

Theseus, the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion. A case of bipolarity in Athens of the fifth Century BC.

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Introduction

The Ancient logographer Isocrates tells us in his encomium or appraisal of Helen of Sparta (Isoc. 18-20) written around 370 BC about how the Athenian hero Theseus was so impressed by the beauty of Helen that he was unable to show any restraint and abducted and raped her to satisfy his lust even though she still was a child. This deplorable act of immorality was, however, mended or even neutralized a few lines later when Isocrates compared Theseus with Herakles

The fairest praise that I can award to Theseus is this – that he, a contemporary of Herakles, won a fame which rivalled his. For they not only equipped themselves with similar armour, but followed the same pursuits, performing deeds that were worthy of their common origin. For being in birth the sons of brothers, the one of Zeus, the other of Poseidon, they cherished also kindred ambitions; for they alone of all who have lived before our time made themselves champions of human life. It came to pass that Herakles undertook perilous labours more celebrated and more severe, Theseus those more useful, and to the Greeks of more vital importance [Isoc. 23-24].

This sudden appraisal of a man whom we had just been told was a rapist is astonishingly odd. Perhaps Isocrates knew nothing about the origins of the abduction-story and perhaps he did not even care to find out from where it came. By the time he wrote this encomium he was a grown up man who evidently had learnt at his mother's knee that Theseus had achieved greatness and that the tale was just one of many colourful episodes in the life of Theseus. He was probably unable to explain how the Athenian hero, who was so useful "to the Greeks" and had surpassed Herakles by accomplishing deeds "of more vital importance", could show this kind of contrasts. He probably knew his Homer very well and took for granted the implicit interpretation of Theseus' and Perithoos' accounts in the *Odyssey* which placed the story in the distant time of the heroic age (Hom.*Od.* 11.631). What he probably did not know

is when exactly the *Odyssey* had been written and how to relate in time this literary reference to the works of art and literature that obviously paralleled Theseus with Herakles. For he would have understood that it had passed around two hundred years in the written and the material record from the time Theseus abducted Helen and the time when the hero had performed the deeds that helped him to outdone Herakles.

This work concerns itself in great part with this topic: the myth of Theseus and its transformation in works of art and literature throughout time. The real subject matter of this thesis is, however, to elucidate how this evolution gave rise to such a prominence and importance of the hero as to be depicted in the Ionic friezes of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion and in the Hephaisteion in Athens in the middle of the fifth century BC. These temples have so much in common that they are assumed to have been built by the same architect: their construction work started nearly at the same time, their Ionic friezes are placed in a very much alike manner and they share so many architectonical similarities that I contend that this gives enough grounds to suspect that this is more than a coincidence. Because of the facts that construction work on both of them started almost simultaneously and that their location in the region of Attica places one of them at the centre of the seat of government and the other at its furthestmost point, I argue that their planning and architectural program were conceived as to represent them as two poles that could be tied symbolically together, so that the city-centre was spiritually connected with the Aegean Sea.

By using and adapting the concept of two interconnected poles, or bipolarity, by the French scholar François de Polignac (de Polignac:1995) I intend to demonstrate that Theseus and his prominence in the sculptural program of the extra-urban sanctuary at Sounion act as the spiritual bridge that connects the temple of Poseidon with the Hephaisteion, the interurban sanctuary in Athens. I propose that the mechanisms of this bipolarity offer a plausible interpretation of how fifth-century Athenians conceptualized the myth of Theseus as an emblem with which to bestow the temple of Poseidon with the authority to state territorial claims of their city over the Aegean Sea.

Research Problem and Aim of the Study

The aim of this work is to get insight in how the myth of Theseus could be manipulated and adjusted to support political ambitions of Athenian individuals or by the state itself. The topographical region encompassed in this research is mainly the territory of Attica and the

sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi and its chronological extent of time comprises primarily the sixth and fifth century BC.

The central focus of the research problem is the analysis of the history-myth of Theseus and how it evolved during the transition from the Archaic to the Classical period. In this respect, I deem that it is fundamental to present and review the most relevant written sources and the material evidence. I then proceed to examine both media in depth to try to elucidate how different versions in the written record and in visual media contradict or complement each other. In this way, the interpolation of both media will show additions and adaptations in the episodes in the life of the hero that can fill in any gap of knowledge we may find in them. This will allow us, on the other hand, to trace and date with some certainty the different facets in the evolution of the legend of the hero. The purpose is to find a way to expose how the history-myth of Theseus was adjusted and modified according to the socio-political and religious changes that took place during the successions of events that marked the transition from tyranny to democracy and to empire in Athens. Through this research, I attempt to show that the growing presence of Theseus in works of art of the period encompassed in this thesis culminates in the deliberate choice of his depiction on the Ionian friezes of the temples on the Athenian Agora and at Sounion. This I argue is not just due to an obvious election of a conventional decorating motif thought to display the hero's line of ancestry in the case of the temple of Poseidon, but that his presence in both temples was consciously used to convey the temples with a political message. How to elucidate the meaning of this message is a question that this work tries to explain.

Special attention is given first to the examination of Attic vase painting and later to the sculptural programs in the Athenian treasury at Delphi, the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion. The analysis of the imagery displayed in both media is essential to understand how the intended use of themes and iconography on vases, friezes and other architectural sculpture establish bipolarity between the Athenian Agora and Sounion.

Research History and Methodological Framework

The myth of Theseus and its political significance in Athens of the sixth and fifth century BC has been vastly explored by many scholars (Walker 1995:1-3). It seems that the myth gained force and popularity under the tyrant Peisistratos in the Late Archaic period around 546-528 BC (Connor 1970:143-152) and while some elements of the myth were first exploited by the tyrant as a propagandistic instrument for acquiring and maintaining power, they became as the

century progressed part of a belief system that was taken over by the whole polis (Boardman 1991:87; Carpenter 1991:160; Connor 1970:143-152). Theseus was clearly reinvented as a hero during the last decade of the sixth century BC when a cycle of deeds suddenly appears in Attic vase painting in fully developed form (Boardman 2007:226, 2010: 228, 2011:87; Brommer 1982:73; Carpenter 2006:160; Edwards 1970:33; Mills 1997:19; Schefold 1946:89; von den Hoff 2010:164; Walker 1995:13). The image of the hero acquired from then on an ideal and consistent standard of conduct that continued to evolve in the course of the fifth century BC (Mills 1997:25). Works of art and literature represented him as a great political leader and king until he finally appeared as a humane and articulate representative of democracy in the last quarter of the century (Davie 1982:28).

In spite of this ideal representation of the hero, by the middle of the century Athens had become an abusive power that coerced the members of the Delian League into financing, among other things, the embellishment of the monumentalization program of the city and its countryside (Plut. *Per.* 12.1-12.7). The temple of Poseidon at Sounion and the Hephaisteion in Athens, were also part of this building project, and in my opinion, the symbology of Theseus and the political and economic implications of the construction of these sanctuaries have escaped the eye of scholars. I propose that the concept of bipolarity of François de Polignac helps to explain how the commissioned and intended use of Theseus in the sculptural program of these two temples can be perceived as a vehicle with which to send a deliberate propagandistic and imperialistic message. de Polignac's approach (de Polignac:1995) focuses on mechanisms that sought to create social cohesion and common identity between communities in or around the Dark Ages. He asserts that a sanctuary is usually (if not always) built to demarcate the territory of a polis to establish trade networks and to ensure access to vital resources to guarantee its subsistence. In this thesis, I adapt this principle to the Athens of the middle of the fifth century BC. My efforts are directed to examine and prove how the literary and material evidence echo the religious, sociopolitical and historical factors that brought about the bipolar connection of these two temples.

By attesting the proliferation of visual representations of Theseus in sculpture and vase painting at the end of the sixth century BC in Athens it is possible to discern the new gained popularity of the hero. An analysis of the themes and the prominence of their representations will help to understand how motifs that used to depict him in acts of deplorable moral value start to lose popularity or to be reinvented. This will furthermore prove how Theseus began to be disassociated from his archaic image and how he was intentionally turned into an ideal representative of Athenian prowess and conduct in the fifth century BC. The analysis of the

literary and material evidence will provide several indications of how the tradition evolved and changed concurrently with the political life of Athens and readiness to challenge Sparta's hegemony of the Greek world. The analysis of the archaeological evidence will point out that the interplay of bipolarity in Athens did not only serve the purpose of holding the population of Attica together, but that it also helped to conceptualize the sanctuary complex at Sounion as a strategic location to state imperialistic claims over the Aegean Sea.

In this thesis, I would like to stress the importance of the work of Frank Brommer and his book *Theseus. Die Taten des griechischen Helden in der antiken Kunst und Literatur* (Brommer:1982) where he gives a full account of the literary and artistic evidence in existence of the Athenian hero at the time of its publication. The adventures of Theseus are presented one by one in a chronological order as they are attested in the literary sources. Brommer proceeds to review the material evidence, again, in a chronological order, and starts with the most abundant material, vase painting, and finishes with major art (sculptures or wall paintings). He then concludes each chapter with short commentaries and a summary of the survey. Brommer does not begin, however, with the earliest tales, but with those that comprise the so-called myth-cycle, and relegates instead the earlier ones to the third part of the book. Brommer does not put forth a deep examination of arguments and ideas of other scholars and the book is clearly intended as a catalogue of the literary sources and artistic representations of Theseus. Major theories and concepts in the research history of the myth are only mentioned in brief discussions and commentaries.

I consider that this method of presenting the evidence is very important for my research because it allowed me to get a quick insight into the abundant works of art related to the myth. Since the available archaeological data is for the most part securely dated, it is possible to explore variations over time in the design and themes of the legend in vase painting and architectural sculpture. This again allows the implementation of a comparative analysis in order to examine the evolution of the myth through the changes and adaptations it suffered over time. In this way, we can make inferences about the role that Theseus played at certain times in Athens and how the adjustments of his myth were negotiated and exploited. Much of the comparative analysis presented here is thus based on the material compiled by Brommer and other scholars.

The chapters of this thesis adopt the convention presented by Brommer with the exception that I chose to follow a strict chronological order placing the earliest tales of the myth first. Chapter One begins with a brief introduction of the myth of Theseus to familiarise the reader with the legend and to prepare the field for the subsequent placement and

presentation of the stories in the chronological order of their actual appearance in the written sources. After they have been arranged according to their appearance in time, I proceed to examine the accounts of Theseus' exploits in the surviving written sources in order to reveal recognizable patterns in these episodes and in the description of the personality of the hero. The purpose is to detect any changes in the characterisation of Theseus that might disclose something about the artistic preferences of the time when they are interpolated with our knowledge of the sociopolitical developments of the city.

My analysis of the material evidence is on the other hand significantly based on the art historical approach of Ralf von den Hoff in his essays *Die Posen des Siegers. Die Konstruktion von Überlegenheit in attischen Theseusbildern des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (von den Hoff: 2001) and *Media for Theseus, or: The different Images of the Athenian Polis-hero* (von den Hoff:2010). In these essays, von den Hoff holds that the conception and impact of works of art presuppose the interplay between the creator of the image, its audience and their shared knowledge of the themes displayed in it. Since the stories about the heroes were an essential part of what the Greeks regarded as their past, and because this past was expressed in myths, the visual representations of these stories may have mirrored not only their oral and written accounts, but historical and social processes that promoted the conscious or unconscious construction of a reality. von den Hoff argues that these processes influenced the creation of specific themes and conventions in works of art that can be used to trace the sociopolitical state of the society that created them. That is why, when it comes to the examination of the body of the material evidence, vase painting provides the major contribution throughout this work being modestly followed by sculpture. von de Hoff's approach is applied throughout the whole thesis. In Chapter Three I draw much inspiration and make substantially use of the work of Richard Neer in his article *The Athenian Treasury at Delphi and the Material of Politics* (Neer:2004). His examination of the treasury and following discussion about the identity of its commissioners is mainly interpolated with the art historical analysis of von den Hoff and other scholars. Chapter Four gives a brief account of François de Polignac's (de Polignac:1995) concept of bipolarity of whom I owe the inspiration of my work and part of the title. I explain with more detail in this chapter how I adapt de Polignac's concept to my theory. The rest is devoted to the archaeological and art historical analysis of the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion in Athens. In the case of the former, it comprises descriptions by very early travellers to contemporary works as that of Iphigenia Leventi's article *Interpretations of the Ionic Frieze of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion* (Leventi:2009). What regards Chapter Four, I use the works of many scholars who have

devoted much research on this building and of whom I make reference whenever necessary. The results of the chapters and of the whole thesis is then summarized in the conclusion.

Chapter One - The Myth of Theseus

Many writers absorbed themselves with Theseus and the events of his life in Antiquity, but no unified narrative has survived until our days besides those composed in Hellenistic or Roman times (Brommer 1982:143; Edwards 1970:7). The two most notable accounts of the life of the Athenian hero are the one by the writer traditionally known as Apollodoros or Pseudo-Apollodoros in his work *The Library* or *Bibliotheca* (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.15.6 – 3.16.2; *Epit.* 1.1 – 1.24) and the one by Plutarch in his *Parallel lives of the Greeks and Romans* (Plut. *Thes.* 1-36.4). Both works include a life of Theseus composed of earlier material from other writers. Apollodoros' version is the shorter of the two and because it is part of a general handbook of myths, it lacks the coherent thread found in Plutarch's account. For this reason, Plutarch's *Theseus* is given more prominence in this introductory outline and the events in the life of the hero follow therefore the sequence he presents in his work. Some other writers will be considered and pointed out as well in the upcoming examination and discussion of the written sources to provide the reader with a fairly complete overview of the tales that comprises the corpus of the myth of Theseus. It is clear that Plutarch owes much of his knowledge about Theseus from the Atthidographers (Harding 2008:52), so that his and Apollodoros' accounts will be notably supplemented, where appropriate, with details from these and other sources. This is deemed necessary to give the reader a sense of how the legend was open to adaptations and changes to accommodate or exemplify how Athenian society wished to define itself throughout the period treated in this thesis.

The Life and Times of Theseus

Aegeus, the king of Athens and a descendant of Erechtheus, had no heir to his throne despite of having been married twice. Eager to find a solution to his problem he went to Delphi to consult the oracle, but did not get a clear answer as what he was supposed to do. He then decide to seek advice from king Pittheus of Troezen who persuaded him into having intercourse with his daughter Aethra. The same night they consummated this act, Aethra was also seduced by Poseidon, and she became thus impregnated with the seed of both of her lovers, Aegeus and Poseidon. Before Aegeus returned to Athens, he hid a pair of sandals and

a sword under a rock and instructed Aethra to take care of the child that was to be born and not to reveal to him who his father was until he could lift the rock and find what was hidden beneath it. The child should then proceed to travel to Athens to claim his inheritance. The years passed and Theseus grew under the protection of Aethra and Pittheus, and when the day came, when Theseus had become old and strong enough, he lifted the rock and collected the sandals and the sword. He then made the journey to Athens, but instead of choosing the safer seaway, he went on the dangerous route along the Saronic Gulf where he would encounter brigands who terrorised travellers on the road (Figure 1).

At Epidauros Theseus encountered the first of the brigands. His name was Periphetes and was famous for killing passers-by with an iron club. In the fight that followed Theseus disarmed Periphetes and paid him in his own coin by killing him with his own club. The second evildoer Theseus had to face was Sinis called Pityocampetes or “the Pine-bender” at the Isthmus of Corinth. Sinis used to tie travellers to one or two pine trees he had bent to the ground to catapult his victims to their death. Theseus, however, subdued Sinis and used the exact same method to eliminate him. The next stop on his journey was at Krommyon near Corinth where he fought and killed Phaia a fierce sow who was the offspring of Typhon and Echidna. The next bandit on the route was Skyron, a son of Pelops and Poseidon, who obstructed a narrow passage between the rocks and a cliff that fell sharply down to the sea. Skyron compelled travellers to wash his feet with their backs to the cliff, and as they did so, they were kicked by him off the rocks and into the sea, where they were devoured by a giant turtle. Theseus, who was not fooled by him, tossed him from the cliff and Skyron ended up suffering the same fate as his victims. Once he arrived at Eleusis, Theseus encountered Kerkyon, a man of incredible strength who killed travellers after forcing them to wrestle with him. Using skill rather than brute force Theseus overpowered Kerkyon in a wrestling match and killed him. The last of the brigands was Prokrustes, also known as “the Stretcher”, who offered hospitality to travellers at his home by the banks of the river Kephisos. Prokrustes invited them to lay on his bed and when the unfortunate travellers did so, he adjusted the sizes of his victims to match the size of the bed by cutting off the limbs of those who were too long and stretching the limbs of those who were too short. Theseus, nevertheless, did not fall into his trap and dispatched Prokrustes by the same means he used to kill his victims.

Theseus finally arrived at Athens and went to find his father Aegeus, who had married the witch Medea and did not know who he was. Medea, however, knew of Theseus and plotted to kill him because she wanted her own son Medus, to take the throne of Athens. She cautioned Aegeus against his own son and prompted him to order Theseus to get rid of a

savage bull at Marathon who had been a menace to farmers of the countryside. Theseus accepted the challenge and fought against the bull and succeeded in capturing it. He took it back to Athens where he paraded it through the city and then sacrificed it to Apollo. In her frustration, Medea persuaded Aegeus that the stranger was dangerous and had to be poisoned at a banquet that was to be held to celebrate his victory. At the banquet, Theseus was about to drink poisoned wine from a cup Aegeus had just handed him, when the king recognised the sword he had hidden under the rock many years back and stroke the cup from the hands of his son. Medea was then banished from Athens, and Theseus was from then on acknowledged as Aegeus' son and heir. By that time, however, Aegeus had lived in unease because his nephews, the fifty sons of Pallas, seeing that he did not have a successor, wanted his throne. Consequently, when Theseus was recognised as his son, his cousins revolted against him, but he defeated them in combat and dispersed them.

Soon after these events, Theseus learned of another sad situation that afflicted Athens. The city had to pay a tribute of seven youths and seven maidens to King Minos of Crete every ninth year. This tribute was a penalty that had been imposed by king Minos to avenge his son Androgeos who, according to some versions of the story, had been murdered by the Athenians. The boys and the girls were chosen from the noble families of Athens and were sent to Crete and shut up in a labyrinth designed by Daidalos to contain the Minotaur, the offspring of a union between king Minos wife Pasiphae and a bull. Theseus volunteered to be part of the tribute and set sail to Crete. On this voyage, Minos boasted of his divine progeny, and Theseus, not to be outdone, proclaimed that he too traced his descent to a god. The king then challenged him to retrieve a ring he had thrown into the sea, and with the help of the goddess Amphitrite, Theseus passed the test and proved to be the son of Poseidon.

On Crete, Ariadne, a daughter of Minos, fell in love with Theseus and gave him a ball of thread to unwind as he went through the labyrinth looking for the Minotaur. In that way, he would be able to find his way out after killing the beast. Theseus succeeded and he and his companions escaped with Ariadne on the ship that had brought them to Crete. On their voyage back, they arrived at the island of Naxos by nightfall. They decide to sleep on the beach, and as they were sleeping, the god Dionysos passed by and fell in love with Ariadne and carried her away. The journey continued on the next day and they made a stop at Delos where Theseus made sacrifices to Aphrodite and created a dance called "the Crane Dance" which he performed together with the youths.

In the meantime, king Aegeus waited eagerly for his son to return from Crete. It had been agreed between them that the ship carrying Theseus and rest of the youngsters should

hoist a white sail to notify him that Theseus had succeeded in liberating Athens from the tribute. If the quest had gone wrong, however, a black sail would signal the unlucky outcome. But Theseus, perhaps in his grief, had tragically forgotten to change the black sails of the ship and Aegeus, believing that his son had died, committed suicide by throwing himself from a cliff into the sea.

Theseus succeeded hence Aegeus as ruler and set about reforms to unify the inhabitants of all the villages and tribes of Attica into one citizen corpus. He created a constitution that was to guarantee freedom and equality for everyone while the king, Theseus himself, acted as a general of its army and guardian of its laws. The civic centre of this unified state was centralised on the acropolis and it was during this time of major changes that the city got the name by which it is known to us today, that is, Athens. A religious festival common to all the citizens of this new state, the Panathenaic festival, was then instituted.

Theseus became thus a good king of Athens and, on one version, went on to marry an Amazon called Antiope whom he was given in reward for helping Herakles on an expedition to the home of the Amazons on the Black Sea. As a result of Antiope's abduction, the Amazons laid siege to Athens to rescue her but were repulsed by the Athenians with Antiope fighting on the side of her lover against her own people. The fortunes of Antiope after the battle are told in many different versions, but by all accounts, Theseus and Antiope had a son whom they called Hippolytos. Theseus' next wife is Phaedra, who was another daughter of king Minos and sister of Ariadne and they had two sons they named Akamas and Demophon. The story continues with Phaedra falling in love with his stepson Hippolytos whom she tried to seduce. Hippolytos, however, rejected her and the resentful Phaedra told Theseus that he had attempted to rape her. Enraged, Theseus prayed to Poseidon for retribution against his son, and the god sent a bull from the sea that frightened the horses of the chariot Hippolytos was steering, causing them to flip it over, and killing him in the process. Phaedra, who was in love with him, hanged herself out of remorse.

The next stage in the life of Theseus comprises the adventures he and his friend Perithoos, the king of the Lapiths from northern Thessaly, undertook together. To begin with, they fought against the centaurs at the wedding of Perithoos. The centaurs, who had been invited to the celebration, were not accustomed to drinking wine. Consequently, they got drunk and tried to rape the Lapith women present at the wedding, including Hippodamia who was the bride. The Lapiths with the help of Theseus drove away the defeated centaurs. Later on, they made a vow that each one of them was going to marry a daughter of Zeus, and with this in mind, they went to Sparta and abducted Helen for Theseus. Since Helen was a child of

ten or twelve, she was not yet of marriageable age, and they left her in the town of Aphidna in Attica under the care of Theseus' mother Aethra. Helen's twin brothers, the Dioskouri, went to Attica to rescue her and took Aethra captive while Perithoos and Theseus were in the underworld trying to carry off the goddess Persephone as a bride for Perithoos. Aethra served Helen as a servant from then on and accompanied her to Troy where Akamas and Demophon, Theseus' sons, eventually rescued her. As for the expedition to Hades, the two heroes, Perithoos and Theseus, were punished for their hubris, and condemned to sit on thrones of rock from which they could not stand up. Herakles eventually rescued Theseus, but Perithoos was left to sit there forever.

In the absence of Theseus from Athens, Menestheus, another descendant of Erechtheus, seized the throne and agitated the people against their legitimate sovereign. The city entered a state of civil unrest and Theseus decided to send his two sons to safety in Euboea and reasoned that it would be best for Athens if he left and lived the rest of his days in exile. He then went to the island of Skyros where he thought that he was going to receive hospitality, but was, instead, lured up to the highest mountain top of the island, where King Lykomedes pushed him over a precipice to his death.

That was the end of Theseus, king of Athens. The city continued to be ruled by Menestheus who would later on make an appearance in the *Iliad* as commander in chief of the Athenian contingent in the Trojan War (Hom. 2.552).

Events in the life of Theseus also appear and are supplemented in Athenian tragedy from the last quarter of the fifth century BC where the plot was almost inspired by tales of mythology (Dugdale 2008:4). Episodes from the legends were retold and discussed as a metaphor for current political and cultural ideas of Athenian society. The poets would allude to current events or developments staged in the mythological past (Mills 1997:2; Zaidman 2008:109-110). Though these retellings did not properly form part of the myth, they did contribute to shape and enrich them. With that in mind, it is worth to look at the episodes in the life of Theseus accounted in the plays of Euripides and Sophokles.

In Euripides' *Suppliant Women* (Eur. *Supp.*) from around 420 BC, the king from Argos, Adrastus, asks Theseus for his assistance. Argos had invaded Thebes and suffered a defeat. Despite Greek custom, Thebes denies Argos to collect their fallen soldiers and their bodies remain unburied without a proper funeral. The mothers of the dead soldiers implore Aethra, Theseus' mother, for help. Aethra asks Theseus to come to Eleusis to listen to their request. When Theseus arrives, he finds out that the Argive expedition had been undertaken in

spite of unfavourable omens. At first, he vacillates, but then he takes pity on the mothers of the soldiers, and his own mother Aethra persuades him to help Argos. Theseus and Athens go to war against Thebes to claim Argos' dead warriors, they succeed and funerals are held for them. Theseus reminds the Argives of their debt to Athens, and Athena suddenly appears and forces Adrastus to pledge that Argos will never invade Athens.

In *Heracles* (Eur. HF) from around 416 BC, the hero is in the underworld to catch and bring back the monster Cerberus. In the meantime, his father Amphitryon, his wife Megara and their children have been sentenced to death by Lykos, the tyrant from Thebes. Herakles manages to arrive in time to save them, but the goddesses Iris and Madness caused him to kill his family in a frenzy. When Herakles is about to kill Amphitryon, Athena intervenes and puts him asleep. When he wakes up, his father reveals to him what he has done and Herakles in his grief wants to commit suicide. Theseus, who had been rescued from Hades by Herakles, arrives and offers him his hospitality in Athens, despite of the pollution Herakles has inflicted upon himself. The hero hesitates at first, but is finally convinced to go with Theseus to Athens, and asks his father to arrange the funeral of his dead family.

In Sophokles' *Oedipus at Kolonos* (Soph. OC) from 406 BC, the homonymous hero arrives at the village of Kolonos guided by his daughter Antigone. He had left Thebes after being treated badly by his two sons, Kreon and Polynices who now fight with each other for the throne of the city. At Kolonos, the villagers ask him to leave because his crimes have polluted him and because the ground is sacred to the Erinyes. Oedipus explains that he really is not guilty of his crimes because they were not done on purpose and without him knowing the truth about his parents. He then asks for king Theseus to come and listen to his request. The hero arrives and offers his sympathies to Oedipus. He makes Oedipus a citizen of Athens and leaves. Both Kreon and Polynices try to gain the favour of their father for the upcoming battle for Thebes because an oracle had spoken that the outcome of the feud depended on where their father was buried. Oedipus, however, both rejects and curses them for all the harm they had done to him. Kreon reveals that he had taken his two sisters, Antigone and Ismene, by force and that he is holding them as hostages to force Oedipus to come back to Thebes. Theseus comes back and the Athenians overpower the Thebans and free the two sisters. In his gratitude, Oedipus promises to give an important gift to Athens and asks Theseus to take care of his daughters. He then tells Theseus that he is the only person who can know the place where he was to be buried and asks him to pledge not to reveal the secret to anyone. Theseus respects Oedipus will and explains to his daughters that he cannot let them grieve for their

father at his tomb because he is bound to a pledge. He also knows that by keeping his pledge Athens would be free from harm forever.

This concludes this short presentation of the life and times of Theseus. As it has been already mentioned, this selected outline mostly follows the accounts of Theseus as told by Plutarch and Apollodoros. The reader be aware that this is a subjective selection from an extensive pool of sources put in a selected order by the author of this thesis. The purpose of this outline is to present a simple chronological overview to simplify the examination of the main episodes in the myth of Theseus. The coming analysis does not respect the sequence of events that has been presented here, but mainly follows the development of the myth from its earliest representations in works of literature and art by setting the written sources in the context of their time. Since this material is vast, it has been complemented with additional details from other sources to facilitate a comparative analysis of the different versions of the legend. The discussion that will result from this examination will show that the development of the myth is strongly connected with the characteristic evolution of epic tradition, but most importantly, with the political life and aspirations of Athens.

The Myth of Theseus in the Written Record

The Earliest Tales

The earliest surviving references from the myth of Theseus are from the eighth and seventh centuries BC (Brommer 1982: 35-114; Harding 2008:52; Walker 1995:13), and the adventures that were commonly told in works of art and literature down to the fifth century BC were the abduction of Ariadne, Helen and Persephone, his encounter with the Minotaur, and the Centauromachy (Carpenter 2006:160; Edwards 1970:26-27; Schefold 1946:65; Walker 1995:13). In addition to these stories, the episodes with the Marathonian bull, the abduction of Antiope and the resulting Amazonomachy are the last stories that comprise the body of single exploits that already existed without any particular connection with each other before the apparition of the adventures along the Saronic Gulf (Brommer 1982: 93).

Theseus and the Minotaur

To begin with, the fight between Theseus and the Minotaur is the oldest exploit of the hero in the written record. (Brommer 1982: 35-64; Harding 2008:59; Mills 1997:13-18).

According to Plutarch (Plut. *Thes.* 20.1-20.2), Hesiod had already written some verses about how Theseus had abandoned Ariadne on the island of Naxos, and how the tyrant Peisistratos had made these verses removed from his work. If Pausanias sources are reliable, that would place our first literary reference of this story in the eighth or seventh century BC. Regardless of the credibility of this anecdote, the story remains the earliest one as it does appear with certainty for the first time in fragment 206 of Sappho (Walker 1995:16) which situates it at the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth century BC (Brommer 1982:35-151). The theme accounts for almost half of all the artistic representations of Theseus with around three hundred Attic black figure vases and about other hundred representations in other media. The high occurrence and spread of this theme in visual media makes it one of the most represented tales of mythology in Ancient Greece (Brommer 1982:37).

The abduction of Helen

In the case of Helen, the date of the earliest literary source has to be placed somewhere between the eighth and the seventh century BC as well. This is because Theseus' mother Aethra is mentioned as one of the servants of Helen in Homer (*Il.* 3.144), and her appearance in this poem hence presupposes the existence of the whole tale of the abduction and the rescue of Helen in Aphidna (Brommer 1982:93). We find references to other early literary sources in Pausanias (Paus. 1.41.4), where he tells that Alkman wrote a poem on the Dioskouri in which he told that they occupied Athens and carried into captivity Aethra, during the hero's absence. This reference can thereby be fixed to the second half of the seventh century BC. Pausanias (Paus. 2.22.26) gives another reference, but this time to a work belonging to Stesichoros and another one to Pindar (Brommer 1982:93). Herodotos also writes about the invasion of the Dioskouri (Hdt. 9.73) and so does Isokrates (Isoc. 10.18).

The Abduction of Persephone

When it comes to the abduction of Persephone, the oldest literary mention is the one we find in Pausanias (Paus. 10.28.2) where he tells of one of Polygnotos' painting and how the painter followed the convention of the tale as described in an old poem written by Hesiod. Theseus and Perithoos are also present in line 631 of Book 11 of the *Odyssey* (Hom.*Od.* 11.631). As regards the graphic representations of the legend, they do not begin earlier than the literary sources. Instead, they begin to appear in the middle of the sixth century BC and they originate in the Peloponnese (Brommer 1982:98).

The Centauromachy

In the matter of the Centauromachy, the earliest evidence we have that associates Theseus with the Lapiths is in the *Iliad* Book 1 (Hom. *Il.* 1.265). In a speech, Nestor recalls the Lapiths

whom he himself had joined in their fight against the Centaurs when he was younger (Walker 1995:4). Brommer (1982:104), however, holds the opinion that this reference is not reliable because it appears to be an interpolation from a line in one of the unconfirmed poems attributed to Hesiod. Thereby, the earliest irrefutable direct connection of Theseus with the Centauromachy comes from the end of the fifth or the beginning of the fourth century BC in Isokrates *Helen* (Isoc. 10.26). When it comes to the visual arts, however, the earliest representation of Theseus in the Centauromachy is from around 570 BC in the François vase where he is actually missing and where not even his full name is preserved. The vase proves, nonetheless, that this is one of the earliest exploits of the hero (Brommer 1982:105).

The last two of the feats that make their first appearance in art and literature as part of “the earliest” tales in the myth are his adventure with the Bull of Marathon in the middle of the sixth century and the abduction of Antiope around 520 BC (Walker 1995:13-14). Despite of their distance from the others in time, Theseus still presents the typical traits of a hero from the heroic age, and his image has, somewhat, not changed. These exploits do not show any particular innovation in the personality of the Athenian hero, inasmuch as they still characterized him as a daredevil with an ambiguous sense of morality towards women.

The Marathonian bull

Theseus and the episode with the Marathonian bull appears for the first time in written records in a fragment belonging to Sophokles’ play *Aegeus* (Soph. frag. 25, Pearson 1917:21). The nearest source in time is from Isokrates (Isoc. 10.25) and this definitely places the first references of the legend in the fifth century BC. The version that tells that the Marathonian bull is the same Cretan bull that Herakles defeated comes from Hellenistic times and is reported by several authors (Brommer 1982:27).

The Abduction of Antiope

As far as Antiope is concerned, many sources tell about her abduction, but there are no consensus about how it happened or how her death came about at the battle to repel the Amazonian invasion (Brommer 1982:110). Plutarch alone enumerates many conflicting versions of the story from different sources. In some of them, it was said that Theseus had taken part with Herakles in an expedition to the Black Sea to fight the Amazons, and that Antiope was given to him by Herakles as a gift for rendered services. Plutarch, however, sustained the opinion that Theseus abducted Antiope in a campaign he organised on his own account (Plut. *Thes.* 26.1-27.6). Since Plutarch based in part his account of this story on Pherecydes, among others, the earliest literary evidence of the tale comes from the sixth century BC. This presumption seems to be confirmed by the virtually proliferation of Attic

vases depicting this theme around the same time between 520 and 490 BC Boardman 1982:8; Walker 1995:26. In addition to the Attic vases, which comprise the majority of the vessels with this theme, there are some vases from Eretria, Keos and Italy as well, and they all illustrate the abduction as an act done by Theseus and Theseus alone (Brommer 1982:112-114).

Analysis of the earlier tales

Thus far, we have been dealing with the earlier myths of Theseus and we have set them in the corresponding chronological order of their appearance in the written records. What all of these episodes have in common is that, with few exceptions, they mostly take place in Attica (Walker 1995:13) and that the picture of Theseus that presents itself to us is no different from that of other heroes of the heroic age. They often share the characteristics of being courageous fighters of royal birth, of half-divine progeny and of performing extraordinary feats (Agard 1928:85; Saïd 1998:21). Apart from the fact that they possess laudable virtuous traits, they also become culpable of sexual and appalling crimes: Oedipus becomes guilty of parricide and has sex with his own mother; Herakles murders his wife and own children and kills Iole's family to rape her; and Achilles rapes and kills Troilus and turns his sister, Polyxena, into his concubine (Neils 1995:17; Saïd 1998:21).

In that respect, the longevity of the legends and the works of art and literature they inspired indicate that the ambiguous moral quality of these heroes and Theseus were a well-established narrative by the sixth and fifth centuries. When examining his earlier exploits we see that the tale of the Minotaur was one of the earliest and perhaps one of the most famous adventures of the hero as it is attested in works of art and literature (Brommer 1982: 35-64; Harding 2008:59; Mills 1997:13-18). What explains the large popularity of the story and sets it apart from the others must be the altruistic nature of the hero who in an act of readiness to make sacrifices, succeeds in killing the monster and becomes a civilizer and a liberator of his people (Mills 1997:18). Theseus, nevertheless, still shows his ambiguous sense of heroic moral and puts himself in an unfavourable light as a deceptive and unthankful hero when the Athenians are on their way back to their city. This judgement is already asserted in Hesiod in the eighth century BC when he describes the episode with Ariadne on the island of Naxos as an act of desertion (Plut. *Thes.* 20.1-20.2; Mills 1997:18). Another incident of deplorable immoral ambivalence from these older exploits is the abduction of Helen. This episode had a more serious aftermath for Theseus than to add another stain to his reputation and is peculiarly connected with the attempt of abducting the goddess Persephone. As we have already seen, the abduction of Helen prompted an enemy invasion of his country that resulted

in an embarrassing defeat of the Athenians and the humiliating abduction and captivity of his own mother while he was imprisoned in Hades. His punishment in the underworld was, furthermore, not only scornful, but also very painful because when Herakles came to his rescue he had to leave his dear friend Perithoos behind (Harding 2008:69; Mills 1997:11).

To sum up, then, it is clear that the earlier myths of Theseus reach long back in time to the eighth and seventh centuries BC. As we have seen, the material record shows that these myths were of common knowledge in Attica and in the whole of the Greek world in the Archaic period (600-480 BC). They enjoyed a large popularity and were told and retold in fairly the same fashion in works of art and literature over decades. The hero is depicted in them as a slayer of monsters and as an abductor of women (Neils 1995:17). As the sixth century BC progresses, new exploits are added to the earliest one giving the hero a broader dimension and renown. The image of the Theseus continues to be, nevertheless, the one of a flawed archaic hero.

By the end of the sixth century BC, however, the exploits performed by Theseus on his journey from Troezen to Athens along the Saronic Gulf suddenly start to appear in Athenian works of art (Walker 1995:13-14). The image of the hero is unexpectedly reshaped and Theseus presents from this point on an ideal and consistent standard of conduct (Mills 1997:25). How Theseus became an idealised embodiment of the best qualities of Athens will be examined in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

The Way from Troezen: the Myth-Cycle

The so-called myth-cycle of Theseus appears in Attic vase painting in fully developed form during the last decade of the sixth century BC (Boardman 2007:226, 2010: 228, 2011:87; Brommer 1982:73; Carpenter 2006:160; Edwards 1970:33; Mills 1997:19; Schefold 1946:89; von den Hoff 2010:164; Walker 1995:13), which is earlier than our earliest references in literature (Brommer 1982:7-26; 67-68). In this case, they come from Bacchylides (Bacchyl. *Dith.* 18) and based on the succinct prose of the poem it is assumed that his *Theseus* was written in the first half of the fifth century BC. This assumption is due to its laconic style that seems to have presupposed that its audience was familiar with the unusual composition of the poem's episodes into a cycle (Brommer 1982:65; Mills 1997:20-21; Neils 1995:17-18; Walker 1995:17-18). As we have seen in the outline of the legend, the exploits tie Theseus to

the Saronic Gulf and they are not found individually before 510 BC, but there are still some single representations of the exploits that can be dated about a decade earlier (Mills 1997:19; Schefold 1946:65; von den Hoff 2010:164; Walker 1995:22). All the other well-known exploits from earlier times, like the abduction of Helen, the Centauromachy, the Amazonomachy and his journey to the underworld, were not included in the visual representations of the myth-cycle (Brommer 1982:74). Its original core encompasses instead all of the opponents Theseus met on his way from Troezen to Athens with the exception of Periphetes. Since Dithyramb 18 (Bacchyl.), which provides the earliest literary reference, starts with Sinis and omits Periphetes altogether, it is believed that he originally did not belong to the myth-cycle and is rather a later addition (Brommer 1982:3, 74; Mills 1997:21; Walker 1995:13, 22). This view finds support in the fact that Euripides knew of Periphetes in his lifetime and since Periphetes is not mentioned by Bacchylides it is reasonable to believe that his tale was added in the time between 476 and 416 BC (Brommer 1982:3,74).

Another peculiarity of the myth-cycle is that it stands out from other epic narratives in Greek mythology because Theseus is the only hero who has one (Figure 2a). The deeds or exploits of other heroes like Herakles, Achilles or Odysseus are not artistically represented in cycles (Brommer 1982:65; von den Hoff 2002:334, 2010:171).

It is furthermore not possible to say with any certainty when the myth-cycle was established in literature (Agard 1928:86; Nilsson 1986:52). Since poetry is much likely to inspire artistic representation than the other way around, and because of the sudden proliferation of Theseus in vase painting, it is generally believed that the myth-cycle illustrates in art a lost epic poem known as the *Theseis* that must have been composed before 510 BC (Boardman 1982:1; Brommer 1982:74; Carpenter 2006:160; Connor 1970:144; Davies 1982:26; Edwards 1970:33; Harding 2008:52; Mills 1997:19; Schefold 1946:65, 67; Walker 1995:17). There is, however, nothing we can say about this poem because we only find some references to it in other written sources (Arist. *Poet.* 145a20; Plut. *Thes.* 28.1; Walker 1995:16), and this leaves us with nothing other but the works of art and literature that resulted from it. There is nonetheless possible to analyse the episodes of the myth-cycle and draw some conclusions as to why it made such a sudden entrance in Athens at the end of the sixth century BC to catapult Theseus popularity to new heights.

It has been already established that Theseus was a typical hero of the epic age. Most of his deeds are performed in or in the vicinity of Attica which makes him a local hero. He is brave, but his sense of morality is questionable because he has a habit of abducting women and, as a

consequence, of bringing misery to his people and to himself. This is exemplified in the invasion of Helen's twin brothers, and in his imprisonment in Hades. In the myth-cycle, however, the sheer number of good deeds begins to bring the balance more in his favour. He is no longer the victorious hero of single isolated deeds, but the benefactor of all the inhabitants and travellers of the Saronic Gulf.

Analysis of the myth-cycle

It is not difficult to see that these new adventures are somewhat modelled on the labours of Heracles which is an aspect that is acknowledged by all scholars (Boardman 2010: 228, 2011:87; Brommer 1982:74; Den Boer 1969:7; McInerney 1994:23; Mills 1997:28; Nilsson 1986:53-54; Walker 1995:31). In literature, a motif of common ancestry was employed to establish a closer link between the two heroes: Theseus' grandfather, Pittheus, traced his descent from Pelops from whom Herakles also traced direct ascendancy through Alkmene and Lysidike (Davie 1982:27; Plut. *Thes.* 7.1). We are even told that Theseus' motivation to confront the evildoers of the Saronic Gulf was his admiration for Heracles and his desire not to want to be outdone by him (Plut. *Thes.* 7.1; Walker 1995:31). This theme of common ancestry and exemplary emulation may, therefore, be looked upon as a measure to adjust the myth of Theseus to turn him into the Attic Heracles (Den Boer 1969:7; Neils 1995:17; von den Hoff 2010:177). This point is evident in Attic vase painting of the end of the sixth century BC, where artistic representations of Theseus start to make his own exploits look more like those commonly associated with Herakles (Mills 1997:27; Neils 1995:21). In the subsequent decades, despite of remaining the greater hero, Attic vase paintings illustrating Herakles showed a strong decline in numbers while those depicting Theseus had drastically increased (Boardman 1975:2; Mills 1997:27; von den Hoff 2010:177; Walker 1995:30). A statistical analysis made by John Boardman shows the proportion of all artistic representations of scenes depicting Herakles to those that appear in Attic vase painting down to about 510 BC. His results indicate that they were decidedly more popular in Attica than anywhere else in Greece. While Attica accounts for 44% of all representations of Herakles during this period, the rest of Greece only manages to bill in average 23-27%. Theseus on the other hand appear in only 5% of Attica vases. This situation changes in the first quarter of the fifth century BC when Theseus becomes more popular and can account for 13.2% of the representations in vase paintings and Herakles goes down to 19.4% (Boardman 1975:1-2).

The literary and material record shows thus that the deeds of the myth-cycle must have been developed to emulate the labours of Herakles (Brommer 1982:12-13; Neils 1995:21, 23),

and in some instances, this concern is plainly expressed by the use of other ploys. Theseus appears, for instance, in already established myths as an apparent addition. This is exemplified in the version of the abduction of Antiope that tells that she was given to Theseus by Herakles as a gift for his help in the Amazonian expedition (Plut. *Thes.* 26.1), or in the tale of the Cerynian hind in which Theseus even shares his glory (Mills 1997:27-28). From these observations it is clear that Athenian artists aimed to create a hero of similar or equal fame as Herakles with the result that Theseus became very popular after 510 BC, and Athens had been provided with a hero with an equally glorious past (Boardman 2009:87; Den Boer 1969:7; Walker 1995:31).

It can be argued that the intention of modelling the adventures of the myth-cycle on similar deeds of Herakles fails because of the fact that Herakles' motivations for his exploits and his opponents are different from Theseus' enemies and the incentive to fight them. Episodes both inside and outside the myth-cycle, nevertheless, give Theseus the opportunity to follow suit and even surpass Herakles. This is elucidated in the episode with the Krommyonian sow that seems to have been included in the myth-cycle to give Theseus an archaic monster to overcome. In this way, a similarity between the two heroes is established because the exploit resembles Herakles' fight with the Erymanthian boar (Mills 1997:23; Neils 1995:17). There remain, however, some significant and evident differences between the deeds performed by the two heroes. While Herakles mostly fights and overcomes monsters of folktale, Theseus encounters and outsmarts human enemies of travellers (Neils 1995:17). A case in point is how any similitude or difference between the two heroes is emphasised in the themes and artistic renderings of pictorial representations in vase painting. While Herakles is, for instance, portrayed overcoming the Cretan bull by brute force, Theseus is often shown in a placid manner after the completion of his fight with the Marathonian bull (Figure 2b) (Carpenter 2006:162; Mills 1997:28). The discernible contrast that thus appears is that between a rough veteran of combats, who destroyed his foes using brute force, and that of a young handsome Athenian who defeated his opponents by strategy and skill (Agard 1928:86; Davie 1982:25; Neils 1995:17, Schefold 1946:66). Strategy and skill, but also justness constitute the common pattern observed in Theseus' exploits in the myth-cycle because the hero makes his opponents suffer in the same way as their victims by turning all of their evil techniques against them. A point is also made, furthermore, between the usefulness of the exploits of the two heroes to demonstrate that those of Theseus not only show intelligence and moral righteousness, but also a motivation rooted in well-defined, humane purposes (Agard 1928:86; Mills 1997:22).

There is also some concern of finding a way for Theseus to repay Herakles' assistance in the underworld. Thus, Theseus is perhaps included in the tale of the Cerynian hind, partly to share Herakles' glory, but also to even out the balance of services exchanged between the two of them (Mills 1997:27-28). This pursuit of equalling the two heroes goes even further and finds its culmination in Euripides' *Heracles* (Eur. *HF*. 1320-1339), where the Athenian hero rescues and welcomes Herakles in Athens, in spite of his crime and the pollution that comes with it (Mills 1997:29). Theseus comforts Herakles and offers to purify him in Eleusis and he furthermore offers to bestow Herakles with half of his possessions and tells him that he also can have his cult places. Euripides explains thus in this play why Herakles was so venerated in Attica and in doing so he seems to reveal a common belief among Athenians that Herakles had become, indeed, one of them as well (Neer 2004:76). This idea of the Atticizing of Herakles, proposed by Richard Neer (2004:76), is considerably reinforced by many facts: Herakles is, for instance, the most popular hero in Attic vase painting and is predominantly represented in sculpture in Athenian public buildings (Boardman 1975:1-2) and, according to the city's tradition, an initiate of the Eleusinian mysteries. He is also worshiped as a god by the residents of Marathon according to Pausanias (Paus. 1.32.4), and Isocrates (Isoc. 5.33) goes beyond this claim and says that Herakles became a god for all Athenians.

The Battles against the Amazons

There is more than one version about the battle between Theseus and the Amazons. The most traditional are the ones that tell about the invasion of Attica by an Amazon army and the abduction of Antiope. We find the earliest version with a secure date in Aeschylus *Eumenides* (Aesch. *Eum.* 681-690) from 458 BC (Brommer 1982:119). In this play, the Amazons invade Athens and set camp on the Areopagus to take revenge on Theseus for the abduction of Antiope. The next version with a secure date comes from Euripides in his play *Heracleidae* or *Children of Herakles* (Eur. *Heracl.* 215-217) from about 430 BC (Brommer 1982:115). This time, Theseus is supposed to have assisted Herakles in his expedition to Themiscyra to retrieve Hippolyta's girdle. It is curious that the dates of these two plays is not mirrored in the order of appearance of the stories in vase painting and sculpture. The abduction of Antiope is depicted on Attic vases from the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century BC and none of them seem to be earlier than 510 BC (Boardman 1982:8; 2007:225, 2010:229; Carpenter 2006:164). It also appeared in sculpture in the west pediment of the temple of Apollo at Eretria from around 510 BC and on an early fifth-century BC temple at Karthaia on

Keos (Boardman 1982:8). The battle between the Athenians and the Amazons was a popular theme in sculpture and painting throughout the fifth century BC. Much of the time it is, however, difficult to tell which one of the battles is displayed unless the artist clarifies if it is an oversea expedition or the invasion of Attica (Boardman 2010:227; Brommer 1982:120; Carpenter 2006:164-165).

Analysis of the battles against the Amazons

As we have already seen, Plutarch based his account of the Amazonomachies on other writers like Hellanikos, Kleidemos, Pherekydes and Herodoros (Plut. *Thes.* 26.1-27.6). These writers apparently considered the abduction of Antiope an independent episode separated from Herakles' expedition (Plut. *Thes.* 26.1), and we may therefore assume that the appearance of the story in vase painting and sculpture confirm that this version is the oldest one and that it was in circulation before 510 BC (Boardman 1982:9). Plutarch seems to have been impressed by Kleidemos' rendering of the invasion of Athens, which was so rich in details that he even mentioned the battle formation of the Amazonian army and that the occupation of Athens ended in a negotiated truce. He also judges that Kleidemos got his version right because he knew of the place where this peace treaty was sworn and of a sacrificial rite in honour of the Amazons before the festival of Theseus.

This detailed account of an Amazonian invasion and the popularity of the Amazonomachies in the visual arts of the fifth century BC indicate that they were obviously fashioned as an analogy to the Persian Wars so that Theseus' role as the central character in the depictions of the battles gradually came to represent Athens (Leventi 2009:129; McInerney 1994:23-24). The fact that there are no early Amazonomachies besides those from works of literature and art from the end of the sixth century BC strongly indicates that they are an invention of that time (Boardman 1982:11).

Analysis of all the Results

At this point, it is appropriate to recapitulate what the literary sources and the briefly mentioned material record tell us about the myth of Theseus. In the previous sections, we concluded that the legend of Theseus extends back in time and that some of his early exploits are a popular motif in visual representations in the whole of Greece (Schefold 1946:89). He has the traits that other archaic heroes share in common as it is attested in works of art and literature that show him as a slayer of monsters and as an abductor of women. In the last

decade of the sixth century BC, a new cycle of deeds along the Saronic Gulf appears in visual work of arts that suddenly emphasises other traits of the hero. The deeds are not only unusual because they are represented as a coherent collection of adventures, but also because no other archaic hero had been represented in the same way in visual media before. They are, in addition, plainly modelled on exploits performed by Herakles, but they are displayed as superior acts of generosity and heroism through artistic conventions and themes. While Theseus was clearly indebted to Herakles because of his rescue from the underworld, the coin is flipped and now it is Herakles who shows gratitude and is indebted to Theseus. In spite of the well attested emergence of the myth-cycle in the visual arts, we do not have any literary source that could concretely account for the date of its first appearance or for the identity of its creator.

As we have seen, the material record shows that the earlier myths were of common knowledge in Attica and in the whole of the Greek world (Schefold 1946:89). If there was any intention from the part of Athenian artists to hide the unpleasant actions committed by their hero, the circumstance that they enjoyed a large popularity and were told and retold in fairly the same fashion in works of art and literature over decades must have made it very difficult for them to achieve this goal. New versions of the story began, nevertheless, to circulate in the fifth century. Hence, according to Pherecydes, Theseus left Ariadne on Naxos because Athena, in a manner that resembles Vergil's account on how Aeneas deserted Dido (Verg. *Aen.* 4.222-4.231), ordered him in a dream to do so (Jacoby 1947:13-64; Mills 1997:18).

The fact that Pausanias (Paus. 10.25.8), based on much earlier works of literature could also tell that Theseus' sons, Akamas and Demophon, rescued their grandmother from captivity seems to be some sort of an epilogue to the tale regarding Theseus punishment in the underworld. This version shows a clear intention of whitewashing Theseus' reputation and, at the same time, that as Athens as well. This fortunate act of vindication not only restored Athens' dignity by putting unfavourable stories in the background, but it also functioned as a formative narrative of filial piety for Athenians to take pride on and to emulate as well (Mills 1997:9-10). This tale furthermore seems to be a rationalised account that tried to remove Theseus from any transgression while explaining why Menestheus was the leader of the Athenians in Homer (*Hom. Il.* 2.552). In that way, Theseus is presented as the victim of the aristocrats whose power he had diminished after the unification and centralization of Attica. This is the tradition that lies behind the retrieval of his remains from Skyros by Kimon in 475 BC, and even though this story is only found in later sources (Apollod. *Epit.* 1.24; Plut. *Thes.* 32.1, 35.3-35.4, 36.1-36.2), in view of the consistent preference of stories where Theseus did

not end imprisoned in the underworld for eternity, we are left with the conclusion that the story antedates the discovery of his bones (Mills 1997:12).

What emerges particularly strongly from the above observations is that there was a concern in Athens to polish the archaic image of their national hero. The suspicious appearance of Menestheus in the *Iliad* (Hom. *Il.* 2.552) not only seem to be an addition to amend the insignificant contribution of Athens in the Trojan War, but also a deliberate incorporation of a story where Theseus did not end imprisoned in the underworld for eternity (Mills 1997:12). This could have been, in fact, an ominous but somewhat anticipated ending for Theseus had it not been for Herakles. Heroes in Greek myths experienced, as a rule, dreadful or embarrassing deaths and Theseus captivity in the underworld certainly was a propitious occasion to end his tale. Herakles' intervention was, however, a very fortunate one and it has all the signs of being a later elaboration of the myth intended to enhance his heroism rather than to absolve Theseus from his misconduct. Despite of the fact that this version made his crime look somewhat less serious and much easier for Athenians to digest, the rescue was definitely not entirely beneficial for Theseus because he became, as a result, deeply indebted to Herakles after that (Mills 1997:11).

All these observations reveal that the narratives of the earlier tales were subjected to later adjustments. These adjustments not only expose the plasticity of myths and how easily they could be modify to shift their emphasis as required (Boardman 1982:1; Mills 1997:18), but they also show that some writers, like the Atthidographers, felt compelled to gloss over unpleasant facts about Theseus. Their attempts to straighten out the motivations behind the hero's actions show that they were preoccupied with his image and we are left, therefore, with the conclusion that, as a product of their time, they had grown up in the fourth century BC cultivating the formative tradition that Theseus encapsulated the ideals with which Athens sought to identify itself (Harding 2008:53).

Turning back to the myth-cycle, we have already seen that there are many scholars that believe that the deeds of Theseus on his way from Troezen to Athens are inspired in a lost epic poem known as the *Theseis* that must have been composed before 510 BC (Boardman 2009:87; Brommer 1982:74; Carpenter 2006:160; Connor 1970:144; Davie 1982:26; Edwards 1970:33; Harding 2008:52; Mills 1997:19; Walker 1995:17). Connor suggests, for instance, that the Peisistratids may have commissioned the epic because much of the evidence indicates that Peisistratos exploited the myth of Theseus to build up his political agenda (Connor 1970:145). He draws some episodes in the lives of both men as examples that could justify

the use of Theseus by Peisistratos as a parallel to himself. The first one is Herodotus account on how Peisistratos went ashore at Marathon to march on Athens after his exile linking the place where the adventure of the Marathonian bull and this landing took place (Hdt. 1.62.1; Connor 1970:146-147). The other one is the successful unification of Attica into a political and geographical entity by Theseus in epic times. In this case, Connor proposes that Peisistratos regarded himself as a similar pan-Athenian leader because of his ability of reconciling different segments of society and of maintaining control over the scattered villages and outlying districts of Attica (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 41.2; Plut. *Thes.* 24.1-24.3; Thuc. 2.15; Connor 1970:145). However, the only confirmed literary work dedicated to Theseus, from which unfortunately only a fragment survives, is the one Simonides wrote (Simon. Frag. 35 Werner 1969:39). Walker holds the opinion that the fact that Simonides was one of the poets working at the court of the Peisistratids is hardly enough evidence to link this poem to any ambition from their part in patronizing works of literature about Theseus because there is no way to tell if he wrote the poem on their commission (Walker 1995:19). It has also been proposed that the lost *Theseis* is connected to the Alcmaeonids through Kleisthenes because of the more prominence given to Theseus over Herakles on the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (Davie 1982:26), if a date around 510 BC for the construction of the building is accepted. At this point it is important to mention that we only have literary references of Peisistratos being tied to Herakles in an anecdote in Herodotus (Hdt. 1.60.3-1.60.5) that tell the story of how the tyrant made a successful comeback to Athens after his second exile (Boardman 1975:1, 7). Walker (1995) identifies two different school of thoughts when it comes to finding out which politician first promoted Theseus as the Athenian hero per excellence. The first one contends that it was the Peisistratids based on the arguments already mentioned: they are suspected of having commissioned literary works about the hero and of using his legend to justify their foreign and domestic politics. The second one claims that it was in fact the Alcmaeonid Kleisthenes based on the confident view that the existence of the *Theseis* was not an invention, but that it actually was a poem composed at the time of his reforms. It is also believed that the Alcmaeonids would express their natural antagonism against the Peisistratids by raising the popularity of Theseus as an answer to the tyrants' patronage of Herakles as their representative.

At this point, it is worth to take a closer look at the myth-cycle and see if these stories can help us to find a solution to these issues. There is, for starters, no literary or material evidence that links Theseus with the Saronic Gulf before the end of the sixth century BC and his birth

in Troezen does not appear in any written record until the subsequent century (Walker 1995:13).

Walker cites Nilsson to stress that Theseus birthplace was, without a doubt, in Attica and that his birth story and subsequent journey to claim his throne in Athens, were developed in Athens to justify the city's occupation of Eleusis and to support her claim to the city of Megara (Walker 1995; Nilsson 1951:167, 1953:747). A closer examination of Theseus opponents in the myth-cycle can provide some clues. Since we know that Periphetes is a much later addition to the myth-cycle, we will direct our attention to the other four. The invention of Sinis and Prokrustes seems to be the product of witty folklore because their names illustrate their evil activities (Sinis Pityocampetes = "the Pine-bender" and Prokrustes = "the Stretcher"). As we have already discussed, the inclusion of Phaia the Krommyonian sow results much likely from the intention of creating a monster with which to parallel Herakles' exploit with the Erymanthian boar (Brommer 1982:12-13; Mills 1997:23; Neils 1995:21). When it comes to Skyron, however, Plutarch (Plut. *Thes.* 10.2-10.3; Miller 23) tells that Megarian writers identified him not as a murderous brigand, but as a great polemarch who was tricked and killed by Theseus at Eleusis when the town still was part of Megara. Pausanias (Paus. 1.14.3) on the other side tells that Choerilus, an Athenian tragedist wrote a play called *Alope* in which he established that Cercyon was the grandfather of Hippothoon, the eponymous hero of the Athenian phyle Hippothoontis which had strong Eleusinian connections (Mills 1997:23-24).

These two stories suspiciously connect the Athenian hero with territories that had been in dispute with the Megarians and this could imply that these episodes are the result of the antagonism between the two cities (Mills 1997: 24). Because of Megara's location in the Saronic Gulf, territorial disputes with the neighbouring Athens were inevitable. Plutarch states (Plut. *Sol.* 10.1-10.4) that the island of Salamis was acknowledged to Athens through the outside arbitration of the Spartans in the time of Solon (Plut. *Sol.* 10.1-10.4). Bury and Meiggs, however, argue that a date around 509 BC in the time of Kleisthenes is better for several reasons: Plutarch mentions, to begin with, a Cleomenes among the Spartan arbitrators which is the name of a Spartan king from around 520-490 BC. The second reason is that Athens established a cleruchy on the island around that time which is an action that would have never taken place if Athens had already been in possession of Salamis since the time of Solon. The third reason is that this was a time when Athens and Megara would accept Spartan arbitration in such matters (Bury and Meiggs 1975:127, 526).

The last decade of the sixth century BC was also marked by Kleisthenes political reforms and the struggle for the survival of the young democracy. In 507-506 BC, Athens successfully managed to defend its new political system against a coalition of Spartans, Boeotians and Chalcidians (Bury and Meiggs 1975:138-140; Hdt. 5.74.1-5.77.4; Morris and Powell 2014:234-235). The date for the settlement of the territorial dispute proposed by Bury and Meiggs and the celebration of the victory of Athens against Boeotians and Chalcidians would therefore completely accord with the nearly contemporary rise of the adventures along the Saronic Gulf in Attic vase painting and their appearance on the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi. A boost in the artistic depiction of myths based on an old or a new tradition would be a swift and expected answer from Athens in any or both cases (Walker 1995:23). In spite of these great achievements, the literary sources are silent about the names of the men who were at the head of the political affairs of the city by the turn of the sixth century BC to the extent that even Kleisthenes disappear in oblivion (Neer 2004:68; Schefold 1946:68).

In the years after the Persian Wars the proliferation of works of art depicting the Amazonomachy and the literary tradition of the occupation of Athens by an Amazonian army, strongly suggest that they were used as an analogy to the Persian invasion (Leventi 2009:129). Another tale that must have enjoyed currency during these years was the death of Theseus on the island of Skyros because it inspired the recovery of his remains and their return to Athens. Kimon, the protagonist of this expedition, launched an earnest development in the cult of Theseus as a national hero two years after the foundation of the Delian League in 477 BC (Davie 1982:2; Goušchin 1999:170; Meiggs 1972:43; Pomeroy 2008:230). Plutarch (Plut. *Thes.* 36.1) tells that the Delphian oracle told the Athenians to bring back the remains of Theseus and to keep them with the greatest honours. Pausanias (Paus. 1.17.2-1.17.3) visited the Theseion, the shrine that was built to commemorate the occasion and where Theseus' bones were kept. The Theseion was decorated with paintings by Micon depicting the defence of Attica against the Amazons, a Centauromachy and Theseus' visit at the bottom of the sea (Carpenter 2006:165; Castriota 1992:33).

Some scholars see in Kimon's action an opportunistic move to gain popularity in the time of Themistocles' decline after Salamis (Goušchin 1999:169). Others see his domination in Athenian politics in the 470s and 460s as the result of his alliance with the Alcmaeonids through his marriage with Isodike in 478 BC (Plut. *Cim.* 4.10; Goušchin 1999:169; Neer 2004:70). Athens had certainly fallen under the control of a group of aristocrats whose

authority partly relied on Kimon's military successes (Meiggs 1972:86-87) and this would accord with what Valerij Goušchin (1999:169) calls a tactical move from his part to strengthen the popularity of the aristocracy in order to take advantage of the disfavour of the more democratically disposed Themistocles. As we have seen, Theseus the king was supposed to have effected the "housing-together" or synoikism of the inhabitants of all Attica after his ascension to the throne (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 41.2; Plut. *Thes.* 24.1-24.3; Thuc. 2.15). This tradition was cultivated in such an effective manner that it was repeatedly handed down in literature by many ancient authors with Aristotle going so far as to ascribe to him the second constitution of Athens in which Theseus deviated slightly from the royal constitution of earlier generations (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 41.2; Den Boer 1969:4). The polyvalent nature ascribed to Theseus in Euripides' *Suppliant Women* helps to confirm this view. In response to a Theban messenger who had asked to see Athens' ruler, Theseus answers:

One moment, stranger!
 Your start was wrong, seeking a master here.
 This city is free, and ruled by no one man.
 The people reign, in annual succession.
 They do not yield the power to the rich;
 The poor man has an equal share in it. [Eur. *Supp.* 403-408].

This passage demonstrates that Theseus as a symbol of Athens could reconcile different segments of Attica's population and support different political views. Theseus could represent the best of the noble families, the eupatridae, in consonance with his royal lineage, and the rest of the masses as a *primus inter pares* in line with the democratic rule that he promoted (McInerney 1994:24; Plut. *Thes.* 24.1-24.3).

Goušchin argues, hence, that the personification of Theseus as a king was convenient to further the interests of the aristocracy. As an example, he holds that the evacuation of Attica caused by the advance of the Persian army during the invasion of Attica, offered an excellent opportunity to exploit the manifoldness nature of Theseus (Goušchin 1999:180-181).

According to Aristotle, the evacuation was disorganized and chaotic and the Areopagus had to step in to bring order. Its members provided those who could not afford it with ships and financial support (they gave each man eight drachmae to operate the ships) (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 23.1; Hdt. 8.41.1-8.41.3). Goušchin holds the opinion that the forced

relocation of the population of Attica in Athens might have evoked king Theseus' synoikism and that the Areopagites seized the opportunity to exploit the gratitude of the people they helped in their advantage (Goušchin 1999:174). Goušchin's argument seems to me very plausible because the dramatic turmoil of events that the Persian Wars caused must have left an indelible mark in the conscience of the Attic population. Since the Persians destroyed everything they met on their way (Hdt. 8.50.1-8.50.2), they came back to a devastated country that no longer had a centre of administration and politics (Meiggs 1972:274). This means that they had to unite efforts to reconstruct their country and this again functioned as an artificial synoikism where all had to work together to achieve this objective (Goušchin 1999:168, 172, 180). Besides, the war was still not over, so they had to cooperate as a unified nation to defend themselves against the Persian threat. Kimon's successful campaigns (Bury and Meiggs 1975:206, 213; Meiggs 1972:275; Morris and Powell 2014:292, 293; Plut. *Cim.* 12.1-14.1; Pomeroy 2008:234; Thuc. 1.100) under these circumstances added to his popularity and I consider it very plausible that synoikism was something he could take advantage of to further the interests of the aristocracy.

Kimon's aristocratic sentiments and his pro-Spartan politics gained him, nevertheless, the enmity of the more radical democrats Ephialtes and Perikles (Bury and Meiggs 1975:213; Meiggs 1972:88-89; Morris and Powell 2014:294; Plut. *Cim.* 14.3-14.5; Pomeroy 2008:234). In 462 BC Perikles brought charges against Kimon for his failed pro-Spartan politics during a helot uprising that had happened two years before and he was ostracised from Athens in 461 BC (Meiggs 1972:89; Plut. *Cim.* 16.4-17.6). Scholars agree that with Kimon out of the way, it was finally possible for his opponents to bring Athens system of government to a full-blown democracy (Bury and Meiggs 1975:213; Meiggs 1972:89; Morris and Powell 2014:294; Pomeroy 2008:234).

There is no mention of Perikles' relationship to Theseus in the literary sources other than his ties with the Alcmaeonids (Hdt. 6.131.2; Plut. *Per.* 3.1), but his radical democratic policies might have been still echoed in the depiction of Theseus by the tragedians. As we saw in the example with the Theban messenger, Theseus describes Athens as a democratic society where the city "is ruled by no one man" (Eur. *Supp.* 404-405). Theseus as the embodiment of democratic rule is even brought to the extreme in the tradition that tells of his displacement as monarch and voluntary exile to Skyros. The fact that he did not respond with violent retaliation to his deposition is emphasised as a sign of his greatness because he demonstrated how highly he regarded the well-being of Athens. He chose to respect the will of the people and renounced his throne on his own resolve. This quality of being willing to

make sacrifices turned him into the champion of all who suffered under power (Den Boer 1969:8). His rectitude and kindness is also a theme illustrated in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Kolonos* and Euripides' *Herakles* where Theseus is presented as a just and compassionate king who offers protection to outcasts in spite of their crimes and pollution. This personification of the hero in the last quarter of the fifth century BC seems to be the last stage of a transformation that started with the slayer of monsters and the abductor of maidens some centuries back and continued with the liberation and civilizing tales of the myth-cycle at the end of the sixth century BC. Theseus grows to become a great political leader and king until he finally appears as the humane and articulate representative of democracy. In this literary genre, Theseus seems to appear as an eminent example of the bygone greatness of democracy (Davie 1982:28). He is no longer portrayed as a Kimonian figure emblematic of the aristocracy, but as a full-blown democrat. What emerges particularly strongly from these plays is that the gradual loss of Theseus' aristocratic image must have originated at the time when Perikles started being in charge of the fate of the state (Goušchin 1999:176).

The plays explore the past to try to explain how Athens had become the society that it was at the time they were written. In Theseus, the tragedians could define the nature of the city and its population by using him as a guide to encourage his values and types of conduct. In that way, the city had an example of prowess that not only defined its ideals, but also acted as a constant reminder of the type of behaviour they should emulate (Mills 1997:1).

Theseus went a long way from the one archaic hero of the sixth century BC until the exemplary ruler of the second half of the fifth century BC. To find out if it was Peisistratos or Kleisthenes who started and promoted his reinvention seems to be a fruitless enterprise. What matters is that every Athenian politician, like in the case of Kimon, had to be in touch with Theseus because the hero was gradually transformed into an emblem of the Athenian state (Kron 1976: 224; Walker 1995:29).

Chapter Two - Theseus in Vase Painting and other pictorial Media

The Earliest Tales

The Minotaur

In the visual arts, the tale is the oldest and at the same time the most popular to be reproduced in pictorial representations. The theme is the only one of the Theseus' exploits depicted importantly in Attic black-figure vases where it accounts for almost half of all the artistic representations of the hero with around three hundred vases. It also appears in some hundred other representations in other media (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:37; Carpenter 1963; Edwards 1970:29). The high frequency and diffusion of this theme in visual media makes it one of the most represented tales of mythology in Ancient Greece (Brommer 1982:37). It appears in seven symposia vases as a central motif and, outside vase painting, it appears on the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi, the Hephaisteion and the Gölbaschi frieze (Brommer 1982:37).

The earliest known representation of the fight between Theseus and the Minotaur comes from a Boeotian relief pithos from the second part of the seventh century BC in Basel (Brommer 1982:38; Carpenter 2006:163; Edwards 1970:28; Hedreen 2011:495). The head of the Minotaur is missing, but it seems that the artist of the pithos depicted the monster with the body of a bull and the long hair of a human (Brommer 1982:38; Carpenter 2006:163; Edwards 1970:28; Hedreen 2011:495). This shows that he did not know of other representations of the Minotaur (Brommer 1982:38; Hedreen 2011:495), which indicates that the relief must be, indeed, one of the oldest representations of the legend. Other early representations of the story appear on gold ornaments from the middle of the seventh century BC from Corinth and as several bronze shield reliefs from Aegina and Olympia from the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth centuries BC (Brommer 1982:40-41; Carpenter 2006:163; Edwards 1970: 28-29). The tale is furthermore depicted on several Corinthian and Chalcidian vases and in Attica on several cycle vases and on many red-figure vases from the fifth century BC (Carpenter 2006:163). The frequency of the legend in artistic representations from all these places indicates thus that the tale was well known over the whole of the Greek world in the Archaic period where most of its representations were produced (Brommer 1982:63). The fight with the Minotaur is the earliest to be portrayed in Attic vase painting in the François vase that dates from the second quarter of the sixth century (Brommer 1982:42). In this period, the depictions show for the greatest part the battle in progress with Theseus with a sword grabbing the Minotaur and sometimes with the hero pursuing the beast (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:63-64; von den Hoff: 2001:86). Some years later, in the Late Archaic period another theme begins to appear with pictures that show the already beaten or slayed Minotaur on the ground (Figure 3) (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:63-

64; von den Hoff 2001:77). In the second half of the fifth century BC some cycle cups depict the hero dragging the beast from the labyrinth (von den Hoff 2001:81).

Visit at the bottom of the sea

The visit of the hero with Poseidon or Amphitrite under the sea is the theme of several Attic red-figure vases from the first half of the fifth century (Figure 4) (Boardman 2010:144, 229; Carpenter 2006:163). Pausanias (Paus. 1.17.3) tells that it also was the subject of a wall painting by Mikon in the Theseion in Athens (Carpenter 2006:163; Castriota 1992:33).

Outside of Attica, the tale is also represented in Melian reliefs from the fifth century BC (Brommer 1982:82).

Theseus and Ariadne

Theseus and Ariadne appear in Corinthian gold shield bands from the seventh century BC and an early sixth century BC shield band (Carpenter 2006:164; Edwards 1970:29). The first depiction of both of them in Attic art is in the François vase (Hedreen 2011:1). In later depictions of their love affair, Athena is depicted commanding Theseus to leave Ariadne as in reminding him that he has a higher calling waiting for him in Athens (Boardman 2010:159, 229; Brommer 1982:89; Carpenter 2006:164). The first one of the vases is from around 470 BC where the goddess is sending Theseus to his left while Dionysos escorts Ariadne to the opposite direction (Carpenter 2006:164).

The abduction of Helen

Even though the literary sources indicate that the myth was well known, there are very few representations of it in the visual arts. The theme of the Abduction of Helen occurs early on a proto-Corinthian aryballos of the early seventh century BC (Brommer 1982:94; Edwards 1970:30, 33). It is suspected to be represented on several shield bands and on several Attic black-figure vases where a woman is seized by two young men. There is however no certainty about the scene because the figures are not identified by inscriptions. In a red-figure amphora from the last quarter of the sixth century BC, the names of Theseus, Perithoos, Helen and a woman called Korone are inscribed. It is possible that the artist of the vase reversed the names of the figures because the scene shows Theseus carrying off the woman called Korone while Helen and Perithoos, in that order, run after them (Carpenter 2006:166). The graphic representations of the episode enjoyed a wide popularity as it is attested in vase paintings from Argos, Corinth and Crete (Brommer 1982:97). Evidence for the production of Attic vases with this theme is very scant. Besides some vases that depict the abduction of a woman

by two men or by one man in a chariot, there are no other representations that could be identified with certainty with this episode (Brommer 1982:95).

The abduction of Persephone

The earliest representation of the legend in the visual arts appear on a shield relief from Olympia from the middle of the sixth century BC. It depicts two bearded men sitting on what appears to be thrones and another man that draws his sword with determination. The interpretation of the scene as the rescue of Theseus by Herakles is secure because of the inscription on the shield (Brommer 1982:101). In vase painting, the legend appears for the first time in the Classical period on the Berlin Lekythos (Brommer 1982:99).

The Centauromachy

The first and only known appearance of Theseus in scenes representing the Centauromachy is on the François vase from around 570-560 BC, where armed Lapiths fight the Centaurs in the frieze under the dance of the Athenian youths (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:105; Carpenter 165). The only thing left of Theseus is part of his name and Perithoos is completely missing (Brommer 1982:105; Carpenter 2006:165). The battle with Theseus is represented in one of two forms: the earlier ones show the Lapiths armed and no women or children are included. The second ones that appeared around 470 BC depict the men without weapons trying to repel the Centaurs who are trying to abduct women and children. Pausanias (Paus. 1.17.2) mentions a painting by Polygnotos in the Theseion in Athens (Carpenter 2006:165).

The Centauromachy seems to have represented the triumph of civilization over barbarism during the Archaic and Classical period (Carpenter 2006:166; Castriota 1992:34, 41). In the fifth century BC, it might have symbolised the victory of the Athenians over the Persians. The theme appears on metopes in the Parthenon, and Pausanias (Paus. 1.28.2) tells that it was depicted on Pheidias' bronze shield of Athena Promachos made from the spoils left by the Persians after the battle of Marathon. According to Pliny (Plin. 36.18) it was also on the sandals of Pheidias' Athena Parthenos. Theseus is shown fighting Centaurs at the wedding of Perithoos on a wall painting on the Theseion (Castriota 1992:33) and friezes from the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion, Bassae and Trysa (Carpenter 2006:166).

It seems that the paintings of the Theseion tried to establish a parallel between Amazons and Centaurs in graphic terms. Both enemies have equine qualities that were already depicted and known in earlier artistic representations. The Amazons are very often represented on horseback and their names are compounds of the word for horse in inscriptions on red-figure vases and in other literary sources (Castriota 1992: 56). The parallels between

the mythical Centaurs and horse-riding Amazons are a clear allusion of the Persian army who depended heavily on its cavalry. As a Kimonian monument (Plut. *Cim* 4.5-6), the Theseion celebrated the Athenian victory over these mythical barbaric forces as an allusion to the Athenian hoplites that had defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 and at the Battle of Plataia in 480 BC. In that way, the Theseion clearly emphasised the contribution rendered by the eupatridae in the Persian Wars in detriment of the oarsmen of the new democracy who fought at sea.

The Marathonian bull

The first known pictorial depiction of the legend appeared in vase painting around 550-540 BC in the Paris amphora. The tale of Theseus and the Marathonian bull was very popular in black-figure painting and is the second most depicted of Theseus in the visual arts. This is already valid in Attic black-figure vases from the sixth century BC and is the most popular after the fight against the Minotaur (Brommer 1982:28; Carpenter 2006:162). The deed appears in most of the cycle vases and on nearly one hundred other red-figure vases. It also appears on one of the metopes from the Athenian treasury at Delphi, from the Hephaisteion and from the temple of Poseidon at Sounion (Carpenter 2006:162).

The abduction of Antiope

Representations of the rape of Antiope first appear in Greek art in either 520 BC or 510 BC. The theme was very popular and it even appeared in sculpture in the west pediment of the Temple of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria (Boardman 1982:8; Walker 1995:26) from around 510 BC and on an early fifth-century temple at Karthaia on Keos (Boardman 1982:8). Theseus is depicted carrying Antiope away on a chariot with Athena contemplating the act. The same themes is depicted on several black- and red-figure vases from the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth century BC and none of them seem to be earlier than 510 BC (Boardman 1982:8; 2007:225, 2010:229; Carpenter 2006:164). In addition to the Attic vases, which comprise the majority of the vessels with this theme, there are some vases from Eretria, Keos and Italy as well (Brommer 1982:112-114).

The Myth-cycle

Most of the cycle vases are cups and if one defines those vases that show at least three of the episodes from the Saronic Gulf as cycle vases, then twenty-three of them are still preserved today (Brommer 1982:67). They were produced during the whole of the fifth century BC with

the greatest frequency at the beginning of the century (Carpenter 2006:160). All of them were produced in Attica and it is not known if they were produced in any other places. Artistic liberties were taken regarding the sequence of events of the episodes we find in Plutarch's account of the myth, which is never respected (Brommer 1982:67; Plut. *Thes.* 1-36.4). This particularity is apparent, for instance, by the fact that the episode with Periphetes do not appear before 450 BC (Brommer 1982:5).

Gnorismata

Scenes of Theseus recovering the sword and the sandals left by Aegeus under the rock, the so-called *gnorismata* are rare and appear probably for the first time in an Attic red-figure vases from around 460 BC. This scene also appears on few other vases from the second half of the fifth century BC and Pausanias tells that it was the subject of a bronze statue on the Acropolis in Athens (Carpenter 2006:161; Paus. 1.27.8).

Periphetes

The scene with Periphetes rarely appears in cycle vases and his identity can only be recognized with certainty twice. These instances do not occur before 450 BC (Brommer 1982:4; Carpenter 2006:161).

Sinis

The encounter with Sinis is one of the more popular subjects and is depicted on more than half of the cycle vases and on many red-figure vases from the fifth century BC. It also appears on one of the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi and in one of the metopes of the Hephaisteion (Brommer 1982:8; Carpenter 2006:161).

Phaia

The fight against Phaia is depicted on about half of the cycle vases and a few other red-figure vases. There are seventeen vases with the depiction of the fight between Theseus and Phaia and thirteen of them are in cycle vases. The theme also appears on one of the metopes from the Hephaisteion (Brommer 1982:11; Carpenter 2006:161).

Skyron

Theseus tossing Skyron is a scene that is represented in more than half of the cycle vases and several other red-figure vases from mostly the first half of the fifth century BC. It also appears on one of the metopes from the Athenian treasury at Delphi, from the Hephaisteion, from the temple of Poseidon at Sounion, and from the Gölbasschi frieze (Brommer 1982:15-18; Carpenter 2006:161-162).

Kerkyon

Theseus fighting Kerkyon appears in at least eleven of the cycle vases and his identification is sometimes difficult because he is not the only brigand that wrestles with Theseus. Only when the hero is present on other scenes, and the identification of the other brigands of the cycle is secure, can Kerkyon be recognized with certainty. The theme of his encounter with Theseus also appears on one of the metopes from the Athenian treasury at Delphi and on the Hephaisteion (Brommer 1982:20; Carpenter 2006:162).

Prokrustes

Theseus against Prokrustes is one of the first exploits of the myth-cycle to appear on Attic vases. This fight is depicted on most of the cycle-vases and on several black- and red-figure vases from the late sixth and early fifth centuries BC. On most of them Theseus attacks Prokrustes with an axe or a hammer. This deed is also the subject of metopes from the Athenian treasury at Delphi and from the Hephaisteion, but they are too fragmentary to reveal details of iconography (Brommer 1982:22-25; Carpenter 2006:162).

The Amazonomachy

The battle between the Athenians and the Amazons was a popular theme in sculpture and painting throughout the fifth century BC. Several metopes from the Athenian treasury at Delphi depicted the battle and it was on the shield of Athena Parthenos and on the throne of Zeus at Olympia (Boardman 1982:9; Brommer 1982:116; Carpenter 2006:164). Pausanias (Paus. 1.15.2; 17.2) tells that the Amazonomachy was also depicted in the Stoa Poikile and in the Theseion in Athens (Carpenter 2006:164; Castriota 1992: 33). In the Stoa Poikile Theseus' Amazonomachy was depicted side by side with the Trojan War and the Battle of Marathon (Barringer 2009:114; Castriota 1992: 28; Edwards 1970:41). The Amazonomachy is a very popular theme in Attic black- and red-figure vases with hundreds of vases (Boardman 2010:227; Carpenter 2006:164). While they were mainly centred on Herakles in Archaic vase painting, they focus more on Theseus in the Classical period (Boardman 2010:227). There is, however, no way of telling which one of the heroes is displayed unless Theseus or Herakles are clearly identified by name, by attributes or by clarifying if the battle is an oversea expedition or the invasion of Attica (Boardman 2010:227; Carpenter 2006:164-165). Brommer points out that Theseus can only be identified with certainty on thirteen vases where the help of inscriptions. They all are in red figure and were produced in Attica in the second half of the fifth century BC (Brommer 1982:120).

Analysis of the representation of the tales

The exclusion or omission of some of the earlier tales from the myth-cycle seem to demonstrate that they were regarded as carriers of unfavourable associations for Theseus. Instead, more laudable tales like the encounter with the Marathonian bull or with the Minotaur were included or used as single themes in a great number of vases (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:28, 37; Carpenter 2006:162-163; Edwards 1970:29). The reasons of their high occurrence in visual media might be that the Athenians considered them to be the exploits that benefitted them the most (Knell 1990:132). Theseus ended the tribute of Athenian youths and subjugated the beast that had been devastating Attica's country side. It is also tempting to see the likeness of the exploit with the Cretan bull as an attempt to make Theseus more like Herakles which probably explains, as we have seen, the high frequency of vases depicting Theseus encounter with Phaia (Mills 1997:23; Neils 1995:21). The popularity of Skyron and Kerkyon in the cycle vases, seems to confirm, on the other hand, the swift response of Athens to the territories in dispute with Megara.

Other episodes of the myth were modified to turn the tale into an exemplary sign of piety and self-sacrifice as it is exemplified when Theseus obeys Athena and leaves Ariadne on Naxos (Boardman 2010:159, 229; Brommer 1982:89; Carpenter 2006:164). While the abduction and rape of maidens lost popularity, the myth-cycle and other adventures as the Centauromachy and the Amazonomachy came to be more acclaimed as examples of his heroism (Mills 1997:23). That is also true for the Archaic tale of Theseus' encounter with the Minotaur that, because of his longevity, provides a good example of how the tale was subjected to transformations.

At the beginning of the fifth century BC, the violence of the fight is illustrated in full with Theseus overpowering the helpless Minotaur (Figure 3) (Boardman 2010:85, 229; von den Hoff: 2001:76-77). von den Hoff calls attention to a change in the typology of the encounter that occurs around 480 BC and lasts until around 460-450 BC. A stamnos from St. Petersburg shows a version of this typology where the scene displays the victorious Theseus after the fight (Figure 5). The hero is framed by Athena on his right and young men and women on his left. The goddess and the youths celebrate Theseus' victory as he stands in front of the dead Minotaur. No other heroes are characterized in this manner before 460-450 BC and this brings us to the conclusion that this new representation does not draw its inspiration from other references, but that it is in fact a recently created typology. The

painting tells us that Theseus no longer needs to show his worth in the *agon* of an encounter because the dead Minotaur is proof of his superiority (von den Hoff 2001:77).

von den Hoff also points out that in the second half of the fifth century, around 440-430 BC, three cycle-cups show Theseus dragging the dead Minotaur from the labyrinth (Figure 6a). According to him, this typology does not show a Theseus with superior dexterity in battle, nor an already victorious hero nor a dignified dead opponent; they show instead a Theseus with a superior strength who abuses and humiliates the helpless monster by using brute force; an action that is even sanctioned by the presence of the goddess Athena. This scene is striking because it is unprecedented in the depictions of the deeds of other heroes and in literary sources. The only comparable depiction would be the vase depicting Herakles who slays the entourage of Busiris with similar violence (Figure 6b). The typology of the cups shows how Attic vase painters imagined Theseus as another Herakles slaying and humiliating his victims. These examples comprise just under 10 % of all the representations of the theme in the fifth century BC, but they were produced in different workshops, which means that they were not so unique. Here we have, again, a case of an uncommon theme that demonstrates that there were other aspects of the hero besides the more current ones, but they were not expressed before 440 BC (von den Hoff 2001: 81-82).

Up until the last quarter of the sixth century BC, Theseus is mostly shown fighting his opponents armed with a sword like in his depictions with the Minotaur (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:63-64; von den Hoff: 2001:86). This convention is still prevalent when the themes of the myth-cycle begin to appear. In one of the earliest extant vase depicting such scenes, a red-figure cup signed by Skythes from around 510 BC in Rome, two of the deeds of Theseus are represented: his fight against the Krommyonian sow and his encounter with what appears to be Skyron (Neils 1995:19). As in the depictions with the Minotaur from this period, the hero is depicted in battle as a young man wielding a sword and wearing a chiton, and, aside from the dress, Skyron and Theseus are not so particularly differentiated because both are shown as young unbearded men (Figure 7a) (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:63-64; Neils 1995:19; von den Hoff: 2001:86).

In the course of few years, some adaptations that emphasised the otherness of Theseus opponents took place. The earliest cup that strictly has the myth-cycle as its main theme is in Florence now and contrasts greatly with the one signed by Skythes (Figure 7b) (Neils 1995:20). One of the differences is that it shows four of the episodes that comprise the myth-cycle and that Theseus human enemies are this time depicted as bearded nude men that are taller than he is (Brommer 1982:15; Neils 1995:20-21). The hero does not fight against his

enemies with a sword, but overpowers them with their own evil weapons or by using his superior wrestling skills (Neils 1995:21). The last two of the six episodes on the cup do not belong to the cycle along the Saronic Gulf and show his fights against the Minotaur and the Marathonian bull. Neils interprets that these last deeds are an artistic device to link the youthful Theseus with the new hero of the Saronic Gulf by reminding the observer that the hero of the more popular tales was the same young man (Neils 1995:20).

A contemporary cup in London from around 500 BC shows a similar imagery as the Florence cup (Neils 1995:21). In this case, four of its five deeds were also present in the Florence cup. What sets them apart is, nevertheless, the depiction of the Krommyonian sow, which in this case is a male animal (Brommer 1982:12; Neils 1995:21). Theseus is shown overpowering the beast while Hermes is directing his progress (Figure 8). What is unusual about this scene is that the god never appears with Theseus in vase painting and this indicates that the scene is an inspiration from black-figure paintings from around 510 BC where Herakles holds the Erymanthian boar by its hind legs (Brommer 1982:12-13; Neils 1995:21). The fact that the painter did not get the gender of the animal right suggests that the artist was more interested in establishing a similarity between the beasts that the two heroes fought than to get the story right (Neils 1995:21).

If Herakles' opponents influenced many of Theseus exploits depicted in vase painting, some of Herakles' human opponents could have served as inspiration as well. Neils points to several Archaic black- and red-figure vases where Herakles kills the sleeping giant Alkyoneus (Carpenter 2006:131; Neils 1995:21). The giant and Prokrustes share some traits in their artistic representations. Both are bigger than the heroes and have an ungroomed and wild aspect with their large beards and nudity. The difference between the deeds as they are illustrated is that while Herakles slays the giant during his sleep, Theseus actually encounters Prokrustes whom he defeats by using his cunning (Neils 1995:21).

Another instance that illustrates the same point is the parallel established between the encounters of Herakles and Antaios and that of Theseus and Kerkyon (Boardman 1982:2; Carpenter 2006:128; Neils 1995:27). On Attic black- and red-figure painting from the last quarter of the sixth and the first quarter of the fifth century BC, Herakles is shown tangling Antaios in a similar manner as Theseus is depicted when he wrestles Kerkyon in the Florence cup (Carpenter 2006:128; Neils 1995:27). Some differences appear again that stress the innovative youthfulness of the Athenian hero; while Herakles crushes his foe using brute force, Theseus gets the upper hand thanks to his scientific wrestling abilities (Neils 1995:27).

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, Herakles remained the greater hero, but his depictions in Attic vase painting declined strongly in numbers, while those of Theseus drastically increased (Boardman 1975:1-2; Mills 1997:27; von den Hoff 2010:177; Walker 1995:30). This fact, when taken together with the evidence shown above, indicates that Theseus' raise in popularity is the result of the introduction of the new narratives in works of art and literature. The depiction of the hero in the closing years of the sixth century BC is subjected furthermore to changes in the themes and conventions of Attic vase painting. Theseus representations are no longer restricted to the abduction of maidens and killing of monsters; instead tales from the myth-cycle start to become popular. The primitivism and brutality of Theseus' enemies in the depiction on these vases help to stress the quality and value of the hero. Attempts are also made to model Theseus on Herakles in vase painting by using similar themes and conventions, but some iconographic devices help to demonstrate that the hero surpasses Herakles in dexterity and ability. Theseus' wrestling skills are a common iconographic device that started to be used at the end of the sixth century BC. Theseus' encounters with Skyron, whom Theseus seems to fight in scenes that recall pankration matches, are a case in point (von den Hoff 2001:82).

The iconographic devise of the *agon* depicted in these early representations gives place to another type of typology that start to appear around 460-450 BC. From that time on, Theseus is shown in the moment when he is holding the tank behind his head preparing to strike the brigand, a detail that does not accord with the literary sources (von den Hoff 2001:82). This is also the case with representations of Prokrustes where Theseus again strikes his opponent with his own weapon (von den Hoff 2001:83). These two types of representations show Theseus in the moment where he has taken the upper hand and is on the verge of giving a final blow to his opponent. In this type of scene, Theseus meets his opponent with the energy of a man who is conscious about his own success and does not fear any retaliation from him. This kind of scenes seem to have been inspired by the iconography used to depict Harmodios the younger of the Tyrannicides who already appeared in the same pose around 477-476 BC (von den Hoff 2001:83). Thucydides describes the act depicted in these works of art as *tolma*, which means audacious bravery (Thuc. 6.54.1, 6.56.3, 6.59.1). This means that the concept of *tolma* as exemplified in the iconography of Harmodios and copied in vase paintings of Theseus, must have been an essential part of Athenian consciousness at the time Thucydides wrote his work. Later on, *tolma* is an established trait also mentioned by Isocrates (Isoc. 10.25). The pictorial representations of Theseus that show him in the moment where he is about to give the final blow indicate that *tolma* had become a

fundamental trait of Athenian identity from the time around 470-460 BC (von den Hoff: 2001:86).

As we have seen, these representations also superseded the new triumphal depiction of Theseus from around 480 BC where the victor is in focus and the opponent is no more than an insignificant figure in the composition (Boardman 2007:225; Brommer 1982:63-64; von den Hoff 2001:85). This can be interpreted as an expression of the growing self-confidence in the individual and collective acts of the city. The victory over the Persians at Marathon certainly contributed to this interpretation, because Athenians started to think of themselves as the saviours of Greece (Hdt. 7.139.1-7.139.5; Thuc. 1.69.1; von den Hoff 2001:85). This kind of iconography continued to be used until the end of the century, but in the case of Theseus, the motif of the self-conscious victor disappear. Instead, a new depiction of the hero is used for the first time. As the example with the dead Minotaur shows, the humiliation of the hero's opponents is given the emphasis. The victor, Theseus, is not only sure about his success, but also claims the right of exerting his might in a merciless way. Thucydides again provides a description of his fellow Athenians that illustrates this point. According to him, the right of the stronger was the principle by which Athens acted in a merciless way against the Melians in 416-45 BC (Thuc. 5.101.1; von den Hoff 2001:86-87).

The above discussion shows that the themes and iconography of Theseus was subjected to transformations that mirrored chronological changes in the mentality and ideology of Athens. The Athenians believed that the way they encounter their opponents in an agonal contest determined their identity. Theseus is represented as an embodiment of the city and his iconography in Attic vase painting shows the transformations of a consciousness that started out as cautious and prudent in the face of its success against the Persians. By the time of Perikles, however, the iconography shows a more aggressive claim of power that disregarded the dignity of their opponents. This notion of superiority in visual media is characteristic for the end of the fifth century BC (von den Hoff 2001:88).

Chapter Three - The Athenian Treasury at Delphi

The Pan-Hellenic Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi is located 166 Km to the north-west of Athens in upper central Greece in the region of Phocis on the slope of Mount Parnassus

(Figure 9a) (Gates 2005:227). The steep topography of this site is interrupted by three main terraces that were cut by a path known as the Sacred Way. These terraces were crowded with sanctuaries and many lesser dedications that were erected and fitted into a limited space with no other discernible reason for their placement than to secure their visibility and to provide access to the Sacred Way (Figure 9b) (Emerson 2007:27; Lawrence 1996:106; Pedley 2006:140).

Travellers accessed the sanctuary at the southeast and advanced up the hill in a zig-zag-pattern on the Sacred Way as participants in processions or as individuals (Emerson 2007:29; Pedley 2006:138). In the early years of the fifth century, at the turn of the first curve, travellers would encounter the Athenian treasury occupying a predominant location at this turning point (Audiat 1935:1390; Emerson 2007:34; Gruben 1966:84; Neer 2004:63; von den Hoff 2009:96). When climbing up the hill, the treasury came into their view from a three-quarter angle perspective that displayed one of its longer sides on the south and its front side on the east (Emerson 2007:34; Knell 1990:53; Neer 2004:63; Pedley 2006:143). The attention of their eyes would not only be drawn to the façade of this edifice but, behind it, high on an upper terrace, they would also get their first glimpse at the imposing porous Temple of Apollo, the main shrine of the sanctuary (Knell 1990:53; Neer 2004:63, 84).

The Athenian Treasury is a small and simple Doric cella with a distyle in-antis form that stands on a high fundament of porous limestone (Figure 9c) (Audiat 1935:1390; Dinsmoor 1950:117; Gruben 1966:84; Knell 1990:52; Lawrence 1996: 99; Neer 2004:65). It has no windows or proper steps and had metal grilles that ran across the entire front to protect the gifts or offerings that were kept inside. It is presumed that a small triangular terrace that stood as a forecourt in front of it was used to display spoils seized from the Persians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC (Emerson 2007:34; Gates 2005:231; Neer 2004:65; von den Hoff 2009:96).

The treasury was made in its entirety of Parian marble (Dinsmoor 1950:117; Gruben 1966:84; Knell 1990:52; Neer 2004:64), and, as it is customary for the Doric order, it is ornamented over its architrave with a frieze consisting of triglyphs and metopes (Pedley 2006:143). There are a total of thirty metopes arranged in two sets of six metopes on the treasury's east and west sides and two sets of nine metopes on its south and north sides (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24-25; Knell 1990:52). On all four sides, the metopes are embellished with sculptures depicting different mythological themes in the lives of Theseus and Herakles. The composition of the themes extend over an uneven number of multiple panels mirroring the labours of these two heroes (Figure 10) (Gruben 1966:85; Knell 1990:52).

The upper elements of the building, the pediments and the roof-acroteria, were decorated too. The pediments on both east and west sides were embellished with sculptures (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:167-181; Dinsmoor 1950:117; Gruben 1966:85; Knell 1990:52; Neer 2004:65, 66, 75, 84; von den Hoff 2010:167). Even though the sculptures are almost completely lost, the east pediment is known to have depicted a group of frontal figures with an epiphany of a goddess between chariots, while the one in the west exhibited a battle that is too fragmentary to make an identification possible (Figure 11) (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:176-181; Neer 2004:65). The roof was crowned at its corners and on the gable with acroteria portraying horse-riding Amazons (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:182-187; Dinsmoor 1950:117; Gruben 1966:85; Knell 1990:52; Lawrence 1996:99; Neer 2004:66).

The Date of the Treasury

The construction date of the treasury is still a matter of great controversies and dispute among scholars (Dinsmoor 1946:86; Neer 2004:64, 67). It is still unresolved if construction works began at the end of the sixth or at the beginning of the fifth century BC.

In his *Description of Greece* Pausanias tells a story where he affirms that the Athenians dedicated the treasury using the spoils they took from the Persians after the battle at Marathon in 490 BC (Paus. 10.11.5). Many scholars take Pausanias at face value because of a dedicatory inscription he read on the pedestal set up in front of the treasury's south wall that said: "The Athenians to Apollo as offerings from the Battle of Marathon, taken from the Mede" (Audiart 1935:1390; Dinsmoor 1946:86-87; Knell 1990:52-54; Neer 2004:66; von den Hoff 2009:96). Pausanias had understandably no reason to doubt the inscription and thought that the treasury and the pedestal were built together as a single gift. However, since Pausanias' reading was done many centuries after the battle, it is reasonable to ask if the pedestal is a later addition. This question is legitimate not only because the inscription lacks clarity regarding the exact date of its edification, but because of the treasury's themes and the late archaic style of its remaining sculpture which are not in tune with this date. Scholars who call attention to the style of the sculptures propose that the treasury and pedestal were constructed in two separate phases and are rather inclined to think that the building celebrates the installation of the Athenian democracy and the victory of its new hoplite forces against Boeotians and Chalcidians in 507-506 BC (Knell 1990:63; von den Hoff 2009:98). Those earlier events were of comparable significance to their victory at Marathon and their date suits

better the style and sculptural program of the treasury (Dinsmoor 1950:117; Emerson 2007:36; Gruben 1966:84-85; Knell 1990:57, 62; Neer 2004:67; Osborne 1998:127; Pedley 2006:144; von den Hoff 2009:96, 2010:164-165). There are also other scholars who prefer to take a middle ground and sustain that the construction of the treasury started before 490 BC and was finished after the battle of Marathon (von den Hoff 2009:96).

In any case, if sculptural style has been the second traditional criterion by which to assess that the treasury dates from the end of the sixth century, there is also the matter of the construction material which is as a third criterion not to be ranked behind. The first scholar who suggested the year 507 BC based on the material of the building was William Bell Dinsmoor (Dinsmoor 1946:88; Lawrence 1996:221). He pointed out that the Athenians would have refrained from using Parian marble, if marble from their own quarries on Mount Pentelikon had been available as it was in the 480s BC. Dinsmoor contended that the logistics and expenditures involved in the construction of such a costly public building so far away from the polis would not justify the additional expenses. (Dinsmoor 1946:88; Lawrence 1996:221; Neer 2004:78).

In recent years, the first criterion has come forward again as new evidence has contributed with even more material for discussion. Based on the discovery of a ledge of 0.30 m in width that projects from the Treasury's stereobate along its south side Richard Neer advocates a date for construction work in the years after 490 BC (Neer 2004:67). This ledge was discovered in the course of excavations carried by French archaeologists in 1989 to clarify the matter of the treasury's date. The ledge is believed to have been constructed to help support the Marathon pedestal, a fact that would prove that treasury and pedestal belong to the same phase of construction (Neer 2004:67). Ralf von den Hoff notes, however, that this ledge can also be found below the southern part of the west wall of the treasury, and on the inner side of the south wall, where no superstructure was supported. The ledge could then be interpreted as a component part of the structural terracing that was raised to support the building on the sloping terrain. Thus, the structural evidence from the foundations of the treasury is not convincing enough to support a late date for the building (von den Hoff 2009:98).

From this short survey of this apparently never-ending debate is clear that a resolution of this controversy might still evade us for time to come. If we, however, are convinced that it is nonetheless possible for the treasury to cast light upon the role it played in Athenian political life, be that at the end of the sixth or the first third of the fifth centuries BC, we have to take a

look at the implicit function of a treasury and the visual language it utilised to convey the premeditated message of their commissioners. By analysing the building, its location, its material, and its ornamentation, we can make deductions about the processes behind the decisions and choices of the themes and designs of its architectural features and sculptures (von den Hoff 2009:96). We can come closer to a satisfactory clarification of the chronology of the treasury by connecting what we know from the historical record about the circumstances and the political pursuits of Athens with an art-historical analysis of the remaining sculptures of the treasury.

Function and Media

The purpose of a treasury is to accommodate votive dedications. The costly expenditure invested in its erection and the choice of its ornamentation requires, however, close examination. If the representatives of a polis sanctioned the edification of a treasury, and if it was in addition to be built in a remote PanHellenic sanctuary, mere functionality is not enough to explain its conception program (Neer 2004:64). As a building designed to house acts of religious devotion, a treasury in a remote location forces its devotees to travel considerable lengths from their hometown. A costly act of religious devotion indeed for it is not only the cost of the journey that has to be taken into account, but the time invested in it. Pilgrimage to such remote sanctuaries was therefore more likely possible or reserved for aristocrats who had the means and the time to undertake such trips. At the sanctuary they would meet other well-born Greeks from other cities, and they would come together and compete with one another at promoting themselves through athletic display and by trying to surpass one another by making costly dedications to the gods. Considering this, it is clear that the treasury was rather used by the elite of a polis as an arena to exhibit their costly dedications for aristocratic self-promotion (Neer 2004:65). Since the treasury nevertheless belongs to the polis, its mere presence at a Pan-Hellenic stage brings about an interconnection between the treasury and the polis that makes that every votive displayed and dedicated to the gods is at two places at the same time: it is in the sanctuary and in the polis. In that way, votive offerings made by the elite become nationalised and the polis ends up capitalising on the self-promoting display of its elite (Neer 2004:65).

With this in mind, we can try to understand what this building represented for Athenian society of this period. As a civic building project, the Athenian treasury is the result

of discussions and decision-making of the new democratic government. The form and the size of the treasury, the material, and the themes and designs of its architectural sculpture must have been discussed thoroughly at the assembly. This would have been a necessity, not only to debate and vote on how to raise revenue and to authorise expenditures, but also to ensure that the treasury would be fitted with the precise visual media to display its intended message and to exalt Athens' self-portrayal at such an important PanHellenic stage (Neer 2004:73; von den Hoff 2009:96).

In the years after the institution of democracy and the political reforms under Kleisthenes, the Athenian assembly initiated a reconstruction program that aimed to replace cultic and civic buildings (Neer 2004:71; von den Hoff 2009:98). If we take into account that these civic meeting places already existed in one form or another, the decision to replace them strongly suggests that the purpose of the program was to remove monumental construction erected under the newly deposed tyranny. Part of this reconstruction program was to build a temple to Athena Polias on the Akropolis, a new site plan for the Agora was chosen and developed north of the Akropolis, and a new space for the popular assembly was created on the Pnyx (Neer 2004:71-72).

The fact that the archaic style of the sculptures of the treasury is better placed in this period (Knell 1990:57, 62) is a strong indication that the building might also have been part of this program. By looking at the whole imagery of the building, we might find further grounds to make this a strong case. In the examination of the metopes that follows, I adopt the numbering system used by de la Coste-Messelière (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24-25).

As already mentioned, the sculpture of the pediments and the acroteria on the roof of the treasury are very fragmentary (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:176-187; von den Hoff 2009:98), and this leaves us with the best preserved component of its visual media, that is, its Doric frieze. Since its style indicates that the metopes were carved sometime at the end of the sixth century BC, the only plausible explanation is, then, that construction work on the treasury must have begun in the decade after Kleisthenes' political reforms. Thus, the suspicion that the treasury belongs to the reconstruction program of the new democracy, finds here strong support. However, even if that could be considered to be settled, matters are still complicated because of the composition of the themes and their distribution over the architrave. It has been already pointed out that the metopes show episodes in the lives of Herakles and Theseus, but controversies about their composition and their placement persist because of the fact that they were found scattered on the site and not *in situ*. It is in general agreed, nevertheless, that the surviving twenty-seven metopes depict an Amazonomachy, the

Cycle of Theseus, the Geryonomachy and labours of Herakles (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24-25, 1966:702; von den Hoff 2009:98, 2010:167). Their current disposition was established by de la Coste-Messelière and was the result of educated guess work from the part of the French archaeologists who reconstructed the treasury in 1906 (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24-36; Gruben 1966:85; Knell 1990:53-54).

Consistently to this reconstruction, the series showing Theseus were placed on the south and the east, which were the two prominent sides of the building facing the ascending viewer (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24, 1966:702). As a result, the series showing Herakles were forcibly relegated to the sides that offered a restricted view from the Sacred Way: the north and the west. The obvious consequence of this arrangement is that visitors would be compelled to leave the path and circle the building if they wished to get a glance at them (Emerson 2007:36; Knell 1990:53; Pedley 2006:144).

According to this reconstruction and the number of metopes that compose each one of the themes, the east side shows six of the eight panels assigned to the Amazonomachy; the south side shows one panel belonging to the Amazonomachy and seven panels concerning the myth-cycle of Theseus. The west side shows the Geryonomachy on five panels and the rest of the surviving frieze displays labours of Herakles on seven panels and a scene of the Amazonomachy on one panel in the north side of the treasury (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:24-25; von den Hoff 2009:98). From this description, it is evident that the number of panels for each one of these four themes does not fit the space available on each side of the building (six panels on each of the shorter sides and nine panels on each of the longer sides of the building) (Figure 12). The only side that seems to have gotten the right number of panels is the west side. Since metope 26 depicting Geryon's dog Orthros was found in front of the treasury's west wall and because the number of panels showing with certainty the Geryonomachy are five, it is reasonable to assign this theme to one of the shorter sides. The disparity in the number of panels available for each one of the remaining themes is more evident on the east side, which displays six of the eight panels depicting Amazons. The solution proposed by the French archaeologists for this imbalance is to allot each of the remaining two panels of the Amazonomachy to the south and to the north sides (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:147, 240-243). This interpretation suggests that the intention of the French archaeologists was to uphold a balance between Theseus and Herakles on the south and north sides, but it is unclear why they chose this solution (von den Hoff 2009:98).

Recently Ralf von den Hoff has argued for a different disposition of the themes based on a solution proposed by Klaus Hoffelner in 1988 (von den Hoff 2009:98, 2010:167). von

den Hoff places Herakles labours on the east and west sides and the whole composition of the Amazonomachy on the north side (von den Hoff 2009:98-99). He reasons, to begin with, that the eight panels belonging to the Amazonomachy are a homogenous theme whose number fits better on this side. This arrangement not only considers the place available for one consistent theme, but it also leaves the prominent south side for the seven metopes of the myth-cycle of Theseus which are definitely too many for one of the shorter sides (von den Hoff 2009:98, 2010:167). von den Hoff furthermore points out that metopes 15, 16, 19 and 21 are the only ones where Herakles has been identified with certainty, and this small number of appearances indicates that his exploits would rather be displayed on the shorter sides of the treasury (Figure 10) (von den Hoff:98-99). von den Hoff takes also into account the novelty of the metopes of Theseus and the capacity of the travellers visiting Delphi to recognize both the hero and his deeds. Well known themes did not demand close attention of their viewers and could then be placed on the sides of the building that were less accessible (von den Hoff 2009:99). The myth-cycle on the other hand was being presented for the first time in a PanHellenic stage on a side of the treasury that was approached by walking up the hill, and their originality certainly required the attention of their viewers who would have to walk along to study them with their eyes. As travellers advanced on the Sacred Way, they would also get a glance at the east front where they could see and compare the newly introduced deeds of Theseus with those of Herakles (von den Hoff 2009:99).

As we have seen in the preceding Chapter, the deeds of the myth-cycle had started to appear around 520-510 BC, but this was the first time that they were displayed in architectural sculpture (von den Hoff 2009:99, 2010:164). The identification of the themes of the metopes where Theseus is the central figure is from left to right (metopes 1 to 8): Sinis, Periphetes, Kerkyon, Prokrustes, Athena, Marathonian bull, Minotaur and Amazon (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:39-81; Knell 1990:54- ; von den Hoff 2009:99-100, 2010:168-169). Metopes 1, 3, 6 and 7 follow the artistic conventions and typology present in Attic vase painting around 500 BC (von den Hoff 2009:99). The identification of metopes 2 and 4 present difficulties, but can be fixed by observing their typology (von den Hoff 2009:99). Depictions of Theseus fighting Skyron throughout the fifth century BC show him taking the brigand by his foot and throwing him into the sea (Brommer 1982:16; Carpenter 2006:161-162; von den Hoff 2009:99). Another theme of this fight, show Theseus striking Skyron with his own basin, but the hero never uses both of his hands for the blow, and this definitely rules him out (von den Hoff 2009:99). The postures of both the hero and the brigand of metope 2 resemble a lekkythos in Athens showing the fight between Theseus and Prokrustes and von den Hoff

deduces therefore that metopes 2 and 4 depict Prokrustes and Periphetes (von den Hoff 2009:99, 2010:168-169). The last identification is significant because Periphetes, as we have seen, is not included in Attic vases depicting the myth-cycle before 470-460 BC (Brommer 1982:5; Carpenter 2006:161; von den Hoff 2009:100, 2010:169). We also know that Theseus uses the brigand's own club to kill him and this visibly indicates that the appearance of Periphetes carries the intention of making the hero similar to Herakles (von den Hoff 2009:100, 2010:169). In spite of the poor condition of these metopes, the preserved shoulder of metope 2 and the posture of metope 4 denote that Theseus was holding his weapon above his head preparing to deliver a final blow against his opponents (Figure 13 and 14). As we have already seen, this posture, that would later be adopted for the statue of the Tyrannicide Harmodios in the Athenian Agora, is only possible if the attacker do not fear any counterattacks because he otherwise leaves his defence open to retaliation (von den Hoff 2010:169). It has been already established that in contemporary Attic vase painting, the theme of the wrestling *agon*, where Theseus is depicted encountering equal opponents and beating them thanks to his fighting skills, is the prevalent one (von den Hoff 2001:82). However, in Delphi the hero adopts the posture of a man of *tolma* who challenges his opponents without fear, just as the infallible Herakles is depicted on the metopes.

Another novelty clearly intended to parallel Theseus with Herakles is present in metope 5 where Athena is shown standing in front of a praying Theseus. This motif was taken from representations of Herakles with Athena in vase painting of the sixth century BC and in the treasury, the calmness of the scene, the only placid one of the entire frieze, seems to have been used to stress the predilection and care of the goddess towards the hero (von den Hoff 2009:100; 2010:168).

The decoration of the metopes reveals thus that Athens intended to introduce its new hero to a PanHellenic audience in such a way that travellers could compare Theseus with Herakles to make them realise that Theseus was almost as strong and impressive as he was (Knell 1990:59, 63; von den Hoff 2009:100).

In Attic vase painting of the time, the episodes with Phaia the Krommyon sow and Skyron are rarely excluded from the myth-cycle, and it is therefore possible that they too were depicted in the frieze (Brommer 1982:11; Carpenter 2006:161-162; von den Hoff 2009:100). Hence, the number of the metopes depicting the deeds of Theseus would be raised to ten, and this would imply that metope 8 with the Amazon must be assigned to the northern side of the treasury (von den Hoff 2009:100). This does not need to be the case because vase painters could

always leave out one episode or the other from the myth-cycle as we already have seen in Chapter Two. In the case of the treasury, I believe that the artists had to compromise to find a solution that could keep the balance between Theseus and Herakles and an omission of one of the episodes of the myth-cycle would be understandable. Maintaining the balance seems to have been a priority. This is also demonstrated by the epiphany of Athena, the city's patroness, who strengthened furthermore the likeness of Theseus and Herakles. This juxtaposition created an implicit correspondence in the nature of both heroes that resulted in the elevation of Theseus to a PanHellenic hero and, conversely, to the assimilation of Herakles as an Athenian one, or as Richard Neer calls it, the Atticizing of Herakles (Neer 2004:76; von den Hoff 2009:100).

At this point, it is worth remembering that the treasury stands on a lower terrace in front of the temple of Apollo when climbing up the hill (Emerson 2007:34; Knell 1990:53; Neer 2004:63; Pedley 2006:143). Many refer to this temple as the Alkmaionid temple because the Athenian clan of the Alkmaionid funded its reconstruction in the years between 530 and 510 BC. While the contract called for a temple in porous stone, the Alkmaionid exceeded this stipulation and paid for the façade of the temple to be built in Parian marble (Bury and Meiggs 1975:134-135; Dinsmoor 1950:91; Emerson 2007:40; Gruben 1966:72-73; Hdt. 5.62.2-5.62.3; Gates 2005:227; Lawrence 1996:80; Neer 2004:83-84; Pomeroy 2008:196). This costly gesture made the Alkmaionid famous in the whole of Greece and the fact that the new democratic state of Athens decided to build its treasury entirely in Parian marble calls for attention. If the use of the same material was a manoeuvre from the part of the Athenian state to establish a connection between these two buildings, an examination of their sculptural program might help us to elucidate this assumption (Neer 2004:84).

The sculptures of the pediments of the temple of Apollo are very fragmentary, but it seems that a reconstruction with some degree of certainty is still possible. The east pediment above the entrance depicted the god Apollo in a chariot framed by a frontal line-up of kouroi and korai. The sculptures in the corners represented lions eating animal victims. The west pediment depicted a Gigantomachy (Emerson 2007:40; Gruben 1966:73; Neer 2004:84). The east pediment of the treasury presented, on the other hand, a group of frontal figures with an epiphany of a goddess between chariots, and the west pediment depicted a battle that is too fragmentary to identify (de la Coste-Messelière 1957:176-181; Neer 2004:65). In spite of the difference of the themes, there were similitudes in their composition that seem to be more than a coincidence (Neer 2004:84).

Neer points out that if we wish to try a reconstruction of the lost metopes of the temple of Apollo, we can turn to Euripides' play *Ion* where the chorus describes the west side of the building and mentions sculptural groups of scenes of Bellerophon killing Chimaera, and Herakles killing the Hydra (Eur. *Ion* 190-193; Neer 2004:84). Since it is evident that these scenes could not be part of the pediments, it is believed that they must belong to the metopes. Fragments of three of the recovered metopes indicate that while some of them were made of porous stone and were left undecorated, others were carved and made of marble, and are expected to belong to the only side of the temple made of that material. These fragments show a female leg and body parts of two oxen. Even though the material evidence is very scant, de la Coste-Messelière argued that these two oxen could belong to a metope cycle of Herakles stealing the cattle of Geryon. Neer suggests that a contemporary cup by Euphronios might have been inspired by these lost metopes (Neer 2004:85). If his assumption is right, the temple of Apollo and the treasury had both metopes depicting the scenes of the same labour of Herakles, and if the solution proposed by Hoffelner and contested by von den Hoff is right, we would have Herakles on the east metopes of both buildings.

The pairing together of Theseus and Herakles in the treasury would not only bring about an Atticizing of the former, but it would have established a connection with the Alkmaionid temple as well. In *The Athenian Treasury at Delphi and the Material of Politics*, Richard Neer tries to elucidate with the help of the historical, literary and archaeological record how the imagery of the treasury can be used to read the efforts of the Athenian democracy to control the self-display of its aristocracy (Neer 2004:63-89). He bases his examination on the premise that the treasury was built after the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC and follows the chain of events in the political life of the city from that date on to trace the responses of the aristocratic factions that opposed democracy. Neer explains that the construction of the treasury is the material expression of this struggle and regards the building as an Athenian statement to announce a new democratic order and the appropriation of aristocratic self-display in benefit of the whole city (Neer 2004:71, 88). He also sees the pairing of Theseus and Herakles in a PanHellenic stage, as a political move to enhance the prestige of the Athenian hero and to Atticize Herakles at the same time. Thus, Herakles becomes in the treasury an Athenian symbol with which to establish a connection between the treasury and the Alkmaionid temple (Neer 2004:85). As postulated by Neer, the democratic government of Athens laid claim to the ostentatious extravagance of the clan turning the temple of Apollo into a “*dedication by the Athenians*” (Neer 2004:86).

von den Hoff on the other hand, places the construction of the treasury in the last decade of the sixth century BC in the years after the Kleisthenic reforms (von den Hoff 2009:96-98, 2010:164-166). He agrees with Neer, however, on most of his line of reasoning and recognizes the moves and countermoves of the political factions and Theseus' adaptability to transcend any political division in Athenian society due to the hero's attributes as a king and a democrat (Neer 2004:74-75). When it comes to the pairing of Theseus and Herakles in a PanHellenic stage, von den Hoff gives a detailed examination of all the measures the Athenian took to parallel both heroes and adheres to Neer's notion on the intention of the enhancing of Theseus and the Atticizing of Herakles (von den Hoff 2009:101). I strongly agree with Neer's idea on the Athenian appropriation of Herakles as a stratagem to both lift Theseus' reputation and to Atticize the Alkmaionid temple. I am convinced, however, that construction work on the Athenian treasury began in the years after the Kleisthenic reforms based on the art-historical grounds presented by von den Hoff. The archaic style of the sculptures and the historical events of the closing years of the sixth century BC, seem to me more plausible than to link the edification of the treasury as a response to the political struggle after the Battle of Marathon.

As we saw in Chapter One, the territorial dispute over the island of Salamis between Athens and Megara ended in favour of the former after the outside arbitration of the Spartans around 509 BC (Bury and Meiggs 1975:127, 526). Shortly after, in 507-506 BC, Athens successfully managed to defend itself against a coalition of Spartans, Boeotians and Chalcidians (Bury and Meiggs 1975:138-140; Hdt. 5.74.1-5.77.4; Morris and Powell 2014:234-235), and if we take all of these events together, we can see that they were reason enough to commemorate them with the edification of an splendid treasury in Parian marble. We can furthermore elucidate how important it was to boost Athenian self-confidence both locally and in a PanHellenic stage. The choice of the scenes and the typology of Theseus that show him as a fearless challenger of his enemies seem to be the appropriate motif to stress these concerns. The contemporary rise and proliferation of artistic representations of the deeds of Theseus along the Saronic Gulf in Attic vase painting and their appearance on the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi as response to these circumstances would make a strong case for this view.

Chapter four – Bipolarity, the Hephaisteion and the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion

Bipolarity in the fifth century BC

In François de Polignac's book *Cults territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*, this French scholar examines the role of religion and the location of sanctuaries in a period of time that comprises the end of the ninth - to the early seventh century BC (de Polignac 1995:3). His main focus is on extra urban sanctuaries because he argues that they had a sacred and a symbolic meaning. As spiritual sites, they connected the inhabitants of a town with the rural communities who shared the same religious beliefs and appropriated the surrounding landscape by serving as demarcations of the territory of the polis (de Polignac 1995:60). According to him, the construction of sanctuaries occurs thus as the interplay of two poles; a central pole, the suburban sanctuary, and a median pole, the extra-urban sanctuary (de Polignac 1995:39-40, 154). While the suburban one acts as the city-centre, the extra-urban one delineates the polis' furthest boundaries. This mechanism serves the purpose of securing access to strategic points in the landscape in order to lay claim to its natural resources. de Polignac disregards Athens as a bipolar city because of the historical continuity at the level of institutions and cults from the Mycenaean times down to the Archaic period (de Polignac 1995:86). He recognizes, however, that the temple of Poseidon at Sounion was a territorial sanctuary manifesting Athenian sovereignty at one of the extremes of its territory (de Polignac 1995:85). He downplays, nevertheless, the importance of the temple as a extra urban sanctuary because his focus is to explain the mechanisms that sought to create social cohesion and common identity between communities in or around the Dark Ages.

In spite of his disbelief, my concept tries to adapt this principle to the religious, sociopolitical and historical factors that have been discussed so far in this thesis. In my approach, bipolarity explains the function of the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion. In this case, the polis, the city-state of Athens, is already consolidated, and the interplay of a focal and a median point does not seek to explain the mechanisms back the emergence of the city-state of Athens, but one that tries to manifest the use of the temples' visual media as a means to extend the city's authority on the Aegean Sea in the middle of the fifth century BC. With that in mind, it is time to examine the conception of the two temples and the choice and use of their visual media.

The Hephaisteion

The temple of Hephaistos and Athena Ergane most commonly known as the Hephaisteion is a Doric temple located at the west side of the Athenian Agora on the Kolonos Agoraios hill (Figure 15a-b) (Barringer 2009:105; Camp 1986:82; Dinsmoor 1950:179; Emerson 2007:135; Gates 2005: 257; Gruben 1966:199; Knell 1990:127; Morgan 1962:210a; Rodenwaldt 1951:28; von den Hoff 2010:172). It is the best preserved Doric temple from Antiquity due to the fact that it was converted into a Christian church somewhere around the seventh century AD (Camp 1986:84; Gates 2005: 256-257; Knell 1979:57).

Most scholars agree that construction works on the temple started sometime around 460 or 449-448 BC (Barringer 2009:105; Camp 1986:87; Dinsmoor 1950:180; Emerson 2007:136; Gates 2005: 257; Gruben 1966:199; Knell 1990:127; Lawrence 1996:129; Morgan 1962:210a; Thompson 1949:267) and finished around 420 BC (Camp 1986:87; Emerson 2007:136; Gates 2005: 257; Knell 1990:127). The construction material of the temple comprised limestone for the lowest step of the krepis, Pentelic marble for the superstructure and Parian marble for its architectural sculpture (Barringer 2009:106; Camp 1986:84; Dinsmoor 1950:180; Emerson 2007:136; Gruben 1966:199-200; Morgan 1962:215a; Rodenwaldt 1951:28).

The temple is 13.708 m wide and 31.77 m long (Emerson 2007:136; Knell 1990:127; Lawrence 1996:129) with a distyle in antis at each end and a peristyle that consists of six columns on the shorter east and west sides and thirteen columns on the longer north and south sides (Figure 15a) (Camp 1986:84; Dinsmoor 1950:179; Emerson 2007:136; Knell 1990:127; Rodenwaldt 1951:28). The rather slender columns of the peristyle supported its relatively high entablature (Dinsmoor 1950:180; Emerson 2007:136; Gruben 1966:204; Lawrence 1996:129; Morgan 1962:99c).

As is usual in the Doric order, the entablature is decorated with metopes and triglyphs. The metopes depict deeds of Theseus and Herakles, but only those at the east front and the first four on each flank are carved (Emerson 2007:138; Gates 2005:257; Gruben 1966:202; Knell 1979:62; Morgan 1962:210a; Thompson 1949:245; von den Hoff 2010:173). The pediments and the roof were also decorated with sculptures, but in the case of the latter the evidence is too fragmentary to make an identification of its theme and composition possible (Barringer 2009:107; Emerson 2007:139; Knell 1990:128). The acroteria on top of the gable depicted what could possibly be identified as a group sculpture of two Hesperides (Gruben

1966:204; Morgan 1962c:95; Thompson 1949:248, 254, 263) or a group of one girl carrying another (Lawrence 1996:129).

The porches of the temple are not equal in size (Figure 15c). The east porch, the pronaos, is deeper with the antae levelled with the third columns of the flanks and the entrance of the cella aligned with their fifth columns (Camp 1986:82; Emerson 2007: 135-136; Gruben 1966:202; Knell 1990:128; Lawrence 1996:129; Rodenwaldt 1951:29). The antae of the west porch, the opisthodomos, stand in the middle of the second and third columns of the flanks and its back wall is aligned with their fourth columns (Emerson 2007:135-136; Knell 1990:128). At first look, the lack of symmetry between the two porches is explained by the different functions of the rooms. The opisthodomos was used to storage treasury and votive dedications and did not require much space. The pronaos, on the contrary, acted as the antechamber of the cella and its purpose seems to have been to intensify the experience of the worshipper when seeing the cult statues at the end of the cella (Emerson 2007:137).

Both of the inner porches are decorated with Ionic friezes. The one of the east porch was framed above and below by an Ionic moulding (Dinsmoor 1950:180; Lawrence 1996:129; Rodenwaldt 1951:29). It was 11.53 m long (Knell 1990:127) and ran at the top of the inner architrave of the pronaos and consisted of six rectangular slabs that extended across and over the pteroma up to the back of the entablature of the external colonnade (Figure 15d) (Camp 1986:84; Dinsmoor 1950:180; Gates 2005:257; Gruben 1966:202; Knell 1990:128; Lawrence 1996:129; Morgan 1962:221b; Rodenwaldt 1951:29). Since the inner architrave at the front is levelled with the third columns of the flanks, the two ends of the frieze were connected, as in a framed compartment, with the last decorated metopes of the external Doric frieze (Dinsmoor 1950:180; Emerson 2007:138; Morgan 1962:221b). Renovation work to clean the frieze revealed that its background was painted in blue and that the architrave was coloured in red along its edges (Gruben 1966:202; Harrison 1988:339; Rodenwaldt 1951:30). The frieze of the west porch was 7.81 m long and 0.81 m wide and ran at the top of the architrave over the whole length of the façade of the opisthodomos (Camp 1986:82; Dinsmoor 1950:180; Gates 2005:257; Knell 1990:128; Lawrence 1996:129). The frieze consisted of four rectangular slabs topped with an Ionic kymation that did not extend further out towards the pteroma (Figure 15e) (Knell 1990:133; Lawrence 1996:129).

When it comes to the cella, the foundations indicate that an inner colonnade ran parallel with the side walls and met behind the bronze cult images of Hephaistos and Athena by Alkamenes (Camp 1986:86; Dinsmoor 1950:179; Emerson 2007:139; Gates 2005:257;

Gruben 1966:203; Knell 1990:127; Lawrence 1996:129-130; Rodenwaldt 1951:28). These images have been dated to 421 and 415 BC with the help of an inscription that records the payment of two large bronze statues (Barringer 2009:106; Camp 1986:87; Dinsmoor 1941:109-110; Emerson 2007:139; Lawrence 1996:129; Rodenwaldt 1951:30; Thompson 1949:267).

The Architectural Sculpture

The Doric frieze

Based on the style of the metopes, scholars estimate that they belong to the earliest phase of construction of the temple and were probably carved around the middle of the fifth century BC (Barringer 2009:106; Knell 1990:128; Thompson 1949:259). Only the ten metopes on the east front and the first four on each of the flanks are carved. Those on the front are dedicated to eight of the Twelve Labours of Herakles and the eight on the flanks depict a selection of the deeds of Theseus from the myth-cycle and his encounter with the Marathonian bull and the Minotaur (Figure 16) (Barringer 2009:106; Camp 1986:84; Gates 2005:257; Gruben 1966:202; Knell 1990:129; Morgan 1962:216-217a; Rodenwaldt 1951:29; Thompson 1949:245; von den Hoff 2010:174).

Adopting the numbering system from Morgan (Morgan 1962:212-217a), the labours of Herakles depicted on the metopes are from left to right: the Nemean Lion, the Lernaean Hydra, the Cerynian Hind, the Erymanthian Boar, the Mares of Diomedes, Kerberos, the Belt of Hippolyte, and finally the Cattle of Geryon on metopes eight and nine. Metope number ten on the far right side has been identified as a quiet scene involving the goddess Athena and the hero (Figure 17) (Morgan 1962:212a, 216-217a).

When it comes to the identification of the metopes dedicated to Theseus, there has been some disagreements among scholars about the first metope on the north flank (Figure 18a-b) (Morgan 1962:212-213a). This is due to the facts that Plutarch lists Periphetes as the first brigand Theseus met on his way to Athens from Troezen (Plut. *Thes.* 1-36.4) and that in the lack of any recognizable attribute Periphetes and Prokrustes are very difficult to distinguish from each other (Morgan 1962:212-213a). Morgan holds, however, that on this metope Theseus' opponent should be identified as Periphetes (Knell 1990:127; Morgan 1962:212a). He asserts that a drill hole behind the knee of the brigand was intended to anchor a cot under his extended right thigh and this iconographic attribute would clearly make his identification possible (Knell 1990:130; Morgan 1962:213-214a). The sequence of Theseus' opponents on the metopes of the north flank is thus Prokrustes, Kerkyon, Skyron and Phaia,

and on the south flank, Periphetes, Sinis, the Marathonian bull and the Minotaur (Figure 17a) (Barringer 2009:106; Knell 1990:130-131; Rodenwaldt 1951:29; von den Hoff 2010:175).

Since this arrangement do not follow the sequence of events of the myth-cycle, we must see some intention in it. Knell argues that this arrangement, as exemplified on the south flank, was intended to highlight what the Athenians considered to be the more beneficial exploits of the hero for the sake of the city crowning it with the slaying of the Minotaur which was the most famous and important of all (Knell 1990:132). On this metope, the posture of the hero when grabbing the Minotaur looks very much like the one adopted by the figure of Aristogeiton of the sculpture group of the Tyrannicides made by Kritios and Nesiotes in 477-476 BC (Figure 14) (Knell 1990:130; Morgan 1962:226b). Knell sustains that the importance that the slaying of the Minotaur had for Athens was specially emphasised by using the same typology as the one used in this sculptural group. He argues that the effect was to associate the murder of the tyrant Hipparchos with the slaying of the Minotaur paralleling the two events and the subsequent creation of a royal-democracy in the past and the actual democracy of fifth-century Athens (Knell 1990:130).

Scholars like Morgan see in this peculiar arrangement of the metopes an interruption of the sculptural work of the temple due to a shortage of funds or of materials (Morgan 1962:221b; Thompson 1949:221-222). Other scholars disagree with that idea because most of the architectural sculptures of the temple were concentrated on its eastern side (Barringer 2009:109; Camp 1986:84; Knell 1990:129). Knell for instance argues that the proof of this intention lies in the fact that the position and quantity of the decorated metopes form a horse-shoe shaped enclosure that produces the right length to connect the Doric frieze on the outside with the Ionic frieze on the inside of the pronaos creating a sculptural enclosure (Knell 1990:129). This combined with the deeper east porch would make the frieze more visible from the Agora and at the same time would enhance the experience of the building while entering it (Emerson 2007:137).

The Ionic frieze

The Ionic frieze of the west porch, shows a Centauromachy which some scholars identify as the battle between Lapiths and Centaurs and its style indicates that it was carved around 430 or 420 BC (Barringer 2009:107; Camp 1986:86; Emerson 2007:139; Gates 2005:257; Gruben 1966:202; Knell 1990:133-134; Morgan 1962:222b; Rodenwaldt 1951:30). Its symmetric composition centres the attention of the viewer to the middle of the frieze where scholars

recognize Theseus and Perithoos standing back to back. Theseus is shown in heroic nudity moving from right to left coming to the aid of Kaineus and Perithoos protects himself with a shield moving in the opposite direction while preparing a decisive blow with his sword against a Centaur (Camp 1986:86; Knell 1990:136-137; Morgan 1962:222). The pose adopted by Theseus clearly derives from Harmodios from the sculpture group of the Tyrannicides (Barringer 2009:107; Knell 1990:136; Morgan 1962:226b) and the fact that the hero is placed besides the familiar theme of Kaineus in the centre of the frieze seems to have been devised to make this recognition more easily identifiable (Velentza 2015:11). The Lapiths and Centaurs are carved in the same scale and this suggests that this was an allusion to establish that the balance of powers was distributed equally between the antagonists. This is evidently shown in the various outcomes of the encounters of the different protagonists fighting in the battle where there are casualties on both sides and where it is not clear which side has the upper hand (Velentza 2015:11). Theseus is furthermore shown fighting alongside his countrymen which was a common Athenian convention during the fifth century BC (Velentza 2015:13).

The theme of the frieze of the east porch is a matter of dispute among scholars (Barringer 2009:107; Knell 1990:136; Morgan 1962:222b; Rodenwaldt 1951:30). It depicts a battle attended by seated figures of larger proportions than those who are fighting (Camp 1986:84; Emerson 2007:139; Knell 1990:136; Rodenwaldt 1951:29). The narrative and the symmetry of the composition do not require that viewers move their gaze along the continuous relief from right to left or vice versa; they are rather encouraged to focus their attention in the centre of the frieze (Morgan 1962:223-224b). The narrative on the edges of the frieze show draped and naked figures engaged in combat. They frame an assembly composed of two groups of three seated gods observing the struggle. Based on their attributes, the three figures at the south have been identified as Athena, Hera and Zeus. The other three at the north lack their attributes, but scholars recognize Hephaistos at the northernmost end in a symmetrical correspondence with Athena with whom he shares the temple. The identification of the other two figures have been suggested as Aphrodite and Apollo (Morgan 1962:222b). A little bit left from the centre of the frieze a figure wearing only a himation and comparatively larger than the others is depicted fighting some opponents that use rocks as weapons. This prominent figure moves from right to left in a posture that resembles Aristogeiton from the bronze group of the Tyrannicides (Barringer 2009:107; Knell 1990:138; Morgan 1962:226b). The identification of this figure is just as debated as the theme of the frieze. Some see in him the god Hephaistos in a scene of the Trojan War (Knell 1990:136) and the assembly of gods watching the Battle on the Skamander River (Knell 1990:136)

which the gods are said to have attended and where Hephaistos actively intervenes in favour of the Greeks (Barringer 2009:116; Knell 1990:136-137). Other scholars have proposed that it is a Gigantomachy or Theseus fighting against his cousins the Pallantides (Barringer 2009:116).

Barringer observes, however, that rocks are the typical choice of attributes to depict the Giants in narratives that depict the clash between the forces of civilization against primitive opponents (Barringer 2009:116) and this fact would rule out the identification of the theme as a scene out of the Trojan War or as Theseus fighting the Pallantides. The remaining alternative would be to identify the frieze as a Gigantomachy, but in this narrative the gods fight actively against the Giants (Barringer 2009:116; Morgan 1962:222b). Even though the motifs and the depiction of the figures of the frieze make it complicated to identify this battle, I agree with those who interpret the theme of the frieze as the battle of Theseus against the Pallantides (Morgan 1962:222b). This myth combined with the postures of Harmodios and Aristogeiton adopted by Theseus might have been used as a figurative treatment for the fight against tyranny (Morgan 1962:226) and the victories of Athens as a force of civilization over the barbaric Persians (Knell 1990:136-138). Morgan calls furthermore attention to the style of the sculptures that appears to borrow inspiration from the heroic type (Morgan 1962:232b) and this seems to me to be an artistic ploy to stress the connection between the Tyrannicides and the hero. This interpretation would in addition fit in the context of the temple for many reasons. It would establish a balance between the Doric frieze with the nine episodes of Herakles depicted in his ten metopes with nine episodes of Theseus if we count his eight metopes and the Ionic frieze in the pronaos (Barringer 2009:109). This would recall the same balance treated in the Athenian treasury at Delphi where efforts were made to distribute the honour of the heroes equally. Since Theseus most probably is the central figure of the western frieze, the balance is set even more in his favour, and this together with the emphasis put on the east front of the temple would also follow a common custom of a decorative choice for public buildings in the Agora.

As we saw in Chapter Two, the Stoa Poikile at the northern edge of the Agora and the Theseion were decorated with famous paintings of Theseus fighting the Amazons. In the Stoa Poikile Theseus' Amazonomachy was depicted side by side with the Trojan War and the Battle of Marathon (Barringer 2009:114; Castriota 1992: 28; Edwards 1970:41; Paus. 1.15.2; 17.2). Close to the temple, in the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios of around 430-420 BC close to the temple there were paintings of Demos, Democracy and Theseus (Barringer 2009:114; Paus.

1.3.2-1.2.3). Theseus throwing Skyron into the sea is also present as a terracotta akroterion on the roof of the Stoa Basileios of around 460 BC (Barringer 2009:114; Paus. 1.3.1).

The evidence becomes even more conclusive when we take into consideration that the location of the temple is strongly associated with the working quarters of the craftsmen who worked in its vicinity and the gods of *techne* to whom it was dedicated: Hephaistos the god of metalworking and Athena the goddess of arts and crafts (Barringer 2009:114; Camp 1986:84; Emerson 2007:141; Gates 2005:256; Gruben 1966: 199; Rodenwaldt 1951:28). Andokides (Andoc. 1.40) mentions a bronze foundry below the temple and archaeological evidence of bronze- and iron working pits and clay moulds has been found southwest of the temple (Barringer 2009:114; Camp 1986:84). As the Athenian hero per excellence, his presence is expected in a public building because of his association with the democracy. From its location, the temple was visible from several other public buildings concerned with the democratic institutions of the city (Barringer 2009:110). Barringer points out that right at the slope of the Kolonos Agoraios four long rows of soft porous slabs of 25 to 37 m were installed. These slabs were used as benches for the law-court or the original Bouleuterion and were known as *synedrion*. When viewed from below, the benches and the temple are nearly centred and this disposition suggests that the intention was to integrate the temple within the larger setting of the Agora (Barringer 2009:111).

The Audience of the Temple

The fact that the outer sculptural decoration and other aesthetic refinements of the temple were concentrated on its east side is supposed to have been planned to emphasise its view from the Agora (Barringer 2009:106; Emerson 2007:135; Gates 2005:257; Lawrence 1996:129; Morgan 1962:221b; Rodenwaldt 1951:29). Prominence was given to the east porch by elongating it (Knell 1990:128). The elongation of the distance between the pteron and the porch is a rarity that can only be explained if the visibility of the east frieze from the Agora was taken into consideration (Barringer 2009:106; Lawrence 1996:129) so that viewers visiting the Agora could see the deeds of the heroes and be reminded of their prowess (Barringer 2009:114).

As a public building, the commission, financing and planning of the temple must have gone through the usual political process where demos and boule had to discuss and sanction the choice of themes and iconographies of its sculptural program (von den Hoff 2010:173). In this case, some of the iconographic choices suggest that Theseus and Herakles were modelled

to resemble each other. Theseus is shown fighting Periphetes in the south flank of the temple in metope 1 using a club which is a typical attribute of Herakles (von den Hoff 2009:100, 2010:169). As we have seen, Herakles overpowers his opponents by the use of raw force, and the depiction of Theseus when fighting on the metopes shows that while he has the upper hand against his enemies, his posture makes evident that he has to make an effort and bring his strength into play to finish the fight. In addition, Herakles, contrary to what was a common attribute in Attic vase painting, lacks his lion-skin in all the metopes, besides from the last one. In metope ten he appears with this attribute in the presence of Athena. The circumstance that both heroes are naked in all of the metopes with the exception of metope 10 seems to be an intentional scheme to make them more similar to one another (von den Hoff 2010:177).

In spite of all the measures taken to equal the two heroes, the placement of the metopes of Herakles on the façade of the temple, looking down to Athens political centre, shows that he still was the more prominent figure in architectural sculpture as he had been before in Delphi and this indicates that he was constructed as a “democratic hero” (von den Hoff 2010:174). The fact that Athena this time appears on the metopes blessing Herakles (von den Hoff 2010:174), can be interpreted as a reversal of what happens in Delphi. Whereas Theseus was elevated to a PanHellenic hero by being set up together with the goddess on the metopes of the treasury, Herakles is Atticized by the same means in the Hephaisteion.

The iconography of Theseus in the metopes does not show the pose of the “superior victor”. It shows instead the overpowering of the opponent by physical force rather than by the agonistic skill of a knowledgeable fighter (von den Hoff 2010:175). It seems that the conventional “final-blow-posture” of Theseus in Delphi and in Attic vase painting of the middle of the fifth century BC was ignored in the metopes (von den Hoff 2010:176).

Theseus was presented in sculpture to a PanHellenic audience in Delphi as a self-confident hero. In contemporary Attic vase painting, he is shown as the agonistic fighter that has to work hard for his success. In the middle of the fifth century BC the coin is flipped and he is now presented as an agonistic hero in the Doric frieze of the Hephaisteion while he has the posture of the “effortless-victor” in Attic vase painting (von den Hoff 2010:177). The small number of vases depicting Theseus as the self-confident hero indicates that this motif did not enjoy much success. In the time around 500 BC the aristocratic interest in this motif is apparent because this is the way that Theseus was depicted in vases used in symposia (von den Hoff 2010:178).

The sculptures of the Doric and Ionic friezes invited Athenians to compare and emulate Theseus' deeds of skill and Herakles' exploits of strength (Barringer 2009:109). The iconographic convention borrowed from the poses of the sculpture group of the Tyrannicides placed in the Agora could be seen opposite the temple (von den Hoff 2010:174) and were used to represent Theseus as the defender of democracy against tyranny (Barringer 2009:112-113).

By the middle of the century, vase painting had adopted the motif of the self-confident *tolma* which means that the inner polis discourse directed its focus on heroic self-confidence and less on agonistic values of equal fighting (von den Hoff 2010:178).

The temple of Poseidon at Sounion

The Doric temple of Poseidon stands 80 m above the sea on the top of the cliff of cape Sounion at the southernmost point of Attica (Themelis 1974:3) (Figure 19a-b). This promontory marks a crossroads in one of the most travelled trade routes of Greece (Lawrence 1996:131-132). The temple is in antis and was built about 444-440 BC on top of the remains of a late archaic porous stone temple (Dinsmoor 1950:182; Gruben 1966:205; Lawrence 1996:130; Leventi 2009:121; Meletzis 1972:9; Themelis 1974:10). Construction work on the porous temple had started in the first years of the fifth century BC, but could not be brought to completion because it was destroyed by the Persians in 480 BC (Dörpfeld 1884:325; Gruben 1966:205; Leventi 2009:121; Meletzis 1972:10; Themelis 1974:10). It seems that only the stylobate of the old temple survived and was preserved to be used as foundation for the Classical temple (Dörpfeld 1884:325; Gruben 1966:206; Knell 1979:64; Leventi 2009:121). How this foundation determined the plan of its successor is demonstrated by the alignment of the ends of the antae of the opisthodomos with the centre of the third columns on the flanks (Dinsmoor 1950: 182; Lawrence 1996:131). As a result, the west porch had the distinctiveness of being larger than the east porch (Gruben 1966:208; Knell 1979:66; Lawrence 1996:131). When it comes to the cella, it seems that the new temple preserved nearly the same dimensions as the old one because otherwise new foundation walls would have had to be constructed (Dörpfeld 1884:332; Knell 1979:66). The plan of the first temple also showed that the cella had a double interior row of columns that was later abandoned in the design of the elevation of its successor (Meletzis 1972:11; Themelis 1974:10).

The Classical temple was made of marble from Agrileza and its floor was paved with marble tiles that hid the stylobate of the old porous temple (Meletzis 1972:11). It was 13.47 m wide and 31.124 m long with distyle in antis at each end and a peristyle that consisted of six columns on the shorter east and west sides and thirteen columns on the longer north and south sides (Dinsmoor 1950: Appendix; Dörpfeld 1884:325; Gruben 1966:206; Knell 1979:64; Meletzis 1972:10-11; Themelis 1974:18).

According to Dörpfeld, the architect responsible for the new elevation of the superstructure deliberately kept the proportions and artistic representation of the old temple (Dörpfeld 1884:335). This is perhaps mirrored in the relationship between the entablature and the columns. While the entablature of the temple had nearly the same height as that of the Hephaisteion, the columns were with a height of 6.1 m approximately 30 cm higher (Dinsmoor 1950: Appendix; Gruben 1966:206; Knell 1979:66-67; Lawrence 1996:131). Lawrence argues that the site of the temple on the promontory dictated its shape because when gazed from the sea, the view on the disproportioned entablature must have made it look high enough for the columns (Lawrence 1996:131-132). The real effect of this architectonic refinement is regrettably not possible to discern today because nothing above the architrave remains in its original position (Lawrence 1996:131).

When it comes to the opisthodomos, the plan shows that its entrance was on the west side. It functioned as a storage room for votive offerings and money from the Laureion mines (Meletzis 1972:12; Themelis 1974:18-19).

The cult statue of Poseidon stood within the cella, but we have no knowledge of how it looked like (Meletzis 1972:11; Themelis 1974:19). The cella lacked internal columns (Dinsmoor 1950:182; Dörpfeld 1884:332) and its walls were exactly aligned with the penultimate columns on the ends (Lawrence 1996:131).

In the east porch of the temple, an Ionic frieze of Parian marble framed by Ionic mouldings (a Lesbian Kyma) ran continuously around all four of its sides (Dinsmoor 1950: 182; Dörpfeld 1884:328; Fabricius 1884:341-342; Knell 1979:66; Lawrence 1996:131; Meletzis 1972:11; Themelis 1974:19). Drill holes show that the figures had embellishments in bronze and lead that were attached to the slabs (Fabricius 1884:345-346; Leventi 2009:122). There is no agreement among scholars about the themes and depictions of the frieze, but most recognize a Centauromachy, a Gigantomachy and some of the deeds of Theseus (Leventi 2009:121; Meletzis 1972:11-12; Themelis 1974:19).

The pediments of the temple were also decorated with sculptures (Dinsmoor 1950:182; Lawrence 1996:131; Meletzis 1972:12) in Parian marble, but only the figure of a

headless seated woman that presumably belonged to the east pediment was found in the course of Valerios Stais' excavations (Themelis 1974:19).

The roof had acroteria in the form of palmettes or floral motives (Dinsmoor 1950:182; Meletzis 1972:12; Lawrence 1996:131) on the left and right corners of the pediment and the central akroterion from the east side was also the figure of a seated woman (Themelis 1974:19). The metopes of the temple were left undecorated (Dinsmoor 1950: 182; Gruben 1966:207; Lange 1881:233; Lawrence 1996:131; Meletzis 1972:11; Themelis 1974:19).

The structure and the refinements of the design of the Classical temple resembles very much those of the Hephaisteion so that it has been postulated that they were designed by the same architect (Dinsmoor 1950:181-182; Gruben 1966:208; Knell 1979:57-71; Lawrence 1996:131, 133).

The Frieze

The frieze was composed of fourteen slabs that are now kept in the Laureion Archaeological Museum (Leventi 2009:121; Meletzis 1972:11). They were mostly founded scattered on the east side of the temple (Leventi 2009:121) and were already in a poor condition at the time of the first systematic excavations of the site, during the nineteenth century AD. This had also been attested by travellers who visited Sounion in the course of the centuries (Abel 1838:15-20; Dodwell 1819:537-545; Michaelis 1876:105-106). The fact that none of the slabs was discovered in situ has made their placement a matter of much controversy (Leventi 2009:121). Most scholars share the view that the frieze ran along the four sides of the interior architrave of the east porch (Dinsmoor 1950: 182; Dörpfeld 1884:328; Fabricius 1884:341-342; Knell 1979:66; Lawrence 1996:131; Leventi 2009:121; Meletzis 1972:11; Themelis 1974:19), but its reconstruction is a very difficult matter because of the poor state of the slabs. In the following analysis of the frieze, I adopt the numbering system of used by Lange and Fabricius because I consider it easier to comprehend.

According to Lange, the use of an Ionic frieze was limited only to the east porch. The frieze stretched across and over the pteroma up to the back of the entablature of the external colonnade (Fabricius 1884:339; Gruben 1966:207; Lange 1881:234). According to Furtwängler (Furtwängler 1882:397), the style of the sculptures of the frieze show a severe character and this implies that they were carved before or around the same time as the frieze of the Hephaisteion. Fabricius disagrees with him and prefer to adhere to the judgment of Dörpfeld who suggests that the solution for the sculptural enclosure of the east side of the

Hephaisteion antedated and served as example for the continuous frieze in Sounion (Fabricius 1884:346-347; Knell 1979:66).

Fabricius identifies a Centauromachy and a Gigantomachy on the long sides of the east porch and deeds of Theseus on the shorter north and south sides (Figure 20). He argues that this disposition was intended to mirror the same arrangement of the east side of the Hephaisteion where the metopes with the deeds of Theseus flanked the north and south sides of the sculptural enclosure (Fabricius 1884:344). Fabricius was very certain to ascribe slabs 2, 3 and 4 to the Centauromachy because the Centaurs are still visible on them (whose system) (Fabricius 1884:343, 347-349). He was obviously not sure about slabs 1, 6 and 11, because 1 shows an undefined warrior with helmet and round shield, and 6 and 11 are in so poor condition that is very difficult to elucidate what they originally represented. Fabricius tried it, nonetheless, and guessed that they too could belong to the Centauromachy (Fabricius 1884:343, 347, 349, 352). He agreed with Lange on slab 13 where both recognized Theseus overpowering the Marathonian bull (Fabricius 1884:343, 352-353; Lange 1881:234). Fabricius furthermore identified a Gigantomachy composed of slabs 7, 8, 10 and 12 (Fabricius 1884:343, 349-352). He then asserted that the Gigantomachy ran above the pronaos facing the Centauromachy from the opposite side of the inner architrave (Fabricius 1884:345). He based his conclusion on the premise that in architectural sculpture a Gigantomachy would have been reserved for the best place of the temple, which in this case was clearly over the pronaos. He found his claim additionally supported on the account that slab 12, which he meant was the only one whose position had been securely established, was the first slab from the south over the pronaos. This on the other hand had been proven because the slab had the right length to fit its drill hole with the block of the epistyle that connected the ante with the back of the entablature of the external colonnade and it was in addition lying beneath its original place (Fabricius 1884:345).

Leventi makes the same identification of slabs 2, 3 and 4 for the same reasons of Fabricius and asserts in addition that the battle is the Thessalian Centauromachy (Leventi 2009:122-123) (Figure 20). When it comes to slabs 1, 6 and 11, Leventi agrees with Fabricius on the last two, but not on the first. Here she identifies the undefined warrior with helmet and round shield as the god Ares (Leventi 2009:123, 128). She again agrees with Fabricius and Lange on the identification of Theseus fighting the Marathonian bull on slab 13 (Leventi 2009:124-125). Leventi also agrees with Fabricius on slabs 7 and 8 and identifies a Gigantomachy as well (Leventi 2009:128). While Fabricius guessed that slab 10 depicted a group of three figures, one lying on the ground and perhaps the goddess Artemis facing a

giant, Leventi identifies the former two as Herakles and Eros (Leventi 2009:127-128). She argues that Herakles and Theseus had been again contraposed as they had been in the Athenian Treasury at Delphi and in the Hephaisteion (Leventi 2009:129). As for slab 12, the contours of three figures are barely discernible, but Leventi and Fabricius seem to agree that the scene depicted on it belongs to the Gigantomachy (Fabricius 1884:352; Leventi 2009:128). Since this clearly is the composition of a group, it must belong to either one of the battles, and because none of the figures appears to be a Centaur, the slab must depict the battle between gods and giants. When it comes to the location of the themes, Leventi agrees again with the solution proposed by Fabricius (Leventi 2009:129).

Even though the slabs are in a very bad condition, and the reconstruction of the frieze is left to the educated guess of scholars, I agree with Leventi's interpretations. She sees the uncanonical Ionic frieze of the temple as an artistic development that had already started with the predecessor of the Parthenon and continued with the experiment in the Hephaisteion (Barringer 2009:129). I see, nevertheless, more than the artistic ingenuity of the architects of the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon. As we have seen, the design and refinements of the elevation of the former took consideration of the visibility of the frieze because it had a specific message to convey. The sculptures of the invited Athenians to compare and emulate Theseus' deeds of skill and Herakles' exploits of strength (Barringer 2009:109). The iconographic convention borrowed from the poses of the sculpture group of the Tyrannicides were furthermore used to represent Theseus as a foe of tyranny (Barringer 2009:112-113). The iconography of Theseus depicted in addition the physical strength of the defender of democracy and ignored the more fashionable and current posture of the "superior victor" (von den Hoff 2010:175).

Leventi points out the military aspect of the themes that were depicted in the sculptural program of both temples and stresses the similar symbolic content and the mythical parallels they alluded in respect with the antagonism between Athens and the Persian Empire (Leventi 2009:129). This assumption finds strong support by my idea of bipolarity. As I have already explained, bipolarity in this case is manifested by the use of the visual media and the symbolic meanings of the temples to unify the population of Attica in their struggle to reach the hegemony of the Aegean Sea. The course of action to establish this bipolarity is by interconnecting the two shrines with the common themes and messages of their sculptural programs. I argue that the affinities were not only restricted to the visual media of the buildings, but also to their general architectural features.

The dimension of the temples is so similar that it seems to be more than a coincidence. We know that the architects incorporated the foundation of the old porous temple of Poseidon in the elevation of its successor either to spare funds or to respect the sanctity of old shrine, and both of these reasons are understandable. But the fact that the same dimensions were used in the design of the Hephaisteion (13.47 m x 31.124 m for the temple of Poseidon and 13.708 m x 31.77 m for the Hephaisteion) speaks strongly against this notion. The temple was for a long time mistaken to be Theseus' shrine and was known as the "Theseum" (Barringer 2009: 105; Lawrence 1996:129) because of the prominence of the hero in his sculptural decoration and because it lacked an altar (Barringer 2009: 105). Since it did not replace an earlier shrine destroyed by the Persians (Gates 2005:257), the choice of using the same dimensions as in Sounion must be deliberate. Some scholars have seen the hand of one individual architect at work and have assumed that the design of four different temples can be ascribed to him: the temple of Ares in Acharnae, the temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous, the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon at Sounion (Dinsmoor 1950:181-182; Knell 1979:57-71; Lawrence 1996:131, 133). Dinsmoor proposed that these temples were built in succession between 449 and 431 BC, when work at Rhamnous had to be postponed because of the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (Lawrence 1996:133). The temple of Ares had the same design as the Hephaisteion even though its dimensions were slightly larger (16.12 m x 34.91 m) (Knell 1979:67). The temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous was the smaller of the group with 11.45 m width and 22.86 m length and shared so many similarities with the temple of Poseidon at Sounion, that many scholars have adhered to Dinsmoor's notion that one architect is responsible for the design of the four temples (Knell 1979:69). According to Dinsmoor, the four temples had slender columns and the same disposition of the frontal porch in order to allow the fitting of a continuous frieze extending across the pteroma just as the Hephaisteion and the temple of Poseidon (Dinsmoor 1950:181-182). This evidence seems to show that Athens had started the establishment of several poles to consolidate her intention to extend her imperialistic pretensions to her outer posts. Since we do not have enough evidence of the sculptural programs of the temple of Ares and of Nemesis, my assumption remains conjectural. If we, nevertheless, look at the historical developments of those years, we might find evidence to support my claim.

Plutarch tells us that about the same time as the Peace of Callias started in 449 BC, Pericles called for a great PanHellenic congress to discuss a variety of questions (Plut. *Per.* 12.1-12.7). One of them was how to keep the promises they had made after the Persian War to rebuild the temples to the gods that had been destroyed by the Persians, and how to keep

freedom of the seas. The temples of the gods that had been destroyed in the Persian Wars were essentially all in Attica, and this was, therefore, an occasion where the Athenians were apparently hoping to bring all the Greeks into the picture to help pay the costs of restoring those temples (Bury and Meiggs 1975:224, Pomeroy 2008:236). Athens had by that time evolved into an abusive power that coerced the members of the Delian League into financing, among other things, the embellishment of the monumentalization program of the city and its countryside. The Athenians moved the treasury of the Delian league from the island of Delos to Athens which clearly was an affront to its members intended to demonstrate their supremacy (Bury and Meiggs 1975:224, Pomeroy 2008:236). For that reason the financing and construction of the sanctuary at Cape Sounion can be perceived as an imperialistic and propagandistic statement made by the Athenians. By crowning this sanctuary with a magnificent temple in marble (Lawrence 1996:130) the city demarcated its furthestmost boundary to claim territories in the face of its neighbors (de Polignac 1995:60). The temple of Poseidon at Sounion symbolizes the embodiment of Athen's request to all the members of the Delian League to submit to its regency for when the topography does not allow the construction of a sanctuary in order to extend its power with a sacred emblem (after the cape there is no more land on which to build a shrine, there is only the sea), a sanctuary like the temple of Poseidon at Sounion manages to expand the boundaries of its city-state by projecting them as far as the eye can see.

The representations of Theseus in the visual media in at least one of these bipolar temples is that of the agonistic hero in the Doric frieze of the Hephaisteion. We do not have enough evidence to discern the typology of the representations of Theseus besides that from slab 13 that has been identified as Theseus and the Marathonian bull. As we have seen in the preceding section, this episode was considered to be one of the most beneficial for Athens (Knell 1990:132) and it usually appeared in the myth-cycle along with the encounter against the Minotaur as in Delphi and the Hephaisteion. We can therefore suspect that the Minotaur also was represented on the frieze because it would fit in the context of the construction programs of the public buildings I have treated so far. If by bringing Theseus to the metopes in the Athenian treasury and pairing him with Herakles Athens could make itself present at Delphi to claim the temple of Apollo, by bringing Theseus at Sounion and depicting him with the Cretan beast, Athens could make itself present at the promontory and signify its regency over the Aegean Sea.

Conclusion

The myth of Theseus was the subject of deliberate additions and transformations during the sixth and the fifth century BC. Theseus was a typical archaic hero that suddenly inspired a new set of deeds that have come to be referred as a myth-cycle. His image was polished in works of art and literature as to become a great benefactor for his city-state. By the middle of the fifth century BC, he had gained so much prominence that he had become the embodiment of Athens and a role model to emulate. His exploits were depicted in visual media to both a private audience through vase painting and to bigger audiences in public buildings. His representations in great architecture are the consequence of the associations he evoked as a democratic king who could appeal to the whole spectrum of Athenian society. By the time Athens started the reconstruction program of the old temples that the Persian had destroyed, Theseus had evolved from an agonistic wrestler to a powerful defender of democracy. His image was allusion enough to propagate Athens defiance against her enemies and her claims to take the hegemony of Greece. The edification of the temple of Poseidon at Sounion and the Hephaisteion in Athens were used to represent the consolidation of Attica and its claim to step up as the leading state among the Greeks. Those who travelled the seas and came in sight of the imposing temple on the promontory at Sounion understood that Athens ruled over the Aegean Sea.

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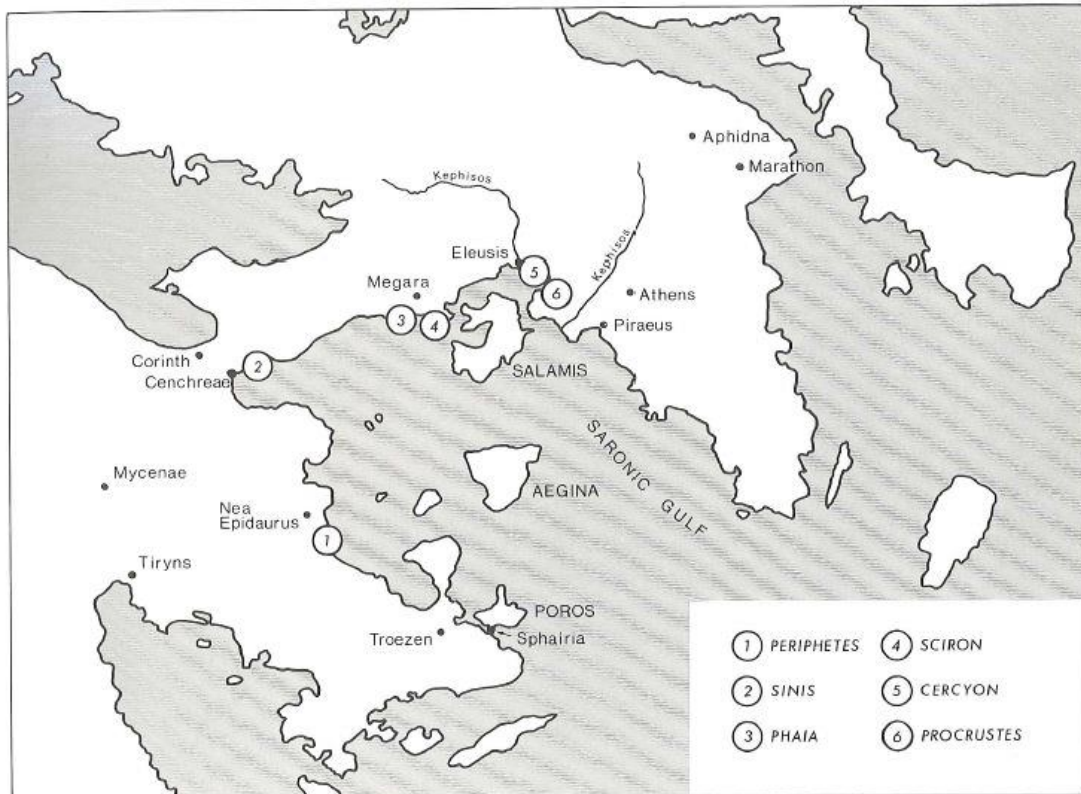


Figure 1

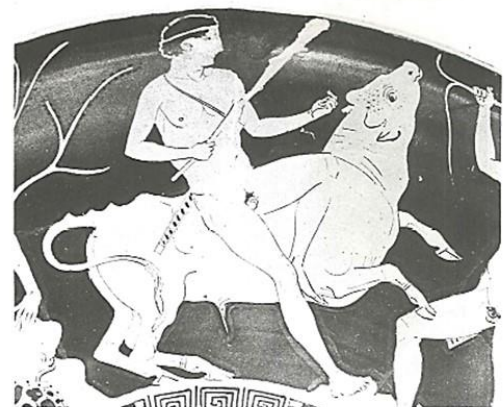


Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 3



Figure 5



a



b

Figure 6



Taf. 10b Florenz 70 800. Schale.

Figure 7



Figure 8

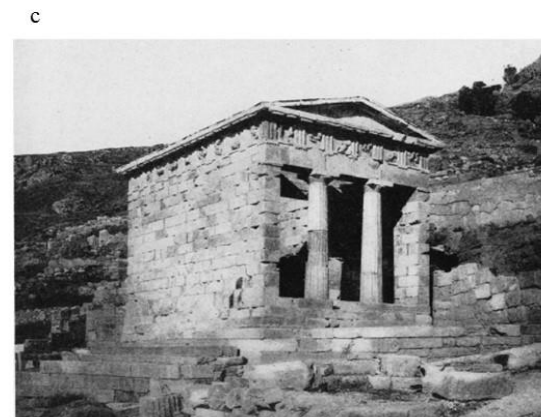
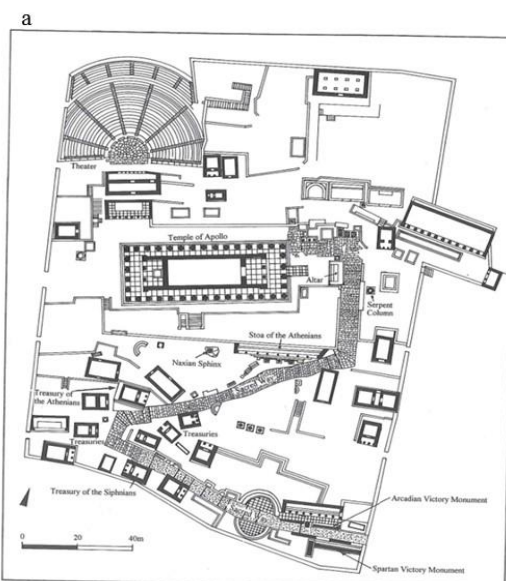


Figure 9



Figure 10

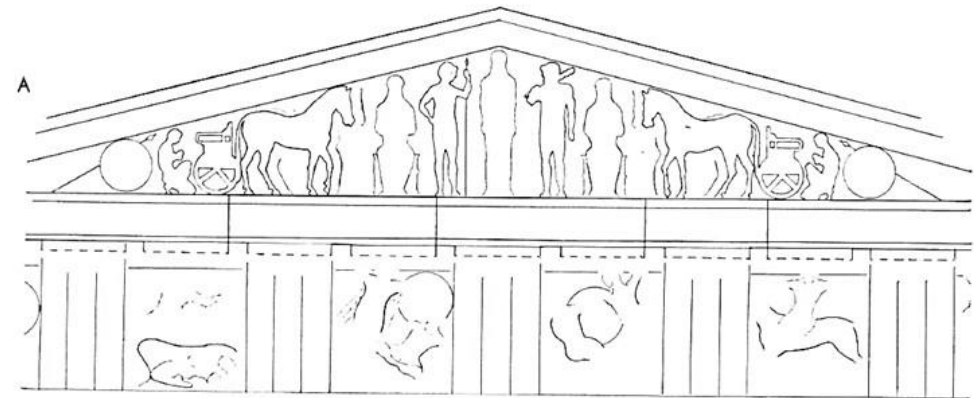


Figure 11



Figure 12



a



b

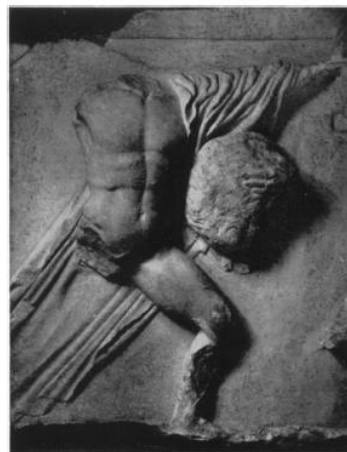


c



d

Figure 13



a. Theseus from East Frieze



b. Aristogeiton (from a cast)

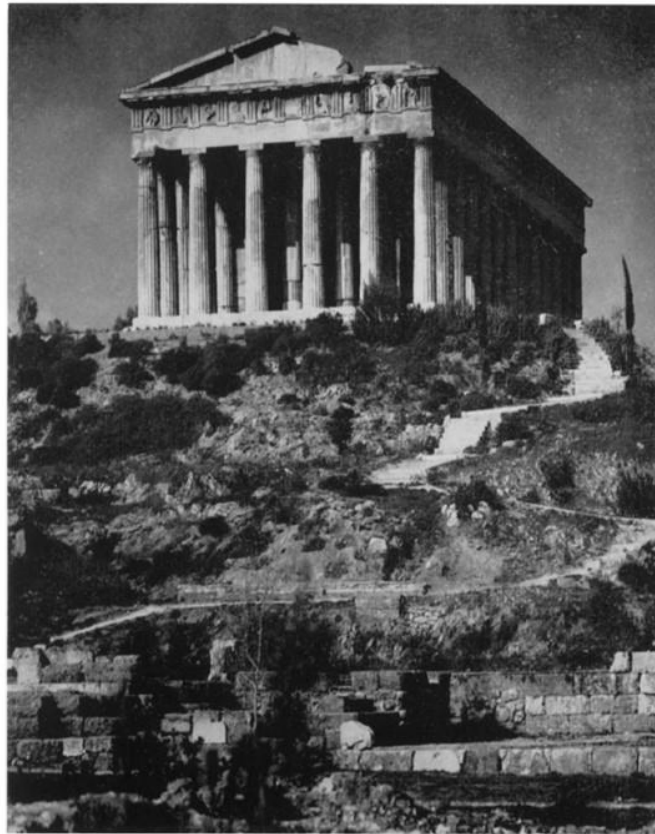


c. Theseus from West Frieze



d. Harmodios (from a cast)

Figure 14



a

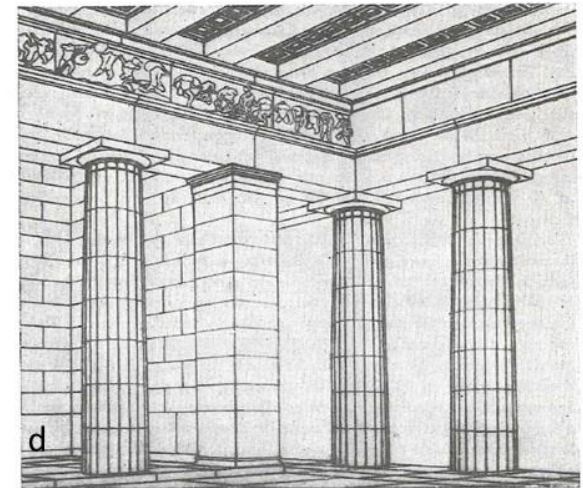
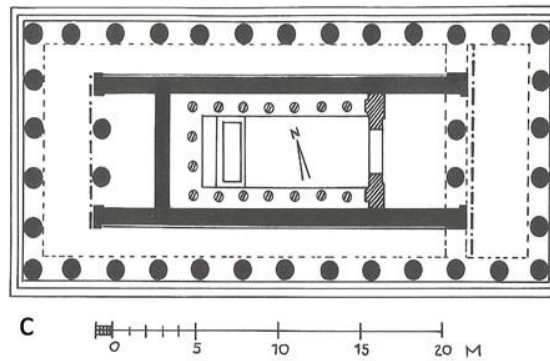
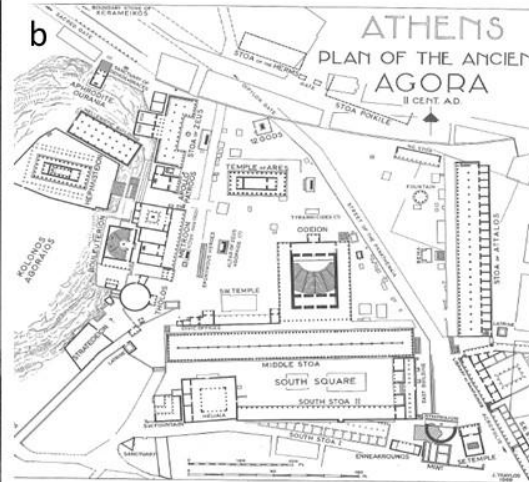


Figure 15

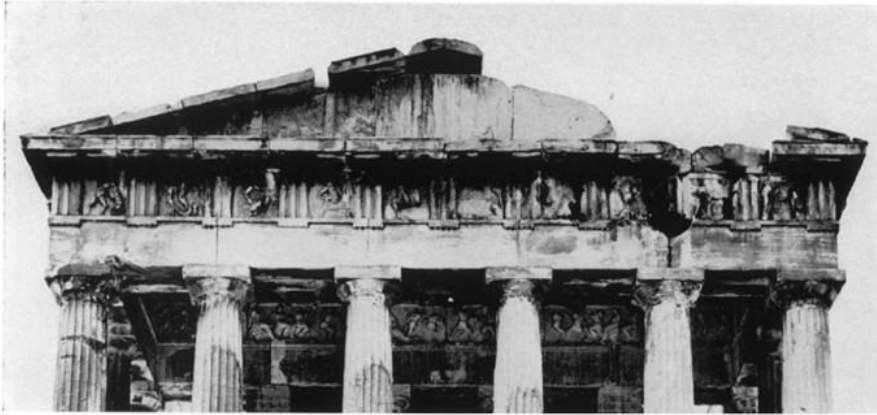


Figure 16

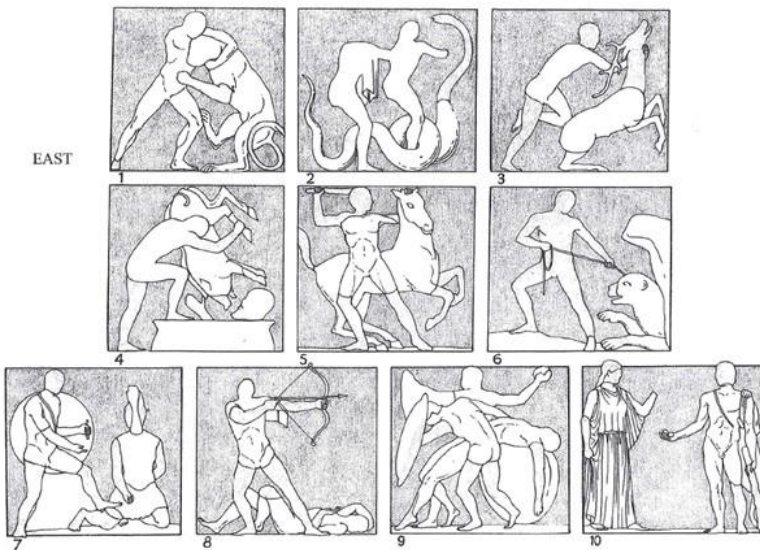
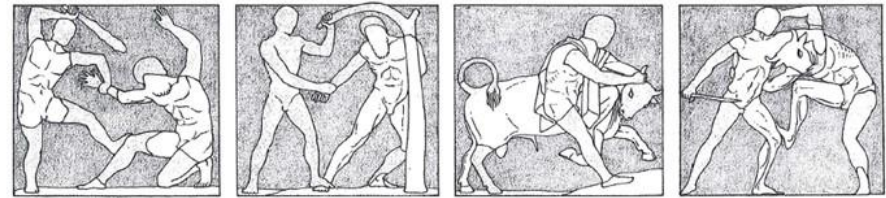
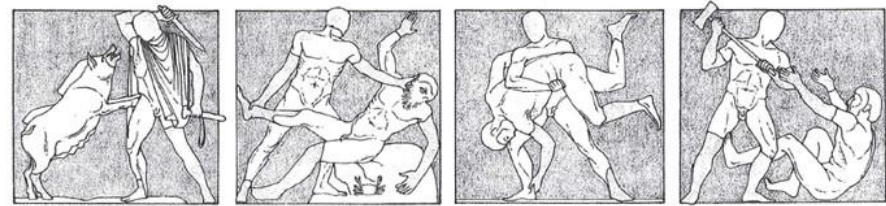


Figure 17



a

Figure 18



a. Prokrustes

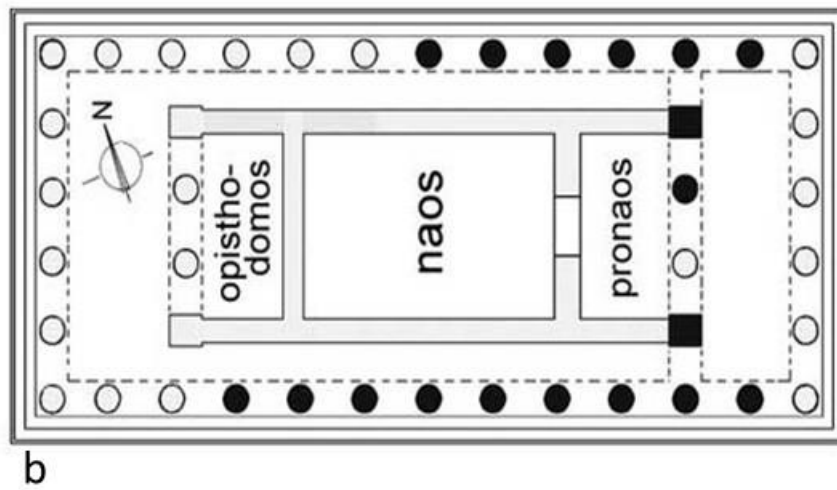


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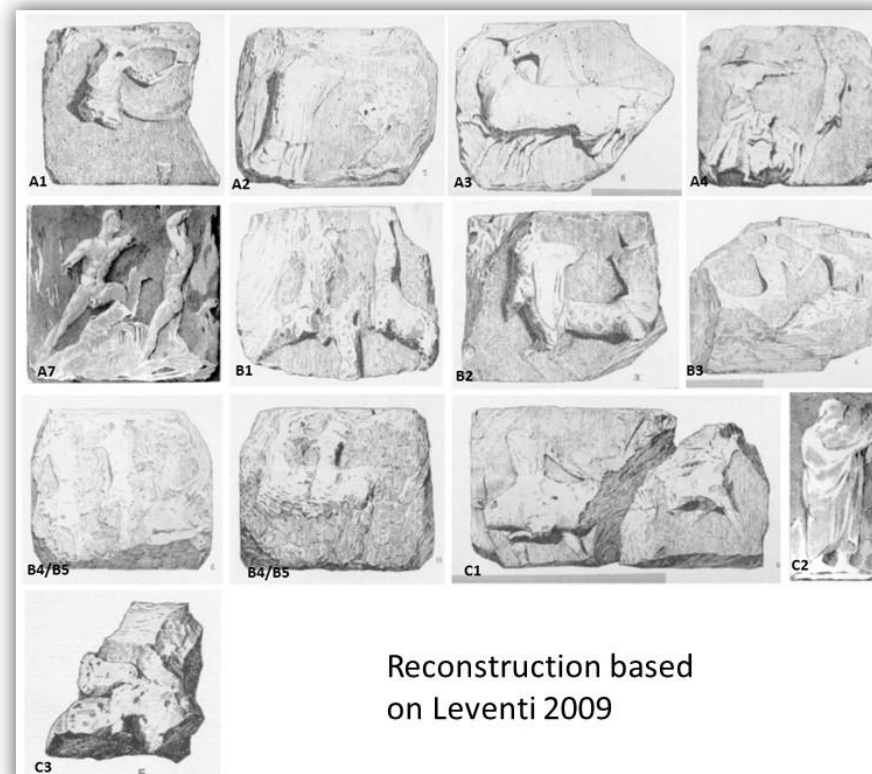
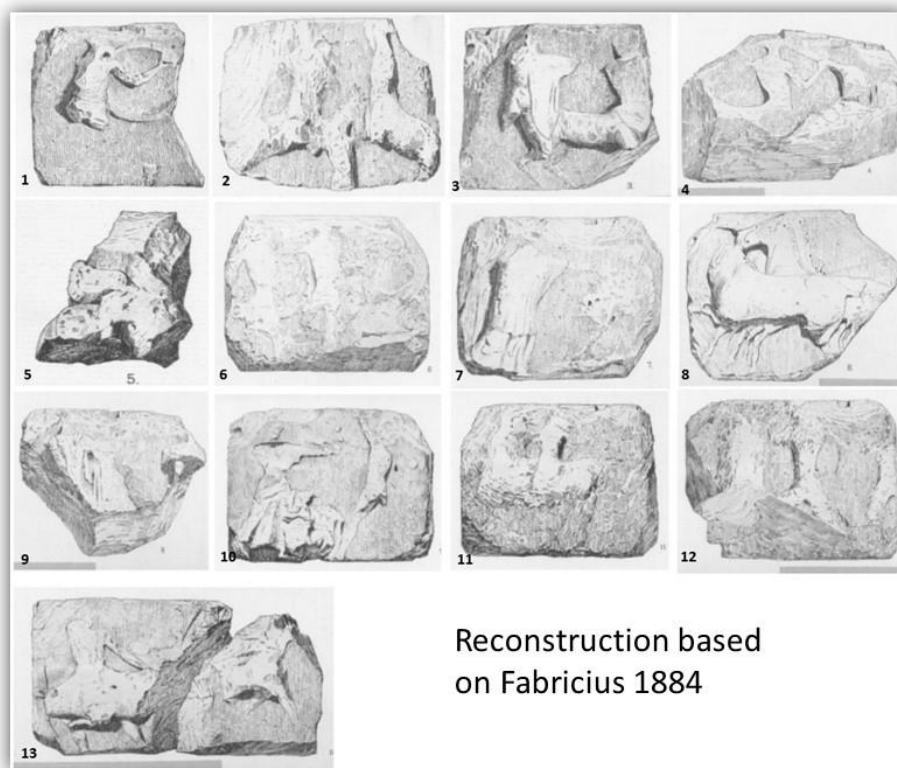
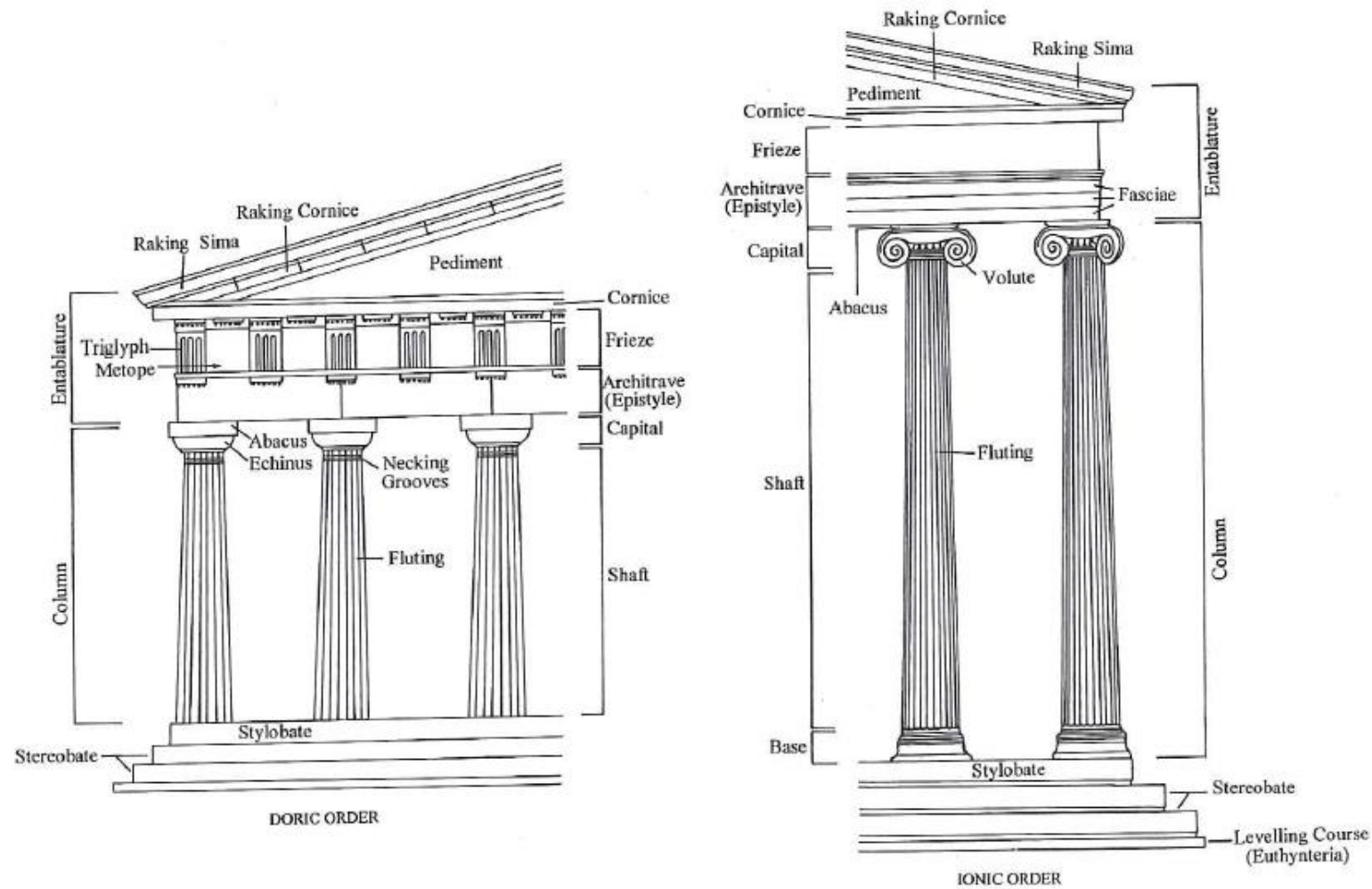


Figure 20

Architectonic terms used in the document



(from Gates 2003)