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## **Connecting present with a canonized past *Neos* and *Nea* for individuals in the Imperial period**

*This article analyzes how the adjective Neos / Nea was used to honour elite individuals of Greek cities in the Imperial period as « new » gods, heroes, or even mortals from the past. Through an analysis of all attested cases, we present the honorands, honouring agents, the honorific titles, the deities and media involved and explore if these titles imply a ritual treatment. A final discussion returns to seminal points : the meaning of the term Neos, the relationship between epithets and heroic honours, and the social hierarchy by which Emperors equated to new gods are contrasted to other individuals honoured as important humans from the Classical past. We conclude that the practice of granting Neos epithets was influenced by the Second Sophistic and responded to socio-political needs of self-representation of the elites.*

**Relier le présent au passé canonisé.**

***Neos* et *nea* pour les individus à l'époque impériale**

*Cet article analyse comment l'adjectif neos / nea a été utilisé pour honorer les membres de l'élite des cités grecques à l'époque impériale en tant que « nouveaux » dieux, héros ou même mortels du passé. À travers une étude de tous les cas attestés, nous présentons les individus honorés, les agents et les titres honorifiques, les divinités et les médias concernés, et examinons si ces titres impliquent un traitement rituel des individus honorés. La discussion finale revient sur des points centraux : la signification du terme neos, la relation entre les épicleses, les honneurs héroïques et la hiérarchie sociale opposant les empereurs appelés nouveaux dieux à d'autres individus honorés comme des hommes importants du passé classique. Nous concluons que la pratique consistant à accorder des épicleses neos a été influencée par la Seconde Sophistique et qu'elle a répondu aux besoins socio-politiques d'auto-représentation des élites.*

Comparisons, equations, associations between political figures and gods or heroes were expressed throughout Greek history by means of various discursive, ritual, and iconographic media<sup>1</sup>. In Classical Athens, comedians critically equated Perikles to Zeus for his megalomaniac wrath precipitating all Greece into war and called Aspasia a new Omphale and Deianira, or the Hera of Perikles<sup>2</sup>. The new flourishing tradition of cultic honours addressed to Hellenistic sovereigns and civic leaders, and later to Roman Emperors, activated a variety of ritual and epicletic solutions to express the encounter between human power and the divine sphere. The purpose of decrees establishing such honours was to create new rituals copying and adapting the model of the existing ones and to embed them within the religious life of the communities to commemorate past benefactions and to negotiate future ones. Hellenistic decrees were not concerned – or very rarely, and generally speaking not before the late-Hellenistic period – with the ontological implications of the established

1. The authors have worked in constant collaboration and share their responsibility for the whole content of this paper. A previous discussion of the sources concerning *Neos* epithets for Emperors and individuals was presented by Jenny Wallensten, « New Gods for a New World : Observations on an Epigraphic Interplay between Greeks and Romans », part 1-3, *Cultural Anthropology and Ethnosemiotics*, t. 3, fasc. 4, 2017, p. 25-40 ; t. 4, fasc. 1, 2018, p. 37-48 ; t. 4, fasc. 2, 2018, p. 2-17 (with part 2 especially relevant for non-Imperial individuals). In sections 2-3 (analysis of the single cases) and 4 (meaning of *Neos*) we have built upon these previous studies by publishing the text and translation of the sources and providing a lengthier commentary with a more encompassing bibliographic apparatus (unless otherwise stated, translations from Greek texts are by Stefano G. Caneva). The historical discussion of sections 1 and 4 draws on and develops observations proposed in Stefano G. Caneva, Alessandra Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai nel mondo greco ellenistico e imperiale : semantica e prassi, attori e contesti », *Mythos*, t. 14, par. 1-30, and in Stefano G. Caneva, « *Isotheoi* ed *heroikai timai* in Diodoro : fra tempo del mito, Sicilia classica ed Ellenismo », *Hesperia*, t. 39, n.s., fasc. 3, 2021, p. 191-230. Finally, the discussion in section 4 on the funerary poem for Herodes Atticus' wife Regilla reworks parts of a seminar by Stefano G. Caneva, *Remettre de l'ordre dans les traditions religieuses. La réponse archaïsante de la Seconde Sophistique face aux processus d'héroïsation des périodes hellénistique et impériale*, Liège, 19 April 2018.

2. See Ar., *Ach.* 530-539 (Perikles Olympios). On Aspasia in comedies, Plut., *Per.* 24.6 : ἐν δὲ ταῖς κωμῳδίαις Ὀμφάλη τε νέα καὶ Δηϊάνειρα καὶ πάλιν Ἥρα προσαγορεύεται ; see, in the same passage, Ἥραν τέ οἱ Ἀσπασίαν, based on a quotation from Cratinus, fr. Kock I 86.

rituals about the position of honoured human beings in relation to the divine. On the contrary, this appears as a central topic in the reflections of (mostly critical) literary authors, among whom an unsurprisingly central place belongs to philosophers, but also to historians and orators involved in the political life of Hellenistic *poleis*<sup>3</sup>. Political leaders could also dress up with divine attributes or be portrayed with them in statues and coins in order to express this multi-faceted message of a special relationship, which took the form of approximation between human and divine power as well as of protection bestowed by gods upon human rulers<sup>4</sup>. Hellenistic practices became a model for later Imperial worship, but the affirmation of Rome as the superpower unifying the Mediterranean world also brought along a series of significant changes concerning diplomatic practices, the religious and juridical understanding of cultic honours for human beings, and more specifically the establishment of a clearer hierarchic distinction between honours for Emperors and their relatives on the one hand, local leaders and officials on the other.

Dio Cassius reports that Augustus placed honours for political leaders under strict control across the Empire. In 11 AD, he issued a decree meant for the ‘moralization’ of the Provinces, which prohibited the conferral of honours to governors in service and within two months from the end of their office<sup>5</sup>. While not directly attacking ritual honours for the civic elites, Augustus eliminated

3. On this point, see Christian Habicht, *Divine Honors for Mortal Men in Greek Cities : The Early Cases* [1970], Ann Arbor, Michigan Classical Press, 2017, p. 123-130 ; Stefano G. Caneva, « Les honneurs culturels pour Attale III à Pergame (IvP I 246) », *The Materiality of Hellenistic Ruler Cults*, ed. S. G. Caneva, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège (« Kernos, Suppléments », 36), 2020, p. 161-164 ; Stefano G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming : Studies in the Vocabulary of Hellenistic Cultic Honours*, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège (« Kernos, Suppléments », 41), 2023, p. 30-48. A PhD research on this topic is currently being carried out by Luca Lorenzon with a joint scholarship at the Universities of Liège and Padova.

4. Shane Wallace, « Court, Kingship and Royal Style in the Early Hellenistic Period », *The Hellenistic Court : Monarchic Power and Elite Society from Alexander to Cleopatra*, ed. Andrew Erskine, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, S. Wallace, Swansea, The Classical Press of Wales, 2017, p. 1-30 ; Panagiotis P. Iossif, « Divine Attributes on Hellenistic Coinages : From Noble to Humble and Back », *TYHOI. Greek and Roman Coins Seen through their Images : Noble Issuers, Humble Users ?*, eds. P. P. Iossif, François de Callataÿ, Richard Veymiers, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège, 2018, p. 269-293.

5. Dio Cass. 56.25.6.

the possibility that such honours would be bestowed upon the highest-ranking holders of power in the Provinces, *i.e.*, the Roman governors, and put the premises for a conformist removal of *isotheoi timai* from the honorific practice of Greek cities.

This process must be taken into account if we want to consider the way the members of prominent aristocratic families were honoured in the Greek *poleis* of the Imperial period. References to deceased dignitaries as heroes were multiplied, at least partly because the heroic category was felt as a typically Greek one, whose ritual and juridical underpinnings did not overlap with the posthumous deification of the Emperors as *Diui*. This reassuring distinction between Roman *consecratio* and Greek *apheroismos* provided Greek elites with a vast territory of posthumous honours that would not enter in competition with Imperial worship<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, heroization also had other, more Greek reasons of appeal. The celebration of deceased ancestors as heroes already had deep roots in the practice of Hellenistic aristocratic groups. Besides, high-ranking families could often claim genealogical links with heroic city founders and with other figures of the Greek mythical traditions who had great importance for the local communities<sup>7</sup>. Thus, heroic honours established an effective connection between past and present at the local level and also satisfied the need of the elites for social distinction in a sphere that was not only tolerated by the Roman establishment, but whose displayed Greekness could meet with the favour of philhellene

6. On Roman *consecratio*, see Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002 ; John Scheid, « Comprendre le culte dit impérial. Autour de deux livres récents », *L'Antiquité classique*, t. 73, 2004, p. 239-249 ; Cesare Letta, *Tra umano e divino. Forme e limiti del culto degli imperatori nel mondo romano*, Sarzana/Lugano, Agorà & Co, 2021. On Greek *apheroismos* and its religious and juridical implications, see S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai », par. 16-21.

7. Susan Alcock, « The Heroic Past in a Hellenistic Present », *Hellenistic Constructs : Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography*, eds. Paul Cartledge, Peter Garnsey, Erich S. Gruen, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1997, p. 20-34 ; Christopher P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity. From Achilles to Antinoos*, Cambridge MA/London, Harvard University Press, 2010, and « Ancestry and Identity in the Roman Empire », *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 111-124 ; S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai », par. 12-13.

Emperors and with the classicist attitude spread by the Second Sophistic.

Keeping in mind the political and cultural background described above is necessary to deal with the diffusion of epithets associating high-ranking members of the civic elites of Greek *poleis* with heroes and famous figures from the past. The formula νέος / νέα + name (« New + hero / famous person ») is by far the most commonly attested for this purpose, even though other options are available<sup>8</sup>. The phenomenon of granting prominent figures a *Neos*-type epithet in honorific contexts is epigraphically attested from the early Principate to the Severan period (early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) in various regions of the Greek East, but the large bulk of evidence significantly comes from continental Greece and western Asia Minor. Three cities from Peloponnese – Sparta (4 mythical cases)<sup>9</sup>, Messene (2 historical), and Argos (1 mythical) – provide alone almost half of the total documented cases. To these occurrences we can add one case from Athens and possibly one from Aetolia (Kalydon), which, if accepted, is also the earliest one and deserves lengthier discussion<sup>10</sup>. The other large group comes from cities in various regions of Asia Minor : Ionia (Teos, 2 mythical cases ; Smyrna, 1 historical), Phrygia (Dorylarion and Synnada, 1 mythical case each), Aeolis (Mytilene, 1 historical case), plus an isolated case from Side in Pamphylia (1 historical). The last three occurrences are sparsely located or without a certain geographical context : a statue base found in Rome concerns a poet from Lykaonia nicknamed *Neos Nestor* ; an entry of *Suda* sheds light on the historian Arrian being named *Neos Xenophon* (without context) ; finally, a unique epigram from Alexandria concerning a *Neos Herakles* does not seem to contradict the general geographical contextualization of the evidence as the person explicitly claims Greek provenance.

Another way to describe the evidence consists in listing the mythical and historical figures evoked by the epithets and in

8. See discussion below.

9. In Cat. III we add the discussion of a comparative case where a Spartan woman is honoured as « another (ἄλλη) Penelope ». The honorand's mother was honoured in Cat. II as *Nea* Penelope and Laodamia.

10. See below for a presentation of the evidence and for discussion of the historical meaning of this case.

investigating their possible links with the persons and places for which they are attested. The mythical characters include Akamas (mythical founder of Dorylaion), Athamas (mythical founder of Teos), Nestor (for the poet honoured in Rome), Penelope and Laodamia (Sparta: two faithful wives, both sharing genealogical ties with the city), Hypermestra (Argos; another faithful wife directly connected with the history of Argos), Herakles (possibly three athletes: Leon at Kalydon, Aitolia, and Dioskoros in Alexandria; an unknown person from Synnada). The historical figures are ancestors of local dignitaries (Theophanes at Mytilene; possibly Sagarites at Smyrna); Homer (alone, for a poet at Side, or in combination with Themistokles, for a civic benefactor in Athens, possibly also with poetic ambitions); Platon and Epaminondas (two elite members from Messene; respectively a philosopher and a political leader with military functions); and Xenophon (for the historian Arrian). This catalogue shows that apart from Herakles, the chosen mythical figures are not necessarily prominent ones from a pan-Hellenic perspective, but priority is given to local heroes / heroines (the founders Akamas and Athamas; Laodamia and Hypermestra) and to figures known for qualities that also characterize the honoured persons: Penelope, Laodamia and Hypermestra are role models for irreproachable wives; Herakles shares the strength and tragic destiny of athletes who died in the flower of their youth; Nestor embodies a model of eloquence for a distinguished poet. A similar evaluation can be made for the historical figures: Platon, Homer and Xenophon are models of intellectual excellence, respectively in the field of philosophy, (epic) poetry and historiography; Themistokles and Epaminondas are leaders intimately connected with the classical past of Athens and Messene; Theophanes was a prominent citizen and benefactor of Mytilene and an ancestor of the person honoured as *Neos* Theophanes (this genealogical link might be valid for Sagarites as well).

To sum up on this point, a general overview of the evidence reveals that mythical and historical figures were chosen principally by two criteria: 1) geographical and/or genealogical significance for the honorands and their communities; 2) the excellence that

distinguished the honoured people in a certain aspect of life<sup>11</sup>. Significantly, most persons holding *Neos*-type epithets are mentioned on statue bases or in decrees erected in their honour. However, in other cases the holder of the epithet has another function : he can be the agent of a dedication ; an ancestor of the honorand or of the donor ; or even a magistrate cursorily referred to in a decree or another document. This shows that epithets equating persons with a mythical hero or an historical figure from the past could be borne by persons as a standard title, not just as a rhetorical solution associated with a punctual honorific act.

This observation leads us to the topic of the agents taking up the initiative of honouring a person that holds a *Neos*-type epithet. A few observations are needed with regard to the persons and collective agents related to the writing of our texts. Interestingly, the honorific dedications stem from the public initiative of a civic governmental body and/or of a tribe. However, at least some texts reveal a prominent role of the elite families to which the honorands belonged. Thus, some statues of prominent Spartan women were erected after the permission was accorded by the city, but on the private costs of a close relative. On the other hand, the texts referring to a *Neos* Herakles from Kalydon and Alexandria, and possibly from Synnada, belong to a funerary framework and to the activity of a gymnasium, and might be the result of the initiative of a group attending this structure.

Another topic that deserves attention is the question of the religious significance of bearing an epithet that associated a person with a hero or with a famous figure from the past. In principle, one could expect that a distinction existed between epithets following the '*Neos* + hero' or the '*Neos* + historical person' formula. However, such a clear-cut difference is not confirmed by the evidence and is in fact in contrast with the attested practice of hero cults in Greek religion. As a matter of fact, Greek sources show that not all mythical heroes and heroines received a cult. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the contexts in which the *Neos*-type epithets are used in Imperial Greek *poleis* will reveal that almost all the occurrences are unrelated to rituals addressed to

11. On these two factors see already Pierre Charneau, « Inscriptions d'Argos », *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, t. 80, 1956, p. 598-618, p. 613.

the honoured persons. Even for the people named after mythical or historical founders of their cities (Akamas in Dorylaion and Athamas in Teos ; Theophanes, honoured as « Second Founder » in 1<sup>st</sup>-century BC Mytilene), there is no trace that the honorific treatment granted by the city with a *Neos*-type epithet included *per se* the practice of rituals, as it commonly happened in the Hellenistic period<sup>12</sup>.

The advent of the Principate substantially changed the rules of public *timai* in Greek cities, eliminating religious honours from the range of distinctions that could be reached by local political leaders. On the other hand, the epithets displayed by some local dignitaries are occasionally combined with the term *heros*, indicating that these persons were still considered as a prestigious presence in the memory and life of the civic community or of a small group, such as an aristocratic family or an association. Whether the term *heros* should be seen as a merely honorific expression of respect for the dead or as the proof of existence of a heroic cult is a notorious issue in the study of the post-classic developments of the Greek category of *heros*, and one that cannot be dealt with in general terms<sup>13</sup>. It certainly exceeds the limits of this study, but at least a few words are needed here in relation to the case of Leon, who was possibly ritually honoured as a hero and *Neos Herakles* in a palaestra in Kalydon.

As we shall see, the archaeological and palaeographic analysis of the documents mentioning Leon not only reveals that his cult lasted from the late-Hellenistic period to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, but also potentially makes this case the first known occurrence of a

12. On the link between the title *Ktistes* being granted to great civic benefactors and the bestowal of cultic honours in Hellenistic (and especially late Hellenistic) *poleis*, see Pierre Fröhlich, « Funérailles publiques et tombeaux monumentaux intra-muros dans les cités grecques à l'époque hellénistique », *Forgerons, élites et voyageurs d'Homère à nos jours. Hommages en mémoire d'Isabelle Ratinand-Lachkar*, eds. Marie-Claire Ferrière, Maria Paola Castiglioni, Françoise Létoublon, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2013, p. 227-309.

13. For a *status quaestionis*, see Fritz Graf, « Hero Cult », *Brill's New Pauly*, vol. vi, 6, 2005, col. 247-251 ; Andrzej Wypustek, *Images of Eternal Beauty in Funerary Verse Inscriptions of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman Periods* (« Mnemosyne Supplements », 352), Leiden, Brill, 2013 ; Gunnel Ekroth, « Heroes : Living or Dead ? », *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, eds. Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 383-396 ; S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai ».



*Neos*-type epithet : at least one century before the known dossiers from the Imperial period, but possibly even before the earliest attestations of this formula for Hellenistic kings. These intriguing details will receive lengthier discussion at the end of our paper, but now we should first of all raise the following question : if cults related to persons equated to mythical figures or important persons from the past are but a small part of the evidence concerning *Neos*-type epithets for non-royal and non-imperial figures, what was the purpose of naming the other honoured people as ‘new heroes’ or ‘new VIPs’ at all ?

In our opinion, the answer lies in two aspects of the social and cultural world of Greek civic elites in the Imperial period. To begin with, prominent elite members were proud of the illustrious past of their families and considered continuity with their great ancestors as a seminal aspect not only of their identity, but also of their legitimacy. This trend had already taken its shape during the Hellenistic period, but became even more important with the consolidation of the census-aristocracy that controlled the political life of *poleis* and provinces under Roman rule. Civic institutions therefore rewarded benefactions – especially fruitful mediations between cities and Emperors, enabled by powerful citizens acquainted with the imperial court – with honorary decrees celebrating continuity of intention and virtue between the honorands and their ancestors. In 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Mytilene, the civic benefactor Macrinus receiving the epithet *Neos* Theophanes shows that this type of discourse could be summarized and encapsulated in an epithet that evoked the glorious past of Macrinus’ family : the honorand’s mediation with the Emperor Antoninus Pius was celebrated by equating it to the past achievements of Macrinus’ ancestor Theophanes, a close collaborator of Pompey who had ensured the restitution of freedom to Mytilene.

The type of genealogical continuity illustrated thus far only explains a limited number of occurrences of *Neos*-type epithets. The reason is that genealogical continuity covers but a small spectrum of a broader theme, which consists in the celebration of the Greek ideals of *arete* that civic elites of the Imperial period claimed to embody and preserve. In a world intellectually dominated by the Second Sophistic and by its classicist cult of the past, mythical and historical figures became role models illustrating fundamental

values of agonistic strength, faithfulness (to the fatherland or within the private sphere of the family), intellectual and literary achievements, political and military successes. Mythical figures and historical leaders of the past provided orators, historians and philosophers with stories to bring moral and political discourses vividly to the eyes of their public. Local narrative traditions (both historical and mythical) continued fashioning the identity of the *poleis* and their elites. This web of stories articulated international diplomatic relationships, provided individual agents with a prestigious pedigree, and gave shape to pan-Hellenic identity and pride under Roman rule. Epithets describing contemporary persons as new embodiments of the values and achievements of figures from the past – be that mythical or historical – became successful because they effectively encapsulated fragments of this broad canvas of identity-making stories and inscribed them in the self-representation of communities and their elites. The reasons for their geographical spread become even clearer when we consider it from the perspective of the regions that contributed most to the Second Sophistic. By making new political elites, athletes, and writers the living embodiment of a venerated canon of Greekness, these epithets contributed to replacing the forbidden practice of cultic honours with a new symbolical form of prestige, which was perfectly in line with the intellectual values of the time.

### MYTHICAL CHARACTERS IN *NEOS*-TYPE EPITHETS

In this section we provide a detailed analysis of the texts mentioning individuals with a *Neos*-type epithet that refers to figures from the Greek myth. The evidence is ordered geographically in three parts: continental Greece; Asia Minor; other provenances.

#### Continental Greece

##### *Peloponnese, Sparta*

The evidence from Sparta stands out among our geographical dossiers for the following reasons: 1) it is the biggest dossier for

the number of references ; 2) it is the only one where elite women are attested ; 3) the dossier is actually only composed of women equated to female mythical figures. All the occurrences appear to belong to the same period of about two/three generations coinciding with the late Antonine and the Severan dynasty. This chronological concentration suggests that we are dealing with a well-circumscribed phenomenon, which inaugurated a successful trend among a few high-ranking families of Sparta who wished to stress the prestige of their women.

### **Cat. I) Chairesion, *Nea Penelopeia* – Sparta, late 2<sup>nd</sup> – early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : base of a portrait herm, with a metrical dedication and sculptor's signature ; Chairesion bears the epithet *Nea Penelopeia* as the donor of the statue, not as the portrayed person. Found at Mistra.

Initiative : Chairesion, possibly the promised wife of the honorand.

Text constituted from : *IG V 1, 540*.

Text and translation :

Τὸν κλυτὸν Ἡγεμονῆα Χαρεῖσιον | ἄνθετο κούρα | Σπάρτας ἀ  
πρώτα, | (5) Πηνελόπεια νέα, | [ῆ]ν μέγα χάρμα πάτρα | [Σ]παρτιατικὸς  
ἠέξι|σεν, κυδάλιμος | [γ]ενέτωρ κυδαλίμα[ν] | (10) θύγατρα. |  
(underneath the phallus) Δημητρίου τοῦ Ὀ γλυφῆ.

The (portrait of the) famous Hegemoneus was dedicated by Chaireion, Sparta's first maiden, *Nea Penelopeia*, a glorious daughter fostered by a glorious father, Spartiatikos, as a great joy for her fatherland. The sculpture (is) of Demetrios (son of Demetrios).

#### Commentary

This portrait herm has preserved the name of the donor Chairesion, a young woman honorifically equated to the mythical character Penelope. Various elements of the epigram depict her as a member of a very high-ranking family from the Sparta of the Severan period : she is called « first maiden of Sparta », « a great joy for the fatherland » (note the etymological pun between her name Chairesion and the Greek word *χάρμα*), and she bears

her epithet as a standard title while acting as the donor of the statue of Hegemoneus. These observations are supported by the prosopographic analysis led by Spawforth, who identified Chairesion's father Spartiatikos with a distinguished member of the Spartan elite of the period, P. Memmius Spartiaticus<sup>14</sup>.

Penelope's faithfulness, her ability in female craft and her wise management of the household made her a role model for honourable women of the upper classes. Moreover, she was the daughter of Ikarios, king of Sparta, which made her a local heroine from the perspective of Spartan elites. It is also possible that the honorand Hegemoneus was her promised spouse, yet this explanation must remain a hypothesis. The fact that Chairesion bears her epithet out of an honorific initiative addressed to her makes it impossible to identify the agent that granted it to her. However, comparison with other known cases suggests that such epithets originally stemmed from public honorific initiatives.

### **Cat. II) Aurelia Oppia, *Nea Penelopeia* and *Laodamia* – Sparta, Imperial period**

Evidence : statue base with a poetic dedication for the deceased honorand.

Initiative : concession of the *polis* of Sparta ; erected on private costs.

Text constituted from : *IG V 1*, 598.

Text and translation :

ἡ πόλις vac. | [τὴν φιλ]οσοφωτάτην καὶ σωφρο[νεστάτη]ν  
 Ἀὐρηλίαν Ὀππίαν, vac. | [τοῦ] φιλοσοφωτάτου Καλλι-  
 (5)[κράτους?] θυγατέρα, vac. | [γυναῖκα] δὲ τοῦ εὐγενεστάτου  
 vac. | [Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Τε]ισαμενοῦ τοῦ Στρατα[...]  
 ου, καὶ ὡς χρηματίζει, vac. | [Ἔστιαν π]όλεως, νέαν Πηνελόπ[ει]  
 (10)αν καὶ Λαοδαμ[ίαν], ἀρετῆς πάση[ς] | [καὶ εὐνοίας] καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰς

14. Antony J. S. Spawforth, « Notes on the Third Century A.D. in Spartan Epigraphy », *Annual of the British School at Athens*, t. 79, 1984, p. 263-288, p. 277. Adolf Wilhelm ed., *Griechische Epigramme*, Bonn, Habelt, 1980, n° 10 interpreted Prota as the donor's name and Chairesion as the accusative of the honorand's name (*SEG XXX 409*). This seems less convincing due to the presence of the article in ἀ πρότα, which makes sense if we assume a relation with the previous κόουρα, not with a personal name.

θεὰ[ς εὐ][σεβείας ἔν]εκα, vac. προσδεξαμέν[ου] | [τὸ ἀνάλωμα] vac. | Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Εὐτυχιανοῦ | [τοῦ καὶ Αὐρ]ηλιανοῦ τοῦ Εὐτυχ[ι(15)ανοῦ, πατρὸς] νόμων καὶ πόλει[ως, τοῦ γαμβ]ροῦ αὐτῆς. vac. | vacat | [... ποιητ]ῆς τοῦπιγράμματ[ος...]. | vacat | [Ὀππίαν σω]φροσύνη κοσμεῖ περιώ[σιον ἄλλων | καὶ πινυτ]ῆ σοφίη τήνδε [κ]ατηγλ[άισεν]. | (20) [καὶ στέρξεν μάλ]α δὴ σε φιλομειδῆς [Ἀφροδίτη], | [ἔξοχος ἦν ἀν]δρῶν γείνε[το Καλλικράτης].

The city (honoured) the very wise and chaste Aurelia Oppia, daughter of the wisest Kalli[krates], wife of the most noble M. Aur. Tisamenos, son of Strata[...], and, as it is deliberated (by the city), [Hestia] of the city, *Nea* Penelop[eia and Laoda]mia, because of her perfect virtue and [benevolence] and of her piety toward the goddesses ; the costs have been guaranteed by M. Aur. Eutyichianus, [son of Aur]elianus, son of Eutyich[ianus, father] of the laws and of the city, her son-in-law. [... poet] of the epigram [...]. Chastity adorns [Oppia] far beyond [all the others], prudence and wisdom made her glorious. Laughter-loving [Aphrodite had much affection] for her, whom [Kallikrates] generated, excellent among men.

### Commentary

Aurelia Oppia was the member of a very distinguished family from Imperial Sparta<sup>15</sup>. Her statue was part of a family group that also included our Cat. III, in honour of her daughter Aur. Herakleia. In this case, we are well informed about the procedure that led to the conferral of her honours. The statue of Aurelia Oppia was erected posthumously by her son-in-law M. Aur. Eutyichianus at his own costs, but had been previously authorized by the *polis*. The text refers to a civic deliberation and summarizes the motivation clause of the decree by stating that the honours were granted « because of her perfect virtue and [benevolence] and of her piety toward the goddesses ». The decree conferred to Aurelia Oppia the epithets « *Nea* Penelopeia and Laodamia » in addition to « Hestia of the city ». The latter expression poignantly overlaps the honorand's household and the city, making Aurelia Oppia the protectress of the family hearth and of the civic one. Both Penelope

15. Yves Lafond, « Sparta in the Roman Period », *A Companion to Sparta*, vol. II, ed. Anton Powell, Hoboken, NJ, Wiley, 2018, p. 403-422, p. 414-415.

and Laodamia are genealogically related to Sparta. According to a scholium to Homer, *Od.* 4.797, Laodamia was another daughter of Ikarios and thus a sister of Penelope<sup>16</sup>. It therefore looks like the family of Aurelia Oppia virtually monopolized the legacy of this mythical family.

### **Cat. III) Aurelia Herakleia, daughter of M. Aur. Tisamenos and Aurelia Oppia, Other Penelopeia – Sparta, Imperial period**

Evidence : honorary statue base for the deceased honorand.

Initiative : concession of the *polis* of Sparta ; erected on private costs.

Text constituted from : *IG V 1, 599.*

Text and translation :

[ή πόλις] | τὴν σεμνοτάτην καὶ | φιλοσοφωτάτην καὶ | εὐγενεστάτην Ἡρά(5)κλειαν Τεισαμενοῦ | παρὰ τῆ ἀγιωτάτῃ Ὀρθία Ἀρτέμιδι ἰδρύσαίτο, ἀρετῆς πάσης καὶ σωφροσύνης καὶ εὐ- (10)σεβείας ἔνεκα, προσιδεξαμένου τὸ ἀνάλωμα τοῦ προσφιλεστάτου ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς | Μάρ(κου) Εὐρυ(ηλίου) Εὐτυχιανοῦ ἔ (15) τοῦ Ὀ. ἄλλην Πηνελόπειαν ἐγένετο κυδαλίμη | χθῶν Σπάρτη, Τισαμενοῦ | θεσπεσίου θύγατρα· τοίη | μῆτιν ἔην ἠδ' ἤθεα καὶ νόο(ν) | (20) ἐσθλὸν ἔργα τ' Ἀθηναίης | ἠδὲ σαοφροσύνην ταύτη καὶ γένος ἔσχες ἐτήτυμον, Ἡράκλεια Ἡρακλέους | Φοίβου πρὸς δ' ἔτ' [ἀπ' Ἰ]α<μ>[ι](25)δῶν οἷ σ' Ἐκάτ<η>[ς κρυε]ραῖσιν ἀνηρείμα[ντο θυέλλ.]αις αὐτοκασιγ[ήτην] | θᾶκον ἐς <ἀ>θ<α>[νάτων].

The city set up near the holiest Artemis Orthia (the statue of) the most revered, wise, and beneficent Herakleia, daughter of Tisamenos, because of her perfect virtue and chastity and piety. The costs have been guaranteed by her dearest husband, M. Aur. Eutyichianus ἔ son of Eutyichianos. The glorious land of Sparta generated another Penelope, daughter of Tisamenos. Such was she for wisdom, costumes, noble mind, and the arts of Athena. You, Herakleia, were truly race of Herakles, and also descended from the Iamidai, who snatched you up from the icy storms of Hekate to bring you to the seat of the immortals who are your relatives.

16. Another candidate could be Laodamia the daughter of King Amyklas of Sparta, known from Paus. 10.9.5.

### Commentary

Just as in the case of Aur. Oppia, the statue of her daughter Aurelia Herakleia was erected posthumously at private costs, but on the basis of a previous civic initiative. A decree of the *polis* must have authorized this honour, chosen a prominent place for the dedication (the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia), and justified it as a consequence of « her perfect virtue and chastity and piety ». The statue was then paid by Herakleia's husband, M. Aur. Eutychianus, who also sponsored the execution of the statue of her mother. Remarkably, Herakleia is not referred to as *Nea Penelope*, but as « another Penelope », probably to distinguish her epithet from that granted to her mother. Nevertheless, we have decided to include this text in our catalogue because it shows that epithets composed with the adjective *Neos* responded to the same honorific purposes of other created with synonyms, such as *allos*, *deuteros*, or *kainos*<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, the formula with *Neos* is more largely attested and this dossier suggests that it enjoyed priority over other epicletic options.

The text honouring Aurelia Herakleia also sheds light on the genealogical links that high-ranking families claimed with outstanding figures from the mythical past of Sparta. Herakleia bore a name that boasted her family's direct ascendance from the Heraklid conquerors of Laconia. Her father Tisamenos had the same name as a son of Orestes, who had become king of Sparta. Moreover, he was a descendant of the Iamidai, the family of Olympian seers who claimed to stem from Apollo's son Iamos<sup>18</sup>. These Iamidai are also described in the text as the agents of an apotheosis of the deceased Herakleia, by which

17. For reasons of space, here we do not deal with the relevant evidence extensively, but we limit ourselves to a few examples. For an occurrence of *kainos*, see *Anth. Pal.* VII, 692, mentioning a *Kainos Atlas* ; a *deuteros Herakles* is mentioned in Hesychius of Miletus, Karl Müller *FGH* IV, p. 167, 40 : Κλεάνθης ὁ μαθητῆς Κράτητος τοσοῦτον γέγονε φιλόπονος, ὡς καὶ δεῦτερος Ἡρακλῆς προσαγορευθῆναι.

18. On the Iamidai, see Michael A. Flower, « The Iamidai : A Mantic Family and Its Public Image », *Practitioners of the Divine : Greek Priests and Religious Officials from Homer to Heliodoros*, eds. Beate Dignas, Kai Trampedach, Washington/Cambridge, Center for Hellenic Studies/Harvard University Press (« Hellenic Studies », 30), 2008, p. 187-206.

this Spartan elite woman is thought to have joined her relatives among the gods<sup>19</sup>.

**Cat. IV) Claudia Neikippia, *Nea Penelope* – Sparta, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : honorary statue base of her grand-daughter Claudia Neikion.

Initiative : the *polis* of Sparta.

Text constituted from : *IG V 1*, 607.

Text and translation :

Face A. ἡ πόλις | Κλαυδίαν Νείκιον, θυγατέρα μὲν Τ(ίτου) Κλαυδίου Δαμοκράτους, ἀν(5)δρὸς ἐπὶ τε προγονόνω[v] | <λα>μπρότατι καὶ ἰδίαι κ<α>|[λοκάγαθ]ία καὶ παιδείᾳ | [τοῦ] τε γένους ἀξίω[v] | <κ>αὶ τᾶς πατρίδος καὶ |(10)[...]|| δια ταῦτα ΕΨΑ||[...]ΕΜΛΜΛΥΤΩΤΕΙΝ[...|...]ΥΛ τᾶς Ἄγιδος | ...] πε τὰ λοιπὰ θαυ|[μαστῶς] καὶ διὰ τὰν ἐ|(15)[πιφανες]τάτ<α>v τε ἀγῆ<ς> | [...]ΙΟΕΓΛΚΛΜΙΤ[...|... ἔγ]γονον δὲ Τ[ιβ(ερίου)] | [Κλαυ]δίου Ἀριστοκράτο[vς] | *vacat*

Face B. *vacat* | εὐσεβοῦς καὶ |(20) φιλοπάτριδος, | καὶ Κλαυδίας | Νεικιπίας, | νέας Πη<ν>ελόπης, <ῆ>ς ἦν φερ<ώ>|(25)νυμος, καὶ Ἰουλίου Πολυ<εῦ>κτ[ου] | καὶ Ἰουλ<ί>ας Ἀπατταρίου, ἱερέ[ι]ας | [ἀ]πὸ γένους τ[ᾶν] | (30) Ἐλευσινιάν. | *vacat*

The city (dedicated the statue of) Claudia Neikion, daughter of T. Claudius Damokrates, a man worthy of his family and of his fatherland for the brilliancy of his ancestors and his own nobleness and culture and [...] therefore [...] of Agis [...] all the rest in an admirable way and because of his most remarkable [...] descendant of Tib. Claudius Aristokrates, (*face B*) pious and loyal to the fatherland, and Claudia Neikippia, *Nea Penelope*,

19. On the topic of apotheosis and ascension to the gods in Imperial funerary texts, see Richmond A. Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press (« Illinois Studies in Language and Literature », 27), 1942, p. 31-43, p. 48-65, p. 97-106 ; Anne Le Bris, *La Mort et les conceptions de l'au-delà en Grèce ancienne à travers les épigrammes funéraires. Étude d'épigrammes d'Asie mineure de l'époque hellénistique et romaine*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2001, p. 61-120 ; Imre Peres, *Griechische Grabinschriften und neutestamentliche Eschatologie*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck (« Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament », 127), 2003, p. 89-121, p. 196-207, p. 217-232 ; A. Wypustek, *Images of Eternal Beauty in Funerary Verse Inscriptions*.



whose name she bore, and Iulius Polyeuktos and Iulia Apatarion, hereditary priestess of the Eleusinia.

### Commentary

The observations made about the previous texts are to a large extent also valid for this one, although in this case the fragmentary state prevents us from understanding whether the statue was erected on civic or private costs. Here the mentioned members of a high-ranking family of Sparta cover three generations, and the epithet *Nea* Penelope belongs to the deceased grandmother of the honoured women. This detail shows that honorific titles were jealously defended by aristocratic families, which preserved their memory across generations as a mark of their long-lasting social distinction.

### *Peloponnese, Argos*

The only occurrence from Argos concerns a woman belonging to a high-ranking family of the city. This detail and the chronology suggest that the same trend documented in Sparta also spread to Argos in roughly the same period.

### **Cat. V) Claudia Philomathia, *Nea* Hypermestra – Argos, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : honorary statue base, found in 1953 in the eastern part of the agora stoa.

Initiative : the *Gerousia* of Argos.

Text constituted from : Pierre Charneux, « Inscriptions d'Argos », *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, t. 80, 1956, p. 612 (*SEG XVI 259*).

Text and translation :

Γερουσία ἢ ἀπὸ Δαιναοῦ καὶ Ὑπερμήστρας καὶ Λυγκέος  
Κλαυδίαν Φιλομαθίαν, γυναῖ(5)κα Γν· Πομπηίου Κλεοσιθέου,  
προστάτου | τῆς γερουσίας ΗΞΔΙΑ.ΙΝ. . νέαν Ὑπερμήστραν.

Apparatus

Line 6 νέου Δ[α]λ[αοῦ] Oliver (*SEG XVII 149*), rejected by Charneux and Robert

The Gerousia descending from Danaos, Hypermestra and Lynkeus (honoured) Claudia Philomathia, wife of Gn. Pompeius Kleosthenes, president of the Gerousia [...] *Nea* Hypermestra.

#### Commentary

In 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Argos, the *Gerousia* erected an honorary statue of Claudia Philomathia, who was the wife of its president, Gnaeus Pompeius Kleosthenes. In the text accompanying the dedication, Philomathia receives the epithet *Nea* Hypermestra. Accordingly, the old and the new Hypermestra are jointly evoked in the same document, as the institution describes itself as the « *Gerousia* descending from Danaos, Hypermestra and Lynkeus »<sup>20</sup>. The royal house of Argos was founded by the union of Hypermestra and Lynkeus, respectively daughter and son of two brothers, Danaos and Aigyptos, descendants of the Argive princess Io. Hypermestra was the sole daughter of Danaos who accepted the marriage and did not kill her husband. This mythical character therefore provided a suitable role model for the virtuous wife of a high-ranking politician in Argos. By stressing the honorific link between the honorand and the most prominent figures of Argos' foundational past, the Council possibly also intended to evoke a genealogical link between them and the aristocratic family from which Philomathia stemmed.

Oliver proposed the reading  $\nu\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu\ \Delta[\alpha]|\nu[\alpha\omicron\upsilon]$  for line 6, thus reconstructing the title *Neos* Danaos for Philomathia's husband Kleosthenes. However, the proposal has been rejected by Charneux on the basis of a new analysis of the stone<sup>21</sup>. A decisive argument against this restoration comes from the observation that Lynkeus was Hypermestra's husband, whereas Danaos was her father : thus, if the intention of the *Gerousia* were to create a living match of the mythic couple, Kleosthenes should expectedly be named *Neos* Lynkeus, yet the stone leaves no chance to such integration.

20. On the successful career of Philomathia's husband, Gn. Pompeius Kleosthenes, see P. Charneux, « Inscriptions d'Argos ». On the formula connecting the Argive *Gerousia* with the city's mythical royal house, see Louis Robert, « Une épigramme satirique d'Automédon et Athènes au début de l'Empire (*Anth. Pal.* XI-319) », *Revue des études grecques*, t. 94, 1981, p. 338-361, p. 355, n. 83.

21. James H. Oliver, « Gerusiae and Augustales », *Historia*, t. 7, 1958, p. 472-496, p. 481, n° 3 ; Pierre Charneux, « Liste argienne de théarodoques », *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, t. 90, 1966, p. 156-239, p. 156, n. 3, followed by L. Robert, « Une épigramme satirique d'Automédon et Athènes », p. 356.

## Central Greece

### *Aetolia, Kalydon*

Central Greece has only delivered one uncertain case of an epithet equating a person to Herakles in Kalydon (Aetolia). However, this single case is of great importance for our purpose because if we accept the restorations proposed by the first editors, the early date of the dossier raises seminal questions about the origins and later developments of *Neos*-type epithets. Accordingly, in addition to presenting the dossier here, we will discuss its historical significance more in depth in the last part of our study.

### **Cat. VI Kalydon (Aetolia), late 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> BC to 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD – Leon, Heros and *Neos* Herakles**

Evidence : documents from Room VII and the Cult Exedra of the gymnasium at Kalydon (Imperial period) : a) marble object with a debated function, probably a hollowed base to hold a pillar or a stele, dedicated to Leon and found in the Cult Exedra<sup>22</sup> ; b) three fragments of the statue base of a woman called Krateia dedicated to Leon, found in Room VII and in the Cult Exedra – the decoration in the lower part of the basis confirms that the preserved fragments were contiguous ; c) three loose fragments of a statue base dedicated to Leon, found in the Cult Exedra and to the north of this room.

Initiative : only known for text b : Krateia's husband, Pantaleon<sup>23</sup>.

Text constituted from : autopsy of the photos of the stones (Fig. 1a-c), from Catherine Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », *Rois, cités, nécropoles. Institutions, rites et monuments en Macédoine*, eds. Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, Miltiade B. Hatzopoulos, Yvette Morizot, Athens, Centre de Recherche Antiquité (« Melethmata », 45), 2006, p. 63-88, pl. 10, 1-3.

22. Catherine Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », *Rois, cités, nécropoles. Institutions, rites et monuments en Macédoine*, eds. Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, Miltiade B. Hatzopoulos, Yvette Morizot, Athens, Centre de Recherche Antiquité (« Melethmata », 45), 2006, p. 63-88, p. 70, convincingly draws attention to the small shape and measures (22 x 22 x 17 cm) of the object and rejects other proposed interpretations as an altar (Klaffenbach in *IG*) or as the lower part of a funerary box (*Reliquienbehälter* in Ejnar Dyggve, Frederik Paulsen, Konstantinos Rhomaios, *Das Heroon von Kalydon*, Copenhagen, Levin and Munksgaard, 1934).

23. E. Dyggve, F. Paulsen, K. Rhomaios, *Das Heroon von Kalydon*, p. 66.

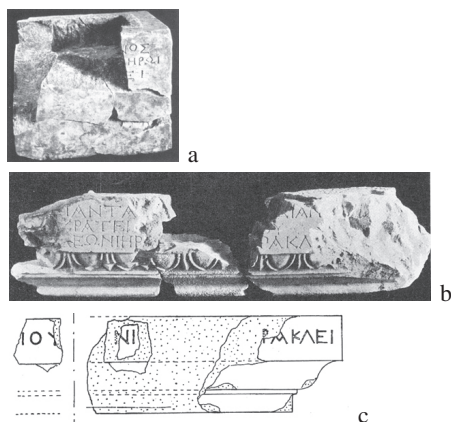


Fig. 1a-c : Dedications to Leon *heros Neos* Herakles, in Kalydon

See also : Text a : *IG IX 1<sup>2</sup> I*, 142 (Ejnar Dyggve, Frederik Paulsen, Konstantinos Rhomaios, *Das Heroon von Kalydon*, Copenhagen, Levin and Munksgaard, 1934, p. 61-63, n° 1). Text b : *IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, I*, 141 (*ibid.*, p. 65-66, n° 2). Text c : *ibid.*, p. 67, n° 3.

Texts and translations :

Text a : [...c.11....]νος | [τὸν βωμὸν( ?) Λέωνι] ἥρωι | [καὶ νέωι ( ?) Ἡρακλ]εῖ.

[...]nos (dedicated) [the altar ( ?) to Leon], Hero [and *Neos* ( ?) Herakl]es.

Text b : Παντα[λέων τὴν ἰδίαν γυναῖκα | Κράτει[αν ...c.6-7...]  
ου | Λέωνι ἥρωι καὶ νέωι ( ?) Ἡ]ρακλ[εῖ].

Panta[leon (dedicated the statue of)] his wife Krateia [...] to Leon, Hero [and *Neos* ( ?) He]rakles.

Text c : ]ίου [... Λέω]νι [ἥρωι καὶ νέωι ( ?) Ἡ]ρακλεῖ.  
[... to Leo]n [Heros and *Neos* ( ?) He]rakles.

#### Commentary

The famous and enigmatic building known as the *Heroon* in Kalydon (Aetolia) attests to a cult paid to a certain Leon, who bore the epithets *heros* and new Herakles. There is still no consensus either as to the dating or to the character of this complex. The structure combines a gymnasium or palaestra with an underlying

tomb. However, the nature of this connection remains disputed. Scholars have alternatively interpreted the complex as a *heroon* taking the form of a gymnasium to honour an athlete who died and was heroized, or as a gymnasium/palaestra built above a tomb and possibly hosting a hero cult<sup>24</sup>. Room VII has delivered many sculptural fragments, which apparently featured a full program with gods, heroes and elite Kalydonians, possibly portrayed as heroes. According to the excavators, sculptures also adorned the Cult Exedra, a square room placed directly above the tomb. They believed that the statue of Leon, and of other family members, were placed on a large base found in the Cult Room, in front of an offering table.

Even if most scholars seem to agree on a Hellenistic date for the tomb, the question arises of whether the extant structure reflects the original plan from the Hellenistic period or is the result of a series of structural and functional changes in later phases. The latest reappraisal of the archaeological data by Charatzopoulou has suggested that a late Hellenistic tomb (late 2<sup>nd</sup> – early 1<sup>st</sup> century BC)<sup>25</sup> was later covered by a palaestra, which was erected not earlier than the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and also included some cult spaces (the Cult Exedra, accessible through Room VII), where a heroic cult was practised. Moreover, all the evidence concerning the hero cult of Leon comes from Room VII and the Cult Exedra of the palaestra, not from the underlying tomb. Another noteworthy detail is that the only access to the tomb remained external to the later palaestra with its annexes, confirming that the tomb and palaestra were related but could also function independently. Accordingly, we should refer to the building as a gymnasium hosting a heroic cult rather than as a family *heroon*, as previously assumed<sup>26</sup>.

24. Discussion in Martin P. Nilsson, *Die hellenistische Schule*, Munich, Beck, 1955, p. 65-66 ; Stephen L. Glass, « Palaistra and Gymnasium in Greek Architecture », PhD, University of Pennsylvania, 1968 ; Peter C. Bol, « Die Marmorbusten aus dem Heroon von Kalydon in Agrinion, archäologisches Museum Inv. Nr. 28-36 », *Antike Plastik*, t. 19, 1988, p. 35-46.

25. The date is based on stylistic grounds. According to this and other scholars, our inscription c would belong to the original late Hellenistic phase.

26. C. Charatzopoulou, « L'héroon de Kalydon revisité », p. 75-76, with references. The hypothesis that the complex was conceived as a whole in the Hellenistic period to function as a family *heroon* relies on the arguments of E. Dyggve, F. Paulsen, K. Rhomaios, *Das Heroon von Kalydon*. However, in their preliminary

Coming to the interpretation of Leon's epithets, a crucial point to bear in mind is that none of the three dedications from the Kalydon palaestra is complete, and that the key denomination *Neos* Herakles always appears in restorations provided by the first editors and accepted ever since. The bad state of preservation of the supports bearing texts a and c does not help us draw conclusive inferences about the length of the original lines. Conversely, the contiguous fragments of text b point to a sufficient length to justify the restoration ἦρ[ωι καὶ νέωι Ἡ]ρακλ[εῖ], but the shorter text ἦρ[ωι νέωι Ἡ]ρακλ[εῖ] or ἦρ[ωι καὶ Ἡ]ρακλ[εῖ] cannot be ruled out for this and, consequently, for the other two inscriptions. This implies that while Leon was certainly honoured as a hero, his epithet *Neos* Herakles is possible but unproven. An alternative option is that Leon and Herakles received a joined cult in the palaestra. We will come back to the implications of these alternative readings below. As for now, it is worth exploring the reasons that led to the association of the cult of a heroized person with one addressed to a typical deity of gymnasia, regardless of the form this association took from an epicletic point of view. Catherine Charatzopoulou deals with two possible explanations for the establishment of a heroic cult of an athlete. She first reviews and dismisses the hypothesis that Leon received ritual honours because of his victories before considering the alternative explanation that Leon was an athlete deceased at a young age and ritually honoured by the members of the palaestra because of the shock this event caused in the local community. Two Hellenistic documents from Aigiale (Amorgos) support this explanation as they testify to the decision of granting heroic status and cult to young athletes deceased during their ephebic training<sup>27</sup>. While no

report, Frederik Poulsen, Konstantinos Rhomaios, *Erster vorläufiger Bericht über die dänisch-griechischen Ausgrabungen von Kalydon* (« Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk filologiske – Meddelelser », 14,3), Copenhagen, Høst & Søn, 1927, p. 51-84, had identified different phases of construction, ranging from the Hellenistic to the Imperial period, which is now convincingly reassessed by Catherine Charatzopoulou. On the chronology of the evidence and its historical implications, see also below for a more detailed discussion.

27. See *IG XII 7*, 447 (epigram for Leontes, deceased and heroized ephebe) and 515 (decree establishing heroic honours for the ephebe Aleximachos). On the rituals accompanying the heroic cult of Aleximachos, see esp. Andreas Helmis, « Entre les vivants et les morts. La fondation à la mémoire d'Aleximachos fils de Critolaos (*IG XII 7*, 515, 1<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C.) », *Symposion 1999. Vorträge zur*

association with a hero from Greek mythology is attested in these dossiers, a reference to Herakles is particularly suitable to the cultural and religious environment of a palaestra<sup>28</sup>. In this respect, it is worth noting with Charatzopoulou that the iconography chosen for the image of Herakles in the palaestra in Kalydon follows the so-called Farnese type, which particularly underscores Herakles' bodily strength and vigour. A related point deserving attention is that some visual features of the portrait assumed to represent Leon have led scholars to interpret the athlete as a practitioner of a fighting sport, probably pankration<sup>29</sup>. Interestingly, one of the Amorgos documents about heroized ephebes explicitly states that during the games held in honour of the deceased Aleximachos, the pankration should not take place and Aleximachos should always be announced as the virtual winner of this contest<sup>30</sup>. If Leon was indeed a specialist of pankration, then his death would have even more struck the attendants of the palaestra because of the unexpected fate of a strong young man who, like Herakles, could not escape premature death<sup>31</sup>.

To sum up, the epithet *Neos* Herakles, if actually granted to Leon, or alternatively his cult associated with Herakles', would

*griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte*, eds. Gerhard Thür, Francisco Javier Fernández Nieto, Cologne, Böhlau, 2003, p. 463-480, 472-480 ; G. Ekroth, « Heroes : Living or Dead ? », p. 391-392.

28. On the cult of Herakles in gymnasia, see Sophia Aneziri, Dimitris Damaskos, « Städtische Kulte im hellenistischen Gymnasion », *Das hellenistische Gymnasion*, eds. Daniel Kah, Peter Scholz, Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 2009, p. 247-271, p. 248-249 ; Olivier Curty, *Gymnasiarchika. Recueil et analyse des inscriptions de l'époque hellénistique en l'honneur des gymnasiarques*, Paris, De Boccard, 2015, p. 249-256.

29. C. Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », p. 71. For similar cases of comparison between a person's physical strength and a mythical model, see the epigram *Anth. Pal.* VII 692, l. 3, where a pankration athlete is referred to as ὁ καινὸς Ἴατρας ; see also Hesychius of Miletus, *FHG IV* Karl Müller, 167, fr. 40 on a philosopher being called δεύτερος Ἡρακλῆς because of his intellectual *philoponia*.

30. *IG XII 7*, 5151, 81-84 : τιθέτωσαν δὲ τὰ ἄθλα πάντα τιθέντες παίδων καὶ ἀνδρῶν κατὰ τὸν γημισσι[αρ]χι[κ]ὸν νόμον· πανκράτιον δὲ μὴ τιθέτωσαν, ἀλλ' ἀνακηρυσσέσθω νικῶν | [A]λεξιμάχος Κριτολάου].

31. As observed by Claudia Antonetti, *Les Étolieus. Image et religion*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres (« Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon », 405), 1990, p. 264-265, Herakles not only occupied a central place in the ritual life of gymnasia, but was also present in the pantheon of Kalydon. This link also had a mythical background as Meleager, the most important hero in the area, was brother of Deianeira, Herakles' last bride.

underline the strength of the honoured person, and was possibly meant to establish a comparison between two strong characters who unexpectedly passed away by untimely death. The funerary cult of Leon probably originated in a period close to the foundation of the palaestra. This architectural complex may have been either the place where Leon used to train and was ritually honoured after his death, or a building erected (or adapted) for his cult, in which case the palaestra would be meant to recall the activities of Leon and host future competitions in his honour. The cult of the hero later gained new success in the early Imperial era, perhaps with the purpose of promoting the identity of the local community in response to the forced synoecism of Kalydon and other neighbouring centres into Nikopolis, which was imposed by Augustus. If this interpretation is correct, then text c (from the Hellenistic period, as we shall see below) was already part of the ritual furniture of the palaestra and was later moved to the Cult Exedra when the northern annexes were built in the Imperial period.

### Asia Minor

Phrygia has delivered two occurrences of *Neos*-type epithets referring to mythical figures. The first concerns an elite citizen of Dorylaion being associated with the mythical founders of the city, whereas an obscure document from Synnada may shed light on the cult of a young athlete deceased and honoured as a new Herakles. In Ionian Teos, two documents draw attention to the founder Athamas.

#### *Phrygia, Dorylaion*

#### **Cat. VII) Q. Voconius Aelius Stratonikos, *Neos Akamas* – Dorylaion (Phrygia), 200-250 AD**

Evidence : base of an honorific statue with a metric composition.

Initiative : *phyle* Apollonias. The epigram exceptionally refers to this *phyle* with the paraphrase ‘of Akersekomes’ (‘the One with uncut hair’), a poetic epithet of Apollo (*HH Apollo*, 134 ; Pindar, *Pyth.* 3.14).

Text constituted from : Reinhold Merkelbach, Josef Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, Munich/Leipzig, Saur, 2001, 16/34/06.



## Text and translation :

Ἀγαθῆι τύχη[ι]· | Ἀπολλωνιάς. | Τὸν κτίστην πόλεως | Ἀκαμάντιον ὡς | Δορύλαον, | κοῦρον ἀφ’ Ἡρακλέους | (5) ἢ Ἀκάμαντα νέον, | τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔργοις | στεφανούμενον, | ἀντί νυ πολλῶν | ὧν ἔπορεν πάτρην, | (10) φυλῆ | Ἀκερσεκόμου. | ἐπεμελήθη τῆς ἀνασιτάσεως · Αὐρ. · Στέφανος β΄, | ὁ φιλόσοφος.

To the good fortune ! (Tribe) Apollonias. The tribe of (Apollo) Akersekomes (erected the) crowned (portrait of) Akamantios, the city founder, as Dorylaos, a young man descending from Herakles, or (as a) *Neos* Akamas, inside his own buildings, in exchange for the many (benefits) he gave to the fatherland. Aur. Stephanos II, the philosopher, took care of the erection (of the monument).

## Commentary

A single instance of a *Neos* Akamas has been identified on the base of an honorary statue, inscribed in the Phrygian city of Dorylaion during the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, probably under Severan rule. The epigram written on the base is part of a series of inscriptions issued by various tribes of Dorylaion to honour a civic benefactor named Q. Voconius Aelius Stratonikos<sup>32</sup>. The researched style of the dedication replaces the institutional name of the tribe Apollonias with a formula mentioning Apollo’s literary epithet Akersekomes. The personal name of the honorand is not mentioned in this text, but the identification is made sure by comparison with another statue base where both the honorand’s personal name and his nickname Akamanthios are legible<sup>33</sup>.

32. The dossier is collected in Reinhold Merkelbach, Josef Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, Munich/Leipzig, Saur, 2001, 16/34/06-09. On Q. Voconius Aelius Stratonikos, see also discussion in *IGR IV* 525, 527 ; Georges Radet, « En Phrygie : Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Asie Mineure (août-septembre 1893) », *Nouvelles archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires*, t. 6, 1895, p. 425-594, p. 560, n° 4 ; Alfred Körte, « Kleinasiatische Studien », *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologische Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, t. 20, 1895, p. 16-19 ; Jakob Weiss, « Zur Gründungssage von Dorylaion », *Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien*, t. 16, 1913, p. 72-76, n° 7 ; Hubert Devijver, *Prosopographia militarium equestrum quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 1976-1977, A 64 (I, p. 75) and V 122bis (II, p. 880) ; L. Robert, « Une épigramme satirique d’Automédon et Athènes », p. 356-358.

33. R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, 16/34/07.

Stratonikos belonged to the elite of Dorylaion and carried out various important charges in his city and at the provincial level of Asia. According to Merkelbach and Stauber, the expression τοῖς ἰδίοις ἔργοις | στεφανούμενον (16/34/07, lines 7-8) reveals that Stratonikos sponsored the erection of one or more public buildings, and that the tribe Apollonias commissioned his crowned statue to place it inside one of them. We know from Steph. Byz., s.v. Ἀκαμάντιον, that the city of Dorylaion was also known as Akamantion. The two place names are paralleled by local traditions that identify two city founders : Akamas, son of Theseus, and Dorylaos, a descendant of Herakles<sup>34</sup>. The epithet Akamantios is attested by three statue bases erected in honour of Stratonikos, which proves that the epithet became his standard honorific denomination rather than an occasional one<sup>35</sup>. One inscription referring to this person as « the first (man) of his fatherland, Akamantios »<sup>36</sup> suggests that the epithet was an ethnic granted to Stratonikos to portray him as the most representative citizen of his city. Conversely, the association with Dorylaos and Akamas in our inscription appears as an occasional honour. While of course one cannot exclude that this statue was chronologically the latest of the preserved dossier – in which case it would point to a development in Stratonikos' honorific titles – it should be noted that the use of the preposition ὡς establishes a mediated link between Akamantios and the two founders he is compared to : Stratonikos is honoured « as Dorylaos, or *Neos Akamas* », distinguishing these formulae from Akamantios, which is instead a recurrent title that directly accompanies or even replaces the honorand's name. A plausible interpretation is that these two figures are evoked here as a way to strengthen the title κτίστης πόλεως granted to Stratonikos. One can also wonder why the term *Neos* is only used of Akamas, not of Dorylaos. With this solution, the epigram fully exploited the

34. Christian Marek, Peter Frei, *In the Land of a Thousand Gods. A History of Asia Minor in the Ancient World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 475. On the tribes of Dorylaion, see Nicholas F. Jones, *Public Organization in Ancient Greece : A Documentary Study*, Philadelphia, American Philosophical Society, 1987, p. 360-361.

35. R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, 16/34/06, 07, 09.

36. *Ibid.*, 16/34/09, l. 1-2 : τὸν πρῶτον πάτρης | Ἀκαμάντιον.

onomastic link between the nickname Akamantios and the heroic founder Akamas.

Finally, we agree with Louis Robert that nothing in this honorary text allows us to infer the Dorylaion established cultic honours of Stratonikos as a new city founder<sup>37</sup>. As seen above, such ritual honours are a Hellenistic practice that did not survive the monopolization of cultic honours by the Imperial family from the early Principate onwards. Most probably, the honorand received his epithets through a formal acclamation. Some of them could become permanent parts of his name and titulary, whereas others remained occasional honours limited to specific contexts.

### *Phrygia, Synnada*

#### **Cat. VIII) (unknown honorand), *Neos Herakles* – 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : epigram on a round marble pillar serving as the statue base of a certain Kynegia. The text was written on a support which already contained an earlier inscription, dated to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century on paleographic grounds.

Initiative : the name of the honorand is unknown ; the cult structure of *Neos Herakles* appears to belong to the city.

Text constituted from : *MAMA* IV 49c.

Text and translation :

Ξείνω μοι π{ι}οθέοντι φράσον φίλε | ἥτις ᾧδ' ἐστὶ. Κυνηγίαν  
λάμπουσαν καὶ | ἴχνεισι βαίνουσαν ἀνδρός· ἐξ οἰκίων γὰρ | πόνων εἰς  
αἰῶνα ἐχαρίσατ' ἅπαντα καὶ ἀ[ι]ετὸν | (5) ἐδωρήσατο πόλι τό ποτε  
κίμενον εἶσα Γέραος, νῦν δ' | εἰς νέον ἤγαγε Ἑρακλέην Διὸς ὕοντος.

Tell, oh dear, to me, a stranger who wishes to know, who is the woman (standing) here : Kynegia, a woman of fame who follows her husband's footsteps. She gave freely and forever the results of private work ; the roof that Geraos had previously reconstructed, she offered to the city and brought now to (the shrine of) the new Herakles for when Zeus sends rain.

37. L. Robert, « Une épigramme satirique d'Automédon et Athènes », p. 360.

### Commentary

A verse inscription found in secondary context near Synnada mentions a cult building of a *Neos* Herakles, whose roof had collapsed and had been restored by a certain Geraos. We do not know what happened to this benefactor: possibly he died before being paid by the institutions that had commanded the work, or more plausibly he renovated the structure at his own expenses as an euergetic act toward the shrine, and his wife Kynegia respected his will by not charging the costs of the works on the city. For this reason, the city rewarded her with a statue that once stood on the preserved pillar, also mentioning the merits of Geraos on the epigram inscribed on it<sup>38</sup>.

An important clue to understand the meaning of this *Neos* Herakles comes from the fact that the inscription for Kynegia was carved on a pillar that already contained a slightly earlier honorific decree of the « Synedrion of the Philosebatoi Neoi »<sup>39</sup>. In Hellenistic and Imperial gymnasia, the category of Neoi grouped young adults who had accomplished their ephebic training and attended the life of the gymnasium on a regular basis. They could gather in associations who also celebrated their own rituals connected with the gods of the palaestra and with honours for great civic benefactors or other figures. Starting from the inference that the shrine of *Neos* Herakles was part of a gymnasium or palaestra, comparison with the case of Leon at Kalydon suggests that a cult was established to ritually honour an ephebe or a young athlete who died and was equated to Herakles. It is impossible to know whether this cult predated the foundation of the association of the Neoi, or whether the person ritually honoured as a new Herakles was one of its members. In any case, the need to renovate the structure also resonates with

38. The *ed. pr.* in Philippe-Ernest Legrand, Joseph Chamonard, « Inscriptions de Phrygie », *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, t. 17, 1893, p. 241-293, p. 286, n° 89 incorrectly describes the object as an altar. However, the question opening the epigram clarifies that the pillar supported a statue. For the earlier inscription carved on the same support (described as a pillar), see William M. Ramsay, « Inscriptions inédites de l'Asie Mineure », *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, t. 7, 1883, p. 297-328, p. 299, n° 23.

39. *Ibid.* On other associations taking the name of Philosebatoi in the Imperial period, see the *Kouretes eusebeis kai philosebatoi* of Ephesos: Guy MacLean Rogers, *The Mysteries of Artemis of Ephesos. Cult, Polis, and Change in the Graeco-Roman World*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012, p. 145-204.

what we know about the gymnasium at Kalydon : it shows that cultic honours for a (possibly heroized) athlete could last for a long period and survive various architectural phases of a building as they became a constitutive part of the identity and ritual life of its attendants.

As in Kalydon, it is possible that at Synnada a functional connection between a honoured member of the gymnasium and Herakles could also find support in the local pantheon. The importance of Herakles at Synnada is testified by the image of the bearded hero on the coins issued by the city during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD<sup>40</sup>.

### *Ionia, Teos*

Two documents from Teos testify to the importance of the figure of the mythical founder Athamas in the Imperial period. The first document is undated. An assumed Hellenistic date relies on speculative grounds.

#### **Cat. IX) Maiandrios son of Herakleides, *Neos Athamas* – Teos (Ionia)**

Evidence : honorary statue base.

Initiative : phyle of the Geleontes.

Text constituted from : *CIG* II 3078.

Text and translation :

[Νέον ?] Ἀθάμ[αντα...] | ἡ φυλὴ ἡ Γελε<ό>ντων στεφανοῖ [...] |  
Μαιάνδριον <Ἡ>ρακλείδου [...]

[New ?] Atham[as...] | the tribe of the Geleontes crowns [...] |  
Maiandrios son of Herakleides [...]

#### Commentary

This document is too fragmentary to provide any clear information about the social profile of the honorand. A certain Maiandrios son of Herakleides was crowned by the Teian tribe of the Geleontes. The person is otherwise unknown and the Hellenistic date proposed by the entry of *Lexicon of Greek*

40. See Barclay V. Head, *A Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum, Phrygia*, London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1906, n° 23-24, 28-29 (suggestion of Herakles as identified with the local god Thynnaros).

*Personal Names* is entirely speculative<sup>41</sup>. Even the term *Neos* is restored in the lacuna at the beginning of the text, while the edition of *CIG* II 3078 does not provide any chronological information based on palaeography. If we accept the integration proposed in *CIG*, comparison with the other case from Teos suggests that we consider Maiandros a member of the civic elite honoured during the Imperial period.

**Cat. X) Tiberius Claudius Philistes, *Neos Athamas* – Teos (Ionia), 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : three documents from Teos : a) stela with an honorific decree ; b-c) statue bases from a family group found near the eastern *parodos* of the theatre.

Initiative : a) *Boule* ; b) unknown ; c) *Gerousia* of Klazomenai.

Text constituted from : a) *CIG* II 3083 ; b-c) *SEG* LI 1615-1616.

See also : *IGR* IV 1568-1570.

Texts and translations :

Text (a) [... ἡ] βο[υ]λῆ [ἐ]τ[ε]ίμησεν | [Τιβέ]ριον Κλαύδιον Μ[νασι]μάχου καὶ τοῦ δήμου | [υἰὸ]ν φύσει δὲ Ἑρμοθέστου, Κυρεῖνα, Φιλιστέα, | εὐσεβῆ, φιλοσέβαστον καὶ φιλόπατριν, νέον Ἀθά(5)μαντα, πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα καὶ καθ' ἓνα καὶ κοινῇ τῇ πατρίδι παρεσχημένον, εὐχομένη τοιούτους εἶσαιε | ἑαυτῇ τε καὶ τῇ πατρίδι ἄνδρας γενέσθαι.

The Council honoured Tiberius Claudius, son of Mnasimachos and of the People, natural son of Hermosthenes to Kyrina, Philistes, pious, loyal to the Emperor and to the fatherland, new Athamas, who has caused many great advantages to individuals and in public to his fatherland, praying that similar men will always exist for the Council and the fatherland.

Text (b) Τιβέριον Κλαύδιον Μνασιμάχου καὶ τοῦ | Δήμου υἰόν, φύσει δὲ Ἑρμοθέστου, | Κυρεῖνα Φιλιστέα, Τηίων νέον | Ἀθάμαντα.

Tiberius Claudius, son of Mnasimachos and of the People, natural son of Hermosthenes to Kyrina, new Athamas of the Teians.

41. *LGPN* 5a Maiandrios 16. On the tribes of Teos, see N. F. Jones, *Public Organization in Ancient Greece*, p. 306.

Text (c) Τι. Κλαύδιον Μνασιμάχου καὶ το[ῦ Δήμου] | υἱόν, φύσει δὲ Ἑρμοθέστου, Κυρεῖνα Φιλισ[τέα] | Τηίων νέον Ἀθάμαντα vac. ἢ Κλαζομενίω[ν] | ἱερὰ γερουσία ἐτείμησεν τὸν ἑαυτῆς εὐεργ(5) γέτην τῆς εἰς αὐτὸν εὐχαριστίας ἕνεκ(εν)· | ἐπιμεληθέντος | Τίτου Φλαουίου Τειμοθέου.

Ti. Claudius, son of Mnasimachos and of the People, natural son of Hermosthenes to Kyrina, Philistes, *Neos* Athamas of the Teians ; the sacred *Gerousia* of Klazomenai honoured her benefactor because of his generosity towards her. Under the supervision of Titus Flavius Timotheos.

Three documents testify to the granting of the epithet *Neos* Athamas to Tiberius Claudius Philistes, who lived in Teos between the late 1<sup>st</sup> and the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Once again, the honoured person belonged to an elite family that played an important role both in their city and in the province of Asia<sup>42</sup>. Philistes was the natural son of a certain Hermosthenes, but the honorary texts first mention his adoptive father Mnasimachos and the title of ‘Son of the Demos’<sup>43</sup>. One of the statues was dedicated by the Council of Teos. This text also displays the epithets Philosebastos and Philopatris and draws attention to Philistes’ generosity, a merit also mentioned in text c. Text b has no reference to the donor, whereas the third text points to the initiative of the *Gerousia* of the neighbouring Klazomenai. Texts b and c belong to the same sculptural family group<sup>44</sup>. They share the formula Τηίων νέον Ἀθάμαντα, ‘New Athamas of the Teians’. The presence of the ethnic in text c is explained by the fact that the donors were foreigners. By analogy we may infer that text b was also dedicated by an institution of a city other than Teos.

42. The relevant documents on Philistes and his family are discussed in Peter H. G. Herrmann, « Eine berühmte Familie in Teos », *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens und des ägäischen Bereiches. Festschrift für Baki Ögün zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Cenzig Isik, Bonn, Habelt, 2000, p. 87-95. Philistes held the priesthood of Dionysos, as noted in a *tabula* found in the vicinity of the temple of Dionysos, which contains a honorary decree of the Dionysiac artists and the Synagonistai (*SEG* LI 1617). On the date of the dossier, see also commentary to *SEG* LI 1615-1619.

43. On this formula, see Filippo Canali De Rossi, *Filius publicus. υἱὸς τῆς πόλεως e titoli affini in iscrizioni greche di età imperiale*, Rome, Herder (« Studi sul vocabolario dell’evergesia », 1), 2007.

44. Both were found in the western *parodos* of the theatre.

Among his relatives, Philistes was the only one holding the title *Neos* Athamas. As for *Neos* Akamas attested in Dorylaion, Philistes' denomination establishes him as a new city founder<sup>45</sup>. King of the Minyans of Orchomenos in Boiotia, the mythical Athamas married Nephele and had the children Phrixos and Helle from her. He later married the princess Ino and was punished by Hera with madness<sup>46</sup>. According to Paus. 7.3.6, Teos was founded by a later generation of Orchomenian Minyans under the leadership of a younger Athamas, a descendant of the famous Boiotian king. According to Strabo, Anakreon of Teos sometimes referred to the city as Athamantis<sup>47</sup>. Remarkably, Athamas' role as founder of Teos was advertised on coins of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD<sup>48</sup>, which provide a contemporary parallel to the honorific acclamation of Philistes as *Neos* Athamas. As in Dorylaion, the granting of the status of new founder and the related titles were purely honorific and did not entail the establishment of a cult.

### Other provenances

#### *Egypt, Alexandria*

#### **Cat. XI) Dioskoros, *Neos* Herakles – 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : epitaph on a grave stele found at Rhakotis, behind the column of Diocletian (also known as Pompey's pillar).

Initiative : unknown, but most plausibly not stemming from civic institutions ; the epithet *Neos* Herakles was possibly granted to Dioskoros posthumously by the attendants of a palaestra. However, considering the literary capacities claimed by Dioskoros, the epithet might be his own creation.

Text constituted from : Étienne Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine. Recherches sur la poésie épigrammatique des Grecs en Égypte*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres (« Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon », 98), 1969, n° 82.

45. Voir L. Robert, « Une épigramme satirique d'Automédon et Athènes », p. 354, also pointing out the generic nature of Philistes' merits as they are reported in the text.

46. Ps.-Apoll., *Bibl.* 1.84 ; 3.28. Hera's punishment was caused by Athamas and Ino having taken care of the infant Dionysos.

47. Strabo 14.1.3.

48. *LIMC* II, 2, 701, s.v. Athamas n° 12.



See also : Werner Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften*, vol. 1, Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1955, n° 1247.

Text and translation :

Δάκρυσον εισορών με | Διόσκορον Ἑλλάδος υἱόν, | τὸν σοφὸν  
ἐν Μούσαις | καὶ νέον Ἡρακλέα.

Cry when you see me, Dioskoros, son of Greece, skilled in the arts of the Muses and new Herakles.

### Commentary

Dioskoros' epitaph was inscribed between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD on a grave stele found at Rhakotis (Alexandria)<sup>49</sup>, behind the column of Diocletian (also known as Pompey's pillar). The stele represents a muscular nude athlete with palms outwards in a gesture of prayer. The pediment also depicts an object alternatively identified as a wreath, a shield, or a radiated disc. Bernand suggests that Dioskoros died during the period of his ephebic training rather than being an experienced professional athlete, arguing that in the latter case he would have mentioned his victories in the epigram. This is a plausible inference, although not a compelling one considering the very concise style of the epigram. Be that as it may, the reference to Herakles and the muscular body of Dioskoros evoke the sport activities carried out in gymnasia and in palaestrae<sup>50</sup>. On the other hand, as in the case of Leon at Kalydon, the funerary context of the evidence should not be forgotten. The connotations brought in by the fate of Herakles, who became divine after a human life, may also have influenced the choice of title. The practice of a funerary cult cannot be either inferred or rejected on the basis of the epigram.

49. Étienne Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine. Recherches sur la poésie épigrammatique des Grecs en Égypte*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres (« Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon », 98), 1969, n° 82, reports the following indication : « Village of Karmoûz, behind the column of Diocletian and between this and the Mahmoudiyeh canal ». Karmoûz is attested as a local name for a district of Alexandria near Rhakotis, see TM Places 100 (Alexandria ; <https://www.trismegistos.org/place/100>). Tassos D. Néroutos-Bey, « Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies dans la ville d'Alexandrie et aux environs », *Revue archéologique*, t. 10, fasc. 2, 1887, p. 198-209, dates the inscription to the reign of Constantine.

50. É. Bernand, *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, p. 326.

In addition to claiming the epithet of *Neos Herakles*, Dioskoros describes himself as a « son of Greece » and an expert in the arts of the Muses. Persons and institutions proudly claiming Greek origins are not unparalleled in Imperial Egypt<sup>51</sup>. By advertizing a special relationship with Herakles and the Muses, moreover, Dioskoros profiles himself as a person combining the best aspects of the Greek *paideia*.

### *Rome*

#### **Cat. XII) Lucius Septimius, *Neos Nestor* – early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : *tabula ansata* originally attached to a bust of the poet.

Initiative : unknown.

Text constituted from : Margherita Guarducci, « Il poeta Lucio Settimio Nestore di Laranda », *Epigraphica*, t. 39, 1977, p. 21-26 (*SEG XXVII 682*).

See also : *IG XIV 1869* ; *IGUR XIV 1531*.

Text and translation :

Νέστωρος εἰ[κὼν] | ἦδε νέ[ου], | βίβλοι δ' ἐγέ[νοντο·...]

This is the portrait of the new Nestor. His works were [...]

#### Commentary

Lucius Septimius Nestor from Laranda in Lykaonia was a well-established poet of the Severan period. As many other men of literature and arts of his age, he travelled around the Empire presenting his poetry and inscriptions attesting to his career have been found in Rome, Ostia, Ephesos, Paphos, and Kyzikos<sup>52</sup>.

51. See, e.g., Étienne Bernand, *Les Inscriptions grecques de Philae, II : Haut et bas empire*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1969, n° 166 (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), and André Bernand, *La Prose sur pierre dans l'Égypte hellénistique et romaine*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1992, n° 62, both celebrating the origins of Ptolemais Hermious as a Greek city.

52. Paphos : *SEG 34 1426 (IGR III 958, 959)* ; Ostia : *SEG 26 677, 678* ; Ephesos : *IK Ephesos 3067* ; Kyzikos : R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, 08/01/07 (*IGR IV 164*). On Lucius Septimius, see Joachim Latacz, « Nestor [3] », *Brill's New Pauly*, t. 9, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2006 ; John Ma, « The Worlds of Nestor the Poet », *Severan Culture*, eds. Simon Swain, Stephen Harrison, Jaś Elsner, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,

Margherita Guarducci has restored the epithet *Neos Nestor*, which she identifies with our poet, in the text of a *tabula ansata* found in Rome and originally meant to accompany the bust of a writer. The title of course alludes to the mythical king of Pylos, described by Homer as a wise old man and an exceptionally eloquent and sweet-voiced speaker<sup>53</sup>. In this case, moreover, the match between the poet and the mythical figure was further prompted by the fact that Lucius Septimius already carried the personal name Nestor.

### **HISTORICAL FIGURES FROM THE CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC PAST IN *NEOS*-TYPE EPITHETS**

In this section we discuss the texts mentioning individuals with a *Neos*-type epithet that refers to political and military leaders as well as intellectuals from the Classical and Hellenistic period. The evidence is ordered geographically in three parts : continental Greece ; Asia Minor ; unknown provenance.

#### **Continental Greece**

##### ***Peloponnese, Messene***

Two texts from Messene refer to distinguished citizens respectively as a new Epaminondas and a new Platon. The date of the evidence is roughly contemporary to the above-discussed texts equating elite women from Sparta and Argos to mythical heroines.

#### **Cat. XIII) Tiberius Claudius Crispianus, *Neos Epaminondas* – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : three honorary inscriptions. One comes from Olympia (text a) : a marble statue base, found between the Metroon and the Heraion. Two are from Messene. Text b : *SEG* LVIII 381, a recycled Hellenistic base found in the sanctuary of a hero, probably taken over by Demeter at a later period. Text c : another statue base from the agora.

2007, p. 83-113 ; Fausto Zevi, « Sui ritratti ostiensi creduti di Plotino », *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia*, t. 88, 2015-2016, p. 137-157.

53. See, e.g., Hom. *Il.* 247-249.

Initiative : the *polis* of Messene ; the texts from Messene mention the role of a tribe.

Text constituted from : a) *InO* 447 (Olympia) ; b) *SEG* LVIII 381 (Messene) ; c) Petros Themelis, 'Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης', *ΡΑΑΗ* 153, 1998, p. 94.

Text and translation :

Text a) Ἡ πόλις ἔ | ἡ Μεσσηνίων Τιβ(έριον) Κλαύ{δ}ιδιον Κρισπιανόν, νέον | Ἐπαμεινώνδαν, ἀρχιερέα | (5) διὰ βίου τῶν Σεβαστῶν, στρατευσάμενον ἔπαρχον σπείρης πρώτης Βωσποριανῆς καὶ χειλιάρχον λεγιῶνος δωδεκάτης | κεραυνοφόρου, ἄριστα πολει(10)τευόμενον.

The city of the Messenians (honoured) Tiberius Claudius Crispianus, new Epaminondas, lifelong high-priest of the Sebastoi, who served the army as prefect of the first Bosporian cohort and chiliarch of the XII legion Fulminata, and lived the life of an excellent citizen.

Text b) Ἄ πόλις ἔ | Τιβ(έριον) Κλαύδιον Κρισπιανόν | Κυρίνα Ἀριστομένουσ υἰόν, ἀρχιερέα | τῶν Σεβαστῶν καὶ νέον Ἐπαμεινών(5)δαν, χειλιάρχον λεγιῶνος | β' Κεραυνοφόρου καὶ ἔπαρχον σπείρης α' | Βωσποριανῆς, τὴν εἰς τοὺς ἀνδριάντας ὅλην δαπάνην ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων παρρασχόμενον κατὰ φυλὰν ἀνέθηκεν | (10) ἀρετῆς πάσης ἔνεκεν, | Κρεσφοντίς.

The city (honoured) Tiberius Claudius Crispianus, son of Kyrinas, son of Aristomenes, lifelong high-priest of the Sebastoi and new Epaminondas, chiliarch of the XII legion Fulminata and prefect of the first Bosporian cohort, who provided the statue entirely at his own expenses ; the tribe Kresphontis dedicated it because of his perfect virtue.

Text c) [Ἡ πόλις] | [---] | [---] | [..., ἀρχιερέα τῶν] | (5) Σεβαστῶν [καὶ νέον Ἐπαμει]νώνδα, χε[ιλί]αρχον λεγιῶνος | | Β κεραυνοφ[όρου καὶ ἔπαρχον] | σπείρης Α Βω[σποριανῆς] | | τὴν εἰς τοὺς [ἀνδριάντας] | (10) ὅλην δαπ[άνην ἐκ τῶν ἰδί]ων πα[ρρασχόμε]νον κ[ατὰ φυ]λ[ὴν ἀνέθηκε]ν ἀ[ρετῆς π[άσης] | | [ἔ]νεκεν, *vacat* | Ὑλλίς<sup>54</sup>.

54. We republish the text of the *ed. pr.* although the section ἀ[ρετῆς π[άσης] is certainly incorrect. We should assume that the first lacuna ended somewhere before π, or that the lost text comprised the whole expression ἀ[ρετῆς πάσης].

[The city... high-priest of the] Sebastoi [and new Epaminondas, chi[liarch] of the XII [legion] Fulminata [and prefect of] the first Bosporian cohort, who provided [the statue] entirely [at his own] expenses ; the tribe Kresphontis [dedicated] it because of his [perfect virtue].

### Commentary

Three inscriptions from Messene and Olympia shed light on the honours granted by the city of Messene to his distinguished citizen Tiberius Claudius Crispianus, who was celebrated as a new Epaminondas. Much is known about the illustrious career of Crispianus : he fulfilled the charges of high-priest of the Sebastoi, Hellenarch of the Achaian League, and hierophant of the Andanian mysteries, in addition to various high-ranking offices in the Roman army<sup>55</sup>.

All the statues were approved by the city, but the text of the two bases from Messene state that the initiative of the dedication was taken up by one of the city tribes, the Kresphontis and the Hyllis respectively<sup>56</sup>. As in the cases of mythical founders discussed above, by celebrating Crispianus as a new Epaminondas his city casted on this prominent citizen the prestige of a new founder and depicted him as the living embodiment of the cultural and political identity of Messene. The dual, both political and military profile of Crispianus may also have contributed to his comparison with the famous Theban leader and liberator of the Messenians.

55. On the career of Ti. Claudius Crispianus, see Petros Themelis, « Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης », *Πρακτικά της έν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Έταιρείας*, t. 153, 1998, p. 89-126 ; Damiana Baldassara, « Famiglie aristocratiche di Messene imperiale : il contributo dell'epigrafia », *Studi in ricordo di Fulviomario Broilo. Atti del convegno, Venezia, 14-15 ottobre 2005*, eds. Giovannella Cresci Marrone, Antonio Pistellato, Padova, Sargon, 2007, p. 25-62, p. 35, sees the religious service in the mysteries as an important part of Crispianus' ability to « maintain the awareness of his own Greekness, while respecting the Roman government ». Further discussion in Damiana Baldassara, « Gli Aristomenai dell'antica Messene », *Social Dynamics under Roman Rule. Mobility and Status Change in the Provinces of Achaia and Macedonia*, eds. Athanasios D. Rizakis, Francesco Camia, Sophia Zoumbaki, Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation (« Meletemata », 74), 2017, p. 195-209, p. 203.

56. According to Themelis, three more monuments may have existed, which were paid for by the remaining three *phylai* ; for the fragment of a possible third statue, see P. Themelis, « Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης », p. 95, n° 2.

**Cat. XIV) Tiberius Flavius [Philo]krates, *Neos Platon*  
– 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : Base for a bronze portrait statue of the honorand, probably represented seated. The statue was erected between the stone thrones assigned to dignitaries, around the orchestra of the theatre at Messene.

Initiative : the *polis* of Messene.

Text constituted from : Petros Themelis, « Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης », *Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, t. 158, 2003, p. 25-44, p. 31 (*SEG LIII* 404), with the integration of the lacuna at line 2 by Ronald S. Stroud in *SEG LII* 406.

Text and translation :

Ἡ πόλις | Τι(βέριον) Φλάβιον [Φίλο]κράτη, ἥρωα, [φιλό]σοφον,  
νέον Π[λά]τωνα ἀρετῆς πάσης ἔνεκεν

The city (honoured) Tiberius Flavius [Philo]krates, hero, philosopher, new Platon, because of his perfect virtue.

Commentary

In the Imperial period, Messene honoured his citizen Ti. Flavius [Philo]krates, a philosopher and a member of the civic elite, with a bronze portrait statue and celebrated him as a New Plato<sup>57</sup>. The prestige granted to this figure is confirmed by the prominent location of the monument in the theatre. The statue was located by the orchestra, between the stone thrones used by dignitaries. Petros Themelis suggested that the title *Neos Platon* should be associated with the school of Neoplatonism<sup>58</sup>, but this inference was proved wrong in 2007 by Michel Sève and Bernadette Puech, who paleographically dated the inscription to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, thus, too early to make Themelis' inference acceptable. The epithet therefore celebrates Philokrates as a philosopher able to bring the great intellectual stature of Platon back to the cultural life of

57. Petros Themelis, « The Economy and Society of Messenia under Roman Rule », *Roman Peloponnese III. Society, Economy and Culture under the Roman Empire : Continuity and Innovation*, eds. Athanasios D. Rizakis, Claudia E. Lepenioti, Athens, National Hellenic Research Foundation (« Meletemata », 63), 2010, p. 89-110, p. 105.

58. See Petros Themelis, « Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης », *Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*, t. 158, 2003, p. 25-44, with the critical discussion by Michel Sève, Bernadette Puech, *Année épigraphique*, t. 2004, 2007, n° 1349.

contemporary Messene<sup>59</sup>. Finally, the honorand is mentioned with the term *heros*, which is only rarely attested in the evidence of *Neos*-type epithets. This detail indicates that his portrait was erected posthumously. Accordingly, the statue immortalized Philokrates as a member of the civic elite of Messene : after his death, he still shared the socio-political distinction of moral virtue and the related privilege of *prohedria* at theatre with his peers, as he did in his lifetime.

## Attica

Attica has only delivered one dossier concerning the granting of *Neos*-type epithets, where a single honorand is tantalizingly equated to both Homer and Themistokles. Moreover, this dossier is chronologically the oldest one from our collection, with the sole exception of the case of Leon at Kalydon.

### *Attica, Athens and Eleusis*

#### **Cat. XV) Iulius Nikanor, *Neos* Homeros and *Neos* Themistokles – Athens, mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD**

Evidence : the dossier comprises six inscriptions from different supports and media in Athens and Eleusis : two stelae respectively containing an honorary decree (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1069 ; Geoffrey Schmalz, *Augustan and Julio-Claudian Athens. A New Epigraphy and Prosopography*, Leiden/Boston, Brill [« Mnemosyne Supplements », 302], 2009, n° 7) and an ephebic list (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1723 ; *SEG* XXVI 166 ; G. Schmalz, *Augustan and Julio-Claudian Athens*, n° 17) mention Iulius Nikanor holding offices related to contests and the epithets *Neos* Homeros and *Neos* Themistokles ; four statue bases bear the same text for the honorand with his two epithets (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3786 ; 3787 ; 3788, from Piraeus ; 3789 = *IEleusis* 362 ; see also G. Schmalz, *Augustan and Julio-Claudian Athens*, n° 199-202). On all these bases except for *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3788, Iulius

59. The authors of the entry *Année épigraphique*, t. 2004, 2007, n° 1349, propose a comparison with an honorific text for Laitos, the author of a neo-Platonic theological hymn. See *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3816, lines 3-4 : εἰ κατὰ Πυθαγόραν ψυχὴ μεταβαίνει ἐς ἄλλον, ἢ ἐν σοί, Λαίτε, Πλάτων ζῆ πάλι φαινόμενος. The strong philosophical characterization of the text makes it an only partial parallel to the case of Philokrates at Messene.

Nikanor's epithets have been hammered away in Antiquity, while his personal name has been preserved.

Initiative : the honorary decree *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1069* and the statue bases *IG II<sup>2</sup> 3786-3789* refer to the initiative of the Areopagos, the Council of the 600 and the Demos.

Text and translation :

We provide, e.g., the text of *IG II<sup>2</sup> 3788* (from Piraeus), the only honorific base where Iulius Nikanor's honorific epithets have not been erased in Antiquity :

Ἡ ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου βουλή καὶ ἡ βουλή τῶν Χ] | καὶ ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων Ἰούλιον Νικά[νορα] | νέον Ὅμηρον καὶ νέον Θεμιστοκλ[έα].

The Council of the Areopagos and the Council [of 600] and the People of Athens (honoured) Iulius Nikanor new Homer and new Themistokles.

#### Commentary

Six inscriptions have preserved the double title new Homer and new Themistokles granted to Iulius Nikanor from Hierapolis, a well-known man active in Athens in the early Imperial period<sup>60</sup>. In the literary sources, the title *Neos* Homeros is also remembered by Stephanus of Byzantium in association with this person, while Dio Chrysostom refers to a statue the Athenians erected of Nikanor, « who bought Salamis for them »<sup>61</sup>.

The two titles deserve separate discussion. Analogy with the other attested case of *Neos* Homeros suggests that Nikanor may have had great poetic ambitions. This, however, only finds indirect support in our evidence. Stephanus mentions Nikanor *Neos* Homer together with two Stoic philosophers as famous citizens of

60. The name of Iulius Nikanor also appears in the two copies of a contract found at the agora (*Agora XVI 337*) and in Eleusis (*IEleusis 360*). His epithets are not attested here, but this could be due to the very fragmentary state of the texts. Finally, the base of another honorific statue defines Iulius Nikanor « Son of Ares », clearly confirming his political link with the Areopagos : ἡ βουλή [καὶ] ὁ δῆμος Γάιον Ἰούλιον Ν[ικ]άνορα Ἀρή[ο]υ υἱόν (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 3785* ; Geoffrey Schmalz, *Augustan and Julio-Claudian Athens. A New Epigraphy and Prosopography*, Leiden/Boston, Brill [« Mnemosyne Supplements », 302], 2009, n° 198).

61. Steph. Byz., s.v. Hierapolis ; Dio Chrys., *Or.* 31, 116 : λέγειν δὲ εἰώθασιν οἱ διασύροντες τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς Νικάνορος εἰκόνας, ὃς αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν Σαλαμίνα ἐωνήσατο.



Hierapolis. Besides, an epigram on a base found in the Athenian agora clarifies that the sculpture represented the personification of *Iliad* standing side by side with her « new parent »<sup>62</sup>. The epigram might refer to a poet who composed a new *Iliad* or, more probably, to someone who became famous for performing and/or commenting on the poem for the public. It is tempting to imagine that the statue of *Iliad* would stand by a portrait of Nikanor. Moreover, since the epigraphic evidence shows that Nikanor was involved in the organisation of activities connected with the training of epebes, one might infer that his particular interest in Homer was part of his commitment to the broader formation of young Athenians. However, these hypotheses must remain unproven as the epigram from the agora does not contain the name of Nikanor and because even the interpretation of the epigram as a paraphrase of the epithet New Homer is subject to debate.

Moving to the second part of Nikanor's epithet, Dio's reference establishes an intriguing link between his denomination *Neos Themistokles* and Salamis. An old explanation presented Nikanor as the victor in a re-enactment of the sea-battle of Salamis between Greeks and Persians, which we know was staged by Augustus in Rome in 2 BC<sup>63</sup>. This interpretation has long been discarded as it neglects the financial transaction evoked by Dio. Some scholars have recently reassessed the hypothesis of a more symbolic association

62. SEG XXIX 192 : Ἰλιάς ἡ μεθ' Ὅμηρον ἐγὼ καὶ πρόσθεν Ὀμήρ[ου] | Πάρσατις ἴδρυμαι τῷ με τεκόντι νεῶ[ι]. The identification of the person with Nikanor has been largely debated : see Karl Keil, « Zum Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum. II », *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, n.s., t. 18, 1863, p. 47-70, p. 60 ; Homer A. Thompson, « Excavations in the Athenian Agora : 1953 », *Hesperia*, t. 23, 1954, p. 31-67 ; Antony E. Raubitschek, « The New Homer », *Hesperia*, t. 23, 1954, p. 317-319 ; Christopher P. Jones, « Three Foreigners in Attica », *Phoenix*, t. 32, 1978, p. 222-234 (*contra*) ; Reinhold Merkelbach, « Das Epigramm auf die Ilias des Nikanor », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 33, 1979, p. 178-179 (New Homer) ; Louis Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », *Στήλη : τόμος εις μνήμην Νικολάου Κοντολέοντος*, Athens, Σωματεῖο φίλων του Νικολάου Κοντολέοντος, 1980, p. 1-20, p. 14-16 ; Elias Kapetanopoulos, « The Iliad Epigram from the Agora of Athens », *Prometheus*, t. 13, 1987, p. 1-10 ; Simone Follet, « Julius Nicanor et le statut de Salamine (Agora XVI, 337) », *L'Hellénisme d'époque romaine. Nouveaux documents, nouvelles approches (I<sup>er</sup> s. a. C. – III<sup>e</sup> s. p. C.)*, Paris, De Boccard, 2004, p. 139-172, p. 149-151.

63. A. E. Raubitschek, « The New Homer », p. 319 ; *contra* Jeanne Robert, Louis Robert, « Bulletin épigraphique », *Revue des études grecques*, t. 68, fasc. 319-323, 1955, p. 185-298, n° 79.

with Themistokles : Nikanor might have bought land in Salamis and later presented it to the Athenians, who would consequently honour him for this welcome restitution of public land<sup>64</sup>. However, the exact character and context of this transaction involving Salaminian land holdings and Athens is still debated. The time when the transfer took place is unknown, nor do our sources explain whether Nikanor bought the whole island or parts of it. Moreover, we ignore if Nikanor redeemed lands that had become Roman *ager publicus* or he bought them back from private owners. Finally, there is no evidence confirming the assumption that Salamis became Athenian public land at some point during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

In any case, Nikanor was originally much celebrated. Honorific statues of him were erected on the joint initiative of the Council of Areopagos, the Boule of the 600 and the Demos. They were placed in important locations, as two were found on the slopes of the Acropolis – apparently one on each side of the ascent to the citadel<sup>65</sup> – one on the top of the citadel, and one in Eleusis. Interestingly, however, at some point in Antiquity Nikanor's double honorific title was erased from almost all of his statue bases, with the only exception of the specimen found at Piraeus. Conversely, the *rasura* did not affect the documentary texts – the honorary decree and the ephebic list. Moreover, all the monuments have preserved the personal name of the honorand.

The reason for this systematic and selective *rasura* is still unknown. Geoffrey Schmalz and Christopher P. Jones suggested that a part of the Athenian elite, and possibly the descendants of Themistokles, did not accept the conferral of the epithet *Neos Themistokles* to a foreigner<sup>66</sup>. However, even though Iulius Nikanor never appears with a demotic in the texts that mention him<sup>67</sup>, he clearly was at home in Athens as he held some public offices in

64. This hypothesis was first proposed by K. Keil, « Zum Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum. II », p. 59-60. See recently S. Follet, « Julius Nikanor et le statut de Salamine » ; Christopher P. Jones, « An Athenian Document mentioning Julius Nikanor », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 154, 2005, p. 161-172 ; Christopher P. Jones, « Julius Nikanor Again », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 178, 2011, p. 79-83, p. 79.

65. S. Follet, « Julius Nikanor et le statut de Salamine », p. 144.

66. G. Schmalz, *Augustan and Julio-Claudian Athens* ; C. P. Jones, « Julius Nikanor Again ».

67. See C. P. Jones, « Julius Nikanor Again » ; S. Follet, « Julius Nikanor et le statut de Salamine », p. 169.

the city : he appears as *strategos epi ta hopla* in the ephebic catalogue *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1723* and the fragmentary honorific decree *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1069* informs that he served as *agonothetes* for the competitions of the Sebastoi and was elected to another charge, which is lost in lacuna<sup>68</sup>. Simone Follet argued that Nikanor's euergetic intervention to re-establish Athenian control over Salamis did not survive him so that the lands he had bought returned to the status of *ager publicus* after his death, causing the Athenians to express their discontent by eliminating the title *Neos Themistokles*<sup>69</sup>. Both explanations remain speculative and do not clarify the Athenian decision to erase the epithet *Neos Homeros* as well<sup>70</sup>.

All in all, what can be said about this selective *rasura* is that it cannot be taken as the evidence of the political disgrace of Nikanor, since all his statues appear to have remained in place. The fact that his epithets did not disappear from the honorary decree and the ephebic list mentioning them confirms that the purpose of the Athenians was not to erase the memory of Nikanor's merits and status, but their own decision to confer him these epithets. The relationship between Nikanor and the institutions of Athens might have become less intense at some point, for reasons we ignore, but did not cease in any abrupt way that could reflect a *damnatio memoriae* of this character. It is also worth noting that Nikanor is the only known person honoured with *Neos*-type epithets in Athens. The fact that such practice never gained currency in Athens suggests that the Athenians may have had second thoughts about the formula of their honorific initiative<sup>71</sup>. Imperial Athens was the symbolic and factual centre of the canonization of the Greek's classical grandeur and the Athenian institutions possibly came to feel that the figures evoked in the honours for Nikanor – Homer as the irreplaceable father of Greek epic and Themistokles as

68. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1723*, lines 14-15 : στρατηγός [ἐπὶ τὰ] ὅπλα Ἰούλιος | Νικάνωρ, νέος [Ἵμμηρο]ς καὶ νέος Θεμισ[τοκλή]ς]. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1069*, lines 5-8 : [... ἐπαινέσαι Ἰούλιον] | Νικάνωρα νέον Ἵμηρον καὶ νέον [Θεμισθοκλέα...] | καὶ ἀγωνοθέτην Σεβαστῶν ἀγώνων ? ...] | χειροτονημένον εἰς τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ? ...].

69. S. Follet, « Julius Nicanor et le statut de Salamine », p. 157.

70. According to C. P. Jones, « Julius Nicanor Again », p. 82, the Homeric title may also have been felt unjustified in hindsight, especially in comparison to images of the great Athenian writers in the Theatre of Dionysos.

71. C. P. Jones, « Three Foreigners in Attica », p. 225 ; cf. L. Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », p. 16, « la honte ».

the crucial Athenian leader of the Persian wars – represented an exaggerated statement which did not suit the city's identity and cult of the past. Therefore, statues in the centre of Athens and at the important suburb of Eleusis may have become the privileged target of this classicist emendation as they provided the most conspicuous traces of Nikanor's honours in some of the seminal identity-making locations of the city. A plausible moment for this initiative could be sometime after Nikanor's death, especially if his close contact with Athens did not result into the continued presence in Athens of descendants who would try to keep alive the memory of his political career and honours.

### **Asia Minor**

All documents from Asia Minor date to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century and refer to persons known for their direct contacts with the Antonine dynasty. Two out of three honorands are equated to prominent figures from the civic past. At least in Mytilene, it is sure that the person evoked by the epithet was an ancestor of the honorand. The last case concerns a poet whose name Nestor prompted a link with the king of Pylos, known for his outstanding rhetorical skills.

#### *Aeolis, Mytilene*

#### **Cat. XVI) Marcus Pompeius Macrinus, Neos Theophanes – post 138 AD**

Evidence : statue base from Mytilene.

Initiative : Demos of Mytilene.

Text constituted from : *IG XII 2, 235 + IG XII Suppl.*, p. 22.

Text and translation :

[Ὁ δῆμος] | [Μ. Π]ομπήιον Μακρεῖλ[νο]ν νέον Θεοφάνην |  
 κουαττορούρον, τα(5)μίαν καὶ ἀντιστράτ[η]λογον Πόντου καὶ  
 Βειθυλίας, δήμαρχον, στρατηγὸν δήμου Ῥωμαί[ω]ν, ἐπιμελητὴν  
 ὁδοῦ Ι(10) [Λατεῖ]νης, πρεσβε[υτὴν | λεγιῶνος ἕκτης νικηφόρου...]

[The Demos] (honoured) M. Pompeius Macrinus, new  
 Theophanes, Quattuorvir, Quaestor and Proprætor of Pontus  
 and Bithynia, Tribune of the plebs, Consul of the Roman People,  
 Curator of the Via Latina, ambassador [of the VI legion Victrix...]

### Commentary

The only text that surely attests Macrinus' epithet *Neos* Theophanes is a statue base from Mytilene (*IG XII 2*, 235 + *IG XII Suppl.*, p. 22). However, René Hodot has convincingly restored this denomination in a few more documents mentioning the same persons: the text of his dedication of a statue portraying the Emperor Antoninus Pius<sup>72</sup>; the statue base of his daughter Pompeia Agrippinilla, erected by the People of Mytilene<sup>73</sup>; possibly the statue of Cornelia Kethegilla, Macrinus' granddaughter, dedicated by the same civic institutions<sup>74</sup>.

Macrinus is known from several inscriptions from Asia Minor, Mainland Greece, and Italy, where he lived. The evidence lets us follow the successful career of a Roman politician of Greek origins in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD<sup>75</sup>. His rich *cursus honorum* was accompanied by the conferral of important honorific titles in his ancestral fatherland: *euergetes* and *ktistes* of Mytilene. He was a descendant of Gnaeus Pompeius Theophanes, a friend and advisor of Pompeius, who had successfully intervened with Rome on behalf of his homeland Mytilene in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC<sup>76</sup>. In 79 BC, the Mytilenians had been punished by Rome with the loss of freedom for having aligned themselves with Mithridates VI. However, with the help of the friend and protector of Theophanes the Elder, Pompey, autonomy was restored. This

72. *SEG XXIX 741*, l. 1-2 : Μάρκος Πομπηΐος Μάρκ[ω παῖς, : Κλουστομείνα, Μάκρεινος, νέος] | Θεοφάνης. The presence of the personal name Theophanes in the nominative after the lacuna makes *Neos* a necessary complement.

73. *IG XII 2*, 236, with the restoration of lines 3-4 by René Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus à Mytilène », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 34, 1979, p. 221-237, p. 232 : τὰν παῖδα Μ[άρκω Πομπηΐω] | Μάκρειν[ω νέω Θεοφάνη] (*SEG XXIX 740*).

74. *IG XII 2*, 237 (copy by Cyriacus of Ancona) with the reading proposed by R. Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus », p. 233 : Πομπηΐω Μάκρινω <νέω> Θεο<φ>άνν<η> τ<ῶ>ν εὐεργέταν καὶ κτίσταν τᾶς | πόλιος (*SEG XXIX 740*).

75. The evidence is collected in R. Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus »; see also Leonhard Schumacher, *Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur Besetzung der vier hohen römischen Priesterkollegien im Zeitalter de Antonine und der Severer (96-235 n. Chr.)*, Mainz, Ditters Bürodienst, 1973, p. 73, n° 19, p. 259.

76. Louis Robert, « Théopane de Mytilène à Constantinople », *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres*, t. 113, 1969, p. 42-64; R. Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus », p. 223.

led Pompey and Theophanes to be celebrated as new founders of Mytilene<sup>77</sup>. The first Theophanes even received cultic honours as a consequence of this service to his city. He appears as the recipient (in the dative) of a dedication that refers to him with the epithets Soter, Euergetes and Second Founder of the fatherland<sup>78</sup>. Later on, coins struck during the reign of Augustus or Tiberius show a male head – presumably of Theophanes – with the legend Theophanes Theos on the obverse, and on the reverse the head of a woman and the legend Archedamis Thea (Theophanes' wife)<sup>79</sup>.

Macrinus not only came from one of the most prominent elite families of Mytilene, but acted in line with the status of his predecessors by mediating between the city and the Emperor

77. Plut., *Pomp.* 42.8 ; L. Robert, « Théopane de Mytilène à Constantinople », p. 47.

78. The dedication to Theophanes was inscribed at the centre of a monument also containing dedications to Pompey and to another citizen of Mytilene, Potamon son of Lesbos (IG XII 2, 163, A-C ; SIG<sup>3</sup> 752-754). Text from S. G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming*, p. 172, n. 205 : A : Γναίω Ποντηλίω, Γναίω ὕτω, Ἰ Μεγάλω, αὐτοκράτορι, τῷ εὐεργέτα καὶ σώτηρι καὶ κτίστα. B : [Θ]έω Δί[ ] [Ε]λε[υθε]ρίω Φίλοπατριδι Ἰ Θεοφάνη τῷ σώτηρι καὶ εὐεργέτα καὶ κτίστα δευτέρω τῆς πατρίδος. C : Ποτάμωνι Ἰ Λεσβόνακτο[ς] Ἰ τῷ εὐεργέτα Ἰ καὶ σώτηρος Ἰ καὶ κτίστα τῆς Ἰ πόλιος. For a commentary on this text, see L. Robert, « Théopane de Mytilène à Constantinople », p. 49ff. ; Barbara K. Gold, « Pompey and Theophanes of Mytilene », *American Journal of Philology*, t. 106, fasc. 3, 1985, p. 312-327, p. 325 ; Marcin N. Pawlak, « Theophanes, Potamon and Mytilene's Freedom », *Electrum*, t. 27, 2020, p. 173-188, p. 180 ; S. G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming*, p. 169-175. The dedication to Theophanes raises the question of whether the syntax should be interpreted as a paratactic juxtaposition of two recipients by asyndeton or as their occasional combination into one figure by means of a compound denomination used in a ritual context. The second option is preferable for the following reasons : 1) the term *theos* is not necessary to refer to Zeus ; 2) the epithet Philopatris is not attested for Zeus or other gods, but is commonly used for civic benefactors from the late Hellenistic period onwards (see F. Canali De Rossi, *Filius publicus*, p. 3), thus *theos Philopatris* directly characterizes Theophanes rather than Zeus ; 3) the theonym Zeus Eleutherios is embedded within the two terms referring to Theophanes and further characterizes the religious *persona* of the honorand.

79. Barclay V. Head, *Historia numorum. A Manual of Greek Numismatics*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911, p. 563 ; Warwick Wroth, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Troas, Aeolis, and Lesbos*, London, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1894, p. 198, n. 158-160 ; Dieter Salzmänn, « Cn. Pompeius Theophanes. Ein Benennungsvorschlag zu einem Porträt in Mytilene », *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts (Römische Abteilung)*, t. 92, 1985, p. 254-260 ; Kostas Buraselis, « Two Notes on Theophanes' descendants », *The Greek East in the Roman Context. Proceedings of a Colloquium organised by the Finnish Institute at Athens May 21 and 22, 1999*, ed. Olli Salomies, Helsinki, Foundation of the Finnish Institute at Athens (« Papers and Monographs of the Finnish Institute at Athens », 7), 2001, p. 61-70, p. 64-66.

Antoninus thanks to his personal contacts with the court<sup>80</sup>. The city rewarded his merits by means of an official recognition of his adherence to the great past of his family, one of the most important values of the Greek civic elites in the Imperial periods<sup>81</sup>. Thus, Macrinus received not only the epithet *Neos* Theophanes, but also the title of Founder (at this time disconnected from cultic honours)<sup>82</sup> which had been borne by his ancestor.

### *Ionia, Smyrna ( ?)*

#### **Cat. XVII) Kleodemos Flavianus, *Neos Sagarites* – 125-138 AD**

Evidence : marble pillar (now in Oxford, Ashmolean Museum), containing a dedication to Herakles Hoplophylax and a list of city magistrates.

Initiative : unknown. The epithet *Neos Sagarites* accompanies the name of the *stephanephoros* in office.

Text constituted from : *IK Smyrna* II 771.

See also : *CIG* 3162.

Text and translation (we publish only lines 1-11, which are relevant to the present discussion) :

[.] Γέσσιος | Φλάκκος | στρατηγός | ἐπὶ τῶν ὀπλῶν | (5) Ἡρακλεῖ Ὀπλοφύλακι | στεφανηφοροῦντος · Γ(αίου) · Πορκίου Δοιμίτιου Κλεοδήμου | (10) Φλαουιανοῦ, νέου | Σαγαρείτου (...)

80. R. Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus », p. 230, convincingly argues that Macrinus earned his epithet by means of his benefactions for the city, thus rejecting the hypothesis that Theophanes had merely become a hereditary cognomen of the family (Conrad Cichorius, « Inschriften aus Kleinasien », *Sitzungsberichte der königlich-preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1889, fasc. 2, p. 365-380, p. 374 ; Achille Vogliano, « La Grande Iscrizione Bacchica del Metropolitan Museum », *American Journal of Archaeology*, t. 37, 1933, p. 215-231, p. 222). Macrinus is known to have intervened with Rome and the current Emperor Antoninus Pius on behalf of Mytilene. The city had once again lost its political independence under Vespasian, but regained it from Hadrian (R. Hodot, « La grande inscription de M. Pompeius Macrinus », p. 234-235).

81. L. Schumacher, *Prosopographische Untersuchungen*, p. 259.

82. The fact that Macrinus is called *heros* in the famous list of a Dionysiac family association from Torre Nova (*IGUR* I 160, I, A, 3 ; John Scheid, « Le thiasé du Metropolitan Museum (*IGUR* I, 160) », *L'Association dionysiaque dans les sociétés anciennes. Actes de la table ronde*, Rome, École française de Rome [« Collection de l'École française de Rome », 89], 1986, p. 275-290) has no relevance to this discussion : the epithet only sheds light on the central role that was still posthumously acknowledged to this figure within the closed group of a family *thiasos*.

Gessius Flaccus, general *epì tōn hoplōn*, to Herakles Hoplophylax ; Gaius Porcius Domitius, son of Kleodemos Flavianus, new Sagarites, being *stephanephoros* (...)

#### Commentary

A marble pillar now at the Ashmolean Museum but thought to come from Smyrna contains a dedication to Herakles Hoplophylax made by the *strategos epì tōn hoplōn* Gessius Flaccus, probably at the end of his office sometime around 125-138 AD. The dedication is followed by a list of city magistrates mentioned in the genitive of a dating formula. The eponymous *stephanephoros* Gaius Porcius Domitius Kleodemos Flavianus bears the unparalleled epithet *Neos Sagarites*. According to the editor of *IK Smyrna*, Georg Petzl, this denomination could point to a personal name Sagarites. It is possible that this rare anthroponym is related to a place name, for which the unidentified settlement of Sagara is a plausible match<sup>83</sup>. If this is correct, we could compare this case with that of Macrinus *Neos* Theophanes in Mytilene and propose that Kleodemos was granted the epithet of *Neos Sagarites* to evoke an ancestor bearing this name, who was remembered in Smyrna for his significant benefactions to the city.

#### *Pamphylia, Side*

#### **Cat. XVIII) Aelius Paion, *Neos* Homeros – mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : honorific inscription for P. Aelius Paionianus, carved on a marble plaque ; fragments reused in the Baths of Side. The

83. On the chronology of the text, see Martin Hallmannsecker, « Heracles Hoplophylax, Iodaioi, and a Palm Grove. A Fresh Look at *ISmyrna* 697 », *Epigraphica Anatolica*, t. 50, 2017, p. 109-127, p. 116 ; Christopher P. Jones, « Heracles at Smyrna », *American Journal of Numismatic*, Second Series, t. 2, 1990, p. 65-76 ; Louis Robert, « Les inscriptions », *Laodicée du Lycos. Le Nymphée. Campagnes 1961-1963*, eds. Jean des Gagniers *et al.*, Québec/Paris, Université de Laval/De Boccard, p. 247-389, p. 259-260. On Sagarites, see Georg Petzl in *IK Smyrna* II, p. 271. On Sagara, see Louis Robert, *Villes d'Asie Mineure* [1935], Paris, De Boccard, 1962, p. 193, n. 2, also mentioning the personal name Sagareus, which is equally related to the place name ; cf. Louis Robert, *Noms indigènes dans l'Asie-Mineure gréco-romaine*, vol. I, Paris, Maisonneuve (« Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'Institut français d'archéologie d'Istanbul », XIII), 1963, p. 536 ff.



denomination *Neos Homeros* is used in relation to the honorand's father.

Initiative : probably the civic institutions of Side.

Text constituted from : *IK Side* II 70.

Text and translation :

[Ἱερεὺς Θεᾶς Ῥώμης καὶ δημιουργὸς Π(όπλιος) Αἴλιος] | [Παιωνιανὸς...] ἐφ' οὗ [...] | πολε[...] τῆ] | πόλει χα[ρι...] | ὑπόθεσις [...] ἀ]πληρτίσθη καὶ [...] ἐπανορ|(5)θώθησαν, ὃς καὶ [...] | σ[α]το καὶ πάσας τὰς ὑποσχέσεις ἀπέδωκεν ἀνελλείπτως | καὶ ἐμπροθέσμως ἔτισ[εν...] καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ὑπαρ[χόντων] πολλὰ ἐπέδωκε κα[ὶ] ἐφιλοτεμ[ή]σατο τοῖς πολεῖταις, καθὼς τὰ ψηφίσματα πε[ριέχει, ἐφ' ο]ὔ ἐγένετο | (10) εὐκαρπία τῆ πόλει καὶ πάντα τ[ὰ] ἀγαθὰ, υἱὸς Αἰλίου | Παίονος φιλοκαίσαρος, νέου Ὀμήρου, τοῦ τὰς ἐπι[σ]ήμους | ἀρχὰς καὶ λειτουργίας φιλοτείμωσ πε[πληρωκό]τος. vac. | ἀντάρχων Ροίζας Ἑρμογένους Οσυ[....., ἱερομ]νήμων Ἀπολλώνιος β Ἀθηνομάνδρο[υ, ...] | (15) Λεωνίδα Πάπου, ἐφήβαρχος E[...]

[The priest of Goddess Rome and *demiourgos* Publius Aelius Paionianus...] under whose (government) [...] to the city [...] proposal [...] was completed and [...] were amended; who also [...] and [ceaselessly fulfilled] all [his engagements] and acquitted himself of [...] even before the due time [...] he gave much [of his] own and [acted honourably] for the citizens in compliance with [the content] of the decrees; [under whose government] the city met with abundancy and complete [prosperity]; the son of Aelius Paion, Philokaisar, new Homer, who had fulfilled the major offices and public services in a way worthy of honour. Roizas son of Hermogenes [...] was pro-magistrate; Apollonios II son of Athenomandros was *hieromnemon*...] Leonidas son of Papos; E[...] was ephebarchos.

### Commentary

An honorific decree from Side for Publius Aelius Paionianos refers to the father of the honorand, P. Aelius Pompeianus Paion, with the epithets Philokaisar<sup>84</sup> and *Neos Homeros*. Paion is

84. L. Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », p. 13, notes that Philokaisar expresses a connection with the Imperial family, through personal contact or official functions. Anna Heller, « Priesthoods and Civic Ideology : Honorific Titles for Hiereis and Archiereis in Roman Asia Minor », *Empire*

known from other inscriptions as a famous poet and a friend of Hadrian<sup>85</sup>. He is likely the Paion Sidetes who, early in his career, accompanied the prefect of Egypt and wrote two poems to be carved on the column of Memnon in Thebes. A portrait statue in the theatre of Ephesus may have been erected to honour him at a later age<sup>86</sup>. Many of his functions as attested by the epigraphic evidence suggest that he successfully worked as a poet and as a composer of celebrations of the Emperor on festivals. As argued by Sylvia Fein, his function as « Rhapsodist of Hadrian » was probably an honorary title which Aelius Paion obtained by making a personal impression on the Emperor, perhaps both by his literary talent and by his efforts as an official in the Imperial cult<sup>87</sup>.

Aelius Paion's poetic capacities no doubt earned him the title New Homer<sup>88</sup>. The editor of *IK Side*, Johannes Nollé, suggested

*and Religion. Religious Change in Greek Cities under Roman Rule*, eds. Elena M. Grijalvo, Juan M. Cortés Copete, Fernando Lozano Gómez, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2017, p. 1-20, examines the occurrences of the term and shows that it expresses loyalty towards the Emperor and his regime ; it is often used for persons who have been both priests and high-priests of the Imperial cult.

85. Sylvia Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian zu den litterati*, Stuttgart, Teubner, 1994, p. 118-126. As a member of the Ephesian *technitai*, he is called « winner of many poetic contests, composer of songs and rhapsodist of god Hadrian, theologian of the temples which are in Pergamon, appointed director of contests of the Augustan Pythian games » in *IK Ephesos 22* (engl. trans. Philip A. Harland, *Associations in the Greco-Roman World. An Expanding Collection of Inscriptions, Papyri, and Other Sources in Translation*, eds. Ph. A. Harland, Richard Last, Richard S. Ascough, John S. Kloppenborg, <http://philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations>, 184).

86. André Bernand, Étienne Bernand, *Les Inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon*, Cairo, Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (« Bibliothèque d'étude », 31), 1960, p. 48-51, n° 11-12 ; Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *The Language of Ruins. Greek and Latin Inscriptions on the Memnon Colossus*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 79-81, p. 123. These inscriptions are to be placed early in his career, since there is no mention of Roman citizenship (A. Bernand, É. Bernand, *Les Inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon*, p. 50-51 ; S. Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian*, p. 122, p. 124). According to L. Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », Paion accompanied Hadrian to Egypt in 130, just as Balbilla accompanied Sabina. For the honorific statue in Ephesus : R. Merkelbach, J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem Griechischen Osten*, p. 329, n° 03/02/42 (*IK Ephesos* 605).

87. S. Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian*, p. 124 ; contra L. Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », p. 17, who considered Paion a court poet following Hadrian in his journeys.

88. It is unknown whether Paion particularly excelled in hexametric poetry, but the hypothesis is confirmed by the Homeric flavour of his linguistic choices as attested by the epigrams inscribed on the Memnoneion (P. A. Rosenmeyer,

that the epithet was bestowed on Aelius Paion by his hometown, the *polis* of Side, where he may have held important offices, and for which he could act as a mediator to request privileges from Hadrian<sup>89</sup>. Since Side organized an important Agon Mystikos, Sylvia Fein proposed that Paion's contacts with the Imperial court proved decisive to ensure this contest the prestigious status of ἀγῶν ἱερὸς οἰκουμενικὸς εἰσελαστικός<sup>90</sup>.

### Unknown provenance

Our last entry is the sole case documented by a literary rather than an epigraphic source.

#### *Athens ( ? )*

#### **Cat. XIX) Arrian of Nicomedia, *Neos Xenophon* – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Evidence : Photius, *Bibl.*, cod. 58.17b Becker ; *Suda* 3868 Adler, s.v. Ἀρριανός.

Initiative : unknown.

Text and translation (*Suda*)<sup>91</sup> :

Ἀρριανός, Νικομηδεύς, φιλόσοφος Ἐπικτήτειος, ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς νέος Ξενοφῶν. Ἦν δὲ ἐν Ρώμῃ ἐπὶ Ἀδριανοῦ καὶ Μάρκου καὶ Ἄντωνίνου τῶν βασιλέων, καὶ ἀξιωματῶν μεταβαλῶν καὶ μέχρις

*The Language of Ruins*, p. 123). More in general, Homer could also be evoked as a term of comparison to celebrate a person for their intellectual and literary achievements in other cultural domains. See, for instance, the case of the physician Herakleitos, who was honoured as a « Homer of medical poetry » (*TAM* II 910 ; see George E. Bean, *Side Kitabeleri. The Inscriptions of Side*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi [« Researches in the Region of Antalya », 5], 1965, p. 18 ; L. Robert, « Deux poètes grecs de l'époque impériale », p. 14). In this case, the need for further specification depends on the partial match between the discipline of expertise of Homer and of the honorand. The term *Neos* is not used in this context.

89. Johannes Nollé in *IK Side* II 70. Besides citizenship in his homeland Side, Paion seems to have been honorary citizen of Tarsos and Rhodes (S. Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian*, p. 121).

90. *IK Side* II 130 ; S. Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian*, p. 124-126.

91. Translation from *Suda* online (<http://www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/sol/sol.html>), partly adapted ; consulted October 2021.

αὐτοῦ τοῦ ὑπατεῦσαι, καθά φησιν Ἑλικωνιος, διὰ τὴν τῆς παιδείας δεξιότητα. ἔγραψε δὲ βιβλία παμπληθῆ.

Arrian, of Nicomedia, an Epictetan philosopher ; known as ‘new Xenophon’. He was in Rome during the reigns of the Emperors Hadrian and Marcus [Aurelius] and Antoninus, and garnered honours even so far as becoming a consul himself, as Heliconius says, through the excellence of his education. He wrote a great multitude of books.

### Commentary

The very concise statement about Arrian’s epithet *Neos Xenophon* transmitted by the Byzantine sources makes it difficult to understand its origin and purpose. Arrian refers to himself as Xenophon in his fragmentary work *Expedition contra Alanos* (10.22). According to Philip A. Stadter, Arrian took the name Flavius Arrianos Xenophon when he became an Athenian citizen<sup>92</sup>. Ewen Bowie rejects this hypothesis and interprets Xenophon as a nickname testifying to Arrian’s literary affiliation to the author of the *Anabasis*<sup>93</sup>. Be that as it may, the epithet *Neos Xenophon* may have been the result of this homonymy, as in the above-mentioned case of Lucius Septimius Nestor.

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

### What does *Neos* actually mean ?

The Greek word *Neos* encompasses a range of meanings related to youth, freshness, and renewal<sup>94</sup>. In the 1<sup>st</sup>-century BC Harris stela of Psenptais, the high-priest of Ptah in Memphis and ‘prophet of the gods Philopatores and Philadelphoi’ (Ptolemy XII and his wife Kleopatra Tryphaina), the epithet *Neos Dionysos* borne by King Ptolemy XII is rendered in Egyptian with the expression *Wsr hwn*, ‘Young Osiris’<sup>95</sup>. The parallelism between Dionysos and Osiris

92. Philip A. Stadter, « Flavius Arrianus ; The New Xenophon », *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, t. 8, 1967, p. 155-161, p. 157-158.

93. Ewen L. Bowie, « Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic », *Past & Present*, t. 46, 1970, p. 3-41, p. 25-26.

94. See *LSJ*, s.v. νέος.

95. Stela BM 886 ; see Gilles Gorre, *Les Relations du clergé égyptien et des Lagides d’après les sources privées*, Leuven, Peeters (« Studia hellenistica », 45), 2009, p. 330, p. 335, n° 65 ; Stefano G. Caneva, « Travelling Epicleses : Hellenistic Royal Epithets in Multicultural Milieus », *Ricerche ellenistiche*,

was an old one, but the translation of *Neos* (meaning both ‘new’ and ‘young’) with *hwn* sharpened the significance of the epithet by pointing to a fundamental religious feature of Egyptian kingship as related to the cycle of rejuvenation of sun, life, and pharaonic power represented by Osiris. This disambiguation of the term *Neos* in relation to youth and renewal also appears in some Hellenistic and Imperial funerary texts where persons having passed away in their childhood or early youth are referred to with the formula *Neos heros*<sup>96</sup>.

The closest that our evidence about *Neos*-type epithets can get to this function of the Greek adjective *Neos* is provided by the texts concerning athletes referred to as new Herakles. At least for Leon at Kalydon and for Dioskoros in Alexandria, we also have a visual depiction of these persons which confirm that they were represented as vigorous young athletes, whose physical achievements and premature death contributed to their posthumous association with Herakles. In the case of the unknown *Neos* Herakles from Synnada, moreover, the fact that the inscription was carved on a reused pillar already containing a decree of an association of Neoi points to the social milieu of a gymnasium and supports the hypothesis that this person too was associated with Herakles as a young attendant of the palaestra.

However, this interpretation of *Neos* in relation to the young age of the honorand cannot explain the vast majority of the evidence concerning the use of *Neos*-type epithets. Again, comparison with other honorific usages of *Neos* confirms this observation. The evidence about *Neos*-type epithets equating late-Hellenistic and

t. 2, 2021, p. 83-111, 102-103. On the meaning of *hwn*, see Penelope Wilson, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon : A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu*, Leuven, Peeters (« Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta », 78), 1997, p. 627.

96. The simplest criterion to identify this category is when the text contains the name of the parents and of their child, who is referred to as *Neos heros*, sometimes with an indication of age. To provide a few examples, see *IG Bulg.* II 693 (Nikopolis ad Istrum), the epitaph of a toddler who died aged 2 years ; see *SEG XLII* 576 and *IG X* 2.1, 540 (Mygdonia), mentioning the parents and their deceased son. A less clear case concerns texts where the person referred to as *Neos heros* is honoured on the exclusive ground of the merits of his parent : see, e.g., *SEG XVI* 470 (Thera). These cases probably point to older persons who died in their youth, when they were already publicly acknowledged as the heirs of a distinguished family, but had not yet had the time to achieve personal successes. An exhaustive analysis of this evidence lies out of the purpose of this paper, but the relevant documents display some traces of a regional *usus*.

Imperial political figures to gods shows that there is no correlation between the grant of these titles and the age of the honorands. The same is true for various political figures of the Imperial period referred to with the expression *Neos heros* after their death. One recently published example from Athens may suffice to illustrate this statement. A marble block found reused in a Roman basin in the northern part of the agora has delivered the text of a statue base erected by the tribe Leontis in honour of the deceased Eukles, son of Herodes from Marathon, *Neos heros*. The text belongs to the reign of Augustus and the prosopographic information about the honorand reveals that Eukles had been a distinguished public officer since the early 30s, making it impossible that he died in his early young age. The meaning of *Neos* in this case must therefore be that Eukles was a new entry in the group of heroes of the tribe Leontis<sup>97</sup>.

All in all, the analysis of our evidence confirms what was already stated by Arthur Darby Nock in one of the rare general discussions of the *Neos*-type epithets available to date<sup>98</sup>. This scholar argued that the term *Neos* coupled with a proper name could be applied to persons who appeared to reproduce the characteristics and achievements of a certain religious, mythical, or historical character. This observation is confirmed by the possibility of expressing a similar statement by means of other adjectives, such as *kainos*, *deuteros*, or *allos*<sup>99</sup>. While Nock's mainly honorific understanding of *Neos*-type epithets falls short of explaining the ritual implications of these titles when used in contexts of cultic honours addressed to the Emperors, it suits the evidence of non-Imperial individuals inasmuch as these persons generally did not receive a cult as a consequence of being equated to a mythical or historical figure.

In this respect, we must once again stress the fundamental difference between the general group of mythical and historical figures evoked by *Neos*-type epithets and the exception represented

97. For the inscription and prosopographical data, see John McKesson Camp II, Brian Martens, « Recent Excavations in the Athenian Agora, 2013-2019 », *Hesperia*, t. 89, 2020, p. 593-657, p. 636-641 (*ed. pr.* of the text in p. 368-369).

98. Arthur D. Nock, « Notes on Ruler-Cult, I-IV », *Journal of Hellenistic Studies*, t. 48, fasc. 1, 1928, p. 21-43, p. 35. See also J. Wallensten, « New Gods for a New World, 2 », p. 42-44.

99. See above, our Cat. III (Aurelia Herakleia, « Other Penelope » in Sparta).

by Herakles. Unlike, say, Penelope or Epaminondas, Herakles was a fully-acknowledged recipient of cult in Greek religion – either as a hero, or as a god, or both – and he occupied a prominent place in the ritual life of gymnasia and palaestrae<sup>100</sup>. The exceptional position of the epithet *Neos* Herakles in our dossier precisely points to this multi-faceted status of Herakles. On the one hand, pan-Hellenic mythical narratives ascribed to him a record of achievements that provided a useful term of comparison for persons having excelled in the field of athletics. On the other hand, as an established recipient of cults (in the gymnasium and elsewhere) and as a stable member of the pan-Hellenic pantheon, Herakles offered to persons honoured in relation to him the distinctive possibility of sharing in his cult.

We may state that it was the association with Herakles himself rather than the honour of being granted a *Neos*-type epithet that placed individual honorands in the condition of receiving a cult. This statement could also be applied to the cases where such epithets were ascribed to late-Hellenistic political leaders and to members of Imperial families. The granting of *Neos*-type epithets neither established nor justified the religious honours addressed to these people because such honours could also exist apart from them. Rather, like other epithets they contributed to characterizing the religious *persona* of the honoured persons in contexts where cultic honours were practised in any case.

The last topic that deserves attention concerns the type of relationship that *Neos*-type epithets established between the honorands and the mythical or historical figures they evoked. In this respect, we should first of all note that nothing in our textual evidence actually provides an explicit statement on this point. Therefore, our attempt at understanding the significance of these epithets must entirely depend on what we know about the cultural context in which they were used. Here we will briefly consider two contrasting hypotheses. The first understands being considered « a

100. Among the historical (or pseudo-historical) important persons discussed in this paper, at least Homer did indeed receive a cult in some specific geographical contexts (see Flore Kimmel-Clauzet, *Morts, tombeaux et cultes des poètes grecs*, Bordeaux, Ausonius, 2013, and « *Theios Homèros* : du poète inspiré au poète divinisé ? », *Mythos*, t. 18, 2020, par. 1-39). However, his cults remained local and Homer never became a stable member of the pan-Hellenic pantheon.

new version » of a revered figure from the mythical or historical past in terms of competition meant to replace that figure : that is, the honorand would exceed the achievements of the said past figure and impose him- / herself as a new, higher role model. The second rather points to an idea of emulation by which the excellence of a past figure is brought back to history by means of the outstanding life of a contemporary person<sup>101</sup>. When we consider that *Neos* epithets were used in an environment profoundly influenced by the Second Sophistic and its reverence to Greek cultural traditions and Classical models, the idea that present exploits could surpass and replace past standards as the fundamental reference for behaviour and identity can hardly convince. Rather, we must infer that being recognized as persons equating the *arete*, the excellence of revered figures from the past functioned as an effective way to approve and legitimate present persons by connecting them with a canonized past<sup>102</sup>. As seen above, in some cases the claimed genealogical links between high-ranking families and some outstanding figures from the mythical or historical past could charge *Neos*-type epithets with yet another layer of meaning : in these cases, reconnecting past and present would also serve the purpose of acknowledging and celebrating the elites' claim to follow the path of excellence traced by their ancestors.

### ***Neoi* and *heroes* : chronology and meaning of the cult of Leon at Kalydon**

In this section we come back to the problematic dossier from Kalydon to explore its historical ramifications if we accept that the heroized athlete Leon was worshipped as a New Herakles rather than receiving offerings that ritually associated him with the god as a distinctive cult recipient. As seen above, the question of

101. In this respect we certainly must avoid generalizing the neo-Pythagorean mindset underlying the idea of metempsychosis expressed in the text *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3816, discussed above. Even in the Imperial period, reincarnation does not represent a mainstream Greek idea that could be generally applied to the practice of referring to historical persons as new versions of revered figures from the past.

102. On this point, see S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « *Hērōs* ed *hērōikai timai* », par. 13, on the rhetorical techniques used in funerary texts to establish a connection between deceased persons honoured as heroes and ancient figures of the mythical past.



whether the epithet *Neos* Herakles was attributed to Leon cannot be confidently answered on the basis of our evidence. However, a few words are necessary to assess the consequences of a positive answer on the origins of the tradition of *Neos* epithets in the late Hellenistic period.

As seen above, the debate about the chronology of the Kalydon palaestra and its appurtenances is of particular importance for our purpose. Stylistic criteria date the underlying tomb to the late Hellenistic period (late-2<sup>nd</sup> / early 1<sup>st</sup> century BC)<sup>103</sup>. Some architectural elements suggest that the palaestra may belong to the same period in its original form, but the complex underwent some major changes in the early Imperial period (probably in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), when the northern Exedra with Room VII and the sculptural programme were added<sup>104</sup>. In this period, the tomb was reused and possibly (but this point remains unproven) connected with the cult activities practised in the Exedra above, even though the excavations have not brought to light any traces of a draining system meant to pour libations into the underlying tomb. Moreover, as pointed out above, the epigraphic evidence of dedications to Leon only come from the upper Exedra and Room VII, not from the tomb<sup>105</sup>.

Let us now move to the inscriptions attesting to dedications to Leon, assuming that they indeed referred to this deceased athlete

103. See recently C. Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », p. 76-77, with the previous references.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 77-79. On the architectural and sculptural elements, *ibid.*, p. 80-82. Arguments based on the shape of letters inscribed on the benches of Room VII are less convincing. See E. Dyggve, F. Paulsen, K. Rhomaïos, *Das Heroon von Kalydon*, p. 70-72, p. 404-406, prudently pointing out that some features such as the lunar rendering of E are already attested in the private evidence at the end of the Hellenistic period. C. Antonetti, *Les Étoléens*, p. 266, accepts a date during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, but such a late chronology remains uncertain : see Jørgen Mejer, Stephen V. Tracy, *Kalydon in Aitolia*, vol. 1, eds. Søren Dietz, Maria Stavropoulou-Gatsi, Athens/Copenhagen, The Danish Institute at Athens/The National Museum of Denmark, 2011, p. 234-235 (*SEG LXI* 403 ; *BÉ* 2013, n° 217), a moulded lead spoon from Kalydon with the inscription Φιλέρως on the handle, written with lunar characters and datable to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC/1<sup>st</sup> century AD ; however, a small altar of Artemis with the same lunar treatment of E can more confidently be dated to the late Hellenistic period because of the archaeological context, see Jørgen Mejer, « A Note on a Dedication to Artemis in Kalydon », *From Artemis to Diana : The Goddess of Man and Beast*, eds. Tobias Fischer-Hansen, Birte Poulsen, Copenhagen, Museum Tusulanum, 2009, p. 79-81, p. 80-81 (*SEG LXIX* 559).

105. C. Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », p. 75-76.

as a New Herakles. Both the dedication on the small support and the statue base dedicated by Pantaleon (our texts a-b ; *IG IX I<sup>2</sup> 1*, 142-141) are paleographically dated to the Imperial period, even though they show different hands. The statue base dedicated by Pantaleon, which has been paleographically dated to the early Principate, shows richer serifs at the crossing and ending of *hastae* and the tendency to detach the diagonal strokes of K as well as the middle horizontal bar of E from the vertical stroke<sup>106</sup>. This chronology suits the stylistic dating of the female head found in Room VII, making it possible that this fragment actually belongs to the statue of Krateia<sup>107</sup>. The second inscription displays a more sober writing – note in particular the thickening at the end of *hastae* instead of fully developed serifs – but the squared rendering of Ω is a reliable mark of later date. Therefore, scholars tentatively ascribe this object to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. So far, the archaeological and epigraphic evidence converge in pointing to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD as a plausible context for the reuse of the complex and the erection of the northern annexes of the palaestra, with their sculptures and dedication.

However, a major problem arises when we consider the writing of the third text mentioning Leon. Since its publication in 1934, this inscription has been considered earlier than the others and a date between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC has generally been accepted on palaeographic grounds. Inscriptions from Kalydon published after the publication of the Danish excavations of the palaestra confirm this assessment. In 1965, Mastrokostas published an act of manumission dated on proposographic grounds to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The writing is similar to that of the dedication to Leon, even though it still shows A with straight crossbar<sup>108</sup>. However, in the contemporaneous list of manumissions published in *IG IX I<sup>2</sup> 1*, 137, the letter A consistently appears with a broken crossbar in the

106. Despite the elegant hand of this text, the letter shape slightly varies from line to line. Thus, E has a separated middle bar in line 2 but not in line 3. The diagonal stroke of N intersects the right vertical at its base in line 1, but stops in the middle in line 3. A is always written with a deeply broken crossbar, but the opening of the letter varies from case to case.

107. See most recently C. Charatzopoulou, « L'hérôon de Kalydon revisité », with the previous references.

108. Euthymios Mastrokostas, « Inschriften aus Ätolien. Akarnanien und Westlokris », *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts (Athenische Abteilung)*, t. 80, 1965, p. 152-159, p. 154-156, n° 6 (*SEG XXV 621*).

entries *a-c*, with straight bar in *d* and *f*, and with both forms in *e*. This plausibly points to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century as a transitional period, when both forms of A were in use. A recently published dedication with a sculptor's signature has A with broken crossbar and provides a very close parallel to our dedication to Leon<sup>109</sup>. A common feature of all these inscriptions is the sober treatment of the ending of *hastae*, which does not have any serif or thickening, and K written with short diagonal strokes, very differently from the long K in Pantaleon's dedication. This and other palaeographic features therefore point to a date of the earliest dedication to Leon between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

If we accept that cultic honours for Leon as a hero and *Neos* Herakles were practised in the palaestra from the end of the Hellenistic period, and continued down to the early Imperial phase of its use, we can draw two sorts of inferences. To begin with, the fact that the objects containing dedications to Leon come from structures built in the early Imperial period means that the ritual furniture belonging to the cult of Leon prior to the renovation of the building was collected and replaced in the reorganized northern annexes of the palaestra, which acquired a specific cultic function. Secondly, and most importantly, leaving aside the reference to Maiandros *Neos* Athamas in Teos, whose Hellenistic date is entirely speculative, we would still have one piece of evidence that sheds light on the granting of an epithet '*Neos* + hero' to a person in the late Hellenistic period. The uniqueness of this document could perhaps be explained by considering that the early date at which Leon was granted his epithet might be related to the heroic status accorded to this person, probably as part of a posthumous cult established to honour a young athlete after his premature death.

The further question we have to deal with concerns the relationship between the epithet *Neos* Herakles possibly granted to Leon and the earliest attestations of the formula '*Neos* + god' used for sovereigns and Roman generals at the end of the Hellenistic period. We have already mentioned the use of the epithet *Neos* Dionysos for Ptolemy XII, which was probably

109. *Ed. pr.* by J. Mejer, S. Tracy, *Kalydon in Aitolia*, p. 122-125 (*SEG* LXI 400); Sascha Kansteiner *et al.*, *Der Neue Overbeck. Die antiken Schriftquellen zu den bildenden Künsten der Griechen*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 2014, vol. v, n° 3768.

introduced c. 80 BC, at the beginning of his reign. This is the first surely dated use of this epithet. According to Posidonius, during the 1<sup>st</sup> Mithridatic war, the Athenian ambassador Athenion was welcomed as « the messenger of the New Dionysos » when he came back from a diplomatic mission at the court of Mithridates VI (88 BC)<sup>110</sup>. This case could therefore be a few years earlier than the Ptolemaic one, but while a link between Mithridates and Dionysos is well attested in the evidence, the formula *Neos* Dionysos in relation to this king remains unparalleled and might have been used in hindsight by Posidonius. Finally, *Neos* Dionysos was later adopted by Mark Antony and it seems that this epithet was in use both in Egypt and in Athens<sup>111</sup>.

The chronology of the establishment of the cult of Leon at Kalydon is vague, yet possibly earlier than this late Hellenistic royal practice. On the other hand, even if we assumed that Leon was honoured as *Neos* Herakles in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century, when not only Ptolemy XII, but possibly Mithridates VI and even Antony had been called *Neos* Dionysos, it would be difficult to see how the prestige of a new royal practice could directly impact the funerary honours of a private citizen in a small city of Aitolia (even though Leon might have been a member of the local elite), without leaving any other traces of the path of its diffusion. Moreover, we should clearly distinguish between the epithet *Neos* Dionysos used by living political leaders and the funerary context of Leon's possible denomination as new Herakles.

110. Posidonius, *FGrH* 87 F 36 (Athen. 5.211D-215B) on the ceremony of *apantesis* organised by the artists of Dionysos : συνήνησαν δ' αὐτῶι καὶ οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνῖται τὸν ἄγγελον τοῦ νέου Διονύσου καλοῦντες ἐπὶ τὴν κοινὴν ἐστίαν καὶ τὰς περὶ ταύτην εὐχὰς τε καὶ σπονδὰς. The Pontic king is more often simply referred to as Dionysos. See the evidence gathered in Luis Ballesteros Pastor, « Mithradates, God-King ? Iranian Kingship in a Greek Context », *Divinizzazione, culto del sovrano e apoteosi. Tra antichità e Medioevo*, eds. Tommaso Gnoli, Federicomaria Muccioli, Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2014, p. 179-192, p. 180 ; S. G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming*, p. 129-136. If historically reliable, the epithet used by the Athenian Guild of Dionysos might shed light on a local and occasional use rather than on the titulary adopted by the king.

111. On Antony bearing the epithet *Neos* Dionysos, see Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, « Le *basilikon symposion* de Cléopâtre à Tarse et Antoine néos-Dionysos à Athènes selon Athénée, IV, 144 e – 148 c », *À la table des rois. Luxe et pouvoir dans l'œuvre d'Athénée*, eds. Catherine Grandjean, Anna Heller, Jocelyne Peigney, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013, p. 229-250, p. 243-250 ; S. G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming*, p. 189-194.

Given these premises, as modern scholars trying to trace the origins of a practice destined for great success in the Imperial period, we might run the risk of overlapping two parallel traditions that were not directly interrelated in their early stage of development. A more promising approach may consist in dealing with these phenomena as two parallel applications of a broader trend that we can identify in various aspects of the late Hellenistic culture. We could see this trend as the result of a growing interest of intellectuals and communities in putting order in cultural memories and in establishing links between present and past as a way to make sense of, and cope with, socio-political crises and changes. From an intellectual perspective and at a broad geographical scale, Diodorus' classification of the different mythical figures named Dionysos and Herakles in Greek and non-Greek traditional narratives exemplifies the idea that various forms of a same god/hero may have lived through time. This concept is attested in Greek historiography as early as Herodotus, but the needs of late Hellenistic universal history urged Diodorus to bring this method to a new level of development and coherence<sup>112</sup>.

Moving to a political and ideological level, the end of the Hellenistic period testifies to a multiplication of honours for civic benefactors celebrated for having protected or rescued their fatherland. As a consequence, an increasing number of high-ranking honorands received from their cities the prestigious denomination (and related cultic honours) of a *Neos Ktistes*<sup>113</sup>. Finally, in the Ptolemaic kingdom, the difficulties met by the dynasty at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the later attempts to

112. See Hdt. 2. 43-45 on the distinction between the recent hero, son of Zeus and Alkmena, and the much older Egyptian god. On the development of this technique of mythical disambiguation in Diodorus, see, e.g., the various figures of Dionysos he distinguishes in the first books of the *Bibliothèque*: the Egyptian Dionysos-Osiris (1.14-22); the Indian Dionysos (2.38-39.1; 3.63), the child of Zeus and Persephone (or Demeter), who introduced agriculture (3.64.1-2); the semi-divine child of Zeus and Semele, who conquered the East and introduced Bacchic mysteries (3.64, 3-65).

113. On this practice, see Johan Strubbe, « Gründer kleinasiatischer Städte. Fiktion und Realität », *Ancient Society*, t. 15/17, 1984-1986, p. 253-304; P. Fröhlich, « Funéraires publiques et tombeaux monumentaux »; Anna Heller, *L'âge d'or des bienfaiteurs. Titres honorifiques et sociétés civiques dans l'Asie Mineure d'époque romaine (I<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.-C. - III<sup>e</sup> s. apr. J.-C.)*, Genève, Droz (Hautes Études du monde gréco-romain, 58), 2020.

promote the message of a renewal of the golden age of the first Ptolemies multiplied the cases of reuse of royal personal names and epithets from the dynastic past : we can mention Ptolemy IX Alexander Soter II ; the children of Ptolemy XII, jointly referred to as Theoi Neoi Philadelphoi<sup>114</sup> ; the name of Kleopatra VII and Antony's last son, Ptolemy Philadelphos ; and Kleopatra's cultic denomination as Thea Neotera<sup>115</sup>. As seen above, in the case of Ptolemy XII, the Egyptian denomination Young Osiris preserved on the Harris stela suggests that an Egyptian theological idea of monarchic rejuvenation may have concurred to the creation of the official epithet *Neos Dionysos*.

Against this broad background, it would be difficult to argue that the denomination Leon *Neos Herakles*, if actually contained in his dossier from Kalydon, belonged to the same ideological and geographical level as the political messages promoted by Ptolemy XII, (possibly) Mithridates VI, and Antony when they adopted, or were granted, the official epithet *Neos Dionysos*. Regardless of the interpretation of the enigmatic epigraphic dossier, the case of Leon rather belongs to a local context and its funerary function can be seen as an honorific and wishful application of the idea that ancient heroes can have multiple manifestations across time. Considering Leon as a new Herakles (or as a hero ritually associated with Herakles) was probably part of a rhetorical and ritual consolation for his family and fellow attendants of the palaestra. It translated the shock for the death of a young powerful athlete into the hope that he might preserve his strength and have a glorious fate in the afterlife<sup>116</sup>.

114. For a similar trend in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, see already Ptolemy VIII and the two Kleopatras (II and III), known as Theoi Euergetai, recalling the epicleris attributed to Ptolemy III and Berenike II in the previous century ; Ptolemy VI's son was known as Theos *Neos* Philopator, recalling the epithet of Ptolemy IV.

115. For a *status quaestionis* about the meaning of Kleopatra VII's epithet Thea Neotera, see Federicomaria Muccioli, « La titolatura di Cleopatra VII in una nuova iscrizione cipriota e la genesi dell'epiteto Thea Neotera », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 146, 2004, p. 105-114 ; Richard Veymiers, « Sarapis et Neôtera élus parmi les dieux », *Revue archéologique*, n.s., t. 1, 2014, p. 37-56 ; S. G. Caneva, *The Power of Naming*, p. 194-198, 311-312.

116. On references to mythical figures in Hellenistic and Imperial epitaphs, especially in the case of persons having died at a young age, see recently A. Wypustek, *Images of Eternal Beauty in Funerary Verse Inscriptions* ; S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai », par. 12, 39-43.

### Emperors as new gods and elite members as new heroes in the Roman East : from social to religious hierarchy

Epigraphic sources from Greece and Asia Minor have delivered a great number of attestations of compound epicleses ‘*Neos + deity*’ being granted to members of Imperial families at the same time in which citizens from the elite of Greek *poleis* received epithets following the ‘*Neos + hero*’ formula. This hierarchical distinction can hardly be hazardous<sup>117</sup>. Roman Emperors broke up with the Hellenistic tradition of accepting all forms of cultic honours from subject and allied cities. During the period between Alexander and Augustus, we know of no refusal of cultic honours by the persons who had been granted them – be they sovereigns, regional governors, or civic benefactors. Cultic honours were the means of positive negotiations between civic institutions and powerful individuals and were consequently always accepted as a sign of loyalty and a request for future benefactions. Starting with Augustus, however, the *Princeps* made frequent recourse to *recusatio* of proposed honours and consequently turned the establishment of cultic honours into a competition for imperial favour between the main cities of the eastern provinces<sup>118</sup>.

As seen above, Augustus also set the premises for a rapid abandonment of the practice of granting cultic honours to distinguished members of the civic elites in the Greek East. Adaptation to the new model was fast : by the end of Augustus’ reign we do not have any remaining trace of the formula *isotheoi timai* for non-imperial honorands. The preclusion of godlike honours to members of the civic and regional elites can be seen as a major factor leading to the growing success of the heroic category in the honours for these social groups.

117. See P. Charneux, « Inscriptions d’Argos », p. 613, who however limits himself to a brief observation about this distinction.

118. Competition between major cities in Asia Minor for the concession of the Imperial neocorate is a good case in point : see Barbara C. Burrell, *Neokoroi : Greek Cities and Roman Emperors*, Leiden/Boston, Brill, 2004. On Imperial *recusationes*, see Martin P. Charlesworth, « The Refusal of Divine Honours, an Augustan Formula », *Papers of the British School at Rome* t. 15, 1939, p. 1-10 ; Emmanuelle Rosso, « *Isotheoi timai*. Les empereurs, les “honneurs divins” et leurs refus, entre Orient et Occident », *Dieux des Grecs, dieux des Romains. Panthéons en dialogue à travers l’histoire et l’historiographie*, eds. Corinne Bonnet, Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, Gabriella Pironti, Bruxelles, Brepols, 2016, p. 211-228 ; C. P. Jones, « Ancestry and Identity in the Roman Empire ».

The early Imperial period saw a significant augmentation of members of elite families being heroized on civic initiative or describing their collective funerary monuments as *heroa* and invoking the protection due to a place sacred to heroes to protect their tombs from violation, reuse, or destruction<sup>119</sup>. Mythical genealogies also played an important role in the identity and prestige of aristocratic families who could motivate their socio-political primacy by claiming direct ascendancy from heroes or great historical figures of the past<sup>120</sup>. Such arguments would be even more valuable if a person could claim ascendancy from the heroic founders of the *polis* or other figures profoundly connected with the history of a city, as in this case the genealogical line vouched for a century-long autochthony of the family.

The hierarchical distinction between, on the one hand, Emperors and Empresses being honoured as new gods, and, on the other hand, high-ranking provincial citizens being equated to heroes had seminal implications concerning the possible practice of cultic honours. While Emperors and their relatives are usually addressed with a '*Neos* + god' epithet in ritual contexts, cases of ritual honours for the holders of '*Neos* + hero' epithets are extremely rare (and only posthumous). The poem written by Marcellus of Side for the funerary monument of Appia Annia Regilla, wife of Herodes Atticus, who died in 161 AD, provides a perfect clarification of the way this ritual difference was perceived as the fitting translation of a distinction in social status. Regilla came from a high-ranking Roman family with direct bonds with the Antonine dynasty. Her marriage with Atticus brought considerable socio-political advantages to him and paved the way to the bi-cultural construction of her public figure in relation to both Greek and Roman cultural models<sup>121</sup>. The Greek poem for Regilla has been discovered on a stela erected within her family

119. On the religious and juridical protection ensured by the act of declaring a funerary monument a place sacred to heroes, see S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai », par. 20-21.

120. See Dennis D. Hughes, « Hero Cult, Heroic Honors, Heroic Dead : Some Developments in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods », *Ancient Greek Hero Cult*, ed. Robin Hägg, Stockholm, Svenska institutet i Athen (« Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae », 16), 1999, p. 165-175 ; C. P. Jones, « Ancestry and Identity in the Roman Empire » ; S. G. Caneva, A. Coppola, « Hērōs ed hērōikai timai », par. 13.

121. Maud Gleason, « Making Space for Bicultural Identity : Herodes Atticus Commemorates Regilla », *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 125-162.



estate on the Via Appia, which hosted a sanctuary of Demeter and of the Empress Faustina, the deceased wife of Antoninus Pius, honoured as *Nea Demeter*. After the death of Regilla, her funerary honours were added to the existing cults into what was known as the Triopion, the « Tripartite » sanctuary<sup>122</sup>. The poem is of particular importance for us as it asserts a hierarchical distinction between gods, heroes, and humans, and exploits it to give shape to a hierarchy of honorific statuses contrasting the members of the Imperial house to those of high-ranking families. The relevant section is worth being quoted in length :

Come, daughters of Tibur, to this shrine, ladies who bring incense offerings to the abode of Regilla ; she was born of the wealthy race of Aeneas, the famed stock of Anchises and Idaean Aphrodite ; she married into Marathon. The heavenly goddesses Old and New Demeter honour her, goddesses in whose shrine the image of the fair-girdled woman is dedicated. She herself, however, dwells with the heroines in the Isles of the Blessed where Kronos is king. She has received this as reward for her virtuous mind, since Zeus pitied her mourning mate, lying in the withered age in a widowed bed, since the snatching black Fates carried off more than half of his children from his blameless halls. [...] She herself, the fair-ankled descendant of Aeneas and of Ganymede, was also of the Dardanian race of Tros, son of Erichthonios. But you, if you will, make offerings and sacrifices. But sacrifices are not needed from the unwilling ; it is good, though, for the pious to pay heed also to the heroes. She is not mortal, but neither was she made a goddess. Wherefore she received neither a sacred temple nor a tomb, not honours due to mortals, nor those due to the gods. There is a temple-like monument for her in the city of Athena, but her soul tends the sceptre to Radamanthes. This statue stands as a gift in honour of Faustina in the Triopion, where there were formerly her broad fields, a choir of vineyards, and olive orchards. The goddess would not dishonour her, queen of women, to be the handmaid of her honours and attendant nymph. For Artemis, arrow-pourer of the lovely throne, scorned not Iphigenia, nor did Gorgon-faced Athena scorne Herse, nor will the corn-bearing mother of the mighty Caesar, guardian-goddess for the nymphs of old, overlook her as she enters the dance of the

122. On this sanctuary, which took its name from the homonymous sanctuary of Demeter at Knidos, see M. Gleason, « Making Space for Bicultural Identity », p. 142-156, with extensive commentary on the text. The poem is published in *IG XIV 1389* ; *IGUR III 1155* ; see Werner Peek, « Zu den Gedichten des Marcellus von Side auf Regilla und das Triopion des Herodes Atticus », *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, t. 33, 1979, p. 76-84 ; Malcolm Davies, Sarah B. Pomeroy, « Marcellus of Side's Epitaph on Regilla (IG XIV 1389) : an Historical and Literary Commentary », *Prometheus*, t. 38, 2012, p. 3-34. On the funerary honours for Regilla, see also C. P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity*, p. 62.

earlier demi-goddesses, for it is her (i.e. Faustina's) prerogative to superintend the dances of Elysium with blessed Alcmene and Kadmos' daughter<sup>123</sup>.

The status claimed for the deceased Regilla is that of a heroine, equal to the demi-goddesses of pan-Hellenic myths, whose choirs she has joined in the Isles of the Blessed, thus also reaching the superhuman figures from whom her family has taken its origins. Her in-between status makes her more than a mortal, yet not the same as the goddesses of the traditional pantheon and as the Imperial women who are fully equated to divine status. Accordingly, her cult place is neither a temple nor a tomb. The poem also confirms what we have stated above about *Neos* epithets and cultic honours being interrelated, but not necessarily connected for non-Imperial persons as for Imperial ones. Whereas members of the ruling dynasty bear *Neos*-type epithets in cultic contexts that are inherently related to their Imperial status, non-Imperial persons equated to heroes do not receive a cult as a consequence of the granting of a *Neos* epithet, but within the context of possible funerary honours. Such honours may or may not be accompanied by a *Neos*-type epithet expressing this equation at an epicletic level. In the poem for Regilla, this hierarchical difference is made explicit by the fact that Faustina, *Nea Deō*, is equated to Demeter (*Palaia Deō*), so that both figures share in a full-fledged cultic status. On the contrary, the rituals addressed to Regilla are described as non-obligatory : they will be practised on a voluntary basis by the pious ones who venerate heroes and heroized dead.

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123. *IG XIV 1389*, l. 1-14, 38-57 ; english trans. from M. Gleason, « Making Space for Bicultural Identity », p. 147-148, 151.