



JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Institute of Archeology and Art History of
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca
Technical University Of Cluj-Napoca



JAHA
JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v9i1>

ISSN 2360 266x

ISSN-L 2360 266x



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JOURNALS

No. 9.1 /2022

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Design & layout:
Petru Ureche

Studies

ANCIENT HISTORY

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN A SACRED LANDSCAPE: THE THESSALIAN PELORIA

Abstract: The sparsely attested Thessalian Peloria, a classic festival of inversion akin to the Roman Saturnalia, honored Zeus Pelorios and commemorated the draining of the Thessalian plain through the Tempe; Baton of Sinope, our principal source, described it as “still even now” (ca. 250-150 BCE) the most important festival of the Thessalians. The festival is distinctive for the ways in which the mythic time of foundation and the historical time of performance can be seen to mirror one another. The Peneios River regularly flooded in antiquity and periodic, devastating inundations persist into the contemporary era. Similarly, there are strong lines of continuity between the principal actors in mythical and historical time. The Thessalian king in the foundation narrative of the Peloria, to whom the wondrous knowledge of the drainage of the plain is reported, is Pelasgos, who is tied directly into mythic narratives of Thessalian descent. Such points of continuity contrast, however, with intriguing evidence of social and economic change. Theophrastos describes a program of marsh drainage in the territory of Larisa that made additional land accessible for cereal cultivation or pasture, but at a cost: a colder, less humid climate in which olives no longer grew and grapevines could freeze. Baton’s emphatic testimony about the festival’s continuing significance must be read against the backdrop of larger social developments in Thessaly ca. 250-150 BCE that herald a wider challenge to and realignment of critical status boundaries, particularly those that otherwise appear affirmed through the foundation narrative of the Peloria.

Keywords: *Thessaly, Peloria, Pelasgos, Peneios River, festival of inversion.*

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DOI: 10.14795/j.v9i1.698

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN–L 2360 – 266X

INTRODUCTION

This modest contribution uses regional myth and cult to explore problems of environmental and social change, and their possible intersection, in a Thessalian landscape. Given the nature of the source material, the paper is exploratory and seeks to generate historical possibilities — to ask, rather than to answer, questions. My point of entry is the testimony of a local historian of Hellenistic Thessaly, Baton of Sinope, who offers a lengthy and unique description of an otherwise unattested Thessalian festival, the Peloria.¹ I then develop two sets of resonances, one environmental and rooted in landscape, the other social and rooted in genealogy, that show a particularly close mirroring between the mythical moment of festival foundation described by Baton and the historical conditions of festival celebration in Thessaly. This set of strong parallels is

¹ For a recent discussion of the Peloria, with helpful reference to earlier scholarship, see MILI 2015, 239-241. The present essay takes a narrow, if, hopefully, novel, approach to the Peloria and does not endeavor to engage the full history of scholarship on the festival.

challenged by social and political developments in Thessaly in the later third and early second centuries BCE, which in turn prompts us to consider how the Peloria may have been reimagined in that changed setting.

The central insight that motivates this contribution can be briefly stated. Stories of the flood invariably describe permanent shifts in the environment that took place in the distant past. Festivals of reversal, associated in some cases with flood myths, use projections of a world past or yet to come to frame the inverted social relationships that are acted out in ritual space. There was thus a profound, indeed insurmountable, distance between the now of flood myth utterance or performance of festival of inversion and the worlds described or created therein. H.R. Versnel has elaborated on the functionalist interpretation of such festivals and shown how such a quality is part of what can make them so deeply conservative and reinforcing of the established order, revealing as they do the impossibility of such a world under any terms other than those set by the oppressor.²

The Thessalian Peloria contrasts sharply with these norms. Some of the region's inhabitants claimed descent from a central figure in the Peloria foundation myth, Pelasgos, and periodic flooding was a prominent feature of the Thessalian environment. And so, the world as imagined by the Peloria foundation narrative and that experienced by the festival's historical celebrants overlapped to an unusual degree in these aspects; the inverted social relationships occurred in a festival space with uncanny resemblance to real life. Such conditions had the potential to make the festival profoundly destabilizing to, rather than reinforcing of, wider society.³

BATON OF SINOPE, LOCAL HISTORY, AND THE PELORIA

We begin with the critical testimony of Baton of Sinope; the entire passage is worth quoting in full:

Βάτων δ' ὁ Σινωπεὺς ὁ ῥήτωρ ἐν τῷ Περὶ Θεσσαλίας καὶ Αἰμονίας σαφῶς ἐμφανίζει τὴν τῶν Σατουρναλίων ἐορτὴν Ἑλληνικωτάτην, φάσκων αὐτὴν παρὰ τοῖς Θεσσαλοῖς Πελώρια καλεῖσθαι, γράφων οὕτως · “θύσιας κοινῆς τοῖς Πελασγοῖς γινομένης ἀπαγγεῖλαι τινα τῷ Πελασγῷ ἄνδρα, ὃν ὄνομα ἦν Πέλωρος, διότι ἐν τῇ Αἰμονίᾳ σεισμῶν μεγάλων γενομένων ῥαγεῖν τὰ Τέμπη ὄρη ὀνομαζόμενα καὶ διότι διὰ τοῦ διαστήματος ὄρμησαν τὸ τῆς λίμνης ὕδωρ ἐμβάλλει εἰς τὸ τοῦ Πηνείου ρεῖθρον, καὶ τὴν πρότερον λιμνάζουσιν χώραν ἅπασαν γεγυμνῶσθαι, καὶ ἀναξηραινομένων τῶν ὑδάτων πεδία θαυμαστὰ τῷ μεγέθει καὶ τῷ κάλλει ἀναφαίνεσθαι. ἀκούσαντα οὖν τὸν Πελασγὸν τὴν τράπεζαν ἀφθόνως αὐτῷ κεκοσμημένην τῷ Πελώρῳ παραθεῖναι, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους δὲ φιλοφρονουμένους ἕκαστον φέρειν ὅ τι ἔχει παρ' αὐτῷ

² VERSNEL 1993, 115-121, and *passim*. Cf. PARKER 2005, 202-203: “oppressive social relations that entail a certain proximity and even intimacy between oppressor and oppressed appear to create a need for reversal rituals of this type.”

³ As VERSNEL 1993, 128, notes, with passages cited at n. 128 referring to instances of social and political conflict taking place at festival times: “rites of rebellion carry the seeds of real revolution,” even in the ancient Mediterranean. *Contra*: TURNER 1978, 281-6.

βέλτιστον καὶ παρατιθέναι ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν τῷ ἀπαγγεῖλαντι, καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Πελασγὸν προθύμως διακονεῖν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τοὺς ἐν ἀξιώματι ὄντας ὑπηρετεῖν, καθότι ἕκαστῳ ὁ καιρὸς παρέπιπτεν. διόπερ φασίν, ἐπεὶ τὴν χώραν κατέσχον, ἀπομίμημα τῆς τότε γενομένης ἐορτῆς < . . . > καὶ θύοντας Διὶ Πέλωρι τραπέζας τε λαμπρῶς κοσμοῦντας προτιθέναι καὶ οὕτως φιλάνθρωπον τὴν πανήγυριν συντελεῖν, ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ξένους ἅπαντας ἐπὶ τὴν θοίνην παραλαμβάνειν καὶ τοὺς δεσμώτας λύειν καὶ τοὺς οἰκέτας κατακλίναντας μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἐστιᾶν, διακονούντων αὐτοῖς τῶν δεσποτῶν · καὶ τὸ σύνολον ἔτι καὶ νῦν Θεσσαλοὺς μέγιστην ἐορτὴν ἄγοντας προσαγορεύειν Πελώρια”.⁴

“The orator Baton of Sinope in his *On Thessaly and Haemonia* brings out the strikingly Greek character of the Saturnalia clearly, claiming that the Thessalians refer to it as the Peloria, and writing as follows: When the Pelasgians were carrying out a public sacrifice, a man named Pelorus brought Pelasgus a message, to the effect that there had been major earthquakes in Haemonia, producing a rift in what is known as the Tempe Range; that the lake-water had rushed out through the gap and joined the course of the Peneius River, and the land that had previously been at the bottom of the lake had all been exposed; and that as the water dried up, extraordinarily large and beautiful plains were emerging. When Pelasgus heard the news, therefore, he set his table, which was covered with a large amount of food intended for him, in front of Pelorus. Everyone else similarly expressed their warm feelings by taking the finest item of food they had and setting it on the table for the man who had brought the message; and Pelasgus himself enthusiastically served him, with the other important people assisting him whenever an opportunity arose. This is why, they say, after they took control of the territory, as an imitation of the festival that occurred at that time ... and they sacrifice to Zeus Pelorius and set out tables covered with spectacular food. They make the festival so hospitable, that they welcome all visitors to the meal, and release their prisoners; and they have their domestic slaves lie down, and then serve them a feast, during which slaves may say anything they like, and the masters do all the serving. To sum up, even today this is the most important festival the Thessalians celebrate, and they refer to it as the Peloria.”⁵

Among the local historians of the Hellenistic world is Baton of Sinope, whose interest touched diverse places, including a work on Thessaly. An outsider to the region, his chronology remains difficult to pin down, although a floruit between 250 and 150 BCE is likely.⁶ In *On Thessaly and Haimonia*, Baton can be seen to cater to the tastes of a Thessalian audience that is known to have appreciated the

⁴ FGrHist 268 F 5 (BNJ 268 F 5) = Athen. 14.639e-640a. I print the text as in OLSON 2011, 237-239, based on Kaibel's 1887-99 Teubner edition, which differs from the FGrHist and BNJ insubstantially and with no impact on the arguments offered in this paper.

⁵ Trans. OLSON 2011, 237-239.

⁶ This is the prudent, cautious range suggested by Christesen in the BNJ; he observes that the latest event mentioned by Baton is in 214 BCE and his work seems already known to Polybius (FGrHist 268 F4; BNJ 268 F4). Other titles associated with him include a *Persika* and an *Attika*, the latter in at least two books, in addition to studies of the tyrants of Ephesos, the Syracusan tyrant Hieronymus, and the poet Ion. Baton's testimony has also been drawn into debates about the reorganization of the Saturnalia at Rome ca. 217 BCE: see VERSNEL 1993, 142.

mythical and fantastical. Compare, for example, Strabo's comments on two contemporary Thessalian local historians, Souidas and Kineas, who discussed the Thessalian origins of the oracle of Zeus at Dodona (Strabo 7.7.12 (Radt)):

Σουίδαας μὲν τοῖς Θετταλοῖς μυθώδεις λόγους προσχαρίζομενος ... Κινέας δ' ἔτι μυθωδέστερον ...⁷

"Souidas, however, in his desire to gratify the Thessalians with mythical stories ... Kineas (tells a story that is) still more mythical..."⁸

As Rosalind Thomas has brilliantly argued in her recent monograph on local history, such interests, by no means limited to Thessaly, offered a means for local communities to understand themselves better and to see more clearly their connection with a larger Greek world; these stories, which were capable of being reinvested with new layers of meaning over time, thus played a prominent social function.⁹

Baton too shows an interest in myth and explicitly ties it to contemporary cult practice in his description of the obscure Peloria. As the foundation story goes, a certain Peloros, who seems to be a lower status individual, reports news of the miraculous draining of some portion of Thessaly to a local king, Pelasgos.¹⁰ Beautiful and fecund plains now appeared where marshes had been, and Pelasgos and his circle celebrate Peloros with a grand meal.¹¹ The Pelasgians take possession of these new lands in time and recreate in festival performance this foundational meal of Peloros. Baton shifts the temporal frame of reference at the end of the description, noting that the Thessalians still even today — ἔτι καὶ νῦν — regard the Peloria as their greatest festival.

While Zeus Pelorios and the Peloria are otherwise unattested,¹² Baton describes a classic festival of inversion, in which traditional social roles are overturned and the elite serve temporarily the interests of non-elites, including slaves, peasants, and related dependent groups. Thessaly was home to a diversity of non-citizen statuses, including

⁷ The transmitted text reads ἐν τοῖς Θετταλοῖς, which offends because of asyndeton. I offer here Kramer's emendation, which is endorsed by Radt. Other alternatives do not impact the general sense of the argument, namely, that there is a contrast between the account just offered by Strabo and that advanced by Souidas: δὲ τοῖς Θετταλοῖς Xylander, μέντοι Θετταλοῖς Meineke.

⁸ Tr. Williams: FGGrHist 602 F 11a / BNJ 602 F11a (Souidas) = FGGrHist 603 F 2a / BNJ 603 F 2a (Kineas) = Strabo 7.7.12 (Radt).

⁹ THOMAS 2019, 74-99.

¹⁰ For an insightful reading of this myth, see HELLY 1991.

¹¹ A second nexus of Thessalian myth and cult was related to these environmental developments, Poseidon Petraios and the Petraia: see MILI 2015, 234-239. As Mili rightly observes, Peloria and Petraia appear to be quite distinct festivals and to address distinct needs within Thessalian society. For an exhaustive study of Greek flood myths, among which Thessaly is quite prominent (e.g., Deukalion and Pyrrha, in addition to the regional stories mentioned above), see CADUFF 1986.

¹² A lacunose rupestral inscription from Thera, Archaic in date, has been restored as [Π]ε[λ]ώ[ρ]ιος and regarded as an epiklesis of Zeus (IG 12, 3 366/1309; cf. INGLESE 2008, 83-98), but the restoration does not command confidence. Similarly tantalizing is the restoration [— — — — — ἐς τὰ Πελώρι]α in an early fourth-century BCE inscription from Pharsalos (ARVANITOPOULOS 1911, 301-305, no. 50; cf. MCDEVITT 1970, 25, no. 167), although there are again no good grounds for confidence; see now ITessEnip 77). The significance of this "monstrous" epithet remains oblique: see MILI 2015, 240; VERSNEL 1993, 130-131, n. 136; cf. CADUFF 1986, 246-9, who connects the epithet with one of the Giants, Pelor, whom Poseidon killed at the Spercheios River during the Gigantomachy (schol. (T) ad Il. 16.176).

some common throughout the Greek world, like metics and chattel slaves, and others more particular to the region, especially the *perioikoi* and a range of peasant-like statuses that were grouped together by ancient theorists under the title of *penestai*.¹³ It was these groups that likely enjoyed the temporary privileges extended during the Peloria. We are probably to imagine a dispersed festival celebrated in many locations throughout Thessaly, perhaps even within individual households, although with the possibility that some more highly marked, quasi-official celebrations took place at the polis or regional level.¹⁴

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESONANCE

A distinctive feature of the Peloria, however, is the apparently close and continual mirroring between the foundation myth of the festival and environmental and social conditions in historical Thessaly at the time of festival performance.

The Peneios River regularly flooded in antiquity and periodic, devastating inundations persist into the contemporary era.¹⁵ Strabo, for example, understands the absence of much of inland Thessaly from the Homeric Catalogue of Ships as reflecting these difficult conditions that made settlement life challenging (9.5.20).¹⁶

ὅν ὁ ποιητὴς ὀλίγων μέμνηται διὰ τὸ μὴ οἰκισθῆναι πῶ τᾶλλα ἢ φαύλως οἰκισθῆναι διὰ τοὺς κατακλυσμοὺς ἄλλοτ' ἄλλους γινομένους

"...few of which places (in Magnesia and the Thessalian plain) the poet mentions because they were not settled yet or settled poorly due to the floods that took place on occasion."

He further observes that the Larisans used embankments to control the course of the Peneios and keep it from washing away arable soil (9.5.19):

Λαρισαῖοι, πλησίον μὲν οἰκοῦντες τοῦ Πηνειοῦ ... νεμόμενοι δὲ τὰ εὐδαιμονέστατα μέρη τῶν πεδίων, πλὴν εἴ σφόδρα κοῖλον πρὸς τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ Νεσσωνίδι, εἰς ἣν ὑπερκλύζων ὁ ποταμός ἀφηρεῖτό τι τῆς ἀροσίμου τοὺς Λαρισαίους · ἀλλ' ὕστερον παραχώμασιν ἐπηνόρθωσαν Λαρισαῖοι.

"The Larisans, living near the Peneios ... cultivating the most productive parts of the plains, except for the extreme hollow near the lake Nessonis, into which the river robs the Larisans of something of their arable land when it overflows. But the Larisans later corrected the problem with embankments."

There is a striking impermanence to the environmental change associated by Baton with the foundation of the Peloria. Continuing human management of the river was

¹³ Foreign residents: see, e.g., IEnipeus 51-52 (Halikarnassians in third-century Pharsalos); *Perioikoi*: KIP 1910, 51-125 remains fundamental; *Penestai*: DUCAT 1994.

¹⁴ MILI 2015, 239.

¹⁵ See, e.g., VAN ANDEL/ZANGGER/DEMITRACK 1990; KOUTSOYIANNIS *et alii* 2012. While no major flooding of the Peneios is attested in ancient sources, see NEWBOLD 1982, who draws attention to the superlative, exemplary quality of the natural disasters described by the ancient historians. But flooding of the Peneios seems frankly to have been routine.

¹⁶ For an exhaustive study of Strabo's description of the Peneios, see HELLY 2000.

thus required to keep some areas of Thessaly from returning to a diluvian state. The marshy Thessaly of Pelasgos remained in fact a potentially constant companion to the region's historical residents.

As we turn to explore briefly historical genealogical resonances of the Peloria myth, we are again in the company of Pelasgos, the eponym of the Pelasgians, that mysterious pre-Greek people whom the historical Greeks imagined as earlier inhabitants of the Aegean world and beyond. Recent scholarship has championed rightly the Pelasgians as having been "good to think with" as the Greeks worked in the language of myth to make sense of themselves, their customs and culture, as well as those of their neighbours.¹⁷ They are a construct; in the lapidary and inimitable formulation of Robert Fowler: "no one would shake your hand in agora or forum and say: I am a Pelasgian."¹⁸

But in Thessaly, someone just might! This is not to challenge the essential constructedness of the Pelasgians, but to emphasize their formative influence in the region as a specifically genealogical construct, for the Pelasgians were "good to think with" there not because they were some distant, pre-Greek other, but precisely because they were regarded as ancestors.¹⁹ Historical Thessalians could trace concretely their lineage through Thessalos to Pelasgos and regard themselves as Pelasgian.²⁰ When Baton writes that the Peloria is "still even now" the most important festival for the Thessalians, he does not simply provide a mythic charter for contemporary cult practice, he effectively collapses any distinction between the celebrants at the mythic moment of foundation and in the Hellenistic present. Nor is Baton an outlier in this respect: the fragmentary historians treating Thessaly, however sparse they may be, are replete with references to Pelasgian names in Thessaly, suggesting a continuing interest in such topics among Thessalian audiences;²¹ and the contemporary epigraphic record at Larisa reflects some public interest in Pelasgian themes, too, including a statue of Melia, who seems to have been regarded locally as the grandmother of Pelasgos.²²

As in landscape, then, so too in genealogy was there a deep resonance between the historical present of Hellenistic Thessaly and the mythic past of Baton's description of the Peloria, leading Mili to write evocatively: "The world of the Thessalians appears to be unchanged in autochthonous."²³

And, yet, there were powerful vectors of change in both climate and society.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

The end products of Thessalian management of the Peneios were not simply greater and more stable arable land. The region's climate seems to have been directly impacted. Theophrastos could write ca. 300 BCE (*De causis plantarum* 5.14.2-3):

Καὶ ὅλως οἱ πρότερον οὐκ ἐκπύγνυντες τόποι παχέος ὄντος τοῦ ἀέρος νῦν ἐκπύγνυνσι, καθάπερ οἱ περὶ Λάρισσαν τὴν ἐν Θετταλίᾳ · τότε μὲν γὰρ ἐνεστηκότος ὕδατος πολλοῦ καὶ λελιμνωμένου τοῦ πεδίου παχὺς ὁ ἀήρ ἦν καὶ ἡ χώρα θερμότερα · τούτου δ' ἐξαχθέντος καὶ ἐνίστασθαι κωλυθέντος ἢ τε χώρα ψυχροτέρα γέγονε καὶ ἐκπύξεις πλείους · σημεῖον δὲ λέγουσιν, ὅτι τότε μὲν ἦσαν ἐλάαι καὶ ἄλλοθι καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἄστει μεγάλαι καὶ καλαὶ νῦν δὲ οὐδαμοῦ, καὶ αἱ ἄμπελοι τότε μὲν οὐκ ἐξεπύγνυντο νῦν δὲ πολλάκις.

"Districts where formerly, when the air was thick, there was no freezing, are now subject to frosts, as the country around Larisa in Thessaly, where formerly, there was much standing water and the plain was a lake, the air was thick and the country warmer; but now that the water has been drained away and prevented from collecting, the country has become colder and freezing is more common. In proof the fact is cited that formerly there were fine tall olive trees in the city itself and elsewhere in the country, whereas now they are found nowhere, and that the vines were never frozen before but often freeze now."²⁴

While Theophrastos does not explore the potential implications of this climate change, the agricultural basis of local economy has shifted in a way that would privilege the most diversified farmers. That is to say, there were winners and losers here.

Similar to the changing climate in Larisa, the historical record suggests a more thoroughgoing realignment in Thessalian society closer in time to Baton's account. From the outbreak of the Social War in 221 down to the battle of Pydna in 168 BCE, Thessaly was subject to frequent, often annual, military campaigning, typically by foreign powers.²⁵ This was a state of continual war and can be imagined as profoundly destabilizing to environment and society alike. Several Thessalian cities in the later third century BCE, including major regional centres like Larisa, struggled with citizen shortages, resulting in the enrollment, voluntary or forced, of new citizens.²⁶ In some cases, those new citizens seem to have been made from the ranks of the *penestai* and, in any case, our sources for the *penestai* seem to go dry about 200 BCE, leading some scholars to imagine a more general decline in the institution.²⁷ About 200 BCE, the Thessalian series of manumission inscriptions begins, whereby newly manumitted slaves pay a fee for the public

²⁴ Trans. Einarson.

²⁵ E.g., Social War, First and Second Macedonian Wars, Syrian War, Third Macedonian War.

²⁶ E.g., the famous dossier of Philip V and Larisa, documenting an exchange beginning in 271 BCE (for the date, see HABICHT 2006): IG 9.2 517; see also an approximately contemporary inscription from Phalanna, also apparently enrolling new citizens: IG 9.2 1228.

²⁷ Enrollment of *penestai* as citizens: Pharsalos — see IThessEnip 50, with earlier bibliography; Krannon — DECOURT/TZIAPHALIAS 2001, 144; Mopsion — GARCIA RAMON/HELLY/TZIAPHALIAS 2007, 98. Decline in the institution: DUCAT 1994, 105-113.

¹⁷ SOURVINOU-INWOOD 2003; FOWLER 2003; MCINERNEY 2014.

¹⁸ FOWLER 2003, 2.

¹⁹ For recent discussion of ancestor making and claims of descent, with helpful reference to earlier scholarship, see BLOK 2017, 100-146.

²⁰ E.g., Pelasgos could be perceived as grandfather, via Haimon, of Thessalos (Rhianos of Bene BNJ 265 F 30a) or as son of Larisa (schol. Ap. Rh. 1.580).

²¹ E.g., Rhianos BNJ 265 F 30a: "Once the ancients called it Pyrrhaie from Pyrrha, the ancient bride of Deukalion; later they called it Haimonie from Haimon, whom Pekasgos begot as the best son; and in turn Haimon begot Thessalos, and from this one the people chased the name to Thessalia"; Kineas BNJ 603 F 1a-b on the name change Ephyra - Krannon; the lively debate over the Thessalian origins of the cult and oracle of Zeus at Dodona (Soudas BNJ 602 F11a-c; Kineas BNJ 603 F 2a-b).

²² IG 9.2 582 (Larisa, 1st c. BCE), statue base of Melia, mother of "... Haimon, a joy to the Pelasgiadai." Cf. the reference to a "Pelasgian clod" in a third-century BCE Larisan epitaph for a visiting poet from Kalchedon (SEG 47.735; BE 2000, no. 52; see now SANTIN 2018 — an exemplary study).

²³ MILI 2015, 241.

recording of the details of their manumission.²⁸ There hover here everywhere the hands of external powers, whether Antigonid Macedonian or Roman, and following the conclusion of the Second Macedonian War in 197, Thessaly was reorganized with new constitutions and new qualifications for citizenship.²⁹ Major debt crises enveloped much of central Greece including Thessaly in the 170s, where Roman and Macedonian influence can again be felt.³⁰

In brief, many of the critical status boundaries that otherwise appear affirmed through the foundation narrative of the Peloria seem to have been directly challenged in this half century. If, as a festival of inversion, the Peloria were deeply counter-revolutionary, how are we to imagine its celebration amidst actually revolutionary circumstances? Had the fantasy world of inverted social roles in fact become real? Or were those who had acquired new status now eager to perform it in this greatest festival of the Thessalians? We do not yet know. But it is worthwhile to return to the insight of Rosalind Thomas, with which this paper began: myth, cult and local history created a profound sense of place within which such social and environmental changes could be made comprehensible.

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²⁸ ZELNICK-ABRAMOVITZ 2013.

²⁹ Roman reorganization: see now BOUCHON/HELLY 2015, 240-249.

³⁰ See, e.g., FUKS 1974, 74-76, and *passim*; cf. WALSH 2000, who suggests that drought may have brought on poor harvests in central Greece, including Thessaly, which in turn fueled the debt crisis, but HELLY 2008, 106 is skeptical. For agricultural boom and bust cycles in Thessaly and the need for careful planning, see GALLANT 1989.

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