) 'Inscriptions de Béotie' ['Beotian Inscriptions'], in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 9, pp.403-433.

GEHRKE, HANS-JOACHIM (2001) 'Myth, History, and Collective Identity: Uses of the Past in Ancient Greece and Beyond', in LURAGHI, NINO (ed.) *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

GEHRKE, HANS-JOACHIM (2010) 'Greek representations of the past', in FOXHALL, LIN; GEHRKE, HANS-JOACHIM; LURAGHI, NINO (eds.) *Intentional History: Spinning Time in Ancient Greece*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

GRIMAL, PIERRE (1951) *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine* [*Dictionary of the Greek and Roman Mythology*]. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

HALBWACHS, MAURICE (1952) *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* [*The social framework of memory*]. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

HALL, JONATHAN M. (2007), 'The creation and expression of identity: Greek', in **ALCOCK, SUSAN E. & OSBORNE, ROBIN** (eds.) *Classical Archaeology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

JAMOT, PIERRE (1926) 'Fouilles de Thespies et de l'hieron des muses de l'Hélicon. Inscriptions: Dédicaces de caractère religieux ou honorifique, bornes de domaines sacrés' ['Findings of Thespiiai and the hieron of the Muses in Helicon. Inscriptions: Religious and honorific dedications, markers of sacred dominions', in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 50, pp. 383-462.

LAMBERTON, ROBERT (1988) 'Plutarch, Hesiod, and the Mouseia of Thespiiai', in *Illinois Classical Studies*, vol. 13, n°. 2, pp.491-504.

LARSON, STEPHANIE (2018) 'Seventh-century Material Culture in Boiotia', in **LONEY, ALEXANDER C. & SCULLY, STEPHEN** (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Hesiod*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MALMER, MARI HEINSDATTER (2011), *The Emergence of Ancient Tegea: Political Unity, Synoikism and Identity in a Greek Polis*. Master's Thesis: University of Oslo.

MCAULEY, ALEXANDER J. (2015) *Basking in the Shadow of Kings: Local Culture in the Hellenistic Greek mainland*. Doctoral Thesis: McGill University.

MOSCOVICI, S. (1988) 'Notes towards the description of social representations', in *Journal of Social Psychology*, 18, pp.211-250.

MÜLLER, CHRISTEL (2017) 'The Roman fate of Thespiiai (171 BC – fourth century AD)', in **BINTLIFF, JOHN; FARINETTI, EMERI; SLAPŠAK, BOŽIDAR; SNODGRASS, ANTHONY** (eds.) *Boeotia Project, Volume II: The City of Thespiiai. Survey at a complex urban site*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

OPPONG, STEWARD HARRISON (2013) 'Religion and Identity', in *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, Vol. 3, No. 6.

OSBORNE, ROBIN (2007) 'Cult and Ritual. The Greek World', in ALCOCK, SUSAN E. & OSBORNE, ROBIN (eds.) *Classical Archaeology*. Oxford: Blackwell.

OSBORNE, ROBIN (2017) 'Thespiai: the epigraphic city down to 171 BC', in BINTLIFF, JOHN; FARINETTI, EMERI; SLAPŠAK, BOŽIDAR; SNODGRASS, ANTHONY (eds.) *Boeotia Project, Volume II: The City of Thespiai. Survey at a complex urban site*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

PASCUAL GONZÁLEZ, JOSÉ (1996) 'La Confederación Beocia a principios del siglo IV a.C.: I. La distribución territorial de las poleis' ['The Boeotian Confederacy at the start of the 4th century BCE: I. The distribution of the poleis'], in *Gerión*, 14, pp.109-142.

PEHRSON, SAMUEL & REICHER, STEPHEN (2014) 'On the meaning, validity and importance of the distinction between personal and social identity: a social identity perspective on Identity Process Theory', in JASPAL, RUSI & BREAKWELL, GLYNIS M. (eds.) *Identity Process Theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ROBINSON, BETSEY A. (2012) 'Mount Helikon and the Valley of the Muses: the production of a sacred space', in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 25, pp.227-259.

ROESCH, PAUL (1965) *Thespies et la Confédération Béotienne [Thespiai and the Boeotian Confederation]*. Paris: Boccard.

ROESCH, PAUL (1982) *Études Béottiennes [Boeotian Studies]*. Paris: Boccard.

ROESCH, PAUL (2007) *Les Inscriptions de Thespies [The Inscriptions of Thespiai]*. Lyon: HISOMA.

ROUX, GEORGES (1954) 'Le Val des Muses, et les Muses chez les auteurs anciens' ['The Valley of the Muses, and the Muses in ancient authors'], in *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, V.78, pp.22-48.

SCHACHTER, ALBERT (1986) *Cults of Boiotia 2: Herakles to Poseidon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

SCHACHTER, ALBERT (2016) *Boiotia in Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SZELAĞ, ŁUKASZ (2021) 'The Epigraphic Curve in Boiotia', in NAWOTKA, KRZYSZTOF (ed.) *Epigraphic Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity*, pp.31-51. London and New York: Routledge.

WALLACE, PAUL W (1974) 'Hesiod and the Valley of the Muses', in *Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 15, 1, pp.5-24.