

SOCIETAS DANICA INDAGATIONIS ANTIQVITATIS ET MEDII AEVI

# CLASSICA ET MEDIAEVALIA

*Danish Journal of Philology and History*

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VOLUME 74

2024

**CLASSICA ET MEDIAEVALIA · VOL. 74**

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Composition by George Hinge

ISSN 0106-5815



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# AN UNNOTICED TWELFTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT OF ARATOR'S *HISTORIA APOSTOLICA*, WROCLAW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, AKC. 2018/1\*

By Michal Broda

**Summary:** This article concerns a hitherto unknown 12th-century manuscript containing the *Historia Apostolica* of Arator, a 6th-century Christian poet. The codex was donated in 2018 to the Wrocław University Library, where it was given the shelf mark Akc. 2018/1. It came to the Library badly damaged and underwent conservation treatment in the Library's Special Collections Conservation Workshop. This paper describes the physical condition of the manuscript before and after conservation, as well as presenting its content. The manuscript has not yet been cited at all in the literature on Arator, it is not included in the list of all his manuscripts, and has not been described in any catalogue. Neither its provenance nor its fate until the 19th century, when it found its way to the book collection of professor Friedrich Haase from the University of Breslau, is known.

Popular in the Middle Ages and largely forgotten in modern times, the late antique Christian poet Arator has been the subject of intensive research over the past few decades. This includes a considerable number of separate studies<sup>1</sup> and chapters in monographs on biblical poetry, epic

\* The digital copy of the manuscript is available in the Digital Library of the Wrocław University Library at the following address: <https://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/dlibra/publication/114075/edition/129211/content>. I would here like to thank my colleagues from the Manuscript Department of the Wrocław University Library: Dr Adam Poznański for all his remarks and comments on the codex and Dr Antoine Haaker for his help with French studies on Arator.

1 Angelucci 1990a; Angelucci 1990b; Deproost 1990; Hillier 1993; Schlechter 1993; Bureau 1997; Schwind 1990; Schwind 1995; Mori 2012 (see: [https://air.unimi.it/retrieve/handle/2434/219532/274157/phd\\_unimi\\_R08511.pdf](https://air.unimi.it/retrieve/handle/2434/219532/274157/phd_unimi_R08511.pdf) (consulted on 22nd February 2022)).

poetry and paraphrases of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> There is also an abundance of smaller publications and articles on the subject.<sup>3</sup> The two critical editions of the *Historia Apostolica* which have appeared in this century show the advances of textual scholarship on Arator.<sup>4</sup> Recently several translations into modern languages such as English,<sup>5</sup> French,<sup>6</sup> Italian<sup>7</sup> and Portuguese<sup>8</sup> have appeared. The *Historia Apostolica* is a poetic paraphrase of the *Acts of the Apostles* written in hexameters. It consists of two books of 1076 and 1250 hexameters respectively. It is an extraordinary work due to its rich classical vocabulary and extensive exposés, especially regarding numerological symbolism.<sup>9</sup> The *Historia Apostolica* is usually accompanied in manuscripts either by three letters, or by one or two of them, written in elegiac distichs: *Epistola ad Vigilium*, *Epistola ad Florianum* and *Epistola ad Parthenium*. Florianus, Vigilus and Parthenius, to whom these letters are addressed, are contemporaries of Arator. Vigilus was pope during the years 537-555 AD and is the most important addressee of Arator's work.<sup>10</sup> Parthenius was Arator's friend and fellow pupil in the school

2 Among others: Roberts 1985; Roberts 1989; Green 2006; Martorelli 2006; Mcbrine 2017.

3 Among a large number of articles, those by Bruno Bureau and Paul Augustin Deproost are the most significant: Bureau 1991; Bureau 1998; Bureau 1999; Bureau 2004; Deproost 1989a; Deproost 1989b; Deproost 1989c; Deproost 1990b; Deproost 1992; Deproost & Haelewyck 1993; Deproost 1997; Deproost 1998. Also worth mentioning are the following: Sotinel 1989 and Licht 2008.

4 Orbán 2006. This publication consists of two volumes. The edition of the *Historia Apostolica* and accompanying letters contained in the first volume reproduces most of the errors of McKinlay's 1951 edition (McKinlay 1951). Of far greater value, however, is the second volume, which contains an edition of glosses to the *Historia Apostolica*. See the review of the edition by P.A. Deproost, *Latomus* 68, 2009: 1067-69.

Bureau & Deproost 2017. This is a completely new edition of the *Historia Apostolica*. Its authors have managed to reconstruct its *stemma codicum* for the first time in history. See the review by R. Hillier, *Latomus* 78, 2019: 815-18.

5 Schrader, Roberts & Makowski 1987; Hillier 2020.

6 Bureau & Deproost 2017.

7 An Italian translation of the first book of the *Historia Apostolica* is found in Mori 2012: 91-117.

8 The translation includes *Epistola ad Florianum*, *Epistola ad Vigilium*, *Epistola ad Parthenium* and the second book of *Historia Apostolica*; see Manso 2010.

9 Kannengiesser 2006: 1307.

10 Green 2006: 263.

of the grammarian Deuterius in Milan and *Epistola ad Parthenium* was presumably added to a copy of the *Historia Apostolica* sent to him.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, *Epistola ad Florianum* should probably be connected with a manuscript of the *Historia Apostolica* handed over to a certain Florianus whose identification with a specific individual is unclear.<sup>12</sup> The letters are important because they reveal the poetic intentions that led the author to choose such a theme for the work.<sup>13</sup> The text of the *Historia Apostolica* or parts of it are preserved in around 150 manuscripts, now in libraries all over Europe.<sup>14</sup>

The figure of Arator himself is not well known. It is believed that he came from Liguria, was born after 480 AD, and was educated in Milan under the tutelage of the local bishop Lorenzo and the well-known poet Ennodius. He then stayed at the Ostrogothic court in Ravenna. Later still, he went to Rome, where he became a subdeacon during the pontificate of Pope Vigilius.<sup>15</sup> The only firmly documented date in his biography is 544 AD. On 6 April of that year, he recited the *Historia Apostolica* before Pope Vigilius, to whom he dedicated it. Subsequently, its public reading before a wider audience took place on 13 and 17 April and 8 and 30 May in the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome and was enthusiastically

11 Hillier 2020: 7, 15, 18, 72; Green 2006: 264.

12 Green 2006: 263–64.

13 Constanza 2014: 210.

14 A.P. McKinlay lists and describes 103 manuscripts from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries and quotes about 40 manuscripts mainly from the later period. See McKinlay 1942: 3–65; McKinlay 1943: 93–96. Now the number of known manuscripts containing the *Historia Apostolica* is higher. Two fragments from the seventh century are known in particular: Oxford, Bodleian Library, e Musaeo 66 and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 253; cf. Ker, Lowe & McKinlay 1944; Eizenhöfer 1953; Bureau & Deproost 2017: CXIII–CXIV, CXCI. For example, in Poland, apart from the manuscript discussed in this article (Akc. 2018/1), there is a fifteenth-century manuscript of Arator, which was not cited by A.P. McKinlay: Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, cod. 2251 (see Wiślocki 1881: 539).

15 Kannengiesser 2006: 1307–8; Orbán 2006: vol. 1, 1–3; Mori 2012: 7–8; Bureau & Deproost 2017: VII–XIII.

received. Arator's life after this date is not known.<sup>16</sup> He may have died during an epidemic that raged in Rome between 546 AD and 549 AD.<sup>17</sup>

In 2018 the Wrocław University Library received a hitherto unknown manuscript of Arator's *Historia Apostolica* as a gift from the family of the classical philologist and archaeologist Otto Rossbach. The manuscript was given the shelf mark Akc. 2018/1. Otto Rossbach (1858-1931), who obtained his habilitation at the University of Breslau (now the University of Wrocław) and was a professor at the University of Königsberg from 1895 until 1926, bought it in 1899 from the book collection of the late Rudolf Peiper. He was its third known owner. This is indicated by one of the two ownership notes made in pencil, probably by Rossbach himself, on the paper folio II recto: *m. Febr. 1899 ex Rudolfi Peiperi libris emi O. Rossbach Regimontanus*. The second note in pencil on this folio reads: *ex libris Friderici Haasii professoris Wratislaviensis emi Rudolf Peiper m. Januario 1870*, and was presumably written by Rudolf Peiper. Accordingly, the manuscript first belonged to Friedrich Haase (1808-1867), professor of philology and rhetoric at the University of Breslau, and from 1870 it was in the hands of Rudolf Peiper (1834-1898), a well-known Wrocław philologist and gymnasium teacher, who bought it from the book collection of his predecessor. After Haase's death, his book collection was listed and published in the auction catalogue of the Schletter'sche Buchhandlung and was auctioned off at a sale held in January 1870.<sup>18</sup> Among the objects auctioned was Arator's manuscript, which has an inscription in pencil on the inside of the front cover: *Ex bibliotheca Haaseanea (p. 216, n. 7334)*,<sup>19</sup> re-

16 Orbán 2006: vol. 1, 5-6; Green 2006: 251-52; Mcbrine 2017: 173-74; Bureau & Deproost 2017: XXI-XXII.

17 Hillier 2020: 33.

18 Bibliotheca Haaseana, 1869. According to this auction catalogue, his book collection consisted of more than 7,000 items, including about 30 manuscripts. These went to various book collections. For example, the Wrocław University Library preserves his Greek liturgical manuscript, now located at shelf-mark R 502, cf. Bibliotheca Haaseana, 1869: no. 7322, 216. See also note 20.

19 This entry was under the front paper cover, which was glued on at a later date (after 1870). It was uncovered as a result of conservation work carried out in the University Library's Special Collections Conservation Workshop. See below in the main text of this article.

ferring to a particular page and item in the said catalogue, which contains a brief description of it. It was at this sale that Rudolf Peiper acquired it.<sup>20</sup> It is not known how Haase acquired the codex or who its previous owners were.

It came to the University Library in poor condition.<sup>21</sup> We can see that its last conservation took place after 1870, because the pastedown which was glued then covered the entry which was made in that year.<sup>22</sup> The codex has not preserved its medieval binding but has been rebound several times. The chamfered boards were covered with brown leather, which survived mainly on the front cover and only fragmentally on the back cover. The fittings survived, four each on the front and back covers, as well as a clasp and two deformed lower bosses on the back cover. The spine was damaged and detached from the text block. The leather was badly dried and cracked. In places where the leather was missing, there was brown, heavily soiled fabric (about 2 cm wide in the inner margin of the front cover, the spine and over three quarters of the back cover) worn through at the cords and torn at the top and bottom of the spine near the boards. The leather of the binding had faint blind stamps tooled with lines and rolls. There were also traces of wormholes visible on the leather.

The text block was in a rather bad condition. As mentioned above, it was detached from the spine. The quires – tied together by three double

20 The Arator manuscript was not the only manuscript from Haase's book collection that Peiper bought at the time. Another manuscript he probably acquired at the time was a codex containing *Expositio super septem psalmos poenitentiales* by Petrus de Alliaco (Pierre d'Ailly). See: <http://pecia.blog.tudchentil.org/category/vente-auction/page/5/> and <https://www.textmanuscripts.com/medieval/alliaco-illuminated-liturgy-60449> (consulted on 28th February 2022). According to the description contained therein, there is a pencil entry on the front pastedown of this manuscript: *Ex bibliotheca Haaseanea* (p. 216, n. 7330), and on the front free endpaper (front flyleaf) a stamp: *Dr R. Peiper*.

21 I would here like to thank Ms. Katarzyna Łabuz, Head of University Library's Special Collections Conservation Workshop for all the information concerning the condition of the manuscript when it arrived at the Wrocław University Library and the methods of its restoration.

22 See text above and note 19.

cords of linen threads – were cracked in the gutter from the upper margin to the cord. The parchment leaves were heavily soiled with brown stains, shabby, corrugated. Some had holes caused by mechanical wear (fols. 33, 39, 46). A paper pastedown was glued to the front board. To the back of the block two handmade paper quires (6 folios and 4 folios) were sewn along with manuscript parchment reinforcing strips. A few of these folios were stained and some small pieces of their lower margins are missing. The back of the text block was joined to the board by a paper pastedown.

The codex has undergone the following conservation treatments.<sup>23</sup> The binding has been separated from the block. The front and back pastedowns have been peeled off while damp, and then the boards and pastedowns have been cleaned of glue. The old fabric has been removed from the binding. The leather and boards have been wet-cleaned of glue residues. From the front board the fittings have been removed on the spine side and the leather was lifted up, and from the back board the fittings, bosses and remains of leather have been removed. The fittings have been cleaned with prosthetic instruments. Remnants of cords and pegs have been removed from the boards. The quires have been separated and cleaned of glue, and then sewn onto double string cords according to their original position. The spine has been cold sealed with a mixture of paste and hide glue. The gaps between the cords have been sealed with leather straps. The boards have been attached to the text block and the original pegs have been restored. New leather has been stretched over the spine, the back board and part of the front board, which is where the fabric used to be and where the original leather was added. The fittings have been returned to their original place. The strap of the clasp has been reinforced with new leather. The binding has been treated with balsam and petroleum jelly. The leaves have been cleaned with a latex sponge, rubbers of various hardness, brushes and cotton buds while damp. Cracks in the parchment and paper leaves have been reinforced with paper pulp, long-fibre paper and tissue paper.

23 The conservation of the codex has been carried out by Małgorzata Kruk from the University Library's Special Collections Conservation Workshop. The photographic documentation has been made by Małgorzata Kruk and Dorota Chmielarz.



The twelfth-century manuscript of Arator currently consists of 60 folios numbered in pencil (ff. I, 1-41, 43-48, II-XII). To these may be added two paper pastedowns detached from the front and back boards during conservation, which together with f. I and f. XII form the front and rear endpapers of the manuscript volume.<sup>24</sup> The nineteenth-century pencil foliation was made before the loss of f. 42, of which only a very narrow parchment strip remained. The main part of the manuscript (ff. 1-41, 43-48) consists of parchment leaves. The additional ff. II-XI are made of handmade paper (on f. VII and f. IX fragments of two different watermarks are visible). Ff. I, 48v, liv-XIv are blank. On the inside of the front board there are three entries: at the top in pencil: *Insunt folia 48 membrancea*; in the middle, in dark blue crayon: *Foll. 49*; and at the bottom, the aforementioned pencil entry: *Ex Bibliotheca Haaseanea* (p. 216, n. 7334) with an illegible entry (also in pencil) in parenthesis. On f. IIr there is an entry in pencil at the upper margin: *saeculi duodecimi*, below in another hand and also in pencil: *6 quaterniones = 48 folia membranacea*, and further down the previously mentioned ownership inscriptions in pencil.

The codex consists of 8 quires. Its parchment part (ff. 1-48) comprises 6 quaternions, with the last, sixth quaternion being incomplete due to the loss of f. 42. The arrangement of the folios within the parchment quires is thus as follows:  $1^{4+4} + 2^{4+4} + 3^{4+4} + 4^{4+4} + 5^{4+4} + 6^{3+4}$ . Quire signatures in Roman numerals are written in the middle of a lower margin of the leaf beginning each quire (f. 1r, 9r, 17r, 25r, 33r, 41r). The paper quires (ff. II-XI) are ternion and binion:  $7^{3+3}$ ;  $8^{2+2}$ . Both these quires (the seventh and eighth) are reinforced with parchment strips written in a medieval script.

The main text of the codex was copied in one column on folios measuring 15 cm x 9.5 cm. Horizontal and vertical lines of the ruling made with dry point are mainly visible on a few early pages of the manuscript. On f. 1r attempts of the ruling with pen are noticeable, but these were abandoned on subsequent folios. The writing pattern was given little consideration by the scribe. The written space of the main text (ff. 1r-46v) measures approximately 11.5 cm x 6.5 cm. There are approximately

24 See above on the conservation treatments, which have been carried out.

25 lines of text on each page. The unfinished *Accessus* on ff. 47r-48r occupies a space of 12 cm x 7.5 cm with 33 lines per page. Some of the leaves show traces of pricking.

At the beginning of the main text (f. 1r) there is the *Praefatio* (inc. *Romani obsessi erant a gothis in quodam castello tuscię inter quos erat Arator ... x ... expl. romanos quorum unus fuit arator diu fluctuagos pristinę libertati restituerunt*).<sup>25</sup> Not written by Arator, the preface takes various forms in Arator's manuscripts.<sup>26</sup> It is then followed by *Epistola ad Florianum* (ff. 1r-1v), *Epistola ad Vigilium* (ff. 1v-2r) and *Historia Apostolica* itself (ff. 2v-46v). The final leaves of the codex (ff. 47r-48r) contain the unfinished text (inc. [Int]encio est aratoris in hoc libro breuiter recolligere actus apostolorum ... x ... et conuerso paula [with o added above a at the end] proconsule apud paphum deinde ...). It is actually a completely unique text of *Accessus ad Aratorem*, found only in this codex. It is structured in a number of sentences, each beginning with the words: *Intencio a[ratoris] est in ...* It differs from the *Accessus Aratoris*, which is present in some Arator manuscripts<sup>27</sup> and which, from the twelfth century onwards, can be found in anthologies now referred to as *Accessus ad auctores*.<sup>28</sup> This *Accessus* consists of three sections of which the first treats the life of Arator, the second analyses the work, and the third section interprets the two epistles which are at the beginning of the work.<sup>29</sup> The *accessus* in the codex in question focuses primarily on the presentation of authorial intention and is longer than

25 In the quoted parts of the manuscript, an attempt has been made to preserve its spelling as much as possible. Only brachygraphic abbreviations have been expanded. Proper names have been left written in lower case if that is how they were written in the manuscript. Missing or reconstructed and any additional words were placed in square brackets.

26 In his edition of *Historia Apostolica's praefatio* and glosses A.P. Orbán takes into account five manuscripts that contain the *praefatio* (also called *prologus*): Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C 74 sup.; London, British Library, Royal MS. 15 A. V.; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (further cited: BNF), fonds latin 2773; Paris, BNF, fonds latin 17905; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (further cited: BAV), Palat. Lat. 1716. See Orbán 2006: vol. 1, 1-2, 41, 43, 54, 61, 90; 2, 1-2.

27 See for example: München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19451, p. 218-19; Paris, BNF, fonds latin 8095, f. 1v.

28 The latest edition: Wheeler 2015: 44-46.

29 Wheeler 2015: 156.

the one mentioned above. It also contains elements of the summary of the *Historia Apostolica*.

The manuscript does not include the *Epistola ad Parthenium*.<sup>30</sup> It also lacks the anonymous *relatio*, which appears sometimes at the beginning, sometimes at the end in most of Arator's oldest manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> It is a type of official account of the *Historia Apostolica*'s presentation to Pope Vigilius and its subsequent public readings. It was probably written shortly after the poem itself.<sup>32</sup> *Epistola ad Florianum* and *Epistola ad Vigilium* do not include dedications written in prose. The *Historia Apostolica* itself (ff. 2v-46v) also lacks a prose dedication. It does not contain non-Aratorian prose *capitulationes* – the one-sentence “chapter titles” usually placed in their entirety before the poem or half before its first book and half before its second, and the *tituli* – several-sentence prose summaries that were usually included in the text before the relevant “chapter” of the poem.<sup>33</sup>

It seems that this manuscript was transcribed for use in schools and was stripped of all the additional parts in prose i.e.: the editorial paratext (*capitulationes*, *tituli* and *relatio*) and the dedications mentioned above

30 It appears in only two of Arator's manuscripts: Paris, BNF, fonds lat. 2773 and fonds lat. 9347 in the edition of A.P. Orbán identified as P1 and P5 (cf. Orbán 2006: 1, 52-60, 66-71, 205), and in the edition of Bureau & Deproost as Θ and R (cf. Bureau & Deproost 2017: CXVIII-CXX, CXVI-CXVII, CXCI).

31 It occurs in most of the ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts that form the basis of the latest *Historia Apostolica* edition. See Bureau & Deproost 2017: 185-86. Cf. also Sotinel 1989: 805-8.

32 Sotinel 1989: 805-8.

33 The terms *capitulationes* and *tituli* are used by Bureau and Deproost in their latest edition of *Historia Apostolica*. The previous editors A.P. McKinlay (McKinlay 1951) and A.P. Orbán (Orbán 2006) referred to *capitulationes* as *tituli* and to *tituli* as *capitula*. *Capitulationes* and *tituli* occur in most manuscripts collated by A.P. McKinlay, A.P. Orbán, and B. Bureau & P.-A. Deproost. Because they were written and included later in the text, B. Bureau & P.-A. Deproost do not put them in their HA edition (cf. Bureau & Deproost 2017: CVIII-CIX). Instead, they are part of the text in the editions of both McKinlay and Orbán, although both editors were aware that they are not written by Arator (McKinlay 1951: IX; Orbán 2006: 1, 100). See also Hillier 2020: 75. – *Capitulationes* and *tituli* cease to appear in manuscripts of the twelfth century and later. This is not a rule. For example, two twelfth-century codices of Arator do not include them: BAV, Palat. Lat. 1717 and Paris, BNF, fonds latin 16699, but they appear in one thirteenth-century manuscript: Paris, BNF, fonds latin 14758.

which are usually scattered in Arator's manuscripts. It can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the codex from which the manuscript in question was copied had *tituli*, as the division into chapters introduced by them is noticeable. The copyist left space for initials at the beginning of each chapter<sup>34</sup> and usually kept a wider spacing between successive "chapters."

The initially copied text of *Historia Apostolica* was sometimes supplemented in the main column or in the margins with one or more lines, the lack of which was most often due to the copyist's omissions. Such lines later added to the main column include 1.194-197: (*festinas proferre reos ... x ... uoce parentum*) [f. 5v]. In the margins the text was filled in with the following lines: 1.836-837 (*cetera membra ... x ... si iure movemus*) [f. 18r], 2.100 (*uenerit ipse salus stimulis agitata furoris*) [f. 24v] and 2.736 (*quod iacet interius menti non dura metalli*) [f. 36v]. The last two lines are currently very worn out and therefore partially illegible.

The following lines are completely missing in the manuscript: 1.487 (*Omnibus ergo salus uno poscente uenibat*),<sup>35</sup> 2.73 (*Virgineos intrare sinus. Euoluite, quicquid*) and the last line of *Historia Apostolica* 2.1250 (*et tenet aeternam socialis gratia palmam*). After line 2.1249 there is a five-line, partially illegible subscription, half of which reads: .... ET TIBI / SALVATORI LAUS SIT QUIA / FINIT ARATOR (f. 46v).<sup>36</sup> Due to the lack of f. 42, the text does not contain the lines: 2.1010-1060 (*ut memoras, quot tela moues ... x ... pro uita meliore mori. Sed muneris auctor*).

34 See below on the codex's script.

35 This line is only transmitted by late manuscripts containing *Historia Apostolica* or by marginalia. Bureau & Deproost think that it is probably a gloss which was given a metrical form (Bureau & Deproost 2017: XCV, 36, 241). A.P. Orbán in his edition (Orbán 2006: 1, 95, 260) quotes four manuscripts that contain this line: Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana C 74 sup.; Paris, BNF, fons latin 9347; Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale 70 (45); Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 3862 (formerly 589). However, this information is incorrect. It is not confirmed by other editions, and an available online microfilm of the manuscript Paris, BNF, fonds latin 9347 does not include the lines: 1.342-2.95. See: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9066678v/f9.item> (consulted on 17.02.2022).

36 Cf. other subscriptions in Arator's manuscripts: McKinlay 1951: 148-49; Orbán 2006: 1, 402.

The manuscript was copied by several hands, which all bear some features of the *littera Prae Gothica* (also called Protogothic) characteristic of the twelfth century. It is hardly a script type in itself. It is, in fact, Carolingian script that shows to a greater or lesser extent one or more of the new features which would only be present all together in the fully developed Gothic *textualis*.<sup>37</sup> The *praefatio*, placed before the main text on f. 1r, was written in brownish ink by a hand identical to that of some of the interlinear and marginal glosses in the codex (ff. 1v, 2v, 4r, 5r). The letter **r** of this hand always has the same form. The straight Carolingian **s** is used in almost every position. The ‘uncial’ **s** is observed only at the beginning of the sentence. The vertical Carolingian **d** is the most frequent, but sometimes the ‘uncial’ **d** with sloping ascender appears. The lower bow of **g** is closed. This hand uses the tironian sign for ‘et’ and **e** caudata at the end of a word.

The main text of *Historia Apostolica* was written with dark ink by two hands. The first one copied text on f. 1r-23v (first 8 lines). The letters **f** and straight **s** are upright and very similar. ‘Uncial’ **s** is used only at the beginning of the sentence. The shaft of **a** is almost in a vertical position. The normal Carolingian shape of **r** is usually used but in a few instances the capital **R** appears at the end of the word (e.g. *uilior*, f. 13r). The straight **d** may be found everywhere. The lower bow of **g** is open. The second hand copied the text on ff. 23v-46v. It is probably responsible for *Accessus* (ff. 47r-48r) and for a large part of glosses on all folios as well. The main characteristic of this handwriting is that particular letters and the strokes of some letters are often unconnected to one another. For that reason, for example such letter as **m**, **n**, **i** and **u** are difficult for readers to distinguish, because forming them particular/single minims are simply separated. This problem has sometimes been partly solved by adding strokes above **i**. The letter **r** sometimes extends a little below the baseline. Straight **s** is the most frequent but sometimes round **s** may be found at the beginning and at the end of a word. **d** is straight everywhere. The letter **g** has an open lower bow. The ampersand is used for *et*.

37 Derolez 2012: 57.

The five-line, partially illegible subscription on f. 46v is written mostly in capital letters.<sup>38</sup> Uppercase letters are also used to at the beginning of each verse, at the beginning of names, and sometimes at first words of individual chapters (e.g. *Primus*, f. 4v, *Agmine*, f. 7v). The manuscript is not illuminated. Space has been left for the initials of words beginning both *Epistolae* and each of the “chapters” of *Historia Apostolica*. Some of these initials were produced with a pen (ff. 1r, 4v, 8v, 9r, 14v, 16v, 17r, 22v, 24v, 27r, 38v).

The marginal and interlinear glosses which are very numerous on ff. 1-41 and were partly trimmed, probably during past conservation treatments of the codex, belong to the first of the two groups into which the tradition of glosses to *Historia Apostolica* was divided by their editor A.P. Orbán.<sup>39</sup> This is evidenced, for example, by the following glosses characteristic of this group: *Ad Flor.* 2: ORE] *in principio* (f. 1r); *Ad Flor.* 5: CON-CURRE] *festina* (f. 1r); *Hist. Apos.* 1.4: IMA] *profunditatem* (f. 2r); *Hist. Apos.* 1.4: ARDUA] *altitudinem* (f. 2r); *Hist. Apos.* 1.13: CINERESQUE PIORUM] *corpora sanctorum* (f. 2v); *Hist. Apos.* 1.25: DOCUMENTA] *indicia* (f. 2v); *Hist. Apos.* 2.1008: FAMEN] *tuam* (f. 41v).<sup>40</sup> Ff. 43r-46v were not annotated at all. Ff. 1r, 8r, 43v, 45v carry numerous pen trials.

Due to its age, the manuscript in question is not among the codices important for establishing the text of the *Historia Apostolica*, as the manuscripts containing the *Historia* dated later than the eleventh century are believed to be of no value for the textual history of Arator's work.<sup>41</sup> This is because they systematically reproduced errors that crept into the text of the *Historia Apostolica* during the Carolingian period. Nevertheless, the manuscript of Arator discussed here is interesting and its existence is worth pointing out. Often manuscripts in private hands are poorly identified and described by researchers. Such is the case with this twelfth

38 See above.

39 Orbán 2006: 1, 102-3. Dividing the tradition into two groups, the editor analysed 27 codices. In addition to these, he also took into account the mixed tradition, which included manuscripts with glosses from both the first and second groups.

40 A.P. Orbán assigned the following manuscripts to this group: Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek 302 (450), München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm 19451 (Tegernsee 1451), Paris, BNF, fonds latin 8318, Trier, Stadtbibliothek 1093/1694, BAV, Palat. Lat., 1716 (see Orbán 2006: 1, 103).

41 Bureau & Deproost 2017: CXII.

century manuscript, which is not mentioned in the literature on Arator, is not included in the list of all his manuscripts and has never been described in any catalogue. It may also have potential value for the study of the tradition of glosses. Its fate can only be traced from the nineteenth century, when it found its way to the book collection of the aforementioned Professor Friedrich Haase.

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# CIRCULAR FLOW: UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL IN THE *IMPERIUM GALLIARUM*

By Kristian Kanstrup Christensen

**Summary:** This article investigates the cultural tendencies of the Gallic Empire (c. AD 260-274). The persistence of imperial institutions shows the Gallic emperors intended to convey an impression of continuity. Yet the numismatic record also shows the influence of a distinct cultural environment associated with the Batavian community and the Rhine army. Batavian forms of Hercules, originally developed through the transformation of the Roman Hercules to suit a local context, were elevated into Postumus' (r. c. AD 260 to 269) imperial propaganda, confirming a long-held hypothesis in anthropology postulating a circular flow of cultural borrowing in agrarian societies between local and elite traditions.

“Great, indeed, was the love felt for Postumus in the hearts of all the people of Gaul because he had thrust back all the German tribes and had restored the Roman Empire to its former security.”<sup>1</sup>

This laudatory description in the *Historia Augusta* (late 3rd c. or later) of a usurper in late 3rd century Gaul is likely more revealing of the author's feeling for the legitimate ruler, Gallienus (r. 253 to 268) than of the true nature of Postumus (r. c. 260 to 269).<sup>2</sup> The latter's actual support turned out to be too weak to overturn Gallienus' regime in Italy (if, indeed, that was ever an aim) yet too entrenched for the usurper to be evicted from north-west Europe (despite an attempt variously dated to 261, 265 or 266).<sup>3</sup> The consequence was the breakaway Gallic Empire (c. 260 to 274)

- 1 *Hist. Aug. Tyranni Triginta* 3: *si quidem nimius amor erga Postumum omnium erat in Gallianorum mente populorum, quod summotis omnibus Germanicis gentibus Romanum in pristinam securitatem revocasset imperium*. Trans. Magie 1968: 71.
- 2 Birley 2006: 19; Cameron 2011: 743-82.
- 3 Christol 1997: 155; Southern 2015 [2001]: 144-46.

consisting of the British, Gallic, Germanic and Iberian provinces. The Gallic emperor's later struggle with a usurper of his own, Laelian, and his subsequent murder at the hands of his own men (both 268 or 269), however, suggest limits to the love felt for him.<sup>4</sup>

Given his eventual failure and the general chaos of the time, Postumus' state-building is mostly studied as a political phenomenon, a symptom of broader imperial dysfunction in the latter half of the 3rd century. However, while extremely sparse, the evidence for the ruling ideology of the *Imperium Galliarum* and the symbolism Postumus employed to win 'love' in the 'hearts of all the people of Gaul' provide a fascinating vista on Roman imperial culture as it manifested itself in the provincial societies of the period. As the passage in the *Historia Augusta* reveals, these were societies quite capable of supporting a usurper carrying out a project of political separatism in the name of 'restoring the Roman Empire'. By comparing this evidence to the anthropology of local communities in agrarian societies generally, the present article analyses the *Imperium Galliarum* as a cultural phenomenon. It will demonstrate that Postumus' ideology was a logical consequence of a pre-modern cosmopolitanism that allowed for the cohabitation of local and universal elements and which explains the perseverance of imperial culture in north-west Europe throughout the tumultuous period.

Little is known of Postumus' background. He was possibly the governor of Germania Inferior before the Rhine army proclaimed him emperor. Even the year of the proclamation is uncertain. Tradition, not implausibly, favours 260 following the capture of Valerian (r. 253 to 260) in the débâcle of Edessa, while the Augsburg Victory Altar documents Postumus' assumption of the imperial title by September 11th in either 260 or 261.<sup>5</sup> Although the altar documents a Roman victory over invading "*Semnonnes or Iuthungi*,"<sup>6</sup> the period seems nonetheless to have witnessed the collapse of Roman defences along the Rhine and Upper Danube.<sup>7</sup> Coin

4 Jones, Martindale & Morris 1971: 492, 720.

5 Southern 2015 [2001]: 140-44. Lavagne 1994: 443-44 favours the victory commemorated on the Altar over events in distant Edessa as spark for the revolt.

6 *Semnonum sive Iouthungorum*. See König 1997: 344-45.

7 Strobel 1993: 292; Wilkes 2005: 223, 231.

evidence suggests the abandonment of the Lower Rhine forts between 260 and 270, while two late 4th century historians report the devastation of Gaul in the later reign of Gallienus by invaders from across the river.<sup>8</sup>

In Eutropius the people responsible are the Alamanni who “devastated the Gauls and penetrated Italy” while “Germans penetrated the Spanish provinces and stormed the renowned city of Tarragona.”<sup>9</sup> In Aurelius Victor the Alamanni are blamed only for the invasion of Italy while Franks are blamed for having “pillaged Gaul and occupied Spain, where they ravaged and almost destroyed the town of Tarraconensis, and some, after conveniently acquiring ships, penetrated as far as Africa.”<sup>10</sup> Since the attackers of Tarragona must necessarily have crossed Gaul, while invaders of Italy may well have done the same, these accounts are not necessarily as divergent as is sometimes assumed.<sup>11</sup> In any case they recount what must to contemporary observers have been a confusing series of events.

In such a context, Postumus’ usurpation seems likely to reflect an urgent need in the region for a commander-in-chief to manage local defences rather than a desire to meddle in wider imperial politics. The Augsburg Victory Altar appears to list local forces among the Roman troops, and it also seems likely that a substantial part of the Rhine army was recruited locally.<sup>12</sup> For the 3rd century, the available evidence for *Legio I Minervia* shows 9 Germans, 6 Gauls, 2 natives of Noricum and from Dalmatia, Pannonia, Syria, and Thrace a single recruit each; for *Legio VIII*

8 Willems 1984: 271-72. For the AD 270 dating of several Gelderland coin hoards, see Willems 1984: 141-42. A new defensive line later established between Cologne and Bavai is sometimes ascribed to the Gallic Empire but more likely hails from the decades following Aurelian’s restoration of imperial unity (Drinkwater 1987: 220-21).

9 Eutr. 9.8: *Alamanni vastatis Galliis in Italiam penetraverunt [...] Germani usque ad Hispanias penetraverunt et civitatem nobilem Tarraconem expugnaverunt*. Trans. Bird 1993: 57.

10 Aur. Vict. Caes. 33: *Francorum gentes direpta Gallia Hispaniam possiderent vastato ac paene direpto Tarraconensium oppido, nactisque in tempore navigiis pars in usque Africam permearet*. Trans. Bird 1994: 33.

11 E.g. Drinkwater, 1987: 50-51.

12 For a discussion regarding the local forces mentioned on the altar, including the possibility that the passage should be interpreted as referring to locals freed from Germanic captivity rather than participants in the battle, see Le Roux 1997: 281-84, 289-90.

*Augusta* 3 Gauls, 3 Germans and from Italy, Raetia, and Thrace a single recruit each; for *Legio XXII Primigenia* 20 Germans, 9 Gauls, 8 Thracians and 5 Raetians; for *Legio XXX Ulpia victrix* 10 Germans, 9 Gauls, 6 Thracians, 2 Britons, 1 Dalmatian and 1 Italian.<sup>13</sup> If these numbers are loosely representative of the Rhine legions as a whole, Postumus will have been raised to the purple mainly by Gaulish and Germanic recruits with a personal interest in the maintenance of the frontier and the protection of local communities.<sup>14</sup>

Postumus' response to this need was broadcast by the coinage of the regime. Much of this material seamlessly continued the traditions of the central government with legends such as *Pax Aug* and *Mars Victor*.<sup>15</sup> Other coins emphasise the restoration and defence of Roman civilisation in Gaul as the *raison d'être* of the new regime, hailing Postumus as *Restitutor Galliarum* ('restorer of Gaul') and as the provider of *Salus Provinciarum* ('safety of the provinces').<sup>16</sup> The lack of an attempted invasion of Italy may reflect sincerity in this respect.<sup>17</sup> If an anonymous Late Antique continuation of Dio's *Roman History* is to be believed, Postumus wrote Gallienus to declare himself content to rule those who had declared him emperor, and consequently asked his rival emperor not to cross the Alps, so that Romans would not need to fight one another.<sup>18</sup> While advertising its devotion to the welfare of the north-west provinces, however, Postumus' regime made no attempt at articulating a separate identity for this territory.<sup>19</sup> Coin legends such as *Romae Aeternae* and *Herculi Romano* instead

13 König 1981: 89-91.

14 Vogt 1993 [1965]: 63.

15 *RIC V Postumus* 78, 79, 153, 154, 218, 219, 219a, 312, 318, 319, 357, 359, 361.

16 The designation as *Restitutor Galliarum* was an innovation of Gallienus' coinage from the end of the 250's, following that emperor's war on the Alamanni and immediately predating Postumus' revolt (*RIC V Gallienus (joint reign)* 31-35; Elmer 1941: 16). For Postumus' usage see *RIC V Postumus* 82, 157-59. *Salus Provinciarum* was an invention of Postumus' regime (*RIC V Postumus* 38, 87; Drinkwater 1987: 167).

17 Southern 2015 [2001]: 145.

18 *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* 4.194.6. For an assessment of this source and its reliability, see Drinkwater 1987: 82-84.

19 The phrase 'Imperium Galliarum' is a modern designation. The closest an ancient source came to conceiving of the breakaway state as a distinct political entity is Eutropius' remark that *Victorinus postea Galliarum accepit imperium* ("Then Victorinus took absolute authority in Gaul") (*Eutr. Breviarium* 9.9; Drinkwater 1987: 53).

signal its continuing cultural, if not political, attachment to the wider Roman world.<sup>20</sup> Continuation of convention also seems to account for the legend of SC (*Senatus Consultum*, i.e. “by decree of the Senate”) on Postumus’ sestertii, given the lack of other evidence that he should have established a senate of his own.<sup>21</sup>

Notwithstanding the lack of a senate, the Gallic Empire furthered its ideology of political continuity through an emulation of Roman forms of government: magistrates were appointed, consuls were elected annually, Postumus was designated as *pontifex maximus*, furnished with a Praetorian Guard and had his *tribunicia potestas* annually renewed.<sup>22</sup> No changes were made to the structures of provincial government or the boundaries of individual provinces, and the state carried on the functions of the imperial government, for instance elevating Speyer to *colonia* and Carlisle to *civitas*.<sup>23</sup> The emphasis on protection and continuity gained Postumus a positive legacy seen not only in the *Historia Augusta* but also in Eutropius (late 4th c.) and Orosius (early 5th c.) both of whom credited him with the restoration of the north-western provinces following near collapse.<sup>24</sup> His self-presentation would be imitated some decades later by Carausius (r. c. 286 to 293), another usurper carving out a similarly independent sphere in north-west Europe, who in one coin issue declared himself *Restitutor Brit* (‘restorer of Britain’).<sup>25</sup>

The appeal of a message of continuity of Roman civilisation reflected the way imperial administration was organised on the provincial level. The Roman Empire was far too vast for a central administration to monitor tightly with pre-modern means of communication and transportation. Instead, responsibility for most of the practical administration was delegated to local elites, mainly the councils of the empire’s estimated

20 *RIC V Postumus* 36–37, 306–7, 351; Elmer 1941: 52, supplementary sheet 3.

21 *RIC V Postumus* 115–17, 120, 121, 123–28, 135–36, 143–49, 152, 155–59, 165–72, 177, 179, 180, 185; Drinkwater 1987: 159–60.

22 Potter 2014 [2004]: 256; Southern 2015 [2001]: 140–45, 413. Postumus’ coinage abounds with designations of pontifical and tribunician authority, e.g. *RIC V Postumus* 1–2.

23 Drinkwater 1987: 127–30.

24 Eutr. *Breviarium* 9.9; Oros. *Historiae Adversus Paganos* 7.22.10.

25 Casey 1994: 54.

two thousand or so cities. Elite cohesion across the territories was ensured and political fragmentation prevented partly by a shared material interest in the maintenance of an imperial system that safeguarded local hierarchies. Yet cohesion was also provided by integration into a common elite culture. Crucially, this culture was not reserved for the elites of the original Latin population of Central Italy but was open to provincial propertied classes.<sup>26</sup> This is evident e.g. from Claudius' (r. 41 to 54) opening of the Senate to prominent Gauls.<sup>27</sup>

Comprehension of this social structure in Roman imperial studies owes a great deal to the ideal type of the *agro-literate polity* described by Ernest Gellner.<sup>28</sup> This model envisages agrarian states as consisting of culturally diverse, insulated communities of agricultural producers ruled over by elite segments sharing a universalised prestige culture.<sup>29</sup> Gellner's conception of pre-modernity drew in turn on the anthropology of Robert Redfield, who first proposed a similar framework to explain the cultural life of peasant communities in early 20th century Mexico, and his associate McKim Marriott, who first employed it to structure the findings of a practical investigation, his 1951 to 1952 field study of the Indian village of Kishan Garhi.<sup>30</sup>

Central to Redfield and Marriott's theory was the hypothesis of an ongoing, low-intensity dialogue between the local traditions of peasant communities and the prestige tradition of literate elites. Indeed, the latter was constructed from elements of the former that were *universalised* – that is, transformed to suit a geographically unspecific upper-class lifestyle whose features were codified by literature. Conversely, the former was enriched by adoptions from the latter which were *localised* – that is, transformed to suit a mainly orally preserved culture whose value to the community depended on its relevance to the specific context.<sup>31</sup>

26 Bang & Turner 2015: 12, 26; Lavan, Payne & Weisweiler 2016: 3-6.

27 Malloch 2020.

28 Lavan, Payne & Weisweiler 2016: 5.

29 Gellner 1983: 8-18.

30 Redfield 1955: 14-21; Wilcox 2004: 151-52.

31 Marriott 1955: 181-91.



Though sources for the *Imperium Galliarum* are slight, they are noteworthy for supporting both the above postulates. Firstly, Postumus' ideology was not directed at a class of Italian landholders but at an elite of local origin that identified with the culture of metropolitan Rome. Postumus' own name Cassianus likely resulted from a common Gallo-Germanic practice of changing Latin *nomina* into *cognomina* and back again (Cassius > Cassianus). The names of two of his most important subordinates, Marcus Piavonus Victorinus and Gaius Esuvius Tetricus, both of whom would briefly rule as emperors themselves in the turbulent last years of the breakaway state, suggest Gallic origin (the uncertain Piavonus and the clearly Celtic Esuvius).<sup>32</sup> The position of these individuals at the head of a state striving to protect Roman imperial traditions amply demonstrates the success of elite assimilation in north-west Europe by the 3rd century.

Secondly, despite its strong focus on the continuity of the civilisation of imperial Rome, Postumus' coinage documents the existence, and vitality, of a distinct cultural tradition in the north-western provinces, more precisely in the heavily-garrisoned and heavily-recruited communities of the Lower Rhine. This is evident in the Gallic emperor's invocations of local forms of Hercules. In the vocabulary of Redfield and Mariott these are *universalisations* of cultural features that have previously been limited to local or regional traditions.

One is the figure of Hercules Magusanus, amalgamating the Roman god with a local deity.<sup>33</sup> This amalgamation has a long-documented history prior to the Gallic Empire. It appears (as 'Magusanus Hercules') as early as the mid-1st century AD in an inscription from present-day Ruimel in the Lower Rhine area.<sup>34</sup> That inscription was set up by a *summus magistratus* of the Batavi, and throughout the following centuries the link between the deity and this people remained strong. Of the three major sanctuaries in Batavian territory, Empel was certainly devoted to him as evidenced by a votive inscription and a statuette of Hercules.<sup>35</sup> Elst and Kessel are thought to have been too, the former based on the find of a

32 Drinkwater 1987: 125–26; Potter 2014 [2004]: 257.

33 For attestations in Postumus' coinage, see *RIC V Postumus* 68, 139.

34 *CIL* XIII 8771; Derks, 1998: 89.

35 *AE* 1994, 1281; Derks, 1998: 98.

fragment of another figurine, the latter based on a predominance of military equipment among the archaeological finds.<sup>36</sup>

Votive inscriptions to the god have also been found in places where Batavian recruits are known to have served. In Rome an altar to Hercules Magusanus was erected by members of the horse guard, a unit so dependent on Batavian recruits that it was often referred to as ‘the Batavians’.<sup>37</sup> The god was also the object of a dedication in present-day Romania by a member of the *ala I Batavorum*, though a Batavian connection for a second dedication from the same region by a *stator* of the *ala II Pannoniorum* is more speculative.<sup>38</sup> It is possible that Hercules Magusanus dominated the religious landscape along a wider stretch of the Lower Rhine, as the neighbours of the Batavians have also produced inscriptions honouring the god.<sup>39</sup>

Postumus’ coinage also invokes Hercules Deusoniensis.<sup>40</sup> While the Celtic name Deuso (‘the raging one’) is known from elsewhere, this particular deity is unattested outside of this Gallic emperor’s coinage, a sole exception being the coins of the later usurper, Carausius, which likewise invoke the figure, presumably in another deliberate evocation of Postumus’ memory.<sup>41</sup> Possibly the god’s name should be understood as ‘Hercules of Deuso’, Deuso in turn being identified with the town of Diessen in present-day North Brabant. This would also place this Hercules in Batavian territory, and it is likely that he should be understood as the Hercules Magusanus worshipped in Diessen rather than as a rival local god. This would explain the paradox that the otherwise barely attested Hercules Deusoniensis is more common in coin hoards from the Gallic Empire than the well-established Hercules Magusanus. On some coins, Postumus even appears as the former.<sup>42</sup> The preference for Deusoniensis has

36 Roymans 2009: 227–28.

37 *CIL* VI 31162.

38 *AE* 1977, 704; Rubel & Varga, 2021

39 Haynes 2013: 232–35; Rubel & Varga, 2021: 108–18. For Hercules Magusanus among the Cananefates: *CIL* XIII 8777 (Domburg). For the Tungri: *RIB* 2140 (Polmont, near Edinburgh), a 2nd century dedication set up by a *duplicarius* of the *ala I Tungrorum*. For the Ubii: *CIL* XIII 8610 (Xanten); *CIL* XIII 8492 (Cologne); *CIL* XIII 8010 (Bonn).

40 *RIC V Postumus* 20–22, 64–66, 98–99, 130–34, 137, 200–2, 247, 343; Derks 1998: 21, 25–26.

41 *RIC V Carausius* 800; Shiel 1977: 195.

42 *RIC V Postumus* 99, 137, 247.

led to speculations that either Postumus himself or his revolt might have originated in Diessen. There is, however, no evidence for these hypotheses.<sup>43</sup>

Nonetheless it is quite plausible that Batavian soldiery played a crucial role in the establishment of Postumus' state. In the 1st century AD and possibly long into the 2nd the Batavian community was heavily recruited for the Roman *auxilia* with some 5,500 men serving at any one time out of an estimated total population of 30,000 to 40,000.<sup>44</sup> By Postumus' time this arrangement had come to an end, yet army recruitment continued to draw heavily on populations adjacent to established garrisons, and the Lower Rhine was a heavily garrisoned frontier. Batavians and their neighbours likely made up a notable proportion of the soldiery employed in these garrisons. With this soldiery rather than with the civilian population deeper inside Gaul lay the initiative for the elevation of usurpers.<sup>45</sup> The latter aspect is illustrated by Postumus' choice of capital which has scholarship divided between Cologne or Trier, the two locations where he minted coins.<sup>46</sup> Either possibility puts his centre of power close to the Rhine.

Moreover, the ascription of the Sack of Autun (sometime between 269 and 271) to the 'Bagaudae' by the orator Eumenius, a native of 3rd century Gaul, is generally thought to be a faulty Renaissance conjecture that should have read 'Batavicae' and probably referred to the armies of the Gallic Empire.<sup>47</sup>

Altogether it is reasonable to suppose that Postumus and his successors depended for at least some of their authority and military might on the Batavians and their neighbours on the Lower Rhine. Given the fundamentally local nature of most cults in the Roman world, even soldiers recruited elsewhere may have come to identify with the Batavian cultural world. In an example from Hatra at the other end of the empire, two dedications to local deities (Shamash and Nergal, rendered in Latin

43 Biegel 1975: 835-36; König 1981: 123; Drinkwater 1987: 162-63; Gavrilović 2013: 178.

44 Haynes 2013: 114.

45 Vogt 1993 [1965]: 62-63.

46 Drinkwater 1987: 141-45, 228; Bourne 2001: 25-26.

47 Eumenius *Panegyrici Latini. Pro restaurandis scholis* 9.4; Nixon & Rodgers 1994: 154 n. 12; Woolf 1998: 1.

as, respectively, Sol Invictus and Hercules Sanctus) were made by the tribune of a unit stationed there for a brief period in the reign of Gordian III (r. 238 to 244).<sup>48</sup> It is quite plausible that decades of occupying garrisons on the Lower Rhine will have fostered a similar appreciation of the dominant local cult in the soldiers of the Rhine army, regardless of their individual origin, rendering the Batavian war god(s) a useful unifying symbol for an emperor depending specifically on this army. It has even been hypothesised that Postumus erected a temple for Hercules Deusoniensis.<sup>49</sup> However, given that the only evidence is the depiction on some coins of the god in front of a temple and that several Batavian temples for Hercules existed already, this theory is rather insubstantial.<sup>50</sup>

Curiously, the coins of the later Gallic emperors do not mention the Batavian deities and indeed rarely invoke deities at all.<sup>51</sup> Save for a single coin Hercules is not mentioned.<sup>52</sup> Visual depictions of the god are somewhat more common.<sup>53</sup> Given the iconographic conformity of the Batavian deities with the Roman, these coins may well have evoked both. The minor role of Hercules in the material, however, indicates his minor relevance to the ruling ideologies of Postumus' successors. One may speculate about the discomfort of identifying too closely with the ideology of a murdered emperor or the hypothesised Batavian origin of Postumus himself, which may not have been shared by his successors. There is, however, no obvious explanation, and little material from which to construct one, given the brief careers of these successors.<sup>54</sup>

Hercules Deusoniensis instead reappears on the coins of the later separatist emperor, Carausius, once again wielding a club in concordance with the standard iconography of the Roman god.<sup>55</sup> Since Deusoniensis is otherwise exclusively associated with Postumus, it is hard not to conclude that Carausius intended by his choice of deity to evoke the memory

48 AE 1958, 239-40; Stoll 2007: 466.

49 König 1981: 121.

50 RIC V Postumus 66, 134; Elmer 1941: 46 n. 316.

51 Drinkwater 1987: 175.

52 RIC V Tetricus I 230.

53 RIC V Victorinus 13, 23, 79, 91; RIC V Tetricus I 44.

54 Later Gallic emperors whose coinage appears in RIC: Laelian (r. c. 269), Marius (r. c. 269), Victorinus (r. c. 269-271), Domitian II (r. c. 271), Tetricus I (r. c. 271-274).

55 RIC V Carausius 800.

of Postumus, in turn suggesting a favourable view in the north-western provinces of the latter's political and cultural experiment.

Where the worship of Batavian forms of Hercules had previously been almost wholly limited to contexts marked by direct connections to the Lower Rhine, the importance of the Batavian soldiery for Postumus' regime manifested in the *universalisation* of their local religious tradition into the realm of state-sanctioned imperial coinage. In practice this was limited to the north-western provinces, yet the ideology displayed on the rest of the coinage was plainly pan-imperial. While Hercules is particularly prominent in Postumus' numismatic record, the other deities invoked by his regime make clear his continued devotion to the traditional cults of the imperial elite: Apollo, Diana, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Minerva, Neptune, Sarapis and Sol all feature, as do personifications of Victory and Good Fortune.<sup>56</sup> The correspondence of these deities with those ordinarily invoked by Roman emperors precludes the possibility that they mask devotion to local deities of the north-west.<sup>57</sup>

On the surface, the acceptance of Hercules Magusanus and Hercules Deusoniensis into this company required little accommodation with unfamiliar cultural concepts. An altar from Bonn displays Hercules Magusanus reining in the hell-hound Cerberus; a figure from Empel has him wearing a lionskin over his shoulders; and he is displayed holding the apples of the Hesperides on a statue from Xanten. Postumus' coins continue this pattern, depicting both Hercules Deusoniensis and Hercules Magusanus in the fashion of their Roman counterpart, clad in lionskin and wielding a club.<sup>58</sup>

Nevertheless, the worship of Hercules by the Batavian community was distinctly different from elsewhere in the empire. The temples of

56 E.g. *RIC V Postumus* 15, 29, 31, 60, 70, 76, 149, 263, 299, 312, 329.

57 König 1981: 112, 115; Drinkwater 1987: 165, 169, 173. The opposite possibility is attested elsewhere: the unusual popularity in the Balkans of Silvanus, a deity not usually promoted by the imperial centre, has been convincingly interpreted as the continuity in Latin guise of a regional god (Lulić 2015: 25-30) while the prominence of Saturn in Roman North Africa reflects continued adherence to the Phoenician deity Ba'al Hammon (Cadotte 2007: 25-44).

58 *RIC V Postumus* 20-21, 64-66, 68, 98, 130-33, 139, 200-1, 343; Roymans 2004: 243; Haynes 2013: 233-35.

both Elst and Empel have yielded substantial evidence for the ritual butchering of cattle, a continuation long into Roman times of a practice once common throughout north-west Europe but abandoned by most provincial populations in the immediate aftermath of the Roman conquest.<sup>59</sup> The Batavian area is also notable for the continuance of weapon-offerings into the 2nd century AD, another custom once widely common but abandoned elsewhere.<sup>60</sup>

More generally, peculiarities of the Batavian archaeological record suggest a community whose intense identification with the military role assigned to them by the imperial authorities led them to emphasise a martial Iron Age past that would have struck contemporary onlookers as 'barbarian'. Batavian pottery consumption is characterised by large drinking beakers that emulate products abandoned by their neighbours in the early Roman period, while from the 1st century AD onwards the Batavians adopted a new set of burial practices centred on the construction of low barrows, apparently in emulation of similar barrows found in the same area and deriving from the period 1100 to 400 BC.<sup>61</sup>

In this context the 1st century AD amalgamation of Hercules with the local war-god was, in the vocabulary of Redfield and Marriott, a *localisation*. Hercules Magusanus may have possessed the visual characteristics of the Roman god. Yet he only made sense for the Batavian community by serving as focus for a cult that embodied a set of local practices significantly dissimilar to those elsewhere associated with Hercules.

Postumus' invocation of Batavian forms of Hercules in place of the standard Roman variety was a novel development in Roman coinage and presumably a carefully crafted signal, communicating the association of the Gallic emperor with Batavian culture.<sup>62</sup> Crucially Postumus' wider self-representation was exceedingly martial, his coins often invoking Victory and representing trophies and prisoners of war.<sup>63</sup> Gallienus may have pioneered the title of *Restitutor Galliarum* but only on coins showing

59 Fernández-Götz & Roymans 2015: 26-27.

60 Nicolay 2003: 367-69.

61 Roymans 2014: 242; Pitts 2019: 189.

62 Derks 1998: 21.

63 *RIC V Postumus* 40, 89, 103, 166-72, 174, 230-31, 233-34, 236, 251.

him bare-headed and wielding a sceptre.<sup>64</sup> Postumus claimed the same title, depicted in full armour, his left hand resting on an upside-down lance, his foot in some cases resting on a conquered enemy.<sup>65</sup> The Batavian community was not only geographically close to Postumus' centre of operations and likely an important source of soldiers; there was also a congruity between the values traditionally associated with it and the values the Gallic emperor sought to display.

Postumus' apparent reliance on an indigenous elite and the prominence of local Batavian war gods have been described as *Gallicising* reactions to the generalising cultural tendencies of the imperial centre.<sup>66</sup> It would be more precise to describe the cultural tendency of the regime as a particular Rhine army culture asserting itself and glorifying its ability to protect the hinterland. The strongly Latin iconography of the Batavian versions of Hercules demonstrates that in the Batavian war-gods the amalgamation of imperial and local traits had progressed far beyond the point where their elevation into the realm of official coinage could be considered the introduction of a distinct 'Germanic' or 'Gallic' cultural element into the imperial. The central role of Roman recruitment in the development of the Batavian cultural outlook illustrates the same point on a wider scale.

While the elevation of Hercules Magusanus and Hercules Deusonensis from a regional phenomenon centred on the Lower Rhine to patrons of a reigning emperor constitute a *universalisation* of the provincial into the imperial, this provincial culture was in prior centuries shaped by *localisations* from the imperial prestige tradition into the local context. Features deriving from Roman culture, such as Latin epigraphy and the myths of Hercules, were introduced into the Batavian community, where they were put to use reinforcing a cultural system that in many ways remained distinct from Mediterranean societies.<sup>67</sup>

64 RIC V Gallienus (joint reign) 31-35.

65 RIC V Postumus 82, 157-59; Elmer 1941: 43; Drinkwater 1987: 161.

66 Potter 2014 [2004]: 257.

67 Illustrating the extent of borrowing behind every supposedly 'pristine' culture, both the Latin alphabet, the activity of epigraphy and the figure of Hercules in turn entered the cultural world of the city of Rome through the adoption and reinterpretation of Greek culture.

In treating the interplay of literary and local elements in the festival cycle of Kishan Garhi, Marriott speculated that *universalisation* and *localisation* were arbitrary points in a circular flow. For instance, ancient peasant rituals for animal prosperity may have given rise to the Sanskritic legend of Kṛṣṇa rescuing a group of cowherds from a destructive storm by lifting their hill into the air. In turn, Marriott documented how the villagers of Kishan Garhi had transformed the Sanskritic ritual deriving from this legend into an idiosyncratic festival more in tune with their local agricultural context.<sup>68</sup> Marriott, however, had no evidence for the first half of his theory, the time-scales involved being far too vast for an anthropological survey to capture.

Yet the present examination of the cultural tendencies of Postumus' regime has a second result besides illuminating the traces of local traditions in the mainly imperial culture of the 3rd century provincial elite. It also delivers a documented example of such circular flow. In the first instance, in order to make sense of the continued local nature of their community within a newly established, universalising imperial world, the Batavians *localised* the figure of Hercules from literary prestige culture, fashioning the non-literary figure of Hercules Magusanus with his idiosyncratic cult. In the second instance, the political fragmentation of the later 3rd century brought the Rhine army, an institution intimately connected with the Batavian community and its cultural world, to unprecedented prominence. This produced the conditions for the *localised* form of Hercules to be *universalised* into an imperial tradition promoted by Postumus, depicted on coinage as an accepted member of the state gods.

This result demonstrates in practice the obsolescence of the 'Roman vs. native' paradigm by revealing both supposed extremes of that binary – the prestige tradition of the imperial court and the locally specific world of agricultural communities – to have shaped their cultures through adoptions of impulses from one another. A great many ostensibly 'Roman' elements were inherent in Batavian culture and would likely have been experienced as 'Batavian' by contemporary onlookers. Conversely, by Postumus' time, an ostensibly 'Batavian' war-god could evidently pass for Roman. This war-god was a cultural hybrid with a mixed local-universal origin, as was the imperial tradition into which he was

68 Marriott 1955: 199-203.



elevated, as indicated most obviously by the presence of the Greco-Egyptian god Sarapis among the cults inherited by the Gallic emperors from the Roman government.

The circular flow at play validates the move in recent Roman cultural history towards understanding the local and universal as points within a “continuous circularity”<sup>69</sup> rather than an exchange of elements between easily defined, unchanging entities such as ‘Roman’ and ‘Germanic’. Even in the first encounters between those cultures some three centuries before Postumus’ time, they were themselves hybrids of earlier cultural encounters in their respective areas of origin.

Since all cultures are ultimately hybrids the continued relevance of the ‘local’ and ‘universal’ binary in ancient history therefore results not from the retention or invention of particular cultural elements. It must be sought instead in the fundamentally different living conditions of the geographically unconstrained ruling classes and the far more local worlds inhabited by the majority of their subjects. Hercules might travel from one to the other and back, but the distinctive archaeological profile of the *civitas Batavorum* shows that provincial lifestyles could be very different from those of the metropolitan centre.

Acknowledgment: This article constitutes part of the ‘Provincial Cultures and the Roman Military’ project generously funded by the Carlsberg Foundation (CF20-0459) and carried out at the University of St Andrews School of Classics. I am grateful to the anonymous peer reviewer for comments and corrections that greatly improved upon the work. Any remaining mistakes are my own.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AE	<i>L’Année Épigraphique</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
RIB	<i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i>
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i>

69 Versluys 2015: 146, 150.

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# AMBRAKIA AS A CONTESTED SPACE: FEDERAL CLAIMS TO POWER AND THE BORDER MANAGEMENT OF A CITY- STATE IN THE SECOND CENTURY BC<sup>\*</sup>

*By Sebastian Scharff*

**Summary:** Situated in the border area of several powerful neighbors, the polis territory of Ambrakia was exposed to numerous territorial claims from its early history onwards. A close reading of the story of the quarrel of the gods fighting over the possession of the city reveals that the passage must be understood as an illustration of those various interests in the city prior to the Roman conquest. Yet it was precisely when the domination of Greek states in the region came to an end that the Ambrakiots undertook a remarkable border-management initiative including at least three boundary regulations dating to the 160s BC. This article asks for the reasons behind this initiative and emphasizes the political room for maneuver the Ambrakiots exploited after the Third Macedonian War.

## I. Introduction

As point of reference for various foreign claims to power, the territory of Ambrakia was a contested area. Corinthian settlers, Athenian *stratēgoi*, Macedonian and Epirote kings, Aitolian politicians, and Roman generals all had a vested interest in the city after which the gulf is named. Consequently, Ambrakia's history was a history of changing affiliations from

<sup>\*</sup> This article was made possible by generous financial support from the European Union (project: "Federalism and Border Management in Greek Antiquity" [FeBo], ERC 2021 COG PR. No. 101043954) which I am most grateful for. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor

independent settlement to Epeirote capital back to independence and membership in the Aitolian League, a process that finally resulted in the city's integration into the Roman Empire. In addition to the claims lodged by the major powers of the day, the people of Ambrakia had to face border conflicts with regional and local stakeholders, including the Amphilocheians, Akarnanians, and the people of the small neighboring town of Charadros.

All of this makes the city a highly promising case for anyone interested in ancient border studies, especially since the surviving evidence for boundary disputes in which the Ambrakiots were involved is particularly rich and includes recently published epigraphic material such as a fourth-century BC treaty between the Ambrakiots, Amphilocheians, and Akarnanians,<sup>1</sup> the boundary regulations between Ambrakia and Charadros,<sup>2</sup> and an arbitration by the Korkyraians in a border conflict between Ambrakia and Athamania.<sup>3</sup> Taken together with other epigraphic evidence,<sup>4</sup> these inscriptions add up to a cluster of boundary settlements dating to the 160s BC. This cluster is unusual in that not many cases are known from Greek antiquity in which a similarly large number of border regulations from a single polis survived in such close succession. It is the aim of this article to investigate how and why this cluster came about.

Precisely because Ambrakia was a contested area, the city's borders were of particular importance and had to be managed carefully. But why

the granting authority can be held responsible for them. – I would also like to thank the two anonymous referees for *Classica et Mediaevalia* and the journal editors Thomas Heine Nielsen (Copenhagen) and Christian Ammitzbøll Thomsen (Copenhagen) for their insightful comments. Kaja Harter-Uibopuu (Hamburg) and the members of our Trento research team Elena Franchi, Claudio Biagetti, Rebecca Massinelli, and Roy van Wijk discussed an earlier version of this paper with me. They all provided constructive comments that helped this article take shape. Jeremy McNerney (University of Pennsylvania) was kind enough to share two brilliant articles with me prior to publication.

- 1 Funke & Hallof 2013 II (SEG 68.391; Antonetti, Funke & Kolonas 2022: *Thyr.* 2; *Thyreion*, end of the fourth century BC).
- 2 *Staatsverträge* IV 665 (SEG 35.665; ed. pr. Cabanes & Andréou 1985; Ambrakia, shortly after 167 BC; cf. Habicht 1986).
- 3 *IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 (Korkyra, mid-second century BC).
- 4 E.g., *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 951 (Ager 1996: no. 132; Athens, 166 BC).



do we find such a massive concentration of border-management activities at this particular moment in time? What strategies were applied to secure boundary lines? How were they established and legitimized and what can we say about the relationship of peoples from different sides of the border(s)? Following a brief sketch of the city's position in the Greek world prior to the Roman conquest, I will first explore how this political constellation was reflected in myth before examining in detail the cluster of boundary regulations of the 160s in a second step.

There can be no doubt that borders figured prominently in the history of Ambrakia on very different levels.<sup>5</sup> Situated among neighbors who, according to Thucydides, were originally not able to speak Greek, Ambrakia was imagined as the 'beginning' of the Greek and border to the barbarian world in the Archaic and Classical periods.<sup>6</sup> In this (geographical) sense, it is called 'the first city of Greece' by Pseudo-Skylax: ἐντεῦθεν ἄρχεται ἡ Ἑλλάς;<sup>7</sup> on the other hand, the northern border of Ambrakia's polis territory at times coincided with the outer boundaries of Greek kingdoms and federal states. For the Aitolians of the late third century BC, for instance, the city's territory became a federal border area, a perspective we will focus on in what follows.

- 5 For Ambrakia's history, see the monographic study by Fantasia 2017. On the city's coins, cf. Ravel 1928, on the excavations in Arta: Tzouvara-Souli 1992, for the museum: Papadopulu 2023.
- 6 Hdt. 8.47; cf. Plut. *Per.* 17.2, Dion. Calliphon. 399, see Kaponis 2020: 52. Language of the Amphiloichian Argives 'hellenized' by the Ambrakiots: Thuc. 2.68.5. Ambrakia was an "Außenposten" (Beck 1997: 135). On the way the border to the barbarian world was perceived see Cabanes 1979.
- 7 [Skyl.] 33: Μετὰ δὲ Μολοττίαν Ἀμβρακία πόλις Ἑλληνίς. ἐπέχει δὲ αὕτη ἀπὸ θαλάττης στάδια π'. Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ θαλάττης τεῖχος καὶ λιμὴν κλειστός. Ἐντεῦθεν ἄρχεται ἡ Ἑλλάς συνεχῆς εἶναι ... – "After Molottia is Ambrakia, a Hellenic city distant 80 stades from the sea. But on the sea there is a fort with an enclosed harbor. From here Hellas begins ..." (Transl. B. Kiesling).

## II. The Location of Ambrakia as a Contested Area and the Story of the Quarrel of the Gods

In the third and early second centuries BC, Ambrakia was in a very difficult strategic position. Situated between Epeiros, Makedonia, and Aitolia, Ambrakia's political geography placed the city at the very center of a world of federal states and empires that tried to integrate the polis into their orbit. As we shall see, it is precisely the federal episodes of Ambrakia's history and their immediate afterlife that represent the most exciting periods of the city's history when it comes to the way in which the Ambrakiots managed their borders.

After the end of the Aiakid dynasty in 232 BC, Ambrakia had become a member of the expanding Aitolian League.<sup>8</sup> Though it is controversial among scholars whether the city remained Aitolian for the next 40 years

8 The exact date remains unclear, as the evidence for the integration of Ambrakia into the Aitolian League is somewhat conjectural. The city certainly belonged to Epeiros at least until 233/2 BC, since the last queen of the Aiakids, Deidameia, was murdered there (Iust. 28.3.4-8, naming the queen Laodameia; see also Polyaeus, *Strat.* 8.52, *Ov. Ib.* 305-6; cf. Paus. 4.35.3). Either in 226/5 or in 222/1 BC, then, the Ambrakiot citizen Aristarchos served as an Aitolian *hieromnēmōn* at Delphi (Grainger 1999: 228; Fantasia 2017: 159). Fantasia 2017: 148 thinks of the summer of 230 BC as a possible political context for Ambrakia's integration into the league. We do not know how exactly this integration was carried out at an institutional level. It is well-known, however, that the formal subdivisions (*telē*) of the Aitolian League which are securely attested (the *telos Lokrikon* and the *telos Stratikon*) refer to cases of newly acquired territory. According to the plausible interpretation of Funke 2024, this is no coincidence, and the *telē* could therefore point to a deliberate Aitolian strategy of integration of new members into the league (for the evidence Lasagni 2019: 147-59). Note that even Polyb. 13.1.1 describes the Aitolians as being "naturally fond of making innovations" in the institutional area, though that is not meant as a compliment here. And yet, accepting the idea of a deliberate Aitolian strategy of integration does not imply that we should overestimate the allegedly peaceful nature of Aitolian expansion (for such an irenic perspective, see, e.g., Grainger 1999: 228: "peaceableness of the Aitolian polity"; but note Rzepka 2019).

without interruption, there is no doubt that it was a contested area between Aitolian, Epeirote, and Makedonian interests.<sup>9</sup> We find this disputed character most clearly expressed in Polybius who states that, “for the Epeirotes”, it was “a matter of the utmost importance to recover Ambrakia from the Aitolians.”<sup>10</sup> The city had been Pyrrhos’ capital and must have had both strategic and symbolic significance for the Epeirotes. With its mighty stronghold Ambrakos, it was of crucial strategic importance to the major political powers of the day, including Hellenistic kings and Roman generals. Seized by Philip V in 219 BC,<sup>11</sup> Ambrakia was taken and plundered by the troops of Marcus Fulvius Nobilior in 189 BC,<sup>12</sup> an event that represented a decisive moment in the Antiochian War.<sup>13</sup>

After many statues and other works of art had been brought to Rome,<sup>14</sup> the city received the status of a *civitas libera* two years later.<sup>15</sup> It remained in Roman hands all through the war with Perseus and was only indirectly affected by the armed conflicts.<sup>16</sup> The good relations with Rome resulted in Ambrakia being spared the harsh consequences that befell Makedonia and Epeiros in 167 BC,<sup>17</sup> and the city even seems to have

9 Due to the fact that a certain Damokritos from Ambrakia was listed not among the Aitolian *hieromnēmones* but among the external delegates in a Delphic inscription dating between 206/5 and 204/3 BC, Grainger 1999: 332, 375-76 argues for the city being under Makedonian domination since 205 BC and “rejoining” the Aitolian League only in 198 BC (Grainger 1999: 393); cf. Fantasia 2017: 158-59. Besieged by Philip II in 338 BC, Ambrakia had already endured forty-three years of semi-autonomy under Makedonian suzerainty in the late fourth and early third centuries BC.

10 Polyb. 4.61.5-6: περὶ πλείστου ποιούμενοι τὸ κομίσασθαι τὴν Ἀμβρακίαν παρὰ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν. (Transl. E.S. Shuckburgh).

11 Polyb. 4.61-66; Scholten 2000: 221, and Fantasia 2017: 149.

12 Polyb. 21.27; Liv. 38.4-5.

13 Polyb. 21.26-30.

14 Polyb. 21.30.

15 Liv. 38.44.2; Fantasia 2017: 183-84, 190.

16 Fantasia 2017: 179; Roman garrison in Ambrakia in 170/69 BC: Liv. 42.67.9.

17 According to Polyb. 30.15, Aemilius Paullus destroyed 70 cities in Makedonia and sold 150,000 people into slavery. However, the figures seem to be rhetorical, as Dreizehnter 1978: 53-69 has convincingly argued (70 meaning all the cities of the region and 150,000 symbolizing the size of the destruction), and are evidently exaggerated, as

flourished to such an extent that it probably hosted the prestigious festival of the Naia for a short period in time (167-146 BC), when the games could not be held in Dodona.<sup>18</sup>

Although the years after the Third Makedonian War (171-168 BC) were a difficult time for the region, Ambrakia's position had improved from a strategic point of view. Instead of being confronted with many strong powers laying claim to the city, Ambrakia now had to take into account above all the wishes of Rome as the dominant power in the Mediterranean. For a city that had suffered from its multiple border location, this must have been a clear advantage compared to the previous situation.

Ambrakia's isolated position as an object of foreign claims to power is reflected in a story that came down to us in the work of the second/third-century AD grammarian Antoninus Liberalis: the quarrel of the gods Apollon, Artemis, and Herakles fighting over the possession of the city.<sup>19</sup> It reads as follows:

Κραγαλεὺς ὁ Δρύοπος ᾧκει <τῆς> γῆς τῆς Δρυοπίδος παρὰ τὰ λουτρά τὰ Ἡρακλέους, ἃ μυθολογοῦσιν Ἡρακλέα πλῆξαντα τῇ κορύνῃ τὰς πλάκας τοῦ ὄρους ἀναβαλεῖν. ὁ δὲ Κραγαλεὺς οὗτος ἐγεγόνει γηραιὸς ἤδη καὶ τοῖς ἐγγχωρίοις ἐνομίζετο δίκαιος εἶναι καὶ φρόνιμος. καὶ αὐτῷ

Forsén 2021: 230, 249 has shown: Molossia, for instance, suffered less than Thesprotia, and it is not very likely that the Romans had the capacity and the willingness to transfer 150,000 slaves to Italy. Although it remains clear that Roman punishment was severe, we must assume that there was a lower level of destruction than suggested by the literary sources.

18 See n. 70. The political structure and settlement pattern of the entire region do not seem to have changed much for more than 130 years (Fantasia 2017: 188-89; Forsén 2021: 250), even the integration of Epeiros in the new Roman province of Macedonia in 146 BC brought "no great changes" (Forsén 2021: 235). It was only when Octavian founded his 'victory city' of Nikopolis after the battle of Actium and most of Ambrakia's inhabitants were transferred to the new settlement (Strab. 7.7.6; Anth. Pal. 9.533; Paus. 5.23.3; see Fantasia 2017: 190-97) that we find a larger break in the settlement pattern of the region. Although we still hear of Ambrakia in the second century AD (CIG II 1801; SEG 39.1868), it never reached its former political significance after that.

19 Ov. Met. 13.713-14 briefly summarizes the story as *certatam lite deorum Ambraciam*.

νέμοντι βοῦς προσάγουσιν Ἀπόλλων καὶ Ἄρτεμις καὶ Ἡρακλῆς κριθησόμενοι περὶ Ἀμβρακίας τῆς ἐν Ἠπείρῳ.

καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἀπόλλων ἑαυτῷ προσήκειν ἔλεγε τὴν πόλιν ... Ἄρτεμις δὲ τὸ μὲν νεῖκος κατέπαυε τὸ πρὸς τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα, παρ' ἐκόντος δ' ἡξίου τὴν Ἀβρακίαν ἔχειν· ἐφίεσθαι γὰρ τῆς πόλεως κατὰ πρόφασιν τοιαύτην ... ὁ δὲ Ἡρακλῆς ἀπεδείκνυνεν Ἀμβρακίαν τε καὶ τὴν σύμπασαν Ἠπειρον οὔσαν ἑαυτοῦ· πολεμήσαντας γὰρ αὐτῷ Κελτοὺς καὶ Χάονας καὶ Θεσπρωτοὺς καὶ σύμπαντας Ἠπειρώτας ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κρατηθῆναι, ὅτε τὰς Γηρυόνης βοῦς συνελθόντες <ἐβούλευον> ἀφελέσθαι, χρόνῳ δ' ὕστερον λαὸν ἔποικον ἔλθεῖν ἐκ Κορίνθου καὶ τοὺς πρόσθεν ἀναστήσαντας Ἀμβρακίαν συνοικίσει. Κορίνθιοι δὲ πάντες εἰσὶν ἄφ' Ἡρακλέους.

ἃ διακούσας ὁ Κραγαλεὺς ἔγνω τὴν πόλιν Ἡρακλέους εἶναι. Ἀπόλλων δὲ κατ' ὀργὴν ἀψάμενος αὐτοῦ τῇ χειρὶ πέτρον ἐποίσεν ἵνα περ εἰστήκει. Ἀμβρακιῶται δὲ Ἀπόλλωνι μὲν Σωτῆρι θύουσι, τὴν δὲ πόλιν Ἡρακλέους καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου παίδων νενομίκασι, Κραγαλεῖ δὲ μετὰ τὴν ἐορτὴν Ἡρακλέους ἔντομα θύουσιν ἄχρι νῦν.

Kragaleus [the king of Dryopis, i.e. Ozolian Lokris] was at this time already an old man and was considered by his countrymen to be just and wise. While he was pasturing his cattle, Apollon, Artemis, and Herakles introduced themselves to him since they wanted a decision about Ambrakia in Epeiros.

Apollon said that the city belonged to him ... [*He gives his reasons.*] Artemis on her part was for keeping her dispute with Apollon within bounds, but claimed that she had acquired Ambrakia with his consent ... [*She makes her claims.*] Herakles in his turn put forward the argument that Ambrakia and the whole of Epeiros belonged to him. All the peoples that had made war with him [when he was mortal], Keltoi, Chaonians, Thesprotians, and all the Epeirotes, had been defeated by him after they had formed an alliance to steal the cattle of Geryon. Some time after, a settlement of colonists from Corinth had expelled the original settlement of colonists and founded Ambrakia. All the Corinthians are descended from Herakles.

Kragaleus heard these arguments through to the end and recognized that the city belonged to Herakles. Apollon became enraged,

touched Kragaleus with his hand and turned him into a stone where he stood. The Ambrakiots sacrifice to Apollon as the Saviour, but they have acknowledged that the city was that of Herakles and his sons.<sup>20</sup>

Obviously, the passage was at least in part intended to give an *aition* for the veneration of Apollon Soter in Ambrakia and to establish Corinth's status as the city's metropolis.<sup>21</sup> Generally, the story must have pleased the Ambrakiots, as three main deities of the Greek pantheon are so interested in the city that they fight over it.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, it reflected the overall political constellation in which the city found itself, a constellation which was characterized by various foreign claims to the possession of the city. I will identify some key elements of those claims in what follows.

In order to do so, we have to take a look at the sources of our author. Fortunately, Antoninus gives them away quite frankly at the beginning of the passage:

Ἰστορεῖ Νίκανδρος Ἑτεροιομένων αὐ καὶ Ἀθανάδας Ἀμβρακικοῖς.

Nikandros tells this tale in the first book of his *Metamorphoses*, as does Athanadas in his *Ambrakika*.<sup>23</sup>

It is striking that two authors and their works are named, as it is not a common practice in the *Metamorphoses* to refer to more than one source.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore likely that we are dealing with a composite text

20 Ant. Lib. Met. 4 (Transl. F. Celoria).

21 Fantasia 2011; 2017: 105-21 has analyzed the episode in detail. On Corinth's role in the region, see Graham 1964: 118 ("colonial empire"), Stickler 2010: 265, Quantin 2012 ("diaspora"), Kaponis 2020, Scharff 2022: 290.

22 Fantasia 2011.

23 Ant. Lib. Met. 4 (Transl. F. Celoria).

24 Out of 41 stories only seven have more than one source mentioned. In addition to Ant. Lib. Met. 4, those stories include Met. 10, 12, 20, 23, 25 and 35. Except from Met. 23 which has six they all name two sources. However, "[t]he extent to which he [sc. Antoninus Liberalis] 'cribbed' from them is unknowable," as Celoria 1992: 11 rightly pointed out.

here. Athanadas' *Ambrakika* have not survived,<sup>25</sup> but the remaining fragments point to the beginning of the third century BC.<sup>26</sup> The floruit of Nikandros of Kolophon who must have picked up an already existing story can be dated either to the third or to the second century BC.<sup>27</sup>

But how could we assign individual elements of the story to one of the sources? One important element can be found, if we take a closer look at the way of how Herakles justifies his claim to the city:

ὁ δὲ Ἡρακλῆς ἀπεδείκνυεν Ἀμβρακίαν τε καὶ τὴν σύμπασαν Ἠπειρον  
οὔσαν ἑαυτοῦ· πολέμησαντας γὰρ αὐτῷ Κελτοὺς καὶ Χάονας καὶ Θεσ-  
πρωτοὺς καὶ σύμπαντας Ἠπειρώτας ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κρατηθῆναι ...

Herakles ... put forward the argument that Ambrakia and the whole of Epeiros belonged to him. All the peoples that had made war with him, Keltoi, Chaonians, Thesprotians, and all the Epeirotes, had been defeated by him ...<sup>28</sup>

It is not surprising that the winning argument in the debate is military conquest, which represented a legitimate form of land acquisition in ancient Greece.<sup>29</sup> Yet what puzzled many editors and commentators of the passage is the mention of the Keltoi among the peoples defeated by Herakles. As Francis Celoria pointed out, "[t]he Celts were not conspicuously connected with Epirus until historical times,"<sup>30</sup> which is why some scholars doubted the manuscript reading Κελτούς and suggested similar-

25 *FGrH* III 303.

26 Fantasia 2011: 506-7.

27 There were probably two poets of the name Nikandros living between 270 and 135 BC (*FGrH* 271-72; Pasquali 1913). One of them is known to have authored *Aitolika* (Cazzaniga 1973). It remains a fair assumption that the Nikandros cited by Antoninus Liberalis was a phil-Aitolian poet (Vollgraf 1909; Antonetti 1990: 58; 310 n. 83; Funke 2015: 90-91; pace Fantasia 2011).

28 *Ant. Lib. Met.* 4.

29 See, e.g., Chaniotis 2004.

30 Celoria 1992: 115; cf. Papathomopoulos 1968: 79-80.

sounding local names such as, most notably, Κελαίθους.<sup>31</sup> However, the single surviving manuscript, the codex *Palatinus Graecus* 398, has Κελτούς which is also accepted in the present authoritative edition of the *Metamorphoses*<sup>32</sup> for good reasons. Strabo understood the nation of the Iapodes as a “mixed Keltic and Illyrian tribe”.<sup>33</sup> Thus, even if there is no clear evidence that Celts actually lived in Epeiros, it is by no means certain that the assumption of a Celtic presence in the region must have seemed implausible to Antoninus Liberalis and/or his sources.<sup>34</sup>

What is more, accepting the text as it is can also help identify a key element of the political message of the story. If we take Herakles as an Aitolian hero and read the passage as an Aitolian attempt at taking part in Ambrakia’s foundation,<sup>35</sup> the mention of the Keltoi makes perfectly sense and must not be understood as an error of transmission. By naming Herakles’ opponents, the passage creates a competitive constellation, and the Keltoi must have been listed among Herakles’ adversaries because the victory over the Celts constituted a foundational moment of Aitolian history that was proudly advertised on the league’s coins. The tetradrachm (*Fig. 1*) on the reverse of which Aitolos is seated on a pile of

31 The reading was already suggested in a 17th-century edition of the *Metamorphoses* by Berkel 1674 [1677]; it has been accepted, e.g., by Oberhammer 1887: 62 n. 1 and Cazzaniga 1962. The Kelaithoi referred to by ancient authors (Kaponis 2020: 126-27) were a sub-division of the Epeirote people of the Thesprotians (Steph. Byz. s.v. Κέλαιθοι; cf. Domínguez Monedero 2018).

32 Papathomopoulos 1968: 79-80. The same is true for the commentary of Celoria 1992: 53; 115. See also Fantasia 2011: 504 n. 36.

33 Strabo 7.5.2: μέχρι τῶν Ἰαπόδων, Κελτικοῦ τε ἄμα καὶ Ἰλλυρικοῦ ἔθνους (Transl. H.C. Hamilton & W. Falconer); see Papathomopoulos 1968: 79-80.

34 This applies in particular to the third century BC, a time when the Epeirotes under Pyrrhos had recently fought the Celts (Anth. Pal. 6.130; cf. Lévêque 1957: 566; Papathomopoulos 1968: 80). We also have to bear in mind that the Celts were very often connected to Herakles (Kistler 2009: 42-45; 333-46).

35 Although the only known sanctuary of Herakles in Aitolia in Arsinoeia (Antonetti 1990: 278-80) was not a very prominent one, the hero did play a role in Aitolian myths (see e.g., Antonetti 1990: 264-65), and became a constant presence on the league’s coins from 279 BC onwards (Imhoof-Blumer 1873: 145, no. 62; Scheu 1960: no. 8; BMC 4ff.).



Galatian and Makedonian shields resting on a Celtic *karnyx* is good evidence of that.<sup>36</sup> The victory over the Celts was so prestigious that it could even be used, at least in theory, to claim Aitolian precedence over Rome.<sup>37</sup> In Rome, however, it was at the place of an earlier temple of Hercules in the Campus Martius that M. Fulvius Nobilior, confronted with the accusation of having enriched himself by looting Greek sanctuaries,<sup>38</sup> had a temple built during his triumph in 187 BC and erected a portico of Hercules Musarum, to whom he donated the statues he had taken from Ambrakia in 189 BC. Would it be too bold to assume that, for Fulvius, Herakles did not only represent Ambrakia, but also stood for the Aitolians he had fought against and celebrated a triumph over?<sup>39</sup>

What is more, Herakles' emphasis on having defeated "all the Epeirotes"<sup>40</sup> takes on a deeper meaning if situated in the context of competing Aitolian and Epeirote claims.<sup>41</sup> It also shows that the existing version cannot be an Epeirote or Makedonian one.<sup>42</sup> Herakles' victory over the

36 Antonetti 2012.

37 Just think of the late reflex of Aitolian third- and second-century BC propaganda that we find in Justin's epitome of Pompeius Trogus (Iust. 28.2.3–13; cf. Funke 2018: 114 n. 13). See also the important role the Celts played in Hellenistic propaganda in general (Kistler 2009) and in royal propaganda in particular (Strootman 2005).

38 Liv. 38.9.13.

39 Fulvius as victor over the Aitolians: Cic. *Arch.* 11.27; Liv. 40.45.6–7: *M. Fulvius Nobilior, qui ex Aetolis triumphaverat*. On Fulvius' campaign against the Aitolians and the debate in the Senate concerning his triumph, see Östenberg 2009: 44 and Walther 2016: 60–82, 94–125.

40 Ant. Lib. *Met.* 4.

41 A response to Aitolian claims to the ownership of Ambrakia is probably to be found in Polyb. 4.61.6, where it is emphasized that the Epeirotes considered it "a matter of the utmost importance" to be in possession of the city. Cf. also Liv. 38.3.9: *Epirotis Ambraciam placebat aggredi ...* ("The advice of the Epeirotes was to attack Ambrakia," transl. E. T. Sage).

42 Fantasia 2011: 505–7; 2017: 105–21 has argued that Philip II had been behind the promotion of Herakles to the legendary founder of Ambrakia, and it is true that the Makedonian king Antigonos Gonatas is well-known to have won victory over the Galatians at Lysimacheia in 277 BC. However, it is also well known that he was defeated twice by Pyrrhos, king of Epeiros, afterwards, which evidently does not fit the claim of having defeated "all the Epeirotes", especially if Athanadas' artistic prime belonged to Ambrakia's golden age under Pyrrhos, as Fantasia 2011: 506 seems to assume.

Celts is therefore best understood as an element deriving from Nikandros' phil-Aitolian version of the story and probably belongs to the time of the expansion and heyday of the Aitolian League in the late third century.<sup>43</sup> This does not mean that the entire story, as we have it in the *Metamorphoses*, is a pure version of the Aitolian rendering of the myth. Since the Aitolians are not explicitly mentioned by Antoninus, other parts of the story may well have been composed before or after the Aitolian phase of the city (232-189 BC), but a victory over the Celts was such a prestigious affair that this truly Herculean deed was kept in the text after Ambrakia had left the Aitolian League.<sup>44</sup> Centered on a figure such as Herakles who was at home at almost every Greek city and kingdom including Makedonia and Epeiros,<sup>45</sup> the passage could easily be adapted to changing historical conditions.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Herakles could indeed have been promoted to the legendary founder of Ambrakia already under Philip II, as argued by Ugo Fantasia,<sup>47</sup> before becoming an Aitolian hero in the years following 232 BC.

No doubt, myths have a history, and the story of the gods fighting over the possession of Ambrakia is one of the occasions when we stand a chance to trace political interventions in the mythical narrative through the centuries.

43 The end of the episode emphasizing the connection to Corinth, then, must be regarded as a local fabrication (Fantasia 2011) and probably goes back to Athanadas. It is important to note that Antoninus presents Herakles' actions and the Corinthian settlement as two different phases of the foundation of Ambrakia. – On the heyday of the Aitolian League in the third century BC, Scholten 2000 and Funke 2008. For the history of the *koinon* after the Antiochian War, Mitropoulos 2019.

44 For the Galatians as the most terrifying opponent of the Greeks in the third century BC, see, e.g., Kistler 2009: 31-41, and Chaniotis 2018: 58-64.

45 It is well-known that the Argeads traced their ancestry back to Herakles (Plut. *Alex.* 2.1), but he also appeared in the lineage of the Epeirote kings (e.g., in Plut. *Pyrrh.* 1.2 via Hyllos; on Aiakid representation, see Funke 2000).

46 A tragedy fragment has Herakles say about himself: Ἀργεῖος ἢ Θηβαῖος οὐ γὰρ εὖχομαι μιᾶς ἅπας μοι πύργος Ἑλλήνων πατρίς “Am I Argive or Theban? I don't pride myself on only one city. In every fortress of the Greeks I am at home” (*TrGF* II, adesp. 392 = Plut. *Mor.* 600f; cf. Ganter 2024: 40). In the case of Ambrakia's foundation story such a “fortress” was Corinth.

47 Cf. n. 42.

### III. Ambrakiot Border Management in the 160s BC

We have seen so far that the history of Ambrakia was dominated by the city being exposed to various foreign claims to power since the late fourth century BC, a political constellation clearly reflected in the story of the quarrel of the gods fighting over the possession of Ambrakia. It was only when the Romans entered the scene that those foreign claims lost their former relevance in terms of *realpolitik*. This was also the time when the cluster of Ambrakiot boundary regulations of the 160s BC came about.

At least four inscriptions explicitly referring to the borders of Ambrakia's polis territory are known. The earliest one, a fragmentary fourth-century inscription from Thyreion, contains a treaty oath sworn by the Amphilocheians, Akarnanians, and Ambrakiots.<sup>48</sup> For us, the most interesting clause is to be found in lines eight and nine which include a reference to the common use of the sea: [τᾱί δὲ θαλά]σσαι κοινᾷ χρήσθω.<sup>49</sup> No doubt, the Gulf of Ambrakia provided an ideal environment for economic disputes over fishing rights, as several scholars have observed.<sup>50</sup> Like the territory of the city, parts of the gulf served as a border area.

Even more important to our research question are the very accurate boundary regulations stipulated between Ambrakia and the small neighboring town of Charadros. The inscription including the regulations was first published in 1985 and consists of two fragments.<sup>51</sup> For prosopographic reasons and due to the appearance of "Roman magistrates" (ἄρχαὶ Ῥωμαϊκὰς) in the first part of the document,<sup>52</sup> the text is to be dated after Pydna, in the 160s BC.

48 Funke & Hallof 2013 II (SEG 68.391; Antonetti, Funke & Kolonas 2022: Thyreion, end of the fourth century BC). For exclusively historical reasons, Fantasia 2018 (cf. Fantasia 2017: 89) argues for a slightly earlier date (ca. 342 BC).

49 Funke & Hallof 2013 II, l. 8-9.

50 Strauch 1996: 137; Dany 1999: 233-34; Fantasia 2017: 183.

51 *Staatsverträge* IV 665a + b (SEG 35.665; ed. pr. Cabanes & Andréou 1985; see also the additions of Cabanes 1985; Ambrakia, shortly after 167 BC).

52 Prosopographic reasons: Habicht 1986; "Roman magistrates": *Staatsverträge* IV 665a (SEG 35.665), l. 38.

Following a long dating clause of almost fifteen lines, the beginning of the border regulations is visibly marked by a *vacat* (Fig. 2).<sup>53</sup> That way, the design of the text emphasizes the specific content of the boundary regulation, the ὅρια τᾶς χώρας clause. It is interesting to note that the first point of reference for the boundary regulations is represented by walls which had been understood by the editors as those of Ambrakia.<sup>54</sup> Vivi Karatzeni, however, has shown that they must have meant the walls of Herakleia, a settlement which is also referred to in the inscription, since otherwise the measurements mentioned in the inscription would not add up.<sup>55</sup> In any case, the fact that walls provide the first fixed point for the course of the boundary line is a nice reflection of the strategic importance of the area.<sup>56</sup>

No doubt, the (high) degree of regulation provided by the inscription is remarkable.<sup>57</sup> Thus it is emphasized more than once that the connection between the τέρμῳνες should be “a straight line” (κατ’ εὐθύ).<sup>58</sup> A river between both cities is designated a common property ([ὁ ποταμὸς] κοινὸς ἔστω),<sup>59</sup> and it is stipulated that both parties “shall be allowed to

53 *Staatsverträge* IV 665a (SEG 35.665), l. 16–18: ἐπὶ τοῖσιδε *vac.* ὥστε εἶμεν ὅρια τᾶς χώρας τοῖς Ἀμβρακιώταις καὶ Χαραδρεί[[ταις, ἐκάτεροι αἱ πόλεις ἔκριν]αν· καὶ ἀπομετρήθεντος πλέθρου, ἀπὸ τᾶς γωνίας τᾶς πρώτας τοῦ τείχεος | [τῶν Ἀμβρακιωτᾶν.

54 According to Liv. 38.4.4, they represented a quite impressive fortification in the first half of the second century BC: *muro quoque firmo saepta erat, patente in circuitu paulo amplius quattuor milia passuum* “it (sc. Ambrakia) was also protected by a strong wall, extending in circumference a little more than four miles” (transl. E. T. Sage).

55 Karatzeni 1999; see also McNerney forthcoming.

56 On the exact course of the border Andreou 1996–1997; cf. Salviat 1997. For the border between Ambrakia and Orraon which is also mentioned in the inscription, see Karatzeni 1999; on Orraon (modern Ammotopos): Rinaldi 2019. For all topographical aspects of the inscription and their influence on the interpretation of the entire document McNerney forthcoming is indispensable reading.

57 Freitag 2007: 58–59.

58 *Staatsverträge* IV 665a (SEG 35.665), l. 19, 22; for parallels see Ager 1996: 17 n. 48, and Harter-Uibopuu 1998: no. 6, l. 7; no. 7, l. 2, 12, 20; no. 8A, 24, 25–26, 28, 33; 8B, 11, 12; no. 9A, l. 2. On the course of Greek borders, see Daverio Rocchi 1988, 2015, Rousset 1994, and Freitag 2007.

59 *Staatsverträge* IV 665a (SEG 35.665), l. 29.

rent out their land” only to the other party and to those who have *symbola* with the other party.<sup>60</sup> This provision is explained by the fact that most of this land was marginal land in the border region (ἔσχατιαί) between the two communities which is why the neighbor was affected by the activities of the tenants, such as shepherds, charcoal burners, and woodcutters – typical cross-border commuters that is.<sup>61</sup> At the end of the document, the contracting parties did not even forget to regulate in detail how the boundary stones should be set: a committee of ‘border officers’ (τερμασταί) made up of equal numbers of representatives from both sides was appointed in order to walk along the boundary and determine the exact position of the *horoi*.<sup>62</sup>

Beyond the generally high degree of regulation, two clauses are of particular interest: first, the Ambrakiots were able to pay for the boundary regulations including the boundary stones and the field surveyor.<sup>63</sup> Although the devastation of the Third Makedonian War had brought about a very tough period for the region, Ambrakia was more or less spared, since it enjoyed the privilege of a *civitas libera* since 187 BC and served as the Romans’ base of operations in the war.<sup>64</sup> So when the Ambrakiots asked the Thessalian League for money some time in between 179 and 165 BC,<sup>65</sup> the situation was far from being hopeless for them,

60 *Staatsverträge* IV 665b, l. 12-13: [ἔχουσίαν ἔχόντω οἱ Χ]αραδρίται ἐγδιδόμεν τὰν ἰδίαν χώραν ξένοις [ποθ’ οὖς | ἐντὶ σύμβολα τοῖς τε Ἀμβρακιώταις καὶ Χαραδρίταις καὶ Χαραδρίταις], ἄλλοι δὲ μηθενί.

61 Charneux & Tréheux 1988: 369-70; see also Errington’s comments at *Staatsverträge* IV 665a.

62 *Staatsverträge* IV 665b, l. 22-25: [εἰ δὲ τί κα διαφέρωνται ἅ πόλις τῶ]ν Ἀμβρακιωτῶν καὶ ἅ πόλις τῶν Χαραδριτῶν ἐν τῷ μετὰ Διο[[φάνην τὸν Δαιμάχου μηνὶ τῷ Ἀ]ρτεμισίοι τῷ τριακάδι καταστασάντω ἑκάτεροι παρ’ αὐτῶν ἄν[[δρας τερμαστὰς τρεῖς(?) οὕστινα]ς διασαφούντω ποτ’ αὐτοσαυτοὺς οἱ ἄρχοντες οἱ παρ’ ἑκατέρᾳ [τῶν πόλεων]. Cf. Freitag 2007: 58-59. On similar designations for judges in interstate arbitrations including τερμαστήρες and ὀρισταί, Ager 1996: 13 n. 31.

63 *Staatsverträge* IV 665b, l. 31-32: παρε[[χόντω δὲ οἱ Ἀμβρακιῶται τὰν] εἰς τοὺς τέρμονας δαπάναν καὶ τοῖ γεωμέτραι. οἱ Ἀμβρακιῶται is an addition to the text, but it is the most plausible one and widely accepted among scholars.

64 *Civitas libera*: Liv. 38.44.4: *in libertate essent ac legibus suis uterentur*; cf. Gruen 1984: 154. Charadros unlike other parts of Epeiros was not destroyed as well; see Errington’s comments on *Staatsverträge* IV 665 (cf. Forsén 2021: 231).

65 SEG 26.688 (Itonion, ca. 179-165 BC [Habicht 1976]); cf. Graninger 2011: 65.

which is why the request is probably not so much to be seen as a financial cry for help but as an attempt at fostering existing political relations with the region. This is in line with another provision of the treaty between Ambrakia and Charadros which is of special interest here: the publication clause. It supports the above interpretation by providing for the erection of a stele also in the sanctuary of Apollo Kerdoios in Larisa.<sup>66</sup>

The close political ties between Ambrakia and Thessaly in the 170s and 160s BC have already been stressed by Christian Habicht in 1976.<sup>67</sup> They may have been rooted in the fact that the Ambrakiots and the Thessalians shared a similar political situation: both suffered from the wars of the second century but profited from the Roman conquest in the long run. The Thessalians had already openly welcomed the Roman victory with the first celebration of their ‘Freedom Games’ (Eleutheria) in 196 BC.<sup>68</sup> For the Ambrakiots, the Roman invasion meant the liberation from other claims to their territory and thus the political leeway to act more independently with regard to their borders.

On the other hand, the Ambrakiots must have realized what was going on in their immediate neighborhood in Epeiros (and Makedonia), and it is a fair assumption that at least some of them were “terrified” by the behavior of the Roman legions in the area, as Jeremy McNerney convincingly argues in a forthcoming article.<sup>69</sup> And yet, the history of a contested city had taught the people of Ambrakia that territorial changes also produce new opportunities: no longer having to serve as a bone of contention between Aitolian, Makedonian, and Epeirote claims to power could

66 Note that no stele is to be erected in Dodona (as it was the case, for instance, in *Staatsverträge* III 480, l. 15 [Aitolians-Akarnanians, Olympia and Thermos, 263/2 BC]). On the meaning of the publication of a version of the treaty in the sanctuary of Apollo Kerdoios in Larisa, see Graninger 2011: 143–45.

67 These close relations can be seen most clearly in a decree of the Thessalian *koinon* concerning Ambrakia (*SEG* 26.688; Itonion, ca. 179–165 BC; see Habicht 1976). They are also recognizable in the circulation of coins from Ambrakia and Thessaly (Kaponis 2020: 259, 270–71, 436, table 2A) and in mutual influences in the area of cult and religion (Kaponis 2020: 335–36).

68 Graninger 2011: 74–85 and now Graninger 2024.

69 McNerney forthcoming, who sees the series of boundary treaties of the Ambrakiots in the 160s as a demonstrative demarcation from their Epeirote neighbors in order to show their support of the Roman cause.

only improve the city's strategic position. This is probably why they adapted so quickly to the new political circumstances and may have already used the presence of the Roman garrison under Q. Mucius in 170/69 BC as a chance to get deeper in touch with members of the elite of the new superpower of the Mediterranean. Would it be too bold to assume that some of the "Roman magistrates" mentioned in the Charadros treaty had already spent some time in Ambrakia during the winter of 170/69 BC? Regardless of whether fear or realistic insight into the political climate at the time was the main motor behind their behavior, it is striking that the Ambrakiots made good use of the new political realities – and had the political leeway to do so within certain limits. The success of their policy could be indicated by the plausible assumption that the city was chosen to organize the prestigious athletic festival of the Naia in the middle of the second century BC.<sup>70</sup>

In any case, the Ambrakiots were clever enough to include the Romans in their border agreements of the 160s, as also becomes clear in another Ambrakiot boundary regulation belonging to the same chronological context. In the mid-second century BC, the Roman Senate delegated an interstate arbitration to a commission of five magistrates (*archontes*) from Korkyra, who gave their judgement in a border dispute between Ambrakia and Athamania.<sup>71</sup> The surviving inscription that consists of three fragments stems from Korkyra and includes both, a letter of the Roman magistrate P. Cornelius Blasio asking the Korkyraians to

70 The assumption is based on the ingenious restoration of an agonistic inscription from Rhodes by Cabanes 2014–2015, who argued that one of the victories of the successful Rhodian heavyweight Pythion was won in the Νᾱᾱ ἐν Ἀμ[βρακίᾱ] (*SEG* 58.816, l. 10 [Rhodes, 167–146 BC]). A different reading Νᾱᾱ ἐν ἁμ[έρᾱ μιᾷ] referring to two victories won on one and the same day at the Naia (of Dodona) was proposed by Strasser 2015, who also preferred an earlier date of the inscription (between 185 and 175 BC; but note *BE* 2017, 264 [D. Knoepfler]). Strasser's restoration has been rejected with good reasons by Badoud, Fincker & Moretti 2016: 414–16, who consequently argued for a date of the inscription between 167 and 146 BC; see also Domínguez Monejero 2022: 71. The fact that the stele of the treaty between Ambrakia and Charadros was not set up in Dodona (cf. n. 66) may be seen as a hint that the sanctuary that was destroyed by the Aitolians in 219 BC also severely suffered at the hands of the troops of Aemilius Paullus in 168 BC.

71 *IG IX* 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 (Korkyra, mid-second century BC); five *archontes*: fr. B, l. 8–9.

arbitrate,<sup>72</sup> and the judgement (κρίμα) of the commission from Korkyra.<sup>73</sup> The first 24 lines of fragment B had remained a phantom of the scholarly debate for a long time and were only published in 2001 in connection with the relevant corpus of the *Inscriptiones Graecae*.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to the number of judges,<sup>75</sup> we learn from the new fragment that the arbitration process included two *periēgēseis* (descriptions of boundary inspections of the territory) of the Ambrakiots and the Athamanes.<sup>76</sup> In arbitrations of boundary disputes, the advocates of both parties often (though not always) showed the judges the territory in question. The survey could take place either before or after hearing the evidence,<sup>77</sup> and it was precisely in interstate arbitrations conducted by small commissions that such inspections became frequent.<sup>78</sup> Of course, this was for practical reasons, since a *periēgēsis* always included some form of travel for the judges which could have got quite expensive in cases of larger tribunals. Therefore, such inspections of the territory were characteristic for small-commission arbitration which is why it

72 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 A (Ager 1996: no. 131, I); for parallel cases where the Romans delegated a Greek polis to arbitrate see Davies 2019: 72–73 n. 76.

73 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 B (Ager 1996: no. 131 II including only l. 25–34).

74 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4.

75 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 B, l. 8: ἄνδρας πέντε.

76 *Periēgēseis*: l. 17: Ἀμβρακιωτῶν περιάγησις and l. 25: [Ἀ]θαμάνων περι[άγησις]. The procedure of such land inspections that resulted in the boundary descriptions is known from other cases of interstate arbitration quite well. Among the parallels that include another inscription from Korkyra (IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 795 [Ager 1996: no. 118], l. 14–16 [Mondaia and Azoros, Korkyra, shortly after 179 BC]) are SEG 18.238 (Ager 1996: no. 30; Magnetto 1997: no. 29) l. 9 (Melitaia, Chalai, and Peuma, Delphi, ca. 270–260 BC), SEG 18.238 (Ager 1996: no. 31; Magnetto 1997: no. 30), l. 19 (Pereia, Phylladon, and Peuma, Delphi, ca. 270–260 BC), SEG 23.178 (Ager 1996: no. 44; Harter-Uibopuu 1998: no. 4), l. 5 (Argos and Kleonai, Nemea, ca. 229 BC), Syll.<sup>3</sup> 546A (Ager 1996: no. 55; Magnetto 1997: no. 69), l. 10 (Melitaia and Xyniai, Delphi, 214/13 BC), and IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1, 75 (Ager 1996: no. 63; Magnetto 1997: no. 41; Harter-Uibopuu 1998: no. 10), l. 11 (Hermione and Epidauros, Epidauros, ca. 200 BC). The procedure could also be referred to as ὑφηγήσις (Ager 1996: no. 88 II, B, l. 4 [Amphissa, Delphi, Myania, and Antikyra, Delphi, 190 BC]) or ἐφήγησις (F.Delphes III 4, 4, 354 [Ager 1996: no. 129], l. 12 [Boumelita and Halai, Delphi, after 167 BC]) in the sources. Cf. Ager 1996: 14 n. 32; on the “Lokalaugenschein”, see also Harter-Uibopuu 1998: 28, 155–57.

77 Ager 1996: 14.

78 Ager 1996: 11–2; Harter-Uibopuu 1998: 28; 155–57.



does not come as a surprise that we find surveys of the territory in the case of the boundary dispute between Ambrakia and Athamania, which was arbitrated by five judges only.

The final decision (κρίσις), however, was given in Korkyra, as it is explicitly stated in the inscription.<sup>79</sup> This also means that the hearing was held there. It is not known what kind of arguments the advocates presented in front of the jury. Yet evidentiary proceedings began earlier when smaller commissions were involved than in cases of large-court arbitration, i.e. during the *periēgēseis*. The most illuminating example of this is an arbitration conducted by a commission of five Rhodian judges in a territorial dispute between Samos and Priene.<sup>80</sup> In the surviving document, the judges give detailed reasons for their decision, citing not only the evidence on both sides,<sup>81</sup> but also their assessment of the material in question, which consisted of different historical versions of a war going back to the eighth century BC.<sup>82</sup> Working “like modern historians”<sup>83</sup> the judges examined the historical material critically and decided that the sources presented by the Samians either did not match the content of what the Samians claimed or had not been written by the historian (Maiandrios of Miletus) whom the Samians had named as the author of the information. In other words, the judges applied bone-dry source criticism.

Due to the fragmentary state of our evidence, we cannot say for sure how the advocates of the Ambrakiots and Athamanians tried to win their cases with the Korkyraian judges. However, it is likely that they made good use of some kind of supplementary evidence, and, if so, there can

79 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 B, l. 13: ἡ κρίσις ὑμῖν τελεσθησέϊται ἐν Κ[ορκύραι].

80 *LPriene* 37 (Ager 1996: no. 74, I; Priene, ca. 197–190 BC).

81 Among the documents brought forward by both sides were several historians: the Samians cited Maiandrios of Miletus (*FGrHist* 491) as well as their local historians Euagon (*FGrHist* 535), Olympichos (*FGrHist* 537), Ouliades (*FGrHist* 538), and Douris (*FGrHist* 76), whereas the Prieneans supported their case by quoting Theopompos of Chios (*FGrHist* 115), Kreophylos (*FGrHist* 417), and Eualkes (*FGrHist* 418) of Samos.

82 The judges' evaluation of the Samian evidence: *LPriene* 37 (Ager 1996: no. 74, I), l. 118–57.

83 Chaniotis 2004: 201.

be no doubt that the Korkyraian judges examined the evidence on the spot.<sup>84</sup>

The *periēgēseis* allowed the advocates to discuss the matter on site with the judges, thus entering into an evidence-based conversation early in the process. There were clearly different informal rules and conditions for arbitrations before small commissions and for those in front of large *dikastēria* up to several hundred judges.<sup>85</sup> Generally speaking, interstate arbitrations reveal a strong commitment to guarantee equal opportunities for the parties involved in the dispute. However, in cases of large-court arbitration without *periēgēsis*, the course of the hearing was probably regulated even more strictly. Thus it is maybe no coincidence that we find the famous water clocks used to ensure the same amount of speaking time given to the advocates of both parties precisely in a hearing conducted in front of a large tribunal of 204 judges.<sup>86</sup> In such hearings, the speeches of the advocates were even more significant than in arbitrations in front of small commissions and emotional arguments are likely to have played a major role. By implication, all of this shows what an important function the *periēgēseis* had in cases of small-commission arbitration.

In the final decision of the document, concrete references of the border descriptions included the mention of adjacent regions such as Molossia and toponyms such as Euryna.<sup>87</sup> The fact that the precise course of the border is three times referenced as καθ' ἄκρην ('along the mountain ridge') is good indication of the mountainous character of the border area between both communities.<sup>88</sup> However, it also shows how the geomorphology of the area influenced the boundary regulation. While in the treaty with Charadros the course of the border between two boundary

84 Note that it was part of the judges' oath in Ager 1996: no. 21 to check the validity of the evidence properly.

85 On the differences between arbitration by a small number of judges and by larger *dikastēria*, see Ager 1996: 11-12, and Harter-Uibopuu 1998: 139-48.

86 204 judges: IG XII 4, 5, 4044 B, l. 131-33 (Ager 1996: no. 21; Kalymna, early second century BC [date according to IG]); water clocks: IG XII 4, 5, 4044 A, l. 39-41, 72-74.

87 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 B, l. 19 (Molossia) and 20 (Euryna).

88 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 B, l. 20, 23 (καθ' ἄκρην), 32. On the exact course of the border: Andreou 1996-1997. For the frequent use of peaks and mountain ridges as reference points in boundary regulations, see Rousset 1994: 117; cf. also Freitag 2007: 54.

stones was supposed to run “in a straight line” (κατ’ εὐθύ), in the boundary regulation with the Athamanes the border is to follow the course of the mountain ridge (καθ’ ἄκρην). There was more than one way for the Ambrakiots to demarcate the borders of their territory.

In any case, fragmentary as the inscription is, the surviving lines of the document show that the initiative for the arbitration came from the Ambrakiots and Athamanes themselves the Roman praetor P. Cornelius Blasio being our main witness:

πρεσβευ|ταὶ Ἀμβρακιῶται καὶ | Ἀθαμᾶνες ἐμοὶ προσ|ήλθοσαν, ἵν’  
αὐτοῖς σύγ|κλητον δῶ· ἐγὼ αὐτοῖς | σύγκλητον ἔδωκα.

Envoys of the Ambrakiots and the Athamanes have come to me that I may give them (access to the) senate. I have given them (access to the) senate.<sup>89</sup>

It is interesting to note that, with the Korkyraians, traditional enemies of the Ambrakiots are chosen and accepted as arbitrators.<sup>90</sup> Yet the Korkyraians seem to have been quite eager to gain an international reputation as trustworthy judges in this period.<sup>91</sup> Beyond that, a proxeny decree for Pausanias from Ambrakia indicates that the political relations between both poleis had improved in the second century.<sup>92</sup>

89 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 796 A, l. 5-10. Although Blasio obviously enjoys the presentation of his role as *patronus* very much here, we do not have reason to doubt that the diplomatic negotiations proceeded as described. The Ambrakiots and Athamanes must have been much more interested in the concrete course of the border line than the Romans were who applied their typical policy of delegation and restraint actively intervening only when absolutely necessary.

90 Van Wijk 2024 has recently shown for the Athenian-Boiotian relations that such traditional enmities were not always key when it came to everyday interstate decision-making.

91 See IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 795 (Ager 1996: no. 118 [Mondaia and Azoros, Korkyra, shortly after 179 BC]) where among the three arbitrators appears Xenophantos, son of Dameas, from Korkyra. A model for such ambitions of the Korkyraians could be seen in the well-known case of the Rhodians, who frequently acted as arbitrators and mediators in the third and second centuries BC (see Ager 1991; 1996: 11, 207).

92 IG IX 1<sup>2</sup>, 4, 791 (Korkyra, second century BC).

In 166 BC, there was then a third boundary regulation of the time regarding the borders of Ambrakia.<sup>93</sup> In this case, the other party of the dispute was represented by the Akarnanians. The inscription is firmly dated by the appearance of the Athenian archon Nikosthenes in the first line of the document. Again a commission of five foreign judges, this time stemming from Athens, was appointed to decide the conflict.<sup>94</sup> As in the treaty with Charadros, an oath figured prominently in the inscription. However, while the oath in the Charadros treaty was a joint oath of both parties in order to protect the entire agreement,<sup>95</sup> the oath in the document from Athens is best understood as an oath taken by the Athenian judges.<sup>96</sup> The difference between the groups of oath takers explains the divergent positions of the oaths at the beginning and at the end of the respective documents. Unfortunately, the rest of the text remains too fragmentary to draw further conclusions.<sup>97</sup>

All in all, Sheila Ager is right in assuming that the people of Ambrakia “were seeking to redraw” the city’s boundaries “in all directions”<sup>98</sup> in the 160s. In contrast, other scholars have rather emphasized Roman agency,<sup>99</sup> and there can be no doubt that Roman weapons had to provide the necessary political freedom that made the cluster of boundary regulations possible. And yet, I cannot but sense a local Ambrakiot impulse behind this sudden explosion of border-management initiatives. After years of Epeirote and Aitolian domination, as expressed in the myth of the quarrel of the gods, the people of Ambrakia seized the opportunity to deal with their borders in their own way.

93 Ager 1996: no. 132 (Akarnanians and Ambrakiots, Athens, 166 BC).

94 We already find an Athenian delegation seeking to arbitrate (though on an informal level) in a conflict involving the Ambrakiots in 189 BC (Polyb. 21.29).

95 *Staatsverträge* IV 665b, l. 45–50.

96 On the role of oaths in interstate arbitration see Scharff forthcoming.

97 However, I see no compelling reason why the inscription should have referred to a private dispute, which was considered a possibility by Fantasia 2017: 182–83.

98 Ager 1996: 370.

99 Cabanes 2010; Errington in his comments ad *Staatsverträge* IV 665: “auf römische Anregung.”

#### IV. A City of Borders – Some Concluding Remarks

Borders clearly played a decisive role in Ambrakia's history, and it was of crucial importance for the city's well-being to manage them properly. However, situated at the intersection of Epeirote, Aitolian, and Akarnanian interests for most of their history, the Ambrakiots did not have the autonomy to do so. The story of the quarrel of the gods fighting for the possession of the city must be read as an illustration of those foreign political interests in the city. In important parts of its surviving version, the myth represents Aitolian claims to the city and belongs to the context of Aitolian imperialism.<sup>100</sup> It is the tale of a city in between.<sup>101</sup> For a polis such as Ambrakia located in the border areas of federal states and object to diverging territorial claims of its neighbors, a world dominated by Rome provided a political chance: the opportunity to overcome the city's isolated position by a border-management initiative that mainly had to take into account one major player. Despite the general unrest caused by Roman expansion in the region, it should be noted that, from an Ambrakiot perspective, federal states were not necessarily guarantors of interstate stability, but rather posed a threat to it. Ambrakia's strategic position undoubtedly improved under Roman rule.

Therefore, the Ambrakiot boundary regulations of the 160s BC can be regarded as an expression of the city's newly achieved political leeway. The Ambrakiots had come into a position to regulate their own borders – and they did so effectively and with great enthusiasm, including various political, economic, and religious activities. In a nutshell, Ambrakiot politics had essentially become border politics in the 160s.

100 On the Aitolians' "federal imperialism" Rzepka 2019; see also Scholten 2000 and Funke 2008.

101 On the surface, this means between the fighting gods; on a metaphorical level, however, it clearly refers to a position between the diverging interests of strong neighbors.

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*Fig. 1: Tetradrachm minted by the Aitolian League, 279-260 BC (Scheu 1960, no. 8). The obverse shows the head of Herakles looking to the right, with lion's skin headdress. On the reverse of the coin, we find Aitolos seated on a pile of Gallic and Makedonian shields which rest on a Gallic karnyx, with his hands Aitolos holds a spear and a sword.*

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Fig. 2: Fragment a of the boundary regulations concluded between Ambrakia and Charadros in the 160s BC (*Staatsverträge* IV 665a [SEG 35.665]).  
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# THE EGYPTIAN MIRACLES OF SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN IN THE LONDON CODEX (Rupprecht, Lond. Add. 37534 = BHG 373b)

*By Ildikó Csepregi & David Movrin*

**Summary:** Patron saints of doctors, surgeons and pharmacists, Saint Cosmas and Damian were among the most popular and important figures of Byzantine hagiography. They healed through incubation, temple sleep, by giving miraculously medical recipes or performed surgical operations in dreams. Their cult was popular and their worship is attested all over the Mediterranean. The present text is the first modern translation of the oldest version of their miracles, from a 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>-century Greek codex found in Egypt, now in the British Library (Cod. Lond. Add. 37534). Its simple and unadorned style offers a rich material for examining the emergence of Byzantine hagiography, a precious source of comparison with the better-known, later miracles of Cosmas and Damian and the theological controversies of the time.

The present text is the first modern translation of the oldest version of the miracles of Saint Cosmas and Damian, preserved in a 10th-11th-century parchment codex, now in the British Library.<sup>1</sup> Saint Cosmas and Damian were some of the most emblematic of early Byzantine saints: fic-

1 Cod. Lond. Add. 37534; the codex is fully digitalized and accessible; its Pinakes record: <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/39156/>; its Arca number: 39587. I would here like to thank the British Library to have allowed me to inspect this precious codex back in 2001.

tional but highly famous doctor saints who healed their patients miraculously by dreams, with the practice of incubation.<sup>2</sup> The trajectory of this pair of physician-saints is perplexing. Their cult and their churches spread quickly from the Near East through Egypt, Byzantium and Rome, and later on the West.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent features complemented their legend in each of the major emerging cult places. Because of their popularity, they multiplied: there are three pairs of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the so-called Asian (that is, from Asia Minor), Roman, and Arab pairs, with three different *Passiones*, and three *Vitae*. Each pair has a different place of birth and their own feast day.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest layer of their legend locates them in Syria, calling the town of Cyrrhus their hometown, which also became the place of their peaceful death and burial.<sup>5</sup> At this phase of the legend, they were healers and miracle workers but not yet martyrs. In their subsequent hagiography, Aegae became the scene of their martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian, under the prefect Lysias. Their cult spread rapidly, as is attested by the churches erected in the honour of the 'Asian' pair: around the year AD 400 a church was dedicated to them in Aleppo, in the fifth century AD two others in Edessa and in Cyrrhus (the latter together with 'their bones'). We know of a Cosmas and Damian church dated to the sixth century AD near Jerusalem, while Johannes Moschus preserved the memory of a church and monastery (where incubation was probably practised) within the city of Jerusalem itself. A knightly order was established in their honour in Palestine, Procopius Carthophylax made mention of a church in the ninth century in Pamphylia, Saint Sabas built a church to them in Cappadocia, there are traces of their cult from the seventh century onwards in Galatia and in Mysia, and important Byzantine

2 Thorough introduction of the Greek practice is by Deubner 1900; Hamilton 1906 and recently von Ehrenheim 2015; Renberg 2017; on Christian incubation: Csepregi 2024.

3 Maraval 1985; Janin 1969; Mango 1994 and for their popularity in Western Europe, of several works, cf. Julien 1980; Julien et al. 1993; Brenk 2007.

4 For disentangling their different legends see Van Esbroeck 1981.

5 Place names are crucial in the understanding of the importance and the extension of their cult and it received major scholarly attention even before the discovery and publication of the London Codex. An overall topography of their miracles can be found in Crum 1908; Maas 1908; Delehay 1902, 185, 791; Deubne, 1907; 91, 93; Van Esbroeck 1981.



ruins were found on the island of Dascalio as well as in Phocis and in Dyrrachium, all dating to before AD 518. A church dedicated to Cosmas and Damian with a spectacular mosaic floor was excavated in the Jordanian town of Gerasa (today Jarash), dating to AD 530 – AD 533. Based on the Greek dedication inscription, the church was built from donations by five individuals under the patronage of Paul, bishop of Gerasa.<sup>6</sup> On their arrival in Egypt we have evidence that in fourth-century Alexandria, Patriarch Timothy converted a temple of Serapis into a church dedicated to Honorius, the son of Theodosius I, which also became known as the church of Cosmas and Damian. We do not know when this happened, but it definitely happened by the end of the seventh century when John of Nikiu wrote about it. This may or may not be the same church of Cosmas and Damian that we read about in Sophronius's *Thaumata*, written at the beginning of the seventh century.<sup>7</sup> A rather early known iconographical representation come from Egypt: If their attributes have been correctly identified, the British Museum stucco painting from a sixth-century Egyptian monastic complex in Wadi Sarga seems to portray characteristics of the Arab pair: It represents the Old Testament martyrdom scene of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael in the burning furnace, painted between the figures of Cosmas and Damian.<sup>8</sup>

The earliest Lives and Passions were soon complemented by a collection of miracles – the earliest known miracle collection is the one translated below. The text of these miracle stories was discovered with several other volumes in a codex from Egypt. The edition of the Greek text was done by a disciple of Deubner's, Ernst Rupprecht, in 1935.<sup>9</sup> As the codex itself was bought in 1935 by the British Museum and eventually became the property of the British Library, scholarly literature refers to this collection either as London Codex/Codex Londoniensis, Rupprecht-text or Egyptian miracles.

About the discovery of the volume we know that in 1907, an Arab shepherd near Edfu found several codices. The excavations following the

6 cf. Deubner 1907: 81; John Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* 127 (PG 87.3. col. 2990); Hamarneh 1985.

7 Fernandez Marcos 1975; Gasco 2006.

8 Dalton 1916.

9 Rupprecht 1935.

discovery unearthed a (supposed) library from a (supposed) Coptic monastery. News about the finds spread fast, and the English collector Robert de Rustafjaell bought the manuscripts. In addition to the largely Coptic material (among them a Nubian vellum with the miracles of St. Menas from the tenth/eleventh centuries), there was also our Greek manuscript. In 1935, a disciple of Deubner's, Ernst Rupprecht, edited the Greek text.

About the discovery and acquisition of the volume, in *The Light of Egypt*, Rustafjaell writes as follows:

“Here [in Edfu] I met the supposed finder himself, who agreed, for a small remuneration, to take me to the spot where he said he had dug them out. On the last page of two of the manuscript references are made to a monastery to which they were dedicated, named St. Mercurius on the mount at Edfu, and I was greatly surprised when the Arab piloted me to a place about five miles west of Edfu on the fringe of the desert plateau, where, he said, was a Coptic monastery. This monastery proved to be a white building of the Oriental type, standing within its own enclosure, and further partly surrounded by the dark brick ruins of what must have once been a very large building.”<sup>10</sup>

It is uncertain if these manuscripts were found where it was claimed or if they belonged to this monastery. Besides the questionable tale of the Arab, it was not uncommon for monasteries to buy up the libraries of other churches. Books could also be transferred to more prominent places for safety or as gifts between various communities. Rustafjaell continues:

“The most important of the Coptic manuscripts is the Apocryphal Narrative of Christ's descent into Hell by the Apostle Bartholomew; this, the Greek manuscript relating to Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian and the small, insignificant-looking Nubian volume of the tenth century [with the Miracles of Saint Menas] were left, because, from their appearance, they seemed to have no particular value compared with

10 Rustafjaell 1909: 4-5.

the larger and better preserved books selected from the find, before I obtained possession of the remainder.”<sup>11</sup>

The codex contains an alternative version of Cosmas and Damian’s miracles, written in simple Greek, in a manner similar to an inventory. Rustafjaell argued that the London Codex pointed to an earlier phase of the cult, noting the unpretentious style and the straightforward narration.<sup>12</sup> Rupprecht called it ‘the oldest Greek version we know’ (*antiquissimum quod novimus exemplum graecum*).<sup>13</sup>

The London Codex starts with a short preface, with some references to the legendary life of Cosmas and Damian, following the *Vita Asiatica* and does not speak about the saints as martyrs, which motif later became the dominant one. In addition to this, the text unmistakably identifies twice the origin of the saints’ cult by naming their hometown and burial place: Pheremma – near Cyrrhus, confirming thus the hypothesis before the appearance of the London Codex.<sup>14</sup>

This short introduction is followed by the catalogue of miracles. The hagiographer divided them into forty-seven sections with each miracle story receiving a unique number and a title. Because of the destruction of the middle of the codex, there is a huge lacuna, with ten folios missing, that would have contained miracles 12–20 (after the missing pages we kept the consecutive numbering, just like Rupprecht and all previous scholars referring to the text). The hand is easily readable, and there are painted floral decorations in colour. An encomium to Archangel Michael is found at the end of the codex written by another hand.<sup>15</sup>

This edition naturally calls for comparison with the later, Deubnerian version of the miracles, which has not only survived in a great number of manuscripts but also differs at various points from the London Codex. The Deubner-collection contains 48 miracles, divided into six sections,

11 Rustefjaell 1909: 5.

12 For more on the lives of Byzantine hagiography cf. Ševčenko 1981 and Patlagean 1979.

13 Rupprecht 1935: vii.

14 Cf. footnote 5.

15 The codicological description of the text: *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years MDCCCCVI-MDCCCCX*, 1912: 73; Halkin 1935; including some photographs, Rustafjaell 1909: 89–98.

but for chronology we can now disregard the later 5th part and the thirteenth century 6th part of Deubner's collection. Considering that from the London Codex is missing roughly 10 miracles because of the missing folios in the middle, but we include the *in vita* miracles, then we end up with 24 miracles present in both collections, and 14 miracles unique to the London Codex. Interestingly, the first two miracles of the Codex are *post mortem* miracles that took place in Pheremma, at the church built upon the tomb of the saints. These stories in the Deubner-version figure as *in vita* miracles.<sup>16</sup>

Another special characteristic is that, unlike in the Deubner texts, the miracles here do not start with short introductions or epilogues, and they end with short doxologies. A further curiosity is, although the Deubner versions are longer, these shorter miracles contain more precise descriptions of the illnesses.

16 For an easier overview cf the table of the corresponding miracles in Csepregi 2024: 203.

The parallel stories of the two collections (without the *in vita* miracles) are the following:

- CL 5 – KDM 1
- CL 6 – KDM 3
- CL 7 – KDM 33
- CL 9 – KDM 6
- CL 11 – KDM 25
- CL 13 – KDM 11
- CL 14 – KDM 27
- CL 21 – KDM 17
- CL 22 – KDM 20
- CL 23 – KDM 9
- CL 24 – KDM 19
- CL 25 – KDM 13
- CL 26 – KDM 23
- CL 28 – KDM 28
- CL 29 – KDM 31
- CL 30 – KDM 32
- CL 33 – KDM 21
- CL 34 – KDM 22
- CL 35 – KDM 26
- CL 36 – KDM 29
- CL 37 – KDM 30

When placed into the larger context of Byzantine hagiography, the uniqueness of the London Codex lies in its Egyptian colouring and in its Monophysite position. This in itself is understandable, because after the synod of Chalcedon (451 AD), a greater part of Egypt remained faithful to the Monophysite credo. But as Cosmas and Damian became more popular and their cult spread, they were re-programmed – while the later versions subscribe to the Chalcedonian creed, this text calls the Monophysite saints as Orthodox. This shift between what is regarded as Orthodox or heretic is not unknown in Byzantine hagiography, but the London Codex gives a good example how a set of miracles attached to the same healers can change its theological standing.<sup>17</sup> “Among the subjects most in the air – hagiographically speaking – at the present time are, on the one hand, that of twin saints and twin gods and, on the other, that of the practice of ‘incubation’ in the shrines of medical saints and divinities” – wrote E.R. Crum in 1908. After more than a century of Cinderella’s sleep, research on incubation miracles is back again.

17 Csepregi 2010; for a similar conclusion cf. Booth 2011.

### The life, work, and miracles of the holy healers Cosmas and Damian

[fol. 1 r] [...] by soothing the pain, these benefits of medical action have provided everyone with an eternally inexhaustible grace. Their mother was called Theodothe, whose parents were induced by divine tidings to name her thus as a great gift from God. For she fulfilled the divine command, as the holy root and the tree that grows well, for by the fruit, the tree is known, according to the Saviour's saying.<sup>18</sup> She gave birth to these saints. For the good tree bears good fruit,<sup>19</sup> as the Lord himself says. And they were brought up worthy and godly by their mother, grew up and gave themselves to the craft of healing men, thinking that the wisdom of the world is a handmaiden of the wisdom above, and saying that art is more solid when based on faith that cannot be deceived, [fol. 1 v] they healed diseases, showing the futility of burning and cutting wounds, rejecting human cures, and calling the spells and talismans a deception of mortals, declaring that Christ's power truly conquers all diseases and that by this means alone, both humans with understanding and animals without understanding can be healed, fulfilling the word of David the prophet: "Men and animals you save, O Lord."<sup>20</sup> Moreover, they have excelled in all the human qualities, so much so that no one could enumerate their virtues and, turning the divine illumination to their thinking, they have distinguished themselves by miracles and not by profit, as they have accepted no payment from the healed, asking only as payment that they might believe in God and give thanks to him who, by his grace, gives so many gifts to people. The gift they had received they passed on, according to the Saviour's teaching,<sup>21</sup> given to his disciples, when he said that it was impossible to receive the gifts of God without faith; as the apostle says,<sup>22</sup> the saints from long ago<sup>23</sup> [fol. 2 r] through their faith have pleased God [...] rule is eternal and who creates in his image. Thus says

18 Mt 12:33.

19 Mt 7:17.

20 Ps 36:7.

21 Mt 10:8.

22 Cf. Heb 11:4-5 and Rom 4.

23 Cf. Lk 1:70; Acts 3:21.

the Saviour, “My Father worketh all the days of my life, and I also will work”<sup>24</sup> – as he renews our bodily frame and makes it shine with his brightness. Laying this task also upon his chosen sons, He has handed this, which continuously works until completion, to them and has said, also to those who in the future will believe Him through these, that: “Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater works than these.”<sup>25</sup> He also said: “I am the light,”<sup>26</sup> and he said it to them again: “You are the light of the world.”<sup>27</sup> And just as a lantern lights a lantern, we are kindled one by one by encouraging one another [fol. 2 v] [...] diseases were often driven out. Because of their good deeds, people have given praise to the name and image of the saints, and acknowledged the grace that was given to them, until now and until the end of time, helping everybody to pray to God to heal our bodies and give salvation to our souls. And in this, the saints Cosmas and Damian listened to Christ as their Lord and the one who spoke to them: “Let your light shine before men,”<sup>28</sup> and that “you may heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons: ye have received freely, ye give freely”<sup>29</sup> [...] in all the world [...] [fol. 3 r] [...] as the apostle says: “And without faith it is impossible to please God.”<sup>30</sup> And the Lord himself says: “All things are possible to him that believeth.”<sup>31</sup> These saints had the same faith. And you, listeners, who hear the account of these miracles, should not only rejoice; whatever miracles you hear that the saints have performed, you need to consider them small and slight. Indeed, out of the many, we have chosen to narrate but few for you to lead you who hear to believe the rest. But let us begin the narrative.

The saints Cosmas and Damian, having already healed many patients by the grace given to them by God, did not want it to be known to many, lest they become those who seek the recognition of men, as it is always the habit of saints to hide their virtues. As many people tried to write

24 John 5:17.

25 John 14:12

26 John 8:12.

27 Mt 5:14.

28 Mt 5:16.

29 Mt 10:8.

30 Heb 11:6.

31 Mark 9:23.

down what they had accomplished in their wandering lives, they prevented this by replying: “The grace of these healings belongs to God, the one who operates everything when he wishes and as he wishes; and what he did before is recorded in the gospels, which show that he is the true God.” [fol. 3 v] [...] not being worthy that the saints should conceal the plentiful miracles which they have wrought, since Christ says, “The city which is built on a mountain cannot hide, neither do they light a candle to put it under a bushel,”<sup>32</sup> but they took no payment from anyone, as I said.<sup>33</sup>

### Miracle 1 (Deubner vita 2/3)

A woman named Palladia, long bedridden, spent whatever she had on secular physicians and received no help from them (for she had long been suffering from a semi-tertian fever, was confined to bed, and had lost her bodily strength). Hearing from some people that the medicine of Cosmas and Damian, the healers of Christ, was trustworthy and that they never asked payment for healing, she had her family members lift her bed and carry her from her home to them, for she could no longer walk. And they, learning of her faith and that of her attendants, seeing that it was like the faith of those who had once lowered the paralytic man in his bed to where the Saviour was,<sup>34</sup> gave her the same health as a gift of grace in the same hour. She returned to her house with great thanksgiving, [fol. 4 r] pledging to bring them three eggs. But knowing that the saints would not accept payment from anyone, she met with Damian in secret and asked him to receive them. As Damian refused, saying that servants of Christ heal as the Lord commands and not for a fee and that it was well known to her that others have received healing from them freely, she swore to Damian that in the name of Christ the Saviour, he needs to accept the three eggs. Fearing these oaths, he took the eggs, and immediately went and gave [the eggs] to people in need. As long as Damian was alive, Cosmas knew nothing of this. Once he completed his lifetime, Damian departed to eternity with saints to find his rest in Christ. Having

32 Mt 5:14; 4:21.

33 Cf. 1v.

34 Mt 9:2



duly buried the corpse, Cosmas himself was left to help heal all the ailing. He later learned that while still alive, Damian had received eggs from Palladia; he was seized with an unusual sorrow and said to himself: "We who have given up our own, how can we accept another's? The grace of the three cannot be bought with three eggs."<sup>35</sup> As he said this, he immediately called his family and friends, asking that when his life ended, not to bury him [fol. 4 v] in the same tomb with Damian, but to bury his body at a distance. But the Lord, who knows the hidden things, stood before Cosmas that night and said: "You did not do the right thing, blaming Damian for the three eggs, because he had respected the oath taken in my name, and asking not to be buried with him. He did not accept the eggs as payment, nor did he break the oath; like Saul who, fearing for his son Jonathan, would have accepted death, had not the people's plea saved him."<sup>36</sup> Thus convinced, the saint gave up his sorrow against his brother and told no one of the assurance sent to him by divine foresight lest the gift of prophecy should be attributed to him, as he was already renowned for miracles. Reaching places far and wide, he healed everyone, whatever their illness. In one place, he found a camel tormented by the jealousy of the demon, and he took hold of its leg and restored it to the health it had before the torment, telling those around it that the demon was destroying both man and beast with his jealousy. He also performed many other kinds of healing, which he prevented from being recorded, [fol. 5 r] imitating Christ, who prevented his miracles from being made public, he also fell asleep [i.e., died], leaving him to be separated from his brother, as was said. His friends, wishing to take proper care of his body, were troubled as to what to do about the funeral, as he had instructed them not to bury him with Damian. And behold, the camel whose leg he had healed came running, with a human voice, at God's command, and crying: "Cosmas and Damian have not only become benefactors to you humans but were also given to us animals for salvation. Thus I come here in thanksgiving for all this, having received a voice from God, to tell you what was entrusted to me to tell, that the Lord and King appeared to Cosmas the healer long ago, when he was alone, and commanded that he should in no case be separated in the grave from

35 Rupprecht: *ad trinitatis doctrinam spectare videtur, nisi forte τριῶν corruptum est.*

36 1 Sam 14:24-45.

Damian. So make sure that his corpse will lie beside him. I was forced to tell you this, even against my nature.” Having said this, the camel again recovered its own voice. They all heard this with great joy, and they put the remains of the saints Cosmas and Damian together in the same place, a place called Pheremma, which is in Cyrrhus. There, many healings and miracles have taken place and are taking place for the glory of the exalted God. [fol. 5 v]

### Miracle 2 (Deubner vita 4)

*About the peasant who swallowed a snake*

After their burial, the Christians, thankful to the servants of Christ, built a large and magnificent church on the spot where they were buried. When the church was finished, they came from all over to draw from the ever-abundant grace of their healings, as from some common spring, hastening there daily.

While all this was going on, a peasant who lived in that region, when summer had arrived and was, as usual, ripening spring's seeds in the fields towards maturity, he was heartily reaping the harvest as was his custom. One day, noon came upon him while he was harvesting. Scorched by the blazing sun, he left his work and lay under a tree to cool off. After lying down for a while, he fell asleep sweetly slumbering and did not know that he had accidentally left his mouth open. Crawling there, a serpent reached him and, as the Enemy's weapon from the beginning, acting under his power, descended through the man's mouth into his belly as if in a lair. The peasant, satiated with sleep, awoke and, suspecting no evil, kept reaping the fields until evening. [fol. 6 r] Having gathered a bountiful harvest, he went home satisfied. He had dinner with his wife and went to bed at nightfall, tired from work and trying to sleep when the snake started stirring inside. Amid aches and pains, he thought he had picked up something from the food, so he vomited it all up in spasms. He spent the night sleepless while the snake bit and gnawed at his insides. When his wife woke up at dawn, she called several doctors who were renowned in their profession, but none of them could identify the cause of the internal convulsion. Spending the whole day in pain, unable to eat anything or sleep for even a little while, and besides

belching foul breath from the panting of the venomous beast, making wailing noises, he paced up and down his house, begging his companions to take him to the saving church of the servants of Christ, Cosmas and Damian. So the very same day, they took him to Pheremma, where, as already mentioned, was the tomb of the saints; it was already evening, and going straight to the sanctuary, he raised his hands and cried out: “God of saints Cosmas and Damian, give me deliverance from my pains!” [fol. 6 v] And the saints had pity on him, and while the serpent was resting in him, the peasant lay down in the holy place, trusting in the saints, and waited gladly until the dawn. When it started dawning, he was lying on his back with his mouth open, and he noticed nothing, as he had not before, when the serpent descended. Well, the snake was driven out by the saints and left his mouth, except for the tip of its tail, which remained there until sunlight. Everybody flocked together to see the sight; the man awoke and leaped up, and the serpent fled the multitude of people, left the sanctuary area, and went out of sight while nobody touched it. The peasant and the crowd sang praises and glorified God, who had given such grace through his saints.

### Miracle 3 (Deubner vita 5)

#### *About the wife of Malchus*

Later, there was a godly man named Malchus, who always spent time in the saint’s church and was also a member of the group of helpers there because of his great faith in the saints. Necessity forced him to start preparing for a trip. Together with his wife, they went to the church of the saints and prayed before the journey for his safe return from [fol. 7 r] abroad and for their union. Setting his wife before the saints, the man said, “Look, I am setting you before the saints while preparing for my way to a foreign land. Stay at home until I come back to you again. If something happens to me to make me linger there, I will send somebody for thee, using agreed signs.” Explaining the agreed signs to her, he departed. But an evil demon had overheard the signs given to the woman. And while Malchus was abroad, the demon, assuming the form of a youth, went to the woman, as if sent by her husband to take her to him, and addressed her with the agreed signal. The woman recognized the signs but looked suspiciously at the strange appearance and

demanded an oath by the saints that the person trying to take her away under the guise of a youth would do her no harm. The demon was delighted to swear by the mighty saints at the altar, saying: “By the power of Cosmas and Damian, I will do you no harm, providing a good journey to deliver you safely to your husband. So he put her on a horse and led her away. They went round and round; the demon left the straight road and led her up a steep, rocky cliff, and then suddenly [fol. 7 v] pushed her from the animal to her death. As she fell, she was intercepted by a rock. Lifting her eyes, she immediately called to the saints: “Servants of God, Cosmas and Damian, do not delay to help me in this distress, me whom my husband has entrusted to you, for you know well that I left my home trusting the oath in you, entrusting you with everything.” And at the woman's word, saints Cosmas and Damian appeared in the shape of horsemen, and others were following them. The demon saw them, started wailing, and disappeared. The saints told the woman to calm down and not be distraught, explaining that they were Cosmas and Damian, whom she had called for help. They immediately took her back to Pheremmma, to the entrance of their church. She told all the people there what happened and, rejoicing with them, thanked the saints and referred glory to Christ, who had given such grace to his saints.

#### Miracle 4 (-)

##### *The peasant with gangrened feet*

While these miracles took place around the consecration of the church of saints Cosmas and Damian long ago, one must not be silent about the following miracles that took place in our country because of them. “One generation shall praise thy works to another),”<sup>37</sup> [fol. 8 r] says David the prophet in praise of God, who is now also moving us towards praise by showing, through Saint Cosmas and Saint Damian, the same miracles to us, his descendants.

There once lived a peasant man whose life was always troubled. For, as Solomon says, “a sluggard’s appetite is never filled”<sup>38</sup> – and indeed, he

37 Ps 145:4.

38 Pr 13:4.

was not a sluggard when it came to depravity, devoting himself to the company of the pleasure-seekers; all that he earned from peasant work he spent on whores, and since this never ceased, he was always their companion in debauchery. He did not do anything decent and was always busy making God angry. This man was once digging the soil with a two-pronged hoe, as was his custom, and he struck his right foot with the hoe and made a great wound in it. His coworkers lifted him and carried him home, where he lay down and no longer seemed to be distressed about the wound. As night fell, however, the wound started swelling, and the whole body was eventually affected. In the morning, those by his side called a doctor who, seeing that this was not the usual wound, as it was also rapidly rotting, advised him: "If you wish to remain alive and not die suddenly, allow me to cut off the leg on which the wound is; for if I do not cut it off quickly, the condition will spread over the whole body and cause death." Having said this, [fol. 8 v] the doctor went to prepare the supplies and the knife for the cut. The peasant realized the trouble he was in and that he brought this upon himself. He burst into tears, groaned, and said: "Lord and my God, you alone know my sins, that they are unspeakable. But I also know your mercy, that you measure them according to your greatness and compassion. My condition is not fit for human hands. But you can heal me, through thy servants Cosmas and Damian, to whom thou have given the healing that soothes the pain." While he was lamenting and pleading with God with these and similar words, in the middle of the night, the saints appeared to him as physicians and said: "Man, you could you not endure this short time of pain that was brought on you for the sake of chastisement; how will you stand against the everlasting wrath prepared against you?"

But if you want to be saved here and now, repent by swearing an oath, promising us that you will live the rest of your life soberly and obey the rest of God's commandments." And he swore with fear and great joy and made a vow, for he knew they were the saints. And they lifted his foot that was wounded and squeezed out all the pus out of it. And when they had cleansed him, [fol. 9 r] the wound was healed with a single touch so that not even a scar remained to be seen. Then they told him, "Look, now there is nothing wrong with your body. Make your soul healthy, too." Having said this, they left him. As the morning came, the peasant went

out into the field to do his usual work, rejoicing for the salvation of his soul as much as his body, and he spent the rest of his life doing good deeds. At sunrise, the doctor came, bringing the supplies needed for the cut. Hearing that the peasant went out into the field, free from harm, he went all over the countryside to announce the miracle. The man who was cured and all who heard of it praised God, who had given such grace through his saints.

### Miracle 5 (Deubner 1)

#### *About the man with dropsy*

Then there was the respectable old man who got ill with dropsy. His bloated belly was touching his beard, and he was not able to see anything from the navel downwards. He came to the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, who unflinchingly come to the aid of all; he lay down and, with great sighs, begged to be healed. Seeing that many had gained a cure for their illness before his eyes, he despaired, [fol. 9 v] how only he remains so unfortunate in his illness. After a while, he despaired about recovery, so he decided to return home. His household servants put the equipment they had brought for their needs onto a ship, and he was taken on a stretcher to the harbor; they left him there alone to go back to fetch the boat, where they would put him after they had anchored. Having thus sent his servants, he waited for the boat. The saints came to him, appearing as local inhabitants, and said, “Old man, why are you sitting here alone, all seized by the constraint of illness?” He said he was waiting for the servants to return. They encouraged him to return to the saints’ sanctuary and wait for healing from them. But he angrily lashed out against the saints, saying, “I would rather choose to go and die at home than elsewhere. For even if I should wish to return to those who have no intention of healing me, none of my servants are here.” Again, they encouraged him, gently drilling [fol. 10 r] his character and said, “Do not scorn the saints, old man! Rather, beseech them even more than before, for they can heal you since none of those who come to them are deserted without providence. So obey us, we will take you there.” The man was persuaded, so they picked up the stretcher with the patient to take him back to the church where he had been before and then disappeared. Then, realizing it was the saints, he begged to be healed, much more than

before. At night, they appeared to him in a dream while sleeping. They seemed to have a sharpened razor in their hands. Thus said one to the other: “Make a cut on this wretch, and cut deep, that he may learn to speak with purer words and not to revile us.” So one of them cut, and the stomach that was ripped open by the cut filled the place with much stench and pus. But they did not consider it unworthy to endure the stench. The man awoke from his sleep, saw the healing, and began to worry again about how he was going to [fol. 10 v] to find a cure for the cut. The saints appeared to him again and told him to put the wax salve<sup>39</sup> from their church on the cut. He applied it and was completely healed; he returned home again in good health, praising the Lord and glorifying his saints.<sup>40</sup>

### Miracle 6 (Deubner 3)

#### *About the man with urinary hesitancy*

Later, there was again an old man in pain from urinary retention who suffered unusual pain, as the urine never left his body without agony. So drinking and non-drinking water were both dangerous for him, as sometimes he feared it would flood his passages, and sometimes he feared it would dry them out. The physicians who were called tried many remedies, now ointments, now potions, but nothing worked for the old man. Eventually, he embraced faith and fled to the church sanctuary of saints Cosmas and Damian, and there he pestered them, alone, for three days to bring him a speedy cure. A devotee of the saints, a godly man named Cosmas,<sup>41</sup> once brought a lamb. This lamb was named Cosmas by the church servants after the donor; [fol. 11 r] and it lived in the front courtyard of the church and grazing there. The saints, appearing on the

39 Gr. κηρωτή, “cerate or salve, used medically” (LSJ), from Latin *cera*, wax; a wax salve was a preparation for external application, of a consistency between that of an ointment and a plaster (can be spread upon cloth but does not melt when applied to the skin).

40 Here, it is said that the church of the saints is next to a harbor, where the patient is traveling somewhere. Would Pheremma, today’s archeological site next to A’zaz in Syria, be by a river? Instead, without any specific marking, we have moved (or returned?) to the events in Constantinople – a talented man with servants.

41 A detail missing from the Deubner miracle.

fourth night, said to the one who had urinary retention: “Take a few hairs from Cosmas’ pubic area, throw them in water, and drink them well mixed, and you will be cured immediately.” The old man woke up from his sleep and understood nothing of what was said to him.<sup>42</sup> At the order of the saints, the lamb came into the place where he was and, stopping in front of him, bleated several times and stood there baaing at the old man. When the servants saw this, they laughed and cried: “Cosmas, what is the matter with you?” The man, recognizing the meaning of the dream by the saints’ grace, called for a barber (for he was not far away), told him to shear off some of the hair around the lamb’s genitals, and drank the wool in a glass of water. The passages in his body opened, and the water flowed out, washing out his urine, so to speak. The man returned home healed, praising God and thanking the saints.

### Miracle 7 (Deubner 33)

#### *About the stenographer*

Afterward, there was the man who was at the head of the royal archives, [fol. 11 v] he distinguished himself with a shining career at the palace. But a bitter sickness befell him, for he was tormented from within with intestinal spasms, so much so that it seemed as if snakes were biting him. The overwhelming pain and sleeplessness nearly drove him insane, and he had no one to comfort him, for his beloved wife had died shortly before. None of the physicians could tell him either the nature or the cause of the illness, which was relieved by nothing but bathing. However, another disease arose among the servants who bathed with him daily until they all fell ill from frequent bathing. So the servant girls served in their place, but as they were not allowed to go to the men’s baths, they heated water in the house, prepared the bath in the room, and bathed the man there. But it was upsetting to him to have the women see his private parts, which even other men should not see. As it had not improved at all, [fol. 12 r] he sought shelter in the sanctuary church of

42 There is no mention of consulting votive tablets. Could that refer to the practice of a larger, more famous shrine?



saints Cosmas and Damian in Blachernai<sup>43</sup> since he was a pitiful sight, for his whole flesh was melted away, and only his skeleton remained visible. His voice was no longer audible, and his eyes were barely detectable from their sockets. His appearance was unrecognizable to those who had known him for a long time. There, in that holy place, he begged the saints to give him a cure for the illness. He no longer had a single servant, as his whole household had left him. Some of those who saw him took pity on him and provided for his needs, but this did not always happen. But then God, who surpasses all in compassion, took pity on him and sent the saints to examine him. They were not repulsed by the terrible stench of the man's grave illness and did not consider him unworthy of assistance but instead appeared as if it were amid a pleasant odor that they exuded. They cut his navel in twain with a metal scalpel, and immediately pus mixed with worms came out. Afterward, he oiled the cut with wax from the holy place, [fol. 12 v] and he fully recovered his health, so he returned to his home, praising God and giving thanks to the saints.

43 This is the Cosmidion - , a church and a monastery-complex erected on the shores of the Golden Horn, which was one of the most beautiful and most frequented churches in Constantinople. According to tradition, it was founded by Paulinus, *magister officiorum* and a schoolmate of Emperor Theodosius II (AD 408-450). the construction of the church may have taken place around 439 AD. Although the role of Paulinus in connection to the church cannot be ascertained, it is sure that the Cosmidion stood in the Paulinus quarter of the city, i.e. on the property of a man called Paulinus. About the monastery adjacent to the church, we do not know exactly when it was built; first known mention of it comes from 518 AD. Procopius described it with enthusiasm in *Buildings* I. vi. 5-8. Michael IV (1034-1041) fortified and enlarged the building complex, and it is at this time that the exterior sacred precinct, gardens, marble mosaics, and a bath were constructed. The privileged status of the church remained as late as 1453, the year of its (supposed) destruction. The exact place of its sanctuary cannot be identified. The building was often named and re-named after the surrounding area - either after the Paulinus quarter or after the Brachys or Lymphidarios quarters. The London Codex repeatedly refers to this church as the church of Cosmas and Damian in the Blachernai (CL7, 17, 18, 20, 37 but also in Deubner KDM 18). It must refer to the famous church of Mary of the Blachernai, and the testimonies of Russian pilgrims confirm the proximity of that church.

**Miracle 8 (-)***About the man with a withered arm*

Afterward, there was a man whose arm was withered; his arm was in spasm and gave him no relief whatsoever for three months; the pain from the spasm of the nerves in his right arm tormented him day and night, until, as I said, three months had passed. After that, the right arm gradually dried up and could do nothing according to its nature. His arm was as if it were dead. This man, putting his hopes after God in saints Cosmas and Damian, went to their church, and there, falling into bed, he implored the saints, persevering every hour in instinctive hope of recovery. There was a deer that someone once brought to the saints and was grazing there, wandering among the bedridden. One day, the dry-armed man was lying in his bed while his cloak was hung up by the cuffs, and by God's nudge, the deer came and started to pull it and nibble on it. The man tried to scare it away with words, [fol. 13 r] for he could not do it with his hand; neither those who lay beside him nor their assistants were alarmed by the deer but instead laughed with great cheerfulness. The man, seeing that they were laughing at the animal and not frightening it away, felt ashamed because of this and was compelled to try to move his dry arm little by little, crying and at the same time scolding those around him. He began to frighten the animal, and gradually, his arm became like the other, his arm hand again the right arm God had originally made it to be, the nerves eventually functional and working according to their nature. Then those who had just laughed restrained themselves due to great fear, and they and the man healed sang in harmony, "Lord, have mercy," and hymns to God, who had bestowed such grace on his saints.

**Miracle 9 (Deubner 6)***About the chest pain sufferer*

Afterward, an old man suffering from chest pains was lying ill in the church of saints Cosmas and Damian. With great sighs, he spat out pus mixed with blood every hour. As the pain increased day by day, his wife began [fol. 13 v] to prepare his funeral and mourning clothes, as he was blaspheming against the saints. When the pain increased again, instead

of praying to the saints, he used incredibly haughty words. But the saints, who are the servants of the All-generous in all things, were not the least bit angry at his recklessness. Appearing in a dream to someone lying close to him, they told him to tell the old man with chest pains the following: “Stop your slander against us. And stop eating poultry, especially during these days.” For the man had sinned in the sanctuary of the saints, namely, it was the time of the forty days’ holy fasting, and he ate fowl every day. “You shall abstain from eating these things,” they said. “Eat bread, salt, and all kinds of vegetables. And if you respect these two commands, we can heal you.” The man [who had the dream] went to the sick man and told him about the dream, gladly fulfilling the instructions entrusted to him. Having previously cursed, the patient began to pronounce blessings; he gave up eating fowl and ate food fit for fasting, not only then but for the rest of his life. The saints, as they wished, cleansed his gullet of blood and pus and [fol. 14 r] full health was given to him. And he gave much thanks to Christ, who had given such grace to his saints.

### Miracle 10 (-)

#### *About Stephanos, the Sophist*

Afterward, there was a clever sophist named Stephanos, versed in all disciplines; his moniker was Tarsian orator; he was well-versed in the books of the ancient philosophers, so much so that he was writing pagan books himself. Enraptured by this man’s reputation, many came to him and became his disciples. Some pernicious disease struck him, and in a short time, he was blinded; his eyes were open, and still, he could see nothing. The others, who were wandering in the dark because of him, could see the sun, but, as I said, they could see nothing and considered his blindness a common affliction. Why waste more words? He came to the harbor of salvation, namely the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, and stayed there. In the fifth year, the saints appeared and healed him, telling him his eyes should be pierced with a medicinal knife. Awakening from his sleep, [fol. 14 v] he told the doctors about the provision. The doctors thus pricked his eyes in the places they agreed on while he was

in the sanctuary of the holy place.<sup>44</sup> After a while, the darkness left his eyes, and he, who used to be dim-sighted for a long time, was now sharp-eyed. He even wrote a book of praise to the saints, giving thanks for the wisdom of God, who had given such grace to his saints.

### Miracle 11 (Deubner 25)

*About the man who had a wise wife*

Afterward, there was a man of a pious nature, keeping God's commandments, living righteously and godly. He had a wise and faithful wife. The devil, desiring to destroy their good concord, planted suspicious thoughts against her in his heart. From then on, the man, jealously suspecting the woman about everything, lived a terrible life. And she could not convince him otherwise, even after taking a dreadful oath. Again and again, the woman urged him not to be upset, saying that she had never betrayed the purity of their marriage, but the man did not believe her; once he became angry, he remained in such a state of mind. Falling a little ill, he went to the church of Cosmas and Damian, who always cure incurable diseases. Lying there [...]

Lacuna: 10 folios missing [post hoc folium iniquitate fortunae inter-ciderunt folia circiter decem].

### Miracle 12<sup>45</sup> (-)

*About the cancer patient*

[fol. 15 r] [...] he did not lie, he did not perjure himself, as they say: he did not slip up at all. He had a strong faith in every respect and participated in the divine mysteries every time. This man fell into a terrible illness, for he fell ill in the middle of his loins. Amid his groin, the glans of the penis developed an ulcer, a so-called canker sore. In a short time, the pain became severe, and the wound got infested by worms. He bore the pain heroically and resolved to himself that he would not show his

44 It is a great example for surgery performed in the church!

45 Following the consecutive numbering of the miracle 21; the heading is missing and thus conjectural.

ailment to any of the human doctors. He put his hope in saints Cosmas and Damian. As the pain grew worse day by day, his friends urged him to show his pain to doctors. He said he had two doctors who were very knowledgeable in the craft, by which he meant the saints. But they kept pestering him, not understanding whom he meant, and again, he said he had two doctors. He always spoke thus, whenever the pain increased, shaking off human medicine, he hoped in the saints for a cure, and the saints approved of his faith, for they came at night, ready to help, and said to him, "Child, since you expected to be [fol. 15 v] delivered from pain, you will be cured." Awakening from his sleep, he examined his wound and found that the saints' grace had instantly healed him; the wound had not left even a scar, and he had regained his former health. He realized that saints Cosmas and Damian had come to him, and their work healed the disease. He gave thanks to them, but even more to Christ, who had granted them this grace.

### Miracle 13 (Deubner 11)

#### *About the man with an abscess*

Afterward, there was a man with a corrupt life, for he was always running after the pleasures of the spectacles of the race courses, and there, with corrupt men, he would applaud and encourage the winners. To educate this man and discourage him from evil, the one who desires the greater good sent him a so-called abscess on his chin, which he bore with incredible difficulty. He sought refuge with Cosmas and Damian, the genuine healers of troublesome diseases. He lay down in the holy church of the saints, believing them capable of healing, while he wept, sobbed, and felt terrible pain. They appeared to him. [fol. 16 r] in the middle of the night, he kindly revealed the remedy for the disease, saying to him, "If you want to be cured of this illness, take a cup of cedar oil, drink it, and you will be cured swiftly." Waking up, he thought it was a trifle, some fantasy, and said to himself: "The saints would never command anybody to drink such a thing." As he was thinking, the saints appeared to him again and said for the second time, "If you want to be cured, drink two cups of cedar oil instead of one." The man was no less disdainful about what was said afterward, saying that it was a dreamy fantasy, that the saints do not command doing such things to anyone. Appearing to him a

third time, they instructed him: “If you want to find a cure for your ailment, drink three cups of cedar oil.” He did nothing of the command, saying that the vision was a dream and a fantasy. Appearing for the fourth time, they told him: “Man, why did you not follow the instruction?” He answered them: “Sirs, I was afraid that drinking cedar oil would bring harm.” And they, desiring to heal his soul as well as his body, laughed at him ironically and said, “If you will not drink the three cups of cedar oil, [fol. 16 v] then pour the three cups into a pitcher and go home. At midnight, rise and go to the hippodrome inside the city, and while no one will be looking, dig up a hole, hide the whole pitcher, and go. If you do so, you will see the healing that will take place within you.” The saints said this due to the cursed horse racing and its fame; they wanted to free him from this evil habit and to heal his soul along with his body, as I said before. As he was told, he took the three cups of cedar oil, poured them into a pitcher, and went to the hippodrome at midnight to hide the pitcher. A man saw him as he went there; the man followed him, for he was curious to know what he was doing. He attended everything, considering the time and the place, and when he saw that even those who carried the sick man retreated to stay at a distance from him, he said to himself that this man had to be doing something that was neither proper nor good. The tracker went and quickly gathered a large crowd and surprised the man just as he was burying the pitcher; they tied him up tightly, saying that he was a poisoner and had done all this at the expense [fol. 17 r] of one of the team’s jockeys. They threatened him violently, telling him twice or thrice that if he did not reveal his machinations and the reason for his actions, he would be handed over to the authorities and severely prosecuted for his undertakings. Driven into such peril, the man felt his illness was secondary. His captors said to him: “Explain your meddling to us. If not, tell us why you are here at this hour. Show us if you are free of every evil intent.” So he began to tell his captors everything, namely, “I am not a poisoner at all, but, suffering from a long-standing illness, I called upon saints Cosmas and Damian to cure my affliction. They appeared and told me to drink three cups of cedar oil. But I did not do as I was told and fled from the cedar oil, fearing it would harm me. As I would not drink the three cups of cedar oil, they commanded me to pour them into a pitcher and leave them buried in

this place.” When people heard this, some became indignant, saying. “The saints would never command anybody to drink something like that. They are good, and they ask people [fol. 17 v] to do good and valuable things. So they could not prescribe such a treatment or ask him to do this. Carry out the commandment of the saints before our eyes; convince us that what you say is true, and we will deliver you from all harm.” So he, desiring to prove that he was free from such reproach, took the vessel and said bitterly to himself: “Then I would not drink it at the command of the saints; now I drink it at the command of men. Now that I think of it, I can see that the saints have brought about this end.” And so he drank the three cups of cedar oil. He immediately vomited up and, together with the cedar oil, vomited up all the causes of the sickness and was absolved from the blame of those who were there. Henceforth, he turned away from the spectacle of horse racing and lived his life more concerned with the salvation of his soul than his body, giving thanks to the saints and even more to Christ, the God who effects all healing.

#### Miracle 14 (Deubner 27)

*About the man who fell off his horse and broke his leg*

Afterward, there was a messenger, a pious man who was riding a horse and broke his leg when he fell. He called doctors who were said to be good at bandaging [fol. 18 r] and expected them to cure him. They wanted to bandage the leg with splints and apply healing remedies if he would let them. But the patient forbade them to apply remedies until they brought the wax salve from saints Cosmas and Damian and mixed it with their remedies. The overthrowers of all sickness saw his faith, visited him by night, and said that they were the ones he had asked for, saying: “Now we have come to your house.” Filled with joy, he reached for the light in his dreams and encouraged the saints to enter and examine him. They came and asked him what was wrong with him. The man showed them his leg, knee, and bandage on his leg. The saints encouraged him to bear his illness lightly: “For you will recover quickly.” With these words, they untied the bandage on his leg and said to him: “We will come again on the third day and provide you with full health.” Marking his leg and knee with the sign of the cross in the name of Christ, they departed from him. Early in the morning, the doctors who had

bandaged him arrived and, seeing the bandage untied with skill, [fol. 18 v] were greatly astonished. They did not know what to do and asked the man who had untied the bandages. He told them about his dream. They were amazed to see the patient sitting there with a cheerful face, as they had never known such a case, and they were astounded. None dared to touch him, saying: “None of us will lay our hands where the pair of saints have laid their hands.” So they went away without doing anything. On the third day, the saints appeared to the man as promised, this time making a sign of the cross on his hand,<sup>46</sup> encouraging him to get up. After they got him to stand on his feet and told him to take a quick bath, they abruptly left him. When the day broke, he walked carefully, with his servants holding his hand, and went to the bath. After bathing, he gained such strength that he did not need the help of any servant guiding him by the hand but went home alone and running, giving thanks to saints Cosmas and Damian, but even more, for them, to Christ, the God. [fol. 19 r]

### Miracle 15 (-)

#### *About the woman with dropsy*

Afterward, a woman was suffering from a horrible disease. Her stomach was hugely bloated from dropsy. She went to the sanctuary church of Cosmas and Damian, who heal complicated ailments with ease, and there she lay down and begged them to find healing. The saints appeared and said to her, “If you want to be healed, stay here and do not leave until you find healing.” After spending a few days in the holy place, an envious demon started to trouble her thoughts, so she returned home. But as the trouble worsened and her stomach became even more bloated, she resumed her good disposition and returned to the church of the benefactors, for it was the will of the Stronger one that she should be saved, and again, she begged the saints to heal her. The bloating of her belly was frightening to see. She was disgusted by all food; she wept and groaned, thinking that death was near. She spent four months in the holy church, and the poor woman was hardly any different from a dead person. On the first [fol. 19 v] of July, when the feast of the saints takes place (according

46 For a while, servants will be leading him by his hand (*cheiragogía*).



to the Roman calendar), one of the priests of the holy church came and asked a servant girl how the dropsy-stricken woman was doing. She replied: "Today before dawn, I saw in my dreams how from the image opposite the entrance, which is engraved and has on the two sides the images of Cosmas and Damian, with the Virgin Mother of God between them, one of the two descended and came to the unfortunate woman in great haste (as he is also pictured on the said image), slipped his hand under the woman's dress and felt the dropsy-stricken woman's stomach and belly. And I somehow forgot how he came down from the image; I supposed he was some monk or one of the deacons, and thinking that he had put his hand on the ill woman for some nefarious purpose, I said to him: "This is not cool, wearing such clothes and groping the nakedness of this woman who is so ill." He answered, "It is not why you suppose I am touching her." Again, I said, [fol. 20 r] "You have come to do this because you see she is ill and cannot guard against such things." And he answered me: "Know well that by the eleventh day from today, when the holy feast day of Euphemia the martyr comes, during these ten days, the pain will gradually diminish, and there will be a final healing from the illness." Corresponding to the servant girl's story, from that day onwards, her stomach subsided little by little, and the sickness receded daily. When the promised day arrived, the disease was entirely banished, and her health was restored completely. So thanks be to the saints, but even more to the one who exercises his power through them, Christ, who is God.

### Miracle 16 (-)

#### *About another lame man*

Afterward, there was an impoverished man<sup>47</sup> who was always afflicted by the excess of his poverty, and then another trouble came upon him: the disintegration of his limbs. Driven by the need of poverty, he crept to people's doors on his belly, [fol. 20 v] and that was how he provided for his living. Reaching the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, who offer good deeds in their church, he lay down in the narthex in terrible pain. Then he saw the saints in his sleep, saying, "If you want to be healed of

47 Alas, the previous one is not lame! It may be a sign of extraction.

your affliction, do not neglect your illness, but bear it bravely and wait until the day you receive the promise.” Appearing a second time, they gave him a staff and gently said to him: “Child, by leaning on this, exercise the movement of your legs, always moving your arms as well.” He woke from his sleep to find the staff lying on the mat. Immediately, he believed and did as instructed, and swiftly, his limbs tightened up together, as God the Creator had ordained, and he departed in good health, praising God and giving thanks to his saints.

### Miracle 17 (-)

#### *About the priest's maid*

The priest of the church of saints Cosmas and Damian in Blachernai<sup>48</sup> had a servant girl who had a terrible illness. Her jaw was suddenly twisted [fol. 21 r] out of its place towards her face, up to her eyes, and her mouth – as far as the twisted face made it possible – was out of place. She was a frightening sight, for her mouth was gaping. She could neither close nor open it nor make an articulate sound and could not eat anything but salty porridge given to her. Plagued by this strange illness, she stayed in the shrine for nine months, asking the saints, in her thoughts, to intercede. After nine months, she dreamed he saw the two priests of the holy church called Cosmas and Damian, after the names of the saints. It was the saints, the servants of God. They said to her: “A sick person is staying here in our church, unknown to us.” But the woman, unable to utter an articulate voice because of her terrible illness, remained silent.<sup>49</sup> They said to her with compassion: “We will come again on Friday of the coming week to deliver you from your affliction.” The girl waited for the promised [fol. 21 v] day. When the day arrived, the saints came in the same form, and Damian said to Cosmas: “Brother Cosmas, hold this woman down, lest she start a bad fight.” Cosmas held the woman's legs, and Damian took hold of her head with his left hand, and with his right, he put her jaw back in place and made her healthy again. When the woman woke up and learned how the saints had saved her, she told eve-

48 Mention of the Blachernai again.

49 Deubner rev.: ἐνεσιώπησεν. Nescio an ἐνεσιώπησεν emendandum sit.

ryone there about her dream and how the saints had appeared and restored her health. All who heard and saw praised God, who effects such miracles through his saints.

### Miracle 18 (-)

*About the two men with cataracts in their eyes*

Afterward, there was a man named Thomas,<sup>50</sup> poor by origin; this was also why he was not skilled in any craft, so he lived on begging. He had a cataract in his eyes, and lamenting both his illness and poverty, he came to the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, the wisest of physicians. The servants of God appeared to him and told him to lie on the left side of the sanctuary. He did as he was told. [fol. 22 r] They appeared and said to him, “If you want to regain your health, borrow twenty gold coins<sup>51</sup> from someone, buy birds, and eat, and you will be healed.” They also appeared to the prospective lender of the money and said: “Out of gratitude to us, lend twenty gold coins to the man who comes to you.” Saying this, they gave him the description of Thomas, who was coming to him, and to Thomas, they gave the name and address of the man who would lend him the money. Thomas rose at dawn, went to the man’s workshop, and sat quietly before him. And the man, recognizing his description and knowing that he was the person who was to show himself, tried to test him and said: “What are you looking for? Why have you come here?” He replied: “I came here tired from my journey, to rest a little here.” He said this because he was ashamed to tell the real reason. So he waited, and the other waited even longer, urging him to say why he had come. With great difficulty, he told him about the dreamy command of the saints. The other one said: “Make a receipt, as far as it is possible for the blind person, but this is what is needed, and take the money. For me, the saints

50 Mention of the Blachernai again! There is also a church in Cyrrhus, from there the patient is directed to Blachernai.

51 Gr. *nomisma*, lat. *solidus*, introduced in the fourth century as a successor to the *aureus*, weighed about 4.5 grams. Although no quantity or species is mentioned, paying 3 × 20 nomismata for “birds” seems pricey. Was the blind man binging on ortolan or some comparable illegal delicacy – or could this version of the text somehow echo the period to which the manuscript is dated, namely the eleventh century when the nomisma’s gold content had fallen to 10 percent? Cf. Kaplanis 2003.

have come to vouch for the loan, which is enough.” Thomas took the twenty coins and went shopping [fol. 22 v] and ate the birds. But there was no improvement, for he was still blind. The saints appeared to him a second time and said again: “If you want to find healing, take the money, buy birds with it, and eat.” Again, he went to the one who had lent him money earlier and receiving another twenty gold coins, he bought and ate birds. But his eyes did not improve. The third time, the saints appeared to him and said: “If you want to be healed, go and borrow twenty gold coins again, eat birds, and you will be healed.” So he borrowed the twenty gold coins again, bought birds, and ate them. But he was no less blind than before. Then he began to curse the saints loudly, pulling his hair out and beating his thighs: “Oh, the cruelty of these two; Cosmas and Damian were not able to help me at all. Why am I in debt up to my neck now? I am in the shackles of debt and illness, wretched me. They were not able to cure it. Why did they make me take out such loans? At least I was free from debt, [fol. 23 r] even though I was sick. And now I wear the handcuffs of debt. Woe is me, how miserable I have become among men!” The holy physicians, however, took no heed of these and such impious words but worked all the more to help him. There was another man of the same name, Thomas, an overseer who administered fertile lands. He also had such a disease, a cataract in his eyes. He visited the church of the saints in Cyrrhus, down in Syria, incessantly beseeching the saints to find him a cure. The saints appeared to him, saying: “If you stay here, you cannot find healing, but go quickly to our home in Blachernai. And if you search, you will find there a man named Thomas, who is suffering from your disease, the cataract of the eyes. Give him one hundred and twenty nomismata, and both of you will find healing for your eyes there simultaneously.” He went joyfully to the church at Blachernai, trusting in the promise of the saints. After some searching, he found Thomas. He asked his name and what his illness was. Thomas started up and first asked him back what his illness was, and then said to him [fol. 23 v] loudly: “Why do you ask my illness and my name?” The other replied: “I was looking for you here. I came here like you, with a cataract in my eye, believing that these saints would heal me.” He replied, “Me, they have not healed; moreover, they have driven me into debt. I have made myself a servant of creditors. I wish I had not received such orders, becoming a servant of

those damned creditors with such abominable friends! Go away quickly if you have come here with cataracts, lest they make you a debtor too, for they will certainly not benefit you.” As he spoke thus, the other Thomas admonished him not to say such things against the saints, for they were good and loved humankind; he told him what the saints had promised him and gave him the hundred and twenty nomismata. On receiving this, Thomas rejoiced greatly and praised the saints with much thanksgiving all day long. The other Thomas had made a bed for himself on the bed where the first Thomas had sent him, so they both slept in one place. In the night, the saints stopped by the one who had received the one hundred and twenty nomismata, and one of them said to him: “So today, I see you are giving thanks, Thomas.” And he praised them with a thousand praises because they had freed him from debts. [fol. 24 r] A particular servant saw Thomas coming out of the church, slapped him in the face, and shouted, “You did not come here while sick for the sake of getting well, but rather because of a troublesome desire for money. Happy is he who makes money without troubling himself. I wish I could be so happy, too.” And that one, terribly disturbed with fear, cried out, and with a great cry, he drove the darkness away from his eyes and saw everything clearly. The other Thomas, however, was dreadfully frightened by this cry, and recovering his sight from this disturbance excitement, he also saw the sun clearly. Through the miracle-working saints, therefore, a single healing had taken place for both. For all these things, however, thanks are not due to the saints but rather to Christ himself.<sup>52</sup>

52 This was a widespread motif, of the icon of Christ giving surety for a loan in popular Christian legends; cf. Mango 1959: 142; Sharf 1971: 60 n. 61; Nelson & Starr 1939-1944; a Christian merchant suffered a shipwreck and, not having his friend help with a new business, turned to a Jewish moneylender who was a specialist in financing such voyages. The man’s friends warned him from doing any business with a Jew, yet they refused to give the surety. An icon of Christ, however, in a church within the Jewish quarter of Constantinople, the Chalthoprataia, miraculously uttered a voice, stating that it accepts all responsibility. When it became necessary, the surety was abundantly paid, and the Jew in the business converted to Christianity.

### Miracle 19 (-)

#### *About the man with pleurisy*

Afterward,<sup>53</sup> there was a Nestorian man following the abominable dogmas of a man who separated Christ into two natures according to the flesh, not recognizing his mother as the divine mother. He suffered [fol. 24 v] from the terrible disease mentioned. Doctors who were praised as the best in the profession and who said that the disease was evident and that it was congested in the chest could do nothing to help the problem. The abscess in his chest was bleeding terribly, and the man's life was in danger because of the pus that was constantly oozing from the inside. The man had a daughter living in a convent as a virgin. Since it was not customary for nuns to leave the holy sanctuary at all, the man went to the monastery next to the holy healers' church to see his daughter one last time. As the heretic lay there calling on the saints, someone appeared and, with great anger, demanded of him to confess and say the following: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>54</sup> And all the following, until "The Word was made flesh and dwelt in us."<sup>55</sup> As soon as he had confessed this, the other immediately added: "If the Word is God and the Word was made flesh and dwelt in men, he is not divided into parts but is one, and his nature is one. And the one who brought him into the world, giving birth to God the Word, begotten in the flesh, she is the Mother of God." These things having been said, he vanished. But immediately, [fol. 25 r] the saints appeared and said to him: "We are Cosmas and Damian; we willed that you should make this profession of faith; Christ sent us to give you salvation. If you take fava bean mash, you will soon be healed." The man did so and quickly found deliverance from his sickness. And he confessed to the end of his life rightly that the nature of God the Word was one and not divided<sup>56</sup> and that the holy Virgin Mary was the Mother of God. He gave thanks for the salvation of his soul and body, first to Christ, the God, and then to the saints.

53 In which it also turns out this is a monophysite collection of miracles.

54 John 1:1.

55 John 1:14.

56 This is a clear monophysite creed.

**Miracle 20 (-)***About the man who was spitting blood*

Afterward, there was a certain Menas,<sup>57</sup> a physician highly experienced in his profession, a man of virtue and versed in his craft, who knew diseases by experience and who himself had fallen seriously ill. He was constantly spitting blood. He had tried all the experience of his art and had taken medication, but it did him no good. The arts of Galen and the methods of Hippocrates were useless to Menas, the doctor who was in the grip of the disease. Since the pain was increasing day by day, the doctor finally fled to the infallible doctors of healing, Cosmas and Damian. When he reached their church, which is located in Blachernai, he drew on a painting a sketch of the features [fol. 25 v] of the disease he suffered within him, asking to be cured. Revealing all this to the saints, he expected them to heal him. After a while, the saints appeared and said to him: “Eat the so-called chidron<sup>58</sup> and rub your chest with warm oil, and do not cool down during your illness. If you do these things which we have prescribed for you, you will soon be free from pain.” He did as he was instructed and was soon cured. Another man, suffering from the same disease, did the same as Menas was prescribed, doing it with his faith, and he, too, was freed from his disease. For all this, thanks indeed to the saints, but even more thanks to God.

**Miracle 21 (Deubner 17)***About the paralyzed heretic*

Afterward, there was a man<sup>59</sup> who had two illnesses: one was a severe physical ailment, as the joints below his knees were paralyzed down to the feet. The other ailment pertained to his soul, the heresy of the Diphysites. This man went to the venerable church of saints Cosmas and Damian, the healers of Christ. Still, he did not dare to stay within the

57 Blachernai mentioned again; and the patient is himself a doctor.

58 Wheat porridge; unripe wheaten-groats.

59 It is important to compare the two versions, heresy and orthodoxy are reversed! Cf. the earlier Mir. 19 (CL 19), where one can even read the creed about the one nature of Christ; the saints are emphatically monophysites.

church with his sickness of the soul – which he had reckoned with beforehand, knowing full well that he was on the opposite side from the saints; so he lay down in the place called the narthex, weeping and begging for healing. Time passed, and one night, the saints, having made the rounds of the patients lying there, [fol. 26 r] passed him by, alone of all the patients, and one said to the other: “What do you think of this one? He has been here for a while; why do you think he came here, lying here?” The other replied immediately, “Leave the heretic. Has he not delayed us here? We must first heal the orthodox.”<sup>60</sup> O Word, friend of true life! Oh, human-loving Word! The saints, recognizing his sickness of the soul, persuaded him with these words not to expose his heresy. Then, two days later, appearing on their usual visit to the sick, they ignored him again, and him alone, with pious intent. One asked the other again: “What do you think of this man? For he has been here for a long time.” The other replied angrily: “Do what you think is right. Do what you want yourself. Just make him go away.” The poor impious wretch heard all this. And all of a sudden, they both cut both his thighs. One of them, who brought a sponge and a pitcher, cleaned off the whole cause of the disease, and the stinking discharge that flowed from the thighs filled two cups. The saints put a bandage [fol. 26 v] on him and left him. The man, awakening from his sleep, failed to realize that such a cure had been given him, and his stomach being very troubled, he went out to the proper place, compelled by necessity. There, he saw that he had bandages on both his thighs. Recognizing the healing given him by grace, and though hearing himself mentioned among the healed, his heart was made of stone, he voluntarily remained not corrected. So the benefactors of all reappeared and said to him: “There is nothing wrong with you; go quickly away from our house. For we hate you as the enemy of orthodoxy.” Immediately, he left as he had been ordered. For all this, thanks be to the saints, but even greater thanks be to Christ, the God who loves humans.<sup>61</sup>

60 that is the monophysites! *Tous orthodoxountas próton khré therapeusai.*

61 NB: The story is also included in the Deubner collection, KDM 17: the most important difference is that there is the sick Arian! Yet he is called “Exakionite” in the text, which was the name of the Arians under Theodosius I (379–395) (for an explanation



**Miracle 22 (Deubner 20)***About the son of Severian*

Afterward, there was a high-ranking man called Severian, who used to be in charge of the public revenue of the district of Arcadia<sup>62</sup> and was devout and pious. He had a very gentle son. This child was struck by a severe illness, for blood was coming out of his mouth while he was groaning from the depths of his heart. No doctor was able to stop the blood from flowing incessantly, and they were all helpless against the disease. The father gave up expecting them to save his son, [fol. 27 r] and, as I have said, having firm faith in God, he took his son to the saving church of true physicians, Cosmas and Damian, and prayed all night long that they might cure him of his sickness. In the daytime, while the boy lay there, he went home, pausing for a little while in his prayers, but left one of the doctors he knew with his son, not for the sake of healing, but for conversation. The boy, seized with the terror of illness, asked the faithful doctor to prepare a drink to ease his pain. If not, he would drink what was considered the most bitter remedy. For that, he was reasoning, would either help him or make him leave this miserable life. As the boy thus threatened the doctor with such senselessness and would not stop, finally Cosmas and Damian, patrons of all recovery, appeared to the doctor and told him not to offer nor to give to drink the said bitter drink, saying: "We will provide a cure from the disease, without medications." But the boy pressed the doctor again, pestering him to give him the remedy to drink. But the doctor did nothing of what he said, obeying the ordinances of the saints. The boy, badgering the doctor even more, asked

of the name, see Festugière 1971: 134), but the saints are no longer monophysites at all, but champions of "official" orthodoxy. However early and wherever the original layer of CL may be, it was still copied in this way (in Greek, moreover) in a long Diphysite, Coptic medium in the tenth century! Rustafjaell comments: "The change definitely points to a Jacobite country." (p. 97)

62 Arcadia was a division of Egypt. Cf. Rustafjaell 1909: 97, "In a manuscript written in Egypt, we should naturally expect the scribe to claim the honour of the relics for his own country, and, if the text is sound, it is possible that some Egyptian locality lies hidden in it. But without further evidence, it is difficult to come to any safe conclusion. The text certainly bears other traces of its Egyptian origin ... (:). But an Egyptian colouring is given to miracles, which in Deubner's text might be referred to Constantinople. For instance, in Deubner's KDM 20.

him to give him the drink. When he began to accuse him, the doctor told him about seeing the saints in a dream and about their gentle promise, which they had made to him, that they would save the boy; he also told him that no doctor among men could [fol. 27 v] cure his illness. To make good on their promise, two days later, the saints appeared to the boy to restrain the gushing of blood with a single touch on his chest, and the boy spat no more blood. The father took his son and returned home as if he had never been ill. Saints Cosmas and Damian immediately appeared to him, saying, “Your faith has saved your son.” And Severian and his son gave thanks to the saints, and both praised Christ who had given them such grace.

### Miracle 23 (Deubner 9)

*About Dioscorus, the scholar, Greek turned Christian*

Afterward, there was a scholar named Dioscorus, a Hellene by religion, so he harboured madness for idols. This man was suddenly paralyzed, and the pagan priests and those who make oracular talismans have given up on him. Those like him who were adherents of the foolish Hellenic religion took him to the church of the wisest of physicians, saints Cosmas and Damian, not as to the saints, but as to Castor and Polydeuces, whom the Hellenes had long revered as the daimons who cured diseases.<sup>63</sup> The saints, however, taking thought for the good of everybody, wanted to heal the man’s soul and body, so one night, when they made their usual

63 There was a long debate whether or not, and of how the Dioscuroi were related to Cosmas and Damian: Harris 1906: 96–104 and Hankoff, 1977; the KDM9 where a pagan visited the saints, addressing them as Castor and Polydeices, led Deubner to believe that the cult predecessors of Cosmas and Damian were the Dioscuroi; in support of his argument he quoted the Byzantine historian from the sixth century AD, Hesychios of Miletos, who referred to a legend that Byzas, the mythical founder of the city who erected a temple next to water for Castor and Pollux who healed his people. Deubner, *De incubatione*, 77. A rejection of Deubner’s fundamental thesis on the basis of the Syriac legend is in Paul Maas’s review of Deubner’s book (Maas 1908: 609–13. Another rejection of the Christian identification of the Dioscuroi from a standpoint different from Maas may be found in Delehay 1904: 427–32; cf. also de’ Cavalieri 1903 and Gartrell 2021. I could also believe that the hagiographer just started from the name Dioscuros and wanted to extend to something even more pagan, this is why inserted the Dioscuroi.

healing rounds among those lying there, he was the only one they ignored. He began to plead with them in a loud voice, saying: "I have also come to you in the hope of finding healing." They said to him: [fol. 28 r] "Why are you clamouring against us here? We are neither Polydeuces nor Castor, as you say. We are not those to whom you came. So be quiet!" After this, they appeared to him again one night as they made their healing rounds among the patients lying there, and again, he was the only one they ignored. This time, he did not just cry out and beg but started crying while imploring them: "Wise healers, I too need healing; that is why I have come to you. Give me healing also, after the others, heal me also." They told him again: "Why do you revile us in vain? We are neither Castor nor Polydeuces, as you say. We are servants of Christ, the only God, Lord and Creator of all things. Our names are Cosmas and Damian. If you want to be healed, come to our God, the only Savior." Hearing these words, the man immediately obeyed them and promised to follow the Lord, Christ the God, steadfastly. Accepting this pledge unhesitatingly, they immediately laid their holy hands on his body and made him whole. Awakening from his sleep, the man sprang up, stood still, and there was nothing wrong in his body; frightened by what he had been told, he went to those who had sent him to pray to Castor and Polydeuces and told them the manner of his recovery, proving their thinking to be a delusion. He joyfully underwent the holy baptism, [fol. 28 v] which the merciful Christ gave as a gift for the salvation of us all, as a bath of regeneration and [...]<sup>64</sup> has long been foretold. For all these things and this reason, thanks must be given to the saints, but even more so to God, who works through them.

#### Miracle 24 (Deubner 19/19a)

##### *About the woman with dropsy*

Afterward, there was a woman who had fallen in with dropsy of the worst kind, a frightening sight as her belly had swollen to such an enormous size that she was unable to see her lower parts because of her bloated stomach. This woman came to the giving church of the wisest of physicians, Cosmas and Damian. Breathing heavily, moaning and crying, she

64 A larger lacuna with several words missing.

lay there gasping for breath and besieging the saints with supplications. But they, full of the wisdom of God, appeared to a godly man that night, who came to the church to pray; he lay near where the woman lay, and to him, they revealed the cure for the hydropic patient. When he woke at dawn, he told the woman he could cure her illness. The woman begged him not to overlook her in her great distress. He carried something he did not bring himself but was given to him by the saints in his sleep; it was a tiny knife. And with these words, “In the name of the holy physicians Cosmas and Damian,” the man began to make three deep cuts from the upper part of her stomach to the abdomen, where there was the swelling, as expertly as possible, [fol. 29 r] and then he cleansed the whole cause of the suffering by filling twenty cups<sup>65</sup> to the brim, and on top of these, he filled five more with the water and pus that had been pouring out. For it was his task to do this issuing from Christ to show both the healing of the sickness and the power of the saints, which does not lack anything.<sup>66</sup> For all this, thanks be to the saints and even more to Christ himself, the God who loves humans.

### Miracle 25 (Deubner 13)

#### *Constantine's wife in Laodicea*

Afterward, there was a man called Constantine, who had an unusual faith in saints Cosmas and Damian. He took their portraits painted on an icon with him everywhere he went, at home and abroad, and was never separated from it. Once, he was sent from his native city abroad, and there, he lawfully married a woman he loved very much. A terrible disease attacked her. She had an abscess in her right jaw. She constantly lay awake with sighs and wails, the pain not abating even for a little while. Her husband's heart worried about her even more. He had the icon of the saints with him, as was his custom, but forgetting that he had it, he told his wife. “What should I do with you, my wife? If only I had brought the icon of the saints with me now or wax salve from their church, you could pray

65 *Xestēs* is Greek for Roman sextarius, about 546 millilitres.

66 Lay men or strangers performing operations was a common motif in miraculous healing, already among the stories from Asclepius and employed in great number by the Byzantine incubation saints too.

to them and anoint yourself with the salve, and you would have been cured.” Having heard this, [fol. 29 v] the wife prayed to them: “Servants of Christ, Cosmas and Damian, physicians of incurable diseases, deem me worthy to be healed by you, and make me worthy of your holy church soon.” So she was praying as the night came, and she fell asleep. In her dreams, she saw the saints saying, “Why do you cause your husband suffering and distress with your jaw? We are with you two, so you can always revere us.” Waking from her dream, she told her husband in detail what she had heard from the saints in her dream and asked him to bring her their images. The husband remembered that he had the icon with him. So he showed her the icon of the saints, and she exclaimed with joy that they were indeed the ones she had seen in her dreams.<sup>67</sup> As soon as the night fell, they appeared to her in her dreams, standing by her side and asking her what illness she had. The woman showed them the jaw. They told her, “There is nothing wrong with you, but open your mouth quickly.” She did so, and one of the saints put his finger in her mouth and removed smelly blood mixed with pus from the sore spot. With that, he quickly restored her health. They appeared to the woman again in the night another time and, wanting to show her how firm her husband’s faith was, they said to her: “Put our wax salve under your pillow each time [fol. 30 r] and you will be healed from this illness completely, and no harm will ever come to you again.” The woman did so and lived her entire life in robust health. All the while, she gave thanks to the saints but even more to Christ himself, the God who is at work with healing in each case.<sup>68</sup>

67 Miracles involving the painted image of the saints Cosmas-Damian became an argument for the use of icons at the Second Council of Nicaea, held in 787. The council convened to support icon-worship and the episode reflects the process by which image and relic attain an equal status. In this story, the icon was the means of cure to such an extent that this miracle was quoted during council. cf. Dagon 1991:31.

68 It is interesting to compare this story with the well-known miracle from Deubner’s version. In KDM 13 we read also about the saints’ church in Constantinople, supposed origin from the icon.

**Miracle 26 (Deubner 23)***About the man with inflammation in the pubes*

Afterward, there was a man, one of the devout priests, who bravely bore a fearsome illness: he was afflicted in his male parts with a so-called inflammation, so much that he moaned and cried as the disease worsened. Moreover, he was not only saddened by this ailment but worried even more since, day by day, he was expecting the loosening of his intestines. He lay weeping, unable to move. All the doctors brought the medicines of their craft, but nothing worked. Finally, despising the healing from men, he fled to the physicians who abounded in gifts of mercy, the wisest Cosmas and Damian, and as soon as he reached their church, he lay down there and tearfully begged them to find healing. On the third night, the saints appeared and, first laying their hands on his testicles and then withdrawing them, said to him: “Know that from now on, after our touch, [fol. 30 v] your body will never again have such a problem. Be free from all harm! For we are binding your loosening with bandages.” As soon as he woke up from sleep, he examined himself and saw that his illness was gone, and he had become healthy. With hymns, he honored Christ, who had given such grace to his saints.

**Miracle 27 (-)***About the man with ophthalmia*

Afterward, there was a man who suffered from terrible ophthalmia. His eyes were so bad that he could see nothing but the shadows of people. He saw the people themselves as if they were trees. He would constantly bow his head and wail, and with dreadful lamentations, he would call himself a wretch and ask for sympathy from everyone, for he suspected that he was going blind. His sickness was so severe that he stopped seeking a remedy from the skill of doctors, so he went to the wisest physicians, Cosmas and Damian, the possessors of the ever-flowing fountain of cures. He stayed in their holy church, begged them to find a cure, and anointed his eyes with the wax salve from that place. And despite his eyes being still inflamed, moisture flowed from his mouth and nostrils, and little by little, he began to see better, no longer deprived of light. For

all this, thanks are due to these saints, but first to Christ, the God who loves humans. [fol. 31 r]

### Miracle 28 (Deubner 28)

*About the woman with breast cancer*

Afterward, there was a girl who had a severe woman's disease, for her whole breast was hard as stone, and she had terrible pains and ailments, which took such a hold of her that she would often fall on the ground and seem to be dying, and the doctors could find no cure. Some thought that a surgical operation could arrest the trouble. But hearing about the scalpel, she became terrified and refused to have the operation, shuddering at the very name of the scalpel, saying: "I have doctors who cure without cutting with a scalpel. I have Cosmas and Damian, saints who heal troubles." But the doctors told her, "Go to them, and when the problem worsens, you will return to us." Yet the patient was not put off by their words; she went to the saints' church, lay down, and prayed there to find help. The girl had a doctor she knew, a very trusted relative, who did not treat her. To him, the all-helpers appeared at night and gave him the following charge: "Pour this medicine into the cut on the girl's breast, and she will be well." Awakening from his sleep, the doctor wondered why the saints had not commanded him to cut open the diseased part of the body first and then pour the indicated medicine into the wound. Pondering these things, he went to the place where the girl was. She seized him and told him about her dream: "That night, I thought I was standing at the church entrance behind you. The saints came to me and said, 'Since you have fled to us, despising the doctors, you will soon find a cure for your affliction.'" Saying this, they both marked [fol. 31 v] my breast with the sign of the cross, providing marks for the with their finger around the breast, and said, 'You will be healed by receiving this medicine.' And after that, I woke up from the dream." The doctor was amazed; he examined the breast and found the cut. He just put the medicine in it as he had been told, and she was freed from the disease. She went home thanking the saints, praising God for having given such grace to his saints.

**Miracle 29 (Deubner 31)***About the lame beggar*

Afterward, a God-loving man of noble character was walking along the agora when he saw a lame beggar, dejected and lying there in need of food. Overcome with compassion, he took him to the saving church of Cosmas and Damian, who give plentiful gifts of grace to all. He stayed with him, asking the saints to give the beggar strength [in legs], weeping and moaning as if he were suffering this sickness. The saints heard his pleas and, appearing, healed the crippled man's hands; his legs remained weakened, but he could lean on a stick and limp while begging. The compassionate man who brought him there again pleaded with the saints harshly to grant him complete healing. They appeared again and told him: "It would be well for you to ask for something more suitable and for him to be content with the power given to his hands since he is a beggar, and you do not know the future." For all this, thanks are due to the saints and, above all, to God himself, who loves man.

**Miracle 30 (Deubner 32)***About the scholar with an abscess*

Afterward, there was a scholar with a grave illness, for an abscess had formed [fol. 32 r] on his jaw, next to his ear, and was causing him much extraordinary pain. The pain made him a pitiful sight. Seeing his ailment, doctors said his abscess needed to be cut before becoming ripe to heal him quickly. They thought it best to cut it open the next day and perform the necessary drainage thoroughly, lest the trouble should spread to the larynx and suddenly cause the man to choke. That night, saints Cosmas and Damian appeared to one of the doctors and told him to say to the patient: "Do not suffer the doctors to perform the incision, for this remedy will be useless to you; but rather than cutting a vein in your neck apply a different medicine to the abscess. And say also to him, 'Why did you not come to our house, though you often promised to come?'" The doctor went there early in the morning and told him the saints' message. Listening to those words, the man went straight to the church of the saints and stayed there, applying wax salve to the diseased part. But the saints appeared again and said to him, "Your wound does not need wax



salve, but you must apply the medicine of which we spoke.” O the wisdom of the saints! They wanted the wax to heal the illness, but they told him that his wound did not need such plaster so that by putting medicine that caused inflammation on the wound, he might realize his failures, repent of his former life, and be saved in body and spirit. So, he applied the medicine that the saints had commanded. [fol. 32 v] However, as the place swelled and became inflamed after the medicine was applied, the man suffered tremendously, much more than before, and wept, asking the saints to give him healing. In the night, the saints appeared to a priest of pure life and said to him, “Go and say to the suffering scholar, ‘Give up the sexual life you are having with a certain woman, and you will be freed from the disease.’” And they also told the priest the name of the woman. Although he heard the words, the priest said nothing of what was said to the man, believing that what he had seen was a mere dream image. However, the saints appeared again and ordered him to give the same message to the scholar. But he told him nothing of what had been said, for he again believed that the words addressed to him were dream visions. Appearing a third time, not gently but angrily, the saints commanded him to tell the suffering scholar what they had instructed previously. Trembling, the priest finally told him what the saints had said he should tell the scholar. The scholar, realizing his sin and recognizing the woman’s name, vowed to put an end to the affair and promised the saints that he would abstain from the relationship and intercourse with the woman, for they had not been joined in matrimony. Now, the saints instructed him to anoint his wound with wax salve, and he was healed swiftly. He returned home with great joy, [fol. 33 r] rejoicing in his heart for the salvation of his soul rather than his body. He spent the rest of his life praising God, who had given such great grace to his saints.

### Miracle 31 (-)

#### *About the other lame man*

Afterward, there was a man who was seriously ill: the service of his limbs had loosened, and he was paralyzed from the knees down. He was taken by some pious people and carried to the church of saints Cosmas and Damian, who love people and heal everybody. Being very poor, he had nothing for his needs as he lay in the holy church. Indeed, he might have

died of hunger if it had not been for the fact that there were more godly men lying on the beds next to the church, which had been set up to treat the sick and always helped him with what he needed. There he lay, sighing and in tears, asking the saints for healing. Appearing to him, the overthrowers of diseases Cosmas and Damian addressed him and commanded him, “Abstain from bodily congress and from eating meat, and you will be freed from disease.” Awakening, he obeyed the command of the saints, professing to abstain from both in the future, and his members were tight [and functioning] again. For a while, the man remained in health. After this, however, the thoroughly depraved daemon induced him, [fol. 33 v] to ignore the saints, to return to bodily congress, and to eat meat again. And again, his illness regained strength and was no less lame than before. Reproaching himself, he went to the saints’ church again to beg them for healing. After a few days, the saints appeared again and said to him, “Abstain from bodily congress and meat now, and you will be in perfect health.” Again obeying them, he lived his whole life in the health of body and soul, giving thanks to the saints and through them to God, who had given such great grace to his saints.

### Miracle 32 (-)

#### *About the man ill with lamia*

Afterward, a man fell ill with a strange disease. As a victim of this so-called lamia, he went to the holy church of Cosmas and Damian, who can cure even strange diseases with ease. This man could not stop eating for a single moment and ate abundantly at all times, in the bath and at home, day and night, and could not restrain himself from food even for a little while. The gorging never ceased, except when sleep overcame him and put him to rest for a little while. But when no food was available, his body would seek to eat more, in vain; when one day, in the bath, he had no food, he would have begun to eat his arm, to no avail, if his servants had not hastily seized him. He thus [fol. 34 r] wasted all his possessions, for he had sold everything he had and became, as I said, a terrible glutton. One night, when he was lying there [in the sanctuary], the saints, making their usual curative rounds among the other patients there, stopped by him, and one said to the other, “Why not look at this one who is lying here?” The other replied, “Leave him alone, as he breathes a fetid breath,

let him exhale this stench which is due to his gluttony.” The patient heard these things. Yet, despite these words, the saints did not ignore him, but at the same hour, one of them appeared, holding a razor and making a small cut under the patient’s throat. And immediately, laying their hands on him, they removed his intestines with an invisible touch. Having cleansed them, as only they could, they put them back as they were before, as they had learned from God the Creator.<sup>69</sup> And again, one said to the other, “Bind up the cut on his throat.” And by mere touch, the other made the cut and the scar disappear. Awakened from sleep, the man stricken with illness, being the fifth day of the holy week of Easter, said to his servants, “As today is the fifth day of the holy week, as you know, do not let me take food even if I desire to eat until I have partaken [fol. 34 v] in the divine mysteries today.” And that whole day, he ate nothing at all. And when evening came, he went to wash himself in the bath of the saints, which is said to have healing powers.<sup>70</sup> As he was heading there, he stubbed his foot. Suddenly, he was in terrible pain; his blood was flowing, and because of that, he remembered the rest of the dream and told the people around him. Immediately realizing that the saints healed him, he rejoiced, washed himself, and was strengthened, trusting in the saints. And waiting the rest of the day, he partook of the holy mystery of the holy body and precious blood of Christ. Delivered from the cause of his pain, he lived in health, taking only the necessary food, sufficient but not in excess, as all people do, giving thanks to the saints, but

69 A nice parallel is a miracle from the 7<sup>th</sup>-century collection of Saint Artemius who ‘once appeared to a man in dream, ready to operate in the manner of a butcher, ‘holding butchers’ tools and a cup ... [and] pierced him with a knife in his lower abdomen and took out all his intestines. Then he cleaned them, washed them off, and twisted them with a rod. And the sick man saw him folding them up and making sausages...’ (Crisafulli & Nesbitt 1997: MA25). Such miraculous surgeries imitating contemporary medical operations (and attesting to the patients’ greatest fears) had been in the repertoire of miracle workers since Antiquity; a similar example from Epidaurus, in Edelstein & Edelstein 1998: T423.25.

70 This is a novelty, that we read about a healing bath in the church. Are we in the Kosmidion? Or somewhere else? The role of the bath is common in Byzantine miracles, mixing the two functions of achieving ritual purity and healing, here the former is emphasized.

even more to Christ, the God who saves through them, the God who loves humans.<sup>71</sup>

### Miracle 33 (Deubner 21)

#### *About the spleen patient*

Afterward, there was a man from an illustrious family, wealthy and well-to-do, who had a diseased spleen since childhood. When he was a young man, no doctor was ever told of his illness, and he refused to disclose it even to his closest relatives. When he reached manhood, [fol. 35 r] the disease took hold of him with immense pain, and his constitution was unable to do anything; his constitution was also all but gone: he could not run, walk, or breathe freely. He did not go to the bath, and when he decided to go, he only moved with great difficulty and panted like a crawler, but when he stopped to rest, he lay on his back because of his difficulty with breathing. He was eating unhealthy food, and even that food he hardly tasted when it was beside him. He always drank excessive amounts of water, his breathing was restrained, and his body moved with his breathing. As soon as the doctors became aware that he was in this condition, they readily informed him of the most expeditious remedy, frequently opening his veins and giving him wholly useless medicines to drink. For his stomach withered for a long time from the pain of starvation, so to speak, scarcely different than petrified. Unable to keep pace with the doctors' ever-changing remedies to bring about the improvement of his wretched body and believing that death was very near in the

71 It is worth noting the emphasis the miracles places on its date, the fifth day of Holy week; beside the symbolism of human-divine food, this abstinence is invigorating in a medical way too, just as it is taking the Eucharist. It is also interesting how his dream is evoked: from pain? The sight of blood? (would his own blood remind him of the Eucharist and from that the food and from that the healing?) The cure is also multi-faceted: fasting is a ritual sign, a sacred act that goes with the holy day. The act of the saints of taking out and putting back the bowels is both medical (miraculous surgery) and, as the text emphasizes, a re-creation of the order created and learned from God. The cause of the illness is finally removed by a combination of three causes: the surgery of the saints, fasting, and the healing grace of Communion, which replaces food and removes gluttony and sickness - but the patient recognizes the healing before Communion takes place. On the Eucharist as medicine cf. Csepregi 2006.

future, he abandoned the doctors, placing all hope into saints Cosmas and Damian and fleeing to their church. There, he lay down, making a bed for himself in a place called the narthex; he prayed with sighs and tears to the saints for healing. At night, he went inside to the railing of the sanctuary, where he would lie down, begging the saints to heal him. After spending a few days there, he thought he would return home, reflecting to himself [fol. 35 v] the fact that the saints had not visited him. He said that being a sinner, he was unworthy to stay there and had been prompted to say and think this by an evil daemon. So he sent his servants for a horse that would take him home, but since they did not reach him in time, he remained in the church again, lying down at the railing to the sanctuary as before. In his dream, someone said, "It will be useful for you to stay here until Sunday." As it was Thursday. He woke up and waited for Sunday, as he had been told. As was his custom, he lay that night near the sanctuary and saw one of the saints coming out of the sanctuary's entrance, noticing him, and going back again without saying a word to him. As he was thinking how the saint had remained silent without saying anything to him, the other saint came out of the same sanctuary entrance, paused with his eyes, looking, then went around the ambon and returned without saying a word. The man got up, found courage in his heart, followed him, and, kneeling before him, asked him to think of a cure. The saint held a nugget of fragrant incense<sup>72</sup> in his hand and, cutting a little of it off, he was about to pass that to the man. But as if that were not enough, the other took [the frankincense] and broke off a small piece and gave it to him. They both handed it to the man and said, "Anoint this quickly to your stomach and belly, and you will see the effect." Rising, the man took [fol. 36 r] the remedy given to him and used it for anointing as instructed. After two days, he was cured, with no trace at all of his body's illness. He ate as much as needed and regained his physical strength, even more strength than before. When he slept again in the same place, close to the entrance to the sanctuary, saints Cosmas and Damian stopped there again, one at his head, the other at his feet. Recognizing them, the man jumped up again and asked them to grant him [in addition] that he would never have this illness again. The saints marked him with the sign of the cross of Christ and said to him, "You will

72 For θυμίαμα σύνθετον, see Ex 30:7 (LXX).

never suffer from this disease again, provided you abstain from eating any kind of leguminous plants all your life.” And so the man lived in health. After three years, he was stricken with a disease of the jawbone, but it caused him no pain at all, for it had withered away as if petrified. Again, he visited the church of the saints and stayed there, asking them to cure his illness. On the third night, they appeared and said to him, “If you want us to cure this ailment, know that it must be cauterized.” He said: “As you order. Just cure me as you wish.” They said to him, “God gave this disease intending to save your soul. Having this, rectify yourself. For know that through us, you were freed from pain and suffering. Keep yourself from negligence and all swearing, and you shall thus crush your bodily afflictions, and your soul shall be saved again.” The man went away gladly, and though he felt no pain, [fol. 36 v] two months later, he was still not free from his troubles. Then the saints came to him again in his sleep at night and, without him knowing, anointed his jaw with wax. The man awoke from his sleep to find his jaw anointed. And the trouble was soon over as if it had never been there. He rushed to the church of the saints and told everyone what had happened to him through the saints and how he received the salvation of his soul and his body, giving thanks for it to saints Cosmas and Damian, but even more to Christ, the one who works through them to bring about his healings, as the only God.

### Miracle 34 (Deubner 22)

*About the eye patient with a withered groin*

Afterward, there was a man with gluttony who indiscriminately threw everything he found around him down into his stomach, and his stomach had a lot of liquid in it. Some of it had filled the membranes all over his body with blood, causing nasty oozing on his groin and making his testicles swollen and stiff. That swelling had grown into a fleshy tumor next to his testicles and had become very hard. Along with this, a pain in the eyes had also afflicted the unfortunate man. So, distressed by these two diseases, he went without delay to the saving church of Cosmas and Damian, who were ready to heal everyone and begged them to make him worthy of their mercy. Not ten days after he had come to lay there, he saw in his sleep a godly acquaintance named Cosmas giving him a piece

of wax [fol. 37 r] and softening it as much as he could. Handing over this piece of wax, he said that while he gave it to him as wax, it was [actually] snow. When the man was astonished at his words, he again showed him another piece of wax as ice and addressed him, "Now I have given you of that wax which you see as frozen. But I will melt and soften it, and as you see, it has become snow and no longer ice." Waking up, he realized that the stone-like sickness in his testicles was the piece of ice, and with the melting snow, the saints hinted at the way of healing. So the illness and the hardness of his testicles slowly melted and became water there, just as the man had experienced in his dream. Yet as the hardened misfortune melted away, his testicles swelled even more, along with the skin covering them, as the water had no exit. One night, the overthrowers of diseases again stood before the patient with an instrument like a small needle and, by pricking the skin of the testicles, removed the water. As soon as the water flowed away, the swelling subsided completely. By anointing himself with wax salve from the holy place, the man found a speedy cure. Having found a cure for this ailment, the man was still tormented by his eyes. He saw people as if they were shadows, and he could do absolutely nothing about his needs. And he would not suffer to put any remedy into his eyes, allowing only anointing with the wax salve from the wax of the saints. When his relatives and friends [fol. 37 v] wanted to take him home from the church, he told them, "The saints have healed the other illness, and they can also be trusted with the healing of this one. Therefore, I will not at all yield to your advice." The saints realized his faith was strong, appeared to him again, and told him not to resist his advisers but to anoint himself always with wax salve as he saw fit. So when he had anointed himself with it, moisture flowed abundantly from his mouth, nostrils, and eyes; all that fluid was removed from his head, and the man began to see crystal clear. For all this, thanks be indeed to the saints, but even more to Christ, the God who works through them to bring about his healing.

### Miracle 35 (Deubner 26)

#### *About the woman with sore breasts*

Afterward, there was a sage and saintly woman with a terrible disease in her breast who arrived at the port of salvation, namely the church of

saints Cosmas and Damian. The deacon of the church in the imperial city, a pious man, was in the habit of going to the church on Fridays and praying there in the evenings and at night until Saturday. And while the woman was incessantly asking the saints for healing, the deacon, as was his custom, came to pray on the night before Saturday. As soon as he lay to have a bit of rest, the saints appeared and said to him, "Say to the woman with the breast disease, 'You have been released regarding your breast. Go home [fol. 38 r] in peace, and you will find healing.'" The priest woke up in the middle of the night and, coming to his senses, thought, "How can this be the message of the saints, by which the woman indicated will be healed? How can I provide proof of the healing? If I go and say to the woman, 'You are delivered from your affliction,' she will probably ask me and say, 'Man, I am in the grip of sickness. You deceive me with empty words you never heard from the saints.'" Thinking these things to himself, he began to pray. The saints appeared and again ordered him to say the exact words to the woman. But he felt it was a delusive dream and that the saints' words were just empty chatter, so after prayers, he lay down and slept. For the third time, the saints appeared and, threatening him, said, "Go and immediately tell the woman what we have told you. To convince both you and her, the woman who feels pain in the side of her breast should search under her mattress and find the medicine, which, if she anoints herself with it, will soon rid her of the trouble." So when the morning dawned, the deacon went and said to the woman, "You have been freed from the illness that has been afflicting you." Looking at him with a strained look, the woman said to him, "It is not becoming of you to mock somebody in such distress with deceitful words. For you know that, like many others before me, for some reason, the saints are not releasing me now, even if they want to heal me." And he replied: "I do not say these things of my own accord, but I have come here at the command of the saints to say them. And the medicine that will cure your illness you will find under your mattress, as I have been ordered to tell you." She hurriedly started to search and found the medicine under her mattress. No one knew what it was or what was the fragrance it emanated, filling the place. Immediately anointing herself with it, she quickly got rid of her troubles. She went home, thanking saints



Cosmas [fol. 38 v] and Damian and praising Christ, who had given such grace to his saints.

### Miracle 36 (Deubner 29)

#### *About the woman with the sore nipple*

Afterward, there was a woman who, being a first-time mother, was ignorant of all things around mothers and newborns. Not only was she afraid to withdraw her breast from her child sometimes, and so the milk inside became engorged and caused her terrible pain; but also, because she delayed showing it to the doctors, instead of milk, it became full of water, and her nipple was aching badly. Finally, the constant pain forced her to go and show herself to doctors, putting aside her shame. Seeing that it was negligence that had caused the trouble, they told her that there was no other way to get rid of the issue but to cut the disease out of her breast with a scalpel. So, the doctors prepared for the operation. Hearing about the scalpel and the operation, the woman preferred to die of the disease rather than endure the scalpel cuts. Her husband sympathized with her and did not want to inflict the scalpel cut on his spouse either. Turning away from the doctors, he led her to the charitable church of Cosmas and Damian, and there, laying her down, he prayed with her and asked the saints to help her. The following night, the saints appeared to the woman's husband dressed as doctors and inquired of him, "Do you know that your wife's breast is to be cut open tomorrow?" He answered them, "No, gentlemen! For you know very well that I have taken her [fol. 39 r] from you to the saints because I do not want my wife to suffer such a thing, lest the scalpel should frighten her." Then the saints appeared to the woman and said, "If you want to be healed, you need an operation." She answered them, "No, gentlemen!" They said to the woman, "If you want to be healed, take some millet,<sup>73</sup> crush it, put it on your breast that is causing you pain, and you will be freed from it." When the day broke, the woman told those around her what she had been told. They quickly

73 *Panicum miliaceum*; for medicinal use in antiquity, see Kokoszko et al 2015: 71-104; warming poultices and cataplasms with millet were described by Galen and Oribasius, *ibid.* 94-95.

brought her some millet; she crushed it and put it on herself, as instructed, and she fell asleep when the day had passed. When she got up at midnight to pray, she saw that her breast had burst. Sure enough, she immediately squeezed out all the pus, put a compress on the wound that happened of itself, and was completely healed. She left with her husband, and they hurried to their house, giving thanks to the saints but first to Christ, the God who healed her through them.

### Miracle 37 (Deubner 30)

#### *About the man with edema*

Afterward, there was a man of high qualities who had a terrible illness. For, close to one part of his buttocks, a so-called edema [χοιράς] developed; for five whole years, he had frequently undergone the operations of physicians and had often had boils removed by medicines. As the disease worsened, the flesh around the edema began to rot, so much so that the man, tormented by the disease, was given up by the doctors, and since the boil started to rot inside, water was coming out of its pores [...].<sup>74</sup> [fol. 39 v] [...] But as the illness worsened and he no longer expected to be saved by humans, he fled to Blachernai to the divine church of Cosmas and Damian, the all-wise and true doctors.<sup>75</sup> For he saw in a dream that the saints came to his house and said with joyful faces, “Now that the doctors have given up on you, come to us so that you may have a share with all others in the grace given to us by God.” So following the promise of the saints, he rushed to them, weeping and sighing, and asked to be healed. One night, after his usual prayers, he lay down and fell asleep after a little while. He saw in his sleep the servants of Christ, Cosmas, and Damian, and among them, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy Virgin said to them: “It is not this one; yes, it is this one. Heal him quickly!” The man heard the Virgin say these words, but a moment later, he saw her no more. The saints Cosmas and Damian lifted the patient and took him to the infirmary near the church and the resting place for doctors inside; they shut the railings there, made a bed on a mattress, and tried to operate on him. But thinking that his usual doctors were about

74 “Valde incerta” (Rupprecht).

75 This miracle is also set in the church at Blachernai Quarter in Constantinople.

to cut him up again, he protested, shouting, "I will not let you cut me up again after I have fled to these saints. From now on, I do not need any operation from you." And when thereupon one of the saints wanted to cut him, while the other tried to hold him and tie him up, he kicked [fol. 40 r] so that it was impossible to hold him. Thus, one of the saints grabbed his legs and put them between the metal bars of the railing, and the other took the scalpel and cut him, making a two-finger wide cut, while the man shrieked with the pain from the cut. The saints eliminated the root of the trouble, and after dressing the wound, without giving any medicine, they left the man. He said to them weakly, "Look, you have given me the cut. Now, anoint the wound with honey before dressing it since that is what your art requires, for that is what frequent operations have taught me." But the saints said to him, "Now you are teaching us to heal? Wait until you are well, for you are treated the right way." And having done this, they laid him back on his mattress. The man awoke from his sleep, and after feeling the bandage on his wound and discovering the deep cut, he realized that the saints had healed him. He remained in the church, asking them to give him complete health. When Saturday evening arrived, at the sixth hour of the night, as was customary, the wax salve was distributed from the wax salve of the saints; he alone remained lying down so that the bandages of the wound would not be disturbed. Lulled by sleep, at the tenth hour of the night, he saw the saints come to him, soak a cloth with medicine, and put it on the cut. When they put the cloth on, the man felt terrible pain, the spot swelled, [fol. 40 v] drawing rot from his whole body. But when he woke up and untied the bandage that the saints had put on the cut, he saw that the wound was quite fissured, with lots of rotten pus coming out of it, which had soaked the mattress. Putting wax salve on it, he stayed in the church of the saints. After a little while, he was completely healed and decided to return home. The saints reappeared and ordered him not to leave their church until six years had passed. Listening to them, he stayed there and often saw the saints apparent to his own eyes. Thus, enjoying complete openness towards the saints, he once asked them, "Since I have sinned very much, from what sin have I been suffering this illness for all these years?" And they answered him, "First tell us, what do you think yourself?" And he said to them, "I think it was because of the jealousy of the depraved Satan

that I had to endure this sickness. By my sins, I have provoked [...], and the devil [diabolos] has slandered [diaballo] according to his name. For he deceives by bringing the trial of sickness upon us.” They answered him, “You thought right. That is how it is and what happened to you.” And the man became dear to the saints, being commanded to remain for everybody in the holy church of the saints as a servant of the sick there until his death, desiring that everybody would gain protection through the help of the saints and benefit from the manifest benefits of their grace [...] [fol. 41 r] giving thanks to the saints and praising God, who has given inexhaustible grace to his saints.

### Miracle 38. (Fragmentary.)

*About the man with a blocked larynx*

Afterward, there was a priest of the divine church of Cosmas and Damian, a pious man [...]

[fol. 41 v]

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# LINGUISTIC THOUGHT IN MOSCHOPOULEAN SCHEDOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

*By Staffan Wahlgren*

**Summary:** This paper contains a discussion of the *Περὶ σχεδῶν* of Manuel Moschopoulos (ca. 1265-1316), with a special focus on his treatment of the topics of pronunciation and spelling (1), preposition and case (2), and etymology and derivation (3). The purpose is to show how the linguistic thought contained in older grammars, from antiquity and the Byzantine era, is translated into what may be the need of students.

## 0 Introduction

Of current scholarship concerned with Byzantine Greek, some is devoted, not primarily to the language as such, but to understanding what the Byzantines thought about language and how Greek was taught in schools.<sup>2</sup>

As is evident, grammars are prime examples of texts that may be studied for the purpose of understanding Byzantine linguistic thought.<sup>3</sup> It is clear enough that they have pedagogical ambitions but arguable to what

- 1 My sincere thanks are due to the anonymous reviewer provided by the editors of the journal.
- 2 The most important hub at present for this kind of research is Ghent University, with the ERC project *MELA: The Meaning of Language. A Digital Grammar of the Greek Taught at Schools in Late Constantinople*, conducted by A. Cuomo. The following is a revised version of a paper read at a workshop in Ghent, 2 June 2023 (*Teaching and Learning Greek in Byzantium 1: Schedography*).
- 3 For general discussions of Byzantine grammatical literature, which is very much indebted to Dionysios Thrax (ca. 170-90 BCE) and the tradition of Alexandria, see Robins 1993 and Wahlgren 2024 (with an overview of the main writers). See also further references below.

extent they were written for direct use in the classroom.<sup>4</sup> As far as the late Byzantine period is concerned, there is at least one example of an author who, if nothing more, seems to be aware of the needs of different kinds of audiences and who writes, sometimes for a scholarly, sometimes for a less sophisticated audience. This is Maximos Planoudes (ca. 1260-1305), with his *Περὶ γραμματικῆς διάλογος*, *Dialogue on Grammar* (directed, in a fairly simple language, at a student and with few abstract concepts), and the *Περὶ συντάξεως*, *On Syntax* (for an audience with a considerable linguistic knowledge).<sup>5</sup>

Probably close to the students' experience is so-called schedography (short texts, *schede*, with their commentary), whereby it should be noted that the terminology is vague and the very word *σχεδογραφία* seems to refer to different phenomena at different times.<sup>6</sup> This paper discusses schedography as it occurs in the *Περὶ σχεδῶν* of Manuel Moschopoulos (ca. 1265-1316), a pupil of the already mentioned famous linguist and teacher Maximos Planoudes.<sup>7</sup> The purpose is to identify some types of

- 4 Proof of a pedagogical aim is of different kinds. First, many texts are written in the form of questions and answers (eminently so the *Περὶ γραμματικῆς διάλογος* by Maximos Planoudes, for whom see below). Secondly, some texts are expressly dedicated to students (the first truly Byzantine example being the *Μέθοδος περὶ τῆς τοῦ λόγου συντάξεως* by Michael Synkellos, 760/61-846). All the same, it is not necessary for the purposes of the present paper to elaborate on whether the existing texts were actually used in a classroom or if these formal properties make part of an elaborate rhetorical game.
- 5 For the texts as such, see Bachmann 1828: 2-101, and 105-66. For a discussion of the *Dialogue*, see Tsiampokalos 2024.
- 6 The term schedography turns up in the eleventh century. For the development over time, see Vassis et al. 2019, Nousia 2017 and 2016, Agapitos 2017 and 2013, Silvano 2015, and Robins 1993.
- 7 A modern edition of the *Περὶ σχεδῶν* (which, as is proven by its preservation in almost fifty mss. and an early print, seems to have been highly successful) is an obvious desiderate (a modern edition is announced here: <https://mycoach.formservice.royalholloway.ac.uk/Research/Moschopoulos.html>); for the time being, it has to be studied in the Stephanus edition of 1545. The commented edition of the two Moschopouleian *schede* contained in the ms. Vat. Graec. 1527 (a fifteenth-century ms. with different linguistic treatises) is also of use: see Nousia 2016 (for specifics about

linguistic argument and to discuss its origin – all in order to show what may have trickled down from cutting-edge theory to what we may suppose to be the Palaeologan classroom.

The schedae of the *Περὶ σχεδῶν*, twenty-two in number, are mostly of two kinds. Roughly the first half is in some sense biblical-Christian, the second (from Stephanus 1545: 160 and onwards) mostly Homeric (with, in between the two main types, one schedos based on a fable, for which see Stephanus 1545: 148).<sup>8</sup> The first of the biblical texts reads as follows:<sup>9</sup>

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 3:

Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἀσπόρως εὐδοκήσας τεχθῆναι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, ταῖς πρεσβεΐαις αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ χρυσορρήμονος Ἰωάννου φώτισον τὸν νοῦν τοῦ νέου τοῦ νῦν ἀρξαμένου τοῦ σχεδογραφεῖν, καὶ τὴν καταρχὴν εὐλόγησον τοῦ σχέδους.

Lord Jesus Christ, our God, you who consented to be seedlessly born from the holy god-bearer Mary, ever virgin: through her prayers and those of John of golden speech, enlighten the mind of the young person who now starts upon schedography, and bless the beginning of the schedos.

On this follows Moschopoulos' lemmatisation with commentary, which begins as follows:

the Vat. Graec. 1527, see also Pinakes/Diktyon: <https://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/cote/68158/>). A proper overview of the (intellectual) life and activities of Manuel Moschopoulos as well as Maximos Planoudes with biographies is a desiderate. See, however, Pontani 2015: 409-19, and Wilson 1996: 230 (on Planoudes) and 244-47 (on Moschopoulos).

8 Cf. Nousia 2019: 254 and Gallavotti 1983: 3, with the following characterisation of the texts: 1-6 Religious texts, 7-10 Admonitory texts, 11 Aesopic fable, 12-22 Homeric texts.

9 The following citations follow the Stephanus edition faithfully, with exception for its habit to use a grave accent before a comma.

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 3:

ΚΥΡΙΕ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΕ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΗΜΩΝ. Πόσα μέρη λόγου εἰσί; Τρία. Κύριε, Ἰησοῦ, Χριστέ, θεός, ὄνομα. ὁ, ἄρθρον. ἡμῶν, ἀντωνυμία. Τὰ γὰρ δύο ὀνόματα ἢ καὶ πολλά, εἰς ἓν συνάγονται, ὄνομα, καὶ ἓν εἰσι μέρος λόγου.

LORD JESUS CHRIST, OUR GOD. How many word classes are represented? Three. ‘Lord’, ‘Jesus’, ‘Christ’, ‘God’ (are examples of) nouns. ‘The’ (scil. ὁ) (is an example of the) article. ‘Our’ (is a) pronoun. For two nouns, or more, are subsumed under one category, noun, and constitute one word class.

In contrast, the first of the Homeric texts reads as follows:

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 160:

Ὁ τοῦ Πριάμου παῖς Ἀλέξανδρος τὰς ἀρχεκάκους ναῦς εἰληφώς, ἃς Φέρεκλος ἐτεκτήνατο, ἐπὶ τὸν τῶν Λακῶνων χῶρον κατέπλευσε. καὶ Ἑλένην τὴν τῆς Λήδας παῖδα, ἣ ὠμευνέτει νομίμως ὁ Ἀτρείδης Μενέλαος, ἥρπακώς, ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ὥχκετο ἄγων τὴν Ἴλιον καὶ Τροίαν κεκλημένην, καὶ ὠνομασμένην. καὶ πολλοῖς ὀλέθρου αἴτιος ἐγεγόνει.

Priam’s son Alexander took the baneful ships that Phereklos had built, and he sailed to the land of the Laconians. And he seized Helen, the daughter of Leda, with whom Atreus’ son, Menelaos, lived lawfully together, and he brought her to his own country, called and named Ilion and Troy. And he became the ruin of many men.

On this follows Moschopoulos’ lemmatisation and commentary, which begins with a simple statement about case:

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 160:

ΠΡΙΑΜΟΥ. Ἡ εὐθεῖα, ὁ Πρίαμος.

Priam’s. The nominative case form is Priamos.

In sum, already in this juxtaposition of two schede we see some differences that also hold true for others. The first kind more often contains an invocation to God (indeed, the text presented for study is nothing but an invocation with prayer), whereas the second is telling a story. They could be said to represent different text types.

Here, the question arises as to what purpose the choice of topics and general arrangement serve, and whether they exist to facilitate the demonstration of different linguistic phenomena (and not only phonology in so far as this might be relevant for spelling).<sup>10</sup> We may suspect that this is so, first and foremost because the schede differ from each other, not only in content but also in language. Thus, to name one feature from each, the first (see the Biblical schedos cited above) illustrates how expressions of wish may be phrased (here with the imperatives φωτίσον, *enlighten*, and εὐλόγησον, *bless*), whereas the second (see the Homeric schedos cited above) lends itself to a study of how to sustain a narrative by participles (εἰληφώς, *took*, ἥρπακώς, *seized*, ἄγων, *bringing*, along with the non-narrative participles of κεκλημένην, *called*, and ὀνομασμένην, *named*). Also, interestingly enough, the two schede contained in the Vat. gr. 1527 (see n. 7) are one of each type (they are the same as the schede beginning in Stephanus 1545: 108 and 160 respectively), and it seems likely that they are juxtaposed so as to supplement each other. In other words, they are intended to give a comprehensive insight into the genre to a student who has no access to the complete Moschopoulean collection.

## 1 Pronunciation and spelling

The first linguistic topic to discuss is fundamental to these exercises and makes up a large part of them: pronunciation and spelling.

Spelling Greek in Palaeologan times was difficult because of changes in the pronunciation that had occurred since orthography was fixed in

10 This, of course, comes in addition to the rather obvious fact that schede were used for rhetorical training and to demonstrate points of rhetoric (for this see also Nousia 2019, especially pp. 259-60).

antiquity.<sup>11</sup> No doubt for this reason, the schedographer is largely occupied with providing annotated lists of words and their correct spelling, e.g.:

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 4:

Τίνα ἀπὸ τῆς κυ συλλαβῆς ἀρχόμενα, ὑπὸ ταύτην τὴν ἀκολουθίαν εἰσὶ; Ταῦτα. Κύριος, Κῦμα. Κυμαίνει θάλαττα, ἀντὶ κύματα ἐγείρει. Κυλίω, ἀφ' οὗ κύλινδρος κτλ.

Which words beginning with the syllable κυ belong to this category? The following: Κύριος (*Lord*), Κῦμα (*wave*). Κυμαίνει θάλαττα (*the sea is agitated with waves*), instead of κύματα ἐγείρει (*it raises up waves*). Κυλίω (*to roll*), from which the word κύλινδρος (*cylinder*) etc.

As for the linguistic thought in this, the following points are worth stressing.

First, the arrangement is a prime example of normative thinking: there is as little allowance for alternative spellings as in modern times. Yet, the words listed to illustrate a particular spelling do not seem so carefully chosen. In fact, the lists do not seem at all normative if we take it that some kinds of Greek are better than others. Instead, they contain not only a medley of Homeric and poetic, specifically Attic and so-called common (*koina*) words; they also contain late – even Latin – words, such as κοιαίστωρ, *quaestor* (Stephanus 1545: 5; this, however, is marked as an ἀξίωμα Ῥωμαϊκόν, *a Roman office*), and πρίγκιψ, *princeps* (Stephanus 1545: 160).

Secondly, when talking about spelling in relation to pronunciation, the author puts it as follows:

11 For an overview of the main changes in pronunciation, including those of relevance to (the almost unaltered) spelling, see Browning 1983: 56–58, and Holton et al. 2019: 1ff. (Vol. I, part 1).

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 8:

Τίνα ἀπὸ τῆς χρι συλλαβῆς ἀρχόμενα διὰ τοῦ ι<sup>α</sup> γράφεται; Ταῦτα. Χρίω κτλ.

What words begin with the syllable χρι and are written with iota? The following: Χρίω (*to anoint*) etc.

A little later, on the same page (l. 8 from below), this is counterbalanced by:

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 8:

Τίνα (scil. ἀπὸ τῆς χρι συλλαβῆς ἀρχόμενα) διὰ τοῦ η<sup>α</sup> (scil. γράφεται); Ταῦτα. Χρῆμα κτλ.

What words begin with the syllable χρι and are written with eta? The following: Χρῆμα (*thing/matter*) etc.

This somewhat awkward means of expression is, as should be obvious, a consequence of the fact that the Byzantines did not have a system of phonetic representation and, more generally, had very little grasp of how to make a distinction between form, function and meaning in language.<sup>12</sup> However, one feature of Moschopoulos' arrangement deserves particular attention. The lemmatisation of the words ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, *Christ*, or ΚΥΡΙΟΣ, *Lord*, leads to a discussion of other similar words. Under the lemma ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (Stephanus 1545: 7), words beginning with χρι, χρη and χρει are presented (such as χρῆμα, *thing*, see the citation above), implying an identical pronunciation of the vowel sound. However, separated from this, under ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (Stephanus 1545: 3), we find the discussion of words with υ and οι (although there is no discussion of words beginning with κι-, κη-, and κει-), for instance κοίρανος, *tyrant*, so as to indicate that υ and οι are pronounced in the same way yet differently from ι, η and ει.

We know that, in antiquity, υ (upsilon) had a distinct pronunciation, and it is also accepted that the pronunciation of οι merged with this at

12 See for this Robins 1993 and Wahlgren 2024.

some point.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, at some later point this (y-)sound turned into [i], that is, the same pronunciation as for ι, η and ει. As for the dating of this second-stage itacism, it seems agreed upon that it happened quite some time earlier than Moschopoulos' age, probably around the eleventh century.<sup>14</sup>

In other words, what all of this seems to indicate is that the arrangement in Moschopoulos – with a dividing line between, on the one hand, ι, η and ει, and, on the other, υ and οι – does not really make sense for his own times. Instead, it tells us something about the reality of the past, a time when i and y were distinct phonemes. Therefore, we may suppose that his arrangement is taken over from some older grammarian (it remains unclear who this might be) without much thought.<sup>15</sup>

## 2 Preposition and case

Prepositions and case constitute perhaps the best developed domain of Byzantine syntactic analysis since, in general, much of what the Byzantines would understand as syntax is a matter of how words relate to their immediate neighbours.<sup>16</sup>

Moschopoulos' work contains observations on prepositions throughout. However, on this topic the very first schedos as presented in the 1545 Stephanus edition is of especial interest. This is by far the most extensive of the whole collection, and one reason for this is because it includes two long, rather independent dissertations: one on pronouns (running from p. 11, with an introductory heading *Περὶ ἀντωνυμιῶν*, *On pronouns*, until

13 For discussions of the issues raised in this paragraph, see Browning 1983: 56 and Holton et al. 2019 (cf. n. 11).

14 Or, in fact, even earlier: it has been suggested that a distinctive pronunciation of /y/ persisted in educated speech until the mid-Byzantine period, whereas it had disappeared in common pronunciation already in Roman times: see Browning 1983: 56.

15 For his sources in general see Nousia 2016: 78–81.

16 This goes back to Dionysios Thrax and the linguistic tradition of Alexandria at the very least: cf. Robins 1993 and Wahlgren 2024. It is also very well demonstrated by this very text, which contains no other kind of syntactic discussion than that pertaining to prepositions with their neighbours.



p. 15, where it, under the heading ΗΜΩΝ, changes direction into a discussion of all kinds of words with *η*), the other on prepositions (pp. 23–36, introduced as *Περὶ συντάξεως τῶν προθέσεων*, *On the syntax of prepositions*).

The dissertation on prepositions takes up some thirteen pages in Stephanus' edition. It contains, especially in its later parts, a lot of material that, in addition to not being schedographical in its form, it is hard to see as being fit for pedagogical use. It is too specialised, and it deals with the language of the poets, on overarching rules of derivation and composition, and the like. There is not much that a student could internalise and apply. It is optimistic to think that it would be much help in understanding poetry.

In order to extract some linguistic thought fit for students from this all the same, let us focus on what Moschopoulos does before he falls into the trap of the *recherché*. To summarise the following discussion, he starts out with a mostly conventional account of prepositions and their case, yet with some minor points that seem to reflect more recent insights.

First, as is known, some prepositions take one case only, such as ἀπό, ἐν and σύν (these are discussed in Stephanus 1545: 23–24; for ἀπό see also p. 33).<sup>17</sup> Other prepositions take two cases, the genitive and the accusative, such as κατά (discussed on p. 27), or even, like παρά (discussed on p. 29), three cases, the genitive, the dative and the accusative. As far as μετά (discussed on p. 29) is concerned, Moschopoulos states that it occurs with all three cases. This seems to reflect the fact that there is a difference between different earlier grammarians. Some, going back to Dionysius Thrax, have the two-case model, while others, going back to Michael Synkellos (cf. n. 4 above) or, possibly, further, to some unknown authority, the three-case model.<sup>18</sup> This may seem like a minor point, but it

17 This is if we understand 'Greek' as meaning the ancient type – standard literary Greek – as Moschopoulos does. Some Byzantine authors, if they tend towards the vernacular, do use ἀπό with the accusative (for this see Holton et al. 2019: 1993). Also, it is discussed by some grammarians, such as Gregory of Corinth (ca. 1070–1156), but is not mentioned by Moschopoulos – an indication of the nature of his text's normativity.

18 See Wahlgren, forthcoming.

shows how Moschopoulos probably belongs to one grammatical tradition (that of Michael Synkellos) rather than another. The greater matter at stake is whether epic and poetic varieties of Greek count or not (see, for instance, *Iliad* I.525, μετ' ἀθανάτοισι, *among the immortals*, where μετά takes the dative).

Another matter is the distinction between ἐν and εἰς, where ἐν takes the dative, εἰς the accusative. In addition, as pointed out by Moschopoulos (Stephanus 1545: 23–24), both prepositions occur with the genitive in expressions such as ἐν ἀγροῦ, *in the field*/ἐν ᾿Αἰδου, *in Hades*, or even εἰς ᾿Αἰδου, a kind of ellipsis for expressions like ἐν ᾿Αἰδου δόμοις, *in the house of Hades*.

In mentioning this construction, Moschopoulos is on common ground with one or more predecessors.<sup>19</sup> However, in the following, the discussion takes another turn.

As is well known, εἰς infringes upon and, with time, replaces ἐν in the vernacular, so that εἰς is found not only for *going* somewhere, but also for *being* somewhere.<sup>20</sup> This in turn leads (among Byzantines concerned with correctness) to a certain confusion regarding the boundaries between εἰς and ἐν.

It is Maximos Planoudes, the very teacher of Moschopoulos, who, in his *Περὶ συντάξεως*, in a discussion of localist functions of the cases, including movement within boundaries, takes up the thread with the following example:<sup>21</sup>

(Maximos Planoudes, *Περὶ συντάξεως*) Bachmann 1828: 123.25–26  
ἐν τῇ στοᾷ περιπατεῖν τὸν Σωκράτην.

Socrates walking in the portico.

This, Planoudes says, some consider an error, since you cannot have movement with the dative. However, he continues, it is not wrong, for:

19 It is, for instance, known from Michael Synkellos, cf. Wahlgren, forthcoming.

20 See Holton et al. 2019: 1994 and 1998.

21 This passage in Planoudes is also discussed in Wahlgren, forthcoming.

οὐ τὴν ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον δηλοῦν κίνησιν βούλεται, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ τόπῳ ἀναστροφὴν.

The intended meaning is not movement from one place to another, but the to-and-fro movement at one and the same spot.

In conclusion, when Moschopoulos mentions ἐν as the correct preposition for κίνησιν ἔν τινι, I would suggest this could be a reminiscence not of an old tradition, but rather of something as recent as a theory launched by his own teacher.

### 3 Etymology and derivation

Byzantine modes of reasoning about etymology and derivation constitute a difficult subject for us to approach, at least if we are looking for historically correct explanations of the origin and development of words, as the modern etymologist would do.<sup>22</sup>

All the same, it should be mentioned that, in Moschopoulos, there are, from a historical perspective, sometimes perfectly correct statements, for instance when foreign words are explained as such. Foreign words in the *Περὶ σχεδῶν* are either Latin or Hebrew, and one reason why Moschopoulos singles them out is to explain why they are not declined as other words are (the name Ἰησοῦς, *Jesus*, being an example, Stephanus 1545: 6).

This is as far as Moschopoulos goes with etymology proper. In addition, there is some reflection upon derivation. Here, one matter stands out: in a majority of cases (although not all, as I would like to underline), it is claimed that verbs are at the origin of meaning, while corresponding words from other word classes, particularly nouns, are said to be derived from these. Thus, not only is χριστός, *anointed*, said to come from χρίω, *to anoint* (Stephanus 1545: 7), but the noun στροφή, *turn*, from στρέφω, *to turn* (Stephanus 1545: 116), and so on.

22 For different discussions of the Byzantine interest in etymology, and its ancient roots, see Robins 1993, especially pp. 21, 22 and 148.

Of course, there are true deverbatives in the Greek language, and *χριστός* is one. Yet, why this is claimed to be the normal course of development is unclear, although, as far as Moschopoulos himself is concerned, the simple explanation is no doubt that earlier grammarians say so.<sup>23</sup> A fact that hampers the Byzantines' analysis is the lack of a clear concept of linguistic root. All the same, Moschopoulos manages to generalise around pairs like *στρέφω* – *στροφή* in an interesting way:

(Manuel Moschopoulos, *Περὶ σχεδῶν*) Stephanus 1545: 116.21-22:

Τὰ ἔχοντα τὸ ἐγκείμενον ἐν τοῖς ῥήμασιν, ἔχουσι τὸ ο ἀντιπαρακείμενον ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασι.

If there is an ε in the verb, there is a corresponding ο in the noun.

This could have been the starting point for an understanding of *Ablaut*. Also, Moschopoulos (in the following) adds his thoughts on pairs like *ἔχω* – *ἵσχω*, *to have*, *μένω* – *μῖμνω*, *to remain*, and *ῥέπω* – *ρίπτω*, *to incline/throw*. Although this is a case of throwing things together that, from the historical point of view, do not belong together, his approach could have served as a starting point for thinking systematically about word formation.

Another lacking concept is homonymy. From the lemma *ΘΕΙΟΤΑΤΟΣ*, *most godly* (Stephanus 1545: 112), Moschopoulos arrives at *θεῖος*, *uncle*, implying, we must conclude, that these words are connected.

Moschopoulos' discussion thus proceeds with no understanding of phonetic correspondences and sound laws, no concept of diachrony and historical change, and with little or no attempt to take dialect and genre into account.

No doubt, the same criticism (if we have a right to employ such a concept) can be aimed at other Byzantine grammarians, too. However, a more balanced assessment is possible if we acknowledge that premodern etymology, at least in a European context, does not even try to be historical. It is also to be remembered that, if, as we have suggested, pedagogical aims stand in the foreground, it does, perhaps, not matter so much if it is wrong to connect the *godly* with the *uncle*: more important is that

23 An actual, or even probable, source has not been identified by me.

students make the right associations in their mind and so master their spelling.

#### 4 Conclusion

The schedography discussed in this paper gives little reason to believe that its author had much of an ambition to transmit original linguistic thought into schedography (and therefore, presumably, to students), even though, as in the case of borrowings from Maximus Planudes, there may be occasional evidence to the contrary. Instead, it mostly provides a light version of the content of the already existing grammatical literature, with the same focal points and ideas, but also – it may be added – while leaving the same areas of language, such as verbal and phrasal syntax, virtually untouched. Even the level of normativity is not oppressive.

In conclusion, schedography may not provide much new insight into linguistic thought (although, as far as the present specimen is concerned, some more topics, such as, for instance, aspect and tense, might prove fruitful to investigate). However, it is still of unexplored interest for the history of pedagogy and language teaching.

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# HORACE ODES 1.24:

## QUINTILIUS AND EPICUREANISM, PHILODEMUS AND VARIUS

*By Francis Cairns*

**Summary:** A number of Epicurean elements have been identified in *Odes* 1.24 by past scholarship. This paper begins by summarising them, before proposing two major additions, one a quotation from Philodemus *On Death*. A final section appends a speculation about another possible Epicurean source for the ode, Varius' *De Morte*.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus  
tam cari capitis? praecipe lugubris  
cantus, Melpomene, cui liquidam pater  
vocem cum cithara dedit.

ergo Quintilium perpetuus sopor  
urget; cui Pudor et Iustitiae soror  
incorrupta Fides nudaque Veritas  
quando ullum inveniet parem? 5

multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,  
nulli flebilior quam tibi, Vergili.  
tu frustra pius, heu, non ita creditum  
poscis Quintilium deos. 10

quid? si Threicio blandius Orpheo  
auditam moderere arboribus fidem,  
num vanae redeat sanguis imagini,  
quam virga semel horrida 15

non lenis precibus fata recludere  
nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi?  
durum: sed levius fit patientia  
quidquid corrigere est nefas. 20

§I of the present paper assembles those Epicurean elements which have already been identified in *Odes* 1.24. §II adds two further such elements, viz. *pudor/Pudor* (§II.i), and a hitherto unrecognised quotation of Philodemus (§II.ii). §III considers other possible sources of the ode, especially Varius' *On Death*.

### I. Identified Epicurean Elements in *Odes* 1.241

*Odes* 1.24 consoles Virgil for the death of Quintilius Varus.<sup>2</sup> Quintilius, a committed Epicurean, had, along with L. Varius Rufus, Plotius Tucca and Virgil, been a pupil of Philodemus in the 40s BC. The four men are addressed together in three of the treatises which were part of Philodemus' *Περὶ κακιῶν καὶ τῶν ἀντικειμένων ἀρετῶν* (*On Vices and their Opposing Virtues*), viz. *PHerc. Paris.* 2, col. Z.23-25 (*On Slander*), *PHerc.* 253, fr. 12.3-5 (*On Greed*), and *PHerc.* 1082, col. 11.2-4 (*On Flattery*).<sup>3</sup> Philodemus always, so it seems, addressed them in the same way: ὦ Πλώτιε καὶ Οὐάριε καὶ Οὐεργίλιε καὶ Κοϊντίλιε.<sup>4</sup> They are the 'dedicatees' of the works in which their names appear in that they constituted the small class of elite students<sup>5</sup> who heard as lectures (at least) these three treatises of Philodemus which, as recorded by his stenographers and then corrected by the Master,<sup>6</sup> contributed to his published *On Vices*.

Norman De Witt seems to have been the first scholar to note and discuss some of the Epicurean content of *Odes* 1.24.<sup>7</sup> He identified *nudaque*

1 The bibliography on *Od.* 1.24 is extensive; in the present paper only items relevant to the ode's Epicurean content are cited.

2 On the epicedic/consolatory aspects of *Od.* 1.24 see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 27-31, 166 (*Stellenregister* s.v. *Horatius carm.* 1.24); Nisbet-Hubbard 1970: 280-81.

3 For the constituents of *On Vices and Opposing Virtues* see Capasso 2010.

4 See Puglia 2023.

5 On the group see Gigante 1993: 172-74; Sider 1997: 19-23.

6 For the transformation of lectures into books see Heath 2004: 255-76 (= Ch. 8 'Technology').

7 De Witt 1935: 314-15.

*Veritas* (7) and *corrigere* (20) as references to Epicurean *parrhesia* (frankness).<sup>8</sup> In 1993 Marcello Gigante added that *Fides* (7) is an essential element of another major Epicurean aspiration, friendship,<sup>9</sup> and he commented on *bonis* (9) as a term with Epicurean significance<sup>10</sup> – see also below. More recently Philip Thibodeau has successfully attempted a fuller treatment of the ode in Epicurean terms.<sup>11</sup> He explored topoi drawn by Horace from Epicurean sources, viz.: 1) the endlessness and irreversibility of death; 2) the non-interference of the gods in human life; 3) the commercial metaphor of *non ita creditum* as a possible reflection of an Epicurean source (cf. Lucretius *DRN* 3.971); and 4) the need for Epicureans to avoid excessive lamentation for the dead and to show restraint in mourning.<sup>12</sup> More broadly, Thibodeau again related the overall frank and critical tone of Horace in *Odes* 1.24 to *parrhesia* among Epicurean friends – and specifically to Philodemus’ *On Frank Criticism*. Horace knew of its particular interest to the group of four to which Virgil and Quintilius belonged,<sup>13</sup> and especially to Quintilius, to whom *parrhesia* was doubly germane: not only did he have a general reputation for speaking frankly, but he was famous for his candour in the field of literary criticism.<sup>14</sup> Thibodeau also pointed out that Horace’s own stance in *Odes* 1.24 vis-à-vis Virgil is reminiscent of the way Quintilius behaved towards his Epicurean friends: “how better to advise Vergil to quit his mourning than with a style of *sermo* memorializing Quintilius’ own?” (252). Horace, so Thibodeau proposed, is also making the implicit point that, although Quintilius is dead, his style of frank but friendly criticism based on the teachings of Philodemus lives on. Two final implications of Thibodeau’s discussion, while not intrinsically implausible, are perhaps less relevant. They are first that Horace adopts the role of frank speaker with awareness that Philodemus had discriminated between, on the one hand, genuinely candid critics and, on the other, flatterers who employed illusory

8 On *corrigere* see also Putnam 1992-1993: 134.

9 Gigante 1993: 175; for *Pudor*, the third member of the personified trio, see below §II.i.

10 Gigante 1993: 171.

11 Thibodeau 2002-2003.

12 See also, for background, Hessler 2015.

13 Thibodeau 2002-2003: 250-51, citing Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.39-42, where Virgil, Varius, and Tucca are described as *candidi*.

14 See Muthmann 1967: 31; Thibodeau 2002-2003: 251, and below.

criticism to convey adulation, and second that Horace also had in mind that “Philodemus dedicated his *Peri Kolakeias* [*On Flattery*] to Vergil, Quintilius, Plotius, and Varius” (250). The difficulty here is that *Odes* 1.24 contains no reference to flattery.

## II. Further Epicurean Elements in *Odes* 1.24

### i. *Pudor*

Lines 6-7 present three personified and deified abstractions who will be unable to find the like of Quintilius again: *cui Pudor et Iustitiae soror / incorrupta Fides nudaque Veritas / quando ullum inveniet parem?* They are associated with Quintilius much as other such entities constitute the attendant *komos* of deities in lyric poetry: cf., e.g., *sive tu mavis, Erycina ridens, quam Iocus circum volat et Cupido* (Horace *Odes* 1.2.33-34).<sup>15</sup> As noted above, two of the three abstractions, *Fides* and *Veritas* (7), have previously been linked with Epicurean ethics. The third, *Pudor* (6), echoes *pudor* in the first line of *Odes* 1.24, and in both instances the term implies ‘self-restraint’ (*OLD* s.v. 2a).<sup>16</sup> Horace describes Quintilius’ critical method as involving self-restraint and moderation; he gives frank advice, but, if the recipient’s ears are closed, he desists:

Quintilio siquid recitares, ‘corrige sodes  
hoc’ aiebat ‘et hoc’. melius te posse negares  
bis terque expertum frustra: delere iubebat 440  
et male tornatos incudi reddere versus.  
si defendere delictum quam vertere malles,  
nullum ultra verbum aut operam insumebat inanem,  
quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares. (*Ars Poetica* 438-444)

15 See Nisbet-Hubbard 1970: 236 on *Od.* 1.18.14. A comparable group of deified abstractions (*Fides*, *Pax*, *Honos*, *Pudor*, *Virtus*) appears at Hor. *CS* 57-60, but in this case unattached to a lead deity/human.

16 See also D’Agostino 1969: esp. 322 (*pudor/pudicitia* and σωφροσύνη); Reeve 2011. For the association (sometimes quasi-synonymy) of *pudor*’s Greek ‘equivalent’ *aidōs* with *sōphrosynē* see further Cairns 1993: General Index s.v. *sōphrosynē*. The essays of Renaud et al. 2012 concentrate on other aspects of *pudor*.

Quintilius' self-control thus goes even further than that prescribed by Philodemus' in *On Frank Criticism*.<sup>17</sup> There Philodemus notes that Epicurus reproached Pythocles "in moderation" (μετρίως, fr. 6.7-8) cf.(?) fr. 20.1 as restored; he also says that a teacher should respond to a pupil's objections "moderately (again μετρίως, fr. 71.4-6), and that a frank critic should approach an advisee with "moderate reminders" (ἐπ[ε]λθ[ε]ῶν / μετρίαῖς ὑπ[ο]μνήσεσιν, fr. 93 N.7-8).<sup>18</sup>

*Pudor* therefore also has Epicurean status as an essential concomitant of παρρησία.<sup>19</sup> Its operation within the ode is visible almost immediately from its start. The function of the first two stanzas is to eulogise the uniqueness of Quintilius. *Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus / tam cari capitis?* (1-2) is usually understood as a rhetorical question, in effect a call for no *pudor* or *modus* in expressions of *desiderium*/πόθος for Quintilius. Similarly, the injunction to the Muse Melpomene (2-3) is (less justifiably) taken as setting no limit to the lamentation that she should initiate.<sup>20</sup> This makes lines 1-3 troubling in the light of the standard Epicurean disapproval of excessive mourning.<sup>21</sup> Apart from noting that Melpomene's *cantus* are *lugubris* (2-3), not unrestrained, there are two ways in which one might reconcile lines 1-3 with what follows. One is to deny that *Quis* etc. is a rhetorical question, and to treat it as a real question, a preliminary to a philosophical discussion. In this case, the initial emphasis on *pudor* and *modus* (1) implies that the *desiderium*/πόθος for Quintilius and Melpomene's laments for him should be regulated by *pudor* and *modus*. In other words, Horace is challenging the appropriateness of a standard topos of the *epicedion/consolatio* – the unrestrained outpouring of grief by

17 References to *On Frank Criticism* are to the edition of Konstan et al. 1988.

18 See also Konstan et al. 1988: 13-14.

19 Thibodeau 2002-2003: 250 comments (correctly) that: "he [Philodemus] repeatedly urges the teacher to tailor his remarks to the character of individual disciples, measure his words carefully, and use full harshness only when necessary (e.g. with a particularly arrogant disciple)"; but he does not connect his remarks to *Pudor*.

20 So, e.g., Nisbet-Hubbard 1970: 281-82 on line 1.

21 Cf. the views of Epicurus (συμπαθῶμεν τοῖς φίλοις οὐ θρηνοῦντες ἀλλὰ φροντίζοντες, Let us have fellow-feeling for our friends, not bewailing them but thinking about them, *Sententiae Vaticanae* 66) and of Philodemus (*On Death* Book 4 col. 100.12-15 Delattre, quoted below §II.ii).

the bereaved.<sup>22</sup> The second mode of reconciliation is arguably valid in either case: Horace's follow-up in stanza 2 with *ergo* (5) cools the emotional fervour of the first stanza, shows the poet standing back and assessing the situation, and sees him offering as his 'conclusion' that Quintilius' death is permanent (5-6), before moving on in stanzas 4 and 5 to counsel Virgil's acceptance of his loss. Thibodeau believed that Melpomene takes over as speaker of the ode from line 5 on.<sup>23</sup> Muses do often respond to such invitations as *praecipe* (2) by becoming speakers or joint speakers of the ongoing work,<sup>24</sup> but, although in the present instance Melpomene remains Horace's preceptor,<sup>25</sup> she does not seem to replace him as speaker. In particular, it is hard to hear the words addressed directly to Virgil at lines 9-12 as spoken by anyone other than Horace himself. Whatever the case, all three personified abstractions attached to Quintilius turn out to be specifically Epicurean in nature.

## ii. Philodemus *On Death* Book 4

*Odes* 1.24 has a direct, apparently unnoticed link with Philodemus *On Death* Book 4, a link which, enriched by its context, places the ode at the heart of that group of Philodemus' students of the 40s BC who later became some of the most eminent writers and critics of the Augustan age. *Odes* 1.24.9 reads: *multis ille bonis flebilis occidit*. Compare Philodemus *On Death* Book 4 col. 100.12-15 Delattre = col. 21.12-15 Henry:

... λυπ[ησομ]ε[ν] οὐς τε πολλοὺς καὶ  
ἀγαθοὺς λε[ι]ψομεν] τελευτήσαντες,  
ὁ προλαμβα[νό]μενον εὐφ[ραίνει φ]υ-  
σικῶς ...

22 For this topos see Esteve-Forriol 1962: 126-27.

23 Thibodeau 2002-2003: 253-54, comparing *Natura* in Lucr. 3.914-51 and Xantho in Philod. AP 9.570 = 14 *GPh.* = 3 Sider.

24 The convention is already visible in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and is echoed throughout antiquity.

25 Cf. *OLD* s.v. *praecipio* 5.b.

et ainsi, nombreux seront les gens de bien qui éprouveront du chagrin quand [nous les laisserons] en mourant – ce dont l’anticipation procure une joie bien naturelle (trans. Delattre 2022: 54-55)

And [we shall have] many good people who will be distressed when we die, anticipation of which thing gladdens (us) naturally (trans. Henry 2009: 49, who reads ἔ[ξομεν in line 13)

The two passages are close enough for Horace’s line to be considered a quotation of Philodemus: *multis* = πολλούς, *bonis* = ἀγαθούς, *flebilis* = λυπηροῦ[ς] ἐ[ν]ου[ς], and *occidit* = τελευτήσαντες. Moreover, in Epicurean writings *bonis* (= ἀγαθούς) refers specifically to Epicureans – Philodemus *On Gods* 1 col. 12.18 Diels (1916) 20 speaks of “good men” with the same reference: ὁ δ’ Ἐ[πί-/κουρ[ο]ς] ἄνδρας ἀ[γαθοῦ]ς ἐκώλ[υ]ε γοεῖν / τοι[αῦ]τα ο[ἱ] ἄν[θρωποι] ἐκ[βάλλη] τὸ εὐδοκῆσαι (17-19); and at *On Gods* 3 col. 14.5 (Diels 1917) 37 Philodemus similarly uses σπουδαῖος as a term of approbation with the same reference: ἄ[λλως τε] κ(αὶ) τῆς / πρ(ὸς) τοὺς ὁμοίου[ς] τοῖς σπουδαίο[ις] κοινολογίας ἄ-/φατον ἡδονὴν καταχεούσης (And particularly since, for good human beings, the sharing of discourse with one’s peers pours down indescribable pleasure, 4-6 tr. D. Armstrong 191).<sup>26</sup> At *Odes* 1.24.9 *bonis* points to the Epicurean circle to which Quintilius belonged.

Book 4 of Philodemus *On Death* dates from after 50 BC, and more precisely to 45 BC at the latest.<sup>27</sup> It was thus roughly contemporary with the three Philodemian works dedicated to the group of four students which included Virgil and Quintilius (above §I). The group may, then, have in addition attended the lecture-course which gave rise to *On Death* Book 4. If they did, Virgil heard Philodemus utter the same sentiment in almost the same words as Horace now addresses to him, and moreover Virgil heard Philodemus’ words in the company of Quintilius (Horace knew the words from the now published *On Death*). In that case the emotional charge carried by Horace’s reminder of the Master’s precept can only be imagined.

26 See Armstrong 2016: 190-91.

27 Delattre 2022: cxlvi.

### III The ‘Elephant in the Room’: Varius *On Death*

In addition to the quasi-mythical trio of *Pudor*, *Fides*, and *Veritas* (6-7), *Odes* 1.24 features ‘real’ mythical *personae*: Melpomene, Orpheus, and Mercury. Horace’s treatment of the two divinities appears to conform to Epicurean norms,<sup>28</sup> but to lack specifically Epicurean connections. As for Orpheus, the most prominent mythical character in the ode, Philodemus’ surviving mentions of Orpheus again offer nothing tangible: four of them treat Orpheus as the author of Orphic Hymns, while the remaining three rationalise his alleged magical powers.<sup>29</sup> The origin and Epicurean significance of Horace’s Orpheus, like those of his Melpomene and Mercury, must rather be sought in earlier poetry, where the tale of Orpheus in Virgil *Georgics* 4.453-529 is most often (and most plausibly) cited as his main inspiration.<sup>30</sup> Virgil is usually understood to be viewing Orpheus’ excessive love for Eurydice and his excessive grief over her death (*Georgics* 4.464-466) as breaching the Epicurean ideal of moderation in the expression of emotions. Horace took a similar Epicurean line with regard to love in, e.g., *Odes* 1.5 and 1.33, and to Valgius’ love of and grief for the dead Mystes in *Odes* 2.9, where lines 10-12 (... *nec tibi vespero / surgente decedunt amores / nec rapidum fugiente solem*) appear to echo Virgil’s *te ueniente die, te decedente canebat* (*Georgics* 4.466). Here in *Odes* 1.24 Horace’s Epicurean target is again excessive shows of grief for the death of a loved one, and here too Orpheus reemerges as a negative mythical paradeigma.

Nevertheless, we should not forget Varius, another of Quintilius’ fellow students in the classes of Philodemus, who composed his hexameter work *On Death*<sup>31</sup> in 44 or 43 BC.<sup>32</sup> Its surviving fragments tell us very little about it, and they contain no mythical material. But this poem, written close to the time when Varius was Philodemus’ pupil, must somehow be linked to the recent and homonymous treatise of his teacher – either as

28 On Epicurean attitudes to poetry see e.g. Obbink 1995.

29 See Vassallo 2015.

30 See, e.g. Thibodeau 2002-2003: 247; Davis 2023: 32-33, on which the remainder of this paragraph draws.

31 For its surviving fragments see Hollis 2007: 254-55 (texts), 263-73 (commentary).

32 So Hollis 2007: 264.



a poetically transformed and embellished version of it,<sup>33</sup> or as a work more distant from Philodemus but still influenced by him; and, although *Odes* 1.24 contains no pointer to Varius' *On Death* visible to us, Horace cannot have forgotten its existence. This background, along with Horace's choice to compose *Odes* 1.24 in the Second Asclepiad metre, which permits potential quotation of the first hemistichs of hexameters, emboldens an unevidenced speculation. Might Horace have quoted from Varius' *On Death* in the ode, as we know Virgil quoted Varius in his *Eclogues*?<sup>34</sup> If he did, one can imagine no more touching and effective consolation to Virgil for the loss of Quintilius than a borrowing in *multis ille bonis flebilis occidit* (9) from their old comrade Varius' rendering of that dictum of Philodemus.<sup>35</sup>

### Addendum

Subsequent to the acceptance of my paper by *Classica et Mediaevalia* I became aware of Michael McOsker's 'The Epicureanism of Horace, *Odes* 1,24 Revisited: Mourning and Friendship', which appeared in the final fascicle of *Rheinisches Museum* 2024 (167.3-4: 321-44). Focussing primarily on Philodemus' *On the Gods*, McOsker offers several convincing proposals about further Epicurean elements in *Odes* 1.24, discussing in particular (329-35) *vana imago* (15), *modus* (1), and Epicurean grief. There is, however, virtually no overlap between McOsker's paper and my own, which I have therefore left unaltered. F.C.

33 See Hollis 2007: 263-64; and cf. Sedley 1998: esp. 134-65 (= Ch. 5), arguing that Lucretius' *DRN* stands in that relationship to Epicurus' *On Nature*.

34 Varius fr. 150.6 Hollis = Verg. *Ecl.* 8.88; see Hollis 2007: 255; Lebek 2008. The line – *nec serae meminit decedere nocti* – looks to be from the same Orphic context as *Georg.* 4.466 and *Hor. Od.* 2.9.10-11; see Davis 2023: 32-33.

35 I am very grateful to Dr Jürgen Hammerstaedt for his comments on and corrections of this paper. My thanks also go to the anonymous referees of *Classica et Mediaevalia* for valuable additional material.

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# WHERE DID SPARTIATES LIVE? THE LAKEDAIMONIAN *ōbai* AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN THE SPARTAN PLAIN FROM THE ARCHAIC TO THE ROMAN PERIOD

*By Paul Christesen*

**Summary:** The current scholarly consensus is that, from the Archaic through the Roman periods, all Spartiates belonged to one of five locality-based groupings (*ōbai*) and that each *ōba* was linked to a particular settlement nucleus, four of which were located in Sparta and one at Amyklai. All Spartiates thus ostensibly lived in Sparta or Amyklai. Based on a comprehensive review of the textual evidence and an exposition of the relevant archaeological data (which is largely absent from prior treatments of this subject matter), I argue that the city of Sparta was never divided into four *ōbai*/settlement nuclei and that there was an important element of diachronic change: during the Archaic and Classical periods, Spartiates lived in an unknowable number of *ōbai* tied to settlements scattered throughout the Eurotas river valley, but, starting sometime in the late fourth or third century BCE most Spartiates found it expedient to live in or near Sparta.

## 1. Introduction

This article addresses a deceptively simple question: where did Spartiates live?<sup>1</sup> The prevailing response to that question was most influentially articulated by H.T. Wade-Gery in the mid-20th century. Wade-

- 1 Thanks are due to Paul Cartledge, Aryeh Lesch, and the anonymous reviewers of the journal for their comments on earlier versions of this article. I also benefited from the opportunity to present part of the argumentation offered here at a conference organized by Florentia Fragkopoulou and Nicolette Pavlides at the British School at

Gery's views can be summarized as follows: the primary purpose of the Lycurgan reforms was to strengthen the Lakedaimonian army.<sup>2</sup> Those reforms included the Great Rhetra, which created five new "tribes based on domicile" called *ōbai*, each of which was linked to a military unit and a distinct settlement nucleus. Four of those *ōbai* – Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana – were situated in the city of Sparta, while the fifth was located at Amyklai (c. 5 km south of Sparta).<sup>3</sup> All adult male Spartiates had to be enrolled in one of the five *ōbai* and hence resided in Sparta or Amyklai. The area around Sparta lacked any substantive settlements other than the four *ōbai* and Amyklai: "Laconia had no inhabited centres except Sparta (*plus* Amyklai) on the one hand, and on the other the towns of the *perioikoi*."<sup>4</sup> Wade-Gery believed that this combination of sociopolitical institutions and residential arrangements came into being in the late seventh century BCE, with the enactment of the Great Rhetra, and continued to function through the end of the Roman period. Throughout the discussion that follows, I refer to this view of where Spartiates lived; the nature, number, and location of *ōbai*; and settlement patterns in the vicinity of Sparta as the "current orthodoxy."

The current orthodoxy has proven to be remarkably persistent, even though the supporting evidence is far from abundant and the methodology on which it is based has fallen out of favor. Wade-Gery relied heavily on (1) the assumption that the Lycurgan reforms were driven by military considerations, (2) a brief and enigmatic provision in the Great Rhetra that calls for creating *phylai* and *ōbai*,<sup>5</sup> (3) the importance of colleges of five officials in the Lakedaimonian government (most obviously the ephors) and what he took to be convincing evidence for the division of the Lakedaimonian army in some periods into five major units, and (4) inscriptions from Sparta and dating to the first through third centuries CE that attest to the existence of four or possibly five *ōbai*. The sole function

Athens in September, 2024. Responsibility for the views expressed here and for any errors or omissions is solely my own.

2 See Section 5.2 for a detailed discussion of Wade-Gery's work and relevant citations.

3 An additional *ōba*, Neopolis, was created in the third century BCE. See n. 190. For the location of Amyklai, see Figure 16 in Section 7.

4 Wade-Gery 1958: 78.

5 See Section 3.1 for the text.

performed by the *ōbai* in those inscriptions is organizing a ballgame contested by boys passing through the state educational system.<sup>6</sup> Wade-Gery took it as a given that Lakedaimonian institutions remained essentially unchanged over the course of centuries. As a result, he saw no difficulty in reconstructing a political and residential system that he claimed came into being with the enactment of the Great Rhetra in the late seventh century BCE on the basis of texts about ballgames that were inscribed several hundred years later.<sup>7</sup>

The evidentiary basis of the current orthodoxy leaves something to be desired, but its biggest single defect is methodological. The use of Roman-era evidence to reconstruct Lakedaimonian sociopolitical institutions in the Archaic period was accepted practice in Wade-Gery's time but is now discredited, and for good reason.<sup>8</sup> Although Cicero felt no qualms about standing in front of a Roman jury and claiming that "the Lakedaimonians ... alone in the whole world have now lived for more than 700 years with one set of customs and without ever altering their laws," it is abundantly clear that the sociopolitical structure of Lakedaimon changed fundamentally between the Archaic and Roman periods.<sup>9</sup> To give but one example, there was, in Roman Lakedaimon, no equivalent to the two hereditary kings who wielded great influence in the Ar-

6 See the Appendix for the texts of these inscriptions.

7 All dates in the text that follows are BCE unless otherwise indicated. I have, in the interests of brevity, not specified CE for obviously modern dates such as 1805. Greek words and names have been transliterated in such a way as to be as faithful as possible to original spellings while also taking into account established usages for well-known individuals and places. My general practice is to employ the spelling in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* for Greek names and places that have their own lemma in that widely-used reference work. My assumption is that the provision of a lemma in the *OCD* is a reasonably good measure of the prominence of a person or place and hence the likelihood that there is an established usage for the spelling of the person or place in question. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations are my own.

8 For another mid-20th century example of using Roman-era evidence to write the history of early Lakedaimon, see Chrimes 1949.

9 Cic. *Flac.* 63; trans. C. Macdonald, modified. Compare the accounts of Lakedaimonian government during the Classical period in Andrewes 1966 and de Ste. Croix 1972: 131-38 with the treatment of Lakedaimonian government during the Roman period in Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 120-33.

chaic period. Scholarship produced over the past three decades has definitively established that the explicit and implicit claims in ancient sources about long-term continuity in Lakedaimonian institutions reflect political propaganda and the process of idealization, distortion, and exaggeration that François Ollier termed *le mirage spartiate*.<sup>10</sup> The current orthodoxy about where Spartiates lived is thus the result of the application of a flawed methodology to a problematic body of evidence.

I am acutely aware that revisionist views of what have long been seen as “basic facts” can be disorienting. Moreover, while deconstructing received but questionable wisdom is useful in and of itself, it is undoubtedly preferable to simultaneously offer a new interpretation that draws on the full range of available evidence and up-to-date methodologies. The text that follows is constructed accordingly. It begins with potentially helpful background information on terminology, the topography of the area around Sparta (the Spartan plain), and ancient and modern accounts of the early history of Lakonia and Lakedaimon (Section 2). I then present all the literary and epigraphic evidence for Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived (Section 3) and consider what is known about the organization of the Lakedaimonian army (Section 4). Next, I review in some detail previous scholarship – which relies almost exclusively on textual evidence – about Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived (Section 5). In doing so, I strive to give the current orthodoxy a full hearing while also demonstrating that scholars, both before and after Wade-Gery, have interpreted the evidence in ways that differ markedly from the current orthodoxy. I then present the archaeological evidence for the settlement organization of Sparta (Section 6) and settlement patterns in the Spartan plain (Section 7), as well as comparative evidence from the Late Bronze Age and 19th century CE (Section 8). Finally, I provide a detailed treatment of my views on the nature, number, and extent of the Lakedaimon *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived (Section 9). The concluding section of the article includes a discussion of a passage from Thucydides’ work,<sup>11</sup> in which he contrasts the architectural glories of the city of Athens with the physically unimpressive communities in Lakedaimon. That passage has been regularly cited – and in my view,

10 See the bibliography cited in n. 187.

11 Thuc. 1.10.2.



misread – in previous scholarship on the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and the settlement organization of Sparta.

This article builds directly on the work of Marcello Lupi, who has, in a series of perspicacious publications, argued that the *ōbai* were actually phratries and that Spartiates lived in several different communities in the Eurotas river valley.<sup>12</sup> While I do not agree with all of Lupi's conclusions, his scholarship played a key role in bringing the fragility of the current orthodoxy to my attention. I have extended Lupi's work, which is based almost entirely on textual evidence, by undertaking a full review of the relevant literary and epigraphic sources (which Lupi explores only in part) and by cataloging and analyzing the archaeological and comparative evidence for the settlement organization of the city of Sparta and settlement patterns in the Spartan plain.

I argue, based on the aforementioned textual and archaeological evidence, that *ōbai* were, as per Wade-Gery, locality-based groups tied to specific settlement nuclei, not, as Lupi would have it, phratries. However, unlike Wade-Gery, who believed that the *ōbai* fulfilled primarily military functions, I take the *ōbai* to be local administrative units similar to Athenian demes. In addition, it is impossible, in my view, given the currently available evidence, to determine the number of *ōbai* at any point in time (including the Roman period); where they were located; or the area they encompassed, either individually or collectively. That uncertainty vitiates the supposition that all Spartiates necessarily resided in Sparta or Amyklai.

In place of the current orthodoxy, I make the case that, during the Archaic and Classical periods, Spartiates belonged to an unknowable number of *ōbai* tied to settlements located throughout the Spartan plain. The geographic dispersion of Spartiates over the Spartan plain was to some degree counterbalanced by the requirement that they routinely take part in collective activities (e.g. *syssitia*) centered in Sparta.<sup>13</sup> The many Spartiates who resided outside of Sparta found it necessary to

12 See Section 5.4 for a detailed conspectus of Lupi's work.

13 I owe the insight about the connection between the Spartiates' residential pattern and their dedication to collective activities to Lupi; see Section 9.4 for further discussion. For the mandatory nature of participation in collective activities, see, for example, Xen. *Lac.* 3.3 on the educational system and Plut. *Lyc.* 12.3 on *syssitia*.

travel regularly to and from the city to participate in the mandatory shared lifestyle. Those Spartiates had a need for spaces in the city where they could dine, sleep, socialize, etc. That need was met by the construction in Sparta of a substantial number of *leschai*, which were, in all likelihood, built and maintained by *ōbai*. The nature of the remains at *leschai* means that they look like cult sites in the archaeological record, even though they served a variety of functions. Starting sometime in the later fourth or third century – as the number of Spartiates declined precipitously, the security situation in Lakonia deteriorated, and the city of Sparta was fortified – most Spartiates found it possible and expedient to live in or near Sparta. Many of the *leschai* became, in this new environment, redundant, and the space they occupied was used for residences instead.

This reinterpretation of the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived prompts a reconsideration of a famous passage in which Thucydides (1.10.2) claims that the “*polis* of the Lakedaimonians” had never been synoikized and, as a result, was settled *kata kōmas* and lacked the grandiloquent architecture found in Athens.<sup>14</sup> The prevailing interpretation of this passage is that Thucydides is describing the city of Sparta, which entails equating Thucydides’ *kōmas* with the four distinct settlement nuclei linked to *ōbai* postulated by the current orthodoxy. I argue instead that Thucydides’ wording is precise and that he is, in fact, describing not the city of Sparta but the *polis* of Lakedaimon. He seeks to highlight the absence of a single, dominant urban center in Lakedaimon and the concomitant failure to embellish any community in Lakonia, including Sparta, in a fashion commensurate with Athens. That elucidation of the Thucydides passage, it need hardly be said, makes perfect sense if we subscribe to the idea that, in the fifth century, Spartiates lived in a series of settlements dispersed across the Spartan plain.

A revised understanding of where Spartiates lived has ramifications for our views on several other aspects of life in Lakedaimon. For example, the presence of multiple religious sanctuaries in the vicinity of Sparta has been interpreted as an intentional demarcation of a sort of sacred boundary (*pomerium*) around the city. If, however, Spartiates resided

14 Thuc. 1.10.2. See Section 9.3 for the text.

throughout the Spartan plain, at least some of those sanctuaries were, in all probability, simply cult places tied to specific settlement nuclei.<sup>15</sup>

Covering all this ground results in what can only be described as a lengthy and dense piece of scholarship. The textual evidence is extensive, in part because the question of where Spartiates lived entails dealing with multiple, interrelated issues. Moreover, the relevant sources vary widely in date, contain numerous internal contradictions, and have been interpreted in highly divergent fashions in a body of scholarship that extends back into the 18th century CE. Archaeological evidence has, for a variety of reasons, not been seriously addressed in previous discussions of the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived. Systematic excavation in Sparta has been much more limited, and less well published, than in other ancient urban centers such as Athens, Corinth, Miletus, and Selinus. The extension of archaeological protection to the entire area of the ancient city of Sparta in 1994/1995 resulted in a sharp increase in the number of rescue excavations carried out by the Greek Archaeological Service. However, the results did not begin to appear in print until roughly a decade later and were published piecemeal, typically in the form of short articles (one for each rescue excavation) in the *Archaiologikon Deltion*. My colleague Nathaniel Kramer and I have recently finished compiling the data from those articles and have used it to reconstruct diachronic development in the settlement organization of Sparta from the Bronze Age through the Roman period.<sup>16</sup> Significant quantities of new finds from other sites in Lakedaimon have been uncovered in recent years, especially in the context of rescue excavations conducted in conjunction with the construction of major highways.<sup>17</sup> As a result, there is quite a bit of new archaeological evidence that needs to be summarized and analyzed.

I have throughout prioritized comprehensive treatment of the evidence over brevity, for three reasons. First, long-established views that are deeply embedded in the scholarship on a particular subject are not easily laid to rest. The most convincing way to demonstrate the fatal

15 See Section 9.4.

16 Christesen & Kramer 2024, which should be consulted for detailed discussion of the history of excavations in Sparta.

17 See Section 7.

flaws in the current orthodoxy on the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived is to explore the relevant evidence and argumentation in depth. Second, in cases such as this, in which the pertinent evidence is voluminous and varied, a full treatment can be particularly valuable. Although there is a lingering expectation that all scholars read everything pertinent to the subject in which they specialize, it is, in reality, impossible to do so, given the sheer volume of source material and published research. In such circumstances, comprehensive examinations of the evidence for and the previous scholarship on particular issues are helpful and perhaps necessary. Third, the current orthodoxy on the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived has been taken as a given for so long that alternative views of the situation are not readily available, even to scholars specializing in the study of Lakedaimon. We are, as a result, in a position where moving beyond the current orthodoxy entails beginning from the beginning. Having all the relevant material together in a single publication makes that process more straightforward and will, I hope, facilitate future work on this subject matter by other scholars.

In order to accommodate readers who do not wish to delve into the fine-grained details of evidence and interpretation, I have written Section 9 so that it functions as something close to a stand-alone overview (with ample cross-references to appropriate parts of the preceding text). The focus throughout is on the Archaic through Roman periods. The evidence for earlier periods is too exiguous to draw any firm conclusions about the issues addressed in this article. The major changes that swept through the Roman world, including the Peloponnese, starting in the fifth century CE brought about fundamental changes in sociopolitical institutions and living conditions that eventuated in the abandonment of Sparta in the 13th century CE.<sup>18</sup>

18 See Armstrong 2002 for a good overview of what is known about Lakonia during the Byzantine period. On the abandonment of Sparta, see the bibliography cited in n. 328.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Terminology

The ancient terminology pertaining to Sparta was more complex than is sometimes appreciated.<sup>19</sup> In exploring that terminology, we need to distinguish between four separate entities: (1) the urban center, (2) the polity, (3) the geographic region in which the urban center was situated, and (4) the territory controlled by the polity. The basic parameters of the relevant terminology seem to have remained largely the same from the Archaic period down through the first century, so it is possible, for present purposes, to approach the issue primarily in a synchronic fashion.

The urban center was referred to as either ἡ Σπάρτη (in Doric, Σπάρτα) or ἡ Λακεδαίμων, with the former being much more commonly employed than the latter.<sup>20</sup> The polity was referred to as ἡ Λακεδαίμων or ἡ Σπάρτη, with the former being much more commonly employed than the latter.<sup>21</sup> The city of Sparta was situated in a geographic region typically referred to as ἡ Λακεδαίμων. The term “Lakonia” is a modern usage that derives from the Latin “Laconica” and its variant “Laconia,” neither of which is attested prior to the first century.<sup>22</sup> There were two city-ethnics, Σπαρτιάτης and Λακεδαίμωνιος; the former denoted the group of fully enfranchised male citizens and their families, whereas the latter (strictly

19 See Hall 2000; Shipley 2004: 570-71, 587-89; Shipley 2006: 52-53, on which the following discussion is directly based. On Latin authors in particular, see Iliopoulou 1992.

20 For ἡ Σπάρτη/Σπάρτα as an urban center, see, for example, Hom. *Il.* 2.582; Theognis 785 (where Sparta is characterized as an ἄστυ); Hdt. 1.68.5; Thuc. 4.3.2. The examples of ἡ Λακεδαίμων as an urban center are more ambiguous, probably because there was some inherent terminological slippage involved. See, for example, Thuc. 1.43.1; Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.16; Dittenberger & Purgold 1896: #171. The etymology of Σπάρτη/Σπάρτα is uncertain; see Bölte 1929b: 1272-73.

21 For ἡ Λακεδαίμων as a political entity, see, for example, Hdt. 7.234.2; Thuc. 5.23.1; Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.14, 3.5.6; Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1180a25. For ἡ Σπάρτη/Σπάρτα as a political entity, see Tod 1933-1948: vol. 2, 204.34-35; Ps.-Scylax 46.

22 For ἡ Λακεδαίμων as a geographic region, see, for example, Hom. *Il.* 2.581; Hdt. 9.6; Xen. *Hell.* 4.8.7. For Laconica/Laconia as a geographic region, see, for example, Plin. *HN* 2.243, 5.32, 6.214, 25.94. An exceptional usage occurs in Pherekydes *FGrH* 3 F 168 in which the settlement of Oitylos in southern Lakonia is referred to as ἡ πόλις ἡ ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ; Sparta here seems to be a geographic region.

speaking) encompassed all the inhabitants of the *polis* of Lakedaimon.<sup>23</sup> Shorter versions of Λακεδαιμόνιος – Λάκων (male) and Λάκαινα (female) – could be applied to either Spartiates or *perioikoi*.<sup>24</sup> The adjective Λακωνικός was derived from Λάκων. The territory governed by the polity of Lakedaimon (which varied over time) was typically referred to as ἡ Λακωνική, which was a shorthand for ἡ Λακωνική γῆ/χώρα.<sup>25</sup> This collection of terminology is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Ancient terminology for the entities discussed in this article

urban center	Sparta (but also Lakedaimon)
polity	Lakedaimon (but also Sparta)
geographic region	Lakedaimon
territory governed by polity	Lakōnikē

I use Sparta to refer to the urban center, Lakedaimon to refer to the polity, Lakonia to refer to the geographic region in which the city of Sparta was situated (despite the anachronism involved), and Lakōnikē to refer to the territory governed by the polity. The term “Spartiate” is used throughout to designate fully enfranchised inhabitants of Lakedaimon, even after the third century, when mass enfranchisements carried out by Agis IV and Kleomenes III blurred prior sociopolitical distinctions.<sup>26</sup> On a related note, I intermittently refer to the Sanctuary of Apollo Amyklaios (on Agia Kyriaki hill, c. 1 km northeast of the modern village of Amykles) as the Amyklaion.

## 2.2 The Spartan Plain, the Perioikoi, and the Spartiates

The geographical region of Lakonia can, for descriptive purposes, be divided into seven subregions: the Parnon mountains, the east Parnon

23 For discussion of city-ethnics (which identified an individual as an inhabitant of a specific community), see Hansen & Nielsen 2004a.

24 See, for example, Hdt. 7.161.2; Eur. *Hec.* 441.

25 See, for example, Hdt. 1.69.4, 6.58.1; Thuc. 2.25.1; Hellanikos *FGrH* 1 F 198. Several variants are attested, including ἡ Λακωνὶς γαῖα (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 410) and ἡ Λάκαινα χώρα (Hdt. 7.235.1).

26 See Section 9.2 for further discussion.

foreland, the west Parnon foreland, the Eurotas furrow, the Taygetos mountains, the Tainaron peninsula, and the Malea peninsula (see Figure 1).<sup>27</sup> The boundaries between these subregions are, to a certain extent, arbitrary. For example, the boundary between the west Parnon foreland and the Parnon mountains is more a matter of judgement than of geology or topography.

The Eurotas furrow is expansive (the Eurotas drains an area of c. 2,400 sq km) and can best be described by dividing it into three subsections (see Figure 2).<sup>28</sup> The first of those subsections encompasses the northern part of the furrow, from the Eurotas' source to the place where it is joined by the Oinous river. This part of the furrow is constricted by mountains on two sides, and it is relatively inhospitable insofar as the terrain is hilly and dissected by ravines. What is typically referred to as the "Spartan plain" or the "Spartan basin" constitutes the second subsection of the Eurotas furrow; this area is clearly demarcated on all four sides: to the north by the hilly terrain of the northern section of the Eurotas furrow, to the east by the west Parnon foreland, to the west by the cliffs that dramatically delimit the eastern edge of the Taygetos, and to the south by a hilly area known as Vardounia (which terminates at its eastern end in Mt. Lykovouno) and a ridge west of the modern village of Goritsa that extends from the west Parnon foreland. Sparta was built on and around a low hill (235 masl) at the northern end of the Spartan plain.<sup>29</sup> The final subsection of the Eurotas furrow consists of the area between Vardounia and the Gulf of Lakonia (the Helos plain).

27 Cartledge 2002: 11-20.

28 Philippon & Kirsten 1959: 446-63.

29 Naval Intelligence Division 1944-1945: vol. 3, 185-86; Bintliff 1977: 374-75; Bintliff 2008: 528-29.

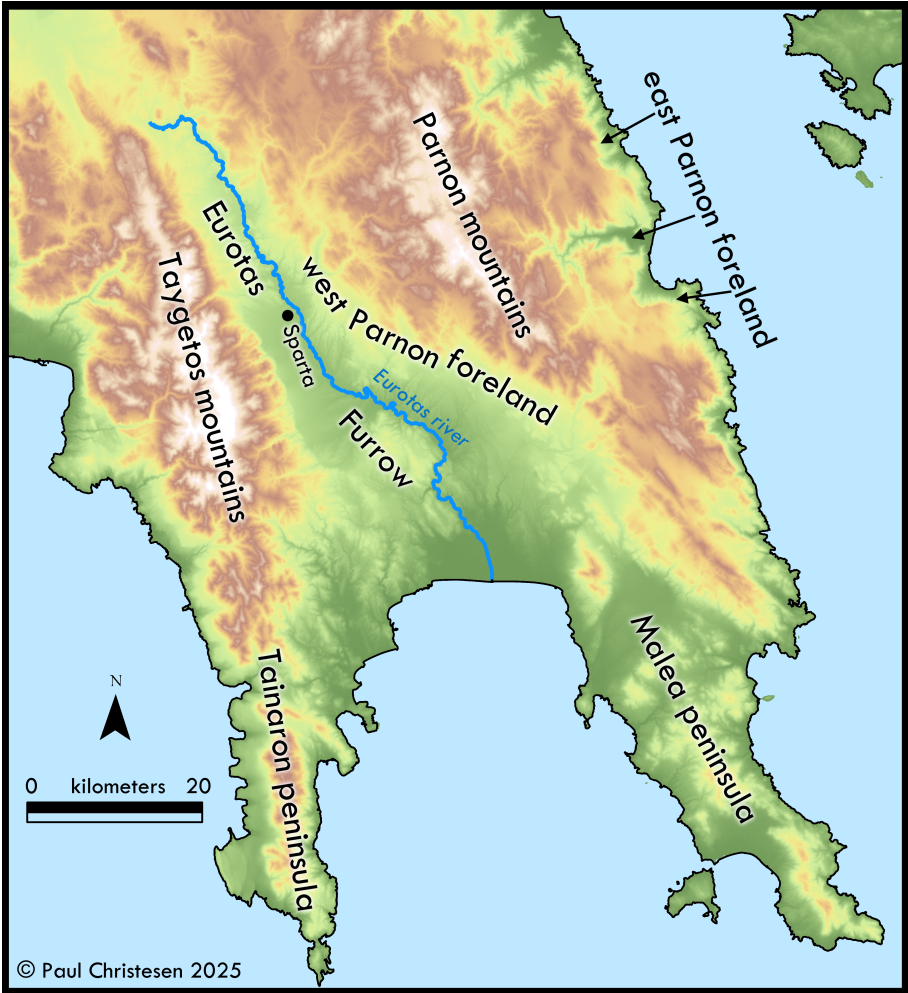


Figure 1: Subregions of Lakonia.





Figure 2: The Eurotas furrow, with locations of sites mentioned in Section 2.2. The label for Goritsa is underlined to indicate that it is a modern rather than an ancient site.

The Spartan plain was a distinct area with special historical status and economic value. It is c. 22 km long, varies in width between c. 6 and 12 km, and covers an area of c. 220 sq km. Most of the Spartan plain lies on the west side of the Eurotas, but it also includes land on the east bank of the river. Although the early history of Lakedaimon remains shrouded in mystery, there can be little doubt that the Spartan plain represented the original core of Lakōnikē. It is noteworthy that when Lakedaimon was compelled to join the Achaean League in 195, the territory under its control reached its nadir and consisted of little more than the Spartan plain and the northern part of the Eurotas furrow.<sup>30</sup> By far the best farmland in Lakonia was situated in the Spartan plain. The Neogene and alluvial soils in the plain were fertile, and the Eurotas and numerous water-courses running eastward from the Taygetos, together with relatively high rainfall levels (c. 800 mm annually in modern Sparta), provided ample water supplies and made irrigation possible in at least some areas (see Section 8 for further discussion of the geology of Lakonia).<sup>31</sup> In modern times, farmers in the Spartan plain have been able to produce two crops annually, and the same was likely true in antiquity.<sup>32</sup>

30 See Shipley 2000 with Figure 2. Plutarch (*Agis* 8.1) claims that when Agis IV redistributed land in Lakonia, he created 4,500 lots in the area between “the torrent at Pellene, Taygetos, Malea, and Sellasia” and 15,000 lots in the rest of Lakonia. This two-fold division implies a distinction between a “core” and “peripheral” territory, but it is difficult to make sense of the boundaries of the core territory as described by Plutarch. See Bölte 1929c: 1331–32 and Hodkinson 2000: 139 for further discussion. Hodkinson (2000: 135–41) suggests that *perioikoi* owned land in the Spartan plain and that Spartiates owned land outside the Spartan plain, but (as per Messenia) Spartiate ownership of land outside the Spartan plain did not imply residence on that land.

31 See the discussion of SEG 40.348 in Section 3.3. The agricultural census published in 1830 includes irrigated farmland in Lakonia, most notably in two villages (Trypi and Vordonia) in the foothills of the Taygetos. For the data, see Belia 1977. Leake mentions the use of channels to bring water from the Eurotas to irrigate wheat fields in the Spartan plain (Leake 1830: vol. 1, 148).

32 ‘Υπουργείου Ἐθνικῆς Οἰκονομίας 1911: 598–99; Cartledge 2002: 16. For a graph showing annual rainfall in Sparta between 1894 and 1980, see Cavanagh, Shipley & Crouwel 2002: Ill. 19 on pg. 11. For further discussion, see Rackham 2002: 76.

There is something approximating a scholarly consensus that the areas directly controlled by Spartiates and the areas in which *perioikoi* exercised local administrative control did not overlap to any significant degree. In other words, what might be described as the *chōra* of the Spartiates was distinct from the *perioikis*. Graham Shipley, in his important studies of the Lakedaimonian *perioikoi*, has persuasively argued that the perioikic settlements of Pellana, Sellasia, Geronthrai, and either Krokeai or Gytheion – all of which lay outside the Spartan plain – were situated at the edges of the Spartiate *chōra*.<sup>33</sup> The entirety of the Spartan plain was thus directly controlled by Spartiates. It is possible that some *perioikoi* lived within the boundaries of the Spartan plain, as residents of communities (potentially including Sparta) that were largely populated and dominated by Spartiates. It is also possible that some non-royal Spartiates owned land in perioikic communities. That said, there is no evidence suggesting that Spartiates had permanent residences in perioikic communities (or anywhere else outside the Spartan plain).

### ***2.3 Ancient and Modern Accounts of the Early History of Lakonia and Lakedaimon***

The textual evidence for the spatial and political organization of Lakonia and Lakedaimon has been repeatedly read against the background of ancient and modern narratives recounting their history between the end of the Bronze Age and c. 700. It is, therefore, worthwhile to briefly review those narratives. The only continuous ancient account that has survived to the present day is that offered by Pausanias in Book 3 of his *Periēgēsis*.<sup>34</sup> For present purposes, it is sufficient to examine what Pausanias has to say and consider other ancient sources on just one key point – the incorporation of Amyklai into Lakedaimon. It will be helpful to bear in mind that Pausanias, like other Greek authors,<sup>35</sup> differentiated between the

33 Shipley 2006: 62.

34 Paus. 3.1.1–5, 3.7.1–6.

35 See, for instance, Theopompos *FGrH* 115 F 122.

Achaean, said to be the original inhabitants of Lakonia, from the Dorians, said to be migrants who arrived with the Herakleidai in the third generation after the Trojan War.<sup>36</sup>

Pausanias begins with Lelex, whom he characterizes as the first king of Lakedaimon, and then traces the succession of kings that follow: Myles, Eurotas, Lakedaimon, Amyklas, Argalos, Kynortas, Oibalos, Tyn-dareus, Menelaos, Orestes. Then the Herakleidai, accompanied by the Dorians, return to the Peloponnese, and Eurysthenes and Prokles, the twin sons of Aristodemos (the great-great-grandson of Herakles), become kings. Pausanias proceeds to offer separate accounts of the Agiads (descendants of Eurysthenes) and Eurypontids (descendants of Prokles) (see Table 2). Lakedaimonian expansion begins during the reign of Echestratos, who expels the population of Kynouria, a borderland between Argos and Lakedaimon. Labotas initiates a series of wars with Argos, and Archelaos (with the assistance of the Eurypontid king Charillos) captures the town of Aigys, situated at the northern part of the border between Lakonia and Messenia.<sup>37</sup> Teleklos captures the towns of Amyklai, Pharis, and Geronthrai, “which up to that time had been still held by the Achaeans.” The inhabitants of Pharis and Geronthrai surrender without a fight, but “the people of Amyklai ... offered a long and not inglorious resistance.”<sup>38</sup> Teleklos is assassinated by Messenians at the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis in the Taygetos mountains. Alkamenes destroys the town of Helos in southern Lakonia, and Messenia is conquered during the reigns of the Agiad kings Alkamenes, Polydoros, Eurykrates, and Anaxander and the Eurypontid kings Nikander, Theopompos, Zeuxidamos, and Anaxidamos.

36 On ancient accounts of the so-called Dorian Invasion/Migration and the Herakleidai, see Hall 2002: 56-89.

37 Pausanias places Lycurgus' activity as a lawgiver in the reign of Agesilaos (3.2.3).

38 Paus. 3.2.6.

Table 2: Pausanias' list of early Agiad and Eurypontid kings

<i>Agiads</i>	<i>Eurypontids</i>
Eurysthenes	Prokles
Agis	Soos
Echestratos	Eurypon
Labotas	Prytanis
Doryassos	Eunomos
Agessilaos	Polydektēs
Archelaos	Charillos
Teleklos	Nikander
Alkamenes	Theopompos
Polydoros	Zeuxidamos
Eurykrates	Anaxidamos
Anaxander	Archidamos I

The conquest of Amyklai, which attracted considerable attention from Greek authors starting in the Classical period at the latest, was closely associated with a group known as the Aigeidai. Herodotus characterizes the Aigeidai as a “great *phylē* in Sparta” and traces their ancestry back to Kadmos in Thebes.<sup>39</sup> Pindar, in an epinikion written for a Theban victor, praises the city of Thebes in part by claiming that “your descendants, the Aigeidai, captured Amyklai.”<sup>40</sup> A scholion to the Pindar passage, citing the Aristotelian *Politeia of the Lakedaimonians*, describes the Aigeidai as a Theban phratry. The scholiast claims that the leader of the Aigeidai during the conquest of Amyklai was Timomachos and that his breastplate was displayed at the celebration of the Hyakinthia festival at Amyklai.<sup>41</sup> Pausanias, in his treatment of the wars between the Lakedaimonians and Messenians, recounts a battle at which King Polydoros commanded the left wing of the Lakedaimonian army, King Theopompos the right wing, and Euryleon – one of the Aigeidai – the center.<sup>42</sup> While the historical veracity of this part of Pausanias' account is very much open to question, it

39 φυλὴ μεγάλη ἐν Σπάρτῃ; 4.149.1; see also 4.147–48. On the Aigeidai, see Nafissi 1980–1981; Vannicelli 1992; Malkin 1994: 98–106.

40 Pindar *Isthm.* 7.14–15.

41 This scholion appears in Rose's collection of Aristotelian fragments as fr. 532.

42 Paus. 4.7.8.

presumably reflects a tradition in which the Aigeidai played a leading role in Lakedaimon.

Modern scholars crafting narratives of the early history of Lakonia and Lakedaimon have been heavily influenced by the ancient sources while at the same time acknowledging their limitations. The most prominent account in the present day is that offered by Paul Cartledge in his monograph *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300-362 BCE*.<sup>43</sup> Cartledge pays careful attention to both the textual sources and the archaeological evidence, especially the chronology and spatial distribution of Lakonian pottery. He suggests that Dorians, divided into three tribes (Dymanes, Hylleis, and Pamphyloi), migrated from Illyria and Epiros to Lakonia sometime around 1000; founded the city of Sparta; and, between c. 950 and 775, gained control of the entire Eurotas furrow and enslaved much of the indigenous population (the Achaeans). Pausanias ascribes the conquest of Amyklai to Teleklos (whose reign historians typically place somewhere in the mid-eighth century), but Cartledge argues that the inhabitants of Sparta would have gained control over the entire Eurotas furrow sometime in the tenth or ninth century. In his view, the four *ōbai* in the city of Sparta existed from a very early date and were amalgamated at some point prior to the mid-eighth century. Cartledge sees Teleklos as being responsible not for the conquest of Amyklai but rather for incorporating Amyklai as a fifth *ōba* (with Amyklai having been subjugated and “Dorianized” well before then). He also takes issue with earlier scholars who argued that the conjunction of Hyakinthos and Apollo at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Amyklai (the Amyklaion) represented the synthesis of an Achaean/pre-Dorian deity (Hyakinthos) and a Dorian deity (Apollo) such that the cult provided evidence that buttresses ancient accounts of a conflict between Dorians based at Sparta and Achaeans based at Amyklai.<sup>44</sup>

43 Cartledge 2002: 65-112. For a more recent account, which largely agrees with Cartledge’s reconstruction of the course of events, see Rahe 2016: 64-98.

44 Cartledge 2002: 69-70, 92-93. For the cult at the Amyklaion as a mixture of Achaean and Dorian beliefs, see, for instance, Nilsson 1950: 556-58.

### 3. Textual Evidence for Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and Where Spartiates Lived

This section addresses the literary and epigraphic evidence for Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived. The sources are organized on the basis of chronology rather than subject matter because there has been a persistent tendency to analyze them synchronically and thereby collapse, for example, the nearly millennium-long gap between the Great Rhetra on the one hand and Roman-era inscriptions on the other. In compiling this evidence, I have made an effort to be comprehensive while, in the interests of (relative) brevity, omitting sources of only tangential relevance. I have supplied the text of most passages in both Greek and English so that readers can easily explore nuances that are sometimes lost in translation.

#### 3.1 Archaic Period

The textual evidence from the Archaic period comes from Homer, the Great Rhetra, Tyrtaios, Alcman, and Pratinas, as well as an enigmatic inscription (IG V.1.722). The Catalog of Ships in the *Iliad* offers a list of places in Lakedaimon:

They who held the swarming hollow of Lakedaimon,<sup>45</sup> Pharis, and Sparta, and Messe of the dove-cotes, they who dwelt in Bryseiai and lovely Augeiai, they who held Amyklai and the seaward city of Helos, they who held Laas, and they who dwelt about Oitylos, of these his [Agamemnon's] brother Menelaos of the great war cry was leader, with 60 ships marshaled apart from the others. He himself went among them in the confidence of his valor, driving them batteward,

45 Although the Lakedaimon mentioned in the Catalog of Ships has been taken by some scholars to be a reference to a town, Hope Simpson and Lazenby are surely right to argue that the adjectives *κοίλη* and *κητώεσσα*, which modify Lakedaimon, are much more appropriate for a geographic region than a town (Hope Simpson & Lazenby 1970: 74).

since above all his heart was eager to avenge Helen's longing to escape and her lamentations.<sup>46</sup>

If one accepts the current scholarly consensus that the Great Rhetra is an authentic document from sometime around 600, it ranks among the most important sources for the study of Lakedaimonian history.<sup>47</sup> The text as transmitted by Plutarch begins "Having built a shrine to Zeus Syllanios and Athena Syllania and having tribed the tribes and obed the obes, and having established a Gerousia of 30 members, including the *archagetai*, then from time to time *appellazein* between Babyka and Knakion ..." <sup>48</sup> The Great Rhetra thus calls for the distribution of the citizen body into *phylai* and *ōbai*, without precisely specifying the nature or number of either group or the relationship between the two.

One of the fragments of Tyrtaios' poetry mentions Lakedaimonians going into battle brigaded on the basis of the three Doric tribes: "Pamphyloi, Hylleis, and Dymanes, separately, brandishing in their hands murderous spears of ash."<sup>49</sup> The extant fragments of Alcman's poetry contain two references to females described as Dymainai: "you, god-

46 οἱ δ' εἶχον κοίλην Λακεδαίμονα κητώεσσαν, | Φᾶρίν τε Σπάρτην τε πολυτρήρωνά τε Μέσσην, | Βρυσειάς τ' ἐνέμοντο καὶ Αὐγείας ἐρατεινάς, | οἳ τ' ἄρ' Ἀμύκλας εἶχον Ἑλος τ' ἔφαλον πτολίεθρον, | οἳ τε Λάαν εἶχον ἡδ' Οἴτυλον ἀμφενέμοντο, | τῶν οἱ ἀδελφεὸς ἦρχε βοήν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος | ἐξήκοντα νεῶν ἀπάτερθε δὲ θωρήσσοντο· | ἐν δ' αὐτὸς κίεν ἦσι προθυμίῃσι πεποιθὼς | ὀτρύνων πόλεμον δέ· μάλιστα δὲ ἔτεο θυμῷ | τίσασθαι Ἑλένης ὀρμήματά τε στοναχάς τε (Hom. *Il.* 2.581-90; trans. R. Lattimore). Interpretation of the information in the Catalog entails answering two preliminary questions: is the Catalog based on genuine geographical knowledge of the Greek world, and, if one responds in the affirmative, what period of time does it reflect (the Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age, or the Archaic period)? See Jasnow 2020. See Section 7 for further discussion of the sites in the Spartan plain mentioned in the Homeric Catalog.

47 The scholarship on the Great Rhetra is enormous. See Fragkaki 2015 for an overview.

48 Διὸς Συλλανίου καὶ Ἀθανᾶς Συλλανίας ἱερὸν ἰδρυσάμενον, φυλάς φυλάξαντα καὶ ὠβάς ὠβάξαντα, τριάκοντα γερουσίαν σὺν ἀρχαγέταις καταστήσαντα, ὥρας ἐξ ὥρας ἀπελλάζειν μεταξύ Βαβύκας τε καὶ Κνακιῶνος (from Plut. *Lyc.* 6.1-10). τριάκοντα has in the past sometimes been read with the preceding phrase and taken to mean that there were 30 *ōbai* (see Section 5.1), but it is now typically understood as specifying the size of the Gerousia.

49 χωρὶς Πάμφυλοι τε καὶ Ὑλλεῖς ἡδ[ὲ Δυμᾶνες], ἀνδροφόνους μελίας χερσὶν ἀν[ασχόμενοι] (fr. 19 West).



loved choir-leader Hagesidamos, glorious son of Damotimos, lead the Dymainai” and “hair-loving Dymainai.”<sup>50</sup> Ancient commentaries on Alcman’s poetry provide two further statements about the Dymainai, namely that they formed a “tribal chorus” and that “often *parthenoi* of the Dymainai came to Pitana to join in choirs with the Pitatan girls.”<sup>51</sup> While we cannot reach any firm conclusions about the veracity of these statements, they are presumably based in some fashion on verses of Alcman that are no longer preserved.<sup>52</sup>

Pratinas, a poet from Phlius who seems to have been active at the end of the sixth century, is said by Athenaeus to have written a play with the title of *Dymainai* or *Karyatides*.<sup>53</sup> Athenaeus’ comments on the play connect it with Lakonia, which is not surprising since there was a settlement named Karyai in the northern part of the region.<sup>54</sup>

IG V.1.722 presents unusual interpretive challenges because it no longer survives and because the only transcription was made by Michel Fourmont in the 18th century. Fourmont had difficulties in understanding the epichoric alphabet of Lakonia, produced many inaccurate transcriptions (apparent in cases where the original inscription survives), and forged several inscriptions in order to enhance his reputation.<sup>55</sup> He claimed that he found the inscription that was later published as IG

50 ἄρχε ταῖς Δυμαί[ναις] ... σιοφιλὲς χο[ρα]γὲ Ἀγησίδαμε κλε[νν]ῆ Δαμοτιμίδα (fr. 10b Page/Davies; trans. D.A. Campbell); Δυμαί[ναις] ... φιλοπλ[οκάμοις] (fr. 4(5.3)).

51 φυλ[ικὸς δὲ χ]ορός (fr. 5.2, col. ii); π[ολ]λάκις δ(ἐ) [Δ]υμαιν[ῶν παρθένοι ἀφί]κοντο ε[ἰς] τὴν Πιτά[ν]ην συγ[χορεύσουσαι] τ[αῖς] Πιτανάτισι (fr. 11; trans. D.A. Campbell). Athenaeus’ explanation (131c-d) of some place names in Alcman fr. 92 includes the statement that they are near Pitana; it is possible, but by no means certain, that Athenaeus found that information in Alcman.

52 The Suda (s.v. Ἀλκμάν) claims that Alcman was from Messoa, which presumably should be equated with the place in Lakonia bearing that name (see Section 3.4.2). The basis of that claim is unknown.

53 Ath. 9.392f; Pratinas TrGF (Snell) 4 fr. 1. On Pratinas, see Shaw 2014: 43-55; Stewart 2017: 94.

54 Pausanias (3.17.9) claims that the Messenian hero Aristomenes captured at Karyai a group of Lakedaimonian *parthenoi* who were performing dances in honor of Artemis. On the location of Karyai, see Pikoulas 1987: 137-39.

55 On Fourmont, see Boeckh 1828: 61-104; Stoneman 1985; Gengler 2020.

V.1.722 on a broken *stēlē* in the vicinity of Amyklai and provided the following text:

..ΛΝΤΟΥΕΔΕΡΟΕΕΥΟ  
 ..ΥΑΜΑΝΟΟΙΤΙΛΕΓΟ..  
 ΎΞΕΘΕΚΕΜΕΥΕΛ·ΙΤΙΜ  
 ΔΕΔΟΦΑΣΑΡΚΑΛΟΝ  
 ΟΕΙ·ΑΛΛΑΚΑΘΑΪΡΟΝ  
 ΥΙΡΟΥΙ·ΡΟΦΟΡΟΜΚ  
 ΑΪΥΑΕΥΑΛΛΥΙΥΟ

When the inscription was included in *Inscriptiones Graecae*, it was characterized as a verse funerary inscription, and the text was printed as follows:

[ - - ] άντου έδε ροε̃ huō  
 [ - - ] θα̃μα νοδι· τί λέγō;  
 [ - - ] ος έθ̃εκέ με χ̃ερ̃ ά[ρ]ίτιμ[ον]  
 [ - - ] <δ>έδοφας άρκαλον  
 [ - - ] Οε . . [ά]λλὰ καθαίρον  
 [ - - ] . ρου . . ροφόρο<ν> κ[ - - ]  
 [ - - ] αγ φαενν̃ά? Λ Λ [ - - ]

In 1951, Arthur Beattie published an emended text and translation based on his attempts to discern and correct errors Fourmont had made in the process of transcription:

]άντο μεδ̃ε̃ τ̃ο̃ ρ̃ε̃μ̃ο̃  
 ένυφ ]ασάσθ̃ο̃, τ̃ι̃ με̃ πο[λι-  
 -ανόμ ]ος έθ̃εκε. με̃ χ̃ερ̃αν τιμ-  
 -α̃χ̃εν ] πεδ' ό̃φ̃α̃ς Άρκαλ̃ον  
 με̃δ̃ε̃ π[ο̃λ]̃ε̃γ· [ά]λλὰ καθαίρον-  
 -τας τ̃ο̃ δ̃ο̃]μα̃ τ̃ος̃ [πυ]ροφ̃ο̃ρ̃ος̃ κ[α̃ι̃  
 [Beattie did not offer a transcription of the final line.]

They shall not ... nor shall they weave into the garments anything that the Polianomos has not prescribed. No unmarried woman shall hold the priesthood in the *ōba* of the Arkaloi, nor serve as Polos; if this should happen, the Pyrokoroι shall cleanse the temple and ...<sup>56</sup>

Lakedaimonian inscriptions make an equivalence between digamma and beta,<sup>57</sup> so ὄφᾱς can be read as the genitive singular of ὠβᾱ. Beattie, who dated the inscription to the late sixth or early fifth century, described πᾱδ' ὄφᾱς Ἀρκάλῳν as “the most certain phrase” in the text,<sup>58</sup> and one does not have to accept the entirety of Beattie’s emended text to take this inscription as evidence for the existence of an *ōba* of the Arkaloi.

This collection of sources indicates that in the Lakedaimon of the Archaic period:

- both *phylai* and *ōbai* existed as subdivisions of the citizen body;
- three *phylai* served as divisions of the army and formed choruses;
- there was (possibly) an *ōba* of the Arkaloi.

The *phylai* of the Great Rhetra were probably the same tribes mentioned by Tyrtaios. In part because the relative chronological positioning of the Great Rhetra and Tyrtaios’ poetry is uncertain, there is no way to establish whether the *phylai* or *ōbai* in the Great Rhetra were institutions created *ex nihilo* or if they pre-existed the Rhetra and were being reorganized.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2 Classical Period

The textual evidence from the Classical period consists of passages from the work of Pindar, Herodotus, Thucydides, Euripides, and Xenophon. In *Olympian* 6 (written for Hagesias of Syracuse to commemorate a victory won in 472 or 468), Pindar traces Hagesias’ ancestry back to the nymph

56 Trans. A.J. Beattie, modified.

57 Bourguet 1927: 66-72.

58 Beattie 1958: 49.

59 On the relationship between the Great Rhetra and Tyrtaios’ poetry, see van Wees 1999; Meier 2002; van Wees 2002; Link 2003.

Pitana. Pindar opens that part of the ode by stating, “I must go today, in good time, to Pitana, beside the ford of the Eurotas.”<sup>60</sup> Herodotus mentions a Pitana in Lakonia on two separate occasions.<sup>61</sup> In recounting the Lakedaimonian expedition to Samos in the closing decades of the sixth century, he offers an aside on one of his sources of information:

Once, in Pitana (which was his native village), I personally met another Archias, who was the grandson of the Archias I have just been talking about, since he was the son of Samios the son of Archias. This Archias honored the Samians more than any other foreigners, and he told me that his father had been given the name Samios because of the heroic death his father Archias had died on Samos.<sup>62</sup>

The specifics of the Greek are important here since Herodotus describes Pitana as a *dēmos* (δήμου γὰρ τούτου ἦν), which probably means something like “township” in this context. In his account of the behavior of the Spartiate commander Amompharetos at the Battle of Plataia, Herodotus describes Amompharetos as “serving as commander [*lochēgos*] of the *lochos* of the Pitanatans.”<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere in his work, Herodotus, in recounting the vicissitudes of the legendary Minyans during their time in Lakonia, states that “the Lakedaimonians welcomed the Minyans and gave them a share of the land and distributed them among their *phylai*.”<sup>64</sup>

Thucydides subsequently critiqued Herodotus (without overtly naming him) on the grounds that there was no such thing as a *lochos* of the Pitanatans:

60 πρὸς Πιτάναν δὲ παρ’ Εὐρώτα πόρον δεῖ σάμερον ἐλθεῖν ἐν ὥρᾳ (Pind. Ol. 6.28; trans. D.A. Svarlien).

61 Herodotus also references a town called Pitana in Asia Minor (1.149.1).

62 τρίτῳ δὲ ἀπ’ Ἀρχίῳ τούτου γεγονότι ἄλλῳ Ἀρχίῳ τῷ Σαμίου τοῦ Ἀρχίῳ αὐτὸς ἐν Πιτάνῃ συνεγενόμην (δήμου γὰρ τούτου ἦν), ὃς ξείνων πάντων μάλιστα ἐτίμα τε Σαμίους καὶ οἱ τῷ πατρὶ ἔφη Σάμιον τοῦνομα τεθῆναι, ὅτι οἱ ὁ πατὴρ Ἀρχίης ἐν Σάμῳ ἀριστεύσας ἐτελεύτησε (Hdt. 3.55.2; trans. R. Waterfield, modified).

63 Ἀμομφάρετος δὲ ὁ Πολιάδῃ λοχηγέων τοῦ Πιτανητέων λόχου ... (Hdt. 9.53.2).

64 δεξάμενοι δὲ τοὺς Μινύας γῆς τε μετέδοσαν καὶ ἐς φυλὰς διεδάσαντο (Hdt. 4.145.5).

I could point to many other false beliefs – about the contemporary world, not the long-forgotten past – in the rest of Greece too: for example, that the kings of the Lakedaimonians do not have one vote each, but two, and that there is a body of Lakedaimonian troops called “the Pitane *lochos*,” which in fact has never existed.<sup>65</sup>

In his *archaiologia* at the beginning of Book 1, Thucydides warns against estimating a community’s military capacity from the size and magnificence of its primary settlement, and uses Athens and Lakedaimon to illustrate his point (see Section 9.3 for the text). He describes the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians as being settled in an old-fashioned way, *kata kōmas*, and lacking in splendid buildings. Thucydides makes no mention of *ōbai* and does not have anything to say about a specific number of settlement nuclei, but his *kōmai* in Lakedaimon have frequently been associated, based on much later lexicographical entries (see Section 3.5), with *ōbai*.

In Euripides’ *Trojan Women*, the chorus, in anticipation of being enslaved and taken to Lakonia, wishes destruction upon Menelaos: “May he never reach the land of Lakonia or his ancestral hearth or the *polis* of Pitana or the goddess of the bronze gate.”<sup>66</sup> The “goddess of the bronze gate” is a reference to the sanctuary, on the acropolis of Sparta, to Athena Polias, who was also known as Athena Chalkioikos.<sup>67</sup>

In his account of events in 390, Xenophon describes a costly defeat inflicted on the Lakedaimonian army. The defeat occurred when the Amyklaians in the Lakedaimonian army stationed near Corinth set out for Lakonia so that they could participate in the Hyakinthia festival:

It is the custom of the Amyklaians, no matter where they find themselves, whether on campaign or away from their city for any other

65 πολλά δὲ καὶ ἄλλα ἔτι καὶ νῦν ὄντα καὶ οὐ χρόνῳ ἀμνηστούμενα καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἕλληνες οὐκ ὀρθῶς οἴονται, ὥσπερ τοὺς τε Λακεδαιμονίων βασιλέας μὴ μιᾷ ψήφῳ προστίθεσθαι ἐκάτερον, ἀλλὰ δυοῖν, καὶ τὸν Πιτανάτην λόχον αὐτοῖς εἶναι, ὃς οὐδ’ ἐγένετο πώποτε (Thuc. 1.20.3; trans. M. Hammond, modified).

66 μηδὲ γαῖάν ποτ’ ἔλθοι Λάκαιναν πατρῷόν τε θάλαμον ἐστίας, μηδὲ πόλιν Πιτάνας χαλκόφυλόν τε θεάν (Eur. *Tro.* 1110-13).

67 See, for example, Paus. 3.17.2. See Figure 6 in Section 6.1 for the location of this sanctuary.

reason, always to leave for home at the time of the festival of the Hyakinthia, so that they may participate in the festival and sing the *paian* to Apollo. At the time of which we are speaking, Agesilaos had left all the Amyklaians in the army back in Lechaion.<sup>68</sup>

Xenophon's wording strongly implies that the Amyklaians did not, at least in his time, all belong to a single unit within the Lakedaimonian army.<sup>69</sup> The privileges enjoyed by the Amyklaians suggest that they were Spartiates, though Xenophon does not state this outright. In his encomium of Agesilaos, Xenophon states that the king on one occasion returned from campaign to participate in the Hyakinthia by joining in the singing of the *paian*, which leaves no doubt that Spartiates took part in that rite.<sup>70</sup> The special status of Amyklai in the Greek historiographic tradition about the early history of Lakonia and Lakedaimon (see Section 2.3), and the major investment the Lakedaimonians made in embellishing the Amyklaion, reinforce the impression that Spartiates lived in Amyklai in some numbers.<sup>71</sup> One might also note that the terms of the Peace of Nicias called for it to be inscribed on *stēlai* at Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, the acropolis of Athens, and the Amyklaion, which indicates that Amyklai was a place of considerable importance in Lakedaimon.<sup>72</sup>

These passages collectively demonstrate that there was, in or close to Sparta, a locality named Pitana. The fact that Pindar and Euripides could refer to it in works intended for non-Lakedaimonian audiences suggests that Pitana was known outside of Lakonia. It is impossible to draw any firm conclusions on the basis of the labels – *dēmos*, *polis* – attached to Pitana by authors who were not themselves Lakedaimonians. However, those labels may suggest that Pitana had an official legal status of some

68 οἱ Ἀμυκλαῖοι ἀεὶ ποτε ἀπέρχονται εἰς τὰ Ὑακίνθια ἐπὶ τὸν παιᾶνα, ἐάν τε στρατοπεδευόμενοι τυγχάνωσιν ἐάν τε ἄλλως πως ἀποδημοῦντες. καὶ τότε δὴ τοὺς ἐκ πάσης τῆς στρατιᾶς Ἀμυκλαίους κατέλιπε μὲν Ἀγησίλαος ἐν Λεχαίῳ (Hell. 4.5.11; trans. J. Marincola, modified).

69 See Lazenby 1985: 13.

70 Xen. Ages. 2.17.

71 For a description of the architecture and dedications at the Amyklaion, see Paus. 3.18.6–19.6 as well as Theopompos FGrH 115 F 193.

72 Thuc. 5.18.10, cf. 5.23.5.

kind. The various references to Amyklai strongly suggest that it was inhabited by Spartiates. We will return in Section 4 to Herodotus' and Thucydides' conflicting claims about the existence of a Pitana *lochos* and, in Section 9.3, to Thucydides' description of Lakedaimon.

### 3.3 Hellenistic Period

The textual evidence from the Hellenistic period consists of coin legends from southern Italy; passages from Callimachus, Euphron of Chalcis, Dioskourides, Sosibios, and Demetrios of Skepsis; inscribed roof tiles; and four inscriptions on stone *stēlai*. A series of silver coins found in small numbers in a part of southern Italy dominated by the Samnites bears images of Hera on the obverse and Hercules on the reverse and the legend ΠΕΡΙΠΟΛΟΝ ΠΙΤΑΝΑΤΑΝ. These coins were issued sometime between 325 and 275.<sup>73</sup> The authority responsible for minting these coins is unknown, but it may well have been the Lakedaimonian *apoikia* of Taras.<sup>74</sup> Strabo states that some people claimed that migrants from Lakonia settled among the Samnites, as a result of which some of the Samnites were called Pitanaes. This story, in Strabo's view, was nothing more than a fabrication created by the Tarantines to develop good relations with a powerful neighbor.<sup>75</sup> The ΠΕΡΙΠΟΛΟΝ ΠΙΤΑΝΑΤΑΝ coins probably reflect politically convenient *mythoi* rather than historical reality. Nevertheless, they indicate that the locality of Pitana had a reputation extending beyond Lakedaimon.

In his *Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus lists a series of places where “the nymphs circle you [Artemis] in dance” including “near the fountains of Egyptian Inopos or Pitana (for Pitana is yours) or in Limnai ...”<sup>76</sup> A scholion on this passage glosses Pitana as a “Lakedaimonian *polis*” and Limnai as a “deme in Attica where Artemis is honored.” Pausanias saw a

73 Tagliamonte 1996: 23-28; Rutter & Burnett 2001: 60, HN 445; Cerchiai 2002-2003.

74 On Taras as a Lakedaimonian *apoikia*, see Fischer-Hansen, Nielsen & Ampolo 2004: 299-302.

75 Strabo 5.4.12. For further discussion, see Roller 2018: 281-82.

76 ἡνίκα δ' αἱ νύμφαι σε χορῶ ἐνι κυκλώσονται | ἀγχόθι πηγῶν Αἰγυπτίου Ἴνωποιο | ἢ Πιτάνῃ (καὶ γὰρ Πιτάνῃ σέθεν) ἢ ἐνὶ Λίμναις (Il. 170-72; trans. D.L. Clayman, modified).

sanctuary of Artemis Issoria, who was also known as Artemis Limnaia, in the northwestern part of Sparta.<sup>77</sup> Polyaeus discusses an incident during the Theban invasion of Lakonia in 370/369 that took place on a hill dedicated to Artemis Issoria, which he locates “near Pitana.” Eleni Kourinou, in her study of the settlement organization of Sparta, places the Sanctuary of Artemis Issoria on Vamvakia hill, in the northwestern part of the city.<sup>78</sup> Strabo informs us that the marshy suburbs of Sparta were called Limnai, and Pausanias notes that the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia could be referred to as the Limnaion.<sup>79</sup> It is, therefore, possible that Callimachus’ Pitana and Limnai were both, *pace* the scholiast, situated in Sparta.

In the *Hymn to Artemis*, Callimachus also lists a series of hunting dogs that Pan gave to Artemis, including “seven Kynosourian dogs, faster than the winds.”<sup>80</sup> A scholion glosses the word Κυνσοῦρίδας as referring either to dogs born from cross-breeding foxes and dogs or as Lakonian dogs. The latter possibility is explained by adding that “Kynosouris is a place in Lakonia.”<sup>81</sup>

Euphorion of Chalcis, active in the third century, was a prolific writer known for employing obscure allusions and intentionally archaizing expressions.<sup>82</sup> In one of his poems, Euphorion referred to the “hair-loving Dymainai.”<sup>83</sup> Given that we have already encountered this exact phrase in the work of Alcman (fr. 4 Page/Davies), it is highly probable that Euphorion was directly quoting the earlier poet.

77 Strabo 8.5.1; Paus. 3.14.2.

78 Λόφον ἱερὸν Ἀρτέμιδος Ἰσσωρίας ἐγγὺς Πιτάνης (Polyaeus 2.1.14); Kourinou 2000: 212–13. Cf. Steph. Byz. s.v. Ἰσώριον: ὄρος τῆς Λακωνικῆς, ἀφ’ οὗ ἡ Ἀρτεμὶς Ἰσσωρία. See also Plut. Lyc. 32.4–6. For the location of Vamvakia hill, see Figure 5 in Section 6.1.

79 Paus. 3.16.7.

80 ἐπτὰ δ’ ἔδωκε θάσσονας αὐράων Κυνσοῦρίδας (Il. 93–94).

81 Κυνσοῦρις γὰρ τόπος Λακωνικῆς.

82 On Euphorion, see Magnelli 2002.

83 φιλοπλοκάμοισι Δυμαίναις (fr. 47 Powell). This phrase occurred in a poem called the *Chiliades* (known only from fragments) that looked forward to the punishment of Euphorion’s enemies.



Dioskourides was an epigrammatist who was active in Alexandria during the second half of the third century.<sup>84</sup> One of his poems mentions Pitana:

Dead on his shield to Pitana came Thrasyboulos, having received seven wounds from the Argives, exposing his whole front to them; and old Tynnichos, as he laid his son's blood-stained body on the pyre, said "Let cowards weep, but I will bury you, my son, without a tear, you who are both mine and Lakedaimon's."<sup>85</sup>

This epigram is a purely poetic exercise in which the reference to Pitana almost certainly derives from earlier literary sources and demonstrates simply that Dioskourides was well read.<sup>86</sup>

Sosibios was born in Lakedaimon in the first half of the third century but spent much of his adult life in Alexandria. His extensive corpus of writings (which survive only in fragments) included works on Lakedaimonian customs, literature, and religious practices. One of the scholiasts to *Olympian* 6, commenting on Pindar's mention of the nymph Pitana, states, "the Lakonian Pitana traces her pedigree from the river Eurotas, so Sosibios says."<sup>87</sup>

One of the most frequently cited pieces of evidence for subdivisions of the Lakedaimonian citizen body is a fragment of the commentary on the *Iliad* written by Demetrios of Skepsis in the first half of the second

84 On Dioskourides, see Clack 2001: 2-6.

85 Τῷ Πιτάνῃ Θρασύβουλος ἐπ' ἀσπίδος ἤλυθεν ἄπνους, | ἐπτά πρὸς Ἀργείων τραύματα δεξάμενος, δεικνὺς ἀντία πάντα τὸν αἱματόεντα δ' ὁ πρέσβυς | παῖδ' ἐπὶ πυρκαϊῇν Τύννιχος εἶπε τιθεῖς | "Δειλοὶ κλαίεσθωσαν· ἐγὼ δὲ σέ, τέκνον, ἄδακρυς | θάψω, τὸν καὶ ἔμὸν καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιον" (*Anth. Pal.* 7.229; trans. W.R. Paton, modified). A slightly re-worked version of this epigram forms part of Plutarch's *Saying of Spartans* (#51; *Mor.* 235a). The fourth-century CE writer Ausonius composed a more thoroughly re-worked version; for translation and commentary, as well as biographical information on Ausonius, see Kay 2001: 11-32, 127-29.

86 Pritchett 1974-1991: vol. 4, 243 n. 47.

87 ἡ δὲ Λακωνικὴ Πιτάνη Εὐρώτῃ τοῦ ποτάμου γενεαλογεῖται, ὡς Σωσίβιος (*FGrH* 595 F 21; trans. A. Bayliss). On Sosibios, see the biographical essay by A. Bayliss in *Brill's New Jacoby*.

century. That fragment, which is preserved as part of Athenaeus' discussion of dining customs in Lakedaimon, describes practices at the festival for Apollo Karneios:

Demetrios of Skepsis, in Book I of his *Trojan Catalog*, says that the Lakedaimonians' Karneia festival imitates their military way of life. For there are a total of nine places, referred to as "canopies" [*skiades*] because they contain something that resembles tents. Nine men eat dinner at each of these; everything is done in response to a herald's order; each canopy contains three phratries, and the Karneia festival lasts for nine days.<sup>88</sup>

Demetrios may have been commenting on *Iliad* 5.362-63, where Nestor advises Agamemnon to arrange the Greek army "by *phylē* and phratry ... so that phratry may aid phratry and *phylē* may aid *phylē*."

Excavations in Sparta conducted by British archaeologists starting in 1906 uncovered, among much other material, a large number of terracotta tiles that were used to cover the mudbrick superstructure of the city wall. Many of those tiles bear an inscription that was impressed with a wooden stamp. Two tiles, found just to the south of Klaraki hill in the northwestern part of the city and dated to the third century, are inscribed with the word Πιτανατᾶν ("of the Pitanatans").<sup>89</sup> These tiles – which were found among the ruins of the city wall and thus in situ – are

88 Δημήτριος δ' ὁ Σκήψιος ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ τοῦ Τρωικοῦ Διακόσμου τὴν τῶν Καρνείων φησὶν ἑορτὴν παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις μίμημα εἶναι στρατιωτικῆς ἀγωγῆς. τόπους μὲν γὰρ εἶναι ἑννέα τῷ ἀριθμῷ, σκιάδες δὲ οὗτοι καλοῦνται σκηναῖς ἔχοντες παραπλήσιόν τι· καὶ ἑννέα καθ' ἕκαστον ἄνδρες δειπνοῦσι, πάντα τε ἀπὸ κηρύγματος πράσσεται, ἔχει τε ἐκάστη σκιάς φρατρίας τρεῖς καὶ γίνεται ἡ τῶν Καρνείων ἑορτὴ ἐπὶ ἡμέρας ἑννέα (Ath. 141f = fr. 1 Gaede; trans. S.D. Olson, modified). Eustathius, who was active in the 12th century CE, incorporated this passage (without citing Demetrios) into his commentary on the *Iliad*, as part of his discussion of the banquet held in Book 24 after the burial of Hector (vol. 4, pg. 991, l. 11 van der Valk). On this passage and Demetrios in general, see the commentary (on fr. 1) and biography in the relevant entry, written by Anna Maria Biraschi, in *Brill's New Jacoby*.

89 Wace 1907b: 42 #61; *JG* V.1.917. See also Wace 1906. See Figure 5 in Section 6.1 for the location of Klaraki hill.

particularly important because they provide a specific locational anchor for Pitana.

A group called the Kynosoureis is mentioned in a Hellenistic inscription on a *stēlē* (SEG 40.348) found near the modern village of Aphysou (on the east bank of the Eurotas, across the river from Sparta). The *stēlē* is decorated with a relief showing two male worshippers approaching an altar and a female deity holding a torch. The style of the relief and the letter forms together suggest a date in the third or second century.<sup>90</sup> The text is divided into two parts, the first of which provides information about the reason for the erection of the *stēlē*:

The Kynosoureis<sup>91</sup> dedicated Antamenes to Eulakia. He was *hydragos* and led down the water in the best way and did not create a shortage when there was a drought and had not taken land from anyone.<sup>92</sup>

The second part of the text begins with “The following men jointly financed the production” and continues with a list of 39 men who presumably paid for both the work overseen by Antamenes and the *stēlē*.<sup>93</sup> A *hydragos* was responsible for infrastructure designed to move water, in this case probably for the purposes of irrigation, and Eulakia was an epithet associated with Artemis.<sup>94</sup>

Another Hellenistic *stēlē* bears an inscription (SEG 50.406), dated to c. 200 on letter forms, in which a *hydragos* is honored by a group that may

90 SEG 40.348. For the *editio princeps*, see Peek 1974. On the date, see Robert & Robert 1976: 467–68. See Figure 14 in Section 6.3 for the location of Aphysou.

91 Eta is frequently used in place of an intervocalic sigma in Lakonian inscriptions (Bourguet 1927: 46–48; Alonso Déniz 2009).

92 τοὶ Κονοῦρηες ἀνέσθηκαν Ἀνταμένην | τᾷ Εὐλακίᾳ ὑδραγὸν γενόμενον καὶ τὸ  
ὑψ[δ]-|ωρ καταγαγόντα κάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἀπορ-|ηλίαν οὐδεμίαν ποιήσαντα τῆς  
ἀνδρίας | γενομένης καὶ κοιάξαντα οὐδένα; trans. N.W. Kramer.

93 τοῖδε συνέδωκαν ἐς τὰν κασκευάν Κλήνικος ...

94 Kramer (forthcoming). See also Le Roy 1974: 229–38 as well as Robert & Robert 1976: 467 on SEG 63.276. Peek maintains that the 39 subscribers paid for the irrigation project, whereas Kennell believes that the 39 subscribers paid for the monument to Antamenes (Kennell 1995: 164).

be a previously unattested *ōba*.<sup>95</sup> The *stēlē* was found in a secondary context during a rescue excavation in the western part of the city of Sparta in 1980. The text, which survives largely intact, seems to have originally appeared between two reliefs. The upper relief in its present form consists solely of the lower parts of two legs of an individual, the lower relief of two heads. The text, as interpreted and translated by Nicole Lanérès, reads:

The Aisiatai dedicated to the Tyndarids [the effigy of] Timon the *hydragos*; the two sub-*hydragoi* Androstheneis and Kallikrates (dedicated it with them).<sup>96</sup>

Lanérès, noting the parallel with SEG 40.348, in which the Kynosoureis honor a *hydragos*, suggested that the Aisiatai were a collectivity of some kind, possibly an *oikos*, *kōma*, or phratry. Another possibility is that the parallel with SEG 40.348 is more precise and the collectivity of the Aisiatai constituted an *ōba*.

A third relevant *stēlē* from the Hellenistic period (IG V.1.26) provides invaluable information about the governance structure of the *ōba* of Amyklai. This *stēlē* was found near the church of Agia Paraskevi in the modern village of Amykles. It is decorated with a relief showing a female figure with a kithara in her left hand, standing in front of an altar; three male figures approach the female figure.<sup>97</sup> The text, dated to the late second or early first century based on letter forms and the sculptural style of the relief, reads:

95 The inscription was first published by Kourinou (2000: 224-27 with figure 51). The key relevant publication is Lanérès 2013. For other scholarship on this inscription, see the article by Lanérès and SEG 52.355.

96 Τοὶ Αἰῖᾱται ἀνέσηκα[ν] | τοῖ Τινδαρίδαι Τίμω[να] | ὕδραγὸν καὶ τῶ ὑφῡδ[ρα]-|γῶ, Ἀνδροσθένης, Καλλικρά[της] (Lanérès 2013). Lanérès derives Αἰσιᾱται from Αἰῖᾱται based on the assumption that an intervocalic sigma became an aspiration and was subsequently dropped. Lanérès suggests Αἰσιᾱται is based on the root αἰσιος ('auspicious').

97 Tod & Wace 1906: 65-66 #441, 176-67 #441. The female figure is presumably Alexandra (in whose sanctuary the *stēlē* was to be erected); the male figures are presumably the three ephors honored in the decree carved onto the *stēlē*.

*Dogmatographoi*: Lysinikos son of Soteridas, Nekles son of Aristokrates, Pasikrates son of Pasikles. Decreed by the Amyklaians that: Whereas the ephors in office for the year under Nikeas, Pasiteles son of Tetartos, Euthymos son of Lysikrates, Damiadas son of Damiadas, conducted themselves in a manner worthy of themselves and of the pledge entrusted to them, in all ways carrying out their year without thought of gain and in a civilized way, it was decided by the Amyklaians to praise the ephors around Pasiteles for carrying out their office well. Let them always make a portion for them in the Supplication, as long as they shall live, so that the *ōba*, in remembrance of the benefits that came about for it, might appear to give back fitting honors. That those appointed contract for a marble *stēlē*, onto which the decree will be inscribed, and erect it in the sanctuary of Alexandra. Let the *ōba* pay the expense for this, and let those appointed for this submit an account of the expenses arising. And, moreover, to praise their secretary, Kallikles.<sup>98</sup>

This inscription has provoked iterated discussion because it strongly suggests the *ōba* of the Amyklaians had its own governmental apparatus.<sup>99</sup> The decree is characterized as an enactment of the Amyklaians, and the ephors in the inscription function in a college of three, whereas

98 δογματογράφων Λυσινίκου τοῦ Σωτηρίδα, Νηκλέος | τοῦ Ἀριστοκράτεος, Πασικράτεος τοῦ Πασικλέος | τὸ δοχθὲν ὑπὸ Ἀμυκλαιέων. | {anaglyphum} | ἐπεὶ κα[τ]ασταθέντες ἔφοροι εἰς τὸν ἐπὶ Νικέα ἐνιαυτὸν Πασιτέλης | Τετάρτου, Εὐθυμος Λυσικράτεος, Δαμιάδας Δαμιάδα ἀξίως | ἀνεστρέψαν αὐτῶν τε καὶ τὰς ἐνχ<ει>ρισθείσας αὐτοῖς πίσ<τεως>, ἐμ πᾶσιν ἀκερδῶς καὶ ἡμέρως τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν διεξα<γαγόντες>, δεδόχθαι τοῖς Ἀμυκλαιείοις ἐπαινέσαι ἐφόρους | τοὺς περὶ Πασιτέλη ἐπὶ τῷ καλῶς τὰν ἀρχὰν διεξαγνέειν. | ποιοῦντω δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖ προστροπαῖ ἀ<ε>ῖ μερίδα, ἕως | ἂν ζῶσι, ὅπως ἀξ[ί] ἃ ὠβὰ μναμονεύουσα τῶν γεγο<νό>των φι<[[λ]]ανθρώπων εἰς αὐτὰν ἀποδιδούσα φαίνεται τὰς καταξίους | τιμὰς. ἐγδόμεν δὲ τοὺς κατασταθέντας στάλαν λιθίναν, | εἰς ἃν ἀναγραφῆσεται τὸ δόγμα, καὶ σᾶσαι εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν τᾶς | Ἀλεξάνδρας. τὰν δὲ εἰς ταύταν δαπάναν δότω ἃ ὠβὰ καὶ λόγον | ἐνεγκόντω περὶ τᾶς γεγενημένας δαπάνας τοὺς ἐπὶ ταῦτα | κατασταθέντας. ἐπαινέσαι δὲ καὶ τὸν γραμματέα αὐτῶν Καλλικλῆ. Trans. N. Kennell, modified.

99 See, for example, Pareti 1910: 461-62 and *passim*; Chrimes 1949: 164-66; Jones 1987: 122; Lupi 2006: 201.

the ephors of the Lakedaimonian state are never attested as being anything other than five in number.<sup>100</sup> The *stēlē* is to be set up in the sanctuary of Alexandra, a cult site dedicated to Agamemnon and Cassandra (who went locally by the name of Alexandra) that Pausanias saw in the settlement of Amyklai,<sup>101</sup> and the relevant expenses are to be paid for by the *ōba*. The *ōba* of the Amyklaians thus seems to have had their own magistrates and public treasury. Little can be said about the *dogmatographoi* (literally, the “drafters of decrees”), but they too were presumably officials of the *ōba*.<sup>102</sup>

At the same time, the *ōba* of the Amyklaians seems to be dependent in some fashion on the *polis* of Lakedaimon. The inscription is dated by reference to the magistracy of Nikeas, whom Nigel Kennell has plausibly identified as the eponymous magistrate of Lakedaimon (by this point in time, the *patronomos*). One might also note that the choice of the title of ephors for the administrators of the *ōba* connects it to the government of the *polis* of Lakedaimon.<sup>103</sup>

The final piece of Hellenistic epigraphic evidence records an *ōba* dispensing honors for someone named Aristoteles. The *stēlē* in question (*IG* V.1.27) survives in a highly fragmentary state and can be only tentatively dated to the first century.<sup>104</sup> The text includes the phrase: δεδόςθαι πάντα τὰ τᾷς ὥβ[ᾱ]ς τ[ίμια] [καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἐκγ]όνοις α[ὐτ]-<ῶ>ν καὶ σείτησιν ἐ[ν τῷ πρυτανείῳ – – τᾷ]ς ὥβᾱ[ς]. The *ōba*, whose name does not survive, grants *timia*, including the right to *sitēsis*. The restoration of πρυτανείῳ is too speculative to permit one to conclude that the *ōba* had its own *prytaneion*.

100 Richer 1998: 261–64.

101 Paus. 3.19.6; Salapata 2014: 18–19, 22–34. See Section 7 for further discussion of this sanctuary.

102 The office of *dogmatographos* appears in several inscriptions from the eastern Aegean; see, for example, *IG* XII.2.67 (Mytilene) and *Inscripfen von Ephesos* 27E, F.

103 Kennell 1995: 162–65. By this point in time, the perioikic communities in Lakonia had become independent and formed the League of Lakedaimonians (later known as the League of the Free Lakonians, see Kennell 1999 for the details). Amyklai does not appear in the list of members of the League of Free Lakonians given by Pausanias (3.21.7). On the office of *patronomos*, see Section 3.4.1.

104 Jones 1987: 122.

The sources from the Hellenistic period make it possible to associate Pitana with the northwestern part of Sparta and provide the earliest evidence for a locality in the vicinity of Sparta called Kynosoura (with the caveat that the sources do not describe Kynosoura as an *ōba*). *IG* V.1.26 and 27 contain the first explicit references to *ōbai* since the early fifth century (presuming Beattie's reading of *IG* V.1.722 to be correct) and provide evidence for an *ōba* acting as a collectivity with its own governmental structure. *SEG* 50.406 may provide evidence of the existence of a previously unattested *ōba* of the Aisiatai.

### 3.4 Roman Period

The corpus of relevant Roman-era textual evidence is sufficiently extensive to warrant discussion under two separate headings: epigraphic and literary.

#### 3.4.1 Epigraphic Texts

One of the most important components of the evidence for *ōbai* is a series of inscriptions that record victories won by teams of ballplayers (called *sphaireis*) in a contest held annually in Sparta. Kennell has shown that the contest was in effect a graduation ceremony for boys completing their time in the state educational system (called the *agōgē* during the Roman period).<sup>105</sup> Fourteen such inscriptions (*IG* V.1.674-87), ranging in date from the first through third centuries CE, have been found (see Appendix for the texts). Although some of these inscriptions are known solely through transcriptions provided by early visitors to Lakonia (including Fourmont), the available information indicates that they were all carved on marble *stēlai* that were roughly 50-75 cm high and 50 cm wide. In at least some cases (e.g. *IG* V.1.675, 676, 683), the *stēlai* were embellished with a figural relief. They were all found in either Sparta or Mystras (c. 5 km to the west of Sparta). Given that the settlement at Mystras was established in the 13th century CE and that many of the structures there were built using materials from the site of Sparta (which was gradually abandoned due to voluntary migration to Mystras), we can be reasonably

105 Kennell 1995: 28-48.

confident that all the inscriptions were originally erected in Sparta.<sup>106</sup> None of these inscriptions seems to have been found in situ, so the context in which they were displayed initially cannot be definitively established.

The *sphaireis* inscriptions exhibit marked similarities in content. The text of IG V.1.680, among the best preserved examples and dating to the second century CE, is presented here *exempli gratia*:<sup>107</sup>

Good Fortune. When Lysippos, the son of Damainetos, dedicated to Caesar and to his fatherland, was *patronomos*, when Pedoukaios the son of Epaphrodeitos, chosen on account of excellence, was *bidieos*, and when Damainetos the son of Aristokrates was, voluntarily, *diabetēs*, the *sphaireis* of the Neopolitans defeated the *ōbai* without a bye. Their [the *sphaireis*'] captain was Galenos the son of Spendon ... [the remainder of the inscription is missing].

Other inscriptions in the series (see, in particular, IG V.1.674) show that they included a list of the team members' names following the name of the captain. The *patronomos* was an annual office that was probably created in the Hellenistic period; one individual held this position at a time, and that individual served as the eponymous magistrate of Lakedaïmon.<sup>108</sup> Five *bidieoi* held office at any given time and seem to have been city-level officials.<sup>109</sup> The *diabetai* were closely associated with and presumably appointed by either *phylai* or *ōbai*. This is most immediately evident from the *cursus honorum* of two men who were active in the second century CE, Agathokles and Damokles, both of whom included διαβέτης Λιμναέων among the list of offices that they held.<sup>110</sup> The positioning of

106 On the history of Mystras, see Runciman 2009.

107 There is continuing debate about whether the language of these inscriptions is intentionally archaizing. See, for instance, Brixhe 1996 and Delli 2013.

108 Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 47, 186–87.

109 Paus. 3.11.2; Kennell 1995: 58–60.

110 IG V.1.32A and B; Bradford 1977: 5–6 (Agathokles (15)), 113 (Damokles (3)). See also IG V.1.34. Pedoukaios is not described as διαβέτης Νεοπολιτῶν in IG V.1.680 because the very nature of the inscription, which was tied to the achievements of a group linked to the *ōba* of the Neopolitans, made his obal affiliation obvious.



*diabetēs* in this and other *cursus* indicates that it was a minor office typically held early in one's public career.<sup>111</sup> The responsibilities of all the officials named in the *sphaireis* inscriptions (*patronomos*, *bidieoi*, and *diabetai*) were primarily concerned with running the *agōgē*.<sup>112</sup>

The *sphaireis* inscriptions contain references to the *ōbai* of Limnai, Neopolis, Pitana, and possibly Kynosoura (the name is restored in *IG* V.1.681, 684). We can be certain that the inhabitants of the *ōba* of Kynosoura participated in the *sphaireis* contests because an honorary decree for Marcus Aurelius Palaistrites from the Roman period describes the honorand as “σφαίρᾶ, Κονοουρέα,” and a *cursus honorum* from the second century CE for Isochrysos proudly proclaims that he was *diabetēs* when the Kynosoureis won the *sphaireis* contest for the first time in 40 years.<sup>113</sup>

There is no firm epigraphic evidence for an *ōba* named Mesoa. Spawforth has shown that *IG* V.1.515, which refers to a Damatrios of Mesoa, is one of Fourmont's forgeries.<sup>114</sup> Marcus Tod restored Μεσοάτων in line 8 of *IG* V.1.685, but Walter Kolbe subsequently read Πιτανάτων.<sup>115</sup>

The absence of Amyklai from the *sphaireis* inscriptions merits discussion in some detail because it potentially impacts our understanding of the organization of the *polis* of Lakedaïmon. As noted above, what is here referred to as the current orthodoxy assumes that, during the Archaic and Classical periods, five *ōbai*, one of which was centered at Amyklai, formed the core of the Lakedaïmonian state. Those *ōbai* are characterized as “tribes based on domicile” that functioned in the first instance as military units. That model does not readily accommodate the existence of a separate government for the *ōba* of Amyklai, which is evident from the late second-/early first-century decree from Amyklai (*IG* V.1.26) discussed in Section 3.3. It has been argued that Amyklai had an obal government in the late second/early first century because it had become semi-autonomous at some earlier point, probably during the Hellenistic

111 Woodward 1925: 181.

112 Kennell 1995: 28–70.

113 *IG* V.1.566; *SEG* 11.493; Woodward 1925: 180–81.

114 Spawforth 1976. See Section 3.1 on Fourmont.

115 Tod 1904: 64, 77; for Kolbe's reading, see *IG* V.1. For references to Mesoa in literary sources, see Section 3.4.2.

period. The absence of Amyklai from the *sphaireis* inscriptions has been taken as a reflection of the detachment of Amyklai from the other *ōbai*.<sup>116</sup>

However, Kennell has argued that Neopolis was another name for Amyklai and that the Amyklaians thus did participate in the *sphaireis* contests.<sup>117</sup> He builds his case around the relief decorating the *stēlē* on which IG V.1.683 (which celebrates a victory by the *ōba* of the Neopolitans) was carved. That *stēlē* was destroyed in a fire, and the relief is known only through the description provided by Ludwig Ross, who stated that it showed a big ball and a female figure with four arms.<sup>118</sup> Kennell compares this relief to the one on the *stēlē* on which IG V.1.675 was inscribed, which showed a big ball and the Dioskouroi,<sup>119</sup> and argues that the reliefs on *sphaireis* inscriptions featured a deity closely associated with the victorious *ōba*. A four-armed deity is, for obvious reasons, distinctive, and the relief has long been understood as a depiction of Apollo Tetracheir (Apollo Four Hands), who was worshipped at Amyklai.<sup>120</sup> This leads Kennell to conclude that Neopolis was another name for the *ōba* of Amyklai.

Four further inscriptions from Roman Sparta can usefully be brought into the discussion of the *sphaireis* texts. A late first- or early second-century CE inscription (IG V.1.480) on the base of a statue of Tiberius Claudius Harmonikos states that the statue was erected due to honors bestowed on him by the tribe of the Kynosoureis: ἀπὸ φυλῆς Κονοουρέων τῶν τιμῶν δοθεισῶν. An inscription (IG V.1.564) on the base of another statue, this one of Marcus Aurelius Damarchos, describes him as “leader of the *phylē* of the Limnaians”: πρέσβυν τῆς Λιμναέων φυλῆς. The inscription also states that the person who paid for the statue, Lucius Apronios Euelpistos, was a “good and just man, and a fellow tribesman [of Marcus Aurelius]”: ἀγαθοῦ καὶ δικαίου, το[ῦ] φυλέτου. Finally, two decrees from the second century CE (IG V.1.472, 663) recognizing the

116 See, for example, Wade-Gery 1958: 75.

117 Kennell 1995: 162-69.

118 Ross 1861: 659-60. Ross came across the inscription in the house of the governor of Sparta and does not provide any information about its findspot.

119 Tod, Tillyard & Woodward 1907: 214-15.

120 For the relevant ancient sources, see Kennell 1995: 215 n. 6.

achievements of Gaius Avidius Agathangelos characterize the honorand as Πιτανάτης.

### 3.4.2 Literary Texts

The literary sources from the Roman period include passages from Strabo, Pausanias, Plutarch, and Herodian.<sup>121</sup> Strabo provides two of the few extant descriptions of Sparta and, in so doing, gives information about Limnai:

Sparta and Amyklai – the site of the sanctuary of Apollo – and Pharis are located at the foot of Mt. Taygetos, in the inland parts of the region. The city [Sparta] is situated in a rather hollow spot, but there are hills within it. However, no part of the city is marshy, but in former times the suburbs were marshy and were thus called Limnai.<sup>122</sup>

121 Aelius Aristides, who was active in the second century CE, writes in his *Panathenaic Oration* that the Lakedaimonians' laws were given by Apollo and then observes that Apollo also "established the division of *phylai* and *genē* in Athens" (382). Some scholars (see, for example, Kiechle 1963: 192-93) have compared this passage with the phrase about arranging *phylai* and *ōbai* in the Great Rhetra and argued that *ōbai* can be equated with *genē* and that *ōbai* must therefore have been descent-based groups. Wade-Gery is rightly dubious about this interpretive approach (Wade-Gery 1958: 79 n. 2).

122 ὑποπέπτωκε δὲ τῷ Ταῦγέτῳ ἡ Σπάρτη ἐν μεσογαίᾳ καὶ Ἀμύκλαι – οὗ τὸ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερόν – καὶ ἡ Φᾶρις, ἔστι μὲν οὖν ἐν κοιλοτέρῳ χωρίῳ τὸ τῆς πόλεως ἔδαφος καίπερ ἀπολαμβάνον ὄρη μεταξύ, ἀλλ' οὐδὲν γε μέρος αὐτοῦ λιμνάζει· τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν ἐλίμναζε τὸ προάστιον, καὶ ἐκάλουν αὐτὸ Λίμνας (Strabo 8.5.1; cf. Polyb. 5.22.3). This passage ends with a parenthesis: καὶ τὸ τοῦ Διονύσου ἱερόν ἐν Λίμναις ἐφ' ὕγρῳ βεβηκὸς ἐτύγχανε, νῦν δ' ἐπὶ ξηροῦ τὴν ἵδρυσιν ἔχει ("and the Sanctuary of Dionysos in the Marshes is situated in an area that was once marshy, but it now stands on dry ground"). This parenthesis is an interpolated note from a later editor that pertains to a sanctuary in Athens (Radt 2002-2011: vol. 6, 441-42). The Greek text given here comes from Radt's edition.

Among the places cataloged by Homer, they say that Messe is nowhere to be found and that Messoa is not part of the *chōra* but of Sparta, just as Limnaion and [- -].<sup>123</sup>

The end of the second passage is less than entirely clear due to textual corruption; the gap is filled with the word “Thornax” in some editions, but that is nothing more than speculation. The significance of “Limnaion” in the second passage is apparent from Strabo’s discussion of a sanctuary of Artemis in the Taygetos:

The Sanctuary of Artemis in the Marshes [ἐν Λίμναις], where the Messenians are supposed to have violated the *parthenoi* who went there to offer sacrifices, is on the border between Lakonia and Messenia. ... The Limnaion sanctuary in Sparta [τὸ ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ Λιμναῖον ... ἱερόν] dedicated to Artemis is said to take its name from this sanctuary.<sup>124</sup>

Strabo’s Limnaion sanctuary of Artemis can be confidently equated with the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, because Pausanias informs us that “the place called Limnaion is a sanctuary dedicated to Artemis Orthia.”<sup>125</sup> Pausanias says very little about the Orthia sanctuary, but he does, in providing an aetiology for the whipping rite that took place there, mention four groups that can be associated with *ōbai*:

When the Limnaians among the Spartiates and the Kynosoureis and those from both Mesoa and Pitana were sacrificing to Athena, they started to quarrel, and this led to bloodshed. After many had been

123 τῶν δ' ὕφ' Ὀμήρου καταλεγόμενων τὴν μὲν Μέσσην οὐδαμοῦ δείκνυσθαι φασὶ Μεσσοῖαν δ' οὐ τῆς χώρας εἶναι μέρος ἀλλὰ τῆς Σπάρτης, καθάπερ καὶ τὸ Λιμναῖον καὶ τὸν [- -] (Strabo 8.5.3). On the textual corruption in this passage, see Radt 2002-2011: vol. 6, 444. For the relevant passage from Homer, see Section 3.1.

124 τὸ δ' ἐν Λίμναις τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερόν, ἐφ' ᾧ Μεσσήνιοι περὶ τὰς παρθένους ὑβρίσαι δοκοῦσι τὰς ἀφιγμένας ἐπὶ τὴν θυσίαν, ἐν μεθορίοις ἐστὶ τῆς τε Λακωνικῆς καὶ τῆς Μεσσηνίας. ... ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν Λιμνῶν τούτων καὶ τὸ ἐν τῇ Σπάρτῃ Λιμναῖον εἴρηται τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερόν (Strabo 8.4.9).

125 Τὸ δὲ χωρίον τὸ ἐπονομαζόμενον Λιμναῖον Ὁρθίας ἱερόν ἐστὶν Ἀρτέμιδος (Paus. 3.16.7).

killed on the altar, and a plague wasted the rest, they were bidden by an oracle to wet the altar with human blood.<sup>126</sup>

Pausanias provides one other tidbit of relevant information. In describing the northwestern part of the city, he states that there is a *leschē* of the Krotanoi, whom he characterizes as forming part of the Pitanatans.<sup>127</sup>

In his life of Lycurgus, Plutarch discusses subdivisions of the Spartiate citizen body and relevant officials. He provides the text of and commentary on the Great Rhetra and explains the phrase φυλὰς φυλάξαντα καὶ ὠβὰς ὠβάξαντα in the Rhetra as meaning “to divide and distribute the populace into groups, the former of which he [Lycurgus] called *phylai* and the latter *ōbai*.”<sup>128</sup> Elsewhere in the same work, Plutarch states that tribal officials (τῶν φυλετῶν οἱ πρεσβύτατοι) inspected infants at birth.<sup>129</sup>

Both Plutarch and Herodian have occasion to mention Pitana. In *On Exile*, Plutarch consoles the recipient in part by stating, “That you do not live in Sardis is nothing. Neither do all Athenians live in Kollytos, nor all Corinthians in Kraneion, nor all Lakonians in Pitana.”<sup>130</sup> Kollytos was a deme in Attica, and Kraneion was a suburb of Corinth. Herodian, who was active in the second half of the second and first half of the third centuries CE, wrote a work with the title *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus*. In recounting one of the campaigns of Caracalla, Herodian informs us that the emperor “sent for young men from Sparta and called them

126 τοῦτο δὲ οἱ Λιμνᾶται Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ Κυνοσουρεῖς καὶ οἱ ἐκ Μεσόας τε καὶ Πιτάνης θύοντες τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ἐς διαφοράν, ἀπὸ δὲ αὐτῆς καὶ ἐς φόνους προήχθησαν, ἀποθανόντων δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ βωμῷ πολλῶν νόσος ἔφθειρε τοὺς λοιπούς. καὶ σφισιν ἐπὶ τούτῳ γίνεται λόγιον αἵματι ἀνθρώπων τὸν βωμὸν αἱμάσσειν (Paus. 3.16.9-10; trans. J.G. Frazer, modified).

127 Paus. 3.14.2; see Section 9.2 for the text.

128 ἐν τούτοις τὸ μὲν φυλὰς φυλάξαι καὶ ὠβὰς ὠβάξαι διελεῖν ἔστι καὶ κατανεῖμαι τὸ πλῆθος εἰς μερίδας, ὧν τὰς μὲν φυλὰς, τὰς δὲ ὠβὰς προσηγόρευκεν (Plut. *Lyc.* 6.1). On the Great Rhetra, see Section 3.1.

129 Plut. *Lyc.* 16.1.

130 Τὸ δέ σε μὴ κατοικεῖν Σάρδεις οὐθέν ἐστιν· οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἀθηναῖοι πάντες κατοικοῦσι Κολλυτόν, οὐδὲ Κορίνθιοι Κράνειον, οὐδὲ Πιτάνην Λάκωνες (Plut. *On Exile* 6 = *Mor.* 601b; trans. P.H. De Lacy & B. Einarson, modified). On this work, see van Hoof 2010: 116-50.

his Lakonian and Pitanaite battalion.”<sup>131</sup> Herodian and Caracalla probably relied on references to Pitana in earlier literary sources, most obviously Herodotus’ mention of a Pitanaite *lochos* (see Section 3.2).

The Roman-era textual sources provide the first certain reference to an *ōba* named Limnai and the first known references to an *ōba* called Neopolis and to Mesoa (which is not, however, explicitly described as an *ōba*). Two honorary inscriptions (IG V.1.480, 564) dating to the same period as the *sphaireis* inscriptions show that Kynosoura and Limnai could be referred to as both *phylai* and *ōbai*. The passages from Strabo and Pausanias connect the *ōba* of Limnai to the eastern part of Sparta, in the vicinity of the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. The absence of Amyklai from the aetiology provided by Pausanias could be an indication that Amyklai was in some fashion administratively separated from the other *ōbai*. However, if Neopolis was indeed an alternative name for Amyklai, then the Amyklaians took part in ballgames along with the other *ōbai*. Moreover, the Amyklaians had their own, quite important sanctuary at the Amyklaion and may have been less involved in the rites at Artemis Orthia purely for reasons of religious practice and accessibility.

### 3.5 *Lexicons, Encyclopedias, and Scholia*

This section treats all the relevant passages from lexicons, encyclopedias, and scholia, regardless of their date. Most of the works in question were produced during the Byzantine period. The dating of individual scholia can be complex, and no attempt will be made to place any of them in time. In addition to the unnamed scholiasts, we will encounter eight authors:

- Apollonius Sophista, active c. 100 CE, author of a lexicon of words from Homer;

131 ἀπό τε Σπάρτης μεταπεμφάμενος νεανίας Λακωνικὸν καὶ Πιτανάτην ἐκάλει λόχον (Herodian *History of the Empire* 4.8). On Herodian and his work, see Kemezis 2014: 227–72.

- Aelius Herodianus, active in the second century CE, author of *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσωδίας* (*On Prosody in General*, frequently referred to as *De prosodia catholica*, primarily a study of accentuation) and *Περὶ Παρωνύμων* (*On Nominal Derivatives* [words derived from nouns]);
- Hesychius, active in the fifth and sixth centuries CE, author of a lexicon of unusual and obscure words;
- Stephanus of Byzantium, active in the sixth century CE, author of the *Ethnika*, a geographical dictionary that survives in the form of an epitome and fragments of the larger, original text;
- Photios, active in the ninth century CE, author of a lexicon of words that had become obsolete or fallen out of use;
- The *Suda*, an encyclopedia compiled in the tenth century CE;
- *Etymologicum Symeonis*, a lexicon from the 12th century CE;
- Pseudo-Zonaras, a lexicon from the 15th century CE that has in the past been incorrectly attributed to the 12th-century CE scholar John Zonaras.

Some of the later authors in this list relied on earlier authors in the list, so not every reference can be considered a separate testimonium. In addition, the large chronological and experiential gap between, for example, Lakedaimon of the Archaic period and Photios needs to be borne in mind.

Scholia and lexical sources mention Pitana, Kynosoura, Mesoa/Mes-soa, and Amyklai. Pitana is referred to as a *kōmē*, a *phylē*, and a *polis*; the scholiast to Pindar *Olympia* 6.46 states that Pitana is located near a ford on the Eurotas river.<sup>132</sup> Kynosoura is referred to as a *phylē*, and

132 *Kōmē*: Scholiast to Thuc. 1.20. *Phylē*: Hesychius s.v. Πιτανάτης στρατός; Photios s.v. Πιτάνη. *Polis*: Scholiasts to Eurip. *Tro.* 1112, Pind. *Ol.* 6.28 (= 6.46a Drachmann).

Mesoa/Messoa as a *phylē* and a place.<sup>133</sup> Amyklai is repeatedly characterized as a *polis*.<sup>134</sup> A scholion to Pindar *Pythian* 1 (1.121a Drachmann) states that Pamphylis and Dymanis were tribal names in Lakedaimon.

Hesychius, due to his interest in obscure words, is a particularly important source. The relevant entries in his lexicon include:

- οὐαί· φυλαί (“*ōbai: phylai*”)
- ὥας· τὰς κώμας (“*ōbai: kōmai*”)
- ὠβαί· τόποι μεγαλομερεῖς (“*ōbai: magnificent places,*” or perhaps “places that form parts of a whole”)
- ὠβάτας· τοὺς φυλέτας (“fellow members of an *ōba*: fellow members of a tribe”)
- ὠγή· κώμη (“*ōba: kōmē*”)

These various forms are related because ὠβά was originally written with a digamma rather than a beta; as the digamma went out of use, various orthographies were employed.<sup>135</sup>

Three further entries in Hesychius’ lexicon require more detailed discussion:

- (1) A heading in the gamma entries is corrupt in the manuscript tradition and has been tentatively restored as γεροάκται, whereas the definition is intact: οἱ δῆμαρχοι, παρὰ Λάκωσιν.
- (2) Johannes Baunack argued that Hesychius’ entry ὠνάρχος· δῆμψος should be interpreted as meaning that there was a

133 Kynosoura: Hesychius s.v. Κυνόσουρα; Photios s.v. Κυνόσουρα. Mesoa/Messoa: Aelius Herodianus *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσωδίας* vol. 3.1 pg 301.26 Lentz (citing Strabo Book 8 as a source); Steph. Byz. *Ethnika* Epitome s.v. Μεσσόα; Suda s.v. Ἀλκμάν, Μεσσόα.

134 Apollonius Sophista pg. 28.10 Bekker; Aelius Herodianus *Περὶ καθολικῆς προσωδίας* vol. 3.1, pg. 318.10 Lentz; Aelius Herodianus *Περὶ Παρωνύμων* vol. 3.2 pg. 872.13 Lentz; Hesychius s.v. ἀμυκλαῖδες; Steph. Byz. *Ethnika* Epitome s.v. Ἀμύκλαι; *Etymologicum Symeonis* s.v. ἀμύκλαι; Pseudo-Zonaras s.v. Ἀμύκλαι; Scholiast to Theocritus Prolegomenon Poem 12, 12–16d.

135 Bourguet 1927: 71 n. 1; Ehrenberg 1937: 1693; Chantraine 1968: s.v. ὠβά.



Lakonian term ὤφαρχος that was the equivalent of the Attic δήμαρχος.<sup>136</sup>

- (3) The entry for ἐπιπαίζειν reads τὸ μὴ φρατρίαν. Λάκωνες. The verb ἐπιπαίζειν appears only rarely in the extant corpus of Greek literature and is defined in the *LSJ* as “to mock at.” Kurt Latte, in creating an edition of Hesychius’ lexicon, noted the practice (attested at Athens and Delphi) of making a sacrifice on the occasion of presenting a child to one’s phratry. He suggested emending the entry to read: ἐπιπαιδειάζειν· τὸ μὴ <ἐν καιρῷ> θύειν φρατρίαν. Λάκωνες (“the phratry does not make the sacrifice at the appointed time among the Lakonians”).<sup>137</sup> Lupi, in his detailed discussion of this entry, argues that ἐπιπαιδειάζειν meant something like “to recognize, in addition, as a son” (i.e. “to adopt”). He takes the definition of ἐπιπαιδειάζειν as an indication that Lakonian phratries did not make sacrifices at adoption ceremonies.<sup>138</sup> The key issue in the present context is the implication that there were phratries in Lakonia and that they played a role in recognizing children as legitimate offspring.

This collection of texts echoes the epigraphic sources in the confusion between *ōbai* and *phylai* and adds an equation between *ōbai* and *kōmai*. In addition, two entries in Hesychius’ lexicon suggest that *ōbai* had magistrates similar to Athenian demarchs.

136 Baunack 1911: 488.

137 In Cunningham’s updated version of Latte’s edition (Cunningham 2020: entry 5038), the original text is supplied, and Latte’s emendation is provided in the *apparatus criticus*.

138 Lupi 2005.

#### 4. The Organization of the Lakedaimonian Army

The organization of the Lakedaimonian army figures prominently in Wade-Gery's work on the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* because, in his view, military units were, for an extended period, tied to specific *ōbai*. Evidence pertaining to units in the Lakedaimonian army could, therefore, be used to reconstruct the number and names of *ōbai*. It is, as a result, necessary to examine the relevant sources in some detail, particularly as they pertain to the number and names of military units.<sup>139</sup>

The earliest source is Tyrtaios (fr. 19 West, see Section 3.1), who mentions "Pamphyloi, Hylleis, and Dymanes, separately, brandishing in their hands murderous spears of ash." This passage strongly implies that in the seventh century units in the Lakedaimonian army were based on the three Dorian tribes. If, as one might suspect, there were units smaller than the tribes at that point in time, we have no information about them. As we have seen (Section 3.2), Herodotus describes the Spartiate officer Amompharetos at the Battle of Plataia as "serving as commander [*lochēgos*] of the *lochos* of the Pitanatans," while Thucydides expressly denies the existence of such a unit.<sup>140</sup> Herodotus (9.53.2), in discussing Amompharetos' disobedience to Pausanias' orders at Plataia, states that "all the rest of the *taxiarchoi* were ready to obey Pausanias."<sup>141</sup> When dis-

139 For a summary and discussion of the full range of evidence for the organization of the Lakedaimonian army, not all of which is relevant here, see Anderson 1970: 225–51.

140 Hdt. 9.53.2; Thuc. 1.20.3. See also Hdt. 9.57.1–2, where Herodotus three times refers to the unit under Amompharetos' command as a *lochos*.

141 οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι ἄρτιοι ἦσαν τῶν ταξiάρχων πείθεσθαι Πανσανίῃ (Hdt. 9.53.2). *Taxiarchos* in this passage is probably a generic word for a high-ranking commander, intended to give Herodotus' readers some sense of Amompharetos' relative standing in the army, rather than an actual rank in Lakedaimon. Lazenby suggests that Amompharetos was one of the *polemarchoi* (Lazenby 1985: 48–50). There is an extensive bibliography on Amompharetos' position in the Lakedaimonian chain of command at Plataia; see, for instance, Christesen 2020. Van Wees, in a detailed examination of two oaths inscribed on a *stēlē* found at Acharnai in Athens and dated to the mid-fourth century, interprets one of the oaths as a relatively faithful reflection of an oath sworn by Greek forces during the Persian War. He argues that

cussing the reforms of Lycurgus, Herodotus claims that Lycurgus “established their military organization: the *enōmotiai* and *triēkades* and *sysitia*.”<sup>142</sup>

In his account of the Battle of Mantinea in 418, Thucydides states that orders issued by a Lakedaimonian king were passed down a chain of command: from *polemarchoi* to *lochagoi* to *pentēkontēres* to *enōmotarchai*. The Lakedaimonian forces at Mantinea were, according to Thucydides, divided into seven *lochoi*, one of which was an ad hoc unit made up of *Brasideioi* and *Neodamōdeis*.<sup>143</sup>

Xenophon does not provide a comprehensive statement about the structure of the Lakedaimonian army in the *Hellenika*, but he supplies relevant information at nearly two dozen points in sections 2.4.31-7.1.25 (covering the years 403-368). That information is internally consistent and can be summarized as follows:

- the Lakedaimonian army has 6 *morai*;
- a *polemarchos* commands each *mora*;

the content of that oath drew heavily on the oath sworn by Spartiates when they joined one of the *enōmotiai* (“sworn bands”) (van Wees 2006). The oath on the *stēlē* contains the phrase “I shall not leave my *taxiarchos* or my *enōmotarchēs*,” which van Wees takes as evidence for the claim that the only officers who commanded units in the Lakedaimonian phalanx were *enōmotarchai* and *taxiarchoi*. He sees the *polemarchoi* referenced by Herodotus as members of a general staff who did not command their own units. Leaving aside concerns about the authenticity of the text of the oaths on the *stēlē* (see Rhodes & Osborne 2003: 440-48 for a detailed discussion that leaves the question open), the term *taxiarchoi* in the oath could easily be a generic reference to “superior officers.” *Enōmotarchēs* would be mentioned specifically because the oath was tied directly to joining an *enōmotia*. The details of the oath as transmitted are, therefore, a questionable source for the command structure of the Lakedaimonian army in the early fifth century.

142 μετὰ δὲ τὰ ἐς πόλεμον ἔχοντα, ἐνωμοτίας καὶ τριηκάδας καὶ συσσίτια (Hdt. 1.65.5).

143 Thuc. 5.66.3-68.3. On the *Brasideioi* and *Neodamōdeis*, see Hunt 1998: 58-60, 116-17. Several features of this passage (e.g. Thucydides’ calculations of the number of Lakedaimonian soldiers present at Mantinea) have been discussed repeatedly and at length but are not immediately relevant here. See, for example, Gomme, Andrewes & Dover 1945-1981: vol. 4, 110-17; Lazenby 1985: 125-34; Hornblower 1991-2008: vol. 3, 180-82.

- the only subordinate officers directly referenced are *pentēkontēres*;
- the Lakedaimonian units at Leuktra in 371 are drawn up by *enōmotiai*, implying the existence of *enōmotarchai*;
- no information is provided about the number of *pentēkontēres* or *enōmotiai* in a *mora*;
- neither *lochos* nor *lochagoi* is mentioned.

In the later sections of the *Hellenika* (covering the years 365-362), Xenophon twice states that the Lakedaimonian army consists of 12 *lochoi*.<sup>144</sup>

In his *Lakedaimonion Politeia*, Xenophon ascribes the following army organization to Lycurgus:

- 6 *morai* of infantry, 6 *morai* of cavalry;
- each infantry *mora* has 1 *polemarchos*, 4 *lochagoi*, 8 *pentēkontēres*, 16 *enōmotarchai*.

Each *mora* thus seems to consist of 4 *lochoi*, 8 *pentēkostues*, and 16 *enōmotiai*.<sup>145</sup>

The information in the *Hellenika* and the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* is contradictory (see Table 3). If we presume that the 12 *lochoi* of the *Hellenika* were subdivisions of the 6 *morai*, there would have been 2 *lochoi* per *mora*, whereas the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* states that there were 4. Given that *lochoi* are not mentioned until 365, the Lakedaimonian army may have been reorganized shortly after Leuktra.<sup>146</sup> On the other hand, Xenophon may not have had occasion to mention *lochoi* or *lochagoi* in the earlier sections of the *Hellenika*, and the number attached to the *lochagoi* in the manuscripts of the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* could be corrupt.

144 The relevant passages in the *Hellenika* are: 2.4.31, 2.4.33, 3.5.22, 4.2.22, 4.3.15, 4.3.21-23, 4.4.7-8, 4.5.3-5, 4.5.7, 4.5.10-19, 4.6.3, 5.1.29, 5.4.46-47, 5.4.51-52, 6.1.1, 6.1.17, 6.4.12, 6.4.14-15, 6.4.17, 7.1.17, 7.1.25, 7.4.20, 7.5.10. See also 3.1.28, 3.2.16, 4.1.26, 6.2.18.

145 The relevant passages in the *Lakedaimonion Politeia* are: 11.1, 11.4, 11.6, 12.5-6, 13.1, 13.4, 13.6-7, 13.9.

146 The date when Xenophon penned his *Lakedaimonion Politeia* remains an open question. See Lipka 2002: 9-13.

Table 3: Organization of the Lakedaimonian army according to Thucydides and Xenophon

Thucydides	Xenophon <i>Hellenika</i>	Xenophon <i>Lakedaimonion Politeia</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 regular <i>lochoi</i></li> <li>• each <i>lochos</i>: 4 <i>pentēkostues</i>, 16 <i>enōmotiai</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 <i>morai</i></li> <li>• each <i>mora</i>: (probably) 2 <i>lochoi</i> divided into unstated number of <i>pentēkostues</i> and <i>enōmotiai</i></li> <li>• 12 <i>lochoi</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 <i>morai</i></li> <li>• each <i>mora</i>: 4 <i>lochoi</i>, 8 <i>pentēkostues</i>, 16 <i>enōmotiai</i></li> </ul>

Thucydides and Xenophon, despite their differences on various points concerning the Lakedaimonian army, agree that there were six major units within that force. The subdivisions of the Lakedaimonian army were described in the Aristotelian *Politeia of the Lakedaimonians*, with the extant fragments suggesting that there were either five or six major units. The clearest statement is found in the lexicon compiled by Harpokration of Alexandria in the second century CE, in the entry for μόραν: “certain Lakonian military units bear this name. Aristotle discusses them in the *Politeia of the Lakedaimonians*. He says that there are six named *morai*, and all the Lakedaimonians are divided among the *morai*.”<sup>147</sup> This passage appears in Rose’s collection of Aristotelian fragments as fr. 540.

An exchange in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, in which the eponymous protagonist mentions “four *lochoi* of battle-ready women,” was explained by some scholiasts and lexicographers as a reference to military units in Lakedaimon.<sup>148</sup>

147 μόραν: ... συντάγματά τινα Λακωνικὰ οὕτω καλεῖται. διείλεκται δὲ περὶ τούτων Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῇ Λακεδαιμονίων πολιτείᾳ. φησὶ δὲ ὡς εἰσὶ μόραι ἕξ ὠνομασμένοι, καὶ διήρηνται εἰς τὰς μόρας Λακεδαιμόνιοι πάντες. This passage appears in Rose’s collection of Aristotelian fragments as fr. 540.

148 Lys. 453-54.

Scholiast Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 453: there exist four *lochoi* among the women. This means that there are also among the Lakedaimonians four *lochoi*, which are at the disposal of the king.<sup>149</sup>

Scholiast Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 453: the poet is referring, in a sloppy fashion, to Lakonian customs. For there are not four *lochoi* in Lakedaimon but five: Edōlos, Sinis, Arimas, Ploas, Messoagēs. Thucydides says that there are seven, leaving aside the Skiritai.<sup>150</sup>

Hesychius s.v. λόχοι: Aristophanes says there are four Lakedaimonian *lochoi*. There are in fact five, as Aristotle says.<sup>151</sup>

Photios s.v. λόχοι: Aristophanes says there are four Lakedaimonian *lochoi*, Thucydides five, Aristotle seven.<sup>152</sup>

A scholion to Thucydides 4.8, in response to Thucydides' mention of Lakedaimonian soldiers having been drafted by lot "from all the *lochoi*," notes that "there are five *lochoi* among the Lakedaimonians: Aidōlios, Sinis, Sarimas, Ploas, Mesoatēs."<sup>153</sup> Finally, the entry for Ἐδωλός in Hesychius' lexicon reads "a *lochos* among the Lakedaimonians bears this name."<sup>154</sup> Rose bundled these six passages under the heading of fr. 541; this arrangement reflects his belief that all these passages drew on a single section of the Aristotelian *politeia*.<sup>155</sup>

149 ὅτι καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν εἰσὶ (τέτταρες λόχοι μαχίμων γυναικῶν): παρὰ ταῖς γυναῖξιν ὑπάρχουσι δ' λόχοι. τοῦτο δέ φησιν, ὅτι καὶ παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις τέσσαρες ὑπάρχουσι λόχοι οἷς κέχρηται ὁ βασιλεὺς.

150 τέτταρες λόχοι: ἀργότερον τὰ Λακῶνων ἔοικεν ἐξεργάσθαι ὁ ποιητής. λόχοι γὰρ οὐκ εἰσὶ τέτταρες ἐν Λακεδαιμονίᾳ ἀλλὰ ε', Ἐδωλος, Σίνις, Ἀρίμας, Πλοάς, Μεσσοάγης. ὁ δὲ Θουκυδίδης ζ' φησὶ χωρὶς τῶν Σκιριτῶν.

151 λόχοι: Λακεδαιμονίων φησὶν Ἀριστοφάνης τέτταρας. πέντε γάρ εἰσιν, ὥς φησιν Ἀριστοτέλης.

152 λόχοι: Λακεδαιμονίων δ', ὥς Ἀριστοφάνης. Θουκυδίδης δὲ ε', Ἀριστοτέλης ζ'.

153 λόχοι Λακεδαιμονίων πέντε, Αἰδῶλιος, Σίνις, Σαρίμας, Πλόας, Μεσοάτης.

154 Ἐδωλός: λόχος Λακεδαιμονίων οὕτως ἑκαλεῖτο.

155 The same collection of passages (minus one of the Aristophanes scholia) appears in Gigon's collection of Aristotelian fragments as fr. 546.1-5. Hesychius' entry for μόραν is fr. 547.

This collection of material has led some scholars to claim that the Aristotelian *Politeia of the Lakedaimonians* gave the names of five *lochoi* in the Lakedaimonian army.<sup>156</sup> This claim relies heavily on Rose's judgment about the interrelationship of the six passages he cataloged under the heading of fr. 541. However, none of the passages that give names for Lakedaimonian *lochoi* specifically cites Aristotle. Harpokration (in Rose fr. 540) does state, citing the Aristotelian *politeia*, that there were six named *morai* in the Lakedaimonian army (μόραι ἕξ ὠνομασμέναι). In addition, Hesychius (in fr. 541 Rose) does cite Aristotle for the statement that there were five Lakedaimonian *lochoi*. If, as Harpokration implies, the Aristotelian *politeia* gave the names of six Lakedaimonian *morai*, it is possible that it also gave the names of five *lochoi*, but that needs to be understood as an inference. Lupi has argued that the names of the five *lochoi* in the scholiasts to Lysistrata 453 and Thucydides 4.8 are actually the names of the five Argive *lochoi* that fought at Mantinea in 418.<sup>157</sup> (Thucydides refers to the Argive forces shortly after his discussion of the structure of the Lakedaimonian army.)

Another issue is the number of *morai* and *lochoi*. Harpokration, citing the Aristotelian *politeia*, gives the number of *morai* as six, and Hesychius, citing Aristotle, gives the number of *lochoi* as five. This may indicate, as has sometimes been claimed, that the Aristotelian *politeia* discussed two different systems of organization used in the Lakedaimonian army, one involving six *morai* and another involving five *lochoi*. However, if Rose was correct in thinking that all of the six passages he lumped together as fr. 541 derived information from the same section of the Aristotelian *politeia*, there was some confusion among the later authors using the *politeia* as to whether there were four or five *lochoi*. (Photios seems to have mixed up Aristotle and Thucydides.) The claim that there were four *lochoi* may be an erroneous guess based on Aristophanes' mention of four *lochoi* of women, but we cannot be certain about what the Aristotelian *politeia* had to say about the number of Lakedaimonian *lochoi*.

Wade-Gery employed this collection of textual evidence to reconstruct the evolution of the organization of the Lakedaimonian army. He argued that the Lakedaimonian army had three successive structures,

156 See, for example, Toynbee 1969: 371.

157 Thuc. 5.72.4, Lupi 2014a.

which he called the Tribal Army, the Obal Army, and the Army of the *Morai*.<sup>158</sup> The Tribal Army consisted of three regiments (each of which was linked to a descent-based Dorian tribe) and 27 phratries. In the seventh century, the enactment of the Great Rhetra created five new regiments called *lochoi*. Each *lochos* was linked to one of five locality-based *ōbai* that were situated in Sparta and Amyklai. Those five *lochoi* contained only Spartiates; the *perioikoi* had their own separate system that was probably also built around five (other) *lochoi*. Following the earthquake of c. 464, which resulted in the death of many Spartiates, a new system, built around six *morai*, was created. The *morai* were not based on locality (or tied in any way to the *ōbai*), and each *mora* contained both Spartiates and *perioikoi*. Wade-Gery, in proposing this reconstruction, relied on Tyrtaios fr. 19 West, the presence of 5,000 Spartiates and 5,000 *perioikoi* at Plataia (which Wade-Gery presumed represented 10 *lochoi* each with a strength of 1,000 men), Herodotus' reference to a Pitana *lochos* (because Pitana was one of the five *ōbai*),<sup>159</sup> the passages collected as fr. 541 Rose, and the evidence for *phylai* and *ōbai* in the Roman-era inscriptions.

The names of the *lochoi* (Edōlos/Aidōlios, Sinis, Arimas/Sarimas, Ploas, Messoagēs/Mesoatēs) presented difficulties for Wade-Gery because only one of them – Messoagēs/Mesoatēs – could be straightforwardly linked to an *ōba* (Mesoia). The other names seem to be nicknames. Hans van Wees suggests, based on a series of plausible etymologies, that Edōlos/Aidōlios = “Devourer,” Sinis = “Ravager,” Arimas/Sarimas = “Hell-Bent,” Ploas = “Thundercloud,” and Messoagēs/Mesoatēs = “Leader of the Center.”<sup>160</sup> Kennell astutely points out the parallel between these names and titles such as *rapax* and *victrix* given to Roman legions.<sup>161</sup> Wade-Gery resolved this problem by simply stating, “But if one *Lochos* is regional then surely all five must be.”<sup>162</sup> Other scholars, however, have

158 Wade-Gery 1925: 558-65; Wade-Gery 1958: 66-85.

159 Hdt. 9.10.1, 9.11.3, 9.53.2.

160 van Wees 2006: 158-61.

161 Kennell 1995: 167. Kennell suggests a different meaning for Arimas/Sarimas.

162 Wade-Gery 1958: 77. Wade-Gery explains the absence of Pitana in the list of *lochoi* given by the scholiast to Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 453 and Thucydides 4.8 by arguing that one of the names in that list is a nickname for the Pitana *lochos*. For Wade-Gery, the six *morai* in Aristotle fr. 540 and the five *lochoi* in fr. 541 show that the Aristotelian *politeia* provided a history of the Lakedaimonian army.



argued that Messoagēs/Mesoatēs had no connection whatsoever to the name of an *ōba*. Kathleen Chrimes, for instance, made the case that *lochos* in this usage referred to a file in a phalanx and that Messoagēs was the name of the middle rank in an *enōmotia* deployed in five files.<sup>163</sup>

Lazenby, in his monograph on the Lakedaimonian army, took issue with Wade-Gery's reconstruction of its organizational history. He endorsed Thucydides' rejection of Herodotus' claim about the existence of a Pitaneate *lochos*, highlighted the interpretive difficulties with the passages in fr. 541 Rose, and expressed doubt about using Roman-era inscriptions pertaining to participants in ballgames as evidence for the structure of the Lakedaimonian army hundreds of years earlier. Given that the actual strength of a Lakedaimonian unit at a particular battle depended on how many age-classes had been called up, the presence of 5,000 Spartiates at Plataia is not probative for the organization of that force. Lazenby proposed instead that the Obal Army was a figment of Wade-Gery's imagination and that the Lakedaimonian army, by the time of the Persian Wars at the latest, was organized into six *morai*, each of which was subdivided into *lochoi*, *pentēkostues*, and *enōmotiai*. Lazenby speculated that the six *morai* already existed in the eighth century, at which point in time each of the three Doric *phylai* was divided into two *morai*.<sup>164</sup> Hence, for Lazenby, the Lakedaimonian army did not at any point in its history have five major units.

163 Chrimes 1949: 316, 392. See also Lazenby 1985: 52; Kennell 1995: 167. For *lochos* meaning a file in a phalanx, see Arrian *Taktika* 5.4.

164 Lazenby 1985: 63-69. For an entirely different perspective, see Singor 2002, who argues that the Lakedaimonian army at Mantinea as described by Thucydides consisted of five *lochoi* of Spartiates, with *perioikoi* brigaded separately. For further discussion of the structure of the Lakedaimonian army, see, in addition to the sources cited above, Kelly 1981; Cartledge 1987: 427-31; Lupi 2006; Sekunda 2010: 719-20.

### 5. Previous Scholarship on *ōbai* and Where Spartiates Lived

The previous scholarship on Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived is based almost exclusively on the textual sources discussed in Sections 3 and 4. A key issue in interpreting those sources is the relationship between *phylai* and *ōbai* – more specifically, whether *ōbai* were subdivisions of *phylai* (and hence descent-based) or whether *phylai* and *ōbai* were separate systems, with the *ōbai* being based on locality rather than descent. Other questions (not all of which are addressed by any given scholar) follow thereupon: did *phylai* and *ōbai* pre-exist the Great Rhetra or was one or both created ex nihilo by its enactment? If *phylai* and/or *ōbai* pre-existed the Great Rhetra, what was the impact of its enactment? What was the nature and number of *phylai* after the enactment of the Great Rhetra? What was the nature and number of *ōbai*? If they were locality-based units, where were they located and what was the sociopolitical status(es) of their inhabitants? The last two questions are of particular significance in the present context because they have ramifications for our understanding of where Spartiates lived and settlement patterns in the Eurotas valley more broadly speaking.

The body of scholarly work on the *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived is vast, and an exhaustive review would require a lengthy essay solely on that subject. The discussion that follows is thus necessarily selective. I begin by examining some of the more influential pieces of scholarship that characterize *ōbai* as descent-based groups (Section 5.1). I then treat the scholarship that characterizes the *ōbai* as locality-based groups (Section 5.2). In that section, the work of Luigi Pareti, Victor Ehrenberg, and Wade-Gery, who authored the most widely read statements of the current orthodoxy, is discussed and critiqued in some detail. Next, I briefly examine some scholarship that appeared after Wade-Gery's time and expresses views differing from the current orthodoxy (Section 5.3). The recent scholarship on Lakedaimonian *phylai* and *ōbai* authored by Lupi is addressed in Section 5.4.

It will rapidly become apparent that several, highly divergent views about the nature and number of the *ōbai* have been proposed. Table 4 summarizes the opinions of some of the scholars whose work is discussed in Sections 5.1-4 on the number of *phylai* and *ōbai* after the enactment of

the Great Rhetra. The table helps make it apparent that the current orthodoxy is by no means the only viable approach to interpreting the available evidence.

Table 4: Proposals about the number of *phylai* and *ōbai* in Lakedaïmon after the enactment of the Great Rhetra

scholar	number of <i>phylai</i>	number of <i>ōbai</i>
Müller (1830)	3	30
Pareti (1910)	3	5
Dickins (1912)	9	27
Kahrstedt (1922)	5	at least 15
Wade-Gery (1925, 1943-44)	3	5
Hammond (1950)	5	5
Beattie (1951)	5	~30
Huxley (1962)	3	9
Lupi (2005-2015)	3	27

### 5.1 Scholarship Presenting the *ōbai* as Descent-Based Groups

Until the early 20th century, it was common to understand *ōbai* as descent-based subdivisions of *phylai*. For example, in the early decades of the 19th century, Karl Otfried Müller, citing Demetrios of Skepsis' comments on phratries at the Karneia (see Section 3.3), claimed that *ōba* was another name for phratry and that *ōbai* were subdivisions of the three Dorian *phylai*. Müller believed that Lycurgus restored prior (Dorian) customs (and thus did not create anything new), implying that *phylai* and *ōbai* pre-existed the Great Rhetra. He regarded both *phylai* and *ōbai* as descent groups tied to specific locales within Sparta, maintaining that there were 30 *ōbai* in total, with the *triēkades* mentioned by Herodotus (1.65.5) being subdivisions of *ōbai*. Müller thought it likely that all Spartiates lived in Sparta itself and a few neighboring villages.<sup>165</sup>

165 Müller 1830 [1824]: vol. 2, 12-13, 47-48, 79-84. Szanto 1901: 12-13 articulates a position similar to that of Müller, but, whereas Müller presumes that the three tribes

Denis Roussel, in an important monograph on the history of tribes in Greece published in 1976, argued that the *phylai* and *ōbai* of the Great Rhetra were both descent groups and that the *ōbai* were subdivisions of *phylai* (and hence akin to phratries). This is similar to Müller's position, with the significant caveat that whereas Müller saw *phylai* and *ōbai* as pre-existing groupings, Roussel took them to be ex nihilo creations.<sup>166</sup>

Ulrich Kahrstedt, in the first volume of his *Griechisches Staatsrecht* (published in 1922), argued that *ōbai* were subdivisions of *phylai*, with urban *ōbai* bearing the same name as the *phylai* to which they belonged. Kahrstedt saw both the *phylai* and *ōbai* of the Great Rhetra as locality-based groupings that became descent-based in the Hellenistic or Roman period. He posited the existence of five *phylai* (Dyme, Konuria, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana), with Dyme encompassing land outside of Lakonia and the other four corresponding to parts of Sparta. He was agnostic about the number of *ōbai* per *phylē* (and if the number of *ōbai* per *phylē* was uniform) and about the total number of *ōbai*. However, he explicitly named what he took to be several additional *ōbai* besides Amyklai, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana: Aigyti, Bryseiai, Geronthrai, Helos, Karystos, Krotaioi, the Menelaion, Pharai, Selinus, and Therapne. Kahrstedt argued that some *phylai* included both a part of Sparta and the surrounding territory (without being specific beyond that) but left the extent of the area inhabited by Spartiates unclear.<sup>167</sup>

existed prior to the Dorians' migration to the Peloponnese, Szanto presumes they were formed in the Argolid in the context of dividing newly conquered land.

166 Roussel 1976: 233–45. Roussel notes that the terminology may have already existed for older, different groups and been applied to the new *phylai* and *ōbai*. Welwei 1979 agrees with Roussel's interpretation while providing some additional nuances. For other iterations of the view that *ōbai* were descent-based subdivisions of *phylai*, see Kiechle 1963: 119–27; Lévy 1977: 91–94; Christien-Tregaro 1997: 52–53.

167 Kahrstedt 1922: 18–22, 70. Kahrstedt does not seem to have been aware of Tyrtaios fr. 19 (which was published in 1918) when he wrote this work. He focused on the constitution of Lakadaimon during its period of hegemony and thus does not comment at length on the origins of this system (or its relationship to the Great Rhetra). He does state that it replaced a system with 27 phratries that incorporated *homoioi*, *hypomeiones*, craftsmen, and perhaps Helots.

### 5.2 Scholarship Presenting the *ōbai* as Locality-Based Groups

Before the end of the 19th century, the late lexicographical sources and the discovery of a handful of Roman-era inscriptions mentioning *ōbai* induced some scholars to equate *ōbai* and *kōmai*. The identification of *ōbai* as *kōmai* led to the conclusion that the *ōbai* were locality-based. Georg Löschke, in publishing (in 1878) the inscription that became IG V.1.26 (see Section 3.3), took the text as confirmation of the idea that *ōbai* were locality-based groupings.<sup>168</sup>

In 1906, a team from the British School at Athens began the first systematic, sustained excavations in Sparta.<sup>169</sup> In advance of those excavations, British scholars made an effort to assemble and publish the available inscriptions and objects. Once excavations started, they uncovered and rapidly published a substantial number of epigraphic texts that provided significant additional evidence for *ōbai*.<sup>170</sup> That evidence prompted a shift in scholarly opinions toward the view that *ōbai* were locality-based groups. Guy Dickins, who played an important role in British excavations in Sparta in the early 20th century, argued that the Dorian population of Lakonia was originally divided into the three Dorian tribes. As a result of the *synoikismos* of Sparta c. 800, the Dorian tribes died out. They were replaced by nine new, locality-based *phylai*, each of which was divided into three locality-based *ōbai*. Dickins maintained that the 27 *ōbai* in Lakedaimon included Amyklai, Krotanoi, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana. The Great Rhetra was, according to Dickins, enacted c. 650 and restored the system that had been put in place c. 800. He did not directly address the geographic spread of the *phylai* and *ōbai* or the political status of their inhabitants. Dickins did, however, presume that at least some of the *phylai* consisted of non-Dorians.<sup>171</sup>

In 1910, Luigi Pareti, making good use of the newly published inscriptions from Sparta, articulated the earliest comprehensive statement of the position that developed into the current orthodoxy. Pareti argued that the Dorians, when they migrated into Lakonia, brought with them a

168 Löschke 1878.

169 On the history of British excavations in Lakonia, see H.W. Catling 1998.

170 See, for example, Tod 1904; Tod & Wace 1906; Tod, Tillyard & Woodward 1907.

171 Dickins 1912: 6-9. Dickins suggested that each *phylē* had an *ōba* of the same name.

system of three descent-based tribes, with each tribe being divided into three *triēkades* and nine phratries (thus giving a total of nine *triēkades* and 27 phratries). The Great Rhetra, in Pareti's view, left the Dorian tribes and phratries intact while creating five new, locality-based tribes called *ōbai*. Pareti, relying primarily on Roman-era inscriptions from Sparta, especially the *sphaireis* inscriptions (see Section 3.4.1), made the case that there were originally five *ōbai*: four in Sparta (Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana) plus Amyklai.<sup>172</sup> He linked the existence of multiple colleges of five officials in Lakedaïmon, most obviously the ephors, to the existence of five *ōbai*. Those *ōbai* all encompassed areas in Sparta or Amyklai such that Spartiates inhabited a restricted space around Sparta, beyond which were fields worked by helots and, further out, *perioikoi*.<sup>173</sup>

Pareti's view found a wide audience and was echoed by Victor Ehrenberg, in a much-cited article on *ōbai* that appeared in the Pauly-Wissowa *Real-Encyclopädie* in 1937.<sup>174</sup> Ehrenberg differed from Pareti in taking the *ōbai* to be pre-existing entities that were reorganized, not created by the Great Rhetra, and in arguing that the Rhetra impacted the functioning of the Dorian tribes (without providing any details).<sup>175</sup> He had nothing to say about the subdivisions of the Dorian tribes. However, he did, noting the Roman-era inscriptions that characterize Kynosoura and Limnai as

172 See n. 190 on the creation of a sixth *ōba* by Kleomenes III.

173 Pareti 1910; see also Pareti 1917-1920: vol. 1, 171-87.

174 Ehrenberg 1937. Later scholarly work that closely follows Pareti and Ehrenberg includes, but is by no means limited to, Toynbee 1969: 260-65.

175 See also Kiechle 1963: 119-27 for the argument that *ōbai* existed among the Dorians prior to their migration into the Peloponnese. Den Boer (who largely agreed with Ehrenberg's views) suggested that the *ōbai* were tribal, descent-based divisions of the pre-Dorian population that the Dorian invaders found expedient to convert into locality-based units (den Boer 1954: 170-75). Negri, building on the work of Levi, argues that *ὠπα* derives from Mycenaean *o-pa*, which he takes to mean either a tribute-paying community or the tribute paid by such a community. For Negri, *ὠπαί* were groupings that existed long before the arrival of the Dorians, who brought with them different groupings in the form of *phylai* (Negri 1978). Subsequent scholarship has suggested that *o-pa* meant something like "work to be performed" and expressed doubt about its connection with *ὠπα* (Melena 1983; Killen 1999).

both *phylai* and *ōbai*, extend Pareti's work by arguing that in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods *phylai* and *ōbai* were alternate appellations for the same, locality-based groupings.

The most influential statement of the current orthodoxy can be found in the work of Wade-Gery, in his essay on Lakedaimon in Volume 3 of the first edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (published in 1925) and three articles published in *Classical Quarterly* in 1943 and 1944.<sup>176</sup> Wade-Gery's work, which draws on earlier scholarship including that of Pareti and Ehrenberg, had a particularly powerful impact in no small part because his views were endorsed by Cartledge in his seminal book on Lakedaimon (first edition 1979, second edition 2002).<sup>177</sup>

Wade-Gery's argument, summarized in a highly compact fashion, is that there were five *ōbai* in Sparta during the Roman period, five major units in the Lakedaimonian army, and colleges of five officials in the Lakedaimonian government. Thus, one can infer that the Great Rhetra created five locality-based *ōbai*, four in Sparta and one at Amyklai, that served as the basis of Spartiate military and political life for centuries thereafter. All Spartiates necessarily resided in one of the five *ōbai* and hence in either Sparta or Amyklai.

Wade-Gery's arguments can be presented in more detailed form as follows:

- (1) The Great Rhetra is a genuine document from the late seventh century that formed part of a series of reform measures (the Lycurgan reforms) that were put into place within a compressed time frame. Tyrtaios' poem *Eunomia* was composed not long afterward.
- (2) The Lycurgan reforms were, at their heart, oriented toward the reorganization and strengthening of the Lakedaimonian army.

176 Wade-Gery 1925: 558-65; Wade-Gery 1943; Wade-Gery 1944a; Wade-Gery 1944b. The *Classical Quarterly* articles are reprinted in a collection of Wade-Gery's work, *Essays in Greek History*, published in 1958 (Wade-Gery 1958: 37-85). Insofar as it is easier to read the articles successively in *Essays in Greek History*, I cite that work here.

177 Cartledge 2002: 92-93; see also Cartledge 1987: 427-31, where the suggested organization of the Lakedaimonian army in the Classical period closely echoes that postulated by Wade-Gery.

The provision in the Great Rhetra that called for tribing the tribes and obing the obes entailed enrolling all adult male Spartiates into military units.

- (3) The *phylai* of the Great Rhetra were the three descent-based Dorian tribes, and the *ōbai* were five locality-based groupings that were tied to four settlement nuclei in Sparta (Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana) and one at Amyklai. As a result, starting in the late seventh century, Spartiates belonged to both a descent-based group (a Dorian tribe) and a locality-based group (an *ōba*). The Great Rhetra left the Dorian tribes intact but deprived them of military significance such that they became unimportant relics.<sup>178</sup>
- (4) The Lakedaimonian army was originally organized around the three Dorian tribes (the Tribal Army). The Great Rhetra entailed the creation of an army organized around five *lochoi*, each of which was linked to a specific *ōba* (the Obal Army). Spartiates and *perioikoi* were separately brigaded, so there were five *lochoi* of Spartiates and five *lochoi* of *perioikoi*. Sometime after the Battle of Plataia in 479 and before the Battle of Mantinea in 418 (probably after and in response to the casualties caused by the great earthquake of 464), the Lakedaimonian army was once again reorganized. The new structure centered around six *morai* in which Spartiates and *perioikoi* were brigaded together (the Army of the *Morai*). The *morai* were not tied to specific localities.

Insofar as all Spartiates were necessarily registered in a locality-based *ōba* and all the *ōbai* were in Sparta or Amyklai, all Spartiates lived in or quite close to Sparta. That assertion had ramifications for settlement patterns in the Eurotas river valley, as Wade-Gery made clear:

Laconia had no inhabited centres except Sparta (*plus* Amyklai) on the one hand, and on the other the towns of the *perioikoi* ... In Laconia,

178 In his 1925 essay in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Wade-Gery claimed that the Great Rhetra abolished the Dorian tribes (Wade-Gery 1925: 560). His views on that matter had evolved by the time the articles in *Classical Quarterly* were published.



we must first subtract the whole perioikis: in what is left, the only inhabited centres in which citizens are domiciled were the five villages or small towns which lay within four miles of the foot of the Akropolis [of Sparta]. The country estates of the Spartiates were not grouped round villages ... but isolated, and anyway the Spartiate's domicile was not on his estate but in Sparta.<sup>179</sup>

The idea that all Spartiates lived in Sparta and Amyklai is not an independently supported argument, but rather a corollary that follows from Wade-Gery's views on the location and function of the *ōbai*. If we admit to uncertainty about the *ōbai*, we must also simultaneously reconsider the question of where Spartiates lived.

Leaving aside some bits and pieces, the evidence that Wade-Gery cited in support of his arguments consisted of:

- Roman-era epigraphic texts, especially the *sphaireis* inscriptions, and passages from contemporary literary works that discuss the layout and early history of Sparta (most notably Strabo and Pausanias);
- various sources pertaining to the structure of the Lakedaimonian army and the size of deployed units, such as Tyrtaios fr. 19, Herodotus' statement about the existence of a Pitanaite *lochos*, and Thucydides' description of the Lakedaimonian forces at the Battle of Mantinea;
- the existence of colleges of five magistrates, including the ephors, *agathoergoi*, and the group of Lakedaimonians sent to arbitrate the dispute between Athens and Megara over Salamis;<sup>180</sup>
- ostensibly similar institutional structures in Athens, where, after the late sixth century, four descent-based Ionic tribes co-existed with ten locality-based Kleisthenic tribes;

179 Wade-Gery 1958: 78. This view echoes the conclusions reached by Bölte in the Pauly-Wissowa *Real-Encyclopädie*: "Daß es hier [the vicinity of Sparta] auch in der klassischen Zeit keine Städte gegeben hat. ... Die Spartiaten werden in der Stadt fest zusammengehalten ... Es hat auch keine Helotendörfer gegeben" (Bölte 1929a: 1336).

180 *Agathoergoi*: Hdt. 1.67.5. Arbitrators: Plut. *Sol.* 10.4.

- an ostensible decline in the vibrancy of the cultural life of Spartiates after the late sixth century.

This collection of evidence is less than compelling.<sup>181</sup> The evidentiary deficit is most acute with respect to the function of the *ōbai*. Wade-Gery's view that the *ōbai* were created for military purposes rests on his assumption that the crisis of the Second Messenian War led (via the Lycurgan reforms) to the militarization of Lakedaimonian society. As he put it in the *Cambridge Ancient History*:

The Spartans ... knew now they were living on a volcano. They met this situation with the *Eunomia*, the famous legislation which later generations associated with the name of Lycurgus. ... It was chiefly a subjecting of their whole lives ... to a discipline as rigid as any religious rule, in the strength of which they defied not the Devil but the Helots. This reorganization of the Spartan army was so radical that it changed the face of Spartan civilization.<sup>182</sup>

The reliability of the various, frequently contradictory ancient claims about the motivations behind and the content of what we call the Lycurgan reforms is difficult to assess,<sup>183</sup> and the belief that Lakedaimon was at any point in time a militarized society has been questioned by scholars such as Moses Finley and Stephen Hodkinson.<sup>184</sup> In addition, even if one assumes that the Lycurgan reforms militarized Lakedaimon, it does not necessarily follow that the *ōbai* were military units. The only sources that

181 None of the previous critiques of the current orthodoxy known to me is as comprehensive as the one offered here. Among the previous scholarship, I found Kennell 1995: 162–69 to be particularly helpful.

182 Wade-Gery 1925: 558.

183 Plutarch begins his life of Lycurgus by stating “Concerning Lycurgus the lawgiver, in general, nothing can be said which is not disputed, since indeed there are different accounts of his birth, his travels, his death, and above all, of his work as lawmaker and statesman” (trans. B. Perrin). The passage of time has not made matters much clearer. See, for instance, the observations in Hölkeskamp 2010 and Nafissi 2018.

184 Finley 1968; Hodkinson 2006.

shed light on the function of the *ōbai* are the Roman-era *sphaireis* inscriptions, in which the *ōbai* organize a ballgame tournament that formed part of the state educational system. The *phylai* and *ōbai* of Roman Lakedaimon thus appear to have served purposes quite different from those that Wade-Gery assigned them in the Archaic and Classical periods.<sup>185</sup> The requirement in the Great Rhetra to “obe the obes” implies that they fulfilled important functions of some kind. However, we know nothing for certain about what those functions may have been or how they evolved.

The evidentiary shortcomings of the current orthodoxy are compounded by methodological problems. Wade-Gery’s conclusions about the number, names, and locations of the *ōbai* created by the Great Rhetra in the late seventh century BCE are based primarily on inscriptions and literary passages from the first through third centuries CE. When Wade-Gery was writing about Lakedaimon, it was widely presumed that, due to an ostensibly high degree of conservatism, Roman Lakedaimon preserved an array of ancient customs. That presumption encouraged scholars to rely on Roman-era evidence to reconstruct the history of Lakedaimon in the Archaic and Classical periods. To give but one example, Chrimes’ *Ancient Sparta: A Re-Examination of the Evidence*, published in 1949, is divided into Part I (Sparta in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods) and Part II (The Earlier Sparta). This arrangement made it easier, as Chrimes put it, “to trace constitutional and social survivals back to their roots in the past.”<sup>186</sup> Recent scholarship has highlighted the numerous hazards in this approach and the need to take into account both diachronic change in Lakedaimon and the progressive mythologization of the past that produced what François Ollier called *le mirage spartiate*. The Roman-era epigraphic texts are a particularly problematic source because the residents of Sparta in the Roman period, when the town had developed into a tourist destination known for preserving what were presented as antique customs, made a concerted effort to highlight, and fabricate, continuities with bygone eras.<sup>187</sup> The current consensus is that,

185 Kennell 1995: 28–48.

186 Chrimes 1949: v.

187 On the dangers of using Roman-era sources to reconstruct Archaic and Classical Lakedaimon, see Hodkinson 2000: 1–64; Powell 2018. On the Spartan Mirage, see

from a methodological perspective, it is highly questionable to use texts from the first through third centuries CE to reconstruct the sociopolitical organization of Lakedaïmon in the late seventh century BCE.

Moreover, although Wade-Gery (like Ehrenberg and others before him) worked from the presumption of long-term continuity in Lakedaïmonian institutions, specific features of the evidence compelled him to acknowledge elements of change. This is most apparent with respect to IG V.1.26, a late second-/early first-century inscription in which Amyklai is an *ōba* with its own governmental apparatus (see Section 3.3). For Wade-Gery, the *ōbai* were “tribes based on domicile”<sup>188</sup> that served as subdivisions of the citizen body and the basis of military organization, not local governments, and Amyklai was one of the five *ōbai*. In order to explain how Amyklai could have had its own officials, Wade-Gery argued that Amyklai attained a degree of independence during the turbulent events of 146.<sup>189</sup> Even if one accepts Wade-Gery’s explanation of how the *ōba* of Amyklai had a local government (see Section 9.1 for further discussion), that explanation presumes that the structure and function of *ōbai* changed over time. One might also note that, for Wade-Gery, the *phylai* of the Great Rhētra were the three, descent-based Dorian tribes (Dymanes, Hylleis, Pamphyloi), whereas the *ōbai* (Amyklai, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana) were newly created, locality-based groupings. Yet, in the Roman-era inscriptions, Kynosoura and Limnai are characterized as both *phylai* and *ōbai* (see Section 3.4.1). If one accepts Wade-Gery’s reading of the Great Rhētra, the characterization of Kynosoura and Limnai as both *phylai* and *ōbai* can only be understood as an indication of significant change in the function of those two groups between the Archaic and Roman periods. All this goes to say that Wade-Gery’s arguments are based on the presumption of long-term continuity in the structure, number, and function of the *ōbai*, but the available evidence

Ollier 1933; see also Tigerstedt 1965–1978; Cartledge 2001: 169–70; Flower 2002. On cultural memory, some of it clearly fabricated, in Lakedaïmon during the Roman period and its political benefits, see Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 190–211 and Kennell 2018, as well as Cusumano 2009–2010; Baudini 2013; del Mar Alcocer Rodríguez 2016.

188 Wade-Gery 1958: 78.

189 Wade-Gery 1958: 75–76. On the events of 146 as they pertain to Lakedaïmon, see Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 88–90.

proves that presumption to be untenable. Even Wade-Gery had to postulate some degree of change in order to make the evidence compatible with his arguments.

One point that requires particular emphasis is that there is little evidence to support the widespread belief that there were five *ōbai* in Lakedaimon starting in the Archaic period (at the latest) and continuing through the Roman period. No textual source, either literary or epigraphic, contains a statement about the number of *ōbai* at any point in time. Among the four *ōbai* that ostensibly existed in Sparta by the seventh century at the latest, Pitana is repeatedly mentioned in literary sources from the Classical period, Kynosoura first appears (in an inscription and possibly in the work of Callimachus) in the Hellenistic period, and Mesoa in the Roman period. Limnai may have been mentioned by Callimachus; otherwise it is first known from Roman-era literary and epigraphic texts. The Roman-era epigraphic sources contain references to the *ōbai* of Kynosoura, Limnai, Neopolis, and Pitana, and contemporary literary sources mention Mesoa (without specifically characterizing it as an *ōba*). It is, as a result, possible (but far from necessary) to conclude that there were five *ōbai* during the Roman period.<sup>190</sup> The limited number of relevant inscriptions and literary passages leaves open the possibility that there were additional *ōbai*. Indeed, the epigraphic record (see, in particular, the discussion of *IG* V.1.722 in Section 3.1 and *SEG* 50.406 in Section 3.3) suggests that there were *ōbai* other than Amyklai, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Neopolis, and Pitana. Furthermore, even if we were certain that there were five *ōbai* in Roman times, we could not, on that basis, confidently state that the same was true in earlier periods. In fact, we have no way of achieving any degree of certainty about the total number of *ōbai* at any point in the history of Lakedaimon (see Section 9.1).

In a similar vein, the oft-repeated statement that Sparta was, from time immemorial, divided into four villages (each linked to a specific *ōba*)

190 In order to account for the existence of Neopolis and keep the number of *ōbai* at five, Wade-Gery endorsed Pareti's idea that Neopolis was created by Kleomenes III and argued that Amyklai became independent after 146 (Pareti 1917-1920: vol. 1, 176-77; Wade-Gery 1958: 75, 76 n. 3). This means that even Wade-Gery implicitly subscribed to the idea that there were, for a brief period, six *ōbai*. Kennell argued that Neopolis was another name for Amyklai. See Section 3.4.1.

is at best speculative and at worst misleading. This claim is not directly supported by any ancient textual source of any date. The idea that there were four separate settlement nuclei in Sparta is based primarily on: (a) the belief in the existence from an early date of five *ōbai* (one of which was Amyklai), (b) Thucydides' statement that the "*polis* of the Lakedaimonians" was, in his time, settled *kata kōmas*, and (c) references in Byzantine lexicons that equate *ōbai* and *kōmai*.<sup>191</sup> As we will see (Section 9.3), there is good reason to believe that the relevant passage in Thucydides' work has been misread – Thucydides was probably describing the settlement pattern in the Spartan plain, not the settlement organization of the city of Sparta. Moreover, there is no trace in the archaeological record of distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta (see Section 6.2). What we know about the early history of other Greek urban centers makes it entirely possible that there were distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta at some point, but, at the moment, it is impossible to establish the number or the specific locations and extents of those nuclei.<sup>192</sup>

The remainder of Wade-Gery's evidence requires only brief treatment. We have already seen (Section 4) that his Obal Army, built around five locality-based *lochoi*, may not have ever existed.<sup>193</sup> The existence of colleges of five magistrates is indisputable, but the assumption that they reflected a political and military system organized around five *ōbai* is open to question. There is no necessary connection between the numerical bases of different parts of a sociopolitical system. Through most of the Archaic period Athens had nine archons and four Ionic tribes; in the fifth century Argos had a citizen body divided into four *phylai* and an army divided into five *lochoi*; and, in Wade-Gery's system, two Spartiate

191 Thuc. 1.10.2. For the relevant lexicon entries, see Section 3.5. Wade-Gery presumed that the city of Sparta was comprised of four villages (Wade-Gery 1958: 79), but mentioned Thucydides' description of Sparta only in passing. This passage does feature in the work of Pareti (see, for example, Pareti 1917-1920: vol. 1, 183) and Ehrenberg (Ehrenberg 1937: 1694-95).

192 On the existence of distinct settlement nuclei in Greek urban centers, see, for instance, Osanna 1999 on Corinth.

193 As Lupi pointed out, it would have been quite difficult to ensure that manpower levels in each of the five locality-based *lochoi* would have stayed roughly equal over the course of time (Lupi 2018: 166).

kings ruled over three Dorian tribes and then five *ōbai*.<sup>194</sup> We can, in any historical context with multiple institutions, play number games that may easily lead to questionable hypotheses when we lack probative evidence. Dickins, for example, argued that there were originally 27 *ōbai* and connected that number to membership in the Gerousia by suggesting that a 28th *ōba* (Neopolis) was added to accommodate new citizens: if each *ōba* supplied one member of the Gerousia, we arrive, with the addition of the two kings, at 30.<sup>195</sup> The simultaneous existence of two distinct tribal systems in Athens is suggestive, but in and of itself tells us nothing about civic subdivisions in Lakedaïmon. Wade-Gery mentions the ostensible decline of the vibrancy of Spartiate cultural life only in the *Cambridge Ancient History* essay. He does so in order to help establish that the Lycurgan reforms were essentially military in nature (the unstated assumption being that militarization led to austerity). The textual and archaeological evidence for Spartiate austerity is currently being subjected to searching re-examination.<sup>196</sup> Even if we were to presume that Lakedaïmon became a more austere place after the late sixth century, that would tell us nothing about the details of sociopolitical organization or settlement patterns.

Wade-Gery's articulation of the current orthodoxy thus relies on a web of deductions that is much more fragile than it might appear *prima facie*. Simply put, the less-than-secure assumptions that the Great Rhetra militarized Lakedaïmonian society and that there were five *ōbai* in Roman Sparta and five major units in the Lakedaïmonian army (between the seventh and mid-fifth century) are not sound bases for reconstructing the sociopolitical organization of Lakedaïmon in the Archaic period. The current orthodoxy cannot, based on present evidence, be conclusively falsified, but it is sufficiently problematic as to warrant serious consideration of alternative interpretations.

194 On Athens and Argos, see Jones 1987: 28-77 and 112-18, respectively.

195 Dickins 1912: 7.

196 See, for example, Martin 2024.

### 5.3 Scholarship on the *ōbai* after Wade-Gery

Scholars working after Wade-Gery have proposed an array of slightly different versions of the current orthodoxy. A couple of examples will give a sense of the range of suggestions. N.G.L. Hammond, in an article published in 1950, argued that the enactment of the Great Rhetra effectively abolished the pre-existing Dorian tribes and created five new, locality-based *ōbai* and five new, descent-based *phylai* that were named after *ōbai* (this would help explain the conflation of *phylai* and *ōbai* in the Roman-era inscriptions).<sup>197</sup> Nicholas Jones, in a book published in 1987, expressed the view that the Great Rhetra did not alter either the three descent-based Dorian *phylai* or the five locality-based *ōbai*, which were already in existence at the time of its enactment, but instead prescribed that citizens would arrange themselves according to those groupings when meeting in the Assembly. When Kleomenes III created large numbers of new citizens in the third century, he put them all, regardless of their place of residence, into a newly created *ōba*, Neopolis. This began a lengthy process by means of which *ōbai* became descent-based groups that could be conflated with *phylai* by the Roman period.<sup>198</sup>

Other scholars writing after Wade-Gery have maintained more heterodox positions. Arthur Beattie, in an article published in 1951, presented a new reading of *IG* V.1.722 (which Fourmont found near Amyklai) that seems to include a reference to an *ōba* of the Arkaloi (see Section 3.1).<sup>199</sup> Beattie argued that, in what would now be called the Early Iron Age, an *ōba* consisted of a group of kinsmen ruled by a *basileus*, *ōbai* formed part of *phylai*, and each *ōba* was subdivided into phratries. He suggested that in Lakedaimon, after the enactment of the Great Rhetra, there were five *phylai* subdivided into approximately 30 *ōbai*, with the latter functioning as important elements of local governance. Pausanias gives a genealogy for the legendary figure Amyklas (see Section 2.3) that includes two sons named Argalos and Kynortas and a grandson named Oibalos.<sup>200</sup> Beattie

197 Hammond 1950: 59-60. For an earlier articulation of a similar argument, see Neumann 1906: 39-46.

198 Jones 1987: 118-23.

199 Beattie 1958.

200 Paus. 3.1.3.



equated Argalos and Arkalos and, reading Oibalos as meaning “little *ōba*,” posited the existence of two *ōbai* – Arkalos and Kynortas – in the vicinity of Amyklai in the Archaic and Classical periods. He explained the references to *ōbai* in Roman-era inscriptions as the result of the dismemberment of Lakedaimon in the second century: the *ōbai* situated close to Sparta became wards of the city, while the *ōbai* in outlying districts became fully independent *poleis*. That scenario assumes that the *ōbai* in the Archaic and Classical periods encompassed much, if not all, of Lakedaimon and that their inhabitants included both Spartiates and *perioikoi*.

George Huxley, in a book on Lakedaimon published in 1962, argued that there were, prior to the Great Rhetra, three descent-based *phylai*, five locality-based *ōbai*, and an uncertain number of phratries that were also known as *lochoi*. The Great Rhetra reorganized both *phylai* and *ōbai* such that there were three descent-based *phylai* and nine locality-based *ōbai*. Each *ōba* consisted of three phratries, one from each tribe (so that there were 27 phratries in all). Huxley takes Pitana to be an *ōba* and Kro-tanoi to be a phratry/*lochos* in the *ōba* of Pitana. The geographic extent of the *ōbai* is not clearly specified but seems to encompass much, if not all, of Lakedaimon.<sup>201</sup>

#### 5.4 Recent Work by Marcello Lupi

Marcello Lupi, in a series of excellent and stimulating articles, has critiqued the current orthodoxy and proposed an alternative that represents a variation of the conception of the *ōbai* as subdivisions of the Dorian *phylai* found in the work of Müller, Huxley, Roussel, etc. (see Sections 5.1, 5.3).<sup>202</sup> Lupi builds his arguments around recent scholarship on the

201 Huxley 1962: 37–49. Huxley’s views are reiterated, with minor variations, in Forrest 1980: 40–60.

202 Lupi’s ideas on this subject are most fully expressed in Lupi 2018, but are also addressed elsewhere, including Lupi 2005; Lupi 2006; Lupi 2014a; Lupi 2014b; Lupi 2014c; Lupi 2015. The summary of Lupi’s views provided here takes all of this work into account. Lupi has announced his intention to treat all of this material in a forthcoming monograph with the title *An Old-Fashioned City. Villages, Civic Subdivisions and Community in Ancient Sparta*.

history and function of subdivisions of the citizen body in Greek communities and on ethnogenesis, the importance of triadic divisions in Lakēdaimon, and Demetrios of Skepsis' description of the Karneia.

There was a long-lived scholarly consensus (already evident in Müller's work in the early decades of the 19th century) that *phylai* and Dorian and Ionian ethnic identities existed from a very early period in Greek history. In 1976, Roussel published what proved to be an influential book in which he argued that *phylai* and phratries were not primordial forms of social organization but rather took shape at the same time as *poleis*.<sup>203</sup> Oswyn Murray and others subsequently argued that the progressive formalization of political institutions in Greece involved the creation of carefully structured subdivisions of citizen bodies.<sup>204</sup> A separate but related body of scholarship, in which Jonathan Hall's work from the late 20th and early 21st century played a key role, presented Dorian, Ionian, and Hellenic identities as the result of complex processes of ethnogenesis that unfolded over the course of the Archaic period.<sup>205</sup>

The number of the Dorian *phylai* is, for Lupi, significant because it foregrounds the importance of triadic divisions in the structure of Lakēdaimonian institutions of all kinds. He points to the 30 members of the Gerousia, the 300 *hippeis*, the enigmatic *triēkades* mentioned by Herodotus, and the tradition in the ancient sources claiming that Lakēdaimon was divided into 9,000 *klēroi*.<sup>206</sup>

Lupi makes the case that the structure of the Karneia as described by Demetrios dates to the Archaic period. Triadic divisions tied to military organization feature prominently in Demetrios' description of the Karneia (fr. 1 Gaede, see Section 3.3 for the text), and Lupi takes this as a reflection of "a Dorian ideological horizon" that weakened over time.<sup>207</sup> Thucydides' description of the Lakēdaimonian army at the Battle of Man-

203 Roussel 1976.

204 Murray 1997.

205 Hall 1997; Hall 2002.

206 Hdt. 1.65.5. On the ancient sources for the number of *klēroi* in Lakēdaimon, see Hodkinson 2000: 65–112. Hodkinson sees the number of 9,000 as an invented tradition that developed in the third century.

207 Lupi 2018: 168.

tinea in 418 (see Section 4) indicates that the three Dorian tribal regiments attested in Tyrtaios fr. 19 had been superseded by six *lochoi*. In Lupi's view, this provides a *terminus ante quem* for the structure of the Karneia as described by Demetrios.

Demetrios states that at the Karneia there are nine *skiades* that contain tents, nine men eat dinner in each *skias*, and each *skias* contains three phratries. Lupi sees this arrangement as faithfully reproducing a system that structured both the Lakedaimonian army and citizen body. Based on the presumption that the men sharing a *skias* fought together and therefore belonged to the same *phylē*, Lupi reconstructs a system of three Dorian *phylai*, 9 intermediate units, and 27 phratries that were, in Lakedaimon, called *ōbai*.<sup>208</sup> He traces this system back to the *synoikismos* of the *polis* of Lakedaimon, when three Dorian *phylai* and 27 *ōbai* were created to serve as institutions for organizing the citizen body into units of roughly equal size. Once in existence, *phylai* and *ōbai* helped create a shared Dorian identity that bound together the entire citizen body. Although the *ōbai* are, in Lupi's reading of the evidence, descent-based groups, he also sees the *ōbai* as being in some sense – which is not clearly specified in his published work – based on locality.<sup>209</sup>

In support of this interpretation of the Demetrios fragment, Lupi points to the situation on Kos, where the citizen body was (in the fourth century) divided into the three Dorian *phylai*, with each *phylē* being subdivided into three *chiliastues*.<sup>210</sup> He also expresses strong approval for Beattie's reading of *IG* V.1.722 (dated to the late sixth/early fifth century), according to which there were two *ōbai* – Arkalos and Kynortas – in the vicinity of Amyklai in the Archaic period (see Sections 3.1, 5.3). Lupi adds a third *ōba* to that group by connecting Pausanias' genealogy of the legendary king Amyklas (according to which Amyklas had three sons, Hyakinthos, Argalos, and Kynortas) to the inscription on a bronze bowl. The bowl, dated to the second half of the sixth century, was found

208 Other scholars have proposed that each of the three phratries in each *skias* came from a different *phylē*. See, for instance, Pettersson 1992: 62.

209 “The opposition between kinship-based and territorial subdivisions has proved misleading since the subdivisions, despite being fictional kinship groups, also had a territorial nature” (Lupi 2018: 174).

210 The *chiliastues* were also referred to as *enatai* (ninths). See Jones 1987: 236–42.

at Aigiai and hence not far from Gytheion in southern Lakonia.<sup>211</sup> The inscription seems to read *ὑακίνθιοι ἀνέθεν ἄται ἀγοίκῶ(ι)*, which Lupi takes as recording a dedication made by an *ōba* of the Hyakinthioi located near Amyklai. The simultaneous presence of three *ōbai* in the vicinity of Amyklai is, for Lupi, another indication of the fundamental importance of triadic divisions in Lakedaimon.<sup>212</sup>

This reading of the evidence prompts Lupi to reconsider the nature of the Aigeidai, Agiads, and Eurypontids; of the *leschai* in Sparta; and of the Great Rhetra. He takes the Aigeidai (described as a *phylē* by Herodotus and a phratry in the Aristotelian *Politeia of the Lakedaimonians*) to be an *ōba*, which leads him to conclude that the Agiads and Eurypontids also constituted *ōbai*.<sup>213</sup> Pausanias' description of Sparta includes "the *leschē* of the Krotanoi, who form part of the Pitanaatans" and "a *leschē* called Poikilē."<sup>214</sup> Plutarch states that Spartiates under the age of 30 were expected to spend most of their time in gymnasia and *leschai* and that new-born children were taken to a *leschē* where they underwent an examination by the "elders of the tribes" (τῶν φυλετῶν οἱ πρεσβύτατοι).<sup>215</sup> Lupi notes the role of phratries in other Greek communities in recognizing children as legitimate offspring and takes the *leschai* to be the seats of *ōbai* (with Plutarch sharing the conflation of *ōbai* and *phylai* evident in Roman-era inscriptions). In a notably audacious interpretive venture, Lupi argues that the Great Rhetra does not, as per the current scholarly consensus, establish legislative practices, but rather specifies procedures for admission to the Spartan citizen body.<sup>216</sup> He reads the text as requiring that each subdivision of the Spartan citizen body meet at more or less the same time each year to test the legitimacy of children.

211 Paus. 3.1.3, SEG 28.404. Both the text and significance of SEG 28.404 continue to be debated. Gallavotti, for instance, took the Hyakinthioi to be a *thiasos*, while Martin sees the inscription as evidence for the participation of *perioikoi* in cult activities at the Amyklaion (Gallavotti 1978: 184; Martin 2024: 101-2).

212 Lupi's interpretation of Hesychius' ἐπιπαι[δεία]ζειν (see Section 3.5) represents another possible piece of supporting evidence.

213 Hdt. 4.149.1; Aristotle fr. 532 Rose. On the Aigeidai, see Section 2.3.

214 λέσχη Κροτανῶν: εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ Κροτανοὶ Πιτανάτων μοῖρα (3.14.2); ἐν Σπάρτῃ δὲ λέσχη τέ ἐστι καλουμένη Ποικίλη (3.15.8).

215 Plut. Lyc. 25.2, 16.1.

216 Lupi 2014b.

Lupi astutely recognizes the implications of all of the preceding for our understanding of settlement patterns in Lakonia:

By defining Sparta as a city settled in villages (πόλις κατὰ κώμας), Thucydides only intended to illustrate the settlement pattern, without any institutional implications: a *polis* which consisted of a series of villages situated in the plain of Sparta (along the middle valley of the Eurotas from Thornax in the north at least as far south as Amyclai), and which, nevertheless, had its centre in the village of Pitane and the adjoining acropolis of Sparta.<sup>217</sup>

For reasons discussed in Sections 9.1-2, I agree with Lupi's views on where Spartiates lived (with the important caveat that I posit an element of diachronic change that is absent from Lupi's work), while disagreeing with his identification of the *ōbai* as phratries.

217 Lupi 2018: 163-64. See also Lupi 2006: 203. Lupi is here referencing Thuc. 1.10.2, on which see Section 9.3.

## 6. The Settlement Organization of Sparta

Wade-Gery did not explicitly discuss the origins or specific locations of the four settlement nuclei, each linked to an *ōba*, that he believed collectively constituted the city of Sparta. However, the widespread belief in a Dorian invasion and the idea that the Dorians founded Sparta on a previously uninhabited site sometime around 1000 BCE have led most scholars to conclude that the four settlement nuclei came into being at the same time as the city. The belief that Thucydides at 1.10.2 describes Sparta as being settled *kata kōmas* has been taken as evidence that a dispersed settlement organization persisted at least through the fifth century.<sup>218</sup> The *ōbai* of the Great Rhetra are habitually equated with Thucydides' *kōmai* based on entries in Hesychius' lexicon.<sup>219</sup>

There is a long tradition – stretching at least as far back as the drawings that Jean-Denis Barbié du Bocage made to illustrate Jean-Jacques Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce* (1788, see Figure 3) – of producing plans showing Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana tightly clustered around the acropolis of Sparta.<sup>220</sup> A notable recent example is the plan of Sparta included in Kourinou's invaluable monograph (published in 2000) on the topography of the city. In that plan, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana are placed in specific parts of the area delimited by the Hellenistic city wall (see Figure 4).

The available archaeological and textual evidence runs counter to this understanding of the settlement organization of Sparta in three ways: (1) there are no traces of distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta, (2) areas outside the space delimited by the Hellenistic city wall were densely occupied from an early date, and (3) textual sources starting in the Archaic period repeatedly equate Pitana and Sparta. Before addressing those issues, I provide a brief overview of Sparta's layout as a potentially helpful orientation to the physical realities of the city.

218 See, for example, Ehrenberg 1937: 1695 (citing Bölte 1929c); Cartledge 2002: 80–81, 90–92.

219 For the text of the Thucydides passage, see Section 9.3 For the entries in Hesychius' lexicon, see Section 3.5.

220 Barthélemy 1788: vol. 1, 495, 624–27; Barbié du Bocage 1788; Lupi 2014c: 103–5.



Figure 3: Plan of Sparta by Bocagé for Barthélemy's *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis*.





Figure 4: Kourinou's plan of Sparta. Red and blue have been added to the original black-and-white plan to make it easier to locate the *ōbai* and the Hellenistic fortification wall. © Eleni Kourinou; reproduced with permission.



### 6.1 *The Layout of the City*

The site of Sparta is bounded on three sides by rivers: to the north by the Mousga, to the south and southwest by the Magoulitsa, and to the east by the Eurotas (see Figure 5). The two most significant topographic features within the city are the acropolis and adjoining Palaiokastro plateau. The city stretched south from the Palaiokastro plateau, in the space defined by the Mousga, Magoulitsa, and Eurotas. A series of isolated hills, though not much higher than the surrounding ground level, had sufficiently steep sides to be significant features in the topography of the city. These hills include Gerokomeiou and Xenia (both located just to the south of the Palaiokastro plateau) and Evangelistria (alongside the Magoulitsa).<sup>221</sup>

A fortification wall (see Figure 6) was constructed in the Hellenistic period. Another, smaller fortification (typically referred to as the Late Roman wall) was constructed around the acropolis and the Palaiokastro plateau sometime in the fourth century CE.<sup>222</sup> This later wall enclosed numerous earlier buildings, including the Sanctuary of Athena Chalki-oikos. Several cult sites were located on the west bank of the Eurotas, including the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. Three extracommunal cemeteries have been identified at the fringes of the city: one in the Mousga ravine and two (what are typically called the Southwestern Cemetery and the Olive Oil Cemetery) along the Magoulitsa.<sup>223</sup>

221 Other than the Eurotas, the ancient names for the various topographical features of Sparta are unknown, and all the standard nomenclature is modern.

222 Wace 1907a; Frey 2016: 85-127.

223 Christesen 2019b.

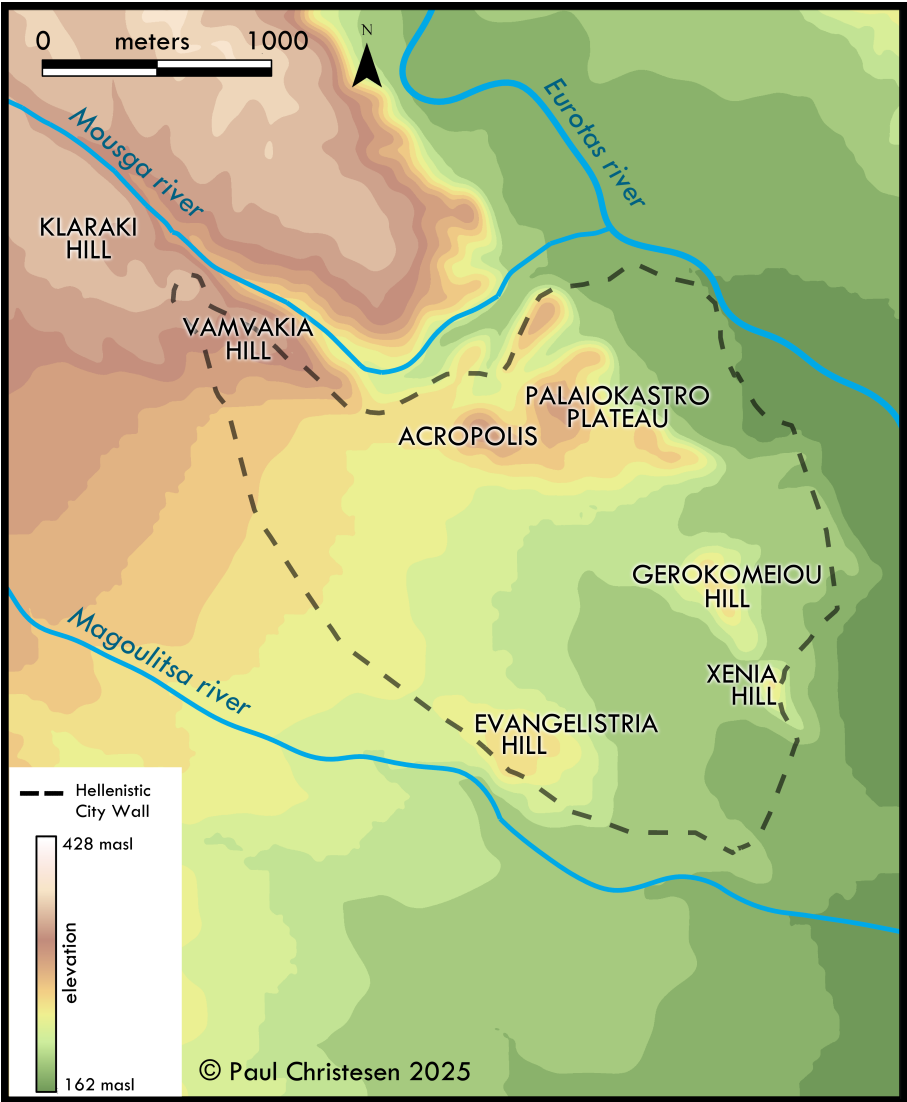


Figure 5: Topography of Sparta.

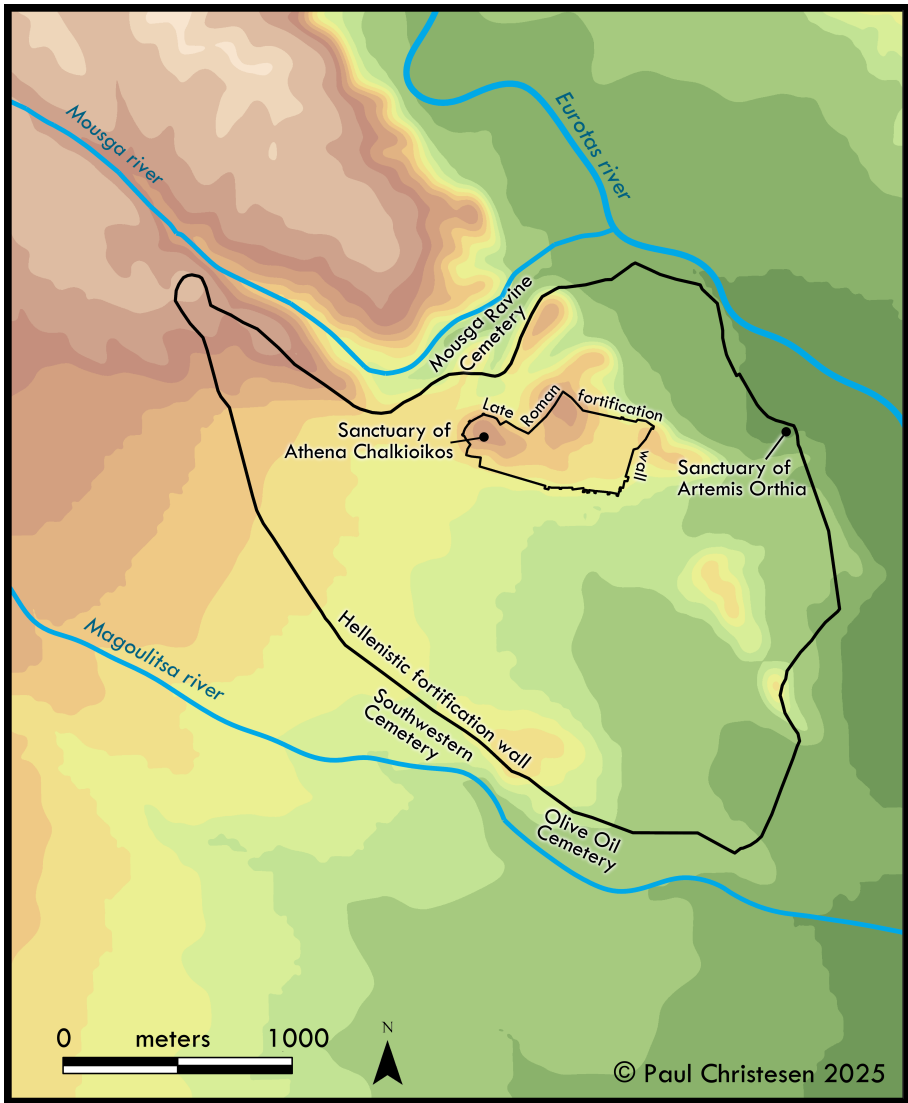


Figure 6: Landmarks in Sparta.

## 6.2 Four Distinct Settlement Nuclei?

The previous scholarship on where Spartiates lived has relied almost exclusively on textual sources, but, for reasons articulated in Section 1, it is now possible to bring archaeological evidence to bear. New information on the settlement organization of Sparta, especially published burials, can be used to help assess the veracity of the assumption, built into the current orthodoxy, that there were four distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta inhabited by roughly 80% (= the inhabitants of four out of five *ōbai*) of adult male Spartiates and their families. Kourinou and others have argued that there were four cemeteries in Sparta, one for each of the *ōbai*. Maria Tsouli has argued that the Olive Oil Cemetery functioned as the burial ground for the *ōba* of Mesoa.<sup>224</sup>

In a previous publication I have expressed doubt – based simply on a visual inspection of a map that I constructed showing burial locations – about the existence of four obal cemeteries.<sup>225</sup> It is now possible, partly as the result of the recent work on the settlement organization of Sparta that I have done with Nathaniel Kramer, to carry out a more sophisticated analysis of the spatial patterning of burials in Sparta. That analysis employs geospatial software and involves placing each published burial in a grid of 100 x 100 meter tiles that covers the entirety of the ancient city.<sup>226</sup>

Spatially distributed variables (e.g. the locations of instances of a disease) can be clustered, evenly dispersed, or random (see Figure 7). In practice, few real-world variables are spatially distributed such that they correspond precisely to one of the cubes shown in Figures 7a and 7b. As a result, the spatial distribution of variables is typically calculated using what is called Moran's Index, which provides a measure of what geographers call "spatial autocorrelation." A perfectly clustered variable (Figure 7a) would get a Moran's Index score of 1, a perfectly dispersed variable (Figure 7b) would get a score of -1, and a completely random distribution would get a score of 0 (Figure 7c).

224 Kourinou 2000: 215-19; Tsouli 2013a: 153.

225 Christesen 2019b: 336-38.

226 Christesen & Kramer 2024. See also Christesen & Kramer (forthcoming).

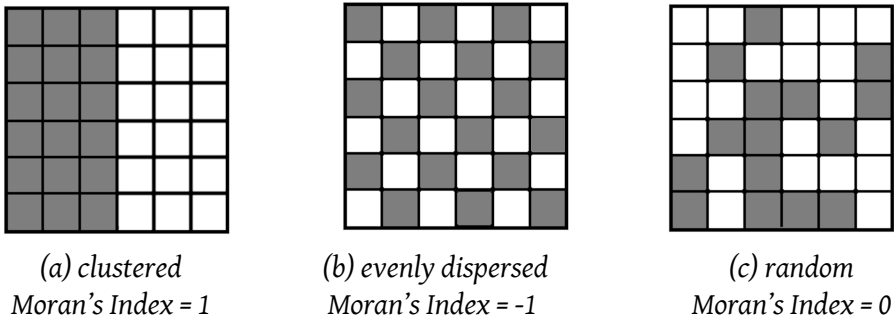


Figure 7: Types of spatial distribution.

Moran's Index can be calculated in two different ways. A global Moran's Index calculation generates solely a numerical score for the dataset in question. A local Moran's Index calculation identifies the locations of statistically significant clusters in the dataset.<sup>227</sup>

227 The analysis presented here was performed using the Spatial Autocorrelation (Global Moran's I) and Cluster and Outlier Analysis (Anselin Local Moran's I) tools in ArcGIS Pro. The conceptualization of spatial relationships was set to "inverse distance" and the distance method to "Euclidean." The threshold distance was set to 100 meters. For more details on the operation of these tools in ArcGIS Pro, see: <https://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/latest/tool-reference/spatial-statistics/spatial-autocorrelation.htm>; <https://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/latest/tool-reference/spatial-statistics/cluster-and-outlier-analysis-anselin-local-moran-s.htm>.

The formulas employed in ArcGIS Pro to calculate global and local Moran's Indexes can be found at:

<https://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/latest/tool-reference/spatial-statistics/how-spatial-autocorrelation-moran-s-i-spatial-st.htm>;  
<https://pro.arcgis.com/en/pro-app/latest/tool-reference/spatial-statistics/how-cluster-and-outlier-analysis-anselin-local-m.htm>.

For a general introduction to the use of Geographic Information Systems in archaeology, see Conolly & Lake 2006. On the statistical underpinnings of the Moran's Index calculations, see Rogerson 2015: 268-73. On the use of global and local Moran's Index calculations in the analysis of archaeological data, see Hacıgüzeller 2020 and Crema 2020, respectively. For an example of another recent application of the use of Moran's Index in the field of archaeology, see Heydari Dastenaiei & Niknami 2023.

I calculated global and local Moran's Indexes for two different datasets:

(a) dated, intracommunal burials, which I defined as burials within the space delimited by the Hellenistic wall circuit (391 burials in all; see Table 5);

(b) dated, intracommunal burials plus dated burials made within 400 meters or less outside the Hellenistic wall (1,472 burials in all). This calculation included burials in the Southwestern and Olive Oil cemeteries. For analytical purposes, I set the number of burials in the Southwestern Cemetery to 1,000, dated them all to the Roman period, and distributed them over four 100-meter tiles. I set the number of burials in the Olive Oil Cemetery to 70 (dated as 25 Archaic, 25 Classical, 20 Hellenistic), and placed them all in a single 100-meter tile.<sup>228</sup> In both cases I combined Protogeometric and Geometric burials into a single category because it has proven difficult in some cases to differentiate the tombs of those two periods.

Table 5: Number of cataloged intracommunal burials, by period

Proto-geo-metric	Geo-metric	Archaic	Classi-cal	Hellen-istic	Roman
15	19	29	17	77	234

The results of the global Moran's Index calculations are shown in Table 6. The scores for intracommunal burials do not support the hypothesis that there were four distinct cemeteries within the inhabited area of Sparta. There is no trace of clustering in the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods, and only a limited degree of clustering in the Protogeometric-Geometric and Roman periods. The scores for intracommunal and extracommunal burials taken together tell essentially the same story. Those scores also suggest that burials in Sparta did become significantly more highly clustered, but not before the Roman period.

228 These parameters are consistent with the published details of the two cemeteries, on which see Christesen 2019b.

Table 6: Global Moran's Index scores for burials in Sparta

period	global Moran's Index	probability that this pattern could be the result of random chance	global Moran's Index	probability that this pattern could be the result of random chance
	intracommunal burials		intracommunal and extracommunal burials	
Protogeometric-Geometric	0.15	< 1%	0.15	< 1%
Archaic	-0.01	pattern appears to be random	0.00	pattern appears to be random
Classical	0.03	pattern appears to be random	0.00	pattern appears to be random
Hellenistic	0.04	pattern appears to be random	0.02	pattern appears to be random
Roman	0.15	< 1%	0.49	< 1%

The spatial patterns underlying this data are made clear by the results of the local Moran's Index calculation, which can be found in Figure 8. During the Protogeometric-Geometric period, there was a notable cluster (spanning four tiles) in the northeastern part of the city. During the Roman period, there were clusters in the center and southeastern part of the city.<sup>229</sup> The limited number of clusters in any given period and their

229 The cluster in the southeastern part of the city is now sometimes referred to as the Southeastern Cemetery (see, for example, Tsouli 2020: 153-54). The Hellenistic period exhibits one major cluster, located just to the west of the Roman cluster in that area. The low global Moran's Index score for the Hellenistic period is largely the result of the existence of more than 20 burials in the northeastern corner of the city, which produces a considerable degree of dispersion.

movement over time are not consonant with the idea that there were, from the foundation of the city, four distinct cemeteries attached to four distinct settlement nuclei.

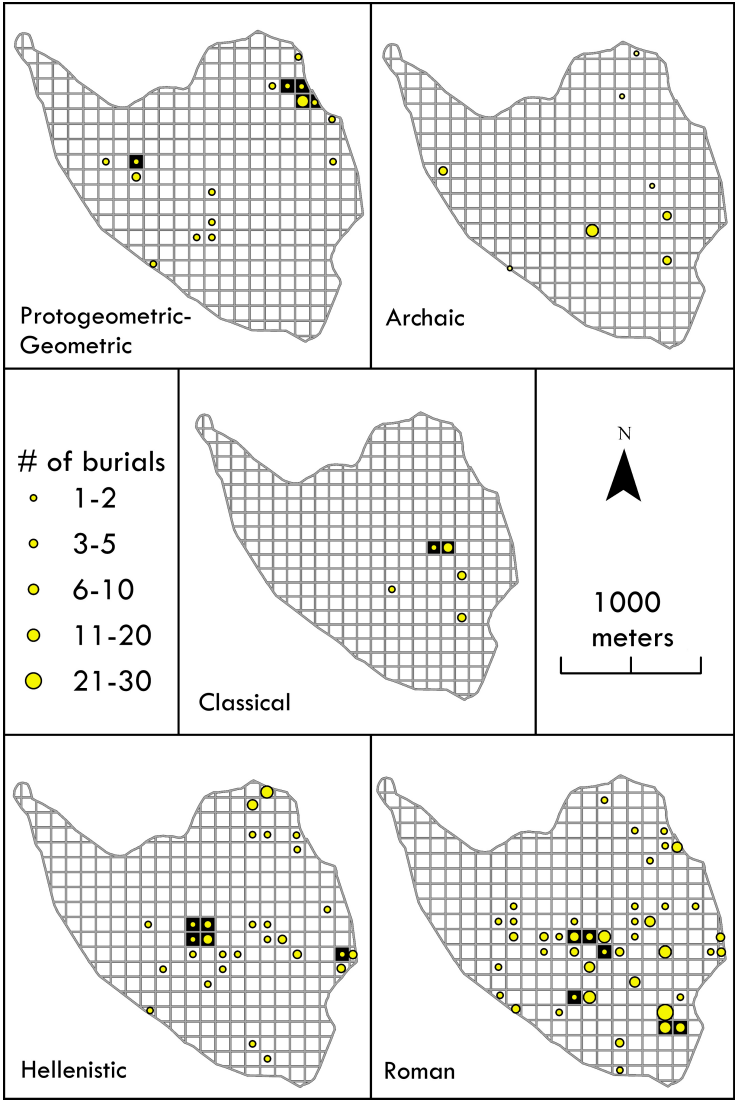


Figure 8: Locations and clustering of burials in Sparta, by period, based on local Moran's Index calculations. Burials are represented by proportionally-sized dots, and statistically-significant clusters are shaded in black.



What is known about the number of Spartiates, the extent to which the space delimited by the Hellenistic city wall was occupied in the Archaic and Classical periods, and the use of space casts further doubt on the existence of four distinct settlement nuclei. It will be helpful to bear in mind that the evidence for residential spaces in Sparta prior to the later Hellenistic period is exiguous because of the use of ephemeral materials such as mudbrick. As a result, the proportion of the city given over to housing can only be determined through indirect means.

At the end of the Archaic period there were approximately 8,000 adult male Spartiates who, given standard demographic patterns, would have belonged to approximately 6,500 separate households.<sup>230</sup> If we assume a family size of four free persons plus two enslaved persons, and if 80% of Spartiate households resided in Sparta, the population of the city would have been approximately 31,000 in the early fifth century.<sup>231</sup>

A significant fraction of the area encompassed by the Hellenistic city wall, c. 270 ha, was at best lightly inhabited prior to the Hellenistic period: there is little evidence for activity south of a line drawn between Evangelistria and Xenia hills, most if not all of the Palaiokastro plateau was given over to religious sanctuaries and the agora, and the edges of the settlement do not appear to have reached the line of the Hellenistic wall in some places.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, the published finds indicate that, in the Archaic and Classical periods, a considerable portion of the space in the city was used for cult purposes (see Section 9.2).

If, using round numbers, we allot 40 hectares to cult sites, 20 to the Palaiokastro plateau, 20 to the area south of Evangelistria and Xenia hills, 20 to areas within the Hellenistic wall not occupied during the Archaic and Classical periods, and another 20 to roads and unusable hillsides, we are left with an area of approximately 150 hectares. This result aligns with Mogens Herman Hansen's argument that roughly half of the intra-

230 Hodkinson 2000: 383; Doran 2018: 22-32.

231 The addition of two enslaved persons per household is, in my view, a minimum number that is necessitated by the refusal of Spartiates to engage in a wide range of activities performed by free persons elsewhere. See, for example, *Xen. Lac.* 8.1-3.

232 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 261-67.

mural area of a typically-sized Greek urban center was used for residential space, and John Travlos' estimate that residences occupied c. 120 of the 215 hectares within the Themistoclean walls in Athens.<sup>233</sup>

Thirty-one thousand people residing in a space of 150 hectares gives a population density of c. 200 persons per hectare. This is a high but not impossible figure, given that Hansen assumed an average of 150 persons per hectare in a typical Greek urban center.<sup>234</sup> However, that figure presumes that, leaving aside the areas listed in the previous paragraph, all the space in the city was occupied by residences. Here we need to recall the prevailing interpretation of Thucydides' (1.10.2) observations on Lakedaimon, which are typically taken to mean that, in the later fifth century, Sparta was still laid out *kata kōmas*, such that there were distinct settlement nuclei in the city. If there were indeed four distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta in the fifth century, they would have needed to be separated by some considerable amount of open space. If one allots any meaningful area to those interstitial spaces, the population density of the occupied areas rapidly increases to improbably high numbers. One might, in the same vein, note that (admittedly incomplete) maps of the use of space in Sparta during different periods (see Figures 9-13) do not show any trace of the existence of four separate settlement nuclei.<sup>235</sup>

233 Travlos 1960: 71; Hansen 2006: 22, 35-47.

234 Hansen 2006: 22, 35-47. For similar (albeit less detailed) calculations, see Forrest 1980: 43; Lupi 2006: 202-3.

235 The categories of spatial function shown in Figures 9-13 are discussed in Christesen & Kramer 2024.

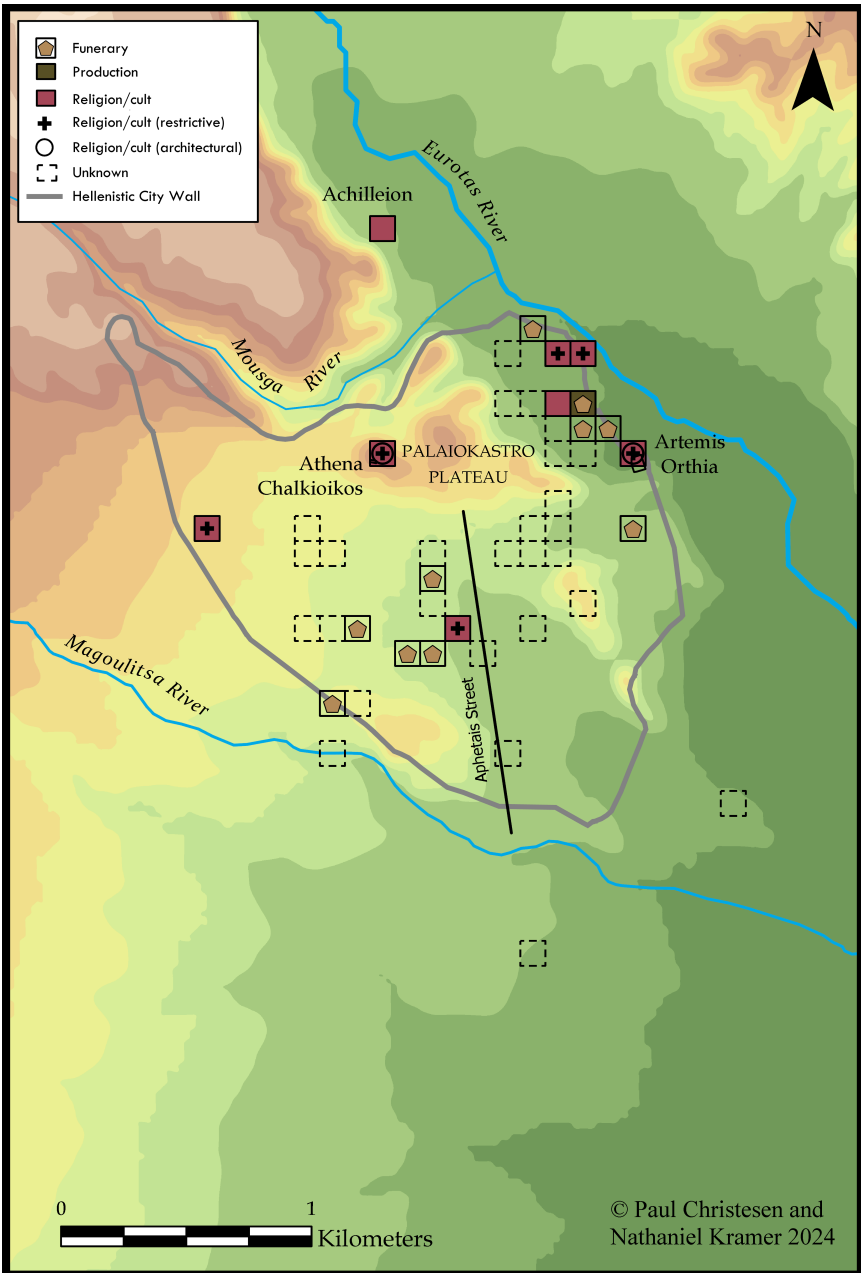


Figure 9: Sparta in the Geometric period. The Hellenistic city wall is shown solely as a convenient landmark.

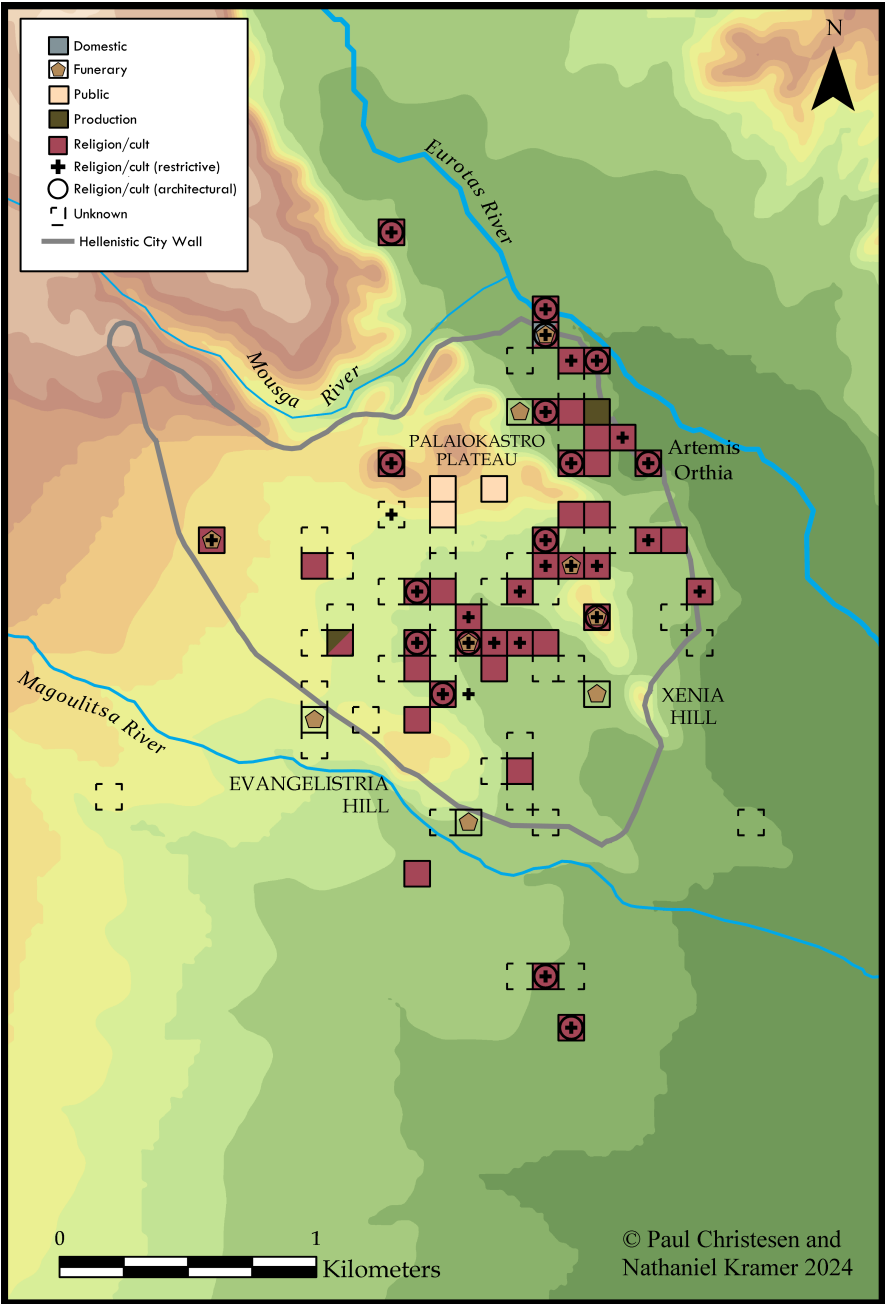


Figure 10: Sparta in the Archaic period. The Hellenistic city wall is shown solely as a convenient landmark.

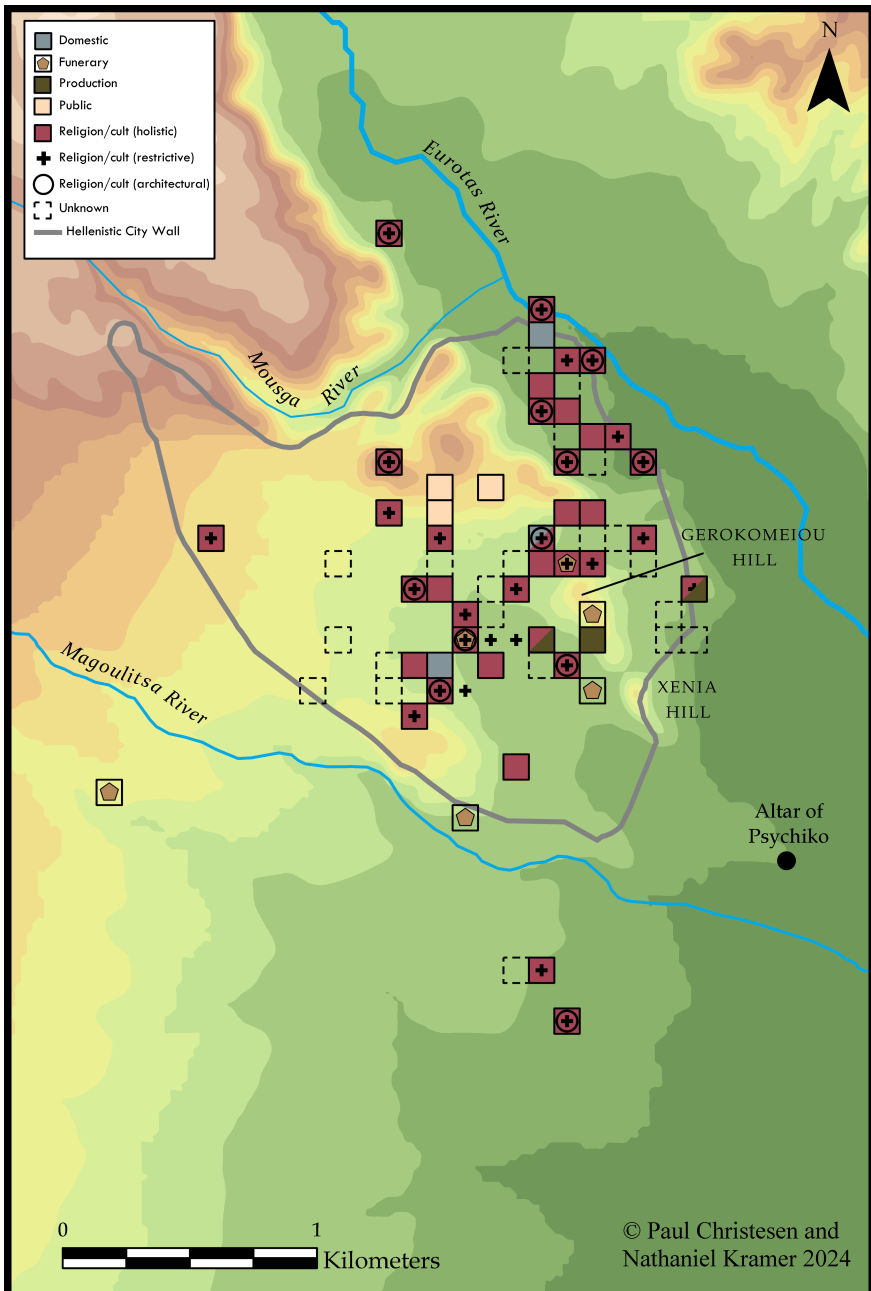


Figure 11: Sparta in the Classical period. The Hellenistic city wall is shown solely as a convenient landmark.

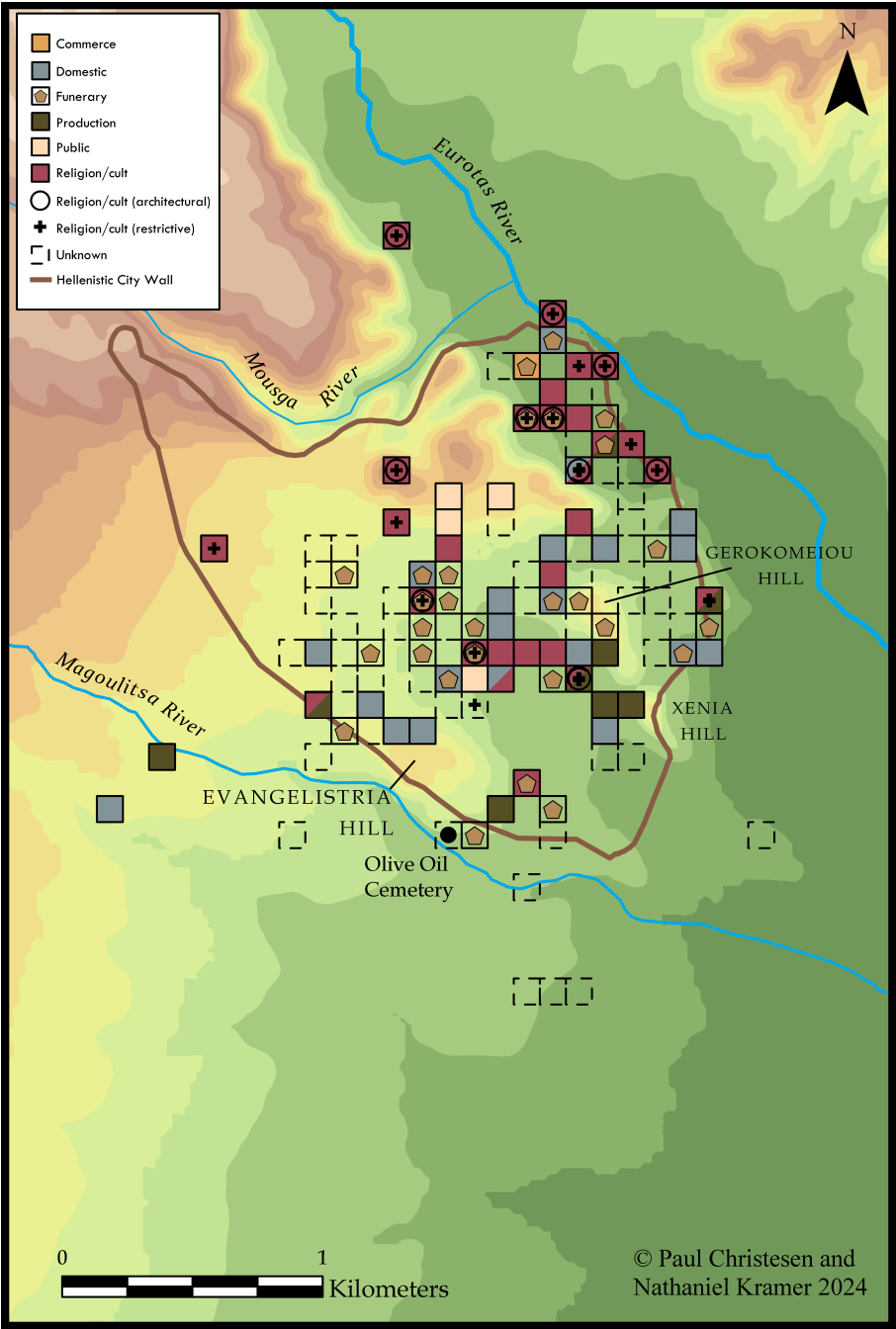


Figure 12: Sparta in the Hellenistic period.

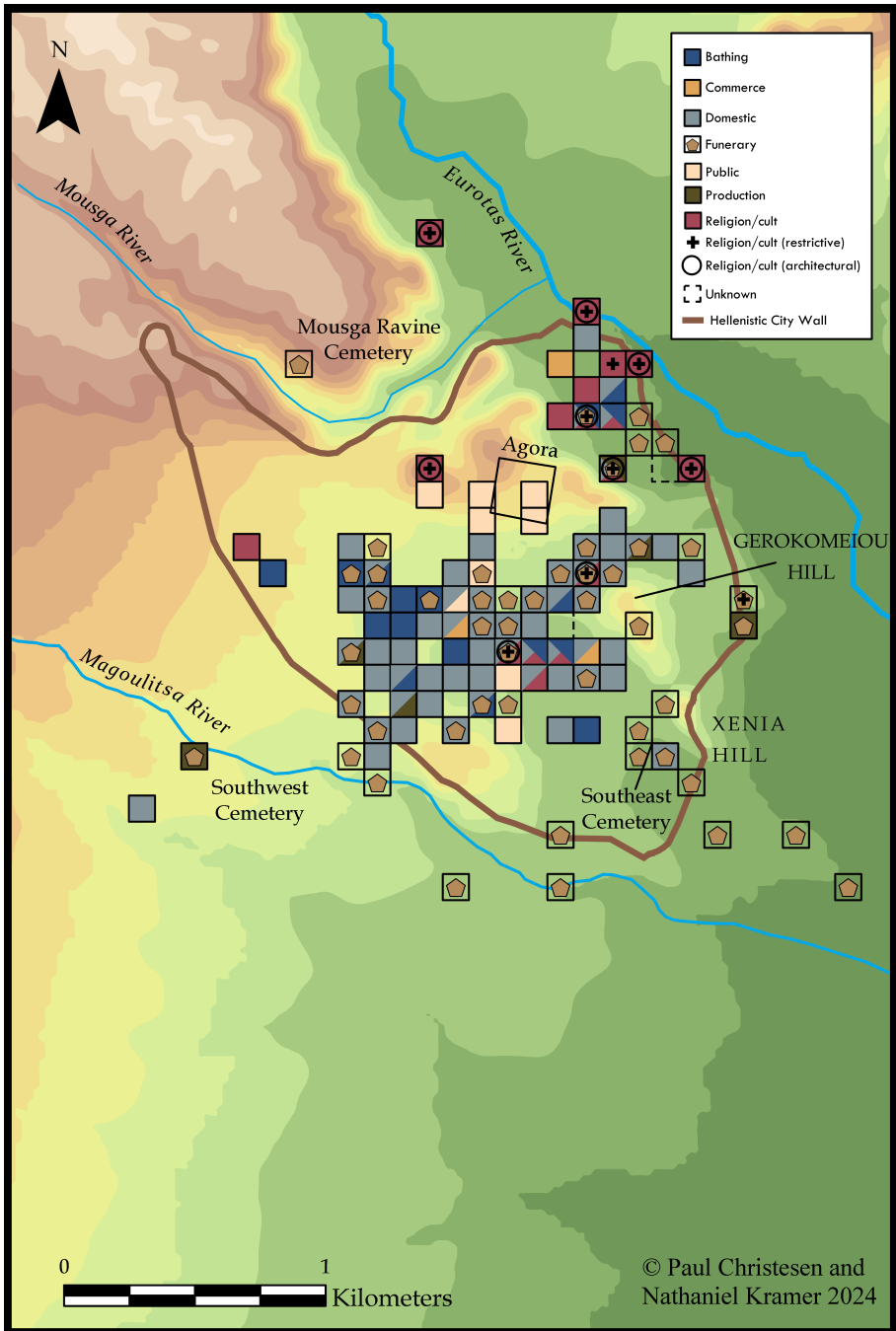


Figure 13: Sparta in the Roman period.

### 6.3 A City with Suburbs

Archaeological evidence, much of it newly available, indicates that, starting in the Archaic period at the latest, the city of Sparta had highly developed suburbs. The presence of rivers on three sides constricted the available space in Sparta, and, in addition, the area to the southeast of the city, starting at the southern ends of Evangelistria and Xenia hills, seems to have been lightly occupied during all periods (probably because it was marshy for at least parts of each year).<sup>236</sup> There were, however, spaces available for the city to expand outward. The Magoulitsa ran roughly NW-SE, while the Mousga turned northwest not far from its juncture with the Eurotas. As a result, the area west of the Palaiokastros plateau (called Magoula in the present day) contained a considerable amount of flat ground outside the area delimited by the Hellenistic wall. In addition, there was a narrow plain, backed by foothills rising to the west Parnon foreland, along the east bank of the Eurotas (see Section 2.2), and the area immediately south of the Magoulitsa was a gently undulating plain.

The more than 50 rescue excavations conducted in Magoula (see Figure 14) yielded evidence of dense settlement starting in the Archaic period at the latest. The published reports for those excavations do not include the sort of detailed locational information that would make it possible to map the results. However, the overall pattern is clear. Finds point to the existence of at least one and probably multiple sanctuaries in the Archaic period; numerous burials ranging in date from the Protogeometric through Roman periods (including a horse burial, probably Archaic in date); at least one and probably multiple Hellenistic workshops; and Roman-period houses, roads, and water pipelines. Pottery finds, dating to the Archaic through Roman periods, from various sites in Magoula suggest that much of this area was occupied from an early date.<sup>237</sup>

236 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 245.

237 It is not possible here to cite every relevant excavation report, but see in particular: Spyropoulos 1983; Zavvou 1997b; Maltezou 2010a; Maltezou & Vlachakos 2010; Tsiangouris 2010h; Tsiangouris 2010i; Tsouli & Tsiangouris 2013b.





Figure 14: Modern Sparta and its suburbs. The Hellenistic city wall is shown as a convenient spatial reference.

The narrow plain (forming part of the larger Spartan plain) on the east bank of the Eurotas, across from Sparta, was intensively surveyed between 1983 and 1989 as part of the Laconia Survey. That project covered a total of 70 sq km, which was divided into 19 subsections (labeled A-U with the omission of I and O). Those subsections were, in turn, grouped into three sectors: north, west, and southeast (see Figure 15).<sup>238</sup> The west sector, which was roughly coterminous with the aforementioned narrow plain and occupied c. 20 sq km, extended c. 6 km to the north of Sparta and c. 2.5 km to the south.<sup>239</sup> The members of the Laconia Survey team found that there was in the west sector, starting in the sixth century and up through and including the Roman period, what they described as a “continuous string” of relatively small (typically less than 0.30 ha) sites: 20 that were in use during the Archaic period (600–450), 15 from the Classical period (450–300), 24 from the Hellenistic period, and 12 from the Roman period.<sup>240</sup> These numbers need to be read as a minimum insofar as the accumulation of alluvial fill along the banks of the

238 For an overview of the Laconia Survey’s history and methodology, see Cavanagh, Shipley & Crouwel 2002. The maps illustrating the work of the Laconia Survey are available only in hard copy. The site catalog provides locational data using six- or eight-digit numbers indicating the easting and northing from a point defined as the origin of the survey grid (Shipley 1996a: 264–65). I constructed Figure 15 by georeferencing the hard copy maps. In practice, this means that the location of specific sites is reasonably but not perfectly accurate (spot checks suggest that locations are no more than 75 m off in any direction).

239 The west sector comprised subsections D, H, J, M, and Q.

240 R.W.V. Catling 2002; Shipley 2002. In some cases, the entries in period-specific site catalogs in the Laconia Survey publication do not precisely match the accompanying maps. In those cases, I have privileged the information in the site catalogs. Shipley’s list of Roman-period sites in the west sector (Table 6.10 on pg. 292) includes a site in subsector K, which I have omitted from the site count and map provided here. On the “continuous string of sites,” see Catling 2002: 180. Based primarily on the size and content of the sherd scatters, the survey team identified most of the sites in the west sector as individual farmsteads or clusters of farmsteads. However, the small number of sherds from the sites found by the Laconia Survey (the median number of Hellenistic sherds from the Hellenistic-period sites

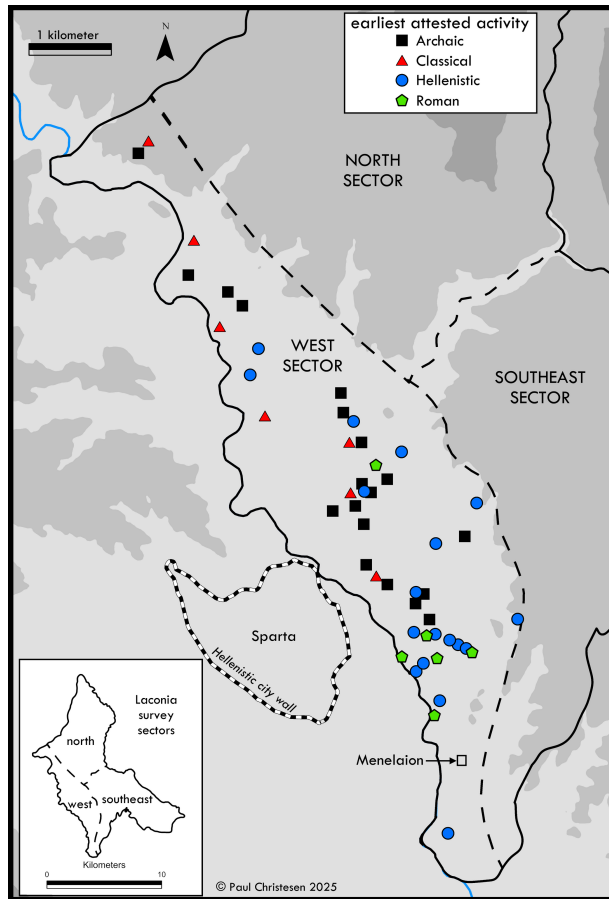


Figure 15: Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman sites found in the west sector of the Laconia Survey. The symbology indicates the earliest attested activity at any given site. Many sites were occupied for multiple periods, so this map should not be read as a complete visualization of the sites from any given time frame (except the Archaic period).<sup>241</sup>

was 13.0, from the Roman-period sites 8.0) makes determining site function challenging (Shipley 2002: 261-63). Twenty of the sites found in the Laconia Survey, including several sites in the west sector, were re-examined in more detail (but without excavation) as part of the Laconia Rural Sites Project (Cavanagh, Mee & James 2005). See in particular pp. 148-66, 196-220, 239-64 on sites LP 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 11.

241 See R.W.V. Catling 2002: Figures 5.2-3 and Shipley 2002: Figures 6.4, 6.6 for separate maps showing site distributions for each of the four periods.

Eurotas has significantly reduced the degree to which sites are visible via survey methodologies.<sup>242</sup>

Rescue excavations prompted by the construction, between 2007 and 2016, of a new highway significantly enhanced our knowledge of the archaeological remains in the modern villages of Kladas, Kokkinorachi, and Aphysou (all located just to the north of Sparta, on the east bank of the Eurotas).<sup>243</sup> Among the array of remains uncovered in Kladas are workshops, cemeteries, and agricultural installations of various dates, as well as an Archaic and Classical sanctuary with dedications that include lead figurines and at least 1,500 miniature vessels. Excavations uncovered at Kokkinorachi multiple Archaic kiln sites and an Archaic cult site and at Aphysou a cemetery that was in use from the Archaic through Hellenistic periods.<sup>244</sup>

242 R.W.V. Catling 2002: 167; Cavanagh, Shipley & Crouwel 2002: 42-43. As Hope Simpson has pointed out, "Often even minor excavation can yield substantial results in places where surface survey has provided little or no indication" (Hope Simpson 2009: 316). Hope Simpson cites an example from the Minoan site of Pseira on Crete, where three sherds were found on the surface in a 10 x 10 m area, but a 4.0 x 1.5 m trench dug on that spot yielded 313 sherds.

243 The highway in question runs approximately 40 km northwest from Sparta to the national motorway that links Corinth and Kalamata. The program of excavations associated with the construction of this highway resulted in the discovery of 162 new archaeological sites along the route of the new road. See E. Pantou & Tsouli 2016. Although the area of Kladas, Kokkinorachi, and Aphysou had been explored by the Laconia Survey, the recent rescue excavations have produced a wealth of new information.

244 Kladas: Tsiangouris 2010d; Tsiangouris 2010e; Tsiangouris 2010f; Kakourou & Maltezou 2011; Tsiangouris 2011a; Maltezou 2013a; Maltezou 2013b; Souchleris 2013a; Souchleris 2013b; Tsouli 2013b; Tsouli 2013c; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014b; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014c; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014d; Tsouli 2014; Souchleris 2016a. Kokkinorachi: Zavvou 1996a; Tsiangouris 2010g; Maltezou 2011; Tsouli & Theodosi-Kontou 2013; Maltezou 2014; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014a; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014b; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014c; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014d; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014e; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014f; Tsouli & Tsountakos 2014. Aphysou: Christou 1961-1962; Christou 1963a; Zavvou 1999a; Zavvou 1999b; Kakourou & Koulogeorgiou 2010; Tsiangouris 2010a; Tsiangouris 2010b; Souchleris 2014; Souchleris & Kotsi 2014a; Souchleris 2016b; Souchleris & Koulogeorgiou 2017.

Textual sources help flesh out this archaeological evidence. Shipley has argued that the nondescript ancient remains at Geladari, directly to the north of Kladas, should be identified as the site of Thornax.<sup>245</sup> Herodotus and Pausanias both mention a sanctuary to Apollo at Thornax, situated not far to the north of Sparta. Herodotus claims that the Lakedaimonians acquired gold from Croesus that they intended to use “for the statue of Apollo that now stands at Thornax in Lakonia.” Pausanias states that he saw a statue of Apollo Pythaeus at Thornax.

In the winter of 370/369, the army that invaded Lakonia under the leadership of Epameinondas marched down the east bank of the Eurotas to Sparta. In his account of this invasion, Xenophon notes that the presence of Lakedaimonian hoplites near the bridge over the Eurotas prevented any attempt on Sparta. As a result, the invading army headed south, along the east bank of the Eurotas, “burning and plundering houses full of many valuable things.”<sup>246</sup> This passage – along with the finds from the Laconia Survey and the rescue excavations in Kladas, Kokkinorachi, and Aphysou – indicates that the east bank of the Eurotas across from Sparta was densely inhabited for a long time.

Rescue excavations in modern villages south of Sparta demonstrate that there was, by the Archaic period at the latest, activity throughout the area between Sparta and Amyklai (see Figure 14). At Charisio, walls, tombs, and strata rich in pottery from the Archaic to Roman periods were uncovered (as well as pieces of the ancient road connecting Sparta and Amyklai).<sup>247</sup> A small Archaic sanctuary building was found at

245 Hdt. 1.69.4; Paus. 3.10.8; Shipley 1996b: 355–57. See now also Eleutheriou & Skagkos 2010–2013 and the bibliography listed in Tsouli 2020: 142 n. 4.

246 *κάνοντες καὶ πορθοῦντες πολλῶν ἀγαθῶν μεστὰς οἰκίας* (Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.27; trans. C.L. Brownson). The invading army crossed the river at a spot directly across from Amyklai, so the houses in question were located in the immediate vicinity of Sparta. See also Livy 34.28, in which the army that invaded Lakonia in 195 is said to have “utterly laid waste all the pleasant and thickly inhabited country round the city” (trans. G. Baker). Curtius concluded, on the basis of the passage from Xenophon and Livy’s description of the campaign of 195, that the area on the east bank of the Eurotas across from Sparta and the area immediately to the south of Sparta were suburbs of the city (Curtius 1851–1852: vol. 2, 239, 243).

247 Zavvou 1995a; Zavvou 1995b; Kakourou 2010c; Maltezou 2010b; Tsiangouris 2011c; Tsouli, Souchleris, Kiakou et al. 2014.

Kamares, and tombs and pottery dating from the Archaic through Roman periods at Kalogonia.<sup>248</sup> Excavations at Sykaraki revealed a sanctuary in use from the Archaic through Hellenistic periods, and at Alesia a cemetery with Archaic through Roman burials.<sup>249</sup> Hope-Simpson and Waterhouse, in their pedestrian survey of Lakonia, noted the presence at Tseramio of what they describe as an “extensive classical site” (which may be the ancient settlement of Alesiai mentioned by Pausanias).<sup>250</sup> Remains of what seem to be agricultural installations in use from the Archaic through the Hellenistic periods were found at Kalami.<sup>251</sup> Parts of a Roman cemetery were uncovered at Gounari.<sup>252</sup>

#### 6.4. *Pitana and Sparta*

If there were four distinct *ōbai* in the city of Sparta from the time of its foundation, three of those four *ōbai* are rarely mentioned in the textual record prior to the first century CE. The earliest extant references to Kynosoura date to the Hellenistic period, and the first certain references to Limnai and Mesoa date to the Roman period. Pitana, on the other hand, is repeatedly attested in textual sources starting in the Archaic period. Alcman probably mentioned Pitana, and Pindar locates it “beside the ford of the Eurotas.” Herodotus describes Pitana as a *dēmos*, and in the *Trojan Women* Euripides characterizes Pitana as a *polis* and the hometown of Menelaos. Two tiles, stamped with the word Πιτανᾶτᾶν and dating to the third century, were found in the northwestern part of Sparta.<sup>253</sup> Pitana was thus undoubtedly located in the immediate vicinity of the Palaiokastro plateau, and – unlike Kynosoura, Limnai, or Mesoa – seems to

248 Kamares: Kakourou 2010b; Tsiangouris 2010c; Tsouli 2016e. Kalogonia: Christou 1963c. Kalogonia may be a corruption of Heptagonia, which Livy places somewhere to the south of Sparta (34.38; Leake 1830: vol. 1, 173).

249 Sykaraki: Tsouli 2016a. Alesia: von Prott 1904: 6–7; Demakopoulou 1968; Tsouli 2016b.

250 Paus. 3.20.2–3; Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960: 82 #2. See also Shipley 1996a: 289, GG85.

251 Kakourou 2010a; Tsouli 2010b; Tsouli 2016d; Paus. 3.19.9–20.7.

252 Christou 1960; Christou 1964; Zavvou 1994; G. Pantou 1996; Tsouli 2016c.

253 Alcman fr. 5 Page-Davies; Pind. *Ol.* 6.28; Hdt. 3.55.2; Eur. *Tro.* 1110–13; *IG* V.1.917.

have been particularly closely identified with Sparta by the fifth century at the latest. One can explain this peculiarity by positing that Pitana was the most “fashionable” of the four *ōbai*.<sup>254</sup> We should, however, be mindful of the possibility that most or all of Sparta was encompassed in the *ōba* of Pitana and that Kynosoura, Limnai, and Mesoa encompassed territory that lay largely or entirely outside the city.

### 6.5 Summary

The archaeological and textual evidence for the settlement organization of Sparta reveals no trace of four distinct settlement nuclei, but it does attest to the existence of well-developed suburbs and a close connection between Pitana and Sparta. The absence of evidence for distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta is not compatible with the current orthodoxy, though the limitations of the evidence need to be recognized. It is, for example, possible that what had originally been four spatially distinct *ōbai* had, as the result of organic growth, effectively merged into a single conurbation at an early date. That understanding of the settlement organization of Sparta is, however, not compatible with reading Thucydides (1.10.2) as saying that Sparta was, in his time, laid out *kata kōmas*.<sup>255</sup>

The existence of suburbs creates further complications for the current orthodoxy. At present, it is impossible to reconstruct the pattern of settlement in the immediate vicinity of Sparta with any degree of precision. However, we can be certain that extensive suburbs containing houses, workshops, and cemeteries surrounded the city from the Archaic period onward. The absence of a city wall prior to the Hellenistic period meant that there were no clear boundaries separating the urban center from the surrounding territory. The horse burial in Magoula and the elegant houses on the east bank of the Eurotas indicate that the inhabitants of the suburbs included at least some affluent families. By far the

254 See, for example, Bölte 1950: 1840.

255 I argue in Section 9.3 that Thucydides is describing the settlement pattern of the Spartan plain, not the city of Sparta.

most obvious explanation is that those families were Spartiates.<sup>256</sup> (The only viable alternative, that the suburbs were inhabited by *perioikoi*, would entail a major revision of the current scholarly consensus on where *perioikoi* resided.) The presence of Spartiate families in the suburbs of Lakedaimon's primary urban center would not, in and of itself, be particularly surprising. Nonetheless, the existence of suburbs inhabited by Spartiates is difficult to reconcile with the current orthodoxy because it indicates either that some or all of the four *ōbai* (Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana) extended outside the immediate bounds of the city of Sparta, or that there were more than four *ōbai*. If one subscribes to the former position, one has to entertain the possibility that the boundaries of the *ōbai* – and hence the area inhabited by Spartiates – stretched well beyond Sparta. If one accepts the latter position, the current orthodoxy collapses entirely.

The archaeological and textual evidence for the settlement organization of Sparta thus does not conclusively disprove the current orthodoxy, but it points toward a different scenario, in which all Spartiates did not live within the confines of Sparta or Amyklai, and some *ōbai* encompassed areas outside of Sparta.

256 Catling, in his analysis of the area covered by the Laconia Survey during the Archaic and Classical periods, notes that, "A Spartiate presence of some sort, whether in person or in the form of helot-worked farms and estates, seems inevitable in most of the western sector, especially that part south of the confluence of the Eurotas and Kelephina" (R. W. V. Catling 2002: 228).



## 7. Settlement Patterns in the Spartan Plain: Archaeological Evidence

As noted in Sections 1 and 5.2, the current orthodoxy holds that there were just two substantial settlements in the Spartan plain – Sparta and Amyklai. That position has been based in large part on the lack of compelling evidence for the existence of other settlements. However, it is important to bear in mind that archaeological investigation of the Spartan plain has been far from comprehensive. A considerable number of European intellectuals, starting in the 19th century, have traveled across the Spartan plain and tried to connect visible remains with sites known from literary sources (primarily the Homeric Catalog of Ships and Pausanias).<sup>257</sup> The relevant work includes, but is by no means limited to, books and articles by William Leake, Ludwig Ross, Ernst Curtius, Hans von Prott, and Henry Ormerod.<sup>258</sup> In the mid-20th century, Richard Hope Simpson and Helen Waterhouse carried out a more systematic, though still relatively informal, survey of Lakonia. They focused on Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, but they did provide occasional notes on material from later periods.<sup>259</sup>

There have been no expansive, intensive surveys of the part of the Spartan plain lying to the west of the Eurotas. The Laconia Survey covered 70 sq km to the east of the Eurotas (see Section 6.3). The intensive surveys conducted elsewhere in the Spartan plain have explored limited areas around particular sites.<sup>260</sup> Aside from Sparta, just one post-Bronze Age site in the Spartan plain – the Amyklaion – has been systematically

257 Hom. *Il.* 2.581-90 (see Section 3.1 for the text); Paus. 3.18.6-20.11.

258 Leake 1830: vol. 1, 120-90, vol. 2, 531-34, vol. 3, 1-19; Ross 1848: vol. 2, 201-50; Curtius 1851-1852: vol. 2, 203-334; von Prott 1904; Ormerod 1910.

259 Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960; Waterhouse & Hope Simpson 1961. Hope Simpson used the results of the survey in subsequent work on sites mentioned in the Homeric poems (Hope Simpson 1966; Hope Simpson & Lazenby 1970).

260 For surveys carried out in the immediate vicinity of the Bronze Age sites of Vapheio/Palaiopyrgi and Agios Vasileios, see Banou, Chapin & Hitchcock 2022 and Voutsaki, Wiersma, de Neef et al. 2019, respectively. See below for an ongoing survey at Amyklai.

excavated.<sup>261</sup> The Amyklaion was situated some distance from the ancient settlement of Amyklai, which remains largely unexplored (see below for details).

As a result, rescue excavations are the primary source of information about post-Bronze Age settlements in the Spartan plain other than Sparta. Unfortunately, relatively few rescue excavations have been conducted in that area. The construction in recent years of a new, 8-km-long road linking Skoura and Pyri prompted rescue excavations at 12 sites in the Spartan plain.<sup>262</sup> Even so, the *Archaiologikon Deltion* contains nearly 500 reports about rescue excavations in the city of Sparta, but fewer than 30 reports about rescue excavations at post-Bronze Age sites in the entirety of the Spartan plain south of Amyklai. Moreover, rescue excavations are, by their very nature, circumscribed in extent, duration, and depth.<sup>263</sup> Roman remains frequently hinder exploration of lower, earlier strata. In addition, up until the Roman period, the nature of the extant remains makes it easier, throughout Lakonia, to detect sanctuaries than habitation sites or cemeteries.<sup>264</sup>

We can be reasonably certain that, in this instance, the absence of evidence is not evidence for absence. Prior to 1995, much of the city of Sparta had not been archaeologically explored. Systematic excavations were conducted at a limited number of sites (most notably the theater and the sanctuaries of Artemis Orthia and Athena Chalkioikos) by British archaeologists. Rescue excavations were carried out by Greek archaeologists only sporadically because most of the city was not archaeologically protected. After archaeological protection was extended to the entire city in 1995, rescue excavations began to be conducted in significant

261 Multiple Neolithic and Bronze-Age sites in the Spartan plain have been systematically excavated. See, for example, Cavanagh, Mee & Renard 2025 (Kouphovouno); de Neef, Voutsaki, Ullrich et al. 2022 (Agios Vasileios); Banou, Chapin, and Hitchcock 2022 (Palaiopyrgi).

262 Tsouli & Vlachakos 2016e.

263 For a discussion of some of the shortcomings of data produced by rescue excavations, see Christesen & Kramer 2024: 217–21.

264 The reasons why this is the case include the accumulation of easily recognizable, diagnostic objects (such as lead figurines) at sanctuary sites, and, prior to the Roman period, the use of ephemeral building materials for structures other than temples.

numbers across much of the urban fabric. However, the results did not appear in print for several years.<sup>265</sup> When Hodkinson published *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* in 2000, his catalog of all known, dated graves in the city had a total of 12 entries.<sup>266</sup> As a result of the excavations carried out since 1995, there are now more than 1,400 known burials in the city of Sparta.<sup>267</sup> In the same vein, Hope Simpson and Waterhouse (in the 1930s and 1950s) and Emily Banou (in the 1990s) carefully examined the surface remains at Agios Vasileios but found no trace of either the cemetery or palatial complex that have been revealed by recent excavations (which were prompted by a chance find of fragments from Linear B tablets in 2008).<sup>268</sup> These examples are salutary reminders that we need to be exceedingly cautious about using negative evidence to draw conclusions about many facets of Lakonian archaeology, including settlement patterns in the Spartan plain.

While the evidentiary base is far from ideal, the currently available archaeological data does contain valuable clues and hence is worth reviewing in some detail. The discussion that follows focuses on substantial sites for which significant information is available and does not address every potentially relevant scrap of information (e.g. the discovery of a small amount of Classical-period pottery). We begin with Amyklai.

Amyklai attracted the attention of scholars from an early date because it figures prominently in the ancient literary sources bearing on Lakonia.<sup>269</sup> References in Pausanias, Polybius, and Xenophon provided

265 Christesen 2019b: 309–12; Christesen & Kramer 2024: 213–15.

266 Hodkinson 2000: 238–40, 243. Hodkinson described the absence of graves in Sparta as an “astonishing archaeological lacuna whose full explanation is far from obvious.”

267 Christesen 2019b.

268 Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960: 80–82; Banou 1996: 37–39. On the discovery of the first fragments of Linear B tablets, see Vasilogambrou 2010; Vasilogambrou, Morgan, Diamanti et al. 2024: 46–47. On the finds at Agios Vasileios, see the bibliography cited in n. 261.

269 See Bölte 1929a: 1328–29 and the discussion in Section 2.3 above. In the early modern period, there were several small settlements in the area of ancient Amyklai, the most significant of which were the adjacent villages of Mahmoud-Bey (to the east of the main road running south from Sparta) and S(k)lavochori (to the west of that road). In 1921 Mahmoud-Bey was renamed Amykles (Αμύκλες), and in 1940 that name was also given to Sklavochori.

valuable information that facilitated finding the Sanctuary of Apollo Amyklaios (the Amyklaion) and the associated settlement. Epigraphic evidence has made it possible to locate both places with a high degree of certainty.<sup>270</sup> The Amyklaion is situated on Agia Kyriaki hill, c. 1 km north-east of the modern village of Amykles (see Figure 16). In the Late Bronze Age, Agia Kyriaki hill, which had been a habitation site since the Early Bronze Age, became a sanctuary, and the nucleus of habitation shifted to the southwest.<sup>271</sup>

The clearest indication of the location of the ancient settlement of Amyklai comes from what is known about the Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Alexandra. Pausanias mentions this sanctuary while recounting his visit to Amyklai:

Amyklai was destroyed by the Dorians, and has since remained a mere village [κώμη], but it contains a sanctuary [ἱερόν] of Alexandra and an image of her, which are worth seeing. The Amyklaians say that Alexandra is no other than Cassandra, the daughter of Priam. Here, too, is a likeness [εἰκών] of Clytemnestra and the reputed tomb of Agamemnon [Ἀγαμέμνονος νομιζόμενον μνημα]. The deities worshipped by the people here are the Amyklaian god and Dionysos. ... Such were the notable objects at Amyklai.<sup>272</sup>

The sanctuary was located after the accidental discovery, in 1955, of hundreds of terracotta objects in the vicinity of the church of Agia Paraskevi in Amykles. That discovery prompted the ephor at the time, Chrysanthos Christou, to undertake intermittent excavations between 1956 and 1961.<sup>273</sup> Christou found a votive deposit with more than 10,000 objects, ranging in date from the early seventh through the late fourth century. The deposit consisted primarily of terracotta plaques (c. 1,200 in all) and

270 Paus. 3.19.6; Polyb. 5.19.2; Xen. *Hell.* 6.27-30.

271 Spyropoulos 1981; Gallou 2020: 68. For information on the ongoing excavation program at the Amyklaion, see <https://amyklaion.gr/en/>.

272 Paus. 3.19.6; trans. J.G. Frazer, modified.

273 Christou 1956; Christou 1960a; Christou 1960b; Christou 1961.

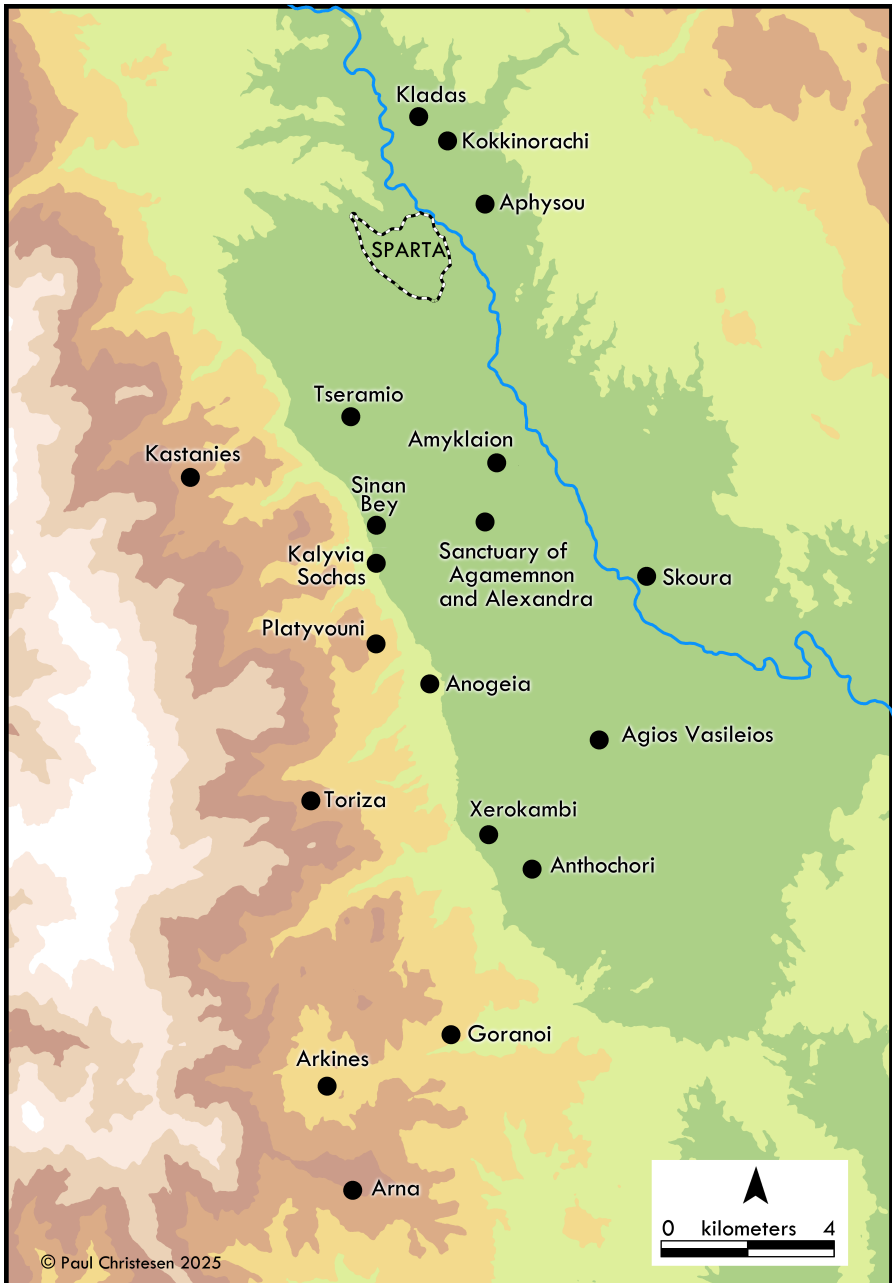


Figure 16: Sites in the Spartan plain and the Taygetos plateau discussed in Sections 7 and 8.

pottery (including more than 2,000 kylikes).<sup>274</sup> A second votive deposit with thousands of objects, similar to those from the first deposit, was discovered in the same locale in 1998.<sup>275</sup> Some of the finds (e.g. an Archaic disk akroterion) suggest the presence of architecture nearby, but no cult structures have as yet been located. Inscriptions (the earliest dating to the last quarter of the sixth century) on some of the excavated objects identify them as dedications to Agamemnon or Alexandra. *IG* V.1.26 (see Section 3.3), inscribed on a *stēlē* found near the church of Agia Paraskevi, includes a provision for the *stēlē* to be set up in the sanctuary of Alexandra. A marble throne, dated to the first century BCE or CE and found in Amyklai, bears a dedicatory inscription to Alexandra (*SEG* 24.281).

Rescue excavations, in addition to those done by Christou, have been conducted in the area of the settlement of Amyklai on several occasions.<sup>276</sup> Those excavations uncovered an array of material ranging in date from the Protogeometric through Byzantine periods, including residential structures and tombs.<sup>277</sup> Hope Simpson and Waterhouse found large quantities of Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman pottery, covering an area of at least 2 km N-S and 1 km E-W, in the vicinity of the modern village. The archaeological finds, taken together with the textual sources (see Sections 2.3 and 3.2-3), indicate that the ancient settlement of Amyklai was quite extensive.<sup>278</sup>

The most compelling evidence for a substantial post-Bronze Age settlement in the Spartan plain other than Sparta and Amyklai comes from the modern village of Anthochori. In the 1960s and again in the 2000s,

274 Stibbe 1994: 17.

275 Zavvou 1998. Gina Salapata produced a detailed study of the terracotta plaques from the first deposit (Salapata 2014). The rest of the material from both deposits is known primarily through the initial reports filed by the excavators.

276 A survey project initiated in 2024 is exploring the area between the Amyklaion and the Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Alexandra, but no significant results have as yet been reported. See <https://www.hansbeck.org/belonging-toin-lakonia>.

277 Raftopoulou 1992; Raftopoulou 1994; Themis 1996; Zavvou 1996b; Zavvou 1997d; Zavvou 2000; Zavvou 2003; Tsouli 2010a; Tsiangouris 2011b; Tsouli & Tsiangouris 2013a.

278 Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960: 82. Polybius (5.19) describes Amyklai as being “καλλιδενδρότατος καὶ καλλικαρπώτατος,” which suggests that the inhabitants of the settlement controlled a considerable area of arable land.

members of the Greek Archaeological Service conducted brief excavations in the vicinity of the church of the Metamorphosis (also referred to as the church of the Transfiguration) in Anthochori. That work was prompted by chance finds, most notably lead figurines, that pointed to the presence of an ancient sanctuary.<sup>279</sup>

The excavators uncovered a series of strata extending to a depth of 3.5 m and covering, at minimum, an area extending 500 m from the church in every direction.<sup>280</sup> The material in those strata ranged in date from the Early Helladic to the Byzantine periods. The published reports do not offer much in the way of details, but the presence of what are described as houses and storage pithoi points to the existence of a settlement. The discovery of high-quality Protogeometric pottery in shapes typically found at cult sites, along with miniature vases and lead figurines, demonstrates the existence of a sanctuary that was founded at an early date and continued to be active for an extended period thereafter.

This archaeological evidence can be productively combined with textual sources. Multiple roof tiles found at Anthochori date to the Hellenistic period and are stamped with the words Μεσσαπέος | Δαμόσιοι.<sup>281</sup> Stephanus of Byzantium, in the entry in his *Ethnika* for Μεσσαπέαι, provides the following information:

Μεσσαπέαι· χωρίον Λακωνικῆς. το ἔθνικόν Μεσσαπεεύς· οὕτω γὰρ ὁ Ζεὺς ἐκεῖ τιμᾶται. Θεόπομπος νζ'.

279 For reports by the excavators, see Christou 1961-1962; Christou 1962a; Christou 1962b; Christou 1963b; Zavvou 2004; Zavvou 2006a; Zavvou 2006b; Zavvou 2009. See also Hope Simpson & Dickinson 1979: 110. For a summary, see Shipley 1996a: 293, GG108. For an insightful analysis of the material from Anthochori in comparison with that found at the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Tsakona, see Cavanagh & Catling (forthcoming).

280 Christou indicates 500 m as both the circumference of the site (Christou 1961-1962: 84) and its radius (Christou 1962a: 135, Christou 1962b: 114). The latter is much more compatible with Christou's statement that the finds indicate that the ancient settlement was larger than the modern one (Christou 1962a: 135, Christou 1962b: 115).

281 Taïphakos 1977: 219-22; Zavvou 2009: 29, 31.

Messapeai: a settlement in Lakonia. The ethnic is Messapean: for Zeus is thusly honored there. Theopompos [says in Book] 57.<sup>282</sup>

The citation of Book 57 is an important detail because it allows us to determine the context in which Theopompos mentioned Messapeai. The only one of Theopompos' works longer than 12 books was his account of Greece during the reign of Philip II, the *Philippika*, which occupied 58 books.<sup>283</sup> Given that Philip invaded Lakonia in the aftermath of Chaeronea and may have led his army as far south as Gytheion and that he died not long thereafter, it is a near certainty that Theopompos mentioned Messapeai in describing Philip's invasion of Lakonia.<sup>284</sup> The word *me-sa-pi-jo* – probably a place name – is attested in the Linear B tablets from Agios Vasileios, which may suggest that the name of Messapeai for the ancient settlement at the modern site of Anthochori went back into the Bronze Age.<sup>285</sup>

The archaeological evidence and textual sources taken together indicate that Anthochori was the site of an ancient settlement called Messapeai, which included a sanctuary dedicated to Zeus Messapeus. That sanctuary was still in operation well into the Roman period: in describing his travels in the Spartan plain south of Sparta, Pausanias writes that “There is in the plain a temenos of Zeus Messapeus. The *epiklēsis* derives, they say, from the name of a man who served as priest of the god.”<sup>286</sup> No

282 FGrH 115 F 245; trans. W. Morrison.

283 See the biographical essay in William Morrison's entry for Theopompos in *Brill's New Jacoby*.

284 On Philip's invasion of Lakonia, see Paus. 3.24.5; Polyb. 9.28.6, 9.33.8; Musti & Torelli 1991: 277; Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 14–15; Kennell 2010: 160. Hope Simpson has argued that the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus mentioned by Theopompos should be equated with the sanctuary at Tsakona (northeast of Sparta), that the remains at Anthochori should be identified as the ancient site of Bryseiai mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 2.583) and Pausanias (3.20.3), and that a sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus was located between Anthochori and the Taygetos (Hope Simpson 2009: 329–31).

285 For *me-sa-pi-jo* in the Agios Vasileios tablets, see Vasilogambrou, Bennet, Karagianni et al. 2024: 72 (Fragment AV X 111).

286 ἔστι δὲ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ Διὸς Μεσσαπέως τέμενος γενέσθαι δέ οἱ τὴν ἐπικλήσιν ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς λέγουσιν ἱερασαμένου τῷ θεῷ (Paus. 3.20.3). Various explanations for the



in situ archaeological remains of the sanctuary were discovered, but a Doric capital, dated stylistically to the middle of the sixth century and found in a secondary context in Anthochori, has dimensions similar to those from the Amyklaion. This capital probably came from a monumental cult structure of some kind.<sup>287</sup>

This collection of evidence indicates that Messapeai was a significant settlement, quite possibly on the same scale as Amyklai, by the sixth century at the latest. Christou noted the presence of material from all periods in the entirety of the 500-m radius circle around the church of the Metamorphosis and, among that material, many finds of Archaic date. One could, therefore, tentatively calculate that the settlement of Messapeai occupied an area of at least 78 ha by the end of the Archaic period. For the sake of comparison, the Hellenistic fortification wall of Sparta enclosed an area of c. 270 ha. The fact that Theopompos had occasion to mention Messapeai in his account of Philip's invasion of Lakonia is another indication that it was a site of considerable importance.

The excavations carried out in association with the construction of the Skoura-Pyri road produced a considerable body of evidence that the area around the modern village of Skoura was the site of an important settlement at various periods of time. The ancient road leading from Sparta to Geronthrai crossed the Eurotas via a ford located at or just north of modern Skoura.<sup>288</sup> Rescue excavations undertaken at the western edge of the village (and hence near the Eurotas river) uncovered what the excavators took to be the remains of an extensive Early Helladic

*epiklēsis* Messapeus have been offered. Pausanias derives the *epiklēsis* from the name of a priest, whereas Theopompos seems to have believed that it derived from the name of the settlement. It is also possible that the *epiklēsis* comes from the Messapians of southern Italy (based on the idea that the cult was imported from there; R.W.V. Catling & Shipley 1989: 196-97). Etymologically, Messapeai may be a formation based on the Indo-European roots from “middle” and “water” and hence may mean something like “land between two rivers” (Vayiakkos 1987: 376-78).

287 Kokkorou-Alevras 2016; Kokkorou-Alevras 2021: 129-33. Another sixth-century Doric capital was found in a secondary context c. 2 km east of Anthochori. That capital has slightly different dimensions from the one found in Anthochori and hence probably comes from a different structure.

288 See Hope Simpson 2009: Figure 1 and the route map in Pikoulas 2012.

settlement.<sup>289</sup> Excavations in Skoura and the area immediately to the south (Perdikovrysi) revealed the remains of what seems to have been a substantial Roman settlement that included a bathhouse, kilns, and a cemetery.<sup>290</sup> Occupation in the intervening period is suggested by the discovery of two tombs from the Classical period.<sup>291</sup> Given that Skoura is situated in the area where the plain on the eastern side of the Eurotas broadens considerably, it would not be surprising if a significant settlement was located there for much of antiquity. The existence of what appears to be a major Mycenaean settlement at Vouno Panagias and contemporary secondary settlements at Agios Georgios and Melathria (all located approximately 2 km to the east and northeast of Skoura) highlights the long-term attraction of this area.<sup>292</sup>

The remaining evidence for post-Bronze Age settlements in the Spartan plain is more exiguous. Hope Simpson and Waterhouse, in their discussion of Agios Vasileios, noted the existence of some “classical and Hellenistic pottery” on the surface around the eponymous church. They also came across, about 1 km to the west, another substantial cluster of “classical” sherds and fragments of column drums and statues (around the chapel of Agios Nikolaos).<sup>293</sup> The church of Agios Vasileios contained two noteworthy spolia: a sixth-century Doric capital and part of an inscribed *stēlē*. In the early decades of the 20th century, Petros Stergiannopoulos found the capital inverted and used as a column base inside the church.<sup>294</sup> The length of the sides of the abacus (75 cm) suggests it came from a relatively large structure. The text on the *stēlē*, the so-called Spartan war fund inscription (*IG* V.1.1), records contributions made by Lakedaimonian allies to pay for military expenses.<sup>295</sup> Another, smaller fragment from the same *stēlē* was found c. 5 km to the southwest of Agios Vasileios (at

289 Tsouli & Vlachakos 2016c; Tsouli & Vlachakos 2017.

290 Zavvou & Themis 2002a; Tsouli & Tsiangouris 2010; Tsouli & Vlachakos 2016a; Tsouli & Vlachakos 2016d; Tsouli 2017.

291 Tsouli & Vlachakos 2016b.

292 Banou 1996: 36–37, 78–80, 100–2; Banou 2009; Banou 2020b. For the locations of Vouno Panagias, Agios Georgios, and Melathria, see Figure 18 in Section 8.

293 Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960: 80–82. See also Shipley 1996a: 293, GG014.

294 Stergiannopoulos 1936. See also Wesenberg 1971: 53 #101.

295 On the inscription, see Osborne & Rhodes 2017 and the bibliography listed therein.

Moni Zerbitsis). Angelos Matthaïou and Yannis Pikoulas, in a detailed discussion of where the *stēlē* originally stood, identified two likely possibilities: Agios Vasileios and the Amyklaion.<sup>296</sup> Matthaïou and Pikoulas opted for the latter, primarily because the text of the Peace of Nicias as given by Thucydides calls for it to be inscribed on a *stēlē* erected at the Amyklaion.<sup>297</sup> Insofar as a fragment of what seems to be a similar list of contributions (IG V.1.219) was found on the acropolis of Sparta,<sup>298</sup> it is worth considering whether multiple copies of public inscriptions were set up at important sanctuaries in the Spartan plain. If that was the case, IG V.1.1 may well have been erected originally at Agios Vasileios, which would in turn suggest the presence of an important sanctuary and settlement.<sup>299</sup>

Four sites along the western edge of the Spartan plain (other than Anthochori) have yielded evidence for activity during Classical antiquity. The finds at Sinan Bey, the most northerly of those sites, include a significant number of Roman-era sculptures.<sup>300</sup> Among the places that Pausanias visited in the Spartan plain was “a sanctuary of Demeter, with the *epiklēsis* Eleusinia” in which stood a wooden statue of Orpheus. Pausanias adds that a wooden statue of Persephone was (presumably as part of a festival) carried in procession “from Helos ... to the Eleusinion.”<sup>301</sup> His description of the surrounding area indicates that the sanctuary was located in the foothills of the Taygetos. In 1902, von Prott, while working on *Inscriptiones Graecae* V, discovered in a ruined church at Kalyvia Sochas several inscriptions that enabled him to identify the modern village as the site of the sanctuary of Demeter mentioned by Pausanias. In 1910, Richard Dawkins spent four days excavating at Kalyvia Sochas. He found

296 Matthaïou & Pikoulas 1989: 113–16. Moni Zerbitsis is situated in a relatively isolated locale in the foothills of the Taygetos and shows no traces of remains from Classical antiquity. The land around Agios Vasileios was once owned by the Moni Zerbitsis, which suggests that the fragment from Moni Zerbitsis came from Agios Vasileios.

297 Thuc. 5.18.10, cf. 5.23.5.

298 Osborne & Rhodes 2017: 301.

299 Von Prott identified Agios Vasileios with the Homeric Pharis. He argued that Pharis was a major settlement on par with Amyklai and that it dominated the southern part of the Spartan plain (von Prott 1904: 5).

300 Shipley 1996a: 290, GG87.

301 Paus. 3.20.5–7.

various votives as well as stamped tiles and an inscription that confirmed von Prott's identification. In the aftermath of a catastrophic flood in 1947, John Cook conducted a brief rescue excavation that uncovered architectural members and further votives.<sup>302</sup> The finds from the site, including part of a Doric column drum and roof tiles, establish the presence of an as-yet-unlocated and undated cult structure. The earliest votives, in the form of pottery, terracotta figurines, and bronze vases, date to the seventh and sixth centuries. The complete assemblage suggests that the cult was particularly popular in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Further south, at the village of Anogeia, a considerable collection of chance finds has turned up over the years. Those finds include Archaic ceramics, bronzes (including Geometric and Archaic pins and a bronze spearhead), at least 40 lead figurines, and an Archaic Aeginetan *statēr*.<sup>303</sup> Although Felix Bölte's suggestion that Anogeia was the site of a *Peri-oikengemeinde* is improbable, his sense that there was a significant settlement here may well be correct.<sup>304</sup>

The most noteworthy remains at Xerokambi, the southernmost site, consist of a stone, arched bridge that should probably be dated to the Hellenistic period. The bridge seems to have been built to facilitate the movement of traffic on a road that ran along the western edge of the Spartan plain.<sup>305</sup>

The Homeric Catalog of Ships lists eight settlements, other than Sparta, in the area ruled by Menelaos: Pharis, Messe, Bryseiai, Augeiai, Amyklai, Helos, Laas, and Oitylos. Pausanias claims to have visited the

302 von Prott 1904; Dawkins 1910; Cook & Nicholls 1950. The finds from the 1910 excavations were re-studied by Stibbe in the 1990s; his report is more detailed than that provided by Dawkins (Stibbe 1993). For a brief summary, see Shipley 1996a: 291, GG 95. For a report on a recent find of an undated kiln, see Zavvou & Themis 2002b.

303 von Prott 1904: 13-14; Ormerod 1910: 65-66; Hope Simpson & Waterhouse 1960: 82 #5; Shipley 1996a: 291, GG118 and 294, HH267; Zavvou 1997a; Zavvou 1997c. The finds come from both Anogeia and a hilltop, called Sto Molyvi, above the town. Ormerod also notes that, according to local reports, the site featured an enclosure wall built from ashlar blocks with lead clamps, before the blocks were taken to Sparta as building material.

304 Bölte 1929a: 1331.

305 Höper 1982; Armstrong, Cavanagh & Shipley 1992: 297; Bougia 1996: 233-37; Shipley 1996a: 293, GG107.

sites of Pharis and Bryseiai (both of which seem to have been abandoned in his time) in his account of places in the Spartan plain; neither site has been definitively located.<sup>306</sup> The various uncertainties surrounding the Catalog of Ships,<sup>307</sup> and the desire in later periods of Classical antiquity to link places mentioned in the Catalog to extant sites, make it difficult to determine if and when Pharis and Bryseiai were secondary settlements in the Spartan plain. Augeiai, Laas, Oitylos, and Helos have been associated with some degree of confidence with specific sites in southern Lakonia, outside the bounds of the Spartan plain. The location of Messe remains an open question.<sup>308</sup>

Authors from the Hellenistic and Roman periods mention a variety of other, as yet unlocated, places that may have been situated in the Spartan plain. However, without supporting archaeological evidence it is impossible to establish precisely where they were or reach any conclusions about their size and importance.<sup>309</sup> For example, Pausanias mentions cult sites in the Spartan plain dedicated to Lakedaimon (at Alesiai) and Artemis Dereatis (near Dereion and Lapithaion).<sup>310</sup> As noted above (Section 6.3), Alesiai has been tentatively identified with the modern village of Tseramio. Dereion and Lapithaion have been tentatively localized in the vicinity of Anogeia.

The evidence reviewed above demonstrates that Amyklai was, from the Archaic through the Roman periods, a major settlement, and it strongly suggests that other important settlements, in that same time frame, could be found at Anthochori and Skoura. The finds from Agios Vasileios, Sinan Bey, Kalyvia Sochas, Anogeia, and Xerokambi are, at present, less impressive but still potentially significant. The most straightforward reading of this evidence is, in my opinion, that a series of settlements occupied the Spartan plain, from Sparta in the north to Anthochori in the south.

306 Hom. *Il.* 2.581-90 (see Section 3.1 for the text); Paus. 3.20.3-4.

307 See, for example, Jasnow 2020.

308 On all of these sites, see Hope Simpson & Lazenby 1970: 74-81; Hope Simpson 2018: Section 4. On Bryseiai, see also Stibbe 1993: 83-88. On Helos, see also Themis 2007; Hope Simpson & Janko 2011. On Messe, see also Gardner 2018: 141-42, 445-48.

309 See Shipley 2004 for the relevant evidence.

310 Paus. 3.19.9-20.7.

## **8: Settlement Patterns in the Spartan Plain: Comparative Data**

The decidedly incomplete evidence for settlement patterns in the Spartan plain from the Archaic to the Roman periods can be supplemented to some degree by data on settlement patterns in other periods. This information is worth considering because some important factors that have influenced settlement patterns in the Spartan plain – the extent and location of arable land, the relative absence of barriers to movement, climate, agriculture as the fundamental basis of the economy, the basic mix of crops, and the available transportation technology – underwent minimal change between the beginning of the Bronze Age in the Aegean (c. 3000 BCE) and the early years of the 20th century. It is essential to acknowledge from the outset that the sociopolitical situation in the Spartan plain, which had a potentially major impact on settlement patterns, has changed massively over the course of time, and at least some degree of diachronic fluctuation in settlement patterns is to be expected. That said, given the long-term continuity in the factors outlined above, information about settlement patterns in other periods can be useful in establishing whether the settlement pattern posited here for the Spartan plain between the Archaic and Hellenistic periods, which presumes the existence of a series of substantial settlements running down the entire length of the Spartan plain, was a practical possibility. (It is worth bearing in mind that the current orthodoxy assumes that starting in the Archaic period there were just two substantial settlements in the Spartan plain, Sparta and Amyklai; see Sections 1 and 5.2.) The comparative data is of course suggestive rather than probative – demonstrating the possibility of a particular settlement pattern is not the same as demonstrating that the settlement pattern in question existed at a specific point in time.

I begin by discussing the geological history of Lakonia in order to establish that some basic parameters of life in the Spartan plain have remained largely the same throughout the Holocene (11,700 years ago to the present day). The landscape of Lakonia as it currently exists began to take shape about 100 million years ago, when a collision between the African and Eurasian tectonic plates created major mountain ranges (a process known as the Alpine orogeny), including the Taygetos and Parnon. The eastern edge of the Taygetos rises abruptly from the Spartan plain,

along a fault line, to an elevation of approximately 500 masl. A plateau (referred to here as the Taygetos plateau, see Figure 17) then rises gradually upward to approximately 1000 masl over a distance of roughly 3 km. After that, much steeper slopes climb to peaks above 2000 masl.<sup>311</sup>

In the early part of the Neogene period, namely the Miocene epoch (23-25 million years ago (mya)), tectonic forces pulling in opposite directions uplifted the Taygetos and Parnon and created between the two ranges a graben (rift valley) that eventually developed into the Eurotas river valley as we know it. For much of the Miocene epoch, that graben was covered by sea and lakes, and its floor was gradually buried under thick layers of clay, marls, gravel, sand, limestones, and conglomerates. That material is frequently referred to as “Neogene fill.”

In the Pliocene epoch (5-2.6 mya), tectonic uplift raised the graben above sea level, thereby creating something like the Eurotas valley of the present day. The central part of the graben subsided, while its eastern margin experienced further uplift. As a result, there were, broadly speaking, two distinct parts of the graben: a higher section to the east and a lower section to the west. The higher section, frequently referred to as the Neogene plateau, merges with the foothills of the Parnon at its eastern edge and drops off sharply at its western edge. The lower section of the graben can, for analytical purposes, be divided into two parts: the Spartan plain and the Helos plain. (The latter has a distinct history because its lower elevation made it more susceptible to marine submersion and flooding.)

311 The Taygetos consists of three major, superimposed layers of rock: phyllite-quartzite (on the bottom) and two separate sheets of hard limestone (the Tripolitsa and Olonos-Pindos units). Much of the Taygetos is composed of Tripolitsa limestone (the lower sections of which have metamorphosed into marble in some areas) with a cap of Olonos-Pindos limestone. The phyllite-quartzite, due to post-orogenic warping and erosion, is exposed in the Taygetos plateau. On the geological history of Lakonia, see Loy 1970: 44-61; Bintliff 1977: vol. 1: 5-34 and vol. 2, 372-76; Piper, Pe-Piper, Kontopoulos et al. 1982; Pe-Piper & Piper 1985; Higgins & Higgins 1996: 22-23, 51-52; Wilkinson 1998; Morton 2001: 13-14; van Berghem & Fiselier 2002: 60-61; Pope, Wilkinson & Millington 2003; Papanastassiou, Gaki-Papanastassiou & Maroukian 2005; Pope & Wilkinson 2005; Fouache, Cosandey, Cez et al. 2025.

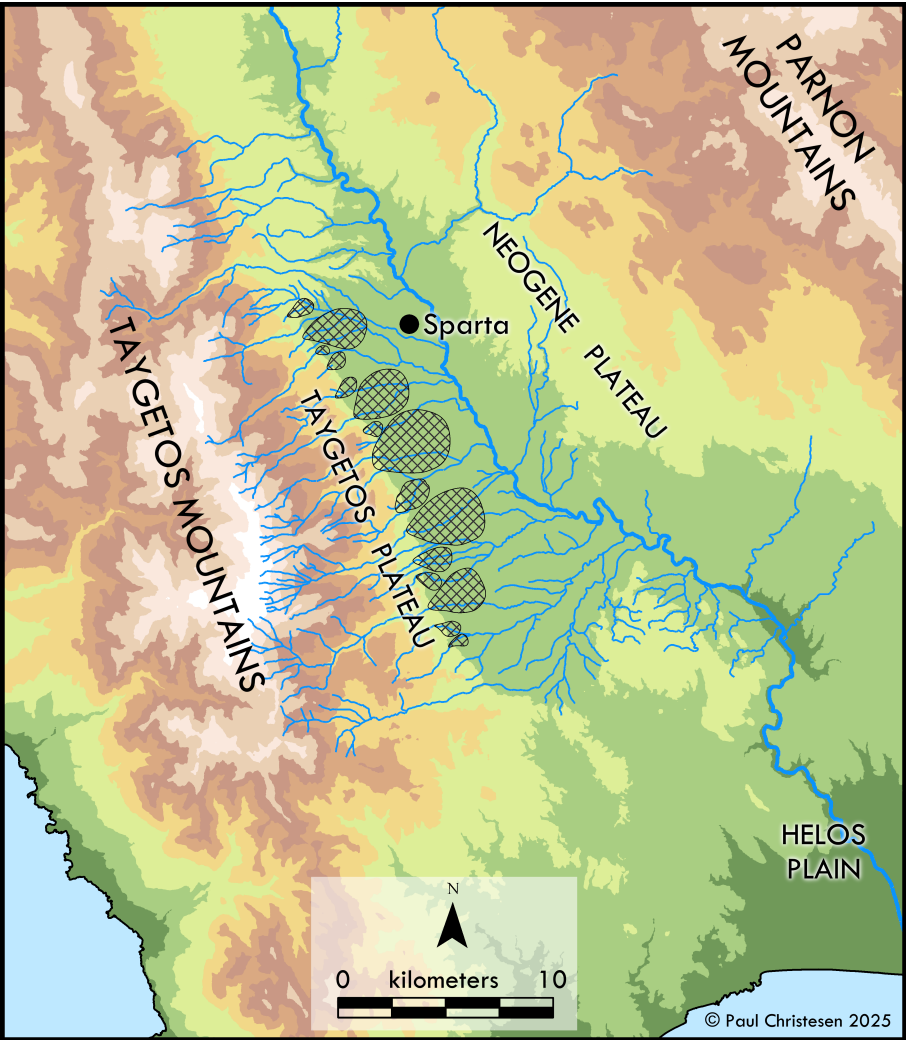


Figure 17: Map showing key geological features of Lakonia. The position and size of the alluvial fans (indicated in cross-hatching) are based on Figure 2 in Pope, Wilkinson & Millington 2003. The tributaries on the west side of the Eurotas are shown in more detail than those on the east side (in order to highlight the relationship between those tributaries and the alluvial fans).



Water flowing through the graben ran northwest to southeast through its lowest point, roughly along the seam between its upper and lower sections, and formed the Eurotas river. Post-orogenic crustal extension during the Pliocene created fractures running east-west through the Taygetos. The streams draining from the Taygetos flowed through those fractures and into the Spartan plain and created alluvial fans before continuing eastward to the Eurotas. During the Pliocene and Pleistocene (2.6 mya – 11,700 years ago), water- and wind-driven erosion heavily dissected the Neogene plateau, thereby greatly reducing its value as agricultural land. In the Spartan plain, some of the Neogene fill was eroded away; that process created a line of low hills – starting with the acropolis of Sparta and terminating at Agios Vasileios – in the central part of the Eurotas valley, on the west side of the river. The summits of those hills, which have elevations of approximately 220-240 masl, are about 30 meters higher than the surrounding terrain. However, the Spartan plain did not experience the dissection that reshaped the Neogene plateau. The plain remained a level area with minimal obstructions to movement (other than the easily crossed beds of the streams running eastward from the Taygetos to the Eurotas). In addition, it was blessed with fertile soil (primarily Neogene marls and alluvial fill).<sup>312</sup>

- 312 Bintliff, drawing on the scholarship of Claudio Vita-Finzi, distinguished two distinct types of fill in Lakonia: “Older Fill” (predominantly red in color and hence sometimes called “red beds,” typically found in the form of massive alluvial fans) and “Younger Fill” (buff or grey, consisting of fine sand with an admixture of gravel and sometimes tile, brick, and pottery) (Bintliff 1977: vol. 1, 35-58; Wagstaff 1981: 247-48). Bintliff argued that these fills were formed in distinct episodes that were widely separated in time (with the Older Fill being at least 20,000 years old and the Younger Fill having been formed after c. 400 CE) and that climatic changes drove their formation. More recent scholarship has taken the view that it is impossible to distinguish reliably just two categories of fill, that fill was deposited at widely variant dates, and that both anthropogenic and climatic factors need to be taken into account (see, for example, Lewin, Macklin & Woodward 1991; Fuchs, Lang & Wagner 2004; Tourloukis & Karkanis 2012). Bintliff has modified his views since 1977 (see, for example, Bintliff 1992; Bintliff 2000; Bintliff 2002). Bintliff also rejected prior statements that much of the soil in the Spartan plain is alluvial. He argued that alluvial fill is limited to a narrow band along the course of the Eurotas and that most of the soil in the Spartan plain is Neogene fill (Bintliff 1977: vol. 2,

Other than some extension of the alluvial fans in the western side of the plain and continuing alluviation along the Eurotas, the fundamental geological and topographic parameters of the Spartan plain that were in place by the end of the Pleistocene remained mostly unchanged throughout the Holocene.<sup>313</sup> While the Eurotas was until recently subject to seasonal flooding that periodically shifted its banks, the general course of the river has remained the same.<sup>314</sup> As a result, the extent and location of arable land in the Spartan plain and the capacity to move freely through the plain did not change significantly. Prior to the 20th century, the challenges of exploiting the lands around the fringe of the plain, the Neogene and Taygetos plateaus, also did not evolve markedly.

There has, in addition, been a substantial degree of continuity in terms of climate, which has experienced fluctuations over the course of the Holocene but remained broadly similar.<sup>315</sup> This continuity is reflected in similarities between the vegetative landscape of Lakonia in ancient and modern times. Oliver Rackham, in an exploration of the historical ecology of Lakonia, concluded that, “the landscape and vegetation of the middle Peloponnese were not very different in Classical times from what they were just before the recent agricultural decline.”<sup>316</sup> The fertility of the Spartan plain and its geographic isolation from the sea have helped

375-76, 383, 386, 391, 402). The details of the formation and location of the fills in the Spartan plain are not, in the present context, a major concern.

313 There remains some degree of uncertainty about the timing and extent of the growth of the alluvial fans in the western part of the Spartan plain during the Holocene. See Pope & Millington 2000; Pope & Millington 2002; Pope, Wilkinson & Millington 2003; Cavanagh, Mee & Renard 2004: 74-5; Pope & Wilkinson 2005; Fouache, Cosandey, Cez et al. 2025: S6. The most thorough treatment of the issue (Pope & Wilkinson 2005) concludes that the alluvial fans in the Spartan plain were formed primarily during the Middle Pleistocene.

314 This is most immediately evident from the fact that the known ancient bridges remain on or very close to the banks of the Eurotas. See Armstrong, Cavanagh & Shipley 1992; Hitchcock, Chapin & Reynolds 2020: Figure 4. On the bridge at Sparta, see now Christesen & Kramer 2024: 208.

315 For a comprehensive review of the evidence, see Weiberg, Unkel, Kouli et al. 2016; see also Rackham 2002: 114, 116-17 and, for more up-to-date discussion and bibliography, Timonen 2024: 74-79.

316 Rackham 2002: 101. In the quote supplied above, Rackham is referring to the decrease in agricultural activity in Lakonia that began c. 1950.

maintain agriculture as the fundamental form of economic activity. Moreover, the *syssitia* contributions required from Spartiates (grain, wine, figs, plus voluntary donations of olive oil) speak to a crop regimen that corresponds closely to that apparent in the archaeobotanical record from Lakonia and surrounding regions in the Bronze Age and from agricultural censuses carried out in the 19th and early 20th centuries (though citrus trees did not arrive until the Ottoman period).<sup>317</sup> The detailed agricultural census published in 1911 shows that in the eparchy of Lakedaimon (consisting of the Spartan plain and the immediately surrounding territory), the area under cultivation was devoted primarily to grain (59% of the total), olive trees (21%), grapes (9%), legumes and vegetables (6%), and fodder crops (2%).<sup>318</sup>

Insofar as the inhabitants of the Spartan plain in the period between the start of the Bronze Age and the early 20th century CE undertook broadly similar economic activities in a broadly similar landscape, a settlement pattern that was possible at one time was possible – but by no means inevitable – at another time. In the discussion that follows, the settlement pattern in the Spartan plain in two periods, the Late Bronze Age and the 19th century CE, is examined. The surveys and systematic excavations focused on Bronze-Age sites in Lakonia (see Section 7) provide an unusually rich body of evidence for settlement patterns in that period. Modern censuses offer a level of detail that cannot be derived from archaeological data.

Hope Simpson and Waterhouse, based on their survey of Lakonia, identified the major Late Bronze-Age sites in the Spartan plain as the Menelaion, the Amyklaion, Palaiopyrgi, and Agios Vasileios. The latter three were all located on one of the low hilltops to the west of the Euro-

317 On Spartiate mess contributions, see Figueira 1984. On the archaeobotanical evidence for Bronze-Age Lakonia, see Cappers & Mulder 2004; Vaiglova, Boggard, Collins et al. 2014; and Diffey & Bogaard 2025. The best study of the relevant evidence for an adjoining region is now Timonen's work on the Argolid (Timonen 2024). For the 19th century, see Petmezas 2003 and the detailed statistical tables contained therein.

318 'Υπουργείου Ἐθνικῆς Οἰκονομίας 1911. The relevant figures can be found in Volume 5, part A.

tas. Hope Simpson and Waterhouse argued that the Bronze-Age inhabitants of the Spartan plain were attracted to hills that were defensible and had ready access to good farmland.

In a study of settlement patterns in Bronze-Age Lakonia published in the 1970s, John Bintliff agreed with Hope Simpson and Waterhouse about the preference for hilltop sites with farmland in the immediate vicinity.<sup>319</sup> He also observed that the major sites were spaced approximately one hour's walk from each other, with secondary settlements situated about 30 minutes from the major settlements. Bintliff made the case that the soil in the alluvial fans in the western part of the plain was difficult to farm, as a result of which there was "scant interest in much of this piedmont till recent times."<sup>320</sup> Anthochori, which was excavated after the publication of Hope Simpson and Waterhouse's work, presented a challenge because it was located at the western edge of the plain.<sup>321</sup> Bintliff, who characterizes Anthochori as a significant secondary settlement in the Late Bronze Age, explains its location in the western part of the plain as a reflection of an interest in accessing the resources available on the Taygetos plateau.<sup>322</sup>

In 1996, Emily Banou published a study of Mycenaean Lakonia in which she argued that there was a four-level hierarchy of sites. She ranked the sites in the Spartan plain as follows (see Figure 18 for the locations):

- large urban centers: Agios Vasileios, Menelaion, Palaiopyrgi, Vouno Panagias
- small urban centers: acropolis of Sparta, Agios Georgios, Anthochori, Kouphovouno
- villages: Aphysou, Melathria

319 Bintliff 1977: 371-450. See, in particular, 393, 407-8.

320 Bintliff 1977: 402.

321 Anthochori is situated at the eastern edge of an alluvial fan and the western edge of a considerable expanse of fertile, flat land. On the finds from Anthochori, see Section 7.

322 Bintliff 1977: 402. This position is somewhat inconsistent with the ostensible disinterest in the western part of the Spartan plain.



Figure 18: Mycenaean sites in the Spartan plain, with indication of placement in Banou's site hierarchy.

- rural installations: (none listed in the Spartan plain).<sup>323</sup>

The recently discovered site of Vrysika can (based on the size of the settlement as indicated in the excavation reports) be added to the list of small urban centers.<sup>324</sup> Banou, echoing Bintliff, noted that the large urban centers were spaced about 5 km apart and that small urban centers were situated roughly halfway between them.<sup>325</sup>

A wealth of modern census data pertaining to Lakonia is available. The Ottoman government starting in the 15th century intermittently collected detailed demographic and economic information;<sup>326</sup> the extant records from the period of Venetian rule over the Peloponnese (1684 to 1715) include information from three separate censuses (1689, 1700-1701, c. 1710);<sup>327</sup> and the Greek government carried out 20 censuses during the 19th century (and a further four censuses between 1907 and

323 Banou 1996: 100-1. The chronological data contained in the most recent publications on Kouphovouno may suggest that it was not an important site in the Late Bronze Age. See Cavanagh, Mee & Renard 2025.

324 Tsouli & Kotsi 2017; Tsouli, Kotsi & Vlachakos 2022.

325 Banou 2020b: 27. Banou pointed out that the co-existence of multiple large sites within close proximity to each other in the Spartan plain still requires satisfactory explanation (Banou 2020a). The waxing and waning of the size of the sites over the course of the Late Bronze Age must be taken into account, but further work is required to establish the precise chronology of activity at some sites. Hitchcock, Chapin, and Reynolds argue that Lakonia in the Late Bronze Age was characterized by “regional cooperation and integration rather than conflict” (Hitchcock, Chapin & Reynolds 2020: 335).

326 The most significant sources of demographic information in the Ottoman records are the *tahrir defterleri*, which record the number of individuals liable to taxation and the scope of taxable resources. A *tahrir defter* was prepared for each newly-conquered region and then, in theory at least, updated every 20-30 years. More than 1,500 *tahrir defterleri* are extant, though the records pertaining to Lakonia remain largely unpublished. For a thorough, recent publication of a *tahrir defter* compiled for the Peloponnese between 1460 and 1463, see Liakopoulos 2019. (Note that most of the pages recording information from Lakonia are missing from that *tahrir defter*.) On the *tahrir defterleri* and their use as historical sources, see Coşgel 2004 and Gümüşçü 2008.

327 There is reason to believe that the census from 1689 missed a significant fraction of the population of the Peloponnese, and the records from the c. 1710 census are

1928). In my opinion, the most immediately relevant information comes from the last quarter of the 19th century. Census data from before the second quarter of the 19th century is less than ideal for present purposes, because Sparta was abandoned after the foundation of Mystras in the 13th century CE and not re-founded until the 1830s.<sup>328</sup> The early census data thus pertains to a situation in which the dominant site in the northern part of the Spartan plain was Mystras, not Sparta. Starting in the early 20th century, the introduction of the internal combustion engine and the gradual integration of Greece into the Western European capitalist economic system impacted residential patterns and farming activity. The last quarter of the 19th century represents something of a “sweet spot.” By that point in time, a major land redistribution program had been implemented. That program helped put into the hands of small farmers more than 1 million hectares of land that the Greek government had controlled since gaining independence from the Ottoman empire. This helped create a situation that, in very rough terms, bore some resemblance to the landholding patterns in the Archaic through Roman periods, in that arable land was privately held by a significant number of households.<sup>329</sup> Moreover, by the last quarter of the 19th century, Sparta had once again emerged as the dominant community in the Spartan plain. Insofar as the modern census data is of interest primarily as representing a possible settlement pattern, the results of a single census are sufficient for present purposes.

The 19th-century census data presents some challenges because the relevant publications produced by the Greek government do not include maps showing the locations of the communities listed in any given census. I addressed that problem by linking information from the 1879 census to sites shown on the highly detailed map of Greece (in 11 sheets)

incomplete. The census started in 1700, the so-called Grimani census, is the most complete and valuable of the three. See Panagiotopoulos 1985: 135-51 (the data from the Grimani census is tabulated on pp. 231-89).

328 Runciman 2009: 9-14; Matalas 2017.

329 On the ownership of agricultural land in 19th-century Greece, see Petmezas 2003: 23-92 and Lemontzoglou 2020. On land ownership in ancient Lakadaimon, see Hodkinson 2000.

prepared by Iphicrates Kokkidis and Heinrich Kieppert for the Kaiserlich-Königliches Militär-Geographisches Institut in Vienna and published in 1885.<sup>330</sup> I also drew on some additional cartographic resources, such as the maps created by members of the French Morea Expedition and published in 1835.<sup>331</sup> In the administrative subdivisions employed in the 1879 census, the entirety of the Spartan plain lay within the eparchy of Lakedaimon (which was subdivided into 13 demes and 162 communities). I was able to map with a high degree of confidence 139 of the 162 communities listed in the eparchy of Lakedaimon in the records from the 1879 census. Those communities contained more than 98% of the total population of the eparchy.<sup>332</sup> The resulting map thus offers a good picture of the distribution of population in the Spartan plain in the second half of the 19th century.

As was virtually certainly the case in antiquity, Sparta was, by a considerable margin, the largest town in the Spartan plain in 1879, with just over 3,500 inhabitants (see Figure 19). The next largest settlement in the vicinity was Anavryti, which was located on the Taygetos plateau. There were four villages with more than 500 inhabitants in the vicinity of Sparta (Hagiannis, Magoula, Mistra, Parori). Four additional settlements of that size were located in the southern part of the plain (at Anogeia, Palaiopanagia, Skoura, Xerokambi). The towns of Sklavo Khorio and Mahmoud Bey, which together occupied the site of ancient Amyklai, had a combined population of 582.

The existence in the 19th century of multiple substantial settlements along the western edge of the plain calls for some discussion. Bintliff (who had a good, qualitative grasp of the location and size of settlements in the Spartan plain in the 19th century) argued that the settlements in the western part of the plain became prominent in the Ottoman period,

330 'Υπουργεῖο Ἑσωτερικῶν 1881; Kokkidis & Kieppert 1885.

331 Bory de Saint Vincent 1835. See now the invaluable digital cartographic resources for 19th-century Greece being made available through the efforts of the *Ινστιτούτο Ιστορικών Ερευνών του Εθνικού Ιδρύματος Ερευνών* in Athens: <https://mo-ree1829.gr/>; <https://atlas1821.com/>.

332 The 139 mapped communities had a cumulative population of 51,638. The total population of the eparchy was 52,519. The unmapped communities were almost all quite small and thus harder to trace.



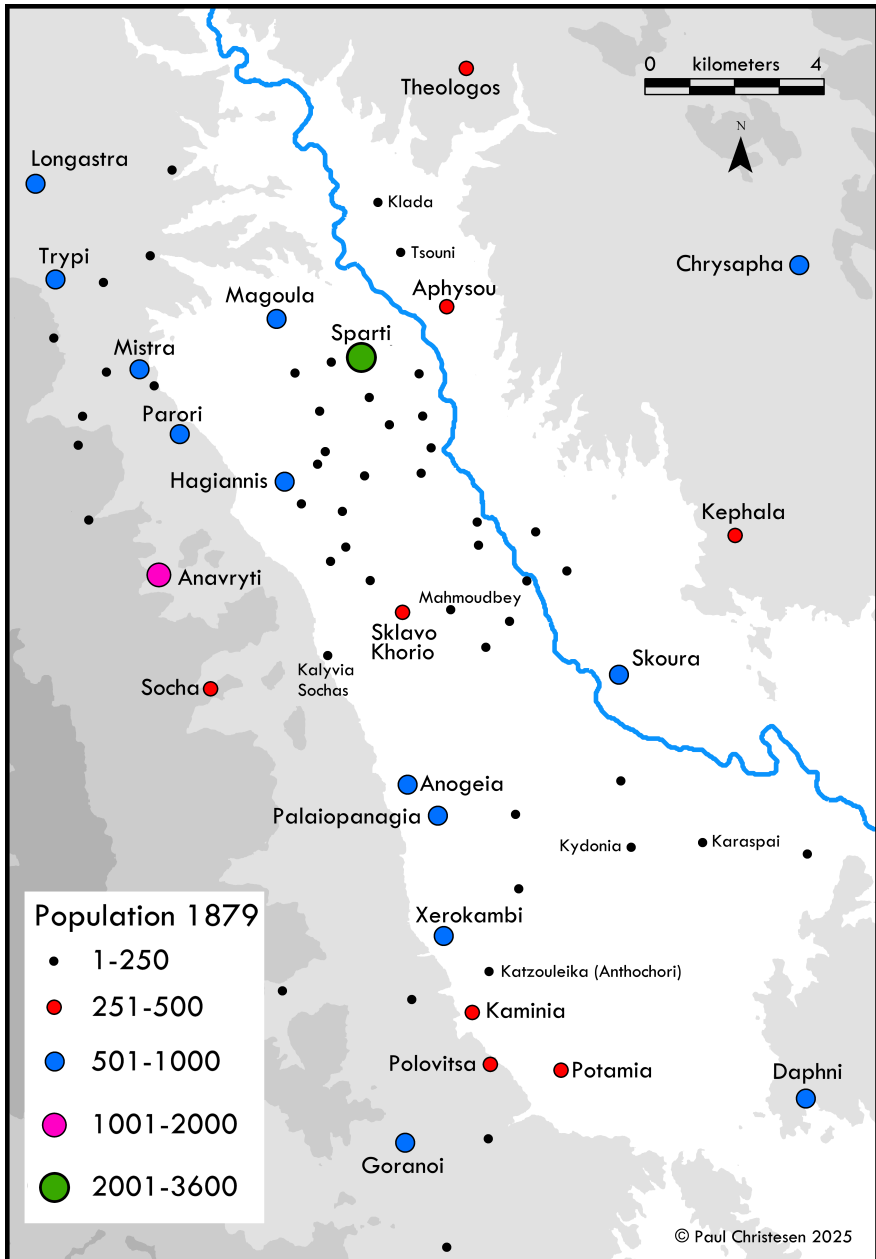


Figure 19: Distribution of population in the Spartan plain and Taygetos plateau in 1879 CE. In the interests of legibility, most settlements with populations less than 250 are not labeled.

when much of the land in the eastern part of the plain was controlled by Turks and worked by hired labor.<sup>333</sup> However, as we have seen, he also interpreted the existence of an important ancient settlement at modern Anthochori as reflecting an interest in exploiting resources available on the Taygetos plateau.

The available archaeological evidence, some of which became available after the 1970s, suggests that Bintliff underestimated the extent of activity during antiquity along the western edge of the Spartan plain and on the Taygetos plateau. As we have seen (Section 7), significant remains have been found at five sites along the western edge of the plain (Sinan Bey, Kalyvia Sochas, Anogeia, Xerokambi, Anthochori). There is also noteworthy evidence from several sites on the Taygetos plateau. The discovery of two tholos tombs and other Late-Bronze Age material at Arkines – c. 6 km southwest of Anthochori and at an elevation of c. 700 masl (see Figure 16 in Section 7) – points to the existence of a settlement. Geometric- and Classical-period finds from the site suggest that activity continued after the Bronze Age. Material from the Classical and Roman periods has been found at Arna and Goranoi (c. 2 km southwest and northeast of Arkines, respectively).<sup>334</sup> In 2010, a rescue excavation at Toriza (c. 5 km northwest of Anthochori and at an altitude of c. 900 masl) uncovered a six-room residential structure that was occupied between the fifth and first century BCE.<sup>335</sup> Further north, near modern Anavryti, the remains of what is probably a Roman settlement were found at Kastanies (elevation c. 850 masl).<sup>336</sup> The attractions of the Taygetos included stone resources; marble was quarried starting in the Archaic period at Goranoi and Platyvouni (c. 1.5 km northwest of Anogeia).<sup>337</sup> In addition, cooler temperatures, perennial streams, and forests on the Taygetos plateau created opportunities for agriculture, animal husbandry, and hunting. The poems of Theognis include praise for wine produced “beneath the peak of Taygetos, from vines planted on the mountain

333 Bintliff 1977: vol. 2, 417-18.

334 Shipley 1996a: 294, HH117; 294, HH115.

335 Maltezou 2020.

336 Shipley 1996a: 294, HH342.

337 Kokkorou-Aletras, Efstathopoulos, Kopanias et al. 2006.

glens.”<sup>338</sup> The 1911 agricultural census shows that residents of villages in the Spartan plain kept, on average, 1.84 livestock animals (cattle, sheep, and goats) per inhabitant, whereas residents of villages on the Taygetos plateau kept 4.3 livestock animals per inhabitant. This data points to opportunities for animal husbandry that could have been exploited in antiquity.<sup>339</sup> There is, as a result, no particular reason to believe the western part of the Spartan plain and the Taygetos plateau received “scant interest” in antiquity.<sup>340</sup>

Two features of the evidence for settlement patterns in the Spartan plain during the Late Bronze Age and the 19th century are particularly noteworthy. First, in both periods, there is a hierarchy of settlements of different sizes that are relatively evenly distributed across the plain. This settlement pattern can be plausibly understood as the result of a desire

338 879–81, trans. D.E. Gerber. Ross, who visited the village of Goranoi in the mid-19th century CE, remarked that most of its inhabitants made their living from viticulture (Ross 1848: vol. 2, 214).

339 These figures are based on a compilation of the data in ‘Υπουργείου Ἐθνικῆς Οἰκονομίας 1911, Volume 5, part B. Ross found that many of the inhabitants of Anavryti made products (leather, shoes, rope, etc.) from animal skins and hair and sold those products to people living in the valley below (Ross 1848: vol. 2, 204).

340 The data from the 1911 agricultural census shows that land-use patterns in villages located in the alluvial fans on the western side of the Spartan plain (e.g. Anogeia and Xerokambi) differed markedly from those in the central part of the plain (e.g. Karaspai and Kydonia). See the chart below, which gives percentages of total cultivated area devoted to different crops (the data is compiled from ‘Υπουργείου Ἐθνικῆς Οἰκονομίας 1911, Volume 5, part A). The inhabitants of the settlements in the alluvial fans, who had access to less than ideal soil but plentiful water, focused on olive trees, which could flourish in stonier soils, and legumes and vegetables, which required regular watering. The inhabitants of the settlements in the central part of the plain grew almost exclusively grain (in the form of wheat). This adaptability to localized conditions was presumably also an option for farmers in antiquity.

	grain	olives & figs	grapes	legumes & vegetables
Anogeia	54%	0%	17%	25%
Xerokambi	27%	53%	12%	2%
Karaspai	95%	0%	5%	0%
Kydonia	93%	0%	7%	0%

to cultivate the plain as fully as possible, limitations on how far it was practical to travel to and from one's fields, and the absence of natural obstacles in the plain. Second, specific areas attracted significant settlement in both periods: the northern end of the plain (Menelaion/Sparta, situated on opposite sides of the Eurotas), the central part of the plain on both the west and east sides of the Eurotas (ancient/modern Amyklai/Sklavochori, Vouno Panagias/Skoura), and the southwestern corner of the plain (Anthochori/Xerokambi-Kaminia).

Those two features resonate with what we know about settlement patterns in the Archaic through Hellenistic periods. The key issues are the certain existence of sizable settlements in the northern and west-central parts of the Spartan plain (Sparta, Amyklai), the possible existence of a sizable settlement in the east-central part of the plain (Skoura), and the probable existence of a sizeable settlement in the southwestern corner of the plain (Anthochori/Messapeai). The higher resolution in the 19th-century data permits more detailed comparison, particularly with regard to the existence of a penumbra of suburbs around Sparta and a chain of settlements on the Taygetos plateau and the western edge of the plain. The size of the linked settlements at Socha and Kalyvia Sochas (a *kalyvi* being a place to which inhabitants of higher elevation settlements moved for the winter months) may suggest that the cult site uncovered at Kalyvia Sochas was part of an as-yet undiscovered ancient settlement. The same could be true of the cult site found in the vicinity of Anogeia.

## 9. Conclusions

We are now in a position to draw some tentative conclusions about Lakedaimonian *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived. What is here called the current orthodoxy holds that:

- the enactment of the Great Rhetra in the late seventh century resulted in the creation of five domicile-based tribes called *ōbai*;
- each *ōba* was tied to a military unit and a distinct settlement nucleus;
- four of the *ōbai* and associated settlement nuclei (Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana) were centered in Sparta and one at Amyklai;
- every Spartiate was enrolled in an *ōba* and thus necessarily resided in either Sparta or Amyklai;
- there were no significant settlements in the Spartan plain other than Sparta or Amyklai.

This combination of subdivisions of the citizen body and residence patterns is said to have persisted largely unchanged through the end of the Roman period.

The current orthodoxy is ripe for reconsideration. It consists of a fragile web of deductions that derive from the application of a questionable methodology to a limited collection of evidence. A key problem is that the word *ōba* appears in the extant textual evidence only sporadically prior to the Roman period: in the Great Rhetra, then (probably) in *IG* V.1.722 in the late sixth or early fifth century, followed by a long gap until *IG* V.1.26 and 27 from the late Hellenistic period. The only texts that say anything directly about the nature of the Lakedaimonian *ōbai* are the Roman-era *sphaireis* inscriptions and late lexicons, encyclopedias, and scholia. In the *sphaireis* inscriptions, the *ōbai* function solely as organizers of ballgames that formed part of the state educational system. Some entries in the late lexicons equate *ōbai* with *kōmai*. The military function attributed to the *ōbai* by the current orthodoxy is thus not attested in any ancient source. Furthermore, given the temporal gap between the Great Rhetra and later sources, the indisputable fact that the Lakedaimonian sociopolitical system underwent significant changes over the course of

time, and the efforts of the inhabitants of Sparta in the Roman period to draw connections with a glorious past, scholarly interpretations that rely on Roman- and Byzantine-era sources to reconstruct the nature of the *ōbai* in earlier periods need to be treated with considerable skepticism.<sup>341</sup> In addition, the current orthodoxy is not compatible with the available archaeological evidence for either the settlement organization of Sparta, which shows no trace of distinct settlement nuclei, or for settlement patterns in the Spartan plain, which seems to have contained at least one substantial settlement other than Sparta and Amyklai (see Sections 6-7).

In this section of the article, I propose alternative interpretations of the number, location, and extent of *ōbai* and where Spartiates lived. I argue that *ōbai* were, as per the current orthodoxy, locality-based groupings created by the Great Rhetra. However, I make the case that they were in the first instance local governmental entities, akin to Attic demes, rather than military units. In addition, I am skeptical that we can say anything for certain about their number, location, or extent. That conclusion has important ramifications for our understanding of where Spartiates lived. If we admit to a high degree of uncertainty about how many *ōbai* there were, where they were located, and how much territory they encompassed, we must simultaneously abandon the claim that all Spartiates necessarily lived in Sparta and Amyklai.

I suggest that, in the Archaic and Classical periods, Spartiates lived in a series of settlements across the entirety of the Spartan plain. The dispersal of Spartiates over a considerable stretch of territory may well have been responsible, at least in part, for their commitment to a shared lifestyle built around collective activities (educational system, commensality, and so forth) that took place in Sparta.<sup>342</sup> The requirement that all Spartiates participate regularly in those activities meant that many Spar-

341 The textual sources are discussed in Section 3, the current orthodoxy and its flaws in Section 5.2. On the methodological problems inherent in using Roman-era sources to interpret much earlier texts about Lakedaimonian *ōbai*, see the bibliography cited in n. 187.

342 The connection between where Spartiates lived and the importance of collective activities among Spartiates has been nicely articulated by Lupi. See Section 9.4.

tiates, in effect, commuted to and from their primary residence. Spartiates who did not live in Sparta but who necessarily spent a considerable amount of time in the city found it convenient to have access to spaces in which they could worship, eat, sleep, and so on. Those spaces took the form of *leschai* that were probably constructed and maintained by *ōbai*. The *leschai* were multi-functional, but the nature of the extant remains is such that they present as cult sites in the archaeological record. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, as the number of Spartiates declined and as the security situation in Lakonia deteriorated, it became possible and advantageous for most, if not all, Spartiates to reside in or very close to Sparta. That shift in residence patterns made many of the *leschai* in Sparta superfluous, and some spaces used for *leschai* in the Archaic and Classical periods were converted to residential purposes in the Roman period.

This analysis of the available evidence is supported by a new reading of a passage in which Thucydides (1.10.2) describes the “*polis* of the Lakedaimonians” as never having been synoikized and, as a result, being settled *kata kōmas* and lacking in physically impressive structures. This passage has traditionally been interpreted within the context of the current orthodoxy such that it is understood as applying solely to the city of Sparta (with Thucydides’ *kōmas* equated to four distinct settlement nuclei linked to the *ōbai*). I make the case that Thucydides is describing exactly what he says he is describing, the *polis* of Lakedaimon, not the city of Sparta. In my view, Thucydides is claiming that there was no single, dominant urban center in Lakedaimon, with the result that communities in Lakonia, including Sparta, were not embellished to nearly the same extent as Athens (which became the dominant urban center in Attica as the result of the *synoikismos* carried out by Theseus). This reading of Thucydides 1.10.2 is not compatible with the current orthodoxy, but it is consonant with the idea that Spartiates in Thucydides’ time lived in a series of settlements scattered throughout the Spartan plain.

### 9.1 The Nature, Number, Location, and Extent of *ōbai*

An obvious starting point for a reconsideration of the *ōbai* is the long-standing debate about whether *ōbai* were descent-based subdivisions of

*phylai* or locality-based units within a system that had no organic connection to *phylai*. The latter view has been ascendant since the early decades of the 20th century, but Lupi has recently attempted to revive the former view (see Section 5).

In my opinion, the evidence favors the interpretation that the *ōbai* were, from the time of the Great Rhetra onward, locality-based units that performed local governmental functions and hence were similar to Athenian demes. This view deviates from that of Wade-Gery, who saw the *ōbai* as “tribes based on domicile” that were primarily military units and hence not tasked with local governmental functions. The most important sources for the nature of the *ōbai* are, from my perspective, Herodotus’ characterization of Pitana as a *dēmos* and Plutarch’s comparison of Pitana to the Athenian deme of Kollytos.<sup>343</sup> The references discussed in Sections 3 and 6.4 show that Pitana was a particularly prominent locale, and it is explicitly characterized as an *ōba* in the Roman-era epigraphic sources.<sup>344</sup> The word *ōba* appears only in textual sources bearing on Lakedaïmon, which indicates that it was a local term that was not used elsewhere in the Greek world. Non-Lakedaïmonian authors, therefore, probably found it necessary to refer to *ōbai* using terminology that would have been more familiar to their readers. Herodotus made a concerted effort to learn about Lakedaïmon, personally visited Sparta, interacted with a resident of Pitana, and went out of his way to explain to his readers the nature of Pitana. (Herodotus states that he met the Spartiate Archias in Pitana and adds as an aside, δῆμον γὰρ τούτου ἦν). Plutarch, who was exceptionally well informed about Lakedaïmon, also equates Pitana with a deme. Attempts to take the same approach with different authors – for example, Lupi and others have argued that the phratries in Demetrios of Skepsis’ description of the Lakedaïmonian Karneia festival were *ōbai* –

343 Hdt. 3.55.2; Plut. *On Exile* 6 = *Mor.* 601b. See Sections 3.2 and 3.4.2 for the relevant passages. For the *ōbai* as “tribes based on domicile,” see Wade-Gery 1958: 78.

344 See, for example, IG V.1.675.



are less persuasive because of the lack of explicit connection to an entity that we know to have been an *ōba* at one point.<sup>345</sup>

I would also note that *IG V.1.26*, from the late second or early first century (see Section 3.3), demonstrates that the *ōba* of the Amyklaians at that point in time had its own government, complete with officials (ephors and *dogmatographoi*) and a public treasury. The existence of an obal government is much more compatible with *ōbai* as demes than as descent-based groups or military units. Hesychius' definition of a word, probably γεροάκται, as "*dēmarchoi* among Lakonians" provides further evidence for *ōbai* being equipped with administrative machinery and their equivalence to demes.<sup>346</sup>

The administrative function(s) associated with *phylai* and the nature of the relationship between *phylai* and *ōbai* remain unclear. The wording of the Great Rhetra shows that *phylai* and *ōbai* were different entities in the Archaic period. It is not unreasonable to equate the *phylai* of the Great Rhetra with the Dorian tribes (Dymanes, Hylleis, Pamphyloi) mentioned by Tyrtaios (fr. 19 West) in a military context. The Tyrtaios fragment indicates that in the Archaic period the Lakedaimonian *phylai* were, at minimum, army units. In the Roman-era inscriptions, *phylai* and *ōbai* appear only in relation to athletic activities forming part of the *agōgē*. Kynosoura and Limnai appear in those inscriptions as the names of both a *phylē* and *ōba*, which strongly suggests that the two were easily conflated at that point in time. The Archaic and Roman-era *phylai* in Lakedaimon thus probably differed in meaningful ways. Kennell has argued that by the Roman period, *phylai* and *ōbai* were little more than groupings within the

345 Lupi 2006; Lupi 2018. Although phratries appear with some regularity in the modern scholarship on Lakedaimon (see Sections 5.1-2), the only evidence for their existence is Demetrios of Skepsis' description (in his commentary on the *Iliad*) of the Karneia festival (see Section 3.3); the corrupted entry for ἐπιπαίξιν in Hesychius' lexicon (see Section 3.5); and the claim, in a scholion to Pindar *Isthm.* 7.14-15 (7.18b Drachmann, = fr. 532 in Rose's collection of Aristotelian fragments), that the Aigēdai were originally a Theban phratry (see Section 2.3). It is possible that there were, at some points in time, phratries in Lakedaimon, most likely as subdivisions of *phylai*, that were entirely separate entities from the *ōbai*.

346 See also Section 3.5 for the proposal that the entry for *ōnarchos* in Hesychius' lexicon (ὠνάρχος δῆμψος) attests to the existence of officials called ὠφάρχαι who were the equivalent of Attic demarchs.

*agōgē*. According to Kennell, boys spent five years in the Roman-era *agōgē* and were divided into five *phylai* (Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Neopolis, Pitana). Each *phylē* was subdivided into five age-class-based groupings called *bouai*; as a result, there were 25 *bouai*. The oldest *boua* in each *phylē* consisted of *eirenes*, and each *boua* of *eirenes* competed in a ballgame tournament that served as a graduation ceremony. A *boua* competing in the tournament was called an *ōba* and bore the same name as the *phylē* of which it was part.<sup>347</sup> This is a plausible though necessarily somewhat speculative interpretation of the relevant evidence. I would suggest instead that the *ōbai* continued to function as local administrative units, at least in the context of the *agōgē*, during the Roman period, whereas the *phylai* were effectively defunct and could, therefore, be conflated with the *ōbai*.

More can perhaps be said about the administrative capacities of *ōbai* prior to the Roman period. Kennell discusses *IG V.1.26* at some length because he, like Wade-Gery, believes the institutional structure and freedom of action attested in that inscription are incompatible with Amyklai being one of the constituent communities of a synoikized Sparta that, administratively speaking, encompassed Amyklai. Wade-Gery argued that Amyklai was one of the original constituent communities of a synoikized Sparta, but had been given a considerable degree of independence during the reorganization of Lakadaimon following the events of 146 (hence the absence of any mention of Amyklai in the Roman-era *sphaireis* inscriptions). Kennell, on the other hand, makes the case that Amyklai was not one of the original constituent communities of Sparta. Rather, it was an *ōba* only in the generic sense of being a village, until the first century, when it was formally incorporated into Sparta.<sup>348</sup> In my view, the *ōbai*, from the time of the Great Rhetra onward, were, in effect, demes, and hence it would not be in the least surprising if each *ōba* had its own administrative structure (as per *IG V.1.26*). *IG V.1.722*, which seems to be a decree passed by the *ōba* of the Arkaloi in the late sixth or early fifth century, offers further evidence for administrative machinery at the obal level. The same can be said for the aforementioned entry in Hesychius' lexicon pertaining to demarchs in Lakonia. Insofar as the *ōbai*

347 Kennell 1995: 28–69. See also Chrimes 1949: 163–69.

348 Wade-Gery 1958: 75–76; Kennell 1995: 162–69.

appear in Roman-era inscriptions solely in relation to athletic activities that took place in the context of the *agōgē*, it seems likely that their organizational role had, by the first century CE, diminished considerably.

It is conceivable that the *ōbai* as we know them from Roman-era inscriptions were recent creations referred to using “recycled” terminology originally applied to institutions that had existed in the past but had ceased to function. Lakedaimonians in the Roman period found it highly convenient to emphasize elements of unbroken continuity between their present and past customs. Among other benefits, that emphasis on continuity made Lakedaimon attractive to Romans, with their respect for *mos maiorum*, and helped Lakedaimonians secure favorable treatment from the Roman government.<sup>349</sup> We cannot, therefore, exclude the possibility that Roman-period *ōbai* had no organic connection to earlier Lakedaimonian institutions bearing that name. However, *IG* V.1.26 attests to an *ōba* performing administrative functions outside the boundaries of the *agōgē* in the late second or early first century, so I am inclined to view the Roman-era *ōbai* as institutions with roots stretching back into the distant past.

I do not see any way of establishing the total number of *ōbai* in Lakedaimon at any point in time, even in the Roman period when we have relatively good sources at our disposal. There is no explicit statement in any of the extant sources about the number of Lakedaimonian *ōbai*. The Roman-era epigraphic texts contain references to four entities overtly described as *ōbai*: Kynosoura, Limnai, Neopolis, and Pitana. Contemporary literary sources have much to say about Lakedaimon, but rarely use the word *ōba* or its cognates. Strabo mentions Limnai and Mesoa, and Pausanias provides an aetiology for the whipping ritual at Artemis Orthia in which the inhabitants of Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana came to blows.<sup>350</sup>

Wade-Gery argued that starting in the Archaic period there were five *ōbai* (Amyklai, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Pitana) and that in the Hellenistic period a new *ōba* was created (Neopolis) while Amyklai became

349 On the importance of *mos maiorum* in Roman thought, see Bettini 2000. See also the bibliography cited in n. 187.

350 Strabo 8.5.1, 3; Paus. 3.16.9–10. See Section 3.4.2.

largely independent, so that the number of *ōbai* remained five.<sup>351</sup> Kennell, on the other hand, equated Amyklai and Neopolis.<sup>352</sup> However, Mesoa is never in any ancient source, either epigraphic or literary, explicitly identified as an *ōba* (though Pausanias puts it into a group that includes Kynosoura, Limnai, and Pitana). Wade-Gery (like other scholars before him) found it convenient to count Mesoa as an *ōba* because he saw five-fold divisions as crucial to the structure of the Lakedaimonian army and government (see Section 5.2).

An additional problem is that the Roman-period inscriptions that explicitly mention *ōbai* all pertain to activities that formed part of the *agōgē*. We need to be alert to the possibility that only the inhabitants of certain parts of Lakonia participated in the *agōgē* at that point in time. If that was the case, there could have been an unknowable number of *ōbai* that continued to function as administrative units but do not appear in the epigraphic record because they did not send their boys through the *agōgē*. The absence of any mention of *ōbai* in the textual record from Lakedaïmon outside of Sparta and Amyklai is not probative, because of the limited number of literary and epigraphic sources for other places in Lakonia and because *ōbai* appear infrequently even in the much richer collection of sources for Sparta. We are, therefore, not in a position to make definitive statements about the number of *ōbai* in the Roman period.

These ambiguities are greatly amplified for earlier periods. Sporadic references in Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic epigraphic and literary texts either to places (e.g. Pitana) that are characterized as *ōbai* in Roman-era epigraphic texts or to a specific *ōba* (e.g. *IG V.1.26*) do not provide any insight into the number of *ōbai*. Wade-Gery et al. retrojected the ostensible five Roman-period *ōbai* all the way back to the Archaic period, in large part because of the existence of various five-fold divisions in Lakedaimonian institutions. That approach is problematic for several reasons, not least because it assumes a high degree of continuity over long periods of time, even though there is good evidence for diachronic change. The existence of an *ōba* called Neopolis in the Roman-era inscriptions probably indicates that new *ōbai* could be created, so the number

351 On the creation of the *ōba* of Neopolis, see n. 190.

352 Kennell 1995: 162-69.

of *ōbai* may well have varied diachronically. Finally, some sources suggest (e.g. *IG* V.1.722, if Beattie's reading is correct, see Section 3.1) that there were *ōbai* other than Amyklai, Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, Neopolis, and Pitana. A great deal of skepticism is, therefore, in order about any attempt to specify the precise number of *ōbai* at any point in time.

The extent of territory encompassed by any given *ōba* also remains unclear. The current orthodoxy presumes that the *ōbai* of Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana were all tied to distinct settlement nuclei contained within the space delimited by the Hellenistic city wall (see, for example, Figure 4). The evidence supporting that presumption is quite limited. The archaeological record from Sparta reveals no traces of distinct settlement nuclei and, by the Archaic period, the city had extensive suburbs that were probably inhabited by Spartiates (see Sections 6.2-3). Pitana is, as we have seen (Section 6.4), frequently used as a synonym for Sparta and is placed by Pindar near the Eurotas, so there must have been some considerable degree of overlap between the two. Pausanias saw a Sanctuary of Artemis Issoria in the northwestern part of Sparta, and Polyaeus describes that sanctuary as being "near Pitana."<sup>353</sup> In addition, tiles stamped with Πιτανᾶτων were excavated in the northwestern part of Sparta.<sup>354</sup> Strabo states that the suburbs of Sparta were once marshy and hence called Limnai. He also, in a discussion of places in Lakonia mentioned by Homer, states that certain writers equate Homer's Messe with Messoa and characterize the latter as part of Sparta rather than a place elsewhere in Lakonia (Strabo himself argues that Messe is a shortened form of Messenia). Both Strabo and Pausanias state that the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta was called the Limnaion, which creates an implicit connection between that sanctuary and Limnai (though Strabo claims that the Artemis sanctuary in Sparta took the name Limnaion from the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis in the Taygetos).<sup>355</sup>

These sources support the suppositions that the *ōba* of Pitana encompassed space to the west of the Palaiokastros plateau (see Figure 5 in Section 6.1) and that the *ōba* of Limnai encompassed marshy areas along the Eurotas (and hence on the eastern edge of the city). However, we have

353 Paus. 3.14.2; Polyaeus 2.1.14.

354 *IG* V.1.917.

355 Pind. *Ol.* 6.28; Strabo 8.4.9, 8.5.1, 8.5.3; Paus. 3.16.7.

no way of knowing the extent of the area covered by either *ōba*. The close connection between Pitana and Sparta can be, tentatively, linked to the absence of evidence for distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta and to the existence of suburbs inhabited by Spartiates. It is possible that the *ōba* of Pitana covered much of the area delimited by the Hellenistic city wall and that other *ōbai* were situated partially or entirely outside the city.<sup>356</sup> Pitana may well also have encompassed the western suburbs of Sparta (modern Magoula) and areas further west, between Sparta and the Taygetos.

Strabo explicitly places Limnai in the suburbs of Sparta, which creates difficulties for anyone wishing to locate it within the Hellenistic city wall, as does the close association between Sparta and Pitana. The *ōba* of Limnai may well have lain entirely outside the Hellenistic city wall, and it could easily have stretched a considerable distance north and south along the Eurotas and east into the small plain on the eastern side of the river. It is worth noting in this context that in the early 20th century CE, the eparchy of Lakadaimon was divided into 14 *dēmoi*, one of which was called Parapotamios and included the villages of Tsouni (= Kokkinorachi), Aphysou, Zaganou, Platana, and Skoura. Those five villages were all located on the east bank of the Eurotas and stretched from 2 km north of Sparta to 10 km south of Sparta (see Figure 19).<sup>357</sup>

Even less can be said with any degree of confidence about Kynosoura and Mesoa, for which the ancient sources provide no explicit topographical information. Scholars have typically, on a purely speculative basis, placed Kynosoura in the southwestern part of the city and Mesoa in the southeastern part, or vice-versa.<sup>358</sup> The earliest references to Kynosoura are found in a Callimachus passage referring to a breed of hunting dogs known as Kynosourians, and an inscribed *stēlē*, found near Aphysou (see Figure 14 in Section 6.3 for the location) and dated to the Hellenistic period, recording what seems to have been an irrigation project funded by 39 individuals who describe themselves as Kynosoureis (see Section 3.3). Making all due allowances that the *stēlē* may have been a *pierre errante*,

356 For variant opinions on whether or not the acropolis/Palaiokastro plateau would have been included in Pitana, see Kourinou 2000: 92–93 with earlier bibliography.

357 See, for example, 'Υπουργείου Ἑθνικῆς Οἰκονομίας 1911: 938–43.

358 Kourinou 2000: 94–95.

the findspot could offer an indication that Kynosoura was located to the east of Sparta. The fact that the Kynosoureis were famed for their hunting dogs and funded an irrigation project indicates that their *ōba* included at least some rural areas. Given that the *ōba* of Limnai was named after a natural feature of its territory, the same may have been true of Kynosoura (“dog’s tail”).<sup>359</sup> The name Kynosoura was given to multiple places in the Greek world, with the common thread seemingly being that they had the shape of a dog’s tail. Perhaps the best-known example is the promontory that helps define the northern edge of the Bay of Marathon in Attica.<sup>360</sup> Barthélemy and Barbié du Bocage connected Kynosoura to an (imaginary) hill north of Sparta (see Figure 3). I would be more inclined to locate Kynosoura in the west Parnon foreland (see Section 2.2), a narrow plateau to the east of Sparta that curves in a fashion such that it resembles a dog’s tail. If that identification, purely a matter of guesswork on my part, is correct, the *ōba* of Kynosoura would have covered a considerable amount of territory.

In the same vein, if we assume that Mesoa was an *ōba* and that its territory was, in some fashion, “in the middle,” it may have been situated to the south of Sparta and hence in the middle of the Spartan plain. The area in the center of the Attic peninsula was called the Mesogeia, and Strabo refers to the interior of Lakonia using precisely that term.<sup>361</sup>

## 9.2 Where Did Spartiates Live?

The adoption of an agnostic position about the number, location, and extent of *ōbai* encourages us to rethink the question of where Spartiates lived. Even if we assume that the Great Rhetra required that every Spartiate belong to a locality-based *ōba*, there could well have been *ōbai* scattered across the entirety of the Spartan plain. The current orthodoxy presumes that “Laconia had no inhabited centres except Sparta (*plus Amyklai*) on the one hand, and on the other the towns of the *perioikoi*.”<sup>362</sup>

359 On possible etymologies for the names of the Kynosoura, Limnai, Mesoa, and Pitana, see Vertseti 1990.

360 See Hesychius s.v. Κυνόσουρα.

361 [Arist.] *Ath Pol.* 21.4; Strabo 8.5.1.

362 Wade-Gery 1958: 77.

However, as we have seen, Sparta already by the Archaic period had substantial suburbs; the material and textual evidence attests to secondary settlements at various places in the Spartan plain, including Anthochori/Messapeai; and the comparative evidence suggests that there may have been more secondary settlements than we can currently trace (see Sections 6-8).

Who lived in those suburbs and secondary settlements? The Spartan plain represented the original core of Lakedaimon, and it remained under Lakedaimonian control even when the borders of the *polis* were severely reduced in 195.<sup>363</sup> The textual and archaeological evidence for the suburbs of Sparta indicates that at least some of the inhabitants were wealthy (see Section 6.3), which points to the presence of Spartiates. What the current scholarly consensus takes to be the perioikic communities nearest to Sparta – Pellana, Sellasia, Geronthrai, Gytheion, and possibly Krokeai – were all located at or beyond the edges of the Spartan plain (see Section 2.2 with Figure 2). It would, therefore, be surprising if the inhabitants of the secondary settlements in the Spartan plain were primarily *perioikoi*. Although we know vanishingly little about the living arrangements imposed on helots, it seems highly improbable that the Spartiates would have countenanced the existence in the Spartan plain of communities that were inhabited largely by helots. Furthermore, the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Anthochori/Messapeai has been plausibly interpreted as a twin of the sanctuary dedicated to the same deity at Tsakona, c. 4 km northeast of Sparta, and the cult site at Tsakona, given its proximity to Sparta, was almost certainly patronized mainly by Spartiates.<sup>364</sup> Anthochori/Messapeai was thus in all probability inhabited primarily by Spartiates, and the same can be said about the other secondary settlements in the Spartan plain. Given the clause of the Great Rhetra that calls for the division of the citizen body into *phylai* and *ōbai* and the evidence of Archaic activity at sites other than Sparta in the Spartan plain, including Amyklai, Anthochori, and Anogeia, we can be reasonably confident that this settlement pattern was already in place in the Archaic period.

363 See Section 2.2.

364 See, for example, Cartledge 1998: 44. On the cult site at Tsakona, see Section 9.4 and the bibliography cited therein.



The breadth of time span under discussion in this article – the end of the Roman period came approximately a millennium after the beginning of the Archaic period – is such that we need to give careful thought to the possibility of diachronic change in where Spartiates lived. Furthermore, particular facets of the settlement organization of Sparta may indicate that, by the Roman period, most if not all Spartiates resided either in or close to Sparta. Nathaniel Kramer and I have, in a previous publication, offered a sketch of the development of the settlement organization of Sparta between the Early Bronze Age and the late Roman period. We based our conclusions on a comprehensive database, which we built and analyzed using geospatial software, of finds from published systematic and rescue excavations.<sup>365</sup> In order to carry out that work, we created a grid of 100 x 100 m tiles that cover the entirety of the modern country of Greece. The area within the Hellenistic city wall intersects (entirely or partially) 325 of those tiles.

Our data indicates that the percentage of space in Sparta devoted to cult sites was remarkably high in the Archaic period and then steadily decreased through the Roman period. More specifically, finds from the Archaic period were excavated at 86 different tiles, and the finds from 43 of those 86 tiles were diagnostic of cult activity (see Figure 10 in Section 6.2).<sup>366</sup> We cannot by any means conclude that in the Archaic period half the city was occupied by religious sanctuaries, for a variety of reasons including the relatively high level of archaeological visibility of cult sites and post-depositional processes that disperse objects from their original contexts.<sup>367</sup> Nonetheless, the evidence points to a strikingly high frequency of cult sites in Archaic Sparta.

The area devoted to cult space seems to have declined starting in the Hellenistic period, and some former cult space was converted to residential use. Finds from the Hellenistic period were excavated at 117 tiles, and the material from 27 of those tiles was diagnostic of cult activity. The corresponding figures for the Roman period are 141 and 17 tiles (see Figures 12 and 13 in Section 6.2). Moreover, 16 of the 58 tiles occupied by

365 Christesen & Kramer 2024.

366 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 244–57.

367 For important caveats about identifying cult space in Sparta, see Christesen & Kramer 2024: 217–21, 247–49.

houses in the Roman period had at some earlier point shown traces of cult activity. This shift in usage is much more noticeable in what seems to have been the core of the ancient city – the area directly to the south of the Palaiokastro plateau – than in less desirable, more flood-prone areas in the northeastern part of the city.<sup>368</sup>

These findings raise two questions: why might a considerable fraction of Archaic Sparta have been devoted to cult spaces and why would that have changed significantly by the Roman period?<sup>369</sup> The answer to the first question needs to be grounded in the strong possibility that in the Archaic period many, perhaps most, Spartiates did not live in Sparta but nonetheless had to be present in the city on a daily basis to participate in collective activities such as *syssitia*. A considerable number of Spartiates had to, in effect, regularly commute to and from Sparta. The need to travel to and from the city would help explain the strong interest Spartiates showed in hippotrophy.<sup>370</sup> Spartiates living in settlements such as Anthochori/Messapeai could have made the c. 14-km-long trip to Sparta much more quickly on horseback than on foot. Xenophon's claim that Spartiates were free to make use of each other's horses can perhaps be best understood as a reflection of the iterated need for many Spartiates to traverse significant distances.<sup>371</sup> Insofar as Sparta was situated at the northern end of the Spartan plain, the placement of the *syssitia* along the Hyakinthian Way south of Sparta may have been intended to facilitate access by Spartiates coming into the city from settlements to the south, such as Amyklai and Messapeai.<sup>372</sup>

The Spartiates who commuted to Sparta would have needed spaces in the city where they could eat, worship, socialize, rest, etc. Visitors to Panhellenic sanctuaries found themselves in a similar situation, and excavations at sanctuaries such as Nemea and Delphi have uncovered structures erected by individual *poleis* that served as multifunctional

368 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 261–77.

369 These questions are not addressed in Christesen & Kramer 2024.

370 On Spartiate hippotrophy, see Christesen 2019a: 100–4 and the sources cited therein.

371 Xen. *Lak Pol.* 6.3.

372 On the location of the *syssitia*, see Lavrencic 1993: 103–8.

spaces, presumably for the convenience of *theōroi* and perhaps all citizens of the *polis* in question, during festival periods. The most famous such structure was the *leschē* of the Knidians at Delphi.<sup>373</sup>

*Leschai* were also a feature of Greek communities from an early date. In the *Odyssey*, a maid-servant scolds Odysseus disguised as a beggar for lingering in Odysseus' home, saying "you will not go where the smith is at work and sleep there, or to some *leschē*," and in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod advises that an industrious farmer should avoid the smithy and *leschē* in winter time.<sup>374</sup> Textual sources show that *leschai* served a variety of purposes including dining, socializing, cult activity, and sleeping.<sup>375</sup>

We have at our disposal some potentially valuable information about *leschai* in Sparta. Athenaeus, as part of his discussion of dining in Lakedaemon, quotes a passage from Kratinos' *Ploutoi* (written in the last third of the fifth century) referring to a feast called the *kopis*:

Is it really possible, as they say, for all strangers who visit there [Sparta] to dine well at the *kopis*? And do sausages really hang pegged up in the *leschai*, for the old men to take a bite from?<sup>376</sup>

Plutarch, in his life of Lycurgus, claims that boys born to Spartiate families had to be brought "to a place called *Leschē*" (εἰς τόπον τινὰ Λέσχην καλούμενον) where they were inspected by the "elders of the tribes" (τῶν φυλετῶν οἱ πρεσβύτατοι). Suitable infants were assigned one of 9,000 *klēroi*; unsuitable ones were exposed. He also states that male Spartiates were expected to spend most of their time in gymnasia and *leschai*.<sup>377</sup> Pausanias comments on two *leschai* in Sparta, one called the *Leschē Poikilē* (located near hero shrines dedicated to Kadmos and his

373 Pouilloux 1960: 120-39; Miller 1990: 118-27, 160-66.

374 οὐδ' ἐθέλεις εὔδριν χαλκήϊον ἐς δόμον ἐλθών, | ἥε που ἐς λέσχην (Hom. *Od.* 18.328-29; trans. R. Lattimore); πὰρ δ' ἴθι χάλκειον ὠθκον καὶ ἐπαλέα λέσχην | ὥρη χειμερίη (Hes. *Op.* 493-94).

375 Bremmer 2008: 153-68.

376 ἄρ' ἀληθῶς τοῖς ξένοισιν ἔστιν, ὥς λέγουσ', ἐκεῖ πᾶσι τοῖς ἐλθοῦσιν ἐν τῇ κοπίδι θοινᾶσθαι καλῶς; ἐν δὲ ταῖς λέσχασι φύσκει προσπεπατταλευμένοι κατακρέμονται, τοῖσι πρεσβύταισιν ἀποδάκνειν ὁδᾶξ (fr. 175 Austin & Kassel *apud* Ath. 4.138e; trans. S.D. Olson, modified).

377 Plut. *Lyc.* 16.1, 25.1.

descendants)<sup>378</sup> and another that he saw in the northwestern part of the city:

In this part of the city are the graves of the Agiad kings, and nearby is what is called the *leschē* of the Krotanoi, who form a part of the Pitanaatans.<sup>379</sup>

These references to *leschai* in Sparta have been connected with remains found in the city. A rescue excavation carried out in Stauffert Street in the 1990s uncovered a site with what appear to be three phases of activity. During the Geometric period, a pit grave was cut in virgin soil and covered with a trapezoidal stone plaque; a circular stone cairn, contemporary with the burial, was piled on top of the trapezoidal plaque. During the Archaic period, a room, with a bench on one wall, was built to the west of the Geometric grave; the finds from this room consist primarily of pottery. During the Hellenistic period, a layer of fill, nearly 1 m thick, was, in a short space of time, dumped in the area around the Geometric grave, starting at the level of the top of the stone cairn. (The fill was not found in the room with the bench.) A layer of blackened earth, similar to that of the fill but with animal bones mixed in, was found near the grave. The finds from the site include more than 2,500 fragments of terracotta plaques, more than 1,500 miniature vases, c. 800 terracotta figurines, lead votives, and a fragment of a marble relief of a type that is, in Lakonia, closely associated with hero sanctuaries.<sup>380</sup>

The presence of animal bones and a room with a bench, along with the fact that the pottery from the site includes a large number of drinking vessels such as *lakainai* and *kantharoi*, suggest that ritual dining took place in the sanctuary. Valeria Tosti, building on the work of Massimo Nafissi, has argued that the room with a bench was a *leschē* (in which diners habitually sat on benches rather than reclining on couches). Tosti

378 Paus. 3.15.8.

379 κατὰ τοῦτο τῆς πόλεως τάφοι τῶν Ἀγιαδῶν βασιλέων εἰσὶ καὶ πλησίον ὀνομαζομένη λέσχη Κροτανῶν· εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ Κροτανοὶ Πιτανατῶν μοῖρα (Paus. 3.14.2; trans. W.H.S. Jones & H.A. Ormerod, modified).

380 Flouris 1996; Flouris 2000: 14–18 and *passim*; Christesen & Kramer 2024: 231, 249, 251.

made the case that *leschai*, among which she places the Stauffert Street site, served as *lieux de mémoire* for family groups within the Spartiate citizen body.<sup>381</sup> Lupi, on the other hand, working solely from the literary sources, argued that ceremonies of admission to the citizen body overseen by phratries (= *ōbai* for Lupi) took place in *leschai*. He maintained that Plutarch, writing in the Roman period when the distinctions between *phylai* and *ōbai* were blurred, erred in associating *leschai* with *phylai*.<sup>382</sup>

I would suggest that *ōbai* attached to settlement nuclei outside of Sparta constructed *leschai* in the city to serve as what were effectively clubhouses for their members. It is possible that, as Lupi proposes, some official functions carried out by *ōbai* took place in *leschai* in Sparta. *ōbai*, each of which in my view had its own administrative machinery, may have paid for and overseen the construction and maintenance of *leschai* in Sparta (though private initiative cannot be ruled out). The *leschē* of any given *ōba* was, in all likelihood, dedicated to a hero or deity associated with that *ōba*, so the *leschē* was a cult site that the members of an *ōba* used for a variety of purposes.<sup>383</sup> A potentially useful comparandum would be gymnasia, which were habitually centered around a heroic cult and which fulfilled a wide range of functions.<sup>384</sup>

The Stauffert Street site was almost certainly dedicated to a hero. The assemblage of votives from that site diverges markedly from the assemblage at the Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, which is located just 200 m to

381 Nafissi 1991: 318-27; Tosti 2011.

382 Lupi 2018: 171.

383 Kennell has shown that the victory monuments erected by *ōbai* in the Roman period (to commemorate success in the annual ballgame tournament) could feature a portrayal of the patron deity of the *ōba* (Kennell 1995: 162-69).

384 Burkert 1985: 208. The fact that Pausanias (3.14.2) mentions a *leschē* associated with the Krotanoi, whom he describes as part (*moira*) of the Pitantes is compatible with this characterization of the *leschai* in Sparta. It may, *prima facie*, seem unlikely that the inhabitants of Pitana, which was closely associated with Sparta, would need a clubhouse in Sparta. However, as we have seen, the extent of any given *ōba* is impossible to determine, and some *ōbai* may well have covered a considerable amount of territory. The precise nature of the Krotanoi has been much debated and remains unclear. Ehrenberg, for example, argued that they were a family group, not an *ōba* (Ehrenberg 1937: 1696).

the southeast of Stauffert Street. The most obvious differences are the predominance of terracotta plaques at Stauffert Street, compared to their near total absence at Orthia, and the paucity at Stauffert Street of more ostentatious dedications such as ivories and bronzes. The finds from other Lakonian sites, including the Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Cassandra at Amyklai, strongly suggest that the assemblage of votives at Orthia was typical at cult sites for Olympian deities, whereas the assemblage of votives from Stauffert Street was typical at cult sites for heroes.<sup>385</sup> It is possible that the *leschai* associated with *ōbai* were all dedicated to heroes. The particular votive assemblage found at Lakonian hero sanctuaries offers a distinctive signature that can be identified at a minimum of 19 of the 43 tiles dedicated to cult activity in Archaic Sparta.<sup>386</sup>

The spatial patterning of where Spartiates lived and the lifestyle expected of Spartiates may well thus help explain the prevalence of cult sites in Archaic Sparta. Just as *poleis* erected clubhouses at Panhellenic sanctuaries to accommodate the needs of their citizens away from home, *ōbai* located outside Sparta could have established clubhouses to cater to the needs of their members who commuted regularly to the city. In line with standard Greek practice, those clubhouses took the form of *leschai* linked to a cult (cf. Pausanias' description of the Leschē Poikilē in Sparta as being located next to a collection of hero shrines). The result was a proliferation of *leschai* in Sparta that appear in the archaeological record as cult sites.

The significant decline in the amount of space dedicated to cult sites in Roman Sparta can be explained at least in part by important shifts in the demographic, security, and sociopolitical situation in Lakedaïmon that began in the late Classical period.<sup>387</sup> The number of Spartiates dropped precipitously after the late Archaic period. Herodotus' account

385 Dawkins 1929; Salapata 2014: 217–28; Pavlides 2023: 29–78. The sanctuary of Helen and Menelaos is an outlier in this regard.

386 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 249.

387 Another relevant factor may be an increase in the frequency of cult activity within households in Sparta; see Christesen & Kramer 2024: 248–49.

of the Persian Wars suggests that there were c. 8,000 adult male Spartiates in 480.<sup>388</sup> By the first quarter of the fourth century, there seem to have been approximately 2,000 adult male Spartiates, and Aristotle claims that (presumably in his own time) there were fewer than 1,000.<sup>389</sup> Plutarch states that there were 700 Spartiates at the time of the reforms of Agis IV in the third century.<sup>390</sup>

The drop in the number of Spartiates was an important contributor to the collapse of Lakedaimonian power starting in the fourth century. That story need not be rehearsed here, but the effects on the security situation in Lakonia are highly relevant to the issues under discussion: between 370/369 and 149, Lakonia was invaded at least a dozen times.<sup>391</sup> One response was to begin building defenses for what had been an un-walled city. The first fortifications in Sparta were erected in the late fourth century, and a full circuit wall followed in the third century.<sup>392</sup>

There were quite possibly concomitant changes in where Spartiates lived. The number of Spartiates becomes difficult to determine after the reforms of Agis IV and Kleomenes III, who seem to have created approximately 4,000 new citizens.<sup>393</sup> Many of those new citizens did not enjoy their enhanced status for long: Plutarch claims that only 200 of the 6,000 Lakedaimonian citizen-soldiers who fought at the Battle of Sellasia in 222 survived.<sup>394</sup> However exaggerated that claim may be, it speaks to the heavy casualties suffered by Lakedaimonian citizens in military conflicts during the later third and early second centuries. In addition, it remains unclear how many descendants of the men enfranchised in the third century managed to retain citizenship in the decades and centuries that followed. Even those who retained citizenship may have found themselves effectively marginalized. Cartledge and Spawforth have argued that

388 Hdt. 7.234.3, cf. 9.28.2 and Arist. *Pol.* 1270a36-37. For a discussion of the evidence for changes in Spartiate numbers over time, see Doran 2018: 22-32.

389 Arist. *Pol.* 1270a30. On the number of Spartiates immediately before and after Leuktra, see de Ste. Croix 1972: 332.

390 Plut. *Agis* 5.6.

391 Invasions are known to have taken place in 370/369, 362, 338, 294, 272, 240/239, 222, 218, 200, 195, 192, and 149. See Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 3-92 for the details.

392 Kourinou 2000: 35-88.

393 Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 38-79.

394 Plut. *Cleom.* 27.5, 28.5; cf. Polyb. 2.65.

“old” families that could trace their lineage back before the third-century enfranchisements retained a de facto special status through the Roman period.<sup>395</sup>

These circumstances would have strongly encouraged Spartiates to concentrate in and around Sparta. The relative safety of the city’s walls, which proved to be effective in repelling invaders, would have been a major inducement. The relatively small size of the citizen body (one might hazard a guess of 1,000-2,000) meant that the absorption of most or all adult male Spartiates and their families into the city did not present any major spatial challenges. The increasing desirability of living in Sparta, and, after the incorporation of Lakedaimon into the Roman empire, the freeing up of resources previously expended on the military, created a positive feedback loop by facilitating investments in urban amenities that further enhanced Sparta’s attractiveness. To give but one example, Roman Sparta was embellished with an array of bathing facilities that must have been far superior to those available anywhere else in the vicinity.<sup>396</sup>

It may well not be coincidental that the collective activities that had bound Spartiates together in the Archaic and Classical periods did not survive the Hellenistic period intact. The precise sequence of events remains difficult to reconstruct, but it seems likely that the educational system and *syssitia* ceased to function in the second quarter of the third century. A restoration undertaken by Kleomenes III lasted only until the early second century. A much diminished version of the educational system was created in 146, but the *syssitia* were not revived.<sup>397</sup> The integration of Lakedaimon into the Roman empire in the second century obviated the need for the *polis* to maintain an army.

The Roman-era epigraphic texts discussed in Section 3.4.1 support the supposition that Spartiates over the course of time came to reside in a more constricted area. Given the importance of the *agōgē* to Spartiate identity in the Roman period, it is likely that most if not all Spartiates

395 Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 163-64. On the reforms of Agis, Kleomenes III, and Nabis, see Cartledge & Spawforth 2002: 38-79.

396 Christesen & Kramer 2024: 268-77.

397 Kennell 1995: 5-27 and *passim*; Ducat 2006: ix-xvii. See also the doubts expressed in Texier 2014: 259-68 and the nuances offered in Nafissi 2024: 207-9.



sent their children through it.<sup>398</sup> If we assume, for the sake of argument, that most Spartiate families sent their sons to the *agōgē*, we can draw tentative conclusions about where Spartiates lived since just four *ōbai* are attested in those inscriptions: Kynosoura, Limnai, Neopolis, and Pitana. Pitana can be located in/around Sparta with confidence, and Limnai in the eastern suburbs of the city. Kynosoura may have been situated in the area to the east of Sparta, and Neopolis may have been synonymous with Amyklai. That would place all four of the *ōbai* mentioned in the inscriptions in the northern end of the Spartan plain. In other words, Wade-Gery's belief that all Spartiates lived in Sparta and Amyklai has some truth in it, but only when applied to the Roman period, and it requires the emendation "in the vicinity of Sparta and Amyklai." There was, therefore, probably a significant element of diachronic change with respect to where most Spartiates lived: throughout the Spartan plain in the Archaic and Classical periods and in the northern part of the Spartan plain starting at some point in the Hellenistic period.<sup>399</sup>

The decrease in the amount of space dedicated to cult sites in Sparta, especially in the city center, should be understood against that background. The daily flow of Spartiates who resided in *ōbai* outside of Sparta into and out of the city dried up in the Hellenistic period, which in turn removed the need for *leschai* in the urban center. Wealthy families seeking to construct one of the large, elaborate houses that became increasingly desirable in the Hellenistic and Roman periods acquired property occupied by defunct *leschai*. The result was that Sparta, which was probably unusual in terms of the amount of space dedicated to *leschai*/cult sites in the Archaic and Classical periods, became a more typical urban center.

398 On the importance of the *agōgē* for Spartiate identity in the Roman period, see del Mar Alcocer Rodríguez 2016: 53 and Kennell 2018: 646–47.

399 The currently available evidence does not make it possible to reach any conclusions about the effects of the diminution of the number of Spartiates and their probable concentration in the area around Sparta during the Roman period on other settlements in the Spartan plain. Given the need to continue farming the plain, it seems likely that what one might call the "outlying *ōbai*" continued to be inhabited.

### 9.3 Re-reading Thucydides 1.10.2

We can at this point revisit the oft-cited passage in which Thucydides describes the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians. This passage has been regularly cited as a key piece of evidence supporting the claim that the city of Sparta was divided into distinct settlement nuclei.<sup>400</sup> Thucydides (1.10.2) writes that:

Λακεδαιμονίων γὰρ εἰ ἡ πόλις ἐρημωθείη, λειφθείη δὲ τὰ τε ἱερὰ καὶ τῆς κατασκευῆς τὰ ἐδάφη, πολλὴν ἂν οἶμαι ἀπιστίαν τῆς δυνάμεως προελθόντος πολλοῦ χρόνου τοῖς ἔπειτα πρὸς τὸ κλέος αὐτῶν εἶναι (καίτοι Πελοποννήσου τῶν πέντε τὰς δύο μοίρας νέμονται, τῆς τε ξυμπάσης ἡγοῦνται καὶ τῶν ἔξω ξυμμάχων πολλῶν· ὅμως δὲ οὔτε ξυνοικισθείσης πόλεως οὔτε ἱεροῖς καὶ κατασκευαῖς πολυτελέσι χρησαμένης, κατὰ κώμας δὲ τῷ παλαιῷ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τρόπῳ οἰκισθείσης, φαίνοιτ' ἂν ὑποδεεστέρα), Ἀθηναίων δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο παθόντων διπλασίαν ἂν τὴν δύναμιν εἰκάζεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς φανεράς ὄψεως τῆς πόλεως ἢ ἔστιν.

For if the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians were to become deserted, and the temples and the foundations of the buildings were left standing, I expect that, with a lot of time passing, there would be much disbelief among future generations that the fame of the Lakedaimonians was an accurate reflection of their power. Yet they possess two-fifths of the Peloponnese and lead the whole of it and many allies outside of it. Nevertheless, the visible remains would seem rather disappointing because the *polis* has not been synoikized nor is it equipped with elaborate sanctuaries and buildings, and it is settled in villages in the fashion of Greece long ago. Whereas if the Athenians suffered the same fate, I expect that future generations would infer, based on the visible remains, that their power was twice as great as it actually is.

While several meanings could be assigned to the word *polis*, those meanings fall under two broad headings: the *polis* as a collective entity and as

400 See, for instance, Kourinou 2000: 36 n. 45. For the underlying reasoning, see Section 5.2.

a physical settlement.<sup>401</sup> The πόλις in the phrase πόλις ἐρημωθείη and πόλεως in the phrase ξυνοικισθείσης πόλεως are habitually taken to refer to a physical settlement, the city of Sparta. For example, Martin Hammond's translation begins "if the city of Sparta were to become deserted," and Shipley states "when Thuc. 1.10.2 comments on the underdeveloped physical urban form of the 'polis of the Lakedaimonians,' he certainly means the town of Sparta."<sup>402</sup> Thucydides is understood to be saying that if the urban center of Sparta were abandoned (Λακεδαιμονίων γὰρ εἰ ἡ πόλις ἐρημωθείη), future generations would underestimate the power wielded by the Lakedaimonians because the urban center of Sparta is not joined into a single conurbation but is divided into distinct settlement nuclei (οὔτε ξυνοικισθείσης πόλεως) and lacks impressive structures. Thucydides' *kōmai* are interpreted as a reference to the four *ōbai*, each linked to a distinct nucleus, that ostensibly comprised the city of Sparta. That reading of the passage is prompted by and hence consistent with the current orthodoxy.

Leaving aside the fact that there are no traces of distinct settlement nuclei in Sparta at any point in time (see Section 6.2), Thucydides' choice of terminology suggests that a different reading is called for. The wording at the beginning of the passage, Λακεδαιμονίων ... πόλις, combining *polis* with a genitive plural, is not an obvious choice for clearly referring to the urban center of Sparta, for which Thucydides elsewhere uses Σπάρτη or Λακεδαίμων.<sup>403</sup> Thucydides' three other usages of Λακεδαιμονίων πόλις refer to the *polis* as a communal entity:

ἡ δὲ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων πόλις πᾶσί τε τούτοις ἐθάρσει καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι οἱ ἐκ τῆς Σικελίας αὐτοῖς ξύμμαχοι πολλῇ δυνάμει ... ἅμα τῷ ἥρι ὥς εἰκὸς παρέσεσθαι ἔμελλον.<sup>404</sup>

The *polis* of the Lakedaimonians was encouraged by all these things and especially by the probable prospect that their allies in Sicily would come in great force in the spring.

401 Hansen & Nielsen 2004b.

402 Shipley 2004: 587.

403 Σπάρτη: see, for example, 1.128.2, 1.131.5, 3.54.5, 4.3.2, 4.53.2, 4.132.3. Λακεδαίμων: see, for example, 1.43.1, 1.95.5.

404 Thuc. 8.2.3.

καὶ ταῦτα ἄνευ τῆς Λακεδαιμονίων πόλεως ἐπράσσετο· ὁ γὰρ Ἅγισ, ὅσον χρόνον ἦν περὶ Δεκέλειαν ἔχων τὴν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ δύναμιν, κύριος ἦν καὶ ἀποστέλλειν εἴ ποί τινα ἐβούλετο στρατιὰν ...<sup>405</sup>

And these things were accomplished without [instructions from] the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians. For Agis, as long as he was at Dekeleia with the army under his command, was empowered to send soldiers wherever he wished ...

οἱ γὰρ οἰκέται τοῖς Χίοις πολλοὶ ὄντες καὶ μιᾷ γε πόλει πλὴν Λακεδαιμονίων πλεῖστοι γενόμενοι ...<sup>406</sup>

For the Chians had many slaves, the most in any one *polis* except [the *polis*] of the Lakedaimonians ...<sup>407</sup>

In addition, Thucydides employs the verb συνοικίζω ten times, and in every instance the verb is applied to a collective entity, not a single urban center. More specifically, συνοικίζω appears in the following passages:

- 1.24.2: Corinthian settlers join the *apoikia* of Epidamnos;
- 2.15.2: Theseus dissolves the councils and magistracies in the various communities in Attica and creates a single *bouleutērion* and *prytaneion* in Athens;
- 2.16.1: The Athenians continue to live in dispersed communities after the *synoikismos* carried out by Theseus (described in 2.15);
- 2.68.5: the Ambraciots are invited to join Amphilochian Argos as new citizens;

405 Thuc. 8.5.3.

406 Thuc. 8.40.2.

407 Thucydides goes on to say that when the Chians' slaves deserted to the Athenians, their knowledge of the *chōra* (ἐπιστάμενοι τὴν χώραν) made it possible for them to do "the greatest mischief." The slaves in question thus resided across the island, and Thucydides is referring to Chios as a collective entity and not the main urban center of the island.

- 3.2.3: the Mytilenians attempt to forcibly combine all the *poleis* on the island of Lesbos into a single political entity (with no implication that all the urban centers on Lesbos other than Mytilene would be abandoned);
- 3.9.3: the *polis* of Herakleia in Trachis is founded;
- 6.2.6: scattered Phoenician outposts in Sicily are, after the arrival of the Greeks, combined into three larger settlements at Motya, Panormos, and Soloeis;
- 6.5.1: Syracusan exiles join the *apoikia* of Himera;
- 6.63.3: the Syracusans in the winter of 415/414, during a period of Athenian inactivity, taunt the Athenians by asking if they have come to Sicily to become Syracusans.

Reading the genitive absolute οὔτε ξυνοικισθείσης πόλεως as a reference to the physical layout of Sparta thus requires assigning συνοικίζω a meaning that would be unique in Thucydides' work.

The other appearances of the phrase κατὰ κώμας in Thucydides are also instructive. In writing about Hellenic customs in early periods, he states:

προσπίπτοντες πόλεσιν ἀτειχίστοις καὶ κατὰ κώμας οἰκουμέναις ...<sup>408</sup>

They would fall upon *poleis* that were unwallled and settled *kata kōmas* ...

This passage might seem to be referring to single, unwallled settlements with distinct nuclei, but consider Thucydides' description of Aetolia. At 1.5.3 Thucydides notes that some Hellenes, including the Aetolians, continue to live "in the old fashion," and he subsequently (in his account of Demosthenes' decision to launch an expedition against Aetolia) describes the entire *ethnos* of the Aetolians as living *kata kōmas*.

τὸ γὰρ ἔθνος μέγα μὲν εἶναι τὸ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν καὶ μάχιμον, οἰκοῦν δὲ κατὰ κώμας ἀτειχίστους ...<sup>409</sup>

408 Thuc. 1.5.1.

409 Thuc. 3.94.4.

[The Messenians said] the *ethnos* of the Aetolians, although numerous and warlike, lived *kata kōmas* in unwalled villages ...

Thucydides' statement that the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians is "settled in villages in the fashion of Greece long ago" resonates strongly with his characterization of the Aetolians as being old-fashioned and living, as a group, *kata kōmas*. One might also note that Sparta was, at this time, unwalled.

In light of these considerations, I would suggest that in 1.10.2 Thucydides is saying that the *chōra* of the *polis* of Lakedaimon – not the city of Sparta – had never been synoikized and was, as a result, still settled *kata kōmas*. This reading, which is the most straightforward interpretation of his choice of words and consonant with his description of other places in the Greek world, raises two immediate questions: to what part of Lakedaimon did Thucydides' observations apply and what, for Thucydides, did it mean in practice for Lakedaimon to not be synoikized and to be settled *kata kōmas*?

With respect to the first question, we should rule out the idea that Thucydides was simply noting that much of the population of the polity as a whole (most obviously the *perioikoi*) lived in relatively small, widely scattered communities and that his observations did not apply to Sparta or its immediate surroundings. Thucydides clearly expresses the idea that Lakedaimon lacked a major, highly developed urban center on par with Athens. Moreover, he explicitly states elsewhere in his work (see below) that Attica was synoikized from an early date and that much of the population of the *polis* continued to live in the *chōra* after the *synoikismos* was completed. The absence of *synoikismos* in Lakedaimon thus cannot simply be a matter of the continued existence of secondary settlements in the *chōra*. Rather, it must be understood as pertaining to and having ramifications for Sparta.

With respect to what it meant for Lakedaimon to not be *synoikized*, one possibility is that Thucydides understood *synoikismos* in Lakedaimon in purely physical terms. He could have been claiming that Lakedaimon was like Aetolia insofar as the populace was dispersed among relatively small, unwalled villages and that, as a result, the *polis* of the Lakedaimonians

lacked a “central place” in the form of a large urban center embellished with elaborate structures. Given what we know about Sparta in the fifth century, this would seem to be a somewhat exaggerated (though by no means unjustified) description of the situation in Lakedaimon. However, Thucydides both at 1.10.2 and in his work as a whole went out of his way to draw a stark contrast between Athenians and Lakedaimonians.<sup>410</sup>

Another possibility is that Thucydides understood *synoikismos* in Lakedaimon as first and foremost a political matter that had ramifications for what we would call settlement organization and settlement patterns. Given that Thucydides explicitly compares Lakedaimon and Athens at 1.10.2 and describes the *polis* of Lakedaimon as not having been synoikized, his observations on the *synoikismos* of Attica by Theseus may well offer insight into his views on the situation in Lakedaimon:

ἐπὶ γὰρ Κέκροπος καὶ τῶν πρώτων βασιλέων ἡ Ἀττικὴ ἐς Θησέα αἰεὶ κατὰ πόλεις ὥκεῖτο πρυτανεῖα τε ἐχούσας καὶ ἄρχοντας, καὶ ὅποτε μή τι δείσειαν, οὐ ξυνῆσαν βουλευσόμενοι ὥς τὸν βασιλέα, ἀλλ’ αὐτοὶ ἕκαστοι ἐπολίτευον καὶ ἐβουλευόντο. ... ἐπειδὴ δὲ Θησεὺς ἐβασίλευσε, γενόμενος μετὰ τοῦ ξυνετοῦ καὶ δυνατὸς τὰ τε ἄλλα διεκόσμησε τὴν χώραν καὶ καταλύσας τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων τὰ τε βουλευτήρια καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐς τὴν νῦν πόλιν οὖσαν, ἐν βουλευτήριον ἀποδείξας καὶ πρυτανεῖον, ξυνώκισε πάντας, καὶ νεμομένους τὰ αὐτῶν ἐκάστους ἅπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ ἠνάγκασε μιᾷ πόλει ταύτῃ χρῆσθαι, ἢ ἀπάντων ἡδὴ ξυντελούντων ἐς αὐτὴν μεγάλη γενομένη παρεδόθη ὑπὸ Θησεῶς τοῖς ἔπειτα.<sup>411</sup>

In the time of Cecrops and the first kings down to Theseus, the population of Attica always lived in separate *poleis*, each with its own town hall and officials. Except when some danger threatened, they did not convene for joint consultations with the king, but each group managed its own affairs and determined its own policy. ... But when Theseus became king and attained power in addition to being intelligent,

410 On the physical realities of Sparta in the fifth century, see Christesen & Kramer 2024: 257–61. On Thucydides’ contrast between Athens and Sparta, see, for instance, Cartledge & Debnar 2006.

411 Thuc. 2.15.1–2.

he put in order everything in the *chōra* and, having dissolved both the *bouleutēria* and magistracies of the other *poleis* and having created a single *bouleutērion* and *prytaneion* in what is now the polis, he synoikized everyone so that, although they held their possessions that they had before, he compelled them to make use of this one *polis* [Athens], which, with all now contributing to it, became the great *polis* that was handed down by Theseus to those who followed.

Immediately after these remarks, Thucydides launches into a description of the physical realities of the city of Athens prior to the *synoikismos*, which is implicitly compared to the much larger and more imposing city of Thucydides' time.

Thucydides clearly considers the crux of *synoikismos* in Attica to be the merging of several, largely independent *poleis* into a single polity. The creation of that new polity then had major ramifications for the level of activity, size, and grandeur of the urban center that served as its capital. If we read 1.10.2 in this light, we are led to the conclusion that Thucydides is saying that: (1) the *polis* of Lakedaimon had not been politically centralized to nearly the same extent as the polity of Athens; (2) as a result, the populace of Lakedaimon continued to live in relatively small villages retaining a considerable level of independence; and (3) the main urban center remained small and unimpressive. (Note the parallel between κατὰ κώμας δὲ τῷ παλαιῷ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τρόπῳ οἰκισθείσης in 1.10.2 and ἡ Ἀττικὴ ... κατὰ πόλεις ὥκεῖτο in 2.15.1.)

However we choose to understand precisely what the absence of *synoikismos* in Lakedaimon meant for Thucydides, he is, in my view, arguing in 1.10.2 that Lakedaimon – including the area around Sparta – was settled *kata kōmas*. Unless we wish to dismiss Thucydides as poorly informed about the situation in Lakedaimon, that reading of 1.10.2 is incompatible with the current orthodoxy and the concomitant presumption that there were only two, large settlements in the Spartan plain. It is, however, entirely compatible with the conception that Spartiates lived in a series of settlements located throughout the Spartan plain.<sup>412</sup>

412 The possibility that Thucydides sought to characterize those settlements as retaining a considerable degree of autonomy can perhaps be connected to the existence



### 9.4 Future Research

The conclusion that Spartiates in the Archaic and Classical periods inhabited communities dispersed across the Spartan plain has important ramifications for our understanding of multiple aspects of Lakedaimonian society. Lupi has astutely pointed out that “a community formed from the amalgamation of several villages situated relatively far from each other ... required institutions that facilitated cohesion and physical contact between the various groups that joined to create it.”<sup>413</sup> He persuasively argues that collective activities in Lakedaimon, such as the Spartiate *syssitia* and the practice of removing boys from their homes at an early age, served to unify the spatially dispersed Spartiates.

Much more could and should be done with respect to identifying other aspects of the history and material culture of Lakedaimon that merit reconsideration in light of a revised understanding of where Spartiates lived. One example, provided here simply *exempli gratia*, is that the dispersal of Spartiates across the Spartan plain calls into question the existence of what has been called a “Spartan *pomerium*.”

Due to the nature of the material remains in Lakonia, the fashion in which those remains have been explored, and the particular interests of authors such as Pausanias, we are much better informed about religious sanctuaries than other site types (e.g. cemeteries).<sup>414</sup> Leaving aside the city of Sparta itself, the material remains of five important sanctuaries have been uncovered in or immediately adjacent to the Spartan plain (moving clockwise, starting from Amyklai, see Figure 20):

of obal governments (see Section 3.3) with their own officials and treasury. One might also recall that the Amyklaians, regardless of the prevailing military situation, had the right to return home for the Hyakinthia (see Section 3.2 for the relevant passage from Xenophon’s *Hellenika*). The facts that *stēlai* with the terms of the Peace of Nicias were erected on the acropolis of Athens and the Amyklaion and that the Spartan war fund inscription (*IG V.1.1*, see Section 7) was erected at either present day Agios Vasileios or the Amyklaion could be seen as an indication that Sparta did not play the predominant role in the political life of Lakonia that Athens played in Attica.

413 Lupi 2018: 177.

414 See n. 264.

- the Sanctuary of Apollo Amyklaios at Amyklai;
- the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Tsakona;
- the Sanctuary of Helen and Menelaos at Therapne;
- the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Anthochori;
- the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Kalyvia Sochas.

Cult activity at Amyklai seems to have begun in the 12th century, and in the eighth century at the other four sites.<sup>415</sup>

Literary sources provide the names and approximate locations of six additional sanctuaries in the Spartan plain. Sanctuaries to the Dioskouroi, to Phoibe and Hilaeira (the wives of the Dioskouroi; the sanctuary was called the Phoibaion), and to Poseidon Gaiaochos all existed in the vicinity of Therapne and hence near the Menelaion. The first mentions of the sanctuaries to Phoibe and Hilaeira (the Phoibaion) and to Poseidon Gaiaochos are found in the work of Herodotus and Xenophon, respectively.<sup>416</sup> Alcman associates the Dioskouroi with Therapne, suggesting that the twins had a cult site there from an early date. Herodotus and Pausanias both mention a sanctuary to Apollo at Thornax, which was located not far to the north of Sparta.<sup>417</sup> Pausanias refers to a sanctuary of Dionysos located at Bryseiai, somewhere on the western edge of the Spartan plain south of Sparta.<sup>418</sup>

415 On the Sanctuary of Apollo Amyklaios, see Vlizos 2017. On the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Tsakona, see H.W. Catling 2002. On the Sanctuary of Helen and Menelaos, see Stelow 2020: 258–84. On the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Anthochori and the Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Kalyvia Sochas, see Section 7. I do not include the so-called Achilleion (located just north of Sparta; Stibbe 2002) and a sanctuary with similar finds recently excavated at Kladas (Maltezou 2013b), both of which appear to be roadside shrines.

416 Alcman fr. 7 Page-Davies; Hdt 6.61.3; Xen. *Hell.* 6.5.30–31; Parker (forthcoming). The passage from Xenophon places the sanctuaries of Poseidon and of the Dioskouroi on the west bank of the Eurotas.

417 Hdt. 1.69.4; Paus. 3.10.8; Shipley 1996b: 355–57. See Section 6.3 for further discussion.

418 Paus. 3.20.3. The precise location of Bryseiai remains unknown; see Stibbe 1993: 83–88.

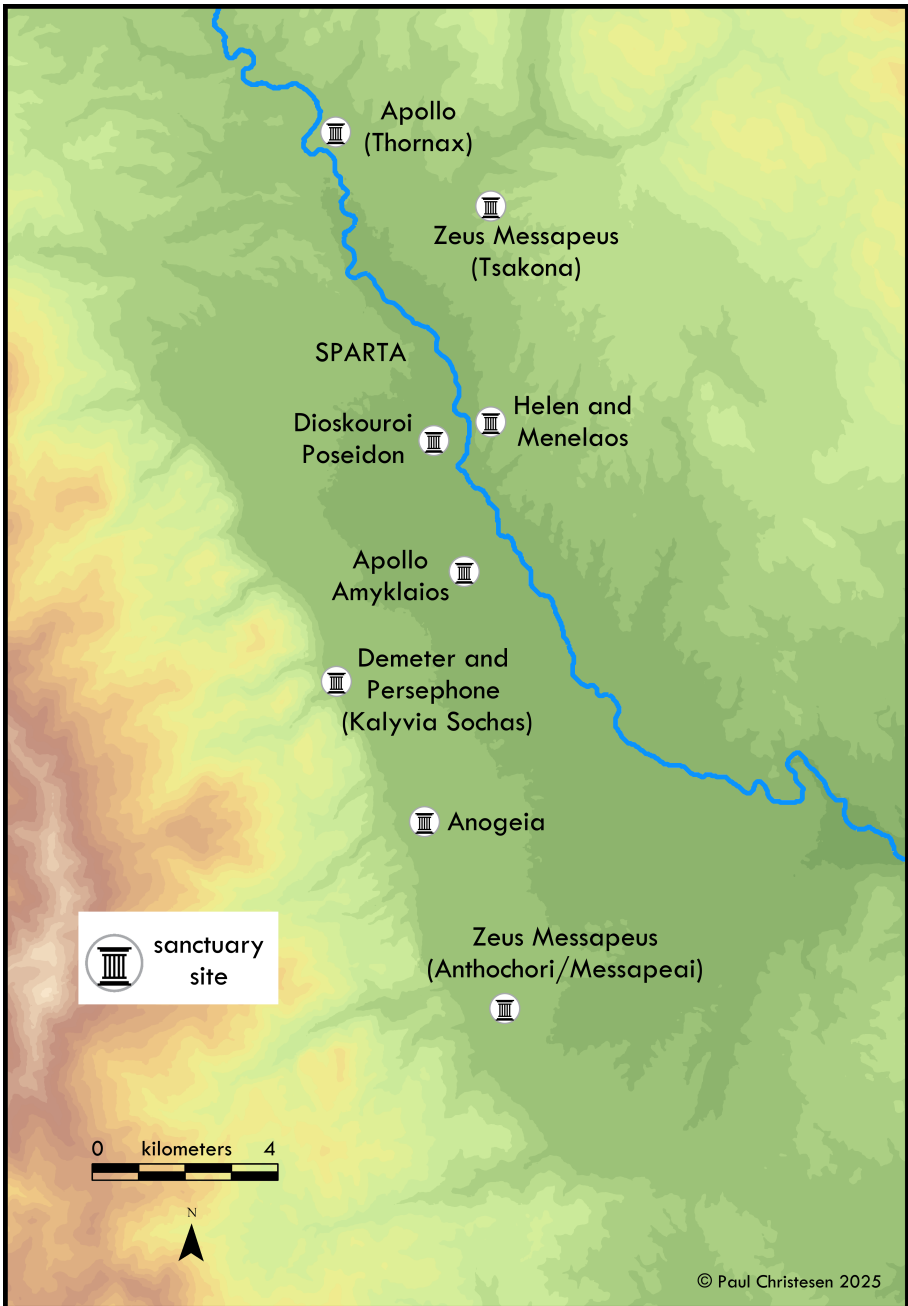


Figure 20: Sanctuaries in and near the Spartan plain.

Cartledge argued that the sanctuaries to Helen and Menelaos, Demeter and Persephone, Zeus Messapeus (at Tsakona), and Apollo Amyklaios (along with sanctuaries of Artemis Issoria and Artemis Orthia in Sparta) “formed a kind of *pomerium* ... or sacred boundary around Sparta itself.” Richard Catling adopted a similar position and added to Cartledge’s list the sanctuaries dedicated to Apollo Pythaeus (Thornax), the Dioskouroi (Therapne), Dionysos (Bryseiai), and Zeus Messapeus (Anthochori). He also mentions the sanctuary to an unknown hero/deity at Anogeia.<sup>419</sup> Scholars such as Mait Kõiv, Nicolas Richer – and myself, in an earlier publication – have endorsed this view of the sanctuaries in the Spartan plain.<sup>420</sup>

I am now inclined to see those sanctuaries not as defining a *pomerium* but rather as cult sites attached to communities inhabited by Spartiates. This would help account for their number: we might expect one or two or even three border sanctuaries, but nine seems improbable. The spatial relationship between the ancient sanctuary sites and population centers in the 19th century CE (see Figure 21) may provide some insight into the links between sanctuaries and settlements in antiquity.

The existence of multiple, important sanctuaries tied to specific communities in the Spartan plain would help explain the relative paucity of elaborate cult buildings that attracted Thucydides’ attention.<sup>421</sup> The pool of public resources available for the construction of magnificent sanctuaries was, in all probability, not only smaller in Lak edaimon than in Athens, but also more broadly dispersed. One suspects, for instance, that the inhabitants of settlements such as Amyklai were more interested in embellishing sanctuaries in their own town than those in Sparta. The Apollo sanctuaries at Thornax (with its gold statue of Apollo) and at Amyklai (with its monumental throne/altar) no doubt required considerable investment. The same was likely true of Anthochori, where a large Archaic, Doric capital is probably the remnant of a substantial cult building of some kind.<sup>422</sup>

419 Cartledge 1998: 44; R.W.V. Catling 2002: 230–32. On the sanctuary at Anogeia, see Section 7.

420 Richer 2012: 201–2; Kõiv 2015: 29; Christesen 2019a: 172. See also Sassu 2022: 54–56.

421 Thuc. 1.10.2; see Section 9.3.

422 Kokkorou-Alevras 2016; Kokkorou-Alevras 2021: 129–33.

I observe, by way of closing, that when it comes to ancient Lakedaïmon, nothing is ever as simple as it might appear at first glance. Even seemingly obvious questions, such as where Spartiates lived, can be answered in new ways that challenge long-established orthodoxies. If the question of where Spartiates lived had never been addressed, and we were to examine the relevant evidence on a *tabula rasa* basis, it is highly improbable that we would arrive at something resembling the current orthodoxy. While the available evidence does not make it possible to conclusively falsify the position articulated by Wade-Gery et al., that evidence, in my view, strongly suggests that during the Archaic and Classical periods Spartiates resided in an unknown number of *ōbai* scattered across the Spartan plain and that they eventually found it expedient to congregate in and around Sparta itself. My hope and expectation is that continued archaeological exploration in Lakonia will make it possible to address this particular facet of Lakedaïmonian history in a decisive fashion in the near future.

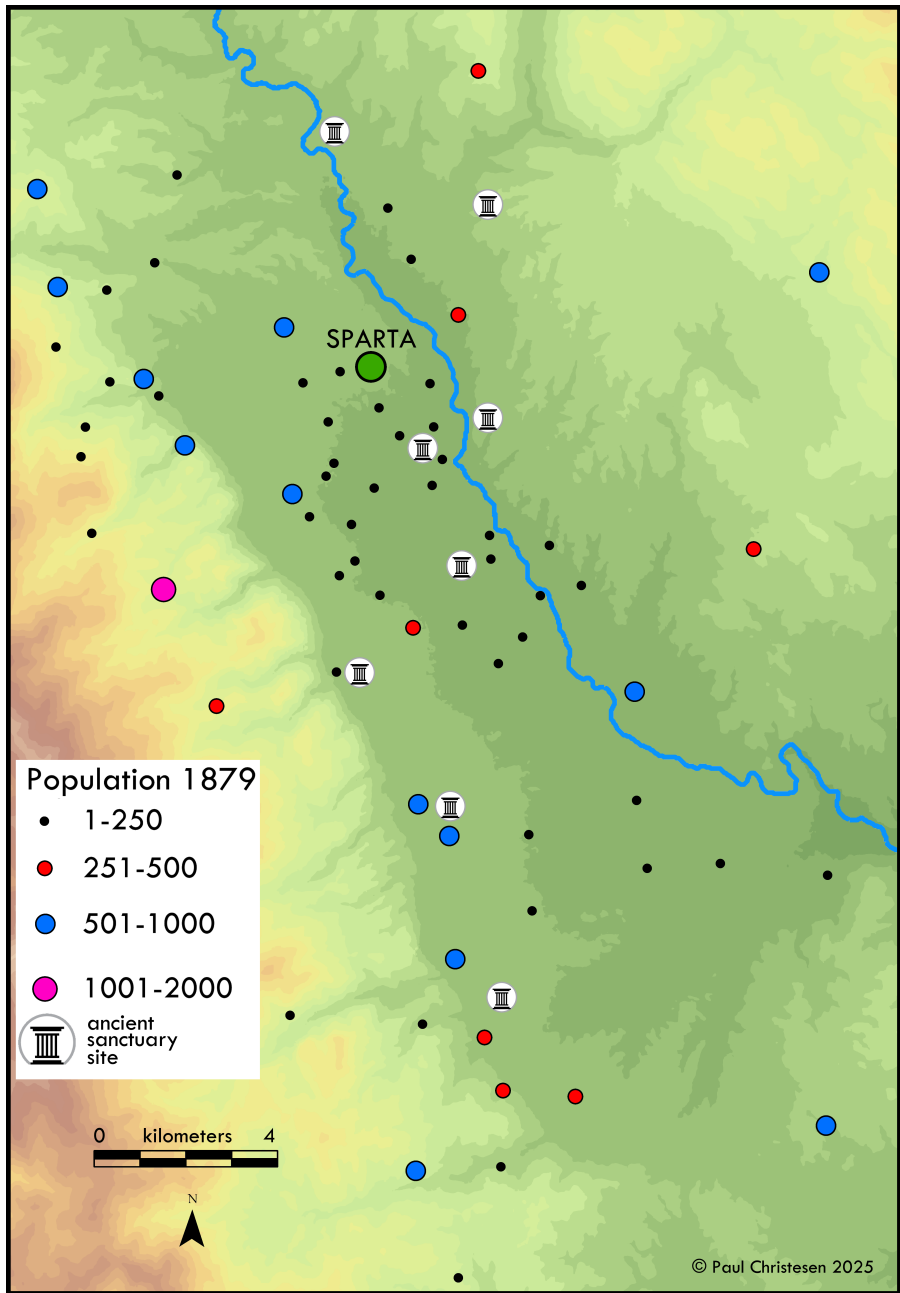


Figure 21: Sites of ancient sanctuaries and 19th-Century CE settlements in the Spartan plain and the Taygetos plateau.

### Appendix: Roman-Era Epigraphic Texts

<i>IG designation</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>other designations</i>	<i>find spot</i>	<i>text</i>	<i>notes</i>
IG V.1.472	c. 130 CE	CIG 1426	Sparta	[ή] πόλις   Γά(ιον) Ἀβί(διον) Ἀγαθάγγελον   [ἀνδρ]είας καὶ βίου σε-[μνó]τητος ἔνεκα,   [προς]δεξαμένου τὸ   [ἀνάλ]ωμα τοῦ ἀξιολο-   [γωτάτου βοαγοῦ αὐτοῦ]   [Τιβ(ερίου) Κλαυ(δίου) Πρατολάου τοῦ]   [Βρασίδου],   [Πιτανάτην].	
IG V.1.480	early C2 CE	CIG 1347	?	ἃ πόλις   Τιβ(έριον) Κλαύδιον Ἀρμόνικον   εὐσεβῆ καὶ φιλόπατριν, γυ- μνασίαρχον, ἀπὸ τᾶς πρώ- τας ἀλικίας πολιτευόμε- νον ἄριστα, ἀρετᾶς ἔνε- κεν καὶ τᾶς πρὸς <α>ύτᾶν   ἄσυνκρίτου μεγαλοψυ- χίας, ἀπὸ φυλῆς Κονοου- ρέων τῶν τιμῶν δοθεισῶν, διὰ συναρχίας, ἧς   πρέσβυς Ξενοκράτης   Φιλωνίδα, τῆς ἐπὶ Γ(αῖου) Ἰου- λίου Λάκωνος τὸ β΄.	
IG V.1.564	Roman period	CIG 1377	Sparta	ή πόλις   Μᾶρ(κον) Αὐρ(ήλιον) Δάμαρχον   Παρδαλᾶ, πρέσβυν   τῆς Λιμναέων φυ- λῆς, ἀνδρείας χάριν,   προσδεξαμένου τὸ   ἀνάλωμα Λουκίου   Ἀπρωνίου Εὐελπίστου,   ἀγαθοῦ καὶ δικαίου, τρ[ῶ]   φυλέτου.	
IG V.1.663	reign of Trajan	CIG 1425	Mys-tras	Γά(ιος) Ἀβίδιος Ἀγαθάνγε- λος, νικήσας ἀγε- νειῶν πάλιν ἐπὶ   ἀγνωσθέντου τ<ῶ>ν   μεγάλων Εὐρυκλε[ί]- ων Γαῖ(ου) Ἰου(λίου) Ἀντιπά- τρου τοῦ Λυσικρά- τους, Λακεδαιμόν[ι]- ος Πιτανάτης.	

IG V.1.674	C1 CE	Tod 1904: 70 #10  Tod & Wace 1906: #721	Ma- goula	[ἐπὶ πατρωνόμου – – –]   [– , βιδέου δὲ – –,   διαβέ]- [τεος δὲ Με]νεκλέου[ς (tri)]-[bus) σ]φαιρεῖς οἱ νικάσαντ<ε>ς τᾶ[ς ὦ] βάς,   [ῶν πρέσβυ]ς   Νικοκράτης,   . . . [.].κίδας Φιλοστράτου,   . . . . ομένης Ἐπικτήτου,   . . . ιππίδας Ἐπικράτους,   [Φιλ]οκλῆς, vac.   [Ε]ϋνίκος, vac.   [Σ]ώανδρος Τρύφωνος,   Εϋδαμος Ἰππάρχου,   Καλλικράτης Φιλοστράτου,   Δάμιππος Τιμοκράτους,   Κλεόμαχος,   Εὐδαιμοκλῆς Εὐδάμου,   Σώστρατος Θεοδώρου,   Ξενάκων Ἀντιβίου.   vacat   {anaglyphum}	relief showing a ball and a palm branch
IG V.1.675	reign of Do- mi- tian	Tod, Tillyard & Woodward 1907: 213 #1  Tod & Wace 1906: #844	Sparta	{anaglyphum}   ἐπὶ πατρωνόμου   Μνάσωνος σφαιρεῖς   Πιτανατῶν οἱ νεικά- σαντες τὰς ὠβάς, ῶν πρέσβυς   Ἀλεξᾶς Χρυσέρωτο[ς],   [Λα]ῶδαμίδης Γοργίππ[ου],   - - - - - -]	relief of Dioskou- roi with ball above
IG V.1.676	Ro- man Im- perial pe- riod	Tod, Tillyard & Woodward 1907: 216 #2  Tod & Wace 1906: #837	Ma- goula	ἐπὶ Ἀγαθοκλέους τοῦ   [Κ]λεοφάντου βιδύου   δὲ Ξένωνος τοῦ Ξενο- στράτου διαβέτεος δ[ε]   Φιλέρωτος τοῦ Θεοξένο[υ],   σφαιρεῖς Λιμναέων οἱ νικ[ά]- σαντες τὰς ὠ[βά]ς, ὦν πρέ[σ(βυς)]   Ἐπάγαθος Σωκράτους,   Στράτων <ἀ>πελε(ύθερος), Πρατόνικος . . [ .]οφῶντο[ς],   . . ογενί[δας Ἀρ]ιστοκρατ[– – ],   [Τι]μοκράτης Σωτίωνος,   Νίκαρχος Ἀγαθονίκου,   Τρίτων,   Ἀφροδείσιος Ἀρίστωνος,   Ζήλος	relief of ball, oil- flask, and wreaths



				Ἀγαθονίκου,   Εὐτυχος, Μένανδρ[ος],   Σωτήρ[ιχο]ς ῤαθήκοντ[ος],   Ἀγα[----- -----]   [-----]	
IG V.1.677	c. 130 CE	Tod, Tillyard & Woodward 1907: 217 #3	Sparta	[ἐπὶ πατρὸνόμου] Κλαυδίου   [Ἀττικοῦ, βιδύου] δὲ Κανινί-  [ου Εὐπόρου, δια]βέτεος δὲ   [αὐτεπαγγέλτο]υ Θρασυβούλου   [τοῦ, σφαιρεῖ]ς οἱ ἀρχαῖοι   [Νεοπολιτῶν?] οἱ νεικάσαντες   [τὰς ὠβὰς vac. ῶ]ν πρέσβυς   [----- Ἐ]ρασμίου,   [----- δ]ώρου,   -----.   [----- -]του.	
IG V.1.678	no date given	CIG 1471	Mys- tras	[ἐπὶ] Ἀριστοδαμί[δα]   [πατρὸνό]μου, Δεινομ[ένους]   [----] διὰ βίου, Ἐ<π>έρ[αστος]   [-- τὰν] ὠβὰν ἐνίκα   [----] Πο<λ>υά<ν>θει [κάσεν]	
IG V.1.679	Ro- man Im- perial pe- riod	Tod 1904: 66 #6	Mys- tras	[ἐπὶ πατρὸνόμου ----]   [τοῦ δεῖνος -- φιλοκαί]-[σαρος καὶ φιλο]πάτρι-<δο>[ς],   ---- --], βιδέω δὲ Αἰλ(ίω)   [---- -]ω,   διαβέτεο<ς>   [δὲ αὐτεπαγ]γέλτω καὶ ἀ[ρι]-  [στίνδου Μά]ρκω Σουλ-  [πικίω -, σφαιρεῖς --] [οἱ νικάσαντες τὰς ὠβὰς]	
IG V.1.680	reign of Anto- ninus Pius or Mar- cus Aure- lius	Tod 1904: 63 #1  Tod & Wace 1906: #400	Sparta	[ἀ]γαθῇ τύχη.   ἐπὶ πατρὸνόμου Λυσίπ- που τοῦ Δαμαινέτου   φιλοκαίσαρος καὶ φιλοπά- τριδος, βιδέου δὲ Πεδουκαί- ου Ἐπαφροδείτου, ἀριστίν- δου δὲ καὶ διαβέτεος αὐτε- παγγέλτου Δαμαινέτου τοῦ Ἀριστοκράτους, σφαι-  ρεῖς Νεοπολιτῶν οἱ νικά-  σαντες τὰς ὠβὰς ἀνέφε- δροι, ῶν πρέσβυς   Γαληνὸς	

				Σπένδοντος,   Σπε[- - - - - ]   [- - - - -]	
IG V.1.681	no date given	CIG 1432  Tod 1904: 65 #3	Mys- tras	[- - - - - βιδέου δέ]   [Ἀφροδ]εισίου [τοῦ Εὐκαταλ]-  [λάκτου], διαβέτε[ος δέ - -]   [- - αἰω]νίου ἀρισ[τοπολει]-  [τευτοῦ]· σφαιρεῖς Κ[ονοου]-  [ρέων οἱ] γεικάσα<ν>[τες τὰς]   [ὠβὰς ἀνέ]φετ<ρ>οι, [ὦν πρέσ]- [βυς - - -]ος Ἄτ[- - - -]	
IG V.1.682	193- 217 CE	CIG 1273  Tod 1904: 67 #7	Sparta	[ἐπὶ πατρονόμου Πο(πλίου) Αἰλ(ίου) Ἀλκανδρίδα τοῦ]   [Δαμοκ]ρατίδα [ἀρχιέρεως τοῦ Σεβας]- τοῦ, διαβέτ[εος δέ αὐτεπαγγέλτου - -] -   κράτους τοῦ Σ[- - - , ἐπιμελη]- τοῦ δέ τῆς φ[υλῆς καὶ γυμνασιάρ]-  χου Αὐρ(ηλίου) Ἀπο[λλ- - - - - σφαι]- ρεῖς Λιμν[αέων οἱ νικήσαντες]   τὰς ὠβὰς ἀ[νέφεδροι, ὦν πρέσ]- βυς Κλαύ<δ>[ιος - - - - -],   [Α]ὐρ(ήλιος) Ἀγαθία[ς, Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἀλκισθένης Εὐ]-  [ε]λπίστου, [- - - - -]   .. Ἡρακλεο[- - - - -]   [. Αὐ]ρηλιο[- - - - -]	
IG V.1.683	early C3 CE	Tod 1904: 69 #9	?	ἀγαθεῖ τύχε[ι]·   νίκη Νεο<π>[ο]- λειτῶ[ν].   {anaglyphum}   ἐπὶ πατρονό(μου) θεο<ῦ> Λυκο<ύ>[ρ]- <γ>ου τὸ ε', ἐπιμελουμένου [δὲ τῆς]   πατρονο(μίας) Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου)   Ἀλκισθένο<υ>[ς]   τοῦ Εὐελπίστου, προστάτ[ου τῆς πό]- λεως, βιδέου δέ Μ(άρκου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Ῥο[ύφου]   τοῦ [Κλεάνορος - - - - -]   [- - - - -] - - - - -]   [σφαιρεῖς οἱ	relief showing big ball and fig- ure with four arms

				νεικάσαντες τὰς]   [ὠβάς --- -----]	
IG V.1.684	early C3 CE	CIG 1272  Tod 1904: 68 #8	Sparta	[ἐπὶ πατρονόμου]   Γαῖου Π[ομπωνίου Παν]-[θάλους [Διογένου Ἀρι]-[στέα σφ<α>[ιρεῖς Κονοου]-[ρέων οἱ νικήσαντες]   τὰς ὠβάς, [ὦν]   πρέσβυς   Αὐρ(ήλιος) Σωτηρ[- ],   Αὐρ(ήλιος) Εὐτυχο[ς], Αὐρ(ήλιος) Νεικηφόρ[ος],   Μέμμιος Σω[-],   Αὐρ(ήλιος) Πρατύλο[ς],   Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἐπίγονο[ς], Αὐρ(ήλιος) Εὐτύχη[ς],   Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ἀγαθόπο[υς],   Μέμ(μιος) Παρμέν<ω>ν,   [Α]ὐρ(ήλιος) [- -----]	
IG V.1.685	Ro- man Im- perial pe- riod	Tod 1904: 64 #2  Tod & Wace 1906: #781	Sparta	[ἐπὶ πατρονόμου τοῦ δεῖνος]   [τοῦ δεῖνος -- φιλοκαΐα]-  [ρος καὶ φιλοπάτρ]ιδ[ος, --- ]  [- --- υἱοῦ] βουλῆς, [αἰωνίου ἀγορᾶ]-[νόμου, αἰ]ωνίου ἀριστοπ[ολειτευ]-  [τοῦ, βιδέ]ου δὲ Μ(άρκου) Αὐρηλί[ου -],   [διαβέτεο]ς δὲ Ἰου(λίου) Ὠρείων[ος, σφαι]-[ρεῖς Πιτα]γατών οἱ νικήσ[αντες]   [τὰς ὠβάς ἀνέ]φεδροι, ὧν π[ρέσβυς]   [- -----]ΙΛε[- - -]	
IG V.1.686	no date given	CIG 1274  Tod 1904: 66 #4	Sparta	[ἐπὶ πατρονόμου - - - - -]   [- ----- -]   [- - σφαιρεῖς Λιμν[αέων οἱ]   [νικήσαντε]<ς> τὰς <ὠ>[βάς ἀνέφ]-[εδροι, ὧν πρέ]σβυς [- - -]   [- - - - - β]ουαγ[ός]	
IG V.1.687	Ro- man pe- riod	Tod 1904: 66 #5  Tod & Wace 1906: #647	Sparta	[- - - - -]ς, διαβ[έτεος]   [δὲ αὐτεπαγγέλ]του <Λ>ου[κίου?]   [- - - - - ]τους τοῦ [- -]   [- - - - - ]εος σφ[αιρεῖς]   [(tribus) οἱ νικήσα]ντες τὰς ὠ[βάς]   [- - -	

				---]υς, ὧν πρ[έσβυς]   [- - -----]	
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