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Dedications for the Hero Ptoios in Akraiphia, Boeotia

Francesca Giovagnorio Alma Mater Studiorum Bologna

Abstract

The paper will present all the epigraphic evidence connected to this cult, in order to understand his evolution during the centuries and, above all, his persistence in the sacred sphere even after the introduction of the cult of Apollo in the principal area of the city of *Akraiphia*, called *Perdikovrysi*. The analysis of the inscriptions will be accompanied by a short section focused on the description of the archaeological site and the literary traditions about the genealogy of the hero. This paper aims to provide a preliminary analysis of the hero Ptoios cult in *Akraiphia*, examined on the basis of the all the votive dedications found, and studied with a brief commentary.

Keywords: votive inscriptions, Boeotia, hero Ptoios, community, Akraiphia.

Introduction

This paper will examine the sanctuary complex of the hero Ptoios inspecting, in particular, the epigraphic production of the city of Akraphaia in Boeotia during the Late Archaic period, in order to divulge the importance of the hero in this city and to understand its symbology regarding the socio-political situation of the city at the time.

The inscriptions, which will be presented below, have been examined previously with the aim of this paper being, in fact, to present them all in a unitary perspective, to make clear the formularity of dedication and also the 'manipulation' of the epigraphy in relation to the local and regional political dynamics.

Firstly, the topographical context of the region will be described with reference to the archaeological context of the excavated site and its' mythological tradition. This section will provide the historical background to the site to provide context to the epigraphic evidence to be presented here.

The second section will focus on the epigraphic evidence for the site by creating a catalogue and presenting, where possible, a commentary on the text. The epigraphic evidence will then be connected and examined in relation to each other, with emphasis on the social, political and religious context of the city of Akraiphia.

1. The site of *Kastraki* and the literary traditions about Hero Ptoios.

The cult of the hero Ptoios was situated north-east of a hill named *Kastraki*, which was west of the main sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios located instead at a site called Perdikovrysi. Both sanctuaries resided in the territory of the ancient city of *Akraiphia*, near Lake *Copais*. Lake *Copais* was drained from the time of Alexander the Great¹, a procedure that was completed in the 19th century BC; now there is a plain that has inherited the name *Copais*. The city of Akraiphia was a religious landmark for the

¹ Strabo. 9.2.18.

region of Boeotia, because it was the location of a panhellenic sanctuary, the Sanctuary of Apollo Ptoios.

However, the complex of *Kastraki*, and located about 2 km west of the main temple of Apollo Ptoios, develops into two main terraces²; the upper terrace has the foundations of an archaic temple of local limestone, recognized by M.M.G. Mendel and L. Bizard in 1903³ and excavated by J. Ducat and Chr. Linas in 1964-65⁴, they state that the last phase does not seem to be dated after the 4th century BC.⁵ This temple was organized into a *sekos* (6 x 17 m), divided in two by a line of six wooden pillars⁶. In this level fragments of architectural terracottas have been found, among them a wing of acroterial sphinx and other materials, dated between the beginning of the 6th and the 4th century BC⁷. Therefore, this temple had its first monumental and architectural phase of development during the 6th century BC and then it was restored at the end of 4th century BC.

From both the higher and the lower level, a very large number of terracotta figurines were found.⁸ The human figurines from the upper level are all female, while those from the lower are, all masculine except for one;⁹ their chronology is established between the middle of the 6th century *BC* and the first half of the 5th century *BC*.¹⁰

⁵ Ducat 1965.

² Bestonso 2010: 211.

³ Mendel and Bizard 1907: 186, n. 1.

⁴ Daux 1964: 851-864.

⁶ Vlad Borelli 1965: 537.

⁷ Vlad Borelli 1965: 537.

⁸ Guillon 1936b: 416-427.

⁹ Guillon 1936b: 424.

¹⁰ Guillon 1936b: 421.

P. Guillon¹¹ argued that the divinity of the upper terrace is a *kourotrophos*¹² of the hero (he proposes a *Gaia-Demeter* or a *Gaia-Europe*). Here we find again what is also found in other sanctuaries, that is, a 'divine couple', male and female (as Apollo Ptoios and Athena Pronaia in the *Ptoion* of *Perdikovrysi*). The two cults were certainly in close connection first of all as there is the same chronology of the archaeological remains and materials excavated, furthermore, the processional way was organized for its tripod dedications (*tripodophoria*) that involved both the terraces, starting from the *heroon*, proceeding on the upper terrace and then heading to the main shrine at *Perdikovrysi*.¹³

The lower terrace is certainly the most interesting area for the purpose of this paper, because it is connected to the cult of the hero Ptoios. This level is organized in several buildings: one of which is an archaic polygonal structure, the others are unidentified and include: votive deposits; traces of two altars; and a sacred way delimited by votive tripods. From the excavations, more than 28 tripod bases were found, that were offered by the city of *Akraiphia* which date between ca. 550 and 450 *BC*.¹⁴

The north-east section of this lower level is occupied by the two altars, settled one above the other, one round and one trapezoidal¹⁵. Ten metres south-west of this double altar there is a building, the *heroon,* and near this, a row of column bases, which was probably a *stoa*. This *stoa* stands near the sacred way of tripods that leads east toward the town and south in direction of the higher terrace.¹⁶

¹¹ Guillon 1936b: 421.

¹² This is the name given, in ancient Greece, to goddesses involved in the protection of young people (*kouroi*).

¹³ Papalexandrou 2008: 269.

¹⁴ Papalexandrou 2008: 262.

¹⁵ Schachter 1981: 12.

¹⁶ Schachter 1981: 12.

We have two legendary versions about the genealogy of the hero: in the first one (Paus. IX, 23, 6 cites Asius of Samos-fr.3 Bern.) Ptoios is the son of Athamas (Boeotian King, son of Aeolous and Enarete) and Themisto (daughter of Hypseus, King of the Lapiths). The second one is related from Pindar (fr.51c) that indicates that Ptoios was the son of Apollo and Zeuxippe, Athamas' daughter.

In the first version, reported by Pausanias¹⁷, the relationship with Apollo is completely absent, since the hero Ptoion is the direct son of Athamas and Themisto. Moreover, it is more ancient than the Pindaric version, in fact Asios of Samos lives during the 6th century BC, the same chronological phase of the development of the archaeological site of Kastraki.

Pindar¹⁸, elaborates on a genealogy that was functional to a strengthening of the Theban propaganda on the Ptoion. In fact, the second version is known only by Pindar and Stephen of Byzantium¹⁹. This is a refunctionalisation of a genealogy is most likely the purpose of exalting a Theban point of view. The modification of this tradition is part of a specific program of appropriation and re-elaboration of mythical and cultural material originally belonging to the Copais area, in order to build a shared common past and feelings necessary for the construction of a federal organisation, with Thebes as its leader.

Pindar's story has been interpreted, thus, as a statement of the Theban power above the *Ptoion* and its oracle, while Asios' version should instead be considered as a

¹⁷ Paus. 9.23.6.

¹⁸ Pind. fr. 51c Maehl.

¹⁹ Steph. Byz. s.v. Άκραιφία.

legitimization of local traditions, a ransom of community values against the Theban hegemony²⁰.

2. The epigraphic evidence.

All epigraphic evidence regarding the hero Ptoios found at the *Kastraki* will be presented below. There are twelve in total, including 9 tripod columns, two marble bases and a *pithos* terracotta rim. The commentary on the texts will be very concise as the aim is to show the content, not to report the historical and linguistic exegesis. It is a preliminary catalogue, to gather together all the dedications and have an overall look on votive practices carried out at the hero's shrine. The epigraphic evidence will be used to address a social and political discussion that, starting from the *polis* of *Akraiphia*, goes back to the historical-political situation of Late-Archaic Boeotia. The inscriptions are all dated from the beginning of the 6th century BC up to the end of the 5th century BC. The chronology derives mainly from the palaeographic details of the letters, for which I refer to: Jeffery, L. H. *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford 1961.

In some cases, where the inscription is particularly damaged and therefore not easy to reconstruct, only the text is shown.

The votive formula is essentially regular and it consists of: $\delta \delta \tilde{\epsilon} v \alpha dv \tilde{\epsilon} \theta \eta \kappa \tau \tilde{\phi} \theta \tilde{\epsilon} \tilde{\phi}$ to $\tilde{\delta} \tilde{\epsilon} v \sigma \zeta d \eta \chi \sigma \tau \sigma \zeta$ (*this person offered to it to the god, under the archonship of...*), with the archonship formula at the beginning or at the end of the script. There is just one case in which the text appears more complex, the base n. 6, in which there are names of members of a particular commission and the name of the artist who made the statue that was placed on the base.

²⁰ Olivieri 2004: 58.

The percentage of the column tripods is clearly higher than that of the other types of materials listed; this detail will be better focused in the conclusions of the paper, where the symbolic and sacred value of the tripod will be highlighted precisely.

3. Catalogue²¹

1. *Kastraki*, shrine of the hero Ptoios. Fluted column supporting a tripod. Dating from the middle of 6th BC to the middle of 5th century BC, Thebes Museum.

Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 54 n.1; II 67 sg.; Jeffery, 1961: 95 n.13 tav.8; Lazzarini, 1976: 310 n.917; SEG 60.497.

Σιμονίδα ἄρχοντος τοῖ λέροι τοῖ Πτοίοι Ἀκριφιές ἀνέθεαν

Translation: Under the archonships of Simonidas, to the hero Ptoios the Akraiphians offered.

It is one of the best-preserved tripod columns in the *Kastraki* sacred complex. The formularity of the dedication is usual with the mention, in the first place, of the city's archon, then the votive destination and finally the offerers with the dedication verb. The chronology of the inscription results from some palaeographic details, in particular the *rho* and *sigma* letters. The *rho* shows the characteristic handwriting of the last quarter of the 6th century BC, as well as the three traits *sigma*, which spreads from the second half of the 6th century BC. Thus, it is reasonable to propose a dating to about 525 BC²².

²¹ You can see that, in this catalogue, some inscriptions have more information and more developed comments. These dedications, thanks to the best preservation of the text, can be better understood and more details can be deduced. Clearly for those where one or few words are conserved, there will be no comment at all.

²² Jeffery 1961: 89.

It's one of the few examples of dedication where the name of the local archon, Simonidas, is preserved. A 'Simonidas' is attested in a document (IG VII 4215) from Anthedon, but in a later chronological phase (4th-3rd century BC)²³.

It is important to stress the collective offering by the city's inhabitants, remembering that all the following dedications will also be marked by the same peculiarity.

2. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Base of cylindrical section with 20 flutes ending in daisy petals. Dating: Late 6th BC-early 5th century BC. Thebes Museum. Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 57 b1; Lazzarini, 1976: 310 n.918.

Translation:

[τοῖ λέροι τοῖ Πτ]οίοι	to the Hero Ptoios
[Άκραιφι]έες ἀνέθεαν	the Akraiphians offered
[— (nomen) —] ἄρχοντος.	Under the archonship
	of—

The inscription is organized in three lines, each one located inside one of the flutes. The text is broken in the left side, but trying to reconstruct it, its length suggests a height not so much suited to a column but to a small base. No further interpretations can be understood about this inscription.

3. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Terracotta *pithos* rim. Dating: 6th century BC. Thebes Museum.

Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 58 b2; Lazzarini, 1976: 310 n.919.

Πυ[ρ]ίδαο ἄρχοντος Άκραιφ[ι]έες ἀνέθει[α]ν [τ]οῖ Πτοίοι λ[έροι].

²³ Fraser and Matthews 2000: 379.

Translation: Under the archonship of Pyridas, the Akraiphians offered to the Hero Ptoios.

The inscription runs on the rim of a terracotta pithos and it's formed by the typical elements we found in almost all the votive inscriptions from this sacred context. In the first place there is the name of the local archon, of which, for the name there is no other evidence from other inscriptions, then the name of the senders of the exvoto, the Akraiphians; in the last place the name of the deity for which the ex-voto was realized, the Hero Ptoios.

The genitive $-\alpha o$ of $\Pi u[\rho](\delta \alpha o$ is typical of the Boeotic dialect, attested together with the genitive in $-\alpha$ (found in the n.1 $\Sigma \mu ov(\delta \alpha)$). The name $\Pi u[\rho](\delta \alpha o$ has no other evidence in Boeotia, but there is evidence of the name in Megaris from a later period $(242-238 \text{ BC})^{24}$.

4. Kastraki, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Fluted column of a tripod. Dating: 450 century BC.

Further Reading: Perdrizet, 1898: 244; IG VII 2734; Guillon, 1943: 55, A, 7; SEG 31.390.

— — — — — Άκρ]αιφιέεσσι, hέροϊ Πτοϊ[έ]ι.

Translation: In Akraiphia to the Hero Ptoios.

Roehl²⁵, who cites an earlier version of the inscription from Lolling, which is not of great quality, reconstructs $\dot{o}]\phii\epsilon\sigma\sigma$, $h\epsilon\rho\sigma$ $\Pi\tau\sigma$;[ϵ], recognizing a mention in the text to 'sacred serpents'. This hypothesis was soon overtaken in favour of $\lambda\kappa\rho\alpha$, ϕ ; $\epsilon\sigma\sigma$, (Akraiphians), admitting a misunderstanding of the engraver who probably read

²⁴ Fraser and Matthews 2000: 368.

²⁵ Roehl, 1882: 162

wrong the article (TOI) before $h \epsilon \rho o i^{26}$. Surely the reconstruction of D. Korolkow²⁷ is more reasoned: [$\delta \delta \epsilon i v a \epsilon v A \kappa \rho a] i \rho \epsilon \epsilon \sigma \sigma i E i \rho \omega i \Pi \tau \omega i [o] i$ (Someone, in Akraiphia, offered to the Hero Ptoios). It is more evidence for the group of the collective dedication of the inhabitants to the Hero. In this case, however, being the inscription broken in the left part, it's no possible to reconstruct the name of the local archon.

5. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Two frr. of a fluted column, Thebes Museum. Dating: half of 6th century BC, early 5th century BC.

Further Reading: P. Guillon, 1943: 49 n.9, 54 n.2, tav. 15, 2; Guillon, 1963: 25 sgg. fig.1; Lazzarini, 1976: n.917b; SEG 22.430.

Translation:	
[] ἄρχοντος Άκραιφιέες	Under the archonship of [], the
	Akraiphians
[ἀνέθεαν] τοῖ <i>ἑ</i> έροι τοῖ Πτοΐοι.	(offered) to the Hero Ptoios
[— — — — — — —]Η̈́ΚѦָΣ[— —]	(unreadable)

It is the same votive formula aforementioned: the name of the local archon, the Akraiphians as senders of the offers and, at last, the name of the sacred recipient, the Hero.

The inscription occupies two lines, one in each flute. L.3 seems to be a later addition, as it has different handwriting, smaller and less engraved, from the rest of the text. The letters are unreadable and no further information can be understood about this inscription.

²⁶ Guillon 1943: 56.

²⁷ Korolkow, 1884: 9.

6. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Large base in limestone without mouldings, reused in the imperial age. 6th century BC.

Further Reading: Perdrizet, 1898: 241-260; Vottero, 1987, 216; D. Knoepfler, 1992: 480 n.133.

Άκρηφιεῖε[ς ΕΪ]ρωι Πτωίοι. Ἀρξάντων Εὐμάριος Καφισοδωρίω, Όλυμπίωνος Λυσ[ι]νίω, Μελίτωνος Όμολωιχίω, Καφισοδώρω Πτωιοδωρίω, Άθανοδώρω Δαμαγαθίω. Μενέστατος Άθηναῖος ἑπόησε.

L.2 (Other Interpretations) - Perdrizet: $\Lambda \upsilon \sigma[\alpha] v i \omega$. Vottero: $\Lambda \upsilon \sigma[i] v i \omega$ because if it was the patronymic of $\Lambda \upsilon \sigma a v i \alpha \varsigma$ we would find $\Lambda \upsilon \sigma a v i \tilde{\eta} \varsigma \varsigma$.

Translation:

The Akraiphians to the Hero Ptoios. Under the 'direction' of Eumaron son of Kaphisodoros, Olympion son of Lysinos, Meliton son of Omoloichos, Kaphisodoros son of Ptoiodoros, Athanodoros son of Damagathos. Menestratos of Athens did.

On the upper face it's easy to distinguish the the remains of the footprints of two statues it supported. Those of the most recent statue are larger, while the ones of the older are smaller. The first statue was most likely made of bronze, as it was a more popular material in the Archaic period, while the imperial one was more likely to be made of marble²⁸. The dedication mentioned above is relative to the first statue, dated to the 6th BC.

²⁸ Perdrizet 1898: 245.

It mentions five $\check{\alpha}p\xi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ and refers to members of a 'committee' established, most likely, to build or to restore a statue placed in the temple. This commission had to have had a pretty short life, only in the time-frame of creation or restoration of the sculpture²⁹. The sculptor, Menestratos, is known for making the famous statue of Herakles and Hecate, probably located post aedem in the Artemision of Ephesus³⁰. Tatian in his *Oratio ad Graecos* refers of another feminine statue, made by Menestratos, representing a poetess, such a Learchis (uknown figure)³¹.

7. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Column fragment, with a broken inscription engraved from top to bottom. Dating: Late 6th century BC.

Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 47 n.2, 55 n.3; Schachter, 1994: 11.

[-nomen-] ἄρχοντος (vac) Translation: —Under the archonship of—

No interpretation of this inscription can be made as it is too fragmentary.

8. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Column fragment, Dating: Late of 6th century BC.

Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 55 n.4; Schachter, 1994: 11.

— h]έρο [ı —

Translation:- To the Hero -

²⁹ Perdrizet 1898: 245.

³⁰ Remarked by Plinius, NH XXXVI, 32: *In magna admiratione est Hercules Menestrati et Hecate Ephesi in templo Dianae post aedem.*

³¹ Tatianus, *Or. ad Graec*. 33, II.9-10.

This inscription is perhaps connected to the previous inscription (n. 7), considering the similarity of the material and the palaeographical characteristics. No other interpretation can be made as it is too fragmentary.

9. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Fragment of a fluted column. The inscription runs in one of the flutes, from the top to the bottom. Dating: early 5th century BC. Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 50 n.10; Schachter, 1994: 11.

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[---- Ἀκραιφι]έες ἀνέθειαν Translation: --- The Akraiphians offered---
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The dedication is broken on both sides and, most probably, has to be combined with the mention of the archon in the first part and the name of the deity (Hero Ptoios) in the last part. The layout of the text is like the dedication n.1. Also, the reconstruction of the name of the inhabitants, $\lambda\kappa\rho\alpha\mu\mu\epsilon\varsigma$, is on the basis of the above examples (nn. 1-6).

10. Kastraki, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Three matching fragments of fluted column. First half of 6th century BC.

Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 50 n.11; Schachter, 1994: 11.

[— (nomen) — ἅ]ρχοντος Ἀκρ[α]ιφιέες [τοῖ λέροι τοῖ Πτοί]οι ἀνέθειαν.

Translation: Under the archonship of (nomen) the Akraiphians offered to the Hero Ptoios.

It is the same votive formula mentioned before: the name of the local archon (in this case not preserved), the Akraiphians as senders of the offers and, at last, the name of the sacred recipient, the Hero. The inscription runs on two lines, inside two flutes.

11. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Two fluted column fragments. The inscription runs from the top to the bottom of one of the flutes. Third quarter of 5th century BC. Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 51 n.15; Schachter, 1994: 11.

[— (nomen) — ἄρχο]ντος Άκρα(ι)φ[ιέες — —]

Translation: — Under the archonship of —, the Akraiphians—

Guillon states that, at the time of the discovery of this inscription, the curve of the *phi* letter in $\lambda\kappa\rho\alpha(I)\varphi_I\epsilon\epsilon\varsigma$ was clearly visible after the α , and thus excludes the presence of the *iota* before the *phi*. From the photographic documentation, it's not possible to read anything besides $\lambda\kappa\rho\alpha$ -. No further details can be deduced about this inscription, as it is too fragmentary.

12. *Kastraki*, shrine of the Hero Ptoios. Four fragments of a fluted column. Further Reading: Guillon, 1943: 51 nn.16-17; Schachter, 1994: 11.

Fragment a-b: [— (nomen) — ἄρχ]ον[τ]ος — — — Fragment c: A Fragment d: OI

Guillon interpreted that the three fragments most likely pertain to the same inscription, considering the affinity of the material and writing. The fragments a-b are definitely connected to the same inscription, fragment c and d most likely. For the

fragments *c* and *d* it's very difficult to attempt a reconstruction as there is a lack of conservation for the letters.

From the above dedications it is possible to highlight, first of all, the use of tripod as a sign of local wealth and freedom of community. In fact, the tripod cauldron is a strong and powerful religious symbol which assumes various meanings according to different local manifestations. In the case of *Akraiphia*, and of the whole Boeotia, the use of tripod is characterized by two modalities³²: the individual and the collective. Those from hero Ptoios' shrine are linked to the second type, a collective affirmation of the wealth of the community and of a local particularism, which are stressed by Guillon's studies³³.

In fact, the dedication of votive tripods, carried out by the inhabitants of the city to the local hero (as in the inscriptions nn. 1-6, 9-11³⁴), contributed in consolidating the identity of the polis, at least until the beginning of the fifth century BC, when, with the emergence of the Theban dominance in the region, a propagandistic framework emerges, producing a strengthening of the Theban leadership in the mythical-cultural context of the whole Copaid basin (starting with the monumentalization of Athena Itonia at *Koroneia*, Poseidon at *Onchestus* and Apollo Ptoios at *Akraiphia*) ³⁵.

This Theban *propaganda*, indeed, has the purpose of inspecting the genealogical origins of the Copaid area, creating new associations with Theban mythical traditions. Pindar's attempt to steal hero's paternity from *Athamas*, to confer it to

³² Papalexandrou 2005: 254.

³³ Guillon 1943: 47.

³⁴ But I think that also in the nn. 7-8-12 the senders of the dedications were the same Akraiphians but, unfortunately, it's not possible to claim this due to the fragmentary preservation status.

³⁵ Bestonso 2010: 213.

Apollo, is a strong sign of the aim of incorporating Thebes in the genealogy traditions of a local hero, a symbol of the political and religious autonomy of the *polis*³⁶.

This strong individualism is also demonstrated by the presence of collective dedications (those listed above) on votive tripods. It is a clear indication that the sanctuary, and all the ritual activities conducted in it, were completely managed by public authorities. This suggests it was an effort to to affirm the prosperity of the city and to highlight the significance of the worship of a local hero, Ptoios, and his sanctuary within the city's collective identity. These activities seem to last until the late 5th century BC-beginning of 4th century BC; subsequently, in fact, there was a deadlock, ending at the end of the 4th century BC, when the whole complex will live a phase of intense rebirth with the reconstruction of the shrine in the upper terrace, the dedication of a statue of the hero³⁷, the erection of a structure on the west side (a sort of *propylaeum*) and, most likely, the rearrangement of the lower terrace as well.³⁸

Conclusions

This paper was a preliminary analysis and aimed to raise a series of questions about in the multifaceted nature of the *polis* of *Akraiphia*, especially regarding the cult of the Hero Ptoios, which can be very fleeting and with unclear characteristics.

The epigraphic evidence previously interpreted by other scholars have the intent, through the discussion of the dedication texts, to point out some peculiarities (such as the issue of collective dedications previously mentioned) to introduce the reader within the historical and social context of the city.

³⁶ Papalexandrou 2008: 265.

³⁷ Perdrizet 1898: 241-260.

³⁸ Schachter 1994: 19.

First of all, the coexistence of two shrines, one titled to a Panboeotic god, the other to a local hero, that have the same epithet but which also maintain, at the same time, autonomy and mutual independence, is fairly unusual and this is demonstrated well at *Akraiphia*.

The nature of the relationship between the god and the hero, in fact, is a very thorny and complex subject, especially in the historical context of Late Archaic Boeotia. Probably the independence of the cult of the hero from Apollo's has the will to ratify the freedom of the collective identity of the city compared, instead, to the inclusion project of Thebes that, precisely in the years in which the inscriptions are dated, initiates a controlling policy over all small urban settlements of the region. The heroic cults are fundamental as they often respond to the social needs that arise with the evolution of the city itself. In this case, Ptoios represents the will to maintain firm the link with the local tradition, rejecting, at least in this first moment, the globalizing demands of Thebes.

This resistant struggle of Ptoios' cult even after the affirmation of Apollo in the city, shown in the epigraphic evidence previously reported, is direct proof of the need of the community to maintain this bond with traditions and territory, in an extremely difficult historical phase, in which the hegemonic and inclusive project of Thebes became established.

The existence of this sanctuary, which was well structured, even from a monumental point of view (as the area is organized in two terraces, most probably re-creating the monumental pattern of the adjacent Apollo's shrine, organized instead, in three levels) makes it clear that hero worship had an important religious weight in the city; certainly he is a figure that really had to represent the citizens in their social essence, as well as from a religious standpoint.

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Abbreviations

BCH	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
EAA	Enciclopedia dell'arte antica. Classica e orientale
IG	Inscriptiones Graecae
IGA	Inscriptiones Graecae antiquissimae praeter Atticas in Attica repertas
SEG	Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

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