

Historical Events as a Means of Iconographic Interpretation: The Reconstruction of Lost Greek Historical Paintings of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.

Anastasia Painesi

Volume 31, Number 2, Fall 2012

Metamorphosis praxéon : nouvelles approches et thèmes en histoire ancienne

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019288ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019288ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Cahiers d'histoire

ISSN

0712-2330 (print)

1929-610X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Painesi, A. (2012). Historical Events as a Means of Iconographic Interpretation: The Reconstruction of Lost Greek Historical Paintings of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C. *Cahiers d'histoire*, 31(2), 157–179.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1019288ar>

Article abstract

The disappearance of Greek monumental painting causes fundamental problems in the study of this particular form of art. Texts referring to or works of art inspired by Greek paintings seem to be frequently inadequate at the task of providing a realistic reconstruction of the painted works. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the date and type of representation of historical paintings seems to be facilitated by texts of historical context that offer valuable information on the events that inspired the painters of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. This paper will examine specific cases of Classical paintings, such as the Battle of Marathon and the Battle of Mantinea, whose iconographical reconstruction depends considerably on historiographical testimonies.

Historical Events as a Means of Iconographic Interpretation : The Reconstruction of Lost Greek Historical Paintings of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.



Anastasia Painesi

Docteure, Études classiques

Université Paris Sorbonne (Paris IV)

Résumé - La disparition de la peinture grecque à grandes dimensions pose souvent nombre de problèmes quant à sa restitution. Les textes évoquant ces peintures ou les œuvres d'art qui en sont inspirées ne nous permettent pas de confirmer nos théories concernant les images originales. Néanmoins, dans le cas des peintures historiques, la restitution de leur datation et du type de représentation est parfois facilitée grâce aux témoignages de sources qui fournissent des informations précieuses sur les événements historiques qui ont inspiré les peintres du V^e et du IV^e siècles av. J.-C. Cet article étudiera des cas spécifiques de peintures classiques, comme la Bataille de Marathon et la Bataille de Mantinée, dont la restitution dépend en grande partie de textes historiographiques.

Abstract - The disappearance of Greek monumental painting causes fundamental problems in the study of this particular form of art. Texts referring to or works of art inspired by Greek paintings seem to be frequently inadequate at the task of providing a realistic reconstruction of the painted works. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the date and type of representation of historical paintings seems to be facilitated by texts of historical context that offer valuable informations on the events that inspired the painters of the fifth and fourth Centuries B.C. This paper will exa-

mine specific cases of Classical paintings, such as the Battle of Marathon and the Battle of Mantinea, whose iconographical reconstruction depends considerably on historiographical testimonies.

Classical Greek monumental paintings have completely disappeared. During ancient times already, the buildings for which these pictures were used as architectural ornaments sustained much destruction, both from natural hazards and human intervention (such as military invasions). In addition, the widespread relocation of some of these works to other places – especially to Rome – in order to decorate local buildings, led to the obliteration of number of these works, resulting in the unfortunate loss of valuable information pertaining to the techniques used in their creation.

Sole witnesses as to the existence of these painted works are certain texts, such as Pausanias' *Description of Greece* and the XXXVth book of Pliny's *Natural History*, which usually refer to the name of the artist and contain a brief description of the paintings. The references in the works of other Greek and Latin authors, such as Achilles Tatios, Plutarch, Zenobios, Lucian and Aelian, to certain works of art are generally brief and of little use to scholars. Setting aside Pausanias, whose status as eyewitness of these works appears unchallengeable, it remains unknown as to who among the other authors actually saw these works rather than merely quoting earlier texts or oral traditions. The further the author is chronologically removed from the painting, the harder it is for us to rely on his testimony. Nevertheless, the disappearance of the actual pictures compels us to examine all surviving testimonies relying principally, though, on the paintings' contemporary sources.

Sometimes, representations on vases or on Pompeian paintings seem to be inspired by works of renowned painters, such as Polygnotos, Panainos, Zeuxis or Euphranor. Yet, in the absence of the original painted works, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between the iconographic elements influenced by the originals and those attributed to the inspiration and personal style

of later artists. In light of this lack of information, the study of the lost pictures is particularly complicated.

Historical Events : A Rare Subject in Fifth-Century Painting

Historical paintings are of particular interest to scholars, mainly because they often represent historical events commented upon by authors specialized in historiography, such as Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, thus facilitating the work of reconstruction. The narration of these episodes does not indicate the style of representation but often offers a detailed account as to the location of the episode and the identities, postures and conducts of the protagonists. These characteristics could have been easily included in the painting by the artist in order to facilitate the recognition of the represented theme by the spectators. Nevertheless, this specific type of painting does not seem to appear frequently in ancient Greek art. After a thorough study of the surviving Classical texts referring to ancient paintings¹, I was able to retrieve only nineteen works inspired by historical events : one dated to the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh Century B.C., one to the end of the sixth, three dating to the fifth, nine dated to the fourth Century and five of a later date.

The first known picture inspired by a historical event seems to be the *Battle of Magnesia* painted by Boularchos of Ephesos at the end of the eighth or the beginning of the seventh Century B.C. The painting was, as Pliny² relates, a commission of the Lydian king Kandaules, the last of the Heraclid dynasty and Gyges' predecessor, as a commemoration of his army's victory over the Treres – a nation of Cimmerian origin – the perennial enemy of his people. This picture appears to have been of consi-

1 A. Reinach, *Textes grecs et latins relatifs à l'histoire de la peinture ancienne*, Paris, C. Klincksieck, 1921; J.A. Overbeck, *Geschichte der griechischen Plastik*, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrich, 1893-1894 ; T. Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Würzburg, K. Triltsch, 1973 ; *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, s.v. « γράφιη », « πίναξ » ; *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, s.v. « pictor », « pictum ».

2 Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV.55 : « [...] Magnetum proelium [...] ».

derable size and probably incurred substantial expenses by the Lydian king – his weight in gold, as Pliny states. However, earlier in his work Pliny³ had referred to Boularchos' painting as the *Destruction of Magnesia*. The downfall of Magnesia on the Meander dated to 645 B.C.⁴ and occurred during Ardys' – Gyges' successor – and not Kandaules' reign. This discrepancy could be explained by the fact that by Pliny's time, the painting was already considered ancient. It is therefore possible that the author misunderstood either what he saw – to the extent where he saw the picture first-hand – or else what he read in the texts that served him as literary sources⁵.

Herodotus⁶ claims that in the end of the sixth Century B.C., Mandrokles of Samos dedicated to the temple of Hera in Samos a picture representing the creation of the bridge which enabled Dareios' army to cross the Hellespont⁷. The historian's reference to the painting is very brief and does not provide any information pertaining to the type of representation. However, an epigram included in the *Anthologia Graeca*⁸ seems to indicate that the Samians were extremely proud of Mandrokles' work.

Conflicting opinions and theories exist on such details as the manner in which these early paintings were reconstructed, the rarity and brevity of literary testimonies referring to them, as well as the chronological distance between the works of art and the author referring to them. Nonetheless, one fact seems generally agreed upon : the first historical paintings made by Greek artists were not of Greek, but of Oriental commission. As a result, the styles of representation were possibly permuted by iconographic elements of these particular regions⁹.

3 Pliny, *Natural History*, VII.126 : « [...] *Magnetum exiti* [...] ».

4 Strabo, XIV.1.40.

5 L.H. Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe in the Stoa Poikile : A Problem in Greek Art and History », *BSA* 60 (1965), p. 41-57, esp. p. 50. For a more thorough analysis of the painting and the theories proposed on its reconstruction, cf. Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 34-35, 234-235.

6 Herodotus, IV.88. The historian (VII.23-25) refers also to the second bridge built over Bosphoros by Dareios' son Xerxes circa 480 B.C.

7 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 35-37, 235 ; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 50.

8 *Anthologia Graeca*, VI.341.

9 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 36-37, 235-nos. 90, 92.

In Classical times, the paintings invoked by the surviving literary testimonies seem to be exclusively of Greek commission. The imbalance in the respective numbers of paintings dated to the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. - two fifth-Century and nine fourth-Century pictures - does not of course exclude the existence of additional historical painted works which were not referred to by ancient authors. Nonetheless, the fact that both fifth-Century paintings are of Athenian origin could justify the rarity of the representation of historical events at the time. In Athens, the representation of living persons in public places, where historical paintings would necessarily be exhibited, was considered *hybris*. Only gods, heroes and renowned deceased persons were allowed to have their likeness depicted in public. It was therefore no surprise that the depiction of the image of Miltiades leading the Greek troops against the Persians in the Stoa Poikile was an unprecedented event that generated an immense scandal in Athenian society. According to Aeschines'¹⁰ testimony, the Athenian people tolerated this image only because Miltiades led the Greek army to victory against their enemies at Marathon, but they did not allow his name to be inscribed on the picture as he had requested.

In this particular case the animadversions focused on the sponsor of the work, Kimon, the son of Miltiades, who commissioned the entire decoration of the Stoa Poikile¹¹. This portico, situated on the North of the Agora was built *circa* 460 B.C. and was donated to the city by Peisianax, brother-in-law of Kimon¹². This act sought to increase Kimon's popularity amongst the Athenians and to serve his political agenda, reinforcing at the

10 Aeschines, *Against Ktesiphon*, III.186 ; N.G.L. Hammond, « The Campaign and Battle of Marathon », *JHS*, 88 (1968), p. 13-57, esp. p. 26, 52. On the theory that Miltiades' request for an inscription of his name in the painting was one of Aeschines' rhetorical contrivances, cf. V. Massaro, « Herodotus' Account of the Battle of Marathon and the Picture in the Stoa Poikile », *AC* 47 (1978), p. 458-475, esp. p. 463-464.

11 Diogenes Laertios, VII.1.5 ; Isidoros, *Origines*, VIII.6.8 ; Plutarch, *Kimon*, IV.5-6 ; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 42, 47-57 ; M.D. Stansbury-O'Donnell, « The Painting Program in the Stoa Poikile », in J.M. Barringer, J.M. Hurwit (eds.), *Periclean Athens and its Legacy. Problems and Perspectives*, Austin, University of Texas, 2005, p. 73-87, esp. p. 86-n. 11.

12 F. De Angelis, « La Battaglia di Maratona nella Stoa Poikile », *ASNP* IV₁, 1 (1996), p. 119-171, esp. p. 130, 146 ; L.S. Meritt, « The Stoa Poikile », *Hesperia*, 39 (1970), p. 233-264, p. 255-256, 257 ; For a detailed study of the Stoa Poikile, cf. H.A. Thompson, « Excavations in the Athenian Agora : 1949-The Stoa Poikile », *Hesperia*, 19 (1950), p. 327-337 ; R.E. Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa », *Phoenix*, 7 (1953), p. 20-35.

same time the power and prestige of the Philaïd family, to which he belonged¹³.

Pausanias¹⁴, our main source here, mentions four pictures decorating the walls of the Poikile : the *Battle of Oinoe*, *Theseus' Amazonomachy*, the *Ilioupersis* and the *Battle of Marathon*. Of the four paintings only the *Battle of Oinoe* and the *Battle of Marathon* refer to historical events. Several specialists¹⁵ believe that these representations were probably painted on wooden panels rather than consist in mural paintings (frescoes). This theory seems to be corroborated by excavations done on the location where this painted portico was built. Indeed, the discovery of stone blocks – which apparently belonged to the walls of the building – marked with drill-made holes containing residues of iron nails, brought about the conclusion that these orifices served to the hanging of the pictures.

The exact location of the paintings inside the portico has generated much debate among scholars over the years, Pausanias remaining silent on the subject. Since he claims to have seen the *Battle of Oinoe* first upon entering the building, many specialists¹⁶ consider that this painting had been placed on the western wall, in light of the custom of configuring the pictures in a clockwise manner inside the buildings. Still, the debate on the exact meaning of Pausanias' phrase demonstrates that in the absence of the original works even the most accurate description is open to numerous interpretations.

13 D. Castriota, *Myth, Ethos and Actuality. Official Art in Fifth Century B.C. Athens*, Madison, Wis., The University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, p. 80-81 ; W.W. How, « Cornelius Nepos on Marathon and Paros », *JHS*, 39 (1919), p. 48-61, esp. p. 57-58.

14 Pausanias, I.15 ; J. Boardman, « Composition and Content on Classical Murals and Vases », in Barringer, Hurwit, *Periclean Athens...*, p. 63-72, esp. p. 66-67 ; J.H. Schreiner, « The Battle of Oinoe and the Credibility of Thukydides », in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to Rudi Thomsen*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1988, p. 71-76, esp. p. 74-75.

15 J. Bollansée, « The Battle of Oinoe in the Stoa Poikile. A Fake Jewel in the Fifth Century Athenian Crown ? », *AncSoc*, 22 (1991), p. 91-126, esp. 92-93 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 24-25. Contra W.K. Pritchett, *Essays in Greek History*, Amsterdam, J.C. Gieben, 1994, p. 18-21.

16 P. Schulz, « The Poikile Stoa, The Nike Temple Bastion and Cleon's Shields from Pylos : A Note on KNIGHTS 843-859 », *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche*, 32 (2003), p. 43-62, esp. p. 46-47; Stansbury-O'Donnell, « The Painting Program... », p. 74-75, 76, 77, 78.

The *Battle of Oinoe*¹⁷ has generated many discussions among scholars on the exact location of the Oinoe battlefield. The four basic theories respectively locate the battle a) at Oinophyta – an agglomeration at the Attica-Boeotia frontier, b) at Argos, c) at Thebes and d) at Oinoe of Marathon. Each hypothesis hinges on historical testimonies referring to specific battles that occurred between the mythical era and the middle of the fifth Century B.C.¹⁸.

The first theory was put forth in 1934 by Stier¹⁹, who asserted that Pausanias had erroneously interpreted the painting and suggested that the picture represented the battle at Oinophyta, of 458/7 B.C., where the Athenians triumphed over the Boeotians and took control of the city²⁰.

The second theory was proposed in 1965 by Jeffery²¹, who linked the painting to the alliance concluded between Argos and Athens, after Kimon's ostracism in 461 B.C. Pausanias²² mentions the existence of this alliance, which lasted until 452 B.C. This clash opposing the united forces of Argos and Athens to the Spartan army took place on the river Charadros' plain, near the city of the Argive Oinoe. The Spartans, who had not yet managed to suppress the Helot Rebellion, were taken by surprise and defeated²³. At the time, Argos was looking forward not only in-

17 I am discussing this and other aspects of the *Battle of Oinoe* painting in « La peinture grecque disparue : les problèmes de restitution de la *Bataille d'Oinoé* (Stoa Poecile de l'Agora d'Athènes) », *RAMAGE* 15 (2012), p. 1-11, [Online], *Ramage*, http://anthropologiedelart.org/ramage/?page_id=410

18 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 68-78, 249-253. Cf. also M. Daumas, « Argos et les Sept », in M. Pierart (ed.), *Polydipsion Argos. Argos de la fin des palais mycéniens à la constitution de l'État classique. BCH Suppl.*, 22 (1992), p. 253-264, esp. p. 255, 256, 259-262 ; J.G. Taylor, « Oinoe and the Painted Stoa : Ancient and Modern Misunderstandings? », *AJPh*, 119 (1998), p. 223-243.

19 H.E. Stier, *Eine Grosstat der attischen Geschichte. Die sogenannte Schlacht bei Oenoë*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1934.

20 E. Badian, « Towards a Chronology of the Pentekontetia down to the Renewal of the Peace of Callias », *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views*, 32/N.S. 7 (1988), p. 289-320, esp. p. 311-312, esp. n. 29 ; R. Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972, p. 469-471 ; Taylor, « Oinoe and the Painted Stoa... », p. 224.

21 Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 47-57 ; Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire ...*, p. 470-471.

22 Pausanias, X.10.3-4 ; Schreiner, « The Battle of Oinoe ... », p. 71.

23 Bollansée, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 97, 100, 104-106 ; Schreiner, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 72-74. *Contra* Pritchett, *Essays...*, p. 4-6, 13, who identifies the city close to Charadros as Orneai and not as Oinoe.

maintaining its dominance over the region, but also expanding it to the entire Peloponnese.

The third theory, once again developed by Jeffery, was based on the text of Herodotus. The historian²⁴ refers to the dispute between the Athenians and the Tegeans just before the Battle of Plataea where they both defended their right to the left side of the Greek army. This was considered the most honorable place for an army, inferior only to that of the Spartans, who always occupied the right side. Herodotus mentions that the Athenians proved their superiority to the Tegeans by quoting *ἔργα παλαιά τε καὶ καινά* (ancient and new labors), among which stood the sanctuary provided to the Heraclids²⁵, the attack of the Athenian army against Thebes, the victory of the Athenians against the Amazons, their crucial role in the Trojan War and their victory against thirty-six barbaric nations at Marathon²⁶. Since all these exploits were represented at the Stoa Poikile – with the exception of the second battle – Jeffery²⁷ identified the *Battle of Oinoe* with the attack of the Athenians against Thebes, an operation the goal of which was to collect the abandoned bodies of Polynices' Argive soldiers, who were later honorably buried at Eleusis. Jeffery concluded that the portico constituted a sort of commemorative monument of ancient triumphs, represented in accordance with Herodotus' description.

Finally, in 1985, Francis and Vickers²⁸ proposed a fourth hypothesis, to which most scholars still refer. According to their theory, Pausanias had wrongly interpreted the scene : the picture represented neither the battle at Oinoe of Argos nor the attack against Thebes. They suggested that the battle took place at Oinoe of Attica and that the scene depicted the initial stage of the Battle of Marathon, which was also represented elsewhere in the same building. This theory was not only based on the lite-

24 Herodotus, IX.26 ; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 50, 51-52.

25 Schol. Aristophanes, *Ploutos*, 385 ; B. Develin, « The Battle of Oinoe meets Ockham's Razor ? », *ZPE*, 99 (1993), p. 235-240, esp. p. 236-237 ; Stansbury-O'Donnell, « The Painting Program... », p. 77, 78-79, 86-n. 18.

26 J.A.S. Evans, « Herodotus and the Battle of Marathon », *Historia*, 42 (1993), p. 279-307, esp. p. 279.

27 Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 52.

28 E.D. Francis and M. Vickers, « Argive Oeno », *AC*, 54 (1985), p. 105-115, *passim*.

rary sources but also on evidence from local archaeological excavations²⁹ suggesting that the river Charadros used to run through the plain of Oinoe in Attica – contrary to Jeffery’s suggestion that it ran through Argos – thus constituting the natural frontier between the city of Oinoe and Marathon³⁰.

Each of the four places proposed by scholars (Oinophyta in Boeotia, Oinoe of Argos, Thebes, Oinoe of Marathon) is associated to battles variously dated (458/7 B.C., 461-452 B.C., mythical era, 490 B.C.) between several enemy groups (Athenians against Boeotians, Argives and Athenians against Lacedaemonians, Athenians against Thebans, Athenians and Plataeans against Persians). Knowing the exact location of the battle could facilitate an indirect dating of the painting through the date of the military event represented. Identifying the adversaries would in this case help the iconographic reconstruction of the painting’s figures, since attires and armors were different from city-state to city-state (Corinthian helmet, Boeotian helmet³¹) and from one people to another (Greek hoplite armor³², Persian trousers and tiara³³). Finally, each location suggested as the Oinoe battlefield presupposes specific landscape elements, as well as human infrastructures (military camps, city walls), which are not necessarily common to different Greek regions of the Classical era and therefore would have been precisely illustrated on the painting so as to present an image of the battle which would be easily recognized by the spectators.

The *Battle of Marathon*, the most famous of the four paintings decorating the Stoa Poikile is usually assumed to be Mikon’s work³⁴, even though Pliny³⁵ rather attributes it to Panai-

29 P. Themelis, « Marathon. Ta prospata archaiologika heurēmata se schesē me tē machē », *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 29 (1974), p. 226-244, Pl. 138-148.

30 Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 35, 38 ; Themelis, « Marathon... », p. 233.

31 Boardman, « Composition and Content... », p. 71-n. 8.

32 On the hoplites, cf. P. Krentz, « Fighting by the Rules : The Invention of the Hoplite Agôn », *Hesperia*, 71 (2002), p. 23–39.

33 On Persian attires, cf. A. Bovon, « La représentation des guerriers perses et la notion de Barbare dans la première moitié du v^e siècle », *BCH*, 87 (1963), p. 579-602.

34 Aelian, *De natura animalium*, VII.38 ; Arrian, *Anabasis*, VII.13.5. On the numerous theories concerning the creator of the painting, cf. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora III...*, p. 31, 45.

35 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXXV.57 ; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 43 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 27-28.

nos, Phidias' brother or nephew, and Aelian³⁶ to Polygnotos of Thasos. Pausanias³⁷ offers a detailed description of the picture. He claims to have seen on one side the Boeotians and the Plataeans fighting the Persians in what seems to be an evenly matched battle. In the center, the Persians were represented fleeing towards the Phoenician ships, with a group of Greek soldiers, on the other side of the picture, taking down the enemy warriors. While trying to escape, some of the Persian soldiers were pictured falling into a marsh situated between the plain of Marathon and the sea. The author also states that Kallimachos the Polemarch was sumptuously represented, as well as Miltiades³⁸, one of the ten Athenian generals and leader of the Greek army in that particular battle.

These elements of the battle attested by Pausanias are corroborated by a certain number of historical sources. Herodotus³⁹, whose account of the Battle of Marathon is quite extended, also mentions the crucial role played by Miltiades and Kallimachos, and the fact that the Plataeans fought alongside the Athenians. He also states that the Persians fled towards the Phoenician ships under the pressure of the opposing army. Herodotus' meticulous description of the battle, as well as the similarities between his testimony and Pausanias' description of the Poikile painting, suggests that the historian had actually seen the Athenian picture⁴⁰. However, literary and epigraphical sources are unable to confirm this hypothesis and it remains unlikely that Herodotus would have based his description of the battle on one sole source⁴¹.

36 Aelian, *De natura animalium*, VII.38 ; Plutarch, *Kimon*, 4.6 ; Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 459-460 ; C. Roscino, *Polignoto di Taso*, Roma, Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 2010, p. 31-32, 138-139-n. 118.

37 Pausanias, I.16.1, 32.5 ; K.-J. Hölkeskamp, « Marathon – vom Monument zum Mythos », in D. Papenfuss, V.M. Strocca (eds.), *Gab es das griechische Wunder ? Griechenland zwischen dem Ende des 6. und der Mitte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Mainz, Ph. von Zabern, 2001, p. 329-353, esp. p. 342-344.

38 Cornelius Nepos, *Miltiades*, 6 ; Schol. in Aristidem, XLVI.174 ; Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 464-465 ; E.B. Harrison, « The South Frieze of the Nike Temple and the Marathon Painting in the Stoa Poikile », *AJA*, 76 (1972), p. 353-377, esp. p. 355, 356.

39 Herodotus, VI.103, 107-109, 111-114, 115, 117 ; Hölcher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 50-68, 239-249.

40 E.D. Francis, M. Vickers, « The Oenoe Painting in the Stoa Poikile and Herodotus' Account of Marathon », *BSA*, 80 (1985), p. 99-111, esp. p. 109 ; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 44.

41 Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 28-29 ; Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 370. *Contra* Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 468-471, who considers the painting at the Stoa Poikile

Apart from the description of the military formations, the historian⁴² does not fail to mention most emphatically certain Greek warriors whose bravery became famous, such as Stesileos, son of Thrasyllaos – one of the ten generals –⁴³, Kynegeiros, brother of the poet Aeschylus, and Epizelos, son of Kouphagoras. The first two died in battle, just as Kallimachos did. Kynegeiros' death was particularly atrocious since a Persian cut off his arm with an axe as Aeschylus' brother laid hold of a ship's stern⁴⁴. Epizelos, finally, did not die but was blinded after witnessing the mysterious apparition of a warrior, whose beard spread all over his shield, killing the soldier next to him in line⁴⁵. Plutarch⁴⁶ follows Herodotus' version on the deaths of Kynegeiros and Epizelos. He also describes the death of Kallimachos, who was annihilated by repeated spear attacks. Polemon's version⁴⁷ of the warrior's death holds that even after having been pierced by the spears, Kallimachos' body remained standing in a fighting posture, frightening the Persian soldiers.

Stesileos, Kynegeiros and Epizelos are not mentioned by Pausanias. Nonetheless, the historian's recurrent mentions of these three warriors state their decisive role in the battle thus indicating that they could have been included in the painting. Aelian⁴⁸ mentions the representation in the picture of Kynegeiros and Epizelos in proximity to Kallimachos' figure as a means to refer to the image of a dog included in the composition. Lucian⁴⁹ also invokes the representation of Kynegeiros in the *Battle of Marathon* painting. Finally, according to Pliny's⁵⁰ testimony,

as Herodotus' main source.

42 Herodotus, VI.114, 117.

43 De Angelis, « La Battaglia di Maratona... », p. 124 ; N. A. Doenges, « The Campaign and Battle of Marathon », *Historia*, 47 (1998), p. 1-17, esp. p. 14 ; E.B. Harrison, « The Victory of Callimachos », *GRBS*, 12 (1971), p. 5-24, esp. p. 20.

44 Polemon, *Declamationes quae extant duae*, I.8-10 and 42, II.13 and 43 ; Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 30, 31 ; Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 459, 460 ; E. Vanderpool, « A Monument to the Battle of Marathon », *Hesperia*, 35 (1966), p. 93-106, esp. p. 105.

45 Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 56 ; Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 363, 367-368.

46 Plutarch, *Parallela Graeca et Romana*, 1 (305B-C).

47 Polemon, *Declamationes quae extant duae*, I.7 and 27, II.10-11 ; Aelius Aristides, *Panathenaic*, 88 ; Harrison, « The Victory... », p. 21-23.

48 Aelian, *De natura animalium*, VII.38 ; Castriota, *Myth, Ethos...*, p. 29-30.

49 Lucian, *Zeus Tragoedus*, 32 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 35.

50 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XXXV.57 ; Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 30, 35-100.

apart from the Greek protagonists, the picture featured also the Persian generals Datis and Artaphernes.

A thorough study of the testimonies offered by Herodotus and Pausanias points toward the possible reconstruction of a three-way representation for the *Battle of Marathon* in the Stoa Poikile, even though its material division in three wooden panels is considerably contested⁵¹. This composition could have comprised on the left Miltiades encouraging the Plataeans and the Boeotians, both fighting the Persian army. In the center there may have been a depiction of the melee between the flanks of the Greek army and the enemy, while at the end of the painting, the artist might have included the Persians' panicked run to their ships, as well as Kynegiros' death⁵².

I will not venture further to place Epizelos and Stesileos or Datis and Artaphernes⁵³ in the picture, as Harrison⁵⁴ and Massaro⁵⁵ did, nor will I try to establish the presence or absence of the Persian cavalry⁵⁶. The literary sources contain insufficient indication as to the exact whereabouts of these figures during the battle let alone the presence of the cavalry. Any theory concerning these warriors or the Persian cavalry would therefore be very difficult to prove despite the extensive debates amongst scholars during this past Century⁵⁷. The remainder of the figu-

51 Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 363, 364-Ill. 1 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 78, 81; Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 42-43-n. 10 ; Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 461-462.

52 E.D. Francis, *Image and Idea in Fifth Century Greece*, London New York, Routledge, 1990, p. 87-88 ; Harrison, « The Victory... », p. 20, 21-22-n. 42 ; E. Hölkeskamp-Stein, « Kimon und die athenische Demokratie », *Hermes* 127 (1999), p. 145-164, esp. p. 161-162 ; Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 467-468 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 28-29.

53 Polemon, *Declamationes quae extant duae*, I.41, II.14, 45, 56 and 60.

54 Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 365-366, 367-368 ; Harrison, « The Victory... », p. 7, 22-23.

55 Massaro, « Herodotus' Account... », p. 467-468.

56 J.P. Holoka, « Marathon and the Myth of the Same-Day March », *GRBS* 38 (1997), p. 329-353, esp. p. 332-n. 11.

57 Souda, s.v. « χωρίς ἰππεῖς ». *Contra* Cornelius Nepos, *Miltiades*, 5. For further analysis on the problem of the presence or absence of the Persian cavalry at the Battle of Marathon, cf. Evans, « Herodotus... », p. 293-299 ; A.W. Gomme, « Herodotus and Marathon », *Phoenix*, 6 (1952), p. 77-83, esp. p. 80-83 ; F. Maurice, « The Campaign of Marathon », *JHS*, 52 (1932), p. 13-24, esp. p. 16-17 ; Shrimpton, « The Persian Cavalry... », *passim* ; N. Whatley, « On the Possibility of Reconstructing Marathon and Other Ancient Battles », *JHS*, 84 (1964), p. 119-139, esp. p. 128-132, 135-136.

res, such as Theseus⁵⁸, Athena and Herakles⁵⁹, Marathon⁶⁰ and Echetlos⁶¹ described by Pausanias, Pan, Demeter, Kore and Hera invoked by Polemon⁶² and Boutes mentioned only by Zenobios⁶³, were represented in the painting in order to assert the protection offered to the city by such divine figures⁶⁴. Their presence forebodes the victory of the Greek army at Marathon which was considered the triumph *par excellence* of the city⁶⁵.

Finally, the type of representation of the *Battle of Oinoe* and of the *Battle of Marathon* paintings is mainly associated to the standard iconography designed to decorate public Athenian buildings during most of the fifth Century B.C. This particular iconography contained mostly scenes symbolizing the victories of Athens against enemies that they considered as barbarians, such as the Amazons, the Centaurs and the Giants, in order to assert the Athenian superiority⁶⁶. The representation of actual historical battles between the Athenians and their enemies is, according to the surviving literary testimonies, a rare occurrence in the fifth Century B.C. The disappearance of the pictures decorating the Poikile Stoa more than seventeen centuries ago⁶⁷ unfortunately left us with no indication as to the iconographic style of these compositions, except Pausanias' detailed description. This text, combined with the accounts of Herodotus, Xenophon, Plutarch and Aelian on the actual historical events, helps

58 E. Simon, « Polygnotan Painting and the Niobid Painter », *AJA*, 67 (1963), p. 43-61, esp. p. 43, 46, 48, 61 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 28.

59 Hammond, « The Campaign... », p. 25 ; De Angelis, « La Battaglia di Maratona... », p. 123.

60 Castriota, *Myth, Ethos...*, p. 30 ; Hölkeskamp, « Marathon... », p. 344 ; Vanderpool, « A Monument... », p. 102.

61 Pausanias, I.32.5 ; E.B. Harrison, « The Composition of the Amazonomachy on the Shield of Athena Parthenos », *Hesperia*, 35 (1966), p. 107-133, esp. p. 132 ; M.H. Jameson, « The Hero Echetlaeus », *TAPhA*, 82 (1951), p. 49-61.

62 Polemon, *Declamationes quae extant duae*, I.35, II.41 and 62.

63 Zenobios, IV.28 ; Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 29-n. 35.

64 De Angelis, « La Battaglia di Maratona... », p. 123-124 ; Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 377 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 119.

65 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, III.2.11-12 ; Hölkeskamp, « Marathon... », p. 345-347, 348-349.

66 A. Andrewes, « Could there have been a Battle at Oenoe? », in B. Levick (ed.), *The Ancient Historian and his Materials*, Westmead, Gregg International, 1975, p. 9-16, esp. p. 13-14 ; Bollansée, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 100, 110, 111 ; Castriota, *Myth, Ethos...*, p. 29, 31, 77-78, 80 ; Harrison, « The South Frieze... », p. 369-370.

67 On the disappearance of the paintings decorating the Stoa Poikile, cf. Synesios of Cyrene, *Epistulae*, 136 ; Francis, *Image and Idea...*, p. 85-86 ; Roscino, *Polignoto...*, p. 31, 138-n. 112.

us to understand⁶⁸ the historical elements that could have been included in the two battle pictures.

Historical Events as Recurrent Themes in Fourth-Century Paintings

By the fourth Century B.C. the painters' scruples against the representation of historical events seem to subside and a more substantial number of works appears in various Greek regions. According to the literary testimonies, the paintings dated to the beginning of the fourth Century B.C. are mostly of Athenian commission – only one of them is of Theban commission – as were the fifth-Century pictures. But none of the fifth-Century historical paintings represented battles of Greeks fighting fellow Greeks. « They dealt rather with the colorful barbarian, the remote in place if not in time », Jeffery⁶⁹ points out.

However, by the fourth Century B.C. the enemy targeted by these representations is no longer a foreign nation but another Greek city-state : Thebes in the case of Athens, Sparta in the case of Thebes. This particular Boeotian region, under the leadership of Epameinondas, aspired in the first quarter of the fourth Century to dominate on sea and land and become equal to fifth-Century Athens and Sparta⁷⁰. However, the brief Theban hegemony was marked by internal disputes, one part of the population aspiring to its rise as an independent force in Greece, the other supporting an alliance with Sparta.

68 The accuracy of these texts is sometimes contested by confusions noted especially in later authors such as the Scholiast of Gregorios Nazianzenos' work *Contra Julianum*, I – fourth Century A.D. The author claims that a *Battle of Salamis* painting was placed in the Poikile along with the *Battle of Marathon*. It is possible that, had the author seen the *Battle of Marathon* or read a description of the painting in one of the various literary sources mentioning it, he could have been misled by the presence of ships in that picture in considering that the naval battle was indeed represented in the Poikile. Cf. also, Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 43-n. 12 ; O. Palagia, *Euphranor*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1980, p. 52-n. 283 ; Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora III...*, p. 31, 34.

69 Jeffery, « The Battle of Oinoe... », p. 50.

70 A. Latini, « L'Attività di Eufanore nell'Atene di Licurgo », *Annuario SAlA*, LXXIX, Serie III, 1 (2001), p. 83-102, esp. p. 94 ; G. Shrimpton, « The Theban Supremacy in Fourth-Century Literature », *Phoenix* 25 (1971), p. 310-318, *passim*.

In order to promote their project, the pro-Spartan Theban faction commissioned a painting of a cavalry battle to Androkrydes of Kyzikos towards 382-379 B.C. According to Plutarch's⁷¹ testimony, the picture was not completed when this faction was overthrown in 379. The author claims that the work was not destroyed by the prevailing anti-Spartan party, but that it was adapted to a commemoration of the Theban cavalry's victory at the *Battle of Plataea* of circa 372/371 B.C. Plutarch further mentions that the orator Menekleidas, sworn enemy of Pelopidas and Epameinondas, aimed at obscuring their victory by glorifying Charon, the Theban commander in this battle, whose name was supposedly inscribed on the painting⁷².

These internal clashes did not deter Thebes' rise in power under Epameinondas. In order to avert the expansion of the Theban influence, Athens contracted a military alliance with a number of Greek city-states, such as Phlious, Sparta and Mantinea, threatened by the same enemy.

The Battle of Phlious constitutes one of the numerous clashes that occurred between Thebes and its enemies. It took place in 367 B.C. and opposed Athenians and Phliountians to Thebans and Sicyonians⁷³. The victory of the Athenians and their allies against Thebes was naturally of particular political importance. It was therefore commemorated by the commission of the *Battle of Phlious* painting attributed by Pliny⁷⁴ to Pamphilos of Amphipolis, the master of Apelles. The exact date is not known. The importance of this victory to Athens' anti-Theban policy suggests a chronological proximity to the actual historical event. The edifice in which the picture was placed remains unknown. Wycherley⁷⁵ considered the Stoa Poikile as a possible place of exhibition but the lack of literary sources or archaeological evidence related to the *Battle of Phlious* painting makes this hypothesis impossible to confirm.

71 Plutarch, *Pelopidas*, XXV. 5-6 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 113-114, 265-266 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 52-n. 281, 54.

72 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 114-115 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 52, 54-n. 301.

73 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.2.10-15 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 115-116.

74 Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV.76 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 52-n. 3.

75 Wycherley, « The Painted Stoa... », p. 26.

In spite of the importance of the Battle of Phlious in the escalation of the conflict between Athens and Thebes, literary sources particularly emphasize the significance of the Battle of Mantinea. In this battle which took place in 362 B.C., an army of allied Athenian, Mantinean and Spartan troops clashed with the Thebans, who had turned to the Persians asking for help in order to create a force both capable to face the Spartan infantry on land and Athens' fleet on sea⁷⁶. The battle was inconclusive. Historians attribute the victory to the Theban side but the death of their general Epameinondas seems to have sullied it. On the other side, the Athenians and their allies managed to keep their lines despite the considerable losses their armies suffered. The ambiguous outcome of the combat was enough to provide each opponent with the perfect opportunity to proclaim themselves the winner, raise trophies and commission commemorative monuments⁷⁷.

In Athens, one such monument was decorating the Stoa of Zeus Eleuthereus or Soter on the northwest corner of the Agora. The portico was built circa 430 B.C. in honor of the father of the gods who protected the Athenian army throughout the Persian Wars⁷⁸. It was embellished by three paintings commissioned by the city to Euphranor: the *Battle of Mantinea*, *Theseus*, the *Demos* and *Demokratia* and the *Twelve Gods*⁷⁹. The paintings were placed in the portico sometime after the battle took place in 362 B.C.

The chronological distance between the construction of the Stoa and the creation of the paintings, as well as the Roman intervention in the building in the first Century B.C., which completely altered its interior, has led to long discussions among scholars⁸⁰ regarding the type of the compositions (wall-paintings

76 Shrimpton, « The Theban Supremacy... », p. 314.

77 Diodoros of Sicily, XV.86.2-3 ; Plutarch, *De gloria Atheniensium*, IV.519 (350A) ; Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.5.26-27.

78 Souda, s.v. « Ἐλευθέριος » ; Thompson, Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora XIV...*, p. 96, 97, 101.

79 Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 50-60 ; J. Six, « Euphranor », *JdI* 24 (1909), p. 7-27, esp. p. 8, 12 ; Thompson, Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora XIV...*, p. 101-102 ; Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora III...*, p. 25, 27.

80 For further analysis on this topic, cf. H. A. Thompson, « The Annex to the Stoa of Zeus in the Athenian Agora », *Hesperia*, 35 (1966), p. 171-187, esp. p. 171-173, 176, 178, 187 ;

or wooden panels) and their exact location in the portico. In spite of these unresolved issues, Hölscher⁸¹ considers that the battle painting should have been represented in accordance to the Athenian iconographical tradition established by the Poikile Stoa paintings, and which sought to emphasize the city's military triumphs as a means of promoting its superiority over its adversaries. As Taylor points out, while the representation of an Athenian victory over another Greek city would have been considered highly unsuitable until the mid-fifth Century, it gradually became a frequent occurrence from the last quarter of the Century onwards (Nike Temple friezes in the Acropolis, Temple of Hephaistos frieze at the Agora)⁸².

Pausanias⁸³, who provides the most accurate surviving description of the *Battle of Mantinea* painting, refers to a clash between Athenian and Theban cavalry forces. He also points out that the most eminent warriors among those represented were Grylos, the son of Xenophon, and the Theban general Epameinondas, who was killed by the Athenian warrior. This is the sole iconographic information that Pausanias provides concerning the picture. Plutarch⁸⁴ refers to the animation of the combat represented by Euphranor, while Pliny⁸⁵ merely attributes to the painter an otherwise unidentified cavalry battle.

Despite the scarcity of literary sources concerning the type of representation of the battle depicted by Euphranor, the surviving testimonies seem to point out that the battle between Grylos and Epameinondas had a prominent position in the picture. I will not compare the scenes of action represented in Euphranor's work with the Alexander mosaic dated to the first Century B.C. as Palagia and Vasic⁸⁶ did. Even though their proposition seems legitimate, there are three centuries apart between both works of art, notwithstanding the fact that the mosaic is considered to

R. Vasic, « Some Observations on Euphranor's "Cavalry Battle" », *AJA*, 83 (1979), p. 345-349, esp. p. 347.

81 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 117, 266-267-n. 616.

82 Taylor, « Oinoe and the Painted Stoa... », p. 238.

83 Pausanias, I.3.3-4 ; Latini, « L'Attività... », p. 93 ; Vasic, « Some Observations... », p. 346.

84 Plutarch, *De gloria Atheniensium*, IV.346B, E-F.

85 Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXV.129 ; W.D.E. Coulson, « The Nature of Pliny's Remarks on Euphranor », *ClJ*, 67 (1971-1972), p. 323-326, esp. p. 323.

86 Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 52-53 ; Vasic, « Some Observations... », p. 345.

be a copy of an earlier Hellenistic painting. The evidence of an analogy between the two works of art seems thus to be inconclusive. Moreover, Vasic's⁸⁷ theory that the painter Nikias' references to the correct representation of cavalry battles⁸⁸ were inspired specifically by Euphranor's painting seems in my opinion quite far-fetched given the fact that there is no such indication in the text itself nor in any other literary source. Nevertheless, Palagia's belief that "the combatants wore contemporary dress"⁸⁹ is justified, since the type of armor and the warriors' garments would be one of the means of identification of the battle and its participants by the public, should there be no inscription attached to the picture.

In addition to his account of Euphranor's painting, Pausanias⁹⁰ refers to the Battle of Mantinea in the eighth book of the *Description of Greece*, which includes his visit to the homonymous city. In his text, the author mentions the various stories on the identity of the man who killed Epameinondas and points out that every city was claiming this glorious act for one of its own warriors. Therefore, the Mantineians attributed it to their countryman Machairion. The Spartans claimed Machairion as one of their own, while the Athenians and the Thebans agreed that it was Grylos who killed Epameinondas. This last version was also represented in the picture of the Stoa of Zeus.

Xenophon⁹¹, who described the battle, does not mention the name of the man who killed the Theban general or where this occurred. He merely states that Epameinondas « ἔπεσεν » (died). Diodoros of Sicily⁹², like Xenophon, does not identify the Theban general's killer. The author states that Epameinondas was severely wounded by a spear blow to the chest and was transferred to the Theban camp, where he expired upon learning by his men that the Boeotian army had won the battle.

87 Vasic, *Ibid.*, p. 348.

88 Pseudo-Demetrios of Phaleron, *De elocutione*, 76 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 112.

89 Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 52.

90 Pausanias, VIII.11.56 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 53-54 .

91 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.5.25.

92 Diodoros of Sicily, XV.87.

Plutarch⁹³, on the other hand, identified the man responsible for the Theban general's death as the Spartan warrior Anticrates, whose descendants were called to the author's day Machairiones (swordsmen) in reference to their ancestor's using of a sword when he killed Epameinondas. Plutarch's statement could justify the information given by Pausanias, who probably retained only the warrior's family honorary title. It is also possible that as time passed, local traditions had maintained the given name held by Anticrates' descendants as a title commemorating their ancestor's brave deed, his actual name regardless.

The historical texts describing the battle of Mantinea provide no confirmation of Pausanias' statement that it was Grylos who killed Epameinondas. This discrepancy between the literary sources either means that Pausanias misunderstood what he saw in the Stoa of Zeus⁹⁴ or that Euphranor, making ample use of artistic license, represented an image diverging from the actual historical events.

Confirming that the duel between Grylos and Epameinondas and the slaying of the latter by the son of Xenophon actually took place is impossible, as the two prominent warriors died at different moments of the battle. Xenophon⁹⁵ and Plutarch⁹⁶ state that a cavalry skirmish took place outside the walls of the city and that the Athenians were victorious, despite the Theban cavalry's superiority in number and equipment⁹⁷. In the third Century A.D., Diogenes Laertios⁹⁸, quoting from Ephoros' twenty-fifth book, claimed that Grylos died during the cavalry skirmish which, according to all historians, occurred at the beginning of the battle of Mantinea. This information seems to suggest that Grylos was killed close to the city walls while the Athenians were fighting against the Theban cavalry at the beginning of the battle. However, the chronological distance between Diogenes' testimony and the battle itself, as well as the fact that he ap-

93 Plutarch, *Agesilaos*, XXXV.1-2 and *Apophthegmata Laconica*, 74-75 (214C-D) ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p. 117.

94 Hölscher, *Ibid.*, p. 117-118 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 54.

95 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.5.15-17 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 53.

96 Plutarch, *De gloria Atheniensium*, 346E ; Vasic, « Some Observations... », p. 347-n. 19.

97 *Contra* Diodoros of Sicily, XV.85.3-4, who claims that the winners were the Thebans.

98 Diogenes Laertios, *Vitae Philosophorum*, II.54.

pears to be quoting from a fourth Century B.C. source that has not survived, compel us to view this information with skepticism.

The descriptions concerning Epameinondas' death indicate that the Theban general was killed around the end of the battle. Xenophon⁹⁹ describes in great detail Epameinondas' plan of attack, which would have taken a considerable amount of time to accomplish. The historian also states that Epameinondas was able to witness the favorable outcome of the battle, and that, after his death, his soldiers could not take advantage of their victory to chase and annihilate the enemy. Diodoros of Sicily¹⁰⁰ claims that after a long and indecisive infantry engagement fought first with spears and then with swords, Epameinondas took it upon himself to determine the outcome of the battle. He charged along with his best men and broke through the enemy line. A furious fight ensued between Epameinondas' selected group of men and the Lacedaemonians who aimed specifically at his demise. The historian mentions that after the Theban general's death, the Boeotian soldiers pursued the enemy for a brief period of time, but then preferred to turn around and collect the bodies of their comrades, a process completed when the trumpets signaled the end of the battle. Plutarch¹⁰¹ mentions that Epameinondas was struck down while celebrating his victory. Based on these literary testimonies, we can assume that the prevailing version of the Theban general's demise placed his death at some point just by the end of the battle, as the victory of the Theban army had not yet been fully secured.

The reasons for this discrepancy between the historical sources and the painting remain unknown, though some hypotheses spring to mind. On the one hand, Pausanias could have mistaken the identity of the principal figures represented on the picture. However, the author does give a complete account of the existing versions on Epameinondas' death stating exactly what each city-state whose army fought at the Battle of Mantinea claimed on that event. Therefore, there is little possibility that

99 Xenophon, *Hellenica*, VII.5.23-25.

100 Diodoros of Sicily, XV.86-87.1-3

101 Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica*, 214D.

Pausanias would have been misled by Euphranor's representation.

On the other hand, Athens' fifth Century policy of embellishing public edifices with their victorious exploits – mythical and historical – is quite well known (Stoa Poikile, Parthenon). In the fourth Century, when the city had lost its Periclean glory and power, had suffered the humiliation of the peace terms imposed by Sparta after the Peloponnesian War and was overshadowed by the ascending star of Thebes, the need for self-glorification seems urgent, if not imperative. Already Xenophon's laudatory account of the Athenian cavalry's exploits during the Battle of Mantinea appears prone to hyperbole given the disinterested tone he maintains throughout the rest of the narration of the combat. It is therefore possible that the Athenians considered that the historian's tribute to the city was worthy of a generous recompense : the glorification of his son Grylos.

Diogenes Laertios¹⁰² claims that, according to Hermippos of Smyrna¹⁰³, Theophrastos and Isocrates wrote panegyrics for Grylos. The author also invokes Aristotle's testimony to the effect that many authors composed panegyrics and epitaphs in honor of Grylos, aiming partly to please his father. This statement indicates that one of the Athenian goals in the aftermath of the Battle of Mantinea was indeed the gratification of Xenophon, a goal for which the extolling of his son's bravery throughout the battle was appropriate. The texts written especially to that end could definitely have been sufficient praise for Grylos and his father. Regardless of future events in the city's history, a picture decorating one of the most prominent public edifices was deemed to constitute an enduring tribute to Grylos' valor and a perennial reminder of the glory of Xenophon's family.

The *Battle of Mantinea* painting was undoubtedly of particular importance and fame, so much so that it was renowned

102 Diogenes Laertios, *Vitae Philosophorum*, II.54 ; Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...*, p.118 ; Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 54 ; Shrimpton, « The Theban Supremacy... », p. 312-313-n. 15.

103 Hermippos of Smyrna, fr. 52.1-4.

outside the frontiers of Attica. Pausanias¹⁰⁴ refers to a copy of this picture that he saw in Mantinea. The copy was decorating an *oikos* dedicated to the cult of Antinous and was situated at the *Gymnasium* of the city¹⁰⁵. The establishment of Antinous' cult, as well as the decoration of the *oikos*, was in all likelihood commissioned by Hadrian – **second Century A.D.** – **whose interest and appreciation of Greek art are well known.** A passage by Aurelius Victor¹⁰⁶ could indicate, according to Palagia¹⁰⁷, the emperor's particular interest in Euphranor's work. However, the way in which the author refers to the names of Polykleitos and Euphranor¹⁰⁸ makes it more likely that the reference consists in a comparison of Hadrian's own great talent in art to that of excellent masters such as these two artists, than a sign of a distinct partiality from the part of the emperor for the works of one artist or the other. Besides, ancient authors¹⁰⁹ often associated Polykleitos and Euphranor mentioning frequently their names together in the same phrase.

In conclusion, as previously stated, the paintings studied in the present paper range between the fifth and the middle of the fourth Century B.C. They constitute mainly representations of famous battles, which demonstrate the power of the city-state that commissioned them by praising the bravery of its soldiers and the superiority of its principles and ideals. The reconstruction of these paintings, based entirely on literary sources, poses many problems. Nevertheless, the historiographical testimonies provide valuable information on the city-states involved in the battle, the number of warriors on each side, the type of arms

104 Pausanias, VIII.9.8.

105 Hölscher, *Griechische Historienbilder...* », p. 116-117 ; Six, « Euphranor », p. 8 ; Vasic, « Some Observations... », p. 345-n. 1.

106 Aurelius Victor, *De vita et moribus imperatorum*, XIV.2.

107 Palagia, *Euphranor*, p. 4, 54.

108 Aurelius Victor, *De vita et moribus imperatorum*, XIV.2 : « [...] pictor fictorque ex aere vel marmore proxime Polycletos et Euphranoras ». The names of the two artists are in plural, a number which is rarely valid for proper names. When these forms appear in literature, they are mostly used in order to give emphasis or to express a metaphor, as I believe the intention of the author was in this passage.

109 Iuvenalis, *Saturae*, III.216 ; Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus.*, XIV.2 ; Gregorios Nazianzenos, *Carmina de se ipso*, V.379 (p. 1220, line 5) ; Coulson, « The Nature of Pliny's ... », p. 325-326.

they carried and the whereabouts of the battlefield, which can help us reconstruct certain important iconographic elements of the lost paintings of this particular period.

However, in the second half of the fourth Century B.C. the powerful city-states of the Classical era – **Athens, Sparta, Thebes** – who had commissioned all the paintings, were declining, while a new power emerged in the North of Greece, Macedonia¹¹⁰. The Macedonian kings also commissioned a great number of paintings, mostly inspired by mythology, but also by contemporary historical events. According to the surviving literary testimonies, between the middle of the fourth and the second Century B.C., the number of historical paintings produced doubled in comparison to the historical compositions dated to the fifth and the first half of the fourth Century B.C. The representation of battles always constitutes a distinct preference among the artists. Thus, most of the painted works seem to be inspired by Alexander the Great's campaign to the East and by other military exploits. In spite of this artistic tendency, there are also a few paintings representing historical events of religious or social nature, such as processions or weddings, though few in number. This variety of historical themes probably results from the fact that these pictures were no longer solely commissioned by the cities, but also by individuals, such as Megabyzos, high priest of Artemis in Ephesos, and from the mid-fourth Century on, by the Macedonian kings, such as Philip II and Alexander the Great.

The reconstruction of these Hellenistic paintings is somewhat less complicated because some of them were copied by Roman mosaicists. Many of the works of these artists survive and, combined with the literary sources, provide us with valuable information on the originals' iconographic style, which I shall attempt to examine in a future paper.

110 Taylor, « Oinoe and the Painted Stoa ... », p. 237.