

Chapter 6

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“This City of Ours”: Fear, Discord, and the Persian War at Megara

When the Megarians recalled the Persian War, they focused on their own actions and experiences. The other participating states did the same. The resulting differences in how the Greeks remembered the Persian War have long been noted,¹ but hardly account for the full influence of the parochial on the commemoration of this manifestly Panhellenic event. In this paper I show that differences between local narratives of the Persian War were not limited to which party was praised and for what deeds.²

The Persian War stories told at Megara evince not only a self-interested focus on that polis, but also convey a tone and outlook that are characteristically Megarian. Very little survives of the Persian War tradition at Megara, and a complete picture of the Megarians' overall understanding of the war is beyond recovery, but a few salient themes can still be detected. Two such themes will concern us here: fear and discord. Both appear in connection with the Persian War in the *Theognidea* and feature in two later narratives as

1 The point was made long ago by Starr 1962 and has become almost axiomatic in the study of Persian War memory. See, for example, W. West 1970, Jung 2006: 225-297, Marincola 2007, Vannicelli 2007, and Cartledge 2013: 122-157.

2 The present paper continues and refines a line of argumentation I developed while examining the commemoration of the Persian War in the Plataian Temple of Athena Areia (Yates 2013). It also appears within the broader context of my forthcoming book on Persian War memory.

well. Together, these themes speak to a distinctly Megarian way of looking at the Persian War and shed much needed light on the parochial nature of collective memory in ancient Greece.

The Persian War in the *Theognidea*

I begin with the *Theognidea*. Two poems within that corpus make explicit mention of the Persian War. The first is a call for divine protection that ends by mentioning the war with the Persians briefly.

Ζεὺς μὲν τῆσδε πόλης ὑπείρεχοι αἰθέρι ναίων
αἰεὶ δεξιτερὴν χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἀπημοσύνηι,
ἄλλοι τ' ἀθάνατοι μάκαρες θεοί· αὐτὰρ Ἀπόλλων
ὀρθῶσαι γλῶσσαν καὶ νόον ἡμέτερον.
φόρμιγξ δ' αὖ φθέγγοιθ' ἱερὸν μέλος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐλός·
ἡμεῖς δὲ σπονδὰς θεοῖσιν ἀρεσσάμενοι
πίνωμεν, χαρίεντα μετ' ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες,
μηδὲν τὸν Μήδων δειδιότες πόλεμον (757-64).

May Zeus, who dwells in heaven, forever hold his right hand over this city to keep it safe and may the other blessed immortal gods do so as well. But may Apollo guide our tongue and mind. May the lyre and flute sound again a holy song. After we have appeased the gods with libations, let us drink, while speaking cheerfully to one another and fearing in no way the war with the Persians.

The invocation that opens the poem is put most emphatically to Zeus, but the other gods are also called to help. The nature of the threat is as yet unstated, and the prayer begins by presenting the danger in markedly general terms. There is no ambiguity about the recipient of divine protection, however. “This city” (τῆσδε πόλης) appears as the sole

beneficiary of the prayer almost immediately after Zeus is named.³ The attention of the poet then turns to Apollo, who is called upon, not to ensure the safety of Megara, but rather to oversee the present festivities. Music and drink fill the poem as the Megarians are told to enjoy cheerful conversation. But danger looms, and the poet ends by reminding the Megarians not to fear the war with the Persians (μηδὲν τὸν Μήδων δειδιότες πόλεμον). On the surface, the poet intends to purge the revelers of any negative thoughts of the war, but in fact achieves the opposite by bringing the threat very much to mind just as the poem closes.⁴ No longer is danger presented in general terms, as it was in the opening lines. Rather, the poet now defines the threat quite specifically.⁵ The choice of participle, δειδιότες, leaves little room for heroic illusions. Outside the festival, outside the exhortation of the poet, the Megarians are terrified, and the audience is not allowed to forget it.

Our second poem appears just a few lines after the first. Here, the poet devotes significantly more attention to the Persian threat.

Φοῖβε ἄναξ, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπύργωσας πόλιν ἄκρην,
 Ἀλκαθῶωι Πέλοπος παιδὶ χαριζόμενος·
 αὐτὸς δὲ στρατὸν ὑβριστὴν Μήδων ἀπέρυκε
 τῆσδε πόλεως, ἵνα σοι λαοὶ ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ
 ἦρος ἐπερχομένου κλειτὰς πέμπωσ' ἑκατόμβας
 τερπόμενοι κιθάρῃ καὶ ἐρατῇι θαλίῃ

3 Hudson-Williams (1910: 223) argues that since Apollo, the patron god of Megara, is not invoked to protect the city, the poet cannot have Megara in mind (see also Carrière 1975: 173), but see van Groningen (1966: 293) for a persuasive rebuttal. There is, of course, no internal evidence to suggest that the city in question is Megara (van Groningen 1966: 293 and Selle 2008: 237), but the location must have been clear to the original audience.

4 Most commentators assume that the poet has no ulterior motives here and is simply attempting to lighten the mood of his audience (see n.11 below).

5 This poem has been compared to an opening prayer at a symposium, where the poet calls upon the listeners to set their cares aside (Hudson-Williams 1910: 10; Highbarger 1937: 98-99; Selle 2008: 237), but the specificity of the final lines in this poem stands in marked contrast to other poems of that sort in the *Theognidea* where the threat remains generic (e.g. 765-768, 1043-1044, 1047-1048, and 1055-1058). I follow M. West 1971 here and end this poem at line 764. Van Groningen 1966 and Carrière 1975 extend the poem a further four lines. If correct, the poem would then have ended on a general note. But specific mention of the Persians (now in the middle of the poem) would remain exceptional nonetheless.

παιάνων τε χοροῖς ἰαχῆισί τε σὸν περὶ βωμόν·
ἧ γὰρ ἔγωγε δέδοικ' ἀφραδίην ἔσορῶν
καὶ στάσιν Ἑλλήνων λαοφθόρον. ἀλλὰ σύ, Φοῖβε,
ἴλαος ἡμετέρεην τήνδε φύλασσε πόλιν (773–82).

Lord Apollo, you fortified the acropolis as a favour to Alkathous, the son of Pelops. Keep now the arrogant army of the Persians away from this city, so that when spring comes the people may joyfully send illustrious hecatombs to you while they take pleasure in the lyre and lovely abundance, in the dances and sounds of paeans around your altar. For I am truly afraid when I see the stupidity and destructive discord of the Greeks. But you, Apollo, graciously protect this city of ours.

The poem begins by identifying Apollo as a past benefactor of the city. Although there was a prominent temple to Pythian Apollo on the acropolis, he is not here invoked as the Panhellenic god of Delphi, but rather as an intimately Megarian one whose close association with Megara's founder, Alkathous, was enshrined in the topography and architecture of the city (Paus. 1.42).⁶ As in the earlier poem, Megarian concerns are narrowly targeted. It is not on Greece's behalf that Apollo is invoked, but on Megara's alone. After the invocation and request, the poet supplies a lengthy purpose clause, detailing the sacrifices and celebrations the god can expect if the city is spared destruction. The pleasant scene of future happiness is shattered, however, when the poet explains the urgent plea for help that began the poem: "For I am truly afraid (δέδοικ') when I see the stupidity (ἀφραδίην) and destructive discord (στάσιν...λαοφθόρον) of the Greeks" (780–781). It is recalled that future happiness is contingent upon Apollo's acquiescence, that the same people (λαοί) who intend to send hecatombs are now on the verge of being undone

⁶ Plutarch mentions a temple to Pythian Apollo located on the Alkathoan acropolis, which was incomplete at the time of the second triumvirate (*Ant.* 23.3) but had been finished by Pausanias' day (1.42.5). Pausanias also mentions two other manifestations of Apollo associated with this temple – Apollo Decatephorus (the Bringer of Tithes) and Apollo Archegetes (the Founder) – and although we cannot be certain which the poet had in mind, Archegetes seems the most likely given the parochial focus of the poem (see also Farnell 1977: 374 n.64). Highbarger (1937: 100–109) argues that the Apollo in question should be seen as Delian Apollo (see also Young 1964: 328), but there is no evidence to suggest that Delian Apollo was particularly popular at Megara.

by destructive, literally people destroying (λαοφθόρον), discord. Two possible futures stand in the balance: the celebration described in the purpose clause and the ruinous defeat feared in the final lines. Yet the poet and his countrymen are powerless to sway the outcome. Apollo alone can save them, not because the Persians are unbeatable, but rather because the Greeks have proven unreliable allies. The poem then ends in ring composition with another plea to Apollo narrowly focused on the city of Megara.⁷

The date at which these two poems were composed is an issue of some debate. Although both are preserved under the name of Theognis, a Megarian poet traditionally dated to the mid-sixth century,⁸ such an early date is hardly likely. Scholars have, of course, proposed occasions to match the traditional date. The initial conquest of Ionia under Cyrus also fell in the mid-sixth century.⁹ Some have even argued that an aged Theognis may have had the battle of Marathon in mind.¹⁰ But neither suggestion suits the poems particularly well. Both evince a feeling of desperation that is hard to explain if the focus of Persian aggression had been manifestly directed elsewhere. War may have loomed when the Persians disembarked at Marathon or perhaps even earlier when Cyrus conquered Ionia, but the first poem does not envision war as a mere possibility, “a war with the Persians,” but rather as a clear and present danger, “the war with the Persians” (τὸν Μήδων...πόλεμον).¹¹ Moreover, reference to discord among the Greeks in the second

7 Hudson-Williams 1910 and van Groningen 1966 end this poem at line 782. M. West 1971 includes the next six lines (783-788) but notes line 782 as another possible ending. Since line 783 picks up a different theme and, in my view, disturbs the balance of the poem, I follow Hudson-Williams and van Groningen.

8 Most support some version of the traditional date and place Theognis' period of activity in the sixth century (Hudson-Williams 1910: 6-12, Legon 1981: 110-111, Gerber 1997: 121-123, Lane Fox 2000: 37-40, and Selle 2008: 21-27), but see n.14 below. There is also some debate in our ancient sources about which Megara Theognis lived in, Nisaian or Hyblaian, but modern opinion falls decisively in favour of Nisaian Megara (M. West 1974: 65, Figueira 1985: 123-128, Gerber 1997: 121, Lane Fox 2000: 36-37, and Selle 2008: 27-30). Certainly, the Persian War poems presuppose a location in mainland Greece.

9 Hudson-Williams 1910: 9-10. Burn (1962: 170) suggests a slightly later date to coincide with Darius' Scythian campaign.

10 Highbarger 1937: 109-110. This represented a change of opinion for Highbarger, who earlier agreed with Hudson-Williams and dated the poems to the mid-sixth century and Cyrus' initial activity in Ionia (1927: 148). Legon (1981: 163-164) accepts 490 as a date for the first poem but connects the second with Xerxes' invasion.

11 Selle (2008: 237), who dismisses the immediacy of the threat, tellingly refers to the war as “den drohenden ‘Angriff (πόλεμος) der Meder,” and so adds an implication of distance wholly absent from the poem. So too does Carrière (1975: 173), who characterizes the war as “la menace lointaine.” See also van Groningen 1966: 302; Hudson-Williams 1910: 10.

poem would seem out of place before any concerted effort to resist the Persians in mainland Greece had begun.¹² Xerxes' invasion is the most likely occasion for both poems.¹³ Consequently, they were almost certainly not written by *the* Theognis, if ever there was such a person.¹⁴ It is not even clear that our two poems were written by the same person.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the poet (or poets) was a Megarian and likely a contemporary of the events described.¹⁶ As such, the poems provide a unique insight into the mood in Megara at the time of Xerxes' invasion. What is of more interest for our present purposes, however, is that the Megarians continued to find the commemorative narrative of the poems indicative of something they wanted to recall about the Persian War. For it is hard to imagine that two poems by one or more unknown Megarian poets would have survived if the poems did not have some purchase in Megara for years to come.

Both poems evince a clear focus on Megara. Despite the Panhellenic scale of the threat posed by Xerxes' invasion, neither poem is concerned with the fate of Greece generally.¹⁷ In both cases, the aid of the gods is invoked on behalf of "this city" or "this city of ours". The second poem goes further by citing Apollo, the patron god of Megara, and Alkathous, its founder. It also draws directly on Megara's experience of the war, inasmuch as the Megarians did in fact face a direct invasion of their territory on two separate occasions

12 Carrière 1975: 175 and Selle 2008: 236.

13 Scholars have now largely accepted that the second poem must refer to the invasion of Xerxes and more specifically the tense months between the battles of Thermopylai and Plataia (see Van Groningen 1966: 302, M. West 1974: 65, Carrière 1975: 175, Legon 1981: 106–107, Nagy 1985: 33, Figueira 1985: 122, Gerber 1997: 122, and Selle 2008: 235–237 with further bibliography). Opinions about the first poem are less certain. Van Groningen (1966: 296), Carrière (1975: 173), and Selle (2008: 237) doubt any firm conclusion can be reached; Nagy (1985: 33 n.2), Figueira (1985: 123), and Gerber (1997: 122) favour Xerxes' invasion, but provide no discussion of the issue.

14 Nagy (1985: 33–36) proposes a tempting conclusion that the historical Theognis is a myth, not unlike the lawgiver Lycurgus, and that the body of poetry that comes down under his name is simply a collection of traditional Megarian poetry; see also Stein-Hölkeskamp 1997: 22, Kurke 1999: 27–28, Papakonstantinou 2004: 6 n.2, and Selle 2008: 246.

15 Hudson-Williams (1910: 10) raises this possibility, but on the flimsy grounds that the poet of the first poem could not have been a Megarian (see n.3 above). Selle (2008: 237) points to differences of tone.

16 M. West 1974: 65, Legon 1981: 157n.1, and Gerber 1997: 121. I leave aside any attempt to identify an alternative to Theognis himself, but see Carrière (1975: 176) and Selle (2008: 246) for a discussion of the question. It is not impossible that the poems were written after the fact, but there is no compelling reason to think so.

17 *Contra* Nagy (1985: 36) who maintains that the poet "speaks of the Persian threat to Hellas" (see also Carrière 1975: 175–176). Nagy is, however, certainly right to note that the overall perspective of the *Theognidea* is Panhellenic, even if the present poem is an obvious exception to that rule (see Carrière 1948: 193 and Figueira 1985: 121–124).

(Hdt. 8.71.1 and 9.14). Nevertheless, the manner in which this parochial focus is conveyed in the poems can at first glance seem almost Panhellenic. Indeed, numerous Persian War commemorations from across Greece focus on the home polis to the near exclusion of all others.¹⁸ Several evoke patron gods or goddesses,¹⁹ and almost all draw on those parts of the war that most impacted the dedicating party.²⁰ Such elemental similarities within the Persian War tradition have left the false impression that the impact of parochialism was limited to telling a common Persian War story (the glorious victory over Persia...) from the perspective of the homeland (...that ‘we’ won). Against this backdrop, the attribution of fear in both poems and the identification of discord among the Greeks as the cause of that fear in the second stand out.²¹ As we shall see below, neither was a particularly popular theme when the Greeks recalled and commemorated their own achievements.

Fear and Discord in the Persian War Tradition

It is easy to miss how infrequently the Greeks cited fear in their own Persian War commemorations. Even a casual reading of Herodotus will reveal fear in abundance among those who united to defend Greece from Xerxes.²² Diodorus and Plutarch are more restrained, but still show the Greeks in a state of panic on several occasions.²³ We must,

18 The tendency of Persian War commemorations to focus, almost myopically, on the dedicating party is particularly notable in the surviving Persian War epigrams (e.g. ‘Simon.’ 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, and 24P), but it can also be seen in longer narratives, such as the speech of the Athenian ambassadors in Thucydides (1.73–74) or Isocrates’ *Panegyricus* (4.85–99). According to Thucydides, even the Plataians were capable of reconstructing the war around their own accomplishments (3.53–59). For more on this trend, see W. West 1970 and Yates: forthcoming.

19 A few examples will suffice to prove the trend: Athena at Athens (Paus. 1.28.2), Helios at Troizen (Paus. 2.31.5), Aphrodite at Corinth (‘Simon.’ 14P), Poseidon at Potidaia (Hdt. 8.128–129), Apollo at Delphi (see below), and Artemis in a later dedication at Megara (see below).

20 The tendency of the Greeks to focus on those events (generally battles) that highlighted their own accomplishments is best exemplified by Pindar (*Pyth* 1.75–80), who addresses the phenomenon directly by claiming that “I shall earn from Salamis the Athenians’ gratitude as my reward, and at Sparta I shall tell of the battle before Kithairon” (trans. Race).

21 The poet explains his fear with reference to both stupidity (ἄφραδῖη) and discord (στάσις), but as van Groningen (1966: 301) rightly notes, discord here specifies the more general idea of stupidity.

22 See, for example, Hdt. 7.173.4 (Tempe), 7.183.1 (Artemision), 7.207 (Thermopylai), 8.70.2 (Salamis), and 9.101.3 (Mykale).

23 See, for example, Diod. 11.13.3, 11.15.2, 11.16.1–3; Plut. *Them.* 6.1, 7.4; *Arist.* 8.1, and 10.3. For a greater emphasis on courage and aggressiveness among the Greek allies in Diodorus, see Marincola 2007: 114–123.

however, make a distinction between historical narratives written about others and parochial narratives recalled by a community about itself.²⁴ The story of Delphi’s miraculous salvation proves instructive here. Herodotus provides a detailed account and defines the mood at Delphi as one of abject terror. There the Delphians “fell into total panic” (ἐς πᾶσαν ἄρρωδίην) when they learned that the Persians were approaching, and “in their great fear” (ἐν δείματι...μεγάλῳ) consulted the oracle (8.36.1). After Apollo responded that he would protect what was his own, the Delphians promptly fled the sanctuary. Only 60 men and a priest remained, and they had no apparent plan of defense until the gods directly intervened. The arms dedicated in the temple miraculously appeared in front of it, thunderbolts rained down on the Persians, and two boulders from a rockslide crashed into their ranks. When the Delphians finally attacked, they did so against a Persian force already in flight and with the aid of two supernatural hoplites (8.36–39). The prominent role given to fear and divine salvation in this episode is certainly evocative of the *Theognidea’s* Persian War poems, but when the Delphians themselves erected a monument to commemorate the same event about a generation later, they told a rather different tale.

μνᾶμά τ’ ἀλεξάνδρου πολέμου καὶ μάρτυρα νίκας
 Δελφοί με στᾶσαν, Ζανὶ χαριζόμενοι
 σὺν Φοίβῳ, πτολίπορθον ἀπώσάμενοι στίχα Μήδων
 καὶ χαλκοστέφανον ῥυσάμενοι τέμενος (Diod. 11.14.4).

When the Delphians drove back the city sacking line of the Persians and saved the bronze crowned sanctuary, they erected me as a memorial of war, the

24 Halbwachs (1980 [=1950]: 84) says of history that “the totality of past events can be put together in a single record only by separating them from the memory of the groups who preserved them...This procedure no longer entails restoring them to lifelike reality, but requires relocating them within the frameworks with which history organizes events.” Far too much has been made of the difference between history and memory, but what Halbwachs says here of history generally can still be said of synthetic histories (ancient and modern) that explicitly seek to craft a single historical narrative from multiple parochial traditions, as did Herodotus, Ephorus, and others. For similar conclusions about synthetic history, see White 1978: 58, Wachtel 1986: 217, Fentress and Wickham 1992: 152–154, and Cubitt 2007: 42–44.

defender of men, and as a witness of victory, in thanks to Zeus and Apollo as well.²⁵

The dread that paralyzed the Delphians in Herodotus has been ignored. The direct intervention of the gods is given only passing recognition as attention is directed rather to the heroic fight of the Delphians, who are the ones credited with driving back the Persians and saving the sanctuary.²⁶ Indeed, the Delphians seem to have been at some pains to eliminate any implication of the impotent fear that stands at the heart of the Herodotean version (and our Theognidean poems). Both the inscription and Herodotus' account obviously derive from the same local tradition, but the differences underscore the contrary tendencies of parochial and Panhellenic narratives.²⁷ Determination and heroism dominate our surviving Persian War dedications.²⁸ Longer parochial narratives show a similar predisposition.²⁹ The Greeks of this or that city-state were, of course, only too happy to point out the fears of others but were seldom interested in commemorating their own.³⁰

25 The stone itself was identified in the seventeenth century but was subsequently lost. Transcriptions made at that time confirm the accuracy of Diodorus' version, but also allow us to date the inscription on the strength of morphology to c. 400 BCE (Meritt 1947). Such a date would make the inscription a relatively late addition to the Persian War tradition, but valuable nonetheless for our present purposes.

26 The assumption that the gods would be credited for these actions was in fact so strong that Oldfather emended the text (1946: 162n.1; see also Green 2006: 67 n.61), but there is no sound justification for the change. The manuscript tradition makes perfect sense and is supported by the transcriptions of the inscription itself (Page 1981: 411 and Haillet 2001: 24; see also Mikalson 2003: 70-71). It is notable, however, that Diodorus himself provides an account of the Persian attack that still follows Herodotus quite closely (11.14.2-4).

27 For the Delphians as Herodotus' source, see Hignett 1963: 445-446, Sánchez 2001: 95, Asheri et al. 2003: 235-236, and Rösler 2013: 241-246. For more on the extent to which Herodotus could and did alter parochial narratives to serve his own larger authorial aims, see Thomas 2001: 224-225, and Munson 2005: 8-10 and 2007: 167.

28 The body of epigrams attributed to Simonides demonstrates this trend amply (7-24P). We might also consider other surviving or attested dedicatory inscriptions (eg. *M&L* 18, *M&L* 19, *FD* III.4.179, and Aeschin. 3.116) and indeed some of the more detailed descriptions of the monuments themselves, which also speak to a focus on courage. See, for example, the Marathon painting in the *Stoa Poikile* (Paus. 1.15.3), the columns of the *Stoa Persike* (Vitr. 1.1.6 and Paus. 3.11.3), and the imagery of the Athenian statue group at Delphi (Paus. 10.10.1-2).

29 Several extended narratives of the Persian War survive from Athens (Lys. 2.20-43, Pl. *Men.* 239d-241e, Isoc. 4.85-99 and 12.49-52, Dem. 18.202-208 and 60.10-11, and Lycurg. 68-74; see also Ar. *Eq* 781-786 and *Vesp.* 1060-1124), and of these only Lysias' *Epitaphios Logos* mentions any fear on the part of the Athenians (2.34 and 2.39), in both cases before the battle of Salamis. Yet it is important to note that Lysias uses fear to a rather different effect than do the Persian War poems in the *Theognidea*. Fear does not define the Athenian response to the threat. Rather it underscores the dangers they faced and the courage they showed by overcoming it (2.40). Plato's *Laws* (698a-699d) makes a related point about

Like fear, discord can seem at first glance a prominent part of the Persian War tradition. It appears with some frequency throughout the historical record and ranges from squabbles within the Hellenic League to outright medism.³¹ References to those who fought openly on the Persian side can also be found in contemporary commemoration.³² References to strife within the alliance are much rarer, however, and it is with this that our second poem seems chiefly concerned. Indeed, even if the poet has medism in mind, his focus falls on the internal strife that led to it, not the subsequent political alignment with Persia. In this respect, the *Theognidea* stands largely alone among contemporary narratives of the war. In his *Persai* Aischylos mentions the famous messenger sent to mislead the Persians on the eve of Salamis (355–360), but adds none of the lurid details of internal dissention and medism that are so central to the later Herodotean version (8.75.2–3).³³ The surviving fragments of Simonides' Plataia Elegy give no hint of discord among the allies, and Plutarch's later assurance that the poem was not biased in favour of any one state suggests that the whole maintained a similar tone (*Mor.* 872d–e).³⁴ Here again, Herodotus had a rather different tale

Athenian fears – that they compelled the Athenians to unite to defeat the Persian threat – but unlike the narratives cited above, *Laws* can hardly be taken as a representative work of Athenian social memory. For the relationship between representations of the past in oratory and Athenian memory, see Steinbock 2013: 94–96.

30 Of the works cited above (n.29), see *Lys.* 2.29, *Pl. Men.* 240c and 241b, and *Isoc.* 4.93 for the attribution of fear to the other Greeks.

31 The Greeks bicker before Artemision (*Hdt.* 8.4–5 and *Plut. Them.* 7), before Salamis (*Hdt.* 8.56–82 and *Plut. Them.* 11.2–5), after Salamis (*Hdt.* 8.108–110 and *Diod.* 11.27.2–3), before Plataia (*Hdt.* 8.140–9.11, *Diod.* 11.28, and *Plut. Arist.* 10), at Plataia (*Hdt.* 9.26–28 and *Plut. Arist.* 12), and after Mykale (*Hdt.* 9.106, *Diod.* 11.37.1–3, and *Plut. Them.* 20.3–4). We might also note the later disputes between the Spartans and the Athenians over the reconstruction of Athens' wall (*Thuc.* 1.89–92, *Diod.* 11.39–40, and *Plut. Them.* 19.1–2) and between the Spartan regent Pausanias and the League's new Ionian allies (*Thuc.* 1.95, *Diod.* 11.44.5–6, and *Plut. Arist.* 23). Medism is also prominently mentioned in Herodotus (eg. 7.132, 7.174, 7.233, 8.30, and 8.92), but less so in later Persian War narratives (see *Diod.* 11.3 and *Plut. Them.* 7.1). For a growing emphasis on unity and Panhellenism in our later authors, see Marincola 2007 and 2010 and Yates 2015.

32 For a discussion of some surviving allusions to medism in early commemorations of the Persian War, see Yates 2013.

33 For more on the differences between the two accounts, see Hignett 1963: 403–408, Masaracchia 1977: 193–194, Blösel 2004: 210–211, and Parker 2007: 8–12.

34 The passage in question comes from *On the Malignity of Herodotus*, and there Plutarch cites a part of the poem that praises the Corinthians to show that they had in fact contributed to the victory (in contrast to Herodotus' malicious assertion to the contrary). He then adds that "Simonides has recorded this, neither for a choral production in Corinth, nor for a song in honor of the city, but simply writing up these events in elegiacs" (trans. Sider). Boedeker (1995: 225) has argued that Plutarch's summation of the poem here suggests that it was not obviously biased in favour of any one party, and in this she is followed by Obbink (2001: 80) and Jung (2006: 235–236). We might press this conclusion one step further and conclude that Simonides likely avoided those episodes of internal strife that would later earn Herodotus' and Plutarch's ire.

to tell. There, distrust among the allies almost dooms the campaign even before it begins and ultimately leaves the Athenians, Spartans, and Tegeans to face the Persians alone.³⁵ We might finally consider the numerous Persian War epigrams that are similarly (and understandably) silent about discord among the allies.³⁶ Too many commemorations have been lost to be categorical, but it does seem that our second poem with its frank admission of internal discord remained popular at Megara despite a discernable tendency among the other Greeks to ignore such tensions, at least for the time being.

Fear and Discord at Megara

The emphasis given to fear and discord in the *Theognidea's* Persian War poems, though an anomaly within the overall tradition, is fully explicable within a Megarian context. This is not to discount the personal motives of the author or authors, but it is the social dimension of these poems that is of concern here.³⁷ Both were presumably written for public consumption. Their initial success and ultimate survival depended on Megarian audiences wanting to remember the Persian War in this way. Three factors explain why the Megarians would have found an emphasis on fear and discord particularly appropriate for a story about the Persian War. All were shaped by social and political realities specific to Megara. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is the Megarians' real experience of the war, which was not identical to that of their fellow allies. The second are the pre-existing social memories through which the largely unprecedented experiences of the war would have first been understood. Finally, we must consider the evolving political needs of those doing the remembering over time. The first two factors – real experience and pre-existing

35 The very question of whether there would be a campaign in central Greece was, for Herodotus, an issue of bitter and partisan debate (9.6-11). Once in the field, the League army was beset by divisions and rivalries. When the Megarians were attacked in a preliminary phase of the battle and required relief, Pausanias could convince none but the Athenians to come to their aid (9.21). The Tegeans and Athenians competed over who would hold the second position of honor (9.26-28). By the time of the battle, most of the army had withdrawn from the field (9.52).

36 The lists of allies at Delphi and Olympia do implicitly draw attention to those who failed to participate in the war by enumerating those who did (*M&L* 27; see Steinbock 2013: 108), but the point would then be medism (or neutrality), not internal strife.

37 For the use of literature as a source of collective memory, see Fentress and Wickham 1992: 144-172 and Cubitt 2007: 48-49.

social memory – help to explain why the poet(s) would have constructed such a narrative of the war, while the third – evolving political needs – answers why the Megarians would have wanted to remind themselves of it years later. I examine each in turn below.

Megara's situation between Thermopylai and Plataia was indeed as grim as our poems suggest. Although it appears that a Hellenic League army was to have met the Persians in Boiotia after Thermopylai, no such force materialized (Hdt. 8.40.2). Most of central Greece medized and those few who did not, suffered their homes to be destroyed as they fled before the Persian army (8.50). The other Peloponnesians, now feverishly building a wall across the Isthmus, were of no use to Megara, located some miles north of that defensive line. As a result, proposals that the fleet abandon Salamis posed as much a threat to Megara as Athens.³⁸ Even with the fleet at Salamis, the full Persian army appears to have been headed for Megara before defeat at sea stayed Xerxes' advance (8.71.1).³⁹ The Greek victory did little to improve Megara's overall security, however. The Persian army under Mardonios retained effective control over central Greece, and the army of the Hellenic League continued to focus its efforts on the wall across the Isthmus. The Megarians still faced the possibility of a hasty evacuation of their territory if the League army could not be coaxed out of the Peloponnese. They soon joined the Athenians and Plataians on an embassy to Sparta to do just that (9.7.1).⁴⁰ An army was eventually sent north, but not before a Persian cavalry force raided the Megarid (9.14-15).⁴¹ Throughout much of the

38 Themistocles makes the point explicitly in his speech to the war council (Hdt. 8.60). Later Herodotus notes that the Megarians (along with the Athenians and Aiginetans) opposed the withdrawal of the fleet to the Isthmus (8.74.2). For more on Megara's position during these debates, see Hignett 1963: 191 and 201, Legon 1981: 165, Lazenby 1993: 158-166, Balcer 1995: 261-264, and Green 1996: 164.

39 For more on the movement of the Persian army immediately before the battle of Salamis and its purpose, see Burn 1962: 448-449, Hignett 1963: 205, Lazenby 1993: 166-167, and Green 1996: 175-176; Hammond (1988: 582-583) argues that the Persian army may have made significant progress on this occasion, devastating not merely the Megarid, but perhaps burning the Temple of Poseidon at Isthmia as well, but see Lazenby (1993: 219 n.10) and Balcer (1995: 269 n.52) who argue against this possibility.

40 Hignett 1963: 282-285, Legon 1981: 165, Lazenby 1993: 213, Green 1996: 229, and Asheri et al. 2006: 183.

41 Herodotus reports that Mardonios turned his entire army against Megara in the hopes of engaging an advanced force of 1,000 Spartans. The cavalry was sent ahead and it "trampled" (κατιππᾶσατο) the Megarid before ordered to turn back. Hignett (1963: 291-92), however, doubts that Mardonios contemplated a full assault on Megara (see also Legon 1981: 168-169 and Lazenby 1993: 219). Asheri et al 2006: 191 may be right to attribute the inflation to a Megarian source, but that must remain conjecture.

war, Megara was exposed to attack and had good reason to feel abandoned by its allies.⁴² The poems of the *Theognidea* respond to this experience and understandably so. The Megarians were unlikely to popularize a story that did not engage in some meaningful way with their own experiences of the war.⁴³

The Megarian experience of the Persian War goes a long way to explaining the peculiar memory of the war contained within the *Theognidea*, but that factor alone does not provide a sufficient answer. Megara was certainly not the only city to fear a direct Persian invasion or to distrust the ramshackle alliance to which the freedom of Greece had been entrusted. The Delphians, for example, famously kept their distance from the alliance and, as noted above, survived (or at least claimed to survive) a Persian attack.⁴⁴ But their parochial commemoration of that attack was an emphatic tale of heroism. The Corinthians also had several notable disagreements with League policy and felt sufficiently under threat that they too preserved the memory of a prayer to their patron deity, Aphrodite.⁴⁵ This prayer was ultimately the subject of a dedication in the temple of Aphrodite at Corinth.⁴⁶ But the differences between the inscription that accompanied this dedication and the *Theognidea's* Persian War poems are remarkable.

αἴδ' ὑπὲρ Ἑλλάνων τε καὶ ἀγχεμάχων πολιταῶν
ἔστασαν εὐχόμεναι Κύπριδι δαιμόνια.
οὐ γὰρ τοξοφόροισιν ἐβούλετο δι' Ἀφροδίτα
Μήδοις Ἑλλάνων ἀκρόπολιν δόμεναι ('Simon.' 14 P).

42 Certainly, the Athenians felt abandoned in similar circumstances (see Hdt. 9.6-11).

43 For the impact of real experience on the subsequent formation of social memory, see Schwartz 1982: 396, Burke 1989: 104-105, Schudson 1989: 109, Irwin-Zarecka 1994: 17-18, Ashplant 2000: 34-36, Misztal 2003: 67-74, and Cubitt 2007: 206.

44 A negative attitude toward any resistance to Persia is often surmised from a string of disheartening oracles issued by Delphi on the eve of the invasion (7.139-142, 7.148, and 7.169; Hignett 1963: 439-447 and Kienast 1995: 124-126).

45 Herodotus' negative portrayal of the Corinthians and Adeimantus in particular may very well hide a genuine desire on the part of the Corinthians not to risk the safety of the Peloponnese on operations in Central Greece (Green 1996: 163-165; *contra* Salmon 1984: 253-256). If so, then they were overruled by the Spartans at the insistence of the Athenians, Megarians, and others.

46 The monument itself is wholly lost, but the inscription is preserved in three literary sources (Page 1981: 207-213).

These women stand praying inspired prayers to Cypris on behalf of both the Greeks and their own close-fighting citizens. For divine Aphrodite was not willing to give the acropolis of the Greeks to the bow-bearing Persians.

There is no acknowledgement of fear on the part of the Corinthians or the women who conduct the prayer.⁴⁷ The Greeks, far from being the source of potential disaster, appear along with the Corinthians as equal beneficiaries of divine aid. Finally, the Corinthians portray themselves as agents in their own salvation. Aphrodite's intervention is certainly decisive, but she is here represented as working through the "close-fighting" soldiers in the field,⁴⁸ and to that extent her role is reminiscent of that given to Zeus and Apollo in the Delphian monument.⁴⁹ The comparison between the Corinthian dedication and the Persian War poems in the *Theognidea* should not be pressed too far, however. Naturally, we would not expect a public monument erected after the immediate threat had passed to resemble the tone of an elegy written during the war, but it remains notable that while the Corinthians (and Delphians) white-washed their experience, the Megarians still wanted to recall the terrors of the war years afterward.

We move closer to an explanation when we account for the pre-existing social memories that had currency in Megara at the time of the Persian War. Much of this is beyond recovery, but the *Theognidea* itself gives us some sense of the impact local perceptions of the past would have had. Whether there was a real Theognis or not, the body of poetry that comes down under his name was very likely the product of a longstanding oral tradition at Megara.⁵⁰ Eventually, these poems would gain notoriety across Greece, but we might imagine that at the time of the Persian War their influence in Megara was rather greater than elsewhere. The Persian War poems obviously did not start as part of that

47 The identity of these women is an issue of debate (see most recently Budin 2008), but for our present purposes it only matters that fear is not attributed to them.

48 The reading of this word (ἀγχεμάχων) is uncertain (Page 1981: 211). Straight-fighting (ἰθυμάχων) and broad-fighting (εὐθυμάχων) are also possible, but in any case, the adjective yields the same implication of martial virility.

49 Mikalson (2003: 71) notes that fifth-century dedications to the intervention of the gods generally focused on human actions, but later singles out the Corinthian inscription above as an exception since it specifically describes the part played by the deity (2003: 214 n.222). While Aphrodite's precise contribution is certainly acknowledged in the second couplet, I would argue that the elegy still conforms to Mikalson's broader observation.

50 See n.14 above.

tradition, but their reaction to the war was nevertheless perfectly suited to the character of Theognis.⁵¹ The Persians are presented as a hybridic force (στρατὸν ὑβριστήν) bent on the overthrow of the established order and so much like the κακοί who threaten Theognis himself.⁵² The stakes, as often, are the very survival of the city.⁵³ Nevertheless, the Megarians cannot respond to the Persian threat effectively, not through any fault of their own, but because their allies have failed them. This too is a common refrain in the *Theognidea* as Theognis is himself betrayed by his faithless friends or warns others to be on guard against a similar fate.⁵⁴ The causes of Megara’s present danger, stupidity (ἄφραδίη) and discord (στάσις), also find parallels in the corpus.⁵⁵ Theognis often reacts to his perilous predicament with fear or thoughts of revenge.⁵⁶ Fear, of course, dominates both Persian War poems. Revenge is less obvious but may find voice when the poet beseeches Apollo to “protect this city of ours” (ἡμετέρην τήνδε φύλασσε πόλιν). The concluding prayer echoes the one that opens the poem with the notable addition of the possessive adjective ἡμετέρην (“of ours”). There may well be a hint here that the god should save our city alone and leave the other Greeks to the fate they so richly deserve. The Persian War

51 For the coherence of a Theognidean worldview within the corpus, see Carrière 1971: 15-22 and 1975: 27-40 and Nagy 1985.

52 See, for example, lines 39-52, 151-152, 153-154, 287-292, 541-542, 603-604, 833-836, 1081-1082, and 1103-1104. For more on the hybridic enemies who beset Theognis, see Nagy 1985: 51-63, Cobb-Stevens 1985: 159-160, Selle 2008: 253-271, and Fisher 2000: 99-100.

53 See lines 39-52, 235-236, 541-542, 603-604, 667-682, 833-836, 855-856, and 1103-1104.

54 Personal betrayal is a notable part of Theognis’ autobiography in the poems (see lines 415-418, 575-576, 811-814, 831-832, and 861-864) and often features in his advice to others (lines 53-68, 73-74, 75-76, 119-128, 283-286, and 1219-1220). The poet is particularly keen to warn his listeners that friends are few in difficult times (77-78, 79-82, 115-116, 299-300, 641-644, 645-646, 697-698, and 857-860), which is very much the situation in the second Persian War poem. For more on the problematic nature of friendship in the *Theognidea*, see Donlan 1985; see also Gerber 1997: 123 and van Wees 2008: 6-7.

55 Discord poses a particular threat to Theognis’ Megara (Nagy 1985: 41; see also van Wees 2008: 4 and Fisher 2000: 100). While στάσις itself is mentioned only twice outside of the Persian War poems (51 and 1082), the concept of civil discord also appears in lines 78, 219, and 390. Ἀφραδίη is used only here, but the broader concept of stupidity appears frequently and is a recurrent cause of problems. See, for example, ἄφρων (223, 431, 454, 497, 625, 665, 1039, and 1069), κενεόφρων (233 and 847), ἀφροσύνη (230), ἀφραίνω (322 and 693), ἄσοφος (370), ἀγνωμοσύνη (896), αἰδρις (683), and ἀνοίη (453). For the important contrast between knowledge and ignorance in Theognis’ worldview, see Edmunds 1985 and Cobb-Stevens 1985; see also Carrière 1971: 16-17 and 1975: 30, Levine 1985: 180, and Figueira 1985: 130.

56 For fear, see lines 39, 541, 680, and 1081. See also Nagy 1985: 41. For thoughts of personal revenge, see lines 337-340, 341-350, 561-562, and 1123-1128. For the importance of revenge generally, see lines 361-362, 363-364, 689-690, 851-852, 869-872, 957-958, and 1087-1090.

poems certainly do stand out in many ways within the Theognidean corpus.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the worldview they convey is still that of ‘Theognis’ and, we might say, Megara.

The influence of the Theognidean corpus on Megarian perceptions of the Persian War should hardly surprise. When the Persian threat approached, the Megarians would have attempted to understand that threat and their response to it in the familiar terms of social memory.⁵⁸ The *Theognidea*, which had given voice to fears of a changing world in Megara for generations, was a natural place to turn. The Persian War poems were in fact so influenced by this worldview that they became part of this evolving body of oral tradition. But tradition alone does not dictate how the past is recalled. Indeed, Megara was not the only locality in Greece to feature a poetic tradition that emphasized many of the same themes that appear in the *Theognidea*. We might account for their impact in this case by citing the extent to which Megara’s real experience of the war coincided with these themes,⁵⁹ but such a solution would not explain why the Megarians continued to recall the war from the perspective of its darkest hour after the victory had been won. Ultimately, these poems were remembered, not because they perfectly suited pre-existing tradition or even the reality of the war (as the Megarians saw it), but rather because they continued to say something meaningful in the present.⁶⁰ There is surely an element of pride here. Persia was defeated. The fear had passed. Apollo had, in retrospect, saved his city. But a brief survey of Megara’s political situation in the century after the Persian invasion suggests that many of the anxieties expressed in the *Theognidea*’s Persian War poems remained painfully relevant.

57 Both poems are datable, late, and the second gives specific details about Megara. The rest of the *Theognidea* tends to present a more universal, Panhellenic picture (see n.17 above).

58 For the influence of pre-existing social memories on the construction of new memories, see Burke 1989: 100–105, Fentress and Wickham 1992: 130–131, Winter and Sivan 1999: 13 and 28, Ashplant 2000: 34–36, Misztal 2003: 67–74, and Cubitt 2007: 208–209.

59 Burke 1989: 104–105 draws particular attention to the importance of this intersection in the formation of memory.

60 For the importance of the present on the recollection of the past, see Halbwachs 1980 (=1950): 50–87 and 1992 (=1925): 39–40 and 119, Wachtel 1986: 210–211, Fentress and Wickham 1992: 40, 58–59, and 87–88, Assmann 1992: 40–42, Schudson 1995: 351–355, Nora 1996: 3, Misztal 2003: 56–67, and Cubitt 2007: 75–90 and 211–214.

Victory over Persia hardly provided Megara any real escape from the fears of invasion that stood behind both our poems. A little over a year after the Greek victories at Plataia and Mykale, the Hellenic League fell into abeyance as Sparta withdrew from active service and Athens took command of the new Delian League (Thuc. 1.94–96). The split was apparently amicable,⁶¹ but there were now two spheres of influence, and Megara was caught uncomfortably in the middle. This was not merely a geographical fact, but a geopolitical one as well. Megara had historically been aligned with the Peloponnesian League, but the strategy preferred by a majority of its members during the Persian War—a defense of the Isthmus—placed Megarian interests decidedly into alignment with the states of central Greece, most notably Athens.⁶² This realignment extended beyond the immediate threat of the Persian invasion, as the fate of Megara’s Aegean and Black Sea colonies now depended on Athens and the Delian League.⁶³ When in 462/1 the Megarians were hard-pressed by the Corinthians, they acted on these new connections and abandoned the Peloponnesian League in favour of an alliance with Athens (Thuc. 1.103.4).⁶⁴ Security remained elusive, however, and Megara became the front line of a new conflict. Within a few years the Megarid played host to two major battles between the

61 So Thucydides 1.75.2 and 1.95.7, but Diodorus points to some latent hostility at Sparta (11.50). For more on the Spartans attitude toward the split, see Hornblower 1991: 142–143 and Badian 1993: 207 n.25.

62 See the discussion of Megara’s wartime experience above. We might add that the Athenians volunteered to reinforce the faltering Megarians during a preliminary skirmish to the battle of Plataia (Hdt. 9.21–22), an act which must have created significant goodwill among the Megarian contingent of 3,000 hoplites (9.28.6). For more on the incident, see Hignett 1963: 299–300, Legon 1981: 171, and Green 1996: 246. If the Megarians’ later engagement with the Theban cavalry rendered aid to the Athenians, as some moderns suggest (Hignett 1963: 338–339 and Legon 1981: 172), we might conclude that the feeling was mutual, but Herodotus give us no indication that the engagement had that effect or was subsequently perceived as such at Athens (9.69; Lazenby 1993: 244). Two later political disputes might seem to undermine the possibility of friendly relations between Megara and Athens after the Persian War. Herodotus reports that Athens objected to a Spartan proposal to resettle the Ionians in mainland Greece, which had the further support of the Peloponnesians (9.106.3), but Legon (1981: 176) argues persuasively that Herodotus is speaking in generalities here and that the Megarians were unlikely to support such a proposal. Thucydides (1.90) states that the Spartans objected to the reconstruction of Athens’ walls largely at the insistence of their allies, but here again we would be right to exclude Megara from this group since the Spartans additionally proposed to tear down the walls of every city outside the Peloponnese (i.e. beyond the Isthmus), which would have left Megara at the mercy of a hostile and fully fortified Corinth.

63 Legon 1981: 179–180.

64 See Hornblower 1991: 161–162 with earlier bibliography. If there is any truth to the story that Cimon berated the Corinthians earlier in the 460’s for their rough treatment of the Megarians (Plut. *Cim.* 17.1), we might posit some sympathy for Megara’s plight at Athens before their defection from the Peloponnesian League (Legon 1981: 181–182).

Athenians and Corinthians (1.105–106) and was laid waste by a Peloponnesian army returning from the battle of Tanagra in 458/7 (1.108.2).⁶⁵ In 446, Megara defected back to the Peloponnesian League, and an army was dispatched for the protection of the pro-Spartan faction (1.114.1), but not before the Athenians launched their own punitive raid.⁶⁶

Megara remained a target of Athenian reprisals even after the Thirty Years' Peace put an end to open hostilities in 446. A little over a decade later, the Athenians passed the Megarian decrees, which in part banned Megarians from all Delian-League ports.⁶⁷ The Megarians were soon clamoring for a Spartan-led war against Athens (Thuc. 1.67.4), which finally came in 432/1. Again, Megara found itself on the front line as the Athenians invaded the Megarid at least once a year from the outbreak of the war down to 424.⁶⁸ What is more notable for our purposes is the fact that Thucydides expressly tells us that Megara's Peloponnesian allies offered no help on any of these occasions (4.72.2). As in the Persian War, Megara was left to its fate. The effect was devastating⁶⁹ and became only worse in 424 when the Athenians seized the Megarian port of Nisaia as part of a failed

65 For more on the Corinthian-led expeditions against the Megarid, see Legon 1981: 186–188 and Salmon 1984: 263–264.

66 Diodorus notes that after the revolt of Megara, the Athenians raided the Megarid and defeated Megarian troops dispatched to stop them (12.5.2). The date Diodorus assigns the revolt – 448 BCE – is incorrect (*contra* Green 2006: 185 n.27), and so his story makes no mention of the Peloponnesian army, but a memorial erected at Athens to the exploits of a Megarian sympathizer, Pythion, seems to relate the daring escape of the Athenian expeditionary force via Pagai upon the approach of the Peloponnesian army (*ME&L* 51). For more on the Athenian attack, see Legon 1981: 194–196 and Lewis 1992a: 134.

67 For the Megarian decrees, see the extensive discussion in de Ste. Croix 1972: 225–289; see also Legon 1981: 200–227, Hornblower 1991: 111–112, and Lewis 1992b: 376–378.

68 Unlike the yearly Peloponnesian attacks on Attica, Thucydides mentions the Athenian attacks on the Megarid only at the point they begin (2.31) and once again as they draw to a close (4.66.1). There is some discrepancy between the two notices. In Book 2 Thucydides suggests that the campaigns occurred once a year and consisted of either a cavalry raid or an invasion by the full Athenian levy. In Book 4, however, he speaks of invasions occurring twice a year and conducted exclusively with the entire Athenian army. The inconsistency might represent a change in Athenian policy during the course of the invasions (Gomme 1956: 93 and Lendon 2010: 476 n.9) or an attempt to downplay the importance of the invasions on Thucydides' part (Wick 1979: 2–3). For more on the invasions generally, see Legon 1981: 228–233.

69 In addition to the Athenian invasions of the Megarid, the Megarians also suffered from a blockade, much strengthened in 427 with the seizure of the nearby island of Minoa (Thuc. 3.51). Aristophanes gives particular voice to the suffering of the Megarians in his *Acharnians* (719–835), which was produced in 425. For more on the privations endured by the Megarians in these early years of the war, see Wick 1979 and Legon 1981: 229–233.

coup within the city (4.66–69).⁷⁰ The fears that animated the Persian War poems in the *Theognidea* and indeed the very reasons for those fears (discord among the Greeks) were not passing anecdotes of the Persian War past at Megara. Rather, they continued to define the harsh political reality of that state for decades to come.

The Megarian Tradition

The *Theognidea's* Persian War poems stood at the intersection of three factors – the real experience of the war, pre-existing social memory, and present circumstances – each of which responded to social and political realities specific to Megara. The result was not merely a commemorative narrative centered on the Megarians and their exploits, but one that also conveyed a Megarian outlook on those events by yielding a prominent place to fear and discord. We can, of course, say with some confidence that the poems and their peculiar recollection of the war remained popular at Megara for a time, but there is good reason to think that the *Theognidea* lost much of its unique popularity at Megara by the end of the fifth century BCE, so much so in fact that Plato could doubt Theognis was even from Nisaian Megara.⁷¹ What then was the afterlife of this distinctly Megarian way of remembering the Persian War? To answer that question, we must consider the themes of fear and discord within the larger Megarian tradition, and indeed two later stories about Megara's role in the Persian War suggest that both remained influential there for centuries to come.

The clearest example comes from Pausanias, the second-century CE travel writer. Near the agora of Megara he identifies a statue of Artemis the Savior. Like Apollo, Artemis was closely associated with Megara's founder and was here honored, Pausanias tells us, for the aid she rendered to the Megarians when the Persians under Mardonios attacked the

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the coup, see Legon 1981: 241–247 and Lendon 2010: 295–300. Nisaia remained in Athenian hands until 409 (Diod. 13.65.1; Andrewes 1992: 486).

⁷¹ Figueira 1985.

Megarid.⁷² The story obviously takes Herodotus' much shorter notice of a Persian cavalry raid as a point of departure (9.14-15).

φασὶ δὲ ἄνδρας τοῦ Μαρδονίου στρατοῦ καταδραμόντας τὴν Μεγαρίδα ἀποχωρεῖν ἐς Θήβας ὀπίσω παρὰ Μαρδόνιον ἐθέλειν, γνώμη δὲ Ἀρτέμιδος νύκτα τε ὁδοιποροῦσιν ἐπιγενέσθαι καὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ σφᾶς ἀμαρτόντας ἐς τὴν ὄρεινὴν τραπέσθαι τῆς χώρας· πειρωμένους δὲ εἰ στρατεύμα ἐγγύς εἴη πολέμιον ἀφιέναι τῶν βελῶν, καὶ τὴν πλησίον πέτραν στένειν βαλλομένην, τοὺς δὲ αὖθις τοξεύειν προθυμίᾳ πλέονι. τέλος δὲ αὐτοῖς ἀναλωθῆναι τοὺς ὀιστοὺς ἐς ἄνδρας πολεμίους τοξεύειν νομίζουσιν· ἡμέρα τε ὑπεφαίνετο καὶ οἱ Μεγαρεῖς ἐπήεσαν, μαχόμενοι δὲ ὀπλιῖται πρὸς ἀνόπλους καὶ οὐδὲ βελῶν εὐποροῦντας ἔτι φονεύουσιν αὐτῶν τοὺς πολλούς· καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε Σωτείρας ἄγαλμα ἐποίησαντο Ἀρτέμιδος...τὴν δὲ Ἄρτεμιν αὐτὴν Στρογγυλίων ἐποίησε (Paus. 1.40.2-3).

They say troops from Mardonios' army ravaged the Megarid and intended to return to Mardonios at Thebes, but by Artemis' design night fell upon them *en route*. They missed the road and turned into the mountainous region. To see if an enemy force was close, they shot off some arrows, and a nearby rock groaned when struck. They responded by shooting with more zeal. Finally, they spent their arrows, thinking they were hitting enemy soldiers. When day broke, the Megarians came upon them and killed most of them since they fought as hoplites against lightly armed men who no longer had a sufficient supply of arrows. It was for this reason that they made an image of Artemis the Savior... Strongylion made the Artemis himself.

Pausanias later notes the rock itself on the road to Pagai: “a rock with arrows implanted all over it (διὰ πάσης ἔχουσα ἐμπεπηγότας ὀιστούς) is shown to those traveling to Pagai, if they turn a little off the highway. The Persians shot the arrows into this rock at night

⁷² Pausanias reports that Alkathous himself dedicated a temple to Apollo Agraios and Artemis Agrotera jointly (1.41.3).

once” (Paus. 1.44.4).⁷³ There is no good reason to conclude that the story dates to the time of the Persian War.⁷⁴ The only firm date is supplied by the artist, Strongylion, who was active in the late fifth or early fourth centuries BCE.⁷⁵ We might date the story to the same period, but it is equally likely that the version reported by Pausanias had changed substantially over the intervening five hundred years. There is no hint of an inscription, and the fact that the story begins with “they say” (φασί) suggests rather an oral or literary source.⁷⁶ The rock itself supplies even less reason for confidence. Whatever it was that Pausanias saw on the road to Pagai, it was almost certainly not a genuine artifact from the Persian invasion.⁷⁷ For our present purposes, however, it matters only that the story was popular at Megara when Pausanias visited in the second century CE.

The tale of Artemis’ divine intervention is immediately evocative of the second Persian War poem in the *Theognidea*.⁷⁸ Both feature a Persian threat against the homeland that could only be stopped by one of Megara’s patron deities. There are, of course, some obvious differences as well. Artemis has been substituted for Apollo. The focus has moved from the acropolis to the countryside. An impending threat in the *Theognidea* is reified as a

73 Pausanias goes on to note a statue of Artemis the Savior in Pagai, which was the same size and shape as that in Megara (1.44.4). Although it is reasonable to assume that this statue was also associated with the Persian attack in Pausanias’ day (West 1967: 188-189 and Gauer 1968: 124-125), Pausanias does not say so explicitly.

74 *Contra* Legon 1981: 169-170 and Green 1996: 234-235.

75 For Strongylion’s period of activity, see Lippold 1950: 189-190 and Todisco 1993: 42; see also Gauer 1968: 124.

76 Flower and Marincola 2002: 124. Piccirilli (1975: 134-136) adds this passage to a list of unidentified fragments from the lost histories of Megara (P5 F22), but since there is no mention of an author or title, such an attribution must, of course, be taken with a grain of salt, as Piccirilli himself acknowledges (1975: 136). Jacoby, more conservatively, leaves this passage out of his collection of unattributed fragments from the *Megarika* (FGrH 487).

77 Legon (1981: 169-170) argues that the stone was what remained of the battlefield trophy, but it seems incredible that a battlefield trophy would have survived over 600 years and be in the state Pausanias describes (see also Lazenby 1993: 219 n.10). It is, however, interesting to note that this was not the only stone at Megara to emit a deceptive sound when struck. Pausanias reports that a stone on the Alkathoan acropolis would make the sound of a lyre if hit with a stone (1.42.2). It had this property, according to Pausanias, because Apollo had laid his lyre on it when he helped Alkathous erect a wall around the acropolis, the very act of beneficence mentioned in the *Theognidea*’s second Persian War poem. Any possible connection between the stones, the twin deities, and the Persian War at Megara would be too conjectural to press, however.

78 Highbarger (1937: 110) recognizes the similarities but focuses on the differences to support his claim that the poem was written in reference to the Marathon campaign. Nagy (1985: 33) and Figueira (1985: 122) suggest that the events described by Pausanias may have inspired the Theognidean poem, but the differences noted below make this conclusion unlikely.

raid in Pausanias. The later tradition also gives the Megarians a rather more robust part to play and ends with the majority of the Persians dead by their hands. Nevertheless, the impotent fear that dominates the *Theognidea* still finds place in Pausanias' story. Megarian military action, though notable, appears quite late, only after Artemis has virtually neutralized the Persian threat. Before that point, the Megarians offer no resistance as this band of Persians ravages their land. When the counterattack comes, the Persians are almost defenseless. Without recourse to their bows, they face the Megarians at a distinct disadvantage, lightly armed men against heavily armed hoplites (ὀπλιῖται πρὸς ἀνόπλους). The muted role the Megarians assign themselves here is thrown into sharp relief if we consider again the tradition at Delphi. There too the Delphians sought to commemorate the defense of their homeland achieved with the aid of the gods. But whereas the Delphians emphasized their own bravery and military prowess, the Megarians continued to yield pride of place to the decisive intervention of their patron deity, much as the second Theognidean poem envisioned.

The story associated with the statue of Artemis the Savior includes no hint of discord among the allies. Indeed, the Greek allies are not mentioned at all, a notable change from Herodotus' version of the same incident, where it is the threat of the approaching League army that sends the Persians back into Boiotia (9.14-15). But indications that Megara's Persian War tradition continued to be associated with discord among the allies can be found in Plutarch's *Aristeides* (20). There the Spartans and Athenians fall out over the prize of valor after the battle of Plataia, and the altercation nearly comes to blows. But then a Megarian named Theogeiton proposes a compromise: "that the prize of valor must be given to another city, unless they wanted to stir up a civil war" (ὡς ἑτέρα πόλει δοτέον εἴη τὸ ἀριστεῖον, εἰ μὴ βούλονται συνταράξει πόλεμον ἐμφύλιον: 20.2). A Corinthian suggests that the Plataians receive the prize, all agree, and the threat passes. There can be no doubt that the story is a later invention.⁷⁹ Leaving aside Herodotus' silence, the story's central premise – that the Athenians would have made an aggressive claim to the glories of Plataia immediately after the battle – is improbable on its face.⁸⁰ But in this case, we have

79 Flower and Marincola 2002: 232-233. *Contra* Legon (1981: 172 n.53) who suggests that there may have been an authentic core to the episode.

80 Our earliest sources for the Plataia tradition unambiguously assign credit to the Spartans (Pind. *Pyth.* 1.75-80 and Hdt. 9.71.1). Even the Athenian Aeschylus attributes that victory to the "Dorian spear" (*Pers.* 817) and so to Sparta. The focus

little reason to suspect that the story originated at Megara.⁸¹ A Megarian is, of course, favourably mentioned, but it would press the principle of *cui bono* too far to suggest that every positive mention of a particular state must then derive from that state's local tradition. Indeed, the presence of so many states in the story – Athens, Sparta, Megara, Corinth, and Plataia – suggests rather a work of Hellenic or universal history. Nevertheless, it remains a distinct possibility that a Megarian has been cast in this particular role because it was thought wholly suited to Megara's Persian War tradition. If so, we might conclude that the concern over discord that animates the second poem was in fact so prevalent in Megarian social memory that even an outsider took note.

Neither the Artemis story nor Theogeiton's advice are exact reproductions of the Persian War narrative found in the *Theognidea*. The imprint of fear and discord can still be seen, but they no longer hold the central place they once held. This should come as no surprise. Fear and discord were only two threads in the complex tapestry of commemorations that constituted the Persian War tradition at Megara. The Megarians were certainly capable of telling more heroic versions of their past.⁸² Over time, those versions were selectively exploited, along with the themes of fear and discord, to tell new stories of the past that better suited the needs of the present as they continued to evolve. The results were quite different, but still suggest that the themes of the *Theognidea*'s Persian War poems remained influential at Megara long after the social and political realities that underlay them had faded away.

of Simonides' Plataia Elegy is an issue of some debate, but the surviving portions certainly emphasize Sparta's unique role (fr. 11.29-34 and possibly fr. 13). It is not in fact until later in the fifth century that the Athenians make any claims to that battle (Jung 2006: 291-295).

81 Sansone (1989: 196) suggests that the entire story may derive from "local tradition," largely because it does not appear in Herodotus or Diodorus, but he never specifies which locality.

82 Simonides praised Megarian seamanship, perhaps in his *Salamis* (PMG 629). So too does Diodorus (11.18.2; Legon 1981: 166). Both may ultimately derive from a laudatory Megarian tradition. For passages in Herodotus that may derive from a similar source, see Asheri et al. 2006: 191. The cenotaph erected in the Megarian agora provides a more certain example ('Simon.' 16P = IG VII 53). The placement alone speaks to the heroic status accorded these men in the Megarian tradition, and later sources speak of a hero cult. The accompanying inscription enumerates the major battles in which the Megarians fought. For more on this monument, see Page 1981: 213-215 and Petrovic 2007: 194-208. We might also add a funerary inscription honoring a Megarian who may have fallen in the Persian War (SEG 45.421; Grossman 2001: 98-100).

Conclusion

Xerxes' invasion of Greece is generally portrayed in deep Panhellenic tones, perhaps more so than any other event in Greek history. The trend is understandable. The Persian threat affected most of the Greek world and inspired the creation of a relatively broad alliance of Greek states to repel it. The war that ensued was fought on a grand scale and was subsequently commemorated at the great Panhellenic sites of Delphi and Olympia. When differences within this tradition are noted, they are usually characterized as a self-interested insistence that the dedicating party had been at the center of events. There is certainly truth in this observation, but the role of fear and discord in the Megarian tradition hints at something more. The Persian War narrative that emerges from the *Theognidea* is not Megarian simply because it cites the mythology, topography, and history of the city, but also because it betrays a Megarian way of understanding the events of that war. Even centuries later, these idiosyncratic themes continued to influence Megarian commemorations and so speak to something of the local color that defined the memory of the Persian War across Greece and throughout antiquity.

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