

The Battle of Thermopylae produces perhaps the most famous Spartan memorial: the monument, located at the site of the battle, which commemorates and celebrates Spartan obedience to the law. But the engagement is also, unusually, physically commemorated at Sparta itself, by the creation of a list of the three hundred dead (Hdt. 7.224); by the construction, some years after the battle, of a heröon to Leonidas (Paus. 3.14.1); and by the celebration of an annual festival (Diod. Sic. 11.11.6). It is this second, domestic, cluster of commemoration, and its context, which forms the focus of this paper.

The paper focuses on three themes: the physical context of these monuments; their role in shaping individual and collective memories; and the interaction between the physical monuments and other forms of commemoration. One aim of this investigation is the elucidation of the nature and function of this particular commemoration. But the paper also engages on a wider level with the subject of Spartan attitudes to space and monumentalisation. Recent work (esp. Kourinou 2000) has significantly enhanced our understanding of the basic topography of Sparta town, but scholars have still not fully explored the construction and use of specific areas of Spartan space, or the ways in which these processes contribute to the shaping of Spartan collective identity and memory.

The first task of this paper is to set the Thermopylae monuments in their spatial context. Close examination of the archaeological and, above all, epigraphical evidence for the monumental landscape of this part of the city reveals that, over the course of the fifth and early fourth centuries, these memorials are joined by a range of other significant commemorative structures: burials and cenotaphs of prominent Spartans (Brasidas, for example); treaties and interstate agreements (ML 67, ML 67bis, perhaps *IG* V.1 219); private dedications and victory monuments (esp. *IG* V.1 213, the Damonon *stèle*). The area on and around the Spartan acropolis, therefore, becomes an important site of collective memory, characterised above all by its reflection of Spartan interaction with the wider Greek world.

The claim that this area should be seen as primarily a site of civic, collective, commemoration might seem to be undermined by the number of monuments which are created both by and for individual Spartans: the list of the dead of Thermopylae seems to stand out as a rare case of collective and public commemoration. This impression is, however, at least partially misleading: later literary accounts of Spartan monuments over-emphasise those of prominent individuals. It is true that the use of this commemorative space is strikingly diffuse, particularly in comparison with Athenian practice. But it is equally important to emphasise the importance of the collectively produced documents located in this area which, particularly when considered in the context of the Thermopylae memorial, play a crucial role in shaping Spartan knowledge of their past, and attitudes to their future, actions.

The importance of the collective is also developed through the commemorative activities which take place in this part of the city. The dead of Thermopylae (all the dead, I argue, not just the leaders) were commemorated at an annual ceremony which, unusually in the context of Spartan festivals, focused attention on a central point of the city rather than a more peripheral location (see, in contrast, Cartledge 2001). It is not only through construction of monuments that the Spartans, as a collective group, assert control over this area of commemorative space, but also through the rituals and festivals which are celebrated at and around the monuments.