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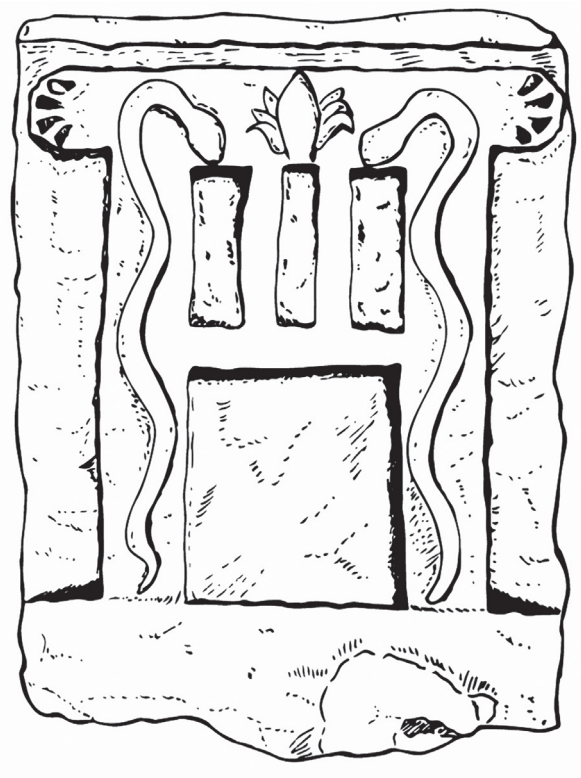
The HISTORICAL REVIEW OF SPARTA



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The HISTORICAL REVIEW OF SPARTA

edited by

Giorgio Piras and Rita Sassu

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Contents

List of abbreviations

BSA = *The British School at Athens*.

CIL VI 1 = W. Henzen, G.B. De Rossi, E. de Bormann, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. Vol. VI. Inscriptiones urbis Romae latinae. Pars I Inscriptiones sacrae. Augustorum, magistratuum, sacerdotum. Latercula et Tituli militum*, Berlin 1876.

FGrHist = F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin-Leiden 1923-1958.

FHG = K.W.L. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 2, Paris 1848.

I. Ephesos = H. Wankel, *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, 11-17. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Bonn 1979-1984.

I. Knidos = W. Blümel, *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, 41-42. *Die Inschriften von Knidos*, Bonn 1992.

I. Cret. IV = M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae, IV. Tituli Gortynii*, Rome 1950.

IG II² = J. Kirchner, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, II-III. *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores. Editio altera*, Berlin 1913-1940.

IG II³ 1 = S.D. Lambert, M.J Osborne, S.G. Byrne, V.N. Bardani, S.V. Tracy, *Inscriptionae Graecae*, II/III. *Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis Anno posteriors. Editio Tertia. Pars I. Leges et Decreta. Fasc. IV*, Berlin 2012-2014.

IG V = W. Kolbe, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, V, 1. *Inscriptiones Laconiae, Messeniae, Arcadiae. Fasciculus prior, Inscriptiones Laconiae et Messeniae*, Berlin 1913.

IG VII = W. Dittenberger, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, VII. *Inscriptiones Megaridis, Oropiae, Boeotiae*, Berlin 1892.

IG XI.4 = P. Roussel, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XI. *Inscriptiones Deli liberae, decreta foedera, catalogi dedicationes varia*, Berlin 1914.

IG XII Suppl. = F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inscriptiones insularum maris Aegaei praeter Delum, Supplementum*, Berlin 1939.

IG XII.3 = F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XII. *Inscriptiones insularum maris Aegaei praeter Delum*, 3. *Inscriptiones Symes, Teutlussae, Teli, Nisyri, Astypalaeae, Anaphes, Therae et Therasiae, Pholegandri, Meli, Cimoli*, Berlin 1898.

IG XII.5 = F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XII, 5. *Inscriptiones Cycladum*, Berlin 1903-1909.

IG XII.8 = C. Friedrich, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, XII, 8. *Inscriptiones insularum maris Aegaei praeter Delum. Fasc. 8, Inscriptiones insularum maris Thracici. Lemnos, Imbros, Samothrace, Thasos, Skiathos (etc.) and Skyros*, Berlin 1909.

Iscr. di Cos = M. Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos,* 1-3, Rome 1993.

ISE = L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche,* 1-2, Florence 1967-1976.

IvEph = R. Merkelbach, C. Börker, D. Knibbe, H. Wankel, J. Nollé, R. Meriç, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Bonn 1979-1984.

IvO = W. Dittenberger, K. Purgold, *Inschriften von Olympia,* Berlin 1896.

Powell = J.U. Powell, *Collectanea alexandrina: reliquiae minores poetarum graecorum aetatis ptolemaicae, 323-146 A.C., epicorum, elegiacorum, lyricorum, ethicorum,* Oxford 1925.

LSJ^{9} = H.G. Liddell, R. Scott, H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996 (9th edition with a revised supplement by P.G.W. Glare and A.A. Thompson).

Miller = E. Miller, *Mélanges de littérature grecque contenant un grand nombre de textes inédits,* Paris 1868.

M-W = R. Merkelbach, M.L. West, *Fragmenta Hesiodea,* Oxford 1967.

PCG 7 = R. Kassel, C. Austin, *Poetae Comici Graeci*, 7 *(Menecrates – Xenophon)*, Berlin-New York 1989.

PLRE I = A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, *The prosopography of the later Roman Empire I, A.D. 260-395*, Cambridge 2006.

PLRE II = J.R. Martindale, *The prosopography of the later Roman Empire II, A.D. 395-527*, Cambridge 2011.

PMG = D.L. Page, *Poetae melici Graeci: Alcmanis, Stesichori, Ibyci, Anacreontis, Simonidis, Corinnae, poetarum minorum reliquias, carmina popularia et convivialia quaeque adespota feruntur,* Oxford 1962.

RE = A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll (eds.), *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1893-.

SB = F. Preisigke, F. Bilabel, E. Kiessling, H.A. Rupprecht, J. Hengstl, A. Jördens, *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten,* Strassburg 1915-.

SEG = *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden 1923-.

SIG = W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum,* 1, Leipzig 1883.

Suda = A. Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, 1-5, Leipzig 1928-1938.

SVF 1 = H.F.A. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta,* 1. *Zeno et Zenonis discipuli,* Berlin 1905.

Syll.^{3} = W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum,* Leipzig 1914-1924.

TGF = A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta,* Leipzig 1889.

West = M.L. West, *Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum Cantati,* 2. *Callinus, Mimnermus, Semonides, Solon, Tyrtaeus. Minora adespota,* Oxford 1992.

Foreword

H.E. Eleni Sourani, Ambassador of Greece to Italy

The discipline of International Relations did not emerge from parthenogenesis. Its roots can be traced back to the beginnings of the political organization of human societies. Therefore, the study of the relations between the city-states of Ancient Hellas provides an amazing opportunity for a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary scientific dialogue and a comparative collaboration of different methodologies and perspectives.

The initiative of the Sapienza University and the Sparta Institute reflects and implements this process in the best way. The involvement of other prominent academic institutions increases the special weight of this effort and confers even greater honor on me, as a member of the Honorary Committee. The impressive start of this collaboration guarantees excellent scientific, and not only, results. It highlights and strengthens, even further, the multi-layered ties between our countries, Italy and Greece, which from Antiquity until today have invested a common future.

Both as distinct countries and also as members of a community of European states, they know that, beyond of their other contributions, they shoulder the task of preserving and adapting the ideals and values of Greco-Roman Civilization, to the necessities and challenges of the modern world. With a sense of great honor and joy for your invitation to be part of this brilliant collaboration, allow me to congratulate the contributors who conceived and implemented this initiative, which I pledge to fully support.

Preface

Anastasia Kanellopoulou, President of the Institute of Sparta
Giorgio Piras, Head of the Department of Classical Antiquities,
Sapienza University of Rome

The present publication examines and contextualises the interconnections, the supra-national relations and the reciprocal influences between ancient Sparta and other Greek *poleis* as well as non-Hellenic cities and States. These topics have been the core of the International Conference entitled "International relations in Antiquity: the case of Sparta", held in Sparta on 11 and 12 September 2021 upon initiative of the Institute of Sparta, in collaboration with the Panteion University, the University of the Peloponnese, the Ionian University and the Amykles Research Project. Therefore, the volume intends to publish the Proceedings of the Conference together with further papers focused on ancient Sparta, that integrate and complete the framework of the investigation on the proposed subject and contribute to the global reconstruction of the topographical, historical and socio-political layout of the Laconian city.

The publication itself is a joint initiative of Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Classical Antiquities, and the Institute of Sparta, aimed at establishing an international scientific journal. The latter, "The Historical Review of Sparta", is meant to be an interdisciplinary space where to reflect on and constructively discuss the historical, political and military role played by Sparta in the pre-Classical, Classical and post-Classical era, to in-deep investigate those aspects of the local culture, ethical system, values and society that distinguish Sparta from the rest of the ancient Greek world – making it somehow "unique" –, to study in holistic way the literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources available, to propose an up-to-date image of the Laconian city-State and to fathom the complexity of its ancient community.

The publication of the volume and the foundation of the academic journal are the result and part of a wider collaboration enshrined by the Cooperation Agreement signed in 2020 between the Department of Classical Antiquity of Sapienza University of Rome and the Institute of Sparta to promote research activities concerning Sparta; to foster cultural exchanges; to implement joint events, editorial initiatives, exhibitions, projects; to carry out archaeological surveys and excavations; to facilitate the mobility of scholars, students and cultural professionals; to foster educational programs regarding ancient Sparta.

The initiated collaboration already registered the cooperation in the organisation of the above-mentioned Conference, to be followed by further events, some of which now in progress (a new Conference about the battle of Sellasia) and other ones already scheduled, to be performed either in Greece or in Italy.

"The Historical Review of Sparta", to be issued by "Sapienza University Publishing House", shall cover all the fields of investigation and disciplines variously related to Sparta, from philology to literature, history, epigraphy, archaeology, topography, anthropology, religion, mythology, law, political and international studies, political and military strategy, economics, cinema, modern reception of the past etc. Although the modern literature on Sparta is consistent, the purpose of the journal is indeed to provide a fertile ground to increase the knowledge of the *polis*, to analyse its multi-layered physiognomy and its changes, revolutions, adaptations through the centuries, as also the present volume with its different papers concerning various (and sometimes divergent) themes and periods indicates. In order to achieve its aim, the Journal seeks to attract various experts, specialists and authors with different backgrounds, who can here share the outputs of their research, their visions and interpretations, given that there is not a pre-fixed common position but, conversely, the will to critically examine, compare and discuss multiple ideas and studies within an international and strongly inter-sectorial environment. Hence, by combining different methodological approaches, the complex nature of the Spartan society and the overall image of the *polis* will hopefully emerge, possible supported by novel archaeological explorations.

Finally, the editorial initiative pursues the ultimate challenging objective of reconstructing Sparta moving from an extended network of available information and trustworthy or altered records – such as historical data from one side and mythological elaboration and

political propaganda from the other side – and critically revisiting the reconstructive narration passed on to us by ancient authors. Efforts will be spent in analysing the discovered material culture, the architectural remains, the visual arts, as well as in reflecting upon Spartan form of government (which changed over time), societal organisation, moral and behavioural pattern, renown for its "austerity". The fruitful dialogue between methodologies, fields of research and scientific approaches will hopefully be the key to bring forward the editorial project inaugurated by the present volume.

To conclude, we would like to thank all the institutions, scholars, students, experts, administrative staff involved in the project, starting from the Hellenic Embassy in Italy (particularly the Ambassador Eleni Sourani and the manager of the Press Office Dimitra Mazaraki), which warmly welcomed and sustained it, the "Sapienza University Publishing House" (particularly Prof. Umberto Gentiloni, Elena Carletti, Silvio Coiante, Silvia Cossetti, Luzio Marinelli) which patiently prepared and revised the edition, the Archaeological Museum of Sparta and the British School at Athens, that kindly authorized the publication of the images of its findings, the authors of the articles, who accepted to share their expertise and studies, the members of the Editorial Board, the Scientific Committee and the Managing Board, without whom the present volume would not exist.

Introduction

Rita Sassu

The system of connections and interactions among ancient *poleis* plays a crucial role in the overall appreciation of the ancient Greek world, distinguished by the presence of a network of settlements organised according to specific jurisdictions, sets of laws and ethical principles but anyway connected by a common shared cultural substratum. The choice of selecting this topic for the International Conference "International relations in Antiquity: the case of Sparta" and declining it in the Spartan horizon turned out to be the occasion to compare different methodologies and perspectives. The Conference meant to discuss and to reflect – in an open and constructive way, deprived of pre-arranged interpretative models – on the critical issues deriving from the study of the ancient sources. By doing so, the initiative succeeded in promoting the dialogue among several scientific disciplines, in stressing the importance of a reciprocal knowledge and of a cross-sectorial dialogue, aimed at enabling a comprehensive understanding of ancient Hellas.

The joint presence of contributions dealing with more general phenomena and of papers addressing specialistic aspects favoured the analysis of the general topic of the Spartan international relations from a variety of standpoints, with a freedom in the individual selection of the subjects which enabled the development of a fruitful two-days debate, exemplifying the plurality of possible approaches and case studies.

So, the publication collects the contributions presented at the International Conference held in Sparta on 11 and 12 September 2021 and organised by the Institute of Sparta, under the aegis of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and the Chamber of Lakonia. The organisation of the event also involved the Department of International, European

and Regional Studies of Panteion University, the School of Human Movement and Quality of Life Sciences of the University of the Peloponnese, the Amykles Research Project and the Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpretation of Ionian University. In addition to the eight speeches given at the Conference, two further texts concerning the monumental layout and the topography of the ancient city are included in the publication.

The Proceedings of the Conference inaugurate "The Historical Review of Sparta", a scientific journal dedicated to the study of the ancient *polis* of Sparta, jointly promoted by the Institute of Sparta presided by Anastasia Kanellopoulou and the Department of Classical Antiquities of Sapienza University of Rome directed by Giorgio Piras. They are both promoters and proactive fosterers of the editorial initiative, that hopefully will increase and expand its activities in the forthcoming years and decades, raising again the profile of the ancient Laconian city.

The contributions are organised in a chronological order, allowing the reader to explore, through a multidisciplinary and cross-sectorial approach, the Spartan world from the birth of the city, until its establishment as a political and military power, its raise and fall, up to the current era – in whose mental and socio-political framework the Laconian city still exerts its long-lasting influence. The texts deal with a variety of topics, all interconnected by the theme of the international relations of Sparta, that range from the study of military and geo-political strategies to the exploration of the cultural, historical and religious life of the *polis* through the instruments provided by philology, epigraphy, history, archaeology, international relations.

Coherently, the volume opens with the fascinating and in-depth discussion (*Spartan* moicheia) by David D. Phillips about the controversial topic of Spartan *moicheia* (seduction or illicit intercourse with another's wife). The latter would have been favoured by the "looseness" of Spartan women, whose abnormal behaviour finds its archetype in Helen. Anyway, the uniquely Spartan practice of wife-sharing (with the husband's prior consent to his wife's extramarital affair), a legally approved procedure for producing children out of wedlock to maintain the Spartiate population, limited the spread of *moicheia*. Although its first implementations can be referred to the age of Lycurgus, the practice failed to totally prevent *moicheia* incidents. Therefore, Plutarch's claim that *moicheia* did not exist at all in the most

ancient phases of Sparta, is proved to be wrong and rejected by the systematic analysis of major cases of unlawful intercourses happened from the 8th cent. BC onward.

The two subsequent contributions by Rita Sassu and Stefania Golino (respectively: *The sacred system of Sparta* and *Heroic cults at Sparta between mythological past and supranational relations*) concern the complex and multi-layered sacred system of Sparta, that progressively emerged as an articulated cosmos of supernatural beings together the birth and development of the *polis*. The gods, semi-gods and heroes venerated in the Laconian capital are studied in relation to the pertaining sanctuaries, groups of worshippers and ritual actions, with the view of investigating the social, cultural and identitarian meanings of the cults and their influence over the Spartan community, its values, behavioural patterns and ethics. Moreover, the role of the religion in the establishment and management of international relations with other city-states and with the colonies is dealt with, too. The final picture resulting from the collection of the available data belonging to the sacred universe highlights the unique nature of Spartan religion, that, although sharing many common elements with the rest of Greece, is nevertheless marked by a strong and novel local dimension.

The perceptive and well-documented contribution (*Themistocles must be destroyed: Sparta confronts a rising Athens*) by Athanasios Platias and Vasilis Trigkas keenly depicts Spartan political strategy aimed at denigrating and aggressively targeting the leading general and politician of Athens, i.e. Themistocles (former ally during the Persian Wars). The latter, having established a solid Athenian thalassocracy, wealth increase and undisputed international hegemony, was then perceived as the main threat to Sparta's ambitions over Greece. Therefore, Sparta consciously chose to pursue a politics finalized to destroy Themistocles' political influence in Attica itself, by indirectly contrasting his initiatives (such as the fortification walls of the city) and by supporting his domestic opponents, mainly the Philo-Laconian coalition led by Cimon, who, inter alia, urged Athens to carry out risky campaigns against Persia. By having Athens engaged in offensive military operations against Persia and beyond, the Spartans hoped to gain ground in controlling Greece.

The innovative article (*Sparta's rise and fall: a critical analysis from the spectrum of neoclassical realism*) by Athanasios Grammenos efficiently uses the analytical tools of Neoclassical Realism to examine the foreign

policies of Sparta in the Classical age and, moreover, to enucleate the core reasons behind the quick decline of the *polis* after the achievement of a hegemonic position in Greece in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian Wars. The research points out that the sudden wealth and power increase derived from the victory and the obtained supremacy over Hellas caused an unprecedented corruption of social institutions, marking the starting point of the decline of Sparta. Furthermore, the text meticulously explores Sparta's gradual revision of isolationism in favour of an international geostrategy aimed at expanding the city-State's network during the 5th cent. BC and its subsequent evolution into an imperialist power in the 4th cent. BC.

An extensive and novel reading of the inscription *IG* XII 8, 156 is offered by the detailed article (*Spartans in the service of Ptolemies: the case of Hippomedon son of Agesilaus*) by Apostolos Papiomitoglou. The epigraph, dating back to 228/225 BC, is an honorary decree of the Samothracians for a distinguished Spartan citizen, Hippomedon son of Agesilaus, a general in the service of Ptolemaic Egypt, with jurisdiction over the regions of the Hellespont and Thrace. He is honoured for his piety and for the donations he made to the sanctuary of the Great Gods, for the safety ensured to the sacred place and because he satisfied the addressed various necessities of the city. A special attention is paid to the historical reconstruction of the honouree, who belonged to the royal family of Eurypontids and who served the Ptolemaic court, becoming an adviser of Ptolemy III Euergetes as well as one of the high-ranking officials of Ptolemy IV Philopator. So, the Classical tradition of capable Spartan commanders is effectively proved to be still existing in the second half of the 3rd cent. BC.

The illuminating paper (*Political and military developments in Hellenistic Sparta*) by Miltiades Michalopoulos provides an in-depth analysis of the political and military situation of Sparta between the 3rd cent. BC and the beginning of the 2nd. A depleted population faced strong social inequalities that resulted in a series of reformations carried out by kings Agis IV and Cleomenes III, which affected the social and demographic organisation of the *polis*, the land distribution, the property and the army. Notwithstanding such measures aimed at rescuing the situation, the disastrous battles of Sellasia and Mantineia caused great losses of men, which caused the even more revolutionary reforms by Nabis. By doing so, Michalopoulos carefully analyses how

the series of reforms radically transformed Sparta and its traditional institutions.

A throughout reexamination of the Spartan *stoa* dating back to the Roman age, most probably to the 2nd cent. AD, is carried out by Lavinia Del Basso (*The so-called Roman stoa of Sparta: a status quaestionis*). The research focuses on the layout, materials and building techniques of the monument, concluding that it combines elements from the Roman architectural traditions with local ancient features. Moreover, an analysis of the placement of the *stoa* and a comparison with other similar buildings contribute to determine the location of the Spartan *agora*, possibly on the Palaiokastro Hill, the Roman porch being a substruction of its southern and eastern sides, which exalts its monumentality, following a trend detectable also in several *agorai* of Roman Greece and Asia Minor in the Imperial period.

The late antique Sparta becomes the focus of the erudite paper (*The statues near Lycurgus in the theatre of Sparta*) by Giulia Vannucci, which deals with two statue bases that Sparta dedicated to two proconsuls of Achaia in the 4th cent. AD. Emblematically, the images were located inside the urban theatre, next to the sculpture of the mythical lawgiver Lycurgus. After a brief description of the theatre and its building phases, the author investigates the life and career of the two honored provincial governors, Publilius Optatianus and Anatolius. Finally, the choice of setting the two images next to that of Lycurgus is contextualized in the typical late antique fashion, popular in Achaia, of erecting statues of Roman imperial officials and local personalities in association with statues or monuments praising the glorious past.

Finally, the insightful reflection (*Sparta as a great power: a comparative analysis*) by Constantinos Koliopoulos brings us back to the current era by originally using the ancient Spartan past to measure contemporary international politics. The imagine of Sparta in the collective turns out to be a reference model for the performance assessment of contemporary great powers. In order to delineate the legacy of Sparta and its impact over nowadays international scenarios, the concept of "great power" is duly illustrated, highlighting those features that make the ancient Laconian *polis* under some aspects comparable to coeval "powerful" nations such as China, Russia and USA. Spartan power's longevity and ability to recover after each troublesome storm, its long-lasting regional hegemony, its capability in establishing and managing an

international network of connections are properly considered against the modern above-mentioned case studies.

On the whole, the Proceedings, aimed at bridging different research fields, condensates more than two-thousand year of military, social, geo-political, cultural and religious life of Sparta. Following this opening volume, the "Historical Review of Sparta" intends to become a permanent place of scientific dialogue and common reflection on the ancient Laconian city, by including a wide range of subjects and thematic paths able to bring together several scholars with different backgrounds, experiences and research fields, whose interpretative methods can effectively contribute to the understanding of the ancient Greek world and its modern reception.

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Spartan *moicheia*

David D. Phillips *

Key words: Sparta, Greek law, *moicheia,* seduction, adultery.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Σπάρτη, ελληνικός νόμος, αποπλάνηση, μοιχεία.

Abstract:
This paper examines the phenomenon of *moicheia* (seduction) in ancient Sparta. Part 1 introduces the topic with Plutarch's claim that *moicheia* did not exist in the Sparta of old. Part 2 demonstrates the falsity of this claim by analyzing four major cases of actual or suspected *moicheia* between the eighth and third centuries BC. Part 3 offers conjectures regarding the Spartan law of *moicheia*.

Το άρθρο εξετάζει το φαινόμενο της μοιχείας στην αρχαία Σπάρτη. Το πρώτο μέρος εισάγει το θέμα με τον ισχυρισμό του Πλουτάρχου ότι στα παλαιά χρόνια δεν υπήρχε μοιχεία στη Σπάρτη. Το δεύτερο μέρος αποδεικνύει την ανακρίβεια του ισχυρισμού αυτού, μέσω της ανάλυσης τεσσάρων μειζόνων περιπτώσεων πραγματικής η εικαζόμενης μοιχείας μεταξύ του 8ου και του 3ου αιώνα π.Χ. Στο τρίτο μέρος αναπτύσσονται υποθέσεις σχετικά με το δίκαιο που διείπε τη μοιχεία στην αρχαία Σπάρτη.

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* University of California, Los Angeles; phillips@history.ucla.edu. I wish to record my gratitude to President Anastasia Kanellopoulou and the Institute of Sparta for inviting me to present at the conference on "International Relations in Antiquity: The Case of Sparta" (September 2021), and to my fellow conference participants for their comments and collegiality; to those who attended and commented upon my presentation of an earlier version of this paper to the Friends of Ancient History (April 2021); to Professor Athina Dimopoulou and Professor John Papadopoulos for proofreading the Greek version of my abstract; and to Professor Rita Sassu and her editorial team for their assistance in the publication of this paper.

Geradas' bull

In his *Life of Lycurgus*, Plutarch concludes his treatment of the Lycurgan regulations on marriage and procreation - including, in particular, the practice of wife-sharing[1] - with praise and an illustrative anecdote:

> ταῦτα δ᾽ οὕτως πραττόμενα φυσικῶς καὶ πολιτικῶς τότε τοσοῦτον ἀπεῖχε τῆς ὕστερον λεγομένης γενέσθαι περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας εὐχερείας, ὥσθ᾽ ὅλως ἄπιστον εἶναι τὸ τῆς μοιχείας παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς. καὶ λόγος ἀπομνημονεύεται Γεράδα τινὸς Σπαρτιάτου τῶν σφόδρα παλαιῶν, ὃς ἐρωτηθεὶς ὑπὸ ξένου, τί πάσχουσιν οἱ μοιχοὶ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς, εἶπεν· ᾽οὐδείς, ὦ ξένε, γίνεται μοιχὸς παρ᾽ ἡμῖν.᾽ ἐκείνου δ᾽ ὑπολαβόντος, ᾽ἐὰν οὖν γένηται;᾽ ᾽ταῦρον,᾽ ἔφη ὁ Γεράδας, ᾽ἐκτίνει μέγαν, ὃς ὑπερκύψας τὸ Ταΰγετον ἀπὸ τοῦ Εὐρώτα πίεται.᾽ θαυμάσαντος δ᾽ ἐκείνου καὶ φήσαντος· ᾽πῶς δ᾽ ἂν γένοιτο βοῦς τηλικοῦτος;᾽ γελάσας ὁ Γεράδας, ᾽πῶς δ᾽ ἄν,᾽ ἔφη, ᾽μοιχὸς ἐν Σπάρτῃ γένοιτο;᾽

> These practices of that time, conducted in such accord with nature and the interests of the state, were so far from the looseness that was later recounted of their women that the possibility of *moicheia* (seduction)[2] was entirely unbelievable among the Spartans. In fact, a saying is recorded of one Geradas, a Spartiate from very ancient times, who was asked by a foreigner what penalty was incurred by seducers at Sparta, and responded, "My foreign friend, there is no such thing as a seducer among us." The foreigner replied, "Well, what if there were one?" Geradas said, "He would pay a bull large enough to extend its head over Mt. Taygetus and drink from the Eurotas." Shocked, the foreigner asked, "How could there be a bull that large?" And Geradas said with a laugh, "How could there be a seducer in Sparta?" (Plu. *Lyc*. 15, 16-18)

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1 See *infra*: "The Spartan law of *moicheia*: some conjectures."

2 "Seduction" is the best English translation of *moicheia*, illicit consensual sex between a man and a woman, including, but not limited to, marital "adultery." See Latte 1932, col. 2446: «Μοιχεία ist der heimliche geschlechtliche Verkehr mit der freien Frau ohne Zustimmung ihres κύριος»; Cantarella 1976, pp. 153-154; MacDowell 1978, pp. 124-125; Schmitz 1997, p. 132 («*Moicheia* bezeichnet nicht nur den Ehebruch im engeren Sinne, sondern jeden vor- und außerehelichen Verkehr mit einer Frau, die unter der *Kyrieia* eines Hausvaters stand»); Patterson 1998, pp. 114-125; Omitowoju 2002, pp. 73-95; Harris 2004; *contra* Lipsius 1905-1915, p. 429; Cohen 1991, pp. 98-132; Todd 1993, pp. 277-278. For some preliminary thoughts on the topic of this paper, see Phillips 2014, pp. 76, 78-79; Phillips (forthcoming).

Plutarch took this anecdote nearly *verbatim* from one of his *Spartan Apophthegms* (*Mor*. 228b-c, *Ap. Lac*. Lycurgus 20),[3] in which the Spartiate is named Geradatas (*PL* 183, Geradas = Geradatas)[4] and the foreigner explains his initial question (τί πάσχουσιν οἱ μοιχοὶ παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς) by his failure to locate any Lycurgan law on the topic (οὐδὲν γὰρ ὁρᾶν περὶ τούτου νενομοθετημένον ὑπὸ Λυκούργου).[5]

Setting aside the hypothetical Laconian Bull of Heaven, who became proverbial for his impossibility[6] and whose significance lies only in the possibility of a genuine remembrance that Spartan law once denominated fines in oxen,[7] this anecdote presents two problems. First,

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[3] Plutarchan authorship of *Ap. Lac*. and its relation to the *Lives*: Stadter 2014; *contra* Bernardakis et alii 2009, vol. 2, p. 100; Nachstädt in Nachstädt, Sieveking, Titchener 1971, pp. 110-111, 165-167.

[4] *PL* = Poralla, Bradford 1985; *PLAA* = Bradford 1977.

[5] Isoc. 12, 259 (a Laconophile former student lists αἰσχύνας γυναικῶν καὶ παίδων among the "irremediable evils" of which Sparta is allegedly free) refers primarily if not exclusively to rape.

[6] Apostol. 15, 90 (15th cent. AD); Arsenius (son of Apostolius) s.v. Ταῦρος ὑπερκύψας τὸ Ταΰγετον ἀπὸ τοῦ Εὐρώτα ἔπιεν: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων (Apostolius follows this with a paraphrase of the anecdote in Plu. *Lyc*.). Geradas' bull, higher at the withers than Mt. Taygetus (7897 ft./2407 m), dwarfs the Bull of Heaven, whose horns had a combined capacity of approximately 375 gal./1420 l (*Gilgamesh* tab. VI, with Speiser in Pritchard 1969, p. 85 with n. 114; Grayson in Pritchard 1969, p. 505). A better match for Geradas' bull might be Donn Cúailnge (the Brown Bull of Cooley), upon whose back 150 boys could play at their mortal peril: *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Recension I (O'Rahilly 1976) 964-965 (LU 5330-5332, YBL 855-856).

[7] Cf. Paus. 3, 12, 3: upon the death of king Polydorus (*PL* 628, *RE* 5, r. ante c. 716/712 (*infra* with n. 20)-c. 665), the Spartans bought his house from his widow, paying in oxen. Various Greek legal systems levied fines in oxen, especially, but not only, before the introduction of coinage. An unknown law of Draco specified a penalty of 20 oxen (κὰν τοῖς Δράκοντος νόμοις ἔστιν ἀποτίνειν εἰκοσάβοιον, Poll. 9, 61; cf. Plu. *Sol*. 23, 3). The Olympic No Fornicating In The Sanctuary Law (end of the sixth century) required offenders and the *theôroi* under whose supervision they came to pay an ox and undergo complete ritual purification (αἰ δὲ βενέοι ἐν τἰαροῖ, βοῖ κα θοάδοι καὶ κοθάρσι τελείαι καὶ τὸν θεαρὸν ἐν ταὐταῖ, *IvO* 7.1-3 = de Prott, Ziehen, *Leg. Sacr.* II 61.1-3 = van Effenterre, Ruzé, *Nomima* I 109 *A*). Among the Homeric examples of values expressed in oxen, the most famous is the exchange of armor between Glaucus and Diomedes (ἑκατόμβοι᾽ ἐννεαβοίων, *Il*. 6, 236). Other ancient and medieval European societies levied fines in cattle as well. The *lex Aternia Tarpeia* (454 BC) set the maximum unappealable fine that a Roman magistrate might impose on his own authority at 30 cattle and 2 sheep (Fest. s.v. *peculatus*; D. H. *Ant. Rom*. 10, 50, 1-2; Cic. *Rep*. 2, 60, with Zetzel 1995, p. 218); and, of course, Latin *pecunia* 'money' < *pecus* 'herd' (cf. the cognates Old English *fēoh* and Old Norse *fé*, both of which mean both 'cattle' and 'money'). The ancient Germans issued fines in horses, cattle, and sheep (Tac. *Germ*. 12, 2; 21, 1). In medieval Irish law the standard unit for fines was the *cum(h)al* (female slave), equated to 3 cows (*Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Stowe version (O'Rahilly 1961) 43-4, 2007, 2627-2628), but occasionally fines are stated in cows (e.g.,

exactly when in the remote past would Plutarch place this mythical prelapsarian Sparta? And second, what was the penalty for *moicheia* at Sparta?

Spartan *moicheia* from Helen to Chilonis

Plutarch posits his view of a chaste Lycurgan Sparta in polemical contradiction to the tradition reported by Aristotle that Lycurgus tried to get the women of Sparta to obey his laws but gave up when they resisted.[8] By the time of Aristotle, the supposed rampant promiscuity of Spartan women[9] was viewed as part of a package of abnormal practices that also included physical training and competitions;[10] the public display of thighs and, on some occasions, full nudity;[11] open

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Corpus Iuris Hibernici (Binchy 1978) 1. 303.42-304.7 = O'Mahony, Richey 1873, pp. 352-353); see Kelly 1988, pp. 112-116. Cf. Pollock, Maitland 1898, vol. 2, p. 151.

8 Arist. *Pol*. 1269b12-1270b6, esp. 1269b12-14: ἔτι δ᾽ ἡ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἄνεσις καὶ πρὸς τὴν προαίρεσιν τῆς πολιτείας βλαβερὰ καὶ πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν πόλεως; 1269b17-23: ἐν ὅσαις πολιτείαις φαύλως ἔχει τὸ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, τὸ ἥμισυ τῆς πόλεως εἶναι δεῖ νομίζειν ἀνομοθέτητον (cf. Arist. *Rh*. 1361a10-12). ὅπερ ἐκεῖ συμβέβηκεν· ὅλην γὰρ τὴν πόλιν ὁ νομοθέτης εἶναι βουλόμενος καρτερικήν, κατὰ μὲν τοὺς ἄνδρας φανερός ἐστι τοιοῦτος ὤν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν ἐξημέληκεν· ζῶσι γὰρ ἀκολάστως πρὸς ἅπασαν ἀκολασίαν καὶ τρυφερῶς; 1270a6-8: τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας φασὶ μὲν ἄγειν ἐπιχειρῆσαι τὸν Λυκοῦργον ἐπὶ τοὺς νόμους, ὡς δ᾽ ἀντέκρουον, ἀποστῆναι πάλιν. Aristotle's analysis is heavily derived from Pl. *Lg*. 780d9-781d6 (Athenian Stranger to Cleinias the Cretan and Megillus the Spartan); note esp. 780e2-3, τὸ δὲ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας οὐδαμῶς ὀρθῶς ἀνομοθέτητον μεθεῖται; 781a4-5, τὸ θῆλυ...οὐκ ὀρθῶς τοῦτο εἰξάντος τοῦ νομοθέτου δύστακτον ὂν ἀφείθη; cf. 637c2 (Athenian Stranger to Megillus), τὴν τῶν γυναικῶν παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ἄνεσιν; 806c1-7 (Athenian Stranger to Cleinias and Megillus), ...τέλεον γὰρ καὶ οὐ διήμισυν δεῖν τὸν νομοθέτην εἶναι, τὸ θῆλυ μὲν ἀφιέντα τρυφᾶν.... *Contra* Plu. *Lyc*. 14, 2: οὐ γάρ, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης φησίν, ἐπιχειρήσας σωφρονίζειν τὰς γυναῖκας ἐπαύσατο, μὴ κρατῶν τῆς πολλῆς ἀνέσεως καὶ γυναικοκρατίας (cf. Arist. *Pol*. 1269b24-25 (γυναικοκρατούμενοι), 31-34) ... ἀλλὰ καὶ τούτων τὴν ἐνδεχομένην ἐπιμέλειαν ἐποιήσατο.

9 Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* turns the stereotype on its head. Lampito's confidence in the effectiveness of her Spartan sisters' conduct of the sex strike (Ar. *Lys*. 168-171), which targets *moichoi* as well as husbands (212-213), is borne out by events (980-1013, 1076-1081, 1148 with Sommerstein 2007 *ad loc*., 1161-1172), whereas the women of Athens are seen to waver (708-780).

10 E. *Andr*. 595-600; Ar. *Lys*. 82; Critias fr. 32 D-K; Pl. *Lg*. 805e7-806a4; X. *Lac*. 1, 4; Theoc. 18, 22-25; Nic. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 103(z).4; Plu. *Lyc*. 14, 3; *Mor*. 227d, *Ap. Lac*. Lycurgus 12; Poll. 4, 102; *Suda* s.v. πυγή, π 3110 Adler.

11 Ibyc. fr. 58 Page = Plu. *Comp. Lyc. Num*. 3, 6; S. fr. 788 Nauck = Plu. *ibid*. 3, 8; E. *Andr*. *loc. cit*.; Plu. *Lyc*. 14, 4-7; *Mor*. 227e, *Ap. Lac*. Lycurgus 13; Poll. 2, 187; 7, 55. For this and the previous note cf. the «sixth-century bronze figurines of girl runners from Sparta (Inv. 3305)» and elsewhere: Cartledge 2001, p. 215, n. 41.

lesbianism;[12] widespread land tenure;[13] freedom of speech;[14] and significant political influence.[15] The archetype of the loose Spartan woman was, naturally, Helen. The connection is made with utmost clarity in Euripides, *Andromache* 590-604, where Peleus questions Menelaus' manhood (σὺ γὰρ μετ᾽ ἀνδρῶν...;/σοὶ ποῦ μέτεστιν ὡς ἐν ἀνδράσι λόγου;) for losing Helen to a Phrygian. «Even if she wanted to,» opines Peleus, «a Spartan girl could not be chaste» (οὐδ᾽ ἂν εἰ βούλοιτό τις/σώφρων γένοιτο Σπαρτιατίδων κόρη): with their bare thighs and loose *peploi*, they run and wrestle with the young men. «And then it should come as a shock if you do not raise chaste women? You ought to ask Helen that (Ἑλένην ἐρέσθαι χρῆν τάδ᾽) – she left your house and your Zeus Philios and went off partying with a young man to another country!»[16] Together with Timaea (see case (*c*) *infra*), Helen will have been the primary inspiration for the proverb Λακωνικὸν τρόπον, "in the Laconian manner," used of women who had illicit sex with strangers.[17] Plutarch knows the passage from the *Andromache* – he

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12 Alcm. fr. 1.73-77; Plu. *Lyc*. 18, 9; Phot. (et alii) s.v. Λακωνικὸν τρόπον, *infra*, n. 17.

13 Arist. *Pol*. 1270a23-25.

14 Hdt. 5, 51, the precocious Gorgo (*PL* 192, *RE* 2); Pl. *Prt*. 342d1-6; Plu. *Comp. Lyc. Num.* 3, 9; *Mor*. 240c-242d, *Ap. Lacaen*.

15 Arist. *Pol*. 1269b31-34; Plu. *Lyc*. 14, 8 ≈ *Mor*. 227e, *Ap. Lac*. Lycurgus 13 ≈ *Mor*. 240e, *Ap. Lacaen*. Gorgo 5.

16 Condemnation of Helen for her infidelity is predictably frequent. Some examples include Hom. *Il*. 6, 344-358, *Od*. 4, 145 (Helen); ?Hes. fr. 176.7 M-W = fr. *8.7 Hirschberger; Stesich. frr. 10-16, 46 *PMG* with Pl. *Phdr*. 243a5-b3, Isoc. 10, 64; A. *Ag*. (in which Helen is an Argive; see Fraenkel 1962, vol. 2, pp. 209-210 with nn. 1-2) 404-408, 803 (Chorus); Hdt. 1, 4, 2-3 (Persians; cf. Ar. *Ach*. 523-539, Dicaeopolis); E. *Tr*. 860-1059, esp. 968 (Chorus), 982, 993-1032 (Hecuba), 1055-1057 (Menelaus); Gorg. *Hel*. (a παίγνιον, §21); Lycophr. *Alex*. 87 (Πεφναίας κυνός: from Pephnus, the name of a coastal location in Laconia and the adjacent islet, Paus. 3, 26, 2), 513 (δισαρπάγῳ κρεκί - a bird whose song portended a bad marriage (Euph. fr. 4 Powell), commonly identified as the corncrake, but see Thompson 1936 s.v. κρέξ); Nic. *Th*. 310 (Αἰνελένη, "Dread Helen"); *Epic. Alex. Adesp*. fr. 2.11 Powell (Αἰνελένης); Hor. *Od*. 3, 3, 25 (*Lacaenae...adulterae*).

17 Λακωνικὸν τρόπον· περαίνειν ἢ παρέχειν ἑαυτὰς τοῖς ξένοις· ἥκιστα γὰρ τὰς γυναῖκας φυλάσσουσιν οἱ Λάκωνες. («In the Laconian manner: for women to penetrate [sexually], or to offer themselves to strangers; for the Laconians keep very poor guard over their women.») Phot. s.v. = *Suda* s.v., λ 66 Adler ≈ Apostol. 10.42 (ἐφύλασσον) = Arsen. s.v.; cf. Hsch. s.v.; Nic. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 103(z).6. Women must be the subject of περαίνειν (presumably by means of a dildo: ὄλισβος, Ar. *Lys*. 109, or βαυβών, Herod. 6, 19) as well as παρέχειν, for reasons of both sense and grammar (cf. Whitehead 2001). Sexual penetration by males was viewed as the norm and would not have been characterized as particularly Spartan. Had the original author meant περαίνειν to apply to both sexes, he might have written περαίνειν ἢ ἐπὶ τῶν γυναικῶν τῶν παρεχόντων ἑαυτὰς τοῖς ξένοις *vel sim*. For ἥκιστα...

cites vv. 577-578 at *Comp. Lyc. Num*. 3, 6 – but Helen does not pose a problem for him, as he dates Lycurgus 500 years (and 14 kings) before Agis II (*PL* 26, *RE* 2, r. 427/6-400/399: *Lyc*. 29, 10 (*infra*, n. 42)) and thus three centuries after Helen.[18]

Far greater obstacles to Plutarch's myth of a *moicheia*-free Sparta are the first two of the following four well-attested historical cases of actual or suspected *moicheia* that bore major ramifications for Spartan domestic and foreign affairs. Given the Spartan policy of secrecy (τῆς πολιτείας τὸ κρυπτόν, Th. 5, 68, 2), born of the paramount domestic imperative of guarding against helot revolt (αἰεὶ γὰρ τὰ πολλὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις πρὸς τοὺς Εἵλωτας τῆς φυλακῆς πέρι μάλιστα καθειστήκει, Th. 4, 80, 3), these are the sorts of cases we would expect our sources to know and report.[19]

(a) The Partheniai and Taras. In 706, the Partheniai, illegitimate children of Spartiate women and helot men born during the First Messenian War (c. 736/732-c. 716/712),[20] were expelled from Sparta to establish the colony of Taras. Significantly, the Partheniai were numerous enough to throw their native state into turmoil by plotting revolution (Antioch. Hist. *FGrHist* 555 F 13 = Str. 6, 3, 2; Ephor. *FGrHist* 70 F 216 = Str. 6, 3, 3; Arist. *Pol*. 1306b29-31) and then to find a colony.[21] The sources offer variant identifications of the fathers of the Partheniai. Antiochus (*loc.*

ἐφύλασσον cf. E. *Andr*. 593-595: Menelaus had left his house and wife unlocked and unguarded (ἄκληστ᾽ ἄδουλα δώμαθ᾽ ἑστίας λιπών,/ὡς δὴ γυναῖκα σώφρον᾽ ἐν δόμοις ἔχων/πασῶν κακίστην).

[18] Thus, in the controversy over Lycurgus' date, Plutarch aligns himself with Eratosthenes (*FGrHist* 241 F 2) and Apollodorus (*FGrHist* 244 F 64), who placed the lawgiver οὐκ ὀλίγοις ἔτεσι πρεσβύτερον...τῆς πρώτης Ὀλυμπιάδος (*Lyc*. 1, 3) – specifically, in 885/4 (for the calculation, based ultimately upon a date of 1184/3 for the fall of Troy, see Manfredini, Piccirilli 2010, p. 218). Cf. *Comp. Lyc. Num*. 4, 9: «for over five hundred years the chief and most important elements of [Lycurgus'] legislation remained in effect» (πεντακοσίων ἐτῶν πλείω χρόνον τὰ κυριώτατα καὶ μέγιστα διαμεῖναι τῆς νομοθεσίας).

[19] Cf. Chrimes 1949, pp. 205-206.

[20] For the date, based on the Olympic victor lists and Tyrt. fr. 5 West (19 years' duration, ending in the reign of Theopompus, r. c. 720-c. 670, *PL* 363, *RE* 3, and Polydorus: Paus. 3, 3, 1; 4, 7, 7-13, 7; cf. *supra*, n. 7), see Huxley 1962, p. 34; Cartledge 2002, pp. 97-105. The foundation date of Taras, confirmed by archaeological evidence (Cartledge 2002, p. 107), militates against the Pausanian dates for the war (Ol. 9, 2, 743/2 - Ol. 14, 1, 724/3, Paus. 4, 5, 10; 13, 7; accepted by Papachatzis 1965, p. 4 with n. 1, p. 59, n. 2), for the Partheniai will have been in or on the cusp of early adulthood when they started causing problems (cf. n. 23 *infra*).

[21] Moreover, «[e]vidently the number involved was so great that summary justice could not safely be exercised on them» (Michell 1952, pp. 85-86).

cit.) states that they were Spartiates degraded to helotry for dereliction of military service. Ephorus (*loc. cit*.) says that they were the youngest and strongest (τοὺς εὐρωστοτάτους ἅμα καὶ νεωτάτους) Spartiates serving in Messenia, sent home on an express mission to forestall the threat of *oliganthrôpia*[22] by impregnating the entire virgin female population (whence, allegedly, the name Partheniai). Polybius modifies this version to make the special procreation force consist of men in their prime (ἐξαπέστελλον οἱ Λακεδαιμόνιοι τοὺς ἀκμάζοντας εἰς τὴν πατρίδα τεκνοποιΐας χάριν, 12, 6b, 5); Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom*. 19, 1, 2-4) has the young men sent home in rotation (ἐπέμποντό τινες ἀεὶ νέοι παραλλάξ); Pompeius Trogus followed Ephorus more exactly (Justin 3, 4, 5-7).[23] According to Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115 F 171 = Ath. 271c-d), the fathers of the Partheniai were helots assigned to duty in the marital beds of Spartiates who had been killed in action. Aristotle (*loc. cit*.) identifies them as Spartiates *tout court* (the Partheniai were ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων, "the offspring of the Homoioi"). But all these versions clearly represent the fruits of later attempts by the Spartans and Tarentines to rehabilitate the reputations of their ancestors. The least flattering account, and thus the one that is doubtless true, is derived from the lost Aristotelian *Constitution of the Tarentines*[24] and preserved, in unfortunately fragmentary form, by Heracleides Lembus (fr. 57 Dilts = Arist. fr. 611.57 Rose = tit. 143.1, no. 28 Gigon = Heraclid. Pont. [*sic*] fr. XXVI Müller, *FHG* 2.220):

> ὅτε δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι Μεσσηνίοις ἐπολέμουν, αἱ γυναῖκες, ἀπόντων τούτων, παῖδάς τινας ἐγέννησαν, οὓς ἐν ὑποψίαις εἶχον οἱ πατέρες ὡς οὐκ ὄντας αὐτῶν, καὶ Παρθενίας ἐκάλουν· οἱ δ᾽ ἠγανάκτουν...
>
> When the Spartans were waging war with the Messenians, their women, in their absence, gave birth to some children, whose fathers suspected that they were not theirs, and called them Partheniai. And they were vexed...

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22 On this phenomenon, see Doran 2018.

23 According to Ephorus and Justin, the mission occurred in the tenth year of the war; Justin's statement that the Partheniai set out for Taras at the age of 30 reflects the Pausanian chronology (which was probably derived from Rhianus' *Messeniaca* (3rd cent. BC; cf. frr. 49-55 Powell; *FGrHist* 265 F 42) rather than Myron of Priene (*FGrHist* 106 T 1, F 3): Paus. 4, 6, 3-4; on Pausanias' use of these sources see Papachatzis 1965, pp. 8-16).

24 Thus, in all probability, Aristotle did not write the *Constitution of the Tarentines* but assigned it to one of his students.

Although we cannot rule out the odd elderly or disabled Spartiate or wandering *perioikos*, the prime candidates for paternity will, of course, have been the helots who worked the lands of the Spartiates (Tyrt. fr. 6 West). And the returning husbands' suspicion (ἐν ὑποψίαις εἶχον) and anger (ἠγανάκτουν)[25] militate against a sanctioned arrangement of the type described by Ephorus (and Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Pompeius Trogus) or Theopompus.[26]

(*b*) *Demaratus and his mother*. In 491, Cleomenes I (*PL* 436, *RE* 3, r. c. 520-c. 490) hatched a plot to depose his enemy Demaratus (*PL* 210, *RE* Damaratos 1, r. c. 515-491) from the Eurypontid throne on grounds of illegitimate birth (Hdt. 6, 61-70). Leotychidas (who would succeed Demaratus as Leotychidas II, *PL* 488, *RE* 2)[27] brought a lawsuit alleging that Demaratus was not the son of his predecessor, Ariston (*PL* 138, *RE* 1); at trial, he called as witnesses the ephors of Demaratus' birth year, who recalled that Ariston's immediate reaction upon learning of Demaratus' birth was to declare on oath that Demaratus could not be his son, since the birth occurred only six months after he had married

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[25] I take οἱ δ᾽ as referring to the husbands, not the Partheniai, but the abrupt termination of the fragment precludes certainty.

[26] S.B. Pomeroy finds the Polybian version "more credible," on the grounds that «[i]n general, hypogamy was not an option for elite Greek women, and there is nothing in the education of Spartan women that prepared them for such a possibility»: Pomeroy 2002, pp. 48-49. But her assertion (p. 48, n. 45) that «the possibility of procreative unions between Spartan women and helot men...is highly unlikely for eugenic reasons among others,» although elsewhere cautiously modified («it is appropriate to ask whether Spartan women had liaisons with lower-class men», p. 102), ignores the fact that even the most virulent and pernicious eugenic doctrines, as in the antebellum American South, do not suffice to prevent sexual relations between members of the dominant and servile classes. Of course Spartan women had liaisons with helot men (cf. the allegation against the mother of Demaratus, case (*b*) *infra*), as Spartan men did with helot women (e.g., X. *HG* 5, 3, 9, with MacDowell 1986, pp. 46-51; alleged eugenic concerns notwithstanding, *mothakes*, including illegitimate sons of Spartiate men (at least), went through the *agôgê* and occasionally were rewarded with Spartan citizenship). H. Michell rejects all the aforementioned identifications of the fathers of the Partheniai: Michell 1952, pp. 85-88. Other sources on the Partheniai include D.S. 8, 21; 15, 66, 3; [Scymn.] 330-336; Hsch. s.v. Παρθένιοι. Cf. Hom. *Il*. 16, 179-192.

[27] The machinations by which Ariston married the mother of Demaratus - by deceiving her first husband, Agetus (*PL* 20), into swearing an oath that he would give Ariston anything of his that Ariston wished - and Demaratus obtained his wife, Percalus (or Percalon, *PL* 609) - by marrying her by capture when she was engaged to marry Leotychidas - demonstrate that Spartans were not immune to dishonorable behavior in relations between the sexes. Indeed, Demaratus would have been guilty of *moicheia* had Percalus' father, Chilon (*PL* 761, *RE* 2), not consented, at least after the fact, to the *Raubehe*: see *infra* with n. 56.

Demaratus' mother (Ariston later recanted and acknowledged Demaratus as his). The Spartans decided to refer the matter to Delphi, where Leotychidas suborned an influential Delphian named Cobon, who in turn suborned Periallus, the Pythia, to rule Demaratus illegitimate. And so Demaratus was deposed.

When this fraud later came to light, Cobon was exiled and Periallus was deposed, but this does not necessarily mean that Demaratus really was the son of Ariston. In fact, he probably was not: in antiquity a baby born at least two months premature had poor chances of survival,[28] and Ariston had not fathered a child by either of his two previous wives.[29] Demaratus' birth occasioned a paternity controversy involving three candidates in addition to Ariston: his mother's former husband, Agetus (as alleged by Leotychidas, Hdt. 6, 68, 2); the hero Astrabacus (*PL* 166); and the household's helot donkey-keeper. (Indeed, the story that Demaratus' mother was miraculously transformed by Helen, at her sanctuary at Therapne (the *Menelaion*), from the ugliest into the most beautiful girl in Sparta (Hdt. 6, 61, 2-5) serves as a harbinger of her future infidelity.) According to Herodotus, shortly before Demaratus fled into exile, he sacrificed an ox to Zeus Herkeios, placed its innards in his mother's hands, and, invoking Zeus and the rest of the gods, interrogated her as to the identity of his father. Evincing a far more realistic attitude than Plutarch's Geradas, he reassured her that if any of the accusations against her were true, she would have plenty of company.[30] And she herself admitted not only that his birth had been several months premature (ἑπτάμηνον, n. 28 *supra*) but that she was not sure who his father was. If not Ariston, she said, it was Astrabacus, who assumed the form of Ariston and visited her two nights after their wedding. Given the famed religiosity of the Spartans (e.g., Hdt. 5, 63,

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28 *Pace* Demaratus' mother at Hdt. 6, 69, 5: τίκτουσι γὰρ γυναῖκες καὶ ἐννεάμηνα καὶ ἑπτάμηνα, καὶ οὐ πᾶσαι δέκα μῆνας ἐκτελέσασαι· ἐγὼ δὲ σέ, ὦ παῖ, ἑπτάμηνον ἔτεκον.

29 There was a partial royal precedent (in addition to Helen) for the suspicions against Demaratus' mother. Hdt. 5, 39-41: Anaxandridas II (*PL* 81, *RE* 1, r. c. 560-c. 520) had no children by his first wife, so the ephors directed him to divorce her and marry another. Anaxandridas refused to do this, but consented to take on a second wife. Shortly after the second wife bore Cleomenes I, the first wife became pregnant. The family of the second wife accused the first wife of lying about her pregnancy and plotting to introduce a supposititious child, so the ephors, out of suspicion, attended the first wife's delivery, which produced Dorieus (*PL* 252, *RE* 3).

30 Hdt. 6, 68, 3: οὔτε γάρ, εἰ πεποίηκάς τι τῶν λεγομένων, μούνη δὴ πεποίηκας, μετὰ πολλέων δέ.

1-2; 6, 106; 7, 133-134), she may actually have believed this, but it is more likely that she was saving face, for herself and her son, as best she could.[31]

The Astrabacus story may be related to the rumor that ascribed paternity to the donkey-keeper, which Demaratus rejects as foolish but some Spartans believed (Hdt. 6, 68, 2). Nineteenth- and early twentieth–century commentators[32] conjectured that Astrabacus, whose name resembles ἀστράβη (a backed saddle used normally by women or disabled people for riding mules or donkeys, or the mule or donkey itself),[33] was the patron hero of donkey-keepers and muleteers; and so they proposed that some Spartans, confronted by the Astrabacus story, cynically and more realistically substituted the human donkey-keeper for the mythical hero.[34] But the converse scenario is equally probable: the original suspicions fell on the donkey-keeper, and Astrabacus was nominated in his stead in an effort to ennoble the liaison and its product.[35]

(*c*) *Alcibiades and Timaea*. In the spring or summer of 412, the Spartan state issued a death warrant for Alcibiades, who had been operating as a Spartan agent in the eastern Aegean. Execution of the warrant was entrusted to the navarch Astyochus (*PL* 169, *RE* 3), but Alcibiades avoided his fate by defecting to the court of Tissaphernes (Th. 8, 45, 1). As the motive for the Spartans' drastic action Thucydides offers only that Alcibiades had made an enemy of Agis II (cf. Th. 8, 12, 2) and was generally considered untrustworthy. But other contemporary sources fill in the picture: Alcibiades had seduced Agis' wife Timaea (*PL* 695, *RE* 2) and impregnated her with the supposititious Eurypontid heir Leotychidas (III, *PL* 489, *RE* 3). An anonymous comic fragment composed soon after the event[36] mentions «Alcibiades the soft – O earth

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31 The Spartans were not immune to the cynical use of religion: in addition to Leotychidas' conduct in this case, see, e.g., Plu. *Lys*. 8, 4-5.

32 Rawlinson 1858-1860, vol. 3, pp. 461-462; Abbott 1893, p. 234; Macan 1895, vol. 1, pp. 326-327; How, Wells 1928, vol. 2, pp. 90-91. Cf. Creuzer *ap*. Baehr 1830-1835, vol. 3, p. 806; Blakesley 1854, vol. 2, p. 126, n. 159; Stein [1894] 1963, p. 172.

33 E.g., D. 21.133; Harp. s.v. ἀστράβη, α 252 Keaney; Hsch. s.v. ἀστράβη; *Suda* s.v. ἀστράβη, α 4248 Adler. See MacDowell 1990, p. 351.

34 We might compare, broadly speaking, the transformation of the *lupa* who nursed Romulus and Remus from she-wolf into human prostitute (Liv. 1, 4, 6-7).

35 Both donkeys (n. 64 *infra*) and muleteers (Ar. *Th*. 491-492) were associated with *moicheia* in the Greek world.

36 Not «prob[ably] c. 413», as Edmonds 1957-1961, vol. 1, p. 949 n. d.

and gods! – whom Sparta yearns to arrest for *moicheia*» (Ἀλκιβιάδην τὸν ἁβρόν, ὦ γῆ καὶ θεοί,/ὃν ἡ Λακεδαίμων μοιχὸν ἐπιθυμεῖ λαβεῖν, fr. com. adesp. 123 K-A). Eupolis fr. 385.2 K-A has an interlocutor credit Alcibiades with having seduced many Spartan women (πολλὰς δὲ <σοί γ᾽> οἶμαι βεβινῆσθαι <γυναῖκας αὐτῶν>).[37] When Agis died in 400/399, the Spartans denied Leotychidas the Eurypontid crown owing to his illegitimacy, granting the throne instead to Agis' paternal half-brother Agesilaus II (*PL* 9, *RE* 4; X. *HG* 3, 3, 1-4; *Ages*. 1, 5; 4, 5).[38]

Plutarch was fully aware of these facts, which he recounts repeatedly in both the *Lives* (*Alc*. 23, 7-9; 24, 3-4; *Lys*. 22, 6-13; *Ages*. 3, 1-4, 1, citing Duris of Samos, *FGrHist* 76 F 69; *Comp. Ages. Pomp.* 1, 2; 2, 1-2) and the *Moralia* (*Mor*. 399b-c, *Pyth. orac*. 11; 467f, *De tranquillitate animi* 6).[39] Nor can he possibly have been ignorant of the traditions concerning the Partheniai and the contested paternity of Demaratus. These traditions together prove that the Spartans were familiar with the term and concept of *moicheia* (which, after all, goes back at least to Homer)[40] long before the navarch Callicratidas (*PL* 408, *RE* 1) warned Conon the Athenian, in the summer of 406, that he would make him stop fornicating with the sea (Κόνωνι δὲ εἶπεν ὅτι παύσει αὐτὸν μοιχῶντα τὴν θάλατταν, X. *HG* 1, 6, 15).[41] Now, since Plutarch places

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[37] The supplements are those of Edmonds *ad loc*. (1957-1961, vol. 1, p. 430); cf. the supplements of Headlam and Herwerden reported by Kassel, Austin *ad loc*. (1986, p. 510). Kock *ad loc*. (1880-1888, vol. 1, pp. 350-351) preserves the wording of the (corrupt) source, Ath. 17d-e, πολλὰς δ᾽...οἶμαι νῦν βεβινῆσθαι...; if this is correct, νῦν ("just now, recently") indicates a date contemporary with the previous fragment.

[38] On this case see Cartledge 1987, pp. 110-115. The skepticism as to identifying Alcibiades' affair with Timaea as the cause of his death warrant that is expressed in Gomme, Andrewes, Dover 1945-1981, vol. 5, pp. 26-27 is unwarranted. The comic fragments cited above prove false the commentators' assertion that «the earliest source which is known to have named Alcibiades» as Timaea's seducer «is Douris of Samos in the late fourth or early third century» (see below in the text). Moreover, as the commentators themselves admit, «[t]he reticence of Thucydides and Xenophon» to explain the grounds of Agis' hatred of Alcibiades and to identify Timaea's seducer, respectively, «does not by itself disprove the later [*sic*, incorrectly: see above] story.»

[39] On Plu. *Ages*. 3, 1-4, 1 see Shipley 1997, pp. 79-98. Other sources include Paus. 3, 8, 7-10; Ath. 535b-c, citing Pherecr. fr. 164 K-A; Nep. *Ag*. 1, 2-5, with Stem 2012, pp. 203-205; Justin 5, 2, 4-5.

[40] *Od*. 8, 332: Ares, caught *in flagrante* with Aphrodite, μοιχάγρι᾽ ὀφέλλει.

[41] The implication is that the sea belongs to Sparta and Conon is an interloper. Note that Xenophon preserves the Spartan Doric form μοιχῶντα (Spartan Doric μοιχάω survives into the Septuagint (*Ps. Sol*. 8:10; *Je*. 3:8, 5:7, 7:9, 36:23, *et alibi*; *Ez*. 16:32, 23:37, 23:43 [Codex Alexandrinus]), the New Testament (*Ev. Matt*. 5:32, 19:9; *Ev. Marc*. 10:11-12), and beyond (e.g., Hld. 1, 11, 4)). Plu. *Mor*. 1100b, *Non posse suaviter vivi secundum Epicurum* 18, paraphrases Xenophon.

the end of the Lycurgan regime in the reign of Agis II,[42] the Timaea case does not invalidate his vision of an ancient chaste Sparta. His stated reason for positing Agis' reign as the end of an era was the massive influx of coinage brought to Sparta by Lysander upon the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War (*Lyc*. 30, 1; cf. X. *HG* 2, 3, 8; *Lac*. 14, 1-3; 7). Elsewhere, though (*Agis* 5), he places most of the blame on the rhetra (law) of Epitadeus (*PL* 276), which contravened the Lycurgan constitution both in form (it was a written law: see *infra,* "The Spartan law of *moicheia*: some conjectures") and in substance (it replaced the Lycurgan system of inherited *klêroi* passed from father to son with freedom of gift and bequest of real property). In all probability, the rhetra of Epitadeus belongs to the reign of Agis, before the end of the Peloponnesian War, and possibly before the affair of Alcibiades and Timaea.[43] In any case, though, even if the Timaea case (very) briefly predated the end of Plutarch's Lycurgan era, it was at the very least, in Plutarch's mind, something of a harbinger.

Finally, without going too deep down the rabbit hole of contrafactual speculation, we must consider the monumental effects that the preceding cases had on the course of Spartan and broader Greek history. If the Partheniai had remained in Sparta and succeeded in their revolution, the famed Spartan *eunomia* (e.g., Tyrt. frr. 1-4 West; Hdt. 1, 65, 2-66, 1; Th. 1, 18, 1; Lycurg. 1, 128) might well have been strangled in its crib. If Demaratus had not lost his throne, fled to the court of Darius, and served as an advisor to Xerxes, would Darius have appointed Xerxes his successor (Hdt. 7, 3)? If so, how might the course of the Second Persian War have been affected if Demaratus had been fighting Xerxes instead of advising him (Hdt. 7, 101-105; 209; 234-239; 8, 65)? And if not, would that war even have taken place?[44] If Alcibiades had remained in Spartan service, how would the rest of the Peloponnesian War have played out?

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[42] *Lyc*. 29, 10 (cf. *supra* with n. 18): χρόνον ἐτῶν πεντακοσίων τοῖς Λυκούργου χρησαμένη [*scil*. ἡ πόλις τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων] νόμοις, οὓς δεκατεσσάρων βασιλέων μετ᾽ ἐκεῖνον εἰς Ἄγιν τὸν Ἀρχιδάμου γενομένων οὐδεὶς ἐκίνησεν.

[43] On the rhetra of Epitadeus, cf. the criticism offered at Arist. *Pol*. 1270a15-39, and see MacDowell 1986, pp. 5, 99-110 (dating the rhetra to «some time in the last third of the fifth century,» before 404: p. 105).

[44] Note the enthusiastic reaction of the Persian court to Mardonius' anti-war speech, Hdt. 7, 13, 3.

(*d*) *Acrotatus and Chilonis*. Far too late to be relevant to Plutarch's myth of Lycurgan chastity, but significant nonetheless, is the blatant affair carried out between Acrotatus (*PLAA* 2, *RE* 2), the son of Areus I (*PLAA* 1, *RE* 1, r. c. 309-265), and Chilonis (*PLAA* 1, *RE* 3), the wife of Cleonymus, Acrotatus' great-uncle (*PLAA* 1, *RE* 3).[45] Desirous of the kingship and enraged at his wife's infidelity, which was public knowledge (οὐδένα γὰρ ἐλάνθανε Σπαρτιατῶν καταφρονούμενος ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικός, Plu. *Pyrrh*. 26, 18), in 272 Cleonymus invited Pyrrhus of Epirus to attack Sparta. When the assault came, Chilonis placed a noose around her neck, so that if the city were captured, she would not fall into her husband's hands (27, 10); Acrotatus fought so valiantly in the first day's successful resistance that some of the elderly men of Sparta followed him through the city, shouting, «Go, Acrotatus, and mount Chilonis; just be sure to make brave sons for Sparta!» (οἶχε, Ἀκρότατε, καὶ οἶφε τὰν Χιλωνίδα· μόνον παῖδας ἀγαθοὺς τᾷ Σπάρτᾳ ποίει, 28, 6). And so they did, at least eventually: their son Areus II (*PLAA* 2, *RE* 2, *r*. (*et vixit*) 262-254), appears on an inscription at Delphi as Ἀρεῖ βασιλεῖ βασιλέως Ἀκροτάτου καὶ Χιλώνιος βασιλίσσας (*Syll*.[3] 430.2-4).[46]

The importance of this case lies in several things. First, in contrast to all the previous cases, in this one the *moichos* was definitely a Spartiate. Second, this was definitely not an instance of wife-sharing (see *infra*, "The Spartan law of *moicheia*: some conjectures"): Cleomenes did not approve the arrangement;[47] indeed, it was the proximate cause of his inviting Pyrrhus to invade. Third, the affair between Acrotatus and Chilonis not only went unpunished but was enthusiastically encouraged by their fellow Spartans. Moreover, Acrotatus went on to succeed his father to the Agiad throne (reigning 265-262), and his and Chilonis' son Areus II succeeded him. Although presumably Chilonis' marriage to Cleonymus ended by divorce or his death,[48] and she married Acrotatus, before the birth of Areus II, thus rendering him legitimate, it is still worth noting the contrast with the cases of

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45 On this case see Pomeroy 2002, p. 75.

46 Chilonis was a Eurypontid but not technically a queen. Flacelière, Chambry 1971, pp. 65, n. 1, 301; Pomeroy 2002, p. 76, n. 6.

47 *Contra* Michell 1952, p. 59.

48 Cleonymus was already elderly (πρεσβύτερος, Plu. *Pyrrh*. 26, 17) when he married Chilonis.

Demaratus and Leotychidas (III). How far had Sparta fallen since the days of Geradas and his bull!

The Spartan law of *moicheia*: some conjectures

Among all the cases above, the only actual offender (*moichos* or paramour) to suffer adverse consequences was Alcibiades. But this was clearly a special case, as Alcibiades was a foreigner, Agis II was a king, and the legitimacy of the crown prince apparent, Leotychidas (III), was a matter of particular concern: the Eurypontid throne must be occupied by a Eurypontid king (X. *HG* 3, 3, 3; Plu. *Ages*. 3, 8; Plu. *Agis* 11, 2). The Alcibiades episode tells us nothing about the normal treatment of *moichoi* at Sparta; even Geradas would fine the *moichos* a giant bull, not put him to death. In fact, we have no good evidence what the remedy or remedies for *moicheia* might have been. In this final section I will offer some conjectures.

The uniquely Spartan practice of wife-sharing, a legally sanctioned procedure for producing children out of wedlock in order to maintain the Spartiate population, has fascinated scholars since antiquity. According to Xenophon, our earliest source for the practice (*Lac*. 1, 7-10), Lycurgus made it so that an old man with a young wife might invite (ἐπαγαγομένῳ) another man to have children by her, and he also made it lawful (νόμιμον ἐποίησεν) that a man who wanted to have children without taking a wife might procreate with a married woman, provided that he persuaded her husband (πείσαντα τὸν ἔχοντα). And, says Xenophon, «many such agreements were made» (πολλὰ... τοιαῦτα συνεχώρει). Already by the time of the First Messenian War, according to Polybius (12, 6b, 8), it was long-standing common practice (καὶ πάτριον ἦν καὶ σύνηθες) for three or four men, or even more in the case of brothers, to share a wife, and it was honorable and common (καλὸν καὶ σύνηθες) for a man who had had enough children to give his wife away (ἐκδόσθαι) to a friend.[49] Plutarch, *Lyc*. 15, 12-13

[49] Ἐκδιδόναι a woman (usually in the active voice, occasionally in the middle) normally means to give her in marriage, and may additionally imply a dowry. But note Plu. *Mor*. 227f-228a, *Ap. Lac.* Lycurgus 15, Lycurgus legislated that girls ἀπροίκους ἐκδίδοσθαι; *contra* Arist. *Pol*. 1270a23-25, Spartans give large dowries. On the context of Polybius' statement, which concerns the foundation of Locri Epizephyrii (the traditional foundation date, 679/673, is preferable to the period of the First Messenian War), see Walbank 1957-1979, vol. 2, pp. 330-331, 339-341. At 12, 8, 2 Polybius castigates Timaeus for alleging that Aristotle had slandered Locri

(cf. *Comp. Lyc. Num*. 3, 3) paraphrases Xenophon: it was permitted (ἐξῆν) for the elderly husband to bring in a young man whom he approved (δοκιμάσειεν) to procreate with his young wife; likewise, it was permitted (ἐξῆν) for a man to procreate with the wife of another, provided that he persuaded him (πείσαντι τὸν ἄνδρα).[50]

The possibility of legal sex with another man's wife reduced the incidence of *moicheia* at Sparta, but did not eliminate it, unless we are somehow to believe that the 350-400 years separating Lycurgus from Agis II[51] contained not a single jealous Spartan husband (not to mention the Spartan father or brother who disapproved of his unmarried daughter or sister's lover). Our sources all emphasize the necessity of the husband's prior consent to his wife's extramarital affair. None of us is totally immune to the Spartan mirage,[52] and even the greatest living historian of Sparta has proven susceptible to it in concluding that «[a]s far as sexual relationships between citizens are concerned, Plutarch seems to have been technically correct» that there was no *moicheia* in the Sparta of old.[53] But it is simply inconceivable that every Spartiate man who wished to have sex with a Spartiate woman who was not his wife

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Epizephyrii as a colony of runaways, slaves, *moichoi*, and slavers (= Timae. *FGrHist* 566 F 156 = Arist. fr. 547 Rose = fr. 554.2 Gigon). However that may be, the city's lawgiver, Zaleucus, may have enacted the first written law on *moicheia* in Greek history (Heraclid. Lemb. fr. 61 Dilts = Arist. fr. 611.61 Rose = tit. 143.1, no. 31 Gigon = Heraclid. Pont. [*sic*] fr. XXX.3 Müller, *FHG* 2.221).

50 Cf. Plu. *Mor*. 242b, *Ap. Lacaen*. anon. 23. On these sources and the institution they describe, see MacDowell 1986, pp. 83-86; Cartledge 2001, pp. 123-125; Pomeroy 2002, pp. 37-44; Manfredini, Piccirilli 2010, pp. 260-261; Walbank 1957-1979, vol. 2, pp. 340-341; Gray 2007, pp. 151-152. Pomeroy argues that the traditional term "wife-sharing" should be replaced by «'husband-doubling'...or, at any rate, some term that does not suggest passivity on the wife's part» (p. 40). But while certainly wives exercised considerable extralegal agency, the sources make it clear that the legal power to grant or refuse permission rested with the husband.

51 500 years (or more), according to Plutarch (*supra* with n. 18); but in reality Lycurgus must have lived at or soon after the establishment of the *polis* of Sparta (given his involvement with the Great Rhetra, Plu. *Lyc*. 6, 1-2) and before the reign of Polydorus and Theopompus, who won the First Messenian War (*supra*, n. 20), inserted the Rider to the Great Rhetra, and established the ephorate (Tyrt. fr. 4 West; Pl. *Lg*. 691e1-692a6; Arist. *Pol*. 1313a25-33; Plu. *Lyc*. 6, 7-10: see Phillips 1992, which I still believe to be substantially correct).

52 See, however, the trenchant critique of "mirageism" in Doran 2018, pp. 12-18.

53 Cartledge 2001, p. 125. Cf. Müller 1844, vol. 2, pp. 222, 281; Jannet 1880, p. 103; Michell 1952, p. 48.

both requested and obtained the permission of her *kyrios*.[54] Acrotatus most assuredly had numerous Archaic and Classical predecessors.

In his classic and indispensable monograph *Spartan Law*, Douglas MacDowell proposed that «[t]he rule about μοιχεία, observed in the early period but not later, must have been that a man might not have sexual intercourse with another man's wife unless the husband gave permission, nor with an unmarried woman unless, being unmarried himself, he carried her off to keep her in his own house (which would constitute marriage).»[55] I would modify this formulation by positing that the *kyrios* of the unmarried woman must consent to the marriage by abduction, either before, during, or after the fact.[56]

The absence of Lycurgan *moicheia* law noted by Gerad(at)as' interlocutor in Plutarch's *Spartan Apophthegms* (*supra,* "Geradas' bull") is neither surprising nor very significant. His comment reflects, at most, the lack of a written law of evident antiquity governing the offense. In fact, though, there is no reason that we should expect the Spartans to possess a written law of *moicheia*. Lycurgus himself did not write down his laws (Plu. *Lyc*. 13, 1); he was active before the First Messenian War (*supra*, n. 51), and thus before or just during the advent of Greek alphabetic literacy. By the Classical period, "the laws of Lycurgus" referred by shorthand to the body of Spartan law, irrespective of post-Lycurgan developments, as did "the laws of Solon" for Athenian law.[57] The so-called Lycurgan rhetra prohibiting written law (Plu. *Lyc*. 13, 4) was a later development (credible Greek tradition assigns the earliest written laws to Zaleucus of Locri Epizephyrii, *fl*. Ol. 29 = 664-661)[58] and was in abeyance by the date of the rhetra of Epitadeus (*supra* with n. 43). But even after that date, the great majority of Spartan law remained unwritten. Written laws will have been predominantly those that introduced significant alterations to older law (such as the

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54 Cf. X. *Mem*. 2, 1, 5, with Phillips 2017, pp. 52-53 (Socrates on the risks assumed by *moichoi* despite the wide range of licit sexual possibilities).

55 MacDowell 1986, p. 87.

56 After the fact, evidently, in the case of Demaratus and Percalus (Hdt. 6, 65, 2, n. 27 *supra*), since Percalus was engaged to marry Leotychidas when Demaratus abducted her. On marriage by abduction, which was no longer practiced in Plutarch's day (the Spartans used to marry (ἐγάμουν) δι᾽ ἁρπαγῆς, *Lyc*. 15, 4), see MacDowell 1986, pp. 77-81; Cartledge 2001, pp. 121-123.

57 Plu. *Lyc.* 20, 2 preserves an eminently credible tradition that Lycurgus made few laws. Cf. MacDowell 1986, pp. 2-3; for Athenian law, see Phillips 2009, pp. 114-118.

58 Eus. *Chron*. 2, Ol. 29: coll. 363-364 Migne.

rhetra of Epitadeus),[59] and we have no reason to believe that any such novelty affected the law of *moicheia* between Lycurgus and the end of the Classical period (at the earliest). The Spartan law of *moicheia*, then, was not statutory, but customary and unwritten.[60]

How might offenders have been punished?[61] No Spartan woman is attested as suffering ill effects, legal or other, on account of *moicheia*.[62] This is not terribly surprising, not just because the named women – Demaratus' mother, Timaea, and, later, Chilonis – were members of the royal houses, and the mothers of the Partheniai were too numerous to be punished, at least by death or degradation, without risking *oliganthrôpia*, but because in the Greek world generally, it was the

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[59] MacDowell 1986, pp. 4-5. *Pace* MacDowell, the written form of the Great Rhetra (Plu. *Lyc*. 6, 2, brought back from Delphi by Lycurgus, *Lyc*. 6, 1) and its rider (*Lyc*. 6, 8, brought back from Delphi by the kings Polydorus and Theopompus, Tyrt. fr. 4 West) does not contravene the "Lycurgan" ban. The Great Rhetra definitely preceded the ban, as did, almost certainly, the rider. Even after the ban was enacted, the Spartans kept an archive of oracular responses (Hdt. 6, 57, 4; Plu. *Mor*. 1116f, *Adversus Coloten* 17: Λακεδαιμόνιοι, τὸν περὶ Λυκούργου χρησμὸν ἐν ταῖς παλαιοτάταις ἀναγραφαῖς ἔχοντες), thus treating Delphic pronouncements (and the laws derived from them) differently than laws generated at Sparta.

[60] Cf. MacDowell 1986, pp. 1-5; Jannet 1880, p. 67. It was no less law for its being customary and unwritten (*pace* Gagarin 2008, pp. 13-38). The oral transmission of much larger bodies of law (not to mention the epics that became the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) is amply attested. The Druid lawgivers and judges of Gaul and Britain memorized a great body of doctrines and were forbidden to reduce them to writing (Caes. *BG* 6, 13-14; cf. Str. 4, 4, 4-5). From c. 930 at the latest, the Icelandic Lawspeaker (*lǫgsǫgumaðr*) was required to recite one-third of the entire law from memory at the Law Rock (*Lǫgberg(i)*) at the Althing during each of his three years in office; written codification of the law (*Grágás*) did not begin until 1117-1118 (*Grágás* Konungsbók §116; Heusler 1911, pp. 2, 24; Miller 1990, pp. 18-19; Byock 1982, pp. 210, 216).

[61] Müller 1844, vol. 2, pp. 278-279, n. 4 concluded from X. Eph. 5, 1 that after the Spartans abolished marriage by abduction, the abductor was penalized by death. In fact, the character who tells this story - Aegialeus, a Spartan born to a powerful family (5, 1, 4) - says that after he and his paramour, the Spartiate Thelxinoe, fled Sparta to prevent her parents from marrying her to Androcles, the Spartans condemned them both to death (Λακεδαιμόνιοι δὲ πυθόμενοι τὴν φυγὴν ἡμῶν θάνατον κατεψηφίσαντο, 5, 1, 8). To treat this as a reliable source for Spartan law is only slightly more defensible than to conclude from what follows (5, 1, 9-10) that Spartans mummified and committed necrophilia with their deceased spouses.

[62] Even in the Geradas anecdote, only the male offender is (hypothetically) punished, though we might note that the foreigner's questions mention only *moichoi* and not their paramours. At E. *Tr*. 1029-1032, Hecuba tells Menelaus to kill Helen, νόμον δὲ τόνδε ταῖς ἄλλαισι θὲς/γυναιξί, θνήσκειν ἥτις ἂν προδῷ πόσιν; Menelaus first concurs and intends to have Helen stoned (1039-1041), then delays her execution until they return home (1055-1059). But the execution, of course, never took place, and the passage cannot be taken as evidence for Spartan law or practice at any period. Cf. Schmitz 1997, p. 86.

male partner, the *moichos*, who was treated as the primary offender.[63] It remains possible that shaming punishments were inflicted on Spartan women, apart from royalty (the fictional Cersei Lannister notwithstanding, royal women are generally exempt from formal public shaming).[64] But mandatory divorce (as at Athens, [D.] 59, 87 (*lex*)) – which would have applied to royal women above all, given the requirement of legitimate heirs – did not exist: Ariston did not divorce the mother of Demaratus;[65] Agis II had Alcibiades marked for death but remained married to Timaea.

For Spartan men, the existence of both financial and shaming punishments for *moicheia* is highly likely, in light of the prevalence of such punishments for a variety of offenses, in particular those concerning marriage.[66] Men guilty of ἀγάμιον, failure to marry, were fined (ζημίαν ἀποτειστέον, X. *Lac*. 9, 5), and they were prohibited from attending the festival of the Gymnopaediae, deprived of the entitlement to displays of respect by their juniors, and compelled by the magistrates to walk naked in a circle around the *agora* in winter, singing a song ridiculing themselves as suffering just punishment for disobeying the laws (Plu. *Lyc*. 15, 1-3, listing these as the ways in which Lycurgus inflicted disability and disgrace on unmarried men, ἀτιμίαν τινὰ προσέθηκε τοῖς ἀγάμοις; cf. *Mor*. 227f, *Ap. Lac*. Lycurgus 14;

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[63] Hom. *Od*. 8, 266-369 (*supra*, n. 40): Hephaestus demands that Zeus refund Aphrodite's bride price, and the *moichos* Ares must pay the μοιχάγρια, but Aphrodite suffers only the shame of being caught. For Athens, see Phillips 2013, pp. 102-115. The Great Code of Gortyn (*ICret* IV 72; Willetts 1967; Gagarin, Perlman 2016, no. G72) punishes only the *moichos*, not his paramour; on the similarities between the institutions of Sparta and Crete, cf. esp. Pl. *Lg*. 780d9-781b4 (the lawgivers' alleged failure to regulate the conduct of women; cf. n. 8 *supra*); also Hdt. 1, 65, 4-5; Pl. *R*. 544c1-3, *Lg*. 682e11-683a2, *et alibi*; Arist. *Pol*. 1269a29-1272b23 *et alibi*.

[64] Shaming penalties for *moicheia* are attested at Athens (*moichos*: see n. 74 *infra*; paramour: Aeschin. 1, 183), Heracleia (Pontica?) (*moichos*: Arist. *Pol*. 1306a36-b2), Thebes (*moichos*: *ibid*.), Lepreum (both parties: Heraclid. Lemb. fr. 42 Dilts = Arist. fr. 611.42 Rose = tit. 143.1, no. 14 Gigon = Heraclid. Pont. [*sic*] fr. XIV Müller, *FHG* 2.217), Pisidia (both parties led around the city on a donkey for a fixed number of days: Nic. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 103(l) = Arist. fr. tit. 143.4 F 11 Gigon), Aeolian Cyme (paramour displayed in the *agora*, led around the city on a donkey, and thenceforth known as a "donkey-rider": Plu. *Mor*. 291e-f, *Quaest. Graec*. 2; cf. Hsch. s.v. ὀνοβάτιδες), Thurii (*moichos*: Plu. *Mor*. 519b, *De curios*. 8), and Cyprus (paramour: Favorin. = [D. Chr.] 64 (47), 2-3).

[65] And he had nothing against divorce *per se*: he had divorced his second wife to marry Demaratus' mother (Hdt. 6, 63, 1).

[66] Compare the punishments inflicted on τρέσαντες ("tremblers," men guilty of cowardice in battle): Hdt. 7, 231-232; Th. 5, 34, 2; X. *Lac.* 9, 4-6; Plu. *Ages*. 30, 2-6.

Mor. 237c-d, *Inst. Lac*. 9).[67] Moreover, according to Clearchus of Soli (fr. 49 Müller, *FHG* 2.319 = Ath. 555c-d), at one (unnamed) festival, the women of Sparta dragged unmarried men around an altar and beat them. Contracting a bad marriage, κακογάμιον, resulted in a fine; contracting a late (first) marriage, ὀψιγάμιον, brought an unknown penalty (Plu. *Lys*. 30, 6-7). The penalties for these offenses may, in some instances, have followed conviction in dedicated lawsuits, the δίκαι ἀγαμίου, κακογαμίου, and ὀψιγαμίου respectively, which are tentatively (ὡς ἔοικεν, *ibid*.) identified by Plutarch.[68]

These penalties for violating Spartan marriage law strongly suggest that similar penalties applied to *moichoi*, who violated Spartan marriages by having unapproved sex with other men's wives, or flouted the authority of the *kyrioi* of unmarried women. The ephors had the power to inflict summary fines on anyone for any reason (X. *Lac*. 8, 4),[69] so they might, if they wished, fine a *moichos* on their own initiative.

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[67] Cf. Pl. *Lg*. 774a1-c2.

[68] See MacDowell 1986, pp. 72-77; Manfredini, Piccirilli 2010, pp. 258-259; Angeli Bertinelli et alii 1997, p. 288. On the named lawsuits cf. Plu. *Mor*. 493e, *De amore prolis* 2; Aristo fr. 400 von Arnim, *SVF* 1.80 = Stob. 67, 16; Poll. 3, 48; 8, 40; Clem. Al. *Strom*. 2, 141. Plutarch uses δίκη in the general sense of "lawsuit," not the particular sense of "private lawsuit" that is applied to a category of lawsuits at Athens prosecutable only by the injured party (or, in the case of the δίκη φόνου, his relatives; see Phillips 2007, pp. 95-96). Even in cases where an individual injured party could be identified, the breach of these Spartan marriage laws harmed the procreative interests of the Spartan state, and any corresponding *dikai* must have been public lawsuits, prosecutable probably by any adult male Spartiate, at least to the extent of denunciation to the ephors. Plutarch appears to identify the case of the suitors of Lysander's (*PL* 504, *RE* 1) daughters, who dropped their suits when Lysander's death revealed his poverty, as an instance of κακογάμιον; the former suitors were fined by the ephors (Plu. *Mor*. 230a, *Ap. Lac*. Lysander 15; cf. Ael. *VH* 6, 4; 10, 15), acting presumably on their own authority (see below in the text) but not necessarily on their own initiative.

[69] ἔφοροι οὖν ἱκανοὶ μέν εἰσι ζημιοῦν ὃν ἂν βούλωνται, κύριοι δ᾽ ἐκπράττειν παραχρῆμα...ἤν τινα αἰσθάνωνται παρανομοῦντά τι, εὐθὺς παραχρῆμα κολάζουσι. «The ephors, then, are competent to fine anyone they wish, and they have the authority to exact payment on the spot. ... if they perceive that a person is committing some violation of the law, they punish him straightaway, on the spot.» «Anyone they wish» included Archidamus II (*PL* 157, *RE* 3, r. ?469-427), fined for marrying a short wife (Lampito, *PL* 474, *RE* 1: Plu. *Ages*. 2, 6; cf. Hdt. 6, 71, 2); E. Hruza posits this as a penalty for κακογάμιον (Hruza 1894, p. 147). (Εὐθὺς) παραχρῆμα indicates that this power belonged to individual ephors, not just the college as a whole, not all of whose members will normally have been present to witness an infraction. *Recte* MacDowell 1986, p. 130: the ephors' «competence to punish 'whoever they wish' gave them extraordinarily wide discretion: they could decide for themselves what conduct they wanted to punish, regardless of whether there was any law or general opinion about it.»

The individual ephors also possessed jurisdiction over ordinary lawsuits (Arist. *Pol*. 1275b9-11).[70] So if *moicheia* was justiciable at law (whether or not there was a specific δίκα μοιχείας), and if the penalty was limited to a fine, the lawsuit will presumably have been judged by an individual ephor. Cases deemed sufficiently serious may have come before the college of ephors (Arist. *Pol*. 1270b28-31).[71] But only the *gerousia* could impose a penalty of death, exile, or disfranchisement upon a Spartiate,[72] so if such a penalty was available and sought, that body must have tried the lawsuit.

To these potential processes at law we can add the possibility of self-help remedies. In various parts of the Greek world, a man who caught a *moichos in flagrante* with one of his female relatives had the power to punish the *moichos* on his own authority. These punishments might include detention for ransom;[73] physical abuse, including the

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[70] ἐν Λακεδαίμονι τὰς τῶν συμβολαίων [*scil*. δίκας] δικάζει τῶν ἐφόρων ἄλλος ἄλλας, οἱ δὲ γέροντες τὰς φονικάς, ἑτέρα δ᾽ ἴσως ἀρχή τις ἑτέρας. Cf. Plu. *Mor*. 221a-b, *Ap. Lac*. Eurycratidas (*PL* 325, r. c. 615-c. 590): the ephors judged such lawsuits every day (τὰ περὶ τῶν συμβολαίων δίκαια ἑκάστης ἡμέρας κρίνουσιν οἱ ἔφοροι), even in enemy territory (καὶ ἐν τοῖς πολεμίοις). In these passages, συμβόλαια cannot mean specifically and only "contracts" (LSJ[9] s.v. συμβόλαιον II.1) - how many contract lawsuits can we expect to have occurred daily in Sparta, let alone among Spartan soldiers on campaign? - but must mean "transactions" (*ibid*. II.2) in the broad sense, as at Isoc. 12, 144 (distinguishing between laws περὶ τῶν κοινῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων and περὶ τῶν ἰδίων συμβολαίων); D. 18, 210: lawsuits between individuals (τὰς...ἰδίας δίκας, here opposed to those concerning public policy: see Goodwin 1901, p. 149) deal with τὰ...τοῦ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν βίου συμβόλαια. Cf. Arist. *EN* 1130b33-1131a9, dividing συναλλάγματα, "obligations," into the voluntary (sale, purchase, loan, pledge, etc.) and the involuntary (theft, *moicheia*, battery, homicide, etc.). See Cope, Sandys 1877, vol. 1, pp. 16-17 (*ad* Arist. *Rh*. 1354b24-25); Susemihl, Hicks 1894, p. 359; MacDowell 1986, pp. 130-131.

[71] ἔτι δὲ καὶ κρίσεών εἰσὶ μεγάλων κύριοι [*scil*. οἱ ἔφοροι], ὄντες οἱ τυχόντες, διόπερ οὐκ αὐτογνώμονας βέλτιον κρίνειν ἀλλὰ κατὰ γράμματα καὶ τοὺς νόμους. «Moreover, they have authority over major cases, although they are ordinary men, for which reason it would be better if they judged not on the basis of their own opinion but according to written standards and the laws.» This freedom of judgment corresponds to that concerning the infliction of summary fines (*supra* with n. 69).

[72] X. *Lac*. 10, 2 (death); Arist. *Pol*. 1294b33-34 (death and exile); Plu. *Lyc*. 26, 2 (κύριον... καὶ θανάτου καὶ ἀτιμίας καὶ ὅλως τῶν μεγίστων); cf. D. 20, 107; Isoc. 12, 154; Plu. *Mor*. 217a-b, *Ap. Lac*. Anaxandridas 6. See MacDowell 1986, pp. 127-128; de Ste Croix 1972, pp. 131-138, 349-353.

[73] Athens: Lys. 1, 25; 29; [D.] 59, 41; 64-71; Call. Com. fr. 1 K-A; Cratin. fr. 81 K-A. Gortyn (the Great Code, c. 450): *ICret* IV 72 col. II vv. 16-45. Thebes: Heraclid. Crit. = [Dicaearch.] fr. 1.22 Müller, *GGM* 1.104, including Laon fr. 2 K-A (3th cent. BC). Cf. the case of Ares and Aphrodite, Hom. *Od*. 8, 266-369, *supra*, nn. 40, 63.

use of the infamous radish;[74] and even death.[75] We may safely assume that Spartiate captors were permitted at least to beat the *moichos*; those who beat each other for no reason as boys[76] will not have hesitated to do so for good reason as men.[77] Whether they might legally employ more severe self-help measures is largely a matter of pure conjecture. Certainly a helot *moichos* could be killed on the spot, for the ephors' annual declaration of war against the helots made them public enemies subject to death at the hands of any Spartiate, with or without specific cause.[78] Perioecic *moichoi* could be put to death by order of the ephors, who could execute without trial any *perioikos* they wished (ἔξεστι τοῖς ἐφόροις ἀκρίτους ἀποκτεῖναι τοσούτους ὁπόσους ἂν βουληθῶσιν,

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74 Ar. *Nu*. 1083-1084 with schol. (radishing and depilation of the genitals and buttocks), *Pl*. 168 (depilation) with schol. (radishing and depilation), *Th*. 536-538 (depilation), *Ach*. 849 (depilation); Hsch. s.vv. Λακιάδαι, ῥαφανιδωθῆναι (radishing; cf. Hsch. s.v. στειλέαν); *Suda* s.vv. ῥαφανιδωθῆναι καὶ τέφρᾳ τιλθῆναι, ϱ 55 Adler (radishing and depilation), ὦ Λακιάδαι, ω 62 Adler (radishing and axe handles, used in default of radishes); Zen. 73 Miller, *Mélanges* pp. 357-358, s.v. Πλακιάδαι [*sic*] καὶ στέλαιον = Posidipp. fr. 4 K-A (radishing and axe handles, 3th cent. BC); Philonid. fr. 7 K-A (depilation, 5th cent. BC); Pl. Com. fr. 189.22 K-A (5th-4th cent. BC) = Ath. 5d (scorpion fish): *A*. ...σκορπίος αὖ - *B*. παίσειέ γέ σου τὸν πρωκτὸν ὑπελθών. That the use of the radish extended beyond Athens is indicated by *AP* 9, 520 (Gow, Page 1965, anonymous epigram LX); Lucian, *Peregr*. 9; and perhaps D.L. 2, 128. At Gortyn, if the *moichos* was not ransomed within five days, his captors had the power to do with him whatever they wished (κρῆθαι ὅπαι κα λείοντι, *ICret* IV 72 col. II vv. 35-36).

75 Athens: D. 23, 53 (*lex*); [Arist.] *Ath. Pol*. 57, 3; Xenarch. fr. 4.22-24 K-A (4th cent. BC); Men. fr. 267 K-A. Gortyn: see the preceding note *ad fin*. Megalopolis and elsewhere: Plb. 2, 56, 15 (stating as a self-evident general rule that the killer of a thief or *moichos* goes unpunished, προφανῶς ὁ...τὸν κλέπτην ἢ μοιχὸν ἀποκτείνας ἀθῷός ἐστιν). Alexandria, at least: Ph. *Ioseph*. 44 (Joseph asserts the universal right of the captor to kill the *moichos*, μόνον τοῦθ᾽ ὁμογνωμονοῦντες πανταχοῦ πάντες ἄξιον θανάτων μυρίων ἐνόμισαν ἀκρίτους ἐκδιδόντες τοὺς ἁλόντας τοῖς πεφωρακόσι); cf. Lys. 1, 2. Tenedos, possibly: Arist. fr. 593 Rose = fr. 610.1 Gigon (a king of Tenedos enacted a law requiring or empowering the captor to kill both the *moichos* and his paramour with an axe, βασιλεύς τις ἐν Τενέδῳ νόμον ἔθηκε τὸν καταλαμβάνοντα μοιχοὺς ἀναιρεῖν πελέκει ἀμφοτέρους (St. Byz. s.v. Τένεδος)). Similarly Phot. s.v. Τενέδιος ξυνήγορος (= Arist. fr. 610.2 Gigon); cf. Apostol. 16, 26 (= Arist. fr. 610.3 Gigon). Heraclid. Lemb. fr. 24 Dilts (= Heraclid. Pont. [*sic*] fr. VII.3 Müller, *FHG* 2.213-214 = Arist. fr. tit. 143.1, no. 7 Gigon) applies the rule to the *moichos* alone; cf. Diogenian. 8, 58; Macar. 8, 7. Regarding X. *Hier.* 3, 3 see below in the text.

76 X. *Lac*. 4, 6: Spartan boys «box out of pure contention wherever they meet» (πυκτεύουσι διὰ τὴν ἔριν ὅπου ἂν συμβάλωσι).

77 Cf. X. *Lac*. 9, 5: cowards who go about looking cheerful or otherwise acting like men who are not under stigma are beaten by their betters (πληγὰς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀμεινόνων ληπτέον).

78 Plu. *Lyc*. 28, 7 = Arist. fr. 538 Rose = fr. 543 Gigon; MacDowell 1986, pp. 36-37. There is a probable (but unilluminating) reference to helot *moicheia* in Eup. fr. 148 K-A, on which see Olson 2016, pp. 15-19.

Isoc. 12, 181); so even if a Spartiate captor was not legally entitled to kill, he could execute a summary arrest, hale the offender before the ephors, and have them do it.

We have no reliable means to judge whether the captor's license to kill extended to Spartiate *moichoi*. Such a right was widespread, but not universal, in the Greek world (*supra*, n. 75); and Xenophon, who knew as much about Sparta as any foreigner did, has Hiero I of Syracuse (r. 478-466) assert that «many cities practice [i.e., permit by law or custom] the killing with impunity of *moichoi* alone» (μόνους...τοὺς μοιχοὺς νομίζουσι πολλαὶ τῶν πόλεων νηποινεὶ ἀποκτείνειν, *Hier*. 3, 3). It might be argued that Xenophon would not have Hiero proffer this statement in part proof of his argument that friendship is a most great and pleasurable good (ἡ φιλία μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἥδιστον ἀνθρώποις ἐστί, *ibid*.) if the "many cities" that permitted self-help killing did not include Sparta. On the contrary, though, the numerous and great differences between Sparta and the rest of the Greek world (see, e.g., X. *Lac*. 1, 2)[79] might militate against such an interpretation. But we return to firmer ground in regard to the case where a captor killed illegally, either because he lacked the legal authority to do so, or because he lied about the circumstances of capture and had not in fact apprehended his victim in the act of *moicheia*. Lawsuits for homicide fell under the jurisdiction of the Council of Elders (Arist. *Pol*. 1275b9-11, n. 70 *supra*), and the penalty upon conviction was almost certainly death or exile.[80] Thus such a killer might suffer the fate of

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[79] Lycurgus caused Sparta to excel in prosperity not by imitating the rest of the cities of Greece, but by contradicting most of them (οὐ μιμησάμενος τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐναντία γνοὺς ταῖς πλείσταις).

[80] X. *An*. 4, 8, 25: the Spartiate Dracontius (*PL* 250) ἔφυγε παῖς ὢν οἴκοθεν, παῖδα ἄκων κατακανὼν ξυήλη πατάξας, «had fled/been exiled from his home as a boy, having unintentionally killed another boy by striking him with a whittle» (i.e., a "curved knife used in shaping a javelin," LSJ[9] s.v. ξυήλη; cf. X. *Cyr*. 6, 2, 32; *An*. 4, 7, 16). The penalty for homicide here attested depends on the meaning of ἔφυγε and ἄκων. (1) If ἔφυγε refers to the sentence of the court, we have evidence for exile as a penalty for (at least unintentional: see below) homicide. If it refers to Dracontius' flight in advance of prosecution, verdict, or sentencing, we have evidence for death as a penalty for (at least intentional: see below) homicide. (2) If ἄκων represents the judgment of the court, we have evidence for exile as a penalty for unintentional homicide. But if it merely expresses the point of view of Dracontius and Xenophon (Dracontius meant to strike but did not mean to kill), then Dracontius fled voluntarily, in order to avoid sentence of death. This leads to one of two conclusions. (1) If the actual or expected charge was unintentional homicide, the penalty for that offense was death. If this was the case, then death was also, *a fortiori*, the penalty for intentional homicide, and Sparta had a strict-liability homicide law, as in Homer (e.g.,

the hero Hyettus, who caught Molurus in bed with his wife, killed him on the spot, and in consequence had to flee Argos (Ὕηττος δὲ Μόλουρον Ἀρίσβαντος φίλον υἱὸν/κτείνας ἐν μεγάροις εὐνῆς ἕνεχ᾽ ἧς ἀλόχοιο,/οἶκον ἀποπρολιπὼν φεῦγ᾽ Ἄργεος ἱπποβότοιο, ?Hes. *Megalae Ehoeae* fr. 257.1-3 M-W = fr. 15.1-3 Hirschberger = Paus. 9, 36, 7). And so I conclude this series of speculations about the Spartan law of *moicheia*, and with it this paper, on a welcome note of at least relative certainty.

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the case of Patroclus, *Il*. 23, 85-90, who fled Opus to avoid being killed in retaliation, even though he had killed the son of Amphidamas «as a child, without intent, in anger over a game of dice» (νήπιος, οὐκ ἐθέλων, ἀμφ᾽ ἀστραγάλοισι χολωθείς). For the Homeric rule of exile, compensation, or death, cf. *Il*. 9, 632-636; *Od*. 3, 193-198; 23, 118-120. Acceptance of compensation was not mandatory: *Il*. 18, 497-508. Strict liability for homicide is the rule in Hesiodic epic as well: see below in the text.). (2) If, however, the actual or expected charge was intentional homicide, then death was the penalty for intentional homicide, but not necessarily for unintentional homicide, and the homicide law of Sparta categorized the killer's intent in a manner similar to Athenian homicide law, in which the distinction between intentional and unintentional homicide rested upon the killer's intent to harm (not necessarily kill): see Phillips 2013, pp. 45-46.

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The sacred system of Sparta

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Key words: Spartan religion, Athena *Chalkioikos*, Apollo, Hyakinthos, Dioskouroi, Taras.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Σπαρτιατική θρησκεία, Ἀθηνᾶ Χαλκίοικος, Απόλλων, Υακίνθιος, Διόσκοροι, Τάρας.

Abstract:

The article analyses the sacred system of Sparta, by investigating the worshipped divinities and the corresponding divine precincts, with the view of analysing their influence over the internal cultural and socio-political organisation of the *polis* as well as of examining the external relations with other city-states, notably the colonies. After a general discussion on the many cult areas attested inside and around Sparta, attention will be paid to the sanctuaries of the Acropolis and of the *chora* and to the enucleation of the Laconian features marking the ritual actions performed for Athena, Apollo and the Dioskouroi. Finally, the impact of the sacred system on the international Spartan network will be addressed. The scope of this contribution is to provide a first overall picture of the Spartan religious structure, in the attempt to rationalize and examine the elements of the documentation hitherto available.

Το άρθρο αναλύει το ιερό σύστημα της Σπάρτης, διερευνώντας τις λατρευόμενες θεότητες και τους αντίστοιχους θεϊκούς περιβόλους, με σκοπό να αναλύσει την επιρροή τους στην εσωτερική πολιτιστική και κοινωνικοπολιτική οργάνωση της πόλης, καθώς και να εξετάσει τις

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εξωτερικές σχέσεις με άλλες πόλεις-κράτη, ιδίως τις αποικίες. Μετά από μια γενική συζήτηση σχετικά με τους πολλούς λατρευτικούς χώρους που μαρτυρούνται εντός και γύρω από τη Σπάρτη, θα δοθεί προσοχή στα ιερά της Ακρόπολης και της χώρας και στον εγκιβωτισμό των λακωνικών χαρακτηριστικών που σηματοδοτούν τις τελετουργικές πράξεις που τελούνταν για την Αθηνά, τον Απόλλωνα και τους Διόσκουρους. Τέλος, θα εξεταστεί η επίδραση του ιερού συστήματος στο διεθνές σπαρτιατικό δίκτυο. Σκοπός της παρούσας συμβολής είναι να δώσει μια πρώτη συνολική εικόνα της σπαρτιατικής θρησκευτικής δομής, στην προσπάθεια εξορθολογισμού και εξέτασης των στοιχείων της μέχρι σήμερα διαθέσιμης τεκμηρίωσης.

The Spartan pantheon

The rich, articulated and multi-layered Spartan pantheon[1] acts as a privileged observatory to explore and appreciate the complexity of a coherent religious system of a Greek city-State which has been hitherto less investigated than other Hellenic *poleis* such as Athens. The Spartan sacred cosmos provides indeed an exhaustive view on the multifaceted nature of ancient cults and on their impact on the internal civic and cultural life of an ancient urban community as well as its external contacts.

The scope of this contribution is to provide an overall picture of the Spartan sacred system, in the attempt to rationalize and systematically examine the elements of the documentation hitherto available. In this regard, the archaeological finds pertaining to the Laconian *polis* are scattered and therefore need to be integrated with the information deriving from the written sources.

As far as expressive verbal and visual languages, rituals, shrines' architecture and spatial arrangement are concerned, the Spartan sacred system shares many common aspects with the religious patterns documented in other antique Greek cities, where divine presence is notoriously all-encompassing in human life. Nevertheless, Sparta's divine universe appears marked by certain peculiar features that, under many respects, make it a unicum in the ancient Hellenic scenario.

In primis, a special attention is paid to youth education, as well as the military and everyday activities of the adults. In Sparta, the patronage over these spheres of actions belongs to superhuman entities – gods,

[1] Parker 1989.

semi-gods, heroes and *pathemata* – who ensure the correct and smooth running of the socio-political life of the urban collectiveness. Although the boundaries from one category to another one are extremely flexible and hard-to-trace, the *polis* offers, on the whole, a wide-ranging portrait of the known typologies of superhuman beings.

Besides the central role kept by the canonical Olympic gods Zeus, Athena, Apollo and Artemis, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Demeter and Kore, Poseidon, Hestia, Hermes, Enyalios/Ares,[2] further honoured deities in Sparta are the Dioskouroi, Asclepius, Tyche, Ge.[3]

In addition to the traditional gods, the semi-divine beings Herakles, Eileithyia, the Muses and the Moirai, the Charites and the Nymphs are also recipients of ritual actions. Moreover, Sparta is also renowned for the cult paid to the *pathemata*,[4] personifications of abstract concepts and feelings – namely Phobos ("the fear"),[5] Aidos ("the modesty"),[6] Hypnos ("the sleep"),[7] Thanatos ("the death"),[8] Gelos ("the laughter"),[9] Eros ("the love"),[10] Limos ("the hunger") – and to a plethora of heroic cults,[11] including Helen[12] and Menelaus, Orestes, Agamemnon and Alexandra/Kassandra, Astrabakos, Hyakynthos, Achilles,[13] the Leucippides, Tyndareus, the heroized lawgiver Lycurgus,[14] and further key-figures who played a remarkable political or military role in the mythical or historical past of the *polis*[15] – as it is going to be illustrated in the contribution by Stefania Golino.

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2 Enyalios is the god of violent war, sometimes identified with Ares and sometimes believed to be his son. The differentiation between Enylaios and Ares (whose name is sometimes accompanied by the epiclesis *Enylaios*) occurred in the post-Homeric period; Davidson 1983, pp. 192-198.

3 Nafissi 2016.

4 Richer 2012, pp. 48-51; Shapiro 1993.

5 Plu. *Cleom.* 9, 1.

6 Paus. 3, 20, 10-11.

7 Paus. 3, 18, 1.

8 Plu. *Cleom.* 9, 1; Paus. 3, 18, 1.

9 Plu. *Cleom.* 9, 1.

10 Paus. 3, 26, 5.

11 Golino 2021; Greco 2014, pp. 51-56. Tosti 2011, pp. 95-108.

12 Swift 2009, pp. 418-438; Zweig 1999, pp. 158-180; Calame 1977, pp. 335-350.

13 Richer 2012, p. 25; Stibbe 2002, pp. 207-219.

14 Paus. 3, 16, 6.

15 Powell 2018, p. 184; Bremmer 1997, pp. 9-17; Flower 1988, pp. 123-134.

The several divinities are venerated through various epithets depending on their field of competence, often concerned with the formation of the young Spartans, the military activities as well as the daily life of common men and women. For instance, Athena is referred to as *Skyllania* in the most ancient source (700 BC) attesting her cult in Sparta,[16] *Agoraia* ("patroness of the *agora*"),[17] *Xenia* ("protectress of the foreigners"),[18] *Amboulia* ("counsellor"),[19] *Poliouchos* ("patroness of the city"), *Chalkioikos* ("of the bronze house"), *Ergane* ("patron of the arisans"), *Ophtalmitis* ("of the eye"), *Axiopoinos* ("of deserved revenge").

As other ancient Greek communities, Spartans created and corroborated their civic identity through the recognition of shared cults and the performance of periodical collective rituals aimed to strengthen the social bonds among the participants, to express their political vision and to promote a sense of unity, cohesion and belonging.[20]

And again like elsewhere in Greece, the most suitable setting to carry out public acts of worship is identified by the Spartan community with the sanctuary, a consciously circumscribed area permanently assigned to the implementation of rituals fostering the interaction between mortals and immortals and dedicated to a specific superhuman being, typically a god, who is his official owner, although often accompanied by a plethora of minor deities and heroes.

Coherently, Sparta gradually equipped itself with a remarkably extended range of sacred spaces, whose monumentalization went hand in hand with the formation of the *polis*' internal and external polity.[21] Such spaces fall in the categories of urban, sub-urban and extra-urban sanctuaries and are variously attested by ancient authors and epigraphic sources and, to a lesser extent, by architectural remains and archaeological records.

Some of the Spartan urban *temene* were located at the hearth of the city (fig. 1), such as the shrine consecrated to Athena *Chalkioikos* and

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16 The text, dated back to the age of Lycurgus, has been handed down by Plutarch (Plut. *Lyc*. 6, 2 and 8).

17 Paus. 3, 11, 9.

18 Paus. 3, 11, 11.

19 Paus. 3, 13, 6.

20 Kõiv 2015, p. 27.

21 Cavanagh 2018, pp. 67-74; Frangkopoulou 2011; Cavanagh, Walker 1998.

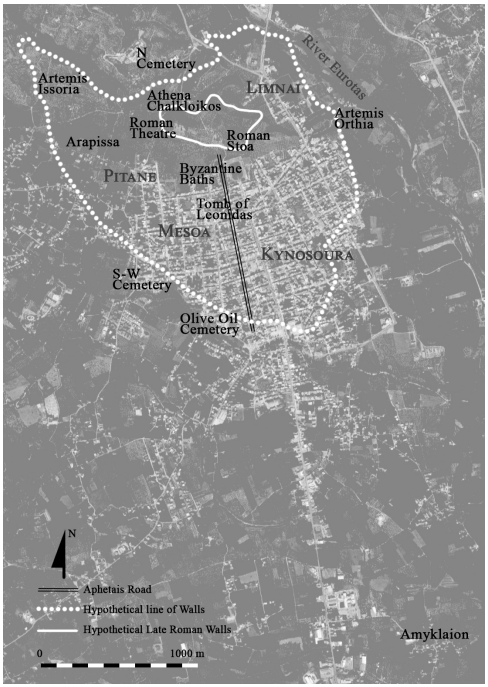

Fig. 1. Sparta, general plan by C. Lamanna.

Poliouchos on the Acropolis, marked by a polyadic significance, holding a primary position in guaranteeing and protecting its civic body. The Hill and its slopes hosted a wide, heterogeneous and composite range of divine and semi-divine beings – among which Zeus, the Muses, Aphrodite, Poseidon, Artemis, the Dioskouroi, Herakles, Tyndareus, Thanathos and Hypnos – as we shall analyse hereafter (fig. 2).

Approximately 800 m south-east of the orchestra of the theatre, a sanctuary dedicated to Poseidon *Tainarios* ("of Cape Tainaron"),[22] was located; the shrine was reduplicated in an extra-urban location at Cape Tainaron/Matapan.

In the *agora*, Apollo *Pythaeus*, Artemis and Leto were venerated (their statues were the addressee of cult actions); other cults of the

[22] The sanctuary of Poseidon Tainarios is mentioned by Pausanias (Paus. 3, 12, 5). A series of corresponding inscriptions (*IG* V 1, 210, 211 and 212) contributed to the localisation of the exact spot where the shrine stood; Kourinou 2000, pp. 185-194.

Fig. 2. Sparta, outline of urban cult areas (graphic elaboration based on Google earth, by G. Vannucci).

district included Zeus *Agoraios*, Athena *Agoraia* and Poseidon *Asphalios* ("Securer"), Ge, the Moirai,[23] Hermes with child-Dionysus and Hestia.

Next to and around the *dromos* we find: Apollo *Karneios*, Herakles, Artemis *Hegemone* ("the queen", "the leader", maybe "who leads the marriage procession or chorus"), Eileithyia, Athena *Axiopoinos*, the Dioscuri *Apheterioi* ("the starters"), the Charites, Poseidon *Domatitis* ("of the house") and Asclepios *Agnitas* ("whose *xoanon* is made out of agnus wood").[24]

Further sacred areas played a part in defining the borders of the city and/or expressing its control over the surrounding region. The *polis*, although lacking an encircling defensive wall until the Hellenistic age, was guarded on all sides by her gods. In fact, from the 8th cent. BC, the internal area inhabited by the citizens appears virtually encircled by a sacred boundary – a sort of *pomerium* states P. Cartledge[25] – composed by a series of sanctuaries[26] that, often settled on more ancient cult districts, delimited the extension of the settlement, articulated the relation between the urban centre and its countryside and established its domination over the surrounding territory through their sub-urban or extra-urban location.[27]

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23 Paus. 3, 11, 9-10.

24 Paus. 3, 14, 6-7.

25 Cartledge 1998, p. 44.

26 Kõiv 2015, p. 29.

27 Richer 2012, p. 201.

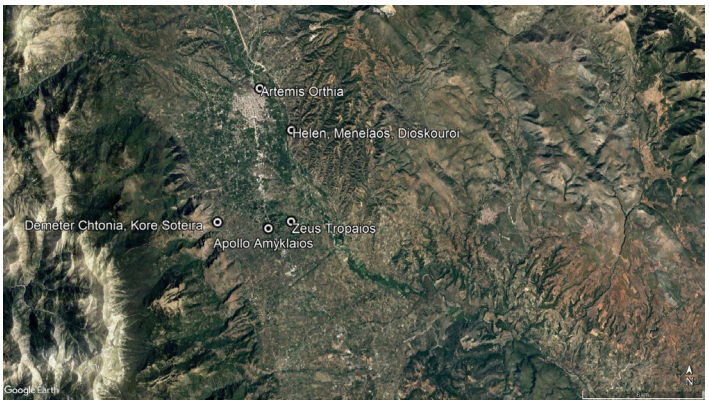

Fig. 3. Sparta, outline of sub-urban cult areas (graphic elaboration based on Google earth, by G. Vannucci).

Fig. 4. Sparta, outline of extra-urban sacred areas (graphic elaboration based on Google earth, by G. Vannucci).

Among the sub-urban *temene* (fig. 3): the area of Artemis *Orthia*, at the eastern edge of the city, on the west bank of the river Eurotas; that of Helen and Menelaos at Therapne, south-east of city, on a hill on the eastern bank of the Eurotas, where the Dioskouroi, Helen's brothers, were said to live under the earth (Castor and Pollux were also venerated in the *Phoibaion* located below the *Menelaion* itself);[28] the *Eleusinion* dedicated to Demeter *Chtonia* ("subterranean") and Kore *Soteira* ("Saviour"), south-west of the city, at the foot of Mount Taigetos; that of that of Zeus *Tropaios* ("who turns the armies", "who brings the military victory") at the southern limit of the settlement; and above

[28] Paus. 3, 12, 9.

all the *Amyklaion* reflecting the conquest of Amyklai in the middle of the Laconian strategic plain south of the city, whose achievement was further stressed by a Sacred Way, namely the Aphetaïs.

Still other sanctuaries, with an extra-urban location, acted as territorial markers, declaring the Spartan dominion of the region (fig. 4). This category includes: the extra-urban sanctuary of Artemis *Limnatis* at Volimnos, north-west of Sparta, at the western foothills of the Mount Taigetos,[29] on the border between Laconia and Messenia; that of Zeus *Messapeus* at Tsakona, north-east of the city;[30] that of Achilles, north of the city, on the way towards Arcadia;[31] that of Poseidon *Tainareos*, at Cape Tainaron/Matapan, south-west of the *polis*;[32] that of Apollo *Hyperteleatas* at Phoiniki,[33] south-east of the settlement, on the Parnon massif.

The cults of the Acropolis

The polyadic sanctuary of Athena *Poliouchos*,[34] the tutelary goddess of the city, also known with the epithet *Chalkioikos* deriving from the bronze panels affixed to the interior walls of the temple – or alternatively, cause of her "stability" or because it was founded by Calchidian exiles –[35] was situated on the Acropolis,[36] i.e. on the Palaiokastro hill.

The Acropolis is not the solely place of cult of Athena in Sparta: as already mentioned, next to the *dromos* there was a shrine of Athena

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29 Koursoumis 2014, pp. 191-222.

30 Catling 1990, pp. 15-35.

31 Paus. 3, 18, 1. See also: Richer 2012, p. 25; Hooker 1980, p. 51.

32 Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. Ταίναρον.

33 Stibbe 2008, pp. 17-45.

34 Christesen 2019, p. 9.

35 Suidas, *Lexicon*, s.v. *Chalcioecus*, explains as follows: «The Athena in Sparta; either because she has a brazen house; or on account of her (its?) stability; or because it was founded by Chalcidian exiles from Euboea». The earliest writer using the name is Thucydides (Thu. 1, 134). In the Damonon inscription on the other hand, which must be dated before 430 BC, Athena is called *Poliouchos* or "Guardian of the City", a title which has a much older sound, and is given by Pausanias as an alternative; Christensen 2019.

36 Paus. 3, 17, 2. Athena *Chalkioikos* is referred to in two brief fragments of Alkman (fr. 43 Page-Davies = 43 Calame and fr. 87 (c) Page-Davies = 112 Calame: references to her cult in Calame 1983, pp. 506-508).

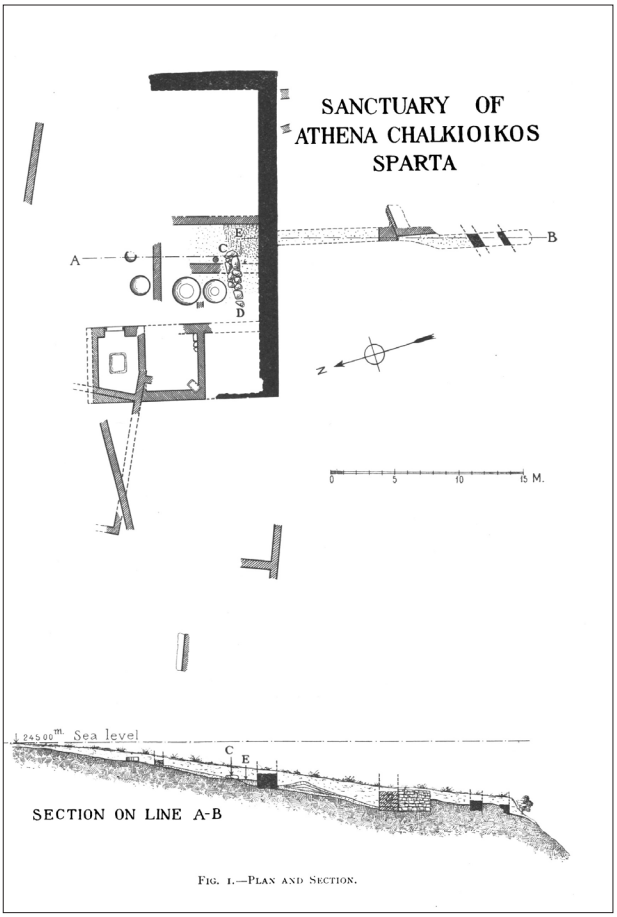

Fig. 5. Sparta, sanctuary of Athena *Chalkioikos*, general plan (© BSA; Dickins 1907).

Axiopoinos[37] and in the *agora* cult was paid to Athena *Xenia* and Athena *Agoraia*.

The cult of the polyadic Athena on the Acropolis (fig. 5)[38] dates back to the post-Dark Age period, as inferable from the archaeological findings recording the most ancient ritual activities. The construction of a first temple is supposedly attributed to the mythical Spartan king

37 Paus. 3, 15, 6.

38 Spallino 2016, pp. 695-710; Piccirilli 1984, pp. 3-19; Woodward 1930, pp. 241-254; Lamb 1927, pp. 82-95; Woodward 1928, pp. 75-107; Woodward 1927, pp. 37-48; Woodward 1925, pp. 253-276; Woodward, Hobling 1925, pp. 240-252; Dickins 1908, pp. 142-146; Dickins 1907, pp. 137-154; Dickins 1906, pp. 431-439.

Tyndareus, that left it unfinished.[39]Architectural traces of a *neos* date back to the 7th cent. BC.[40] Subsequently, in the last quarter of 6th cent., a new edifice was built, with walls panelled with the mentioned bronze reliefs and accordingly known as the "Bronze House". The structure was made out of limestone and its poorly preserved foundations indicate an edifice of limited dimensions.[41]

On the bronze plaques, besides the birth of Athena,[42] images of gorgons, of Amphitrite and Poseidon, of the rape of the Leukippides, of Hephaestus releasing his mother from the fetters, of Nymphs bestowing upon Perseus and of the labours of Heracles were wrought in relief, thus confirming the plurality of cults often marking Spartan shrines on which we shall return after a while.

The peculiar and sophisticated technique of covering the interior of the edifice with bronze plaques, some of which recovered during the archaeological excavations and in some cases showing a *gorgoneion*, testifies the leading role of Sparta in the diffusion of this architectural decorative style and artistic language at an international level, noticeably in its colonies. In fact, bronze panels reproducing *gorgoneia* have been discovered at Cyrene, in relation to the temple of Zeus;[43] exactly the same type of *gorgoneion* has been also found at Taras,[44] on a clay acroterion.[45]

Besides the temple, the *temenos* was provided with a rectangular peribolos enclosure erected in the archaic period and preserved in its southern and eastern arm (fig. 6),[46] an altar, whose first erection dates to the 7th cent. BC,[47] and two porches documented by literary sources, i.e. a southern *stoa* and a western one, the latter being decorated with eagles surmounted by Nikai, offered by Lysander to celebrate the victory over the Athenians in the Peloponnesian war.[48]

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39 Paus. 3, 17, 2.

40 Dickins 1908, pp. 142-146.

41 Flower 2018, p. 431.

42 Paus. 3, 17, 3.

43 Kane 2006, pp. 205-216.

44 On the Spartan foundation of Taras: Brauer 1986; Musti 1988, pp. 151-172; Leschhorn 1984; Giannelli 1963, pp. 15-27; Bérard 1957, pp. 162-175; Wuilleumier 1939, p. 9-33.

45 Gagliano 2017, p. 89.

46 Dickins 1907, p. 144.

47 Dickins 1907, p. 145.

48 Paus. 3, 17, 4. See also Gagliano 2017, p. 83.

Fig. 6. Sparta, sanctuary of Athena *Chalkioikos*, peribolos wall, 6th cent. BC (© BSA; Dickins 1907).

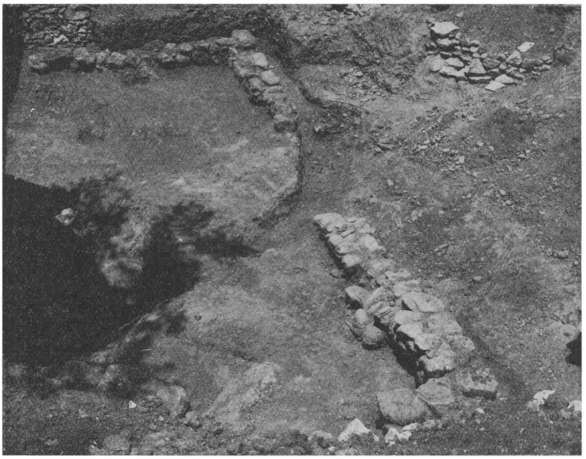

Fig. 7. Sparta, Acropolis, foundations the shrine south of the temenos of Athena *Chalkioikos*, 7th cent. BC (© BSA; Woodward 1927).

Traces of a minor temple (fig. 7) have been brought to light too, partially covered by the Augustan age theatre.[49] This edifice, probably dedicated to Athena and located ca 13 m south of the peribolos wall, was erected in the 7th cent. BC on an artificial terrace on the southern slopes of the Acropolis and was destroyed by a fire during the 5th cent. BC (fig. 8).[50] All the dedications recovered on the spot bear no dedication to any deity but Athena and therefore we must assume

[49] Spallino 2016, pp. 488-489; Woodward 1927, pp. 41-43.

[50] Woodward 1927, pp. 42-43.

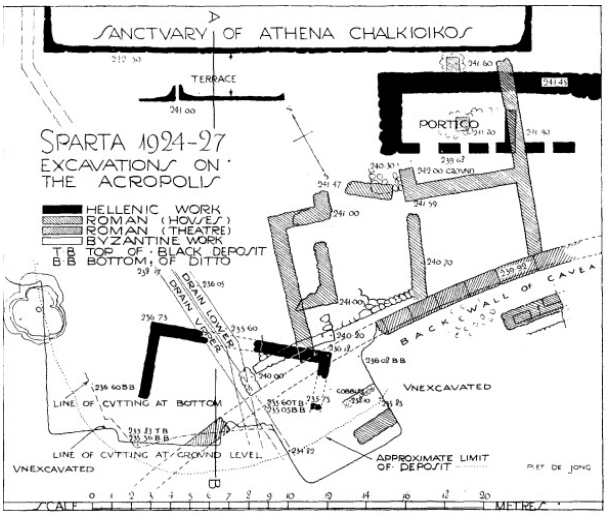

Fig. 8. Sparta, Acropolis, plan of the shrine south of the *temenos* of Athena *Chalkioikos*, 7th cent. BC (Gagliano 2017).

that the construction was a subsidiary shrine of that goddess,[51] maybe praised as *Ergane* or *Ophtalmitis*.

The sacred area served a plurality of functions, variously connected with the socio-political and military life of the city.

The sanctuary was a famous place of asylum. Lycurgus himself fled and took refuge in the precinct after having caused the rage of the rich, due to the introduction of his reforms,[52] and also Leonidas did likewise.[53] Again, Pausanias the regent, accused of alleged correspondence with the king of Persia,[54] sought refuge in the sanctuary as a suppliant around 470 BC and was walled up there, before being dragged out just before death.[55] Later on, also Agesilaos claimed asylum in the *Athenaion*, to no avail.

Military victories were celebrated in the sacred area. Besides the mentioned offers dedicated by Lysander, two statues of the regent

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51 Woodward 1927, p. 43.

52 Plu. *Lyc*. 11, 1-2; Plu. *Mor*. 227a.

53 Plu. *Agis* 11, 8.

54 Thu. 1, 128-129 and 132-133.

55 Eventually Pausanias was rehabilitated as the avenger of his uncle Leonidas. And in fact, in the following decades, his corpse was reburied in the place where he had died. Two bronze statues were dedicated in the sacred precinct by order of Delphi; Powell 2018, p. 285.

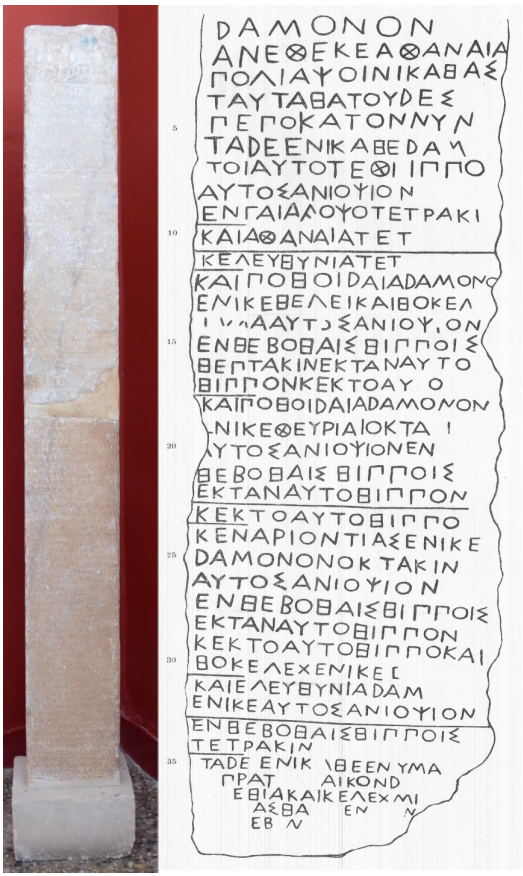

Fig. 9. Damonon stele, 5th cent. BC, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta (Christesen 2019).

Pausanias, victor at Plateia (479 BC), were erected beside the altar upon order of the oracle of Delphi.[56]

In addition to military achievements, also agonistic victories were publicly flaunted in the *temenos*, as documented, for instance, by the Damonon stele (fig. 9) recording the victories that two Lakedaimonians, Damonon and his son Enymakratidas, won in the late 5th cent. BC in equestrian contests and footraces at nine different local festivals.[57]

[56] Paus. 3, 17, 7; Th. 1, 134, 4.

[57] Christesen 2019, p. 1.

Honorary acts, starting from *proxenia* decrees, were displayed in the sanctuary, too – as it can be elicited by a 2nd cent. BC inscription containing a *proxenia* decree for Carneades of Cyrene.[58]

Coming back to the issue of the plurality of cults, given that Spartan sacred areas are often inhabited by numerous superhuman beings, the Bronze House of the goddess was flanked by a shrine of the Muses to the left[59] and a bronze statue of Zeus *Hypatos* ("the highest") to the right.[60] Moreover, her altar was surrounded by statues, among which those of Aphrodite *Ambologera* ("who delays the old age") and of the *pathemata* Thanathos and Hypnos.[61] In addition, on the Hill, on its slopes and on its close surroundings, also the following divine and semi-divine entities were the addressees of specific rituals: Aphrodite *Areia*, owner of a *neos* on the Acropolis, not far from that of Athena;[62] Poseidon, whose cult place was next to the later Roman theatre on the southern side of the cliff;[63] Zeus *Cosmetas* ("the orderer"), owner of a temple mentioned by ancient sources,[64] located close to the tomb of Tyndareus; the Dioskouroi, should the proposal to refer to the Acropolis a relief depicting Castor and Pollux with Athena proved to be correct.[65] Several clues may additionally suggest the possible presence of the cult of Artemis in a secondary position, maybe limited to the ritual realm: Among the findings, in fact, statuettes of Artemis, clad in a skin with a dog by her side (that have also been found near the *Orthia* Sanctuary)[66] have been discovered.[67]

Somewhere in Acropolis district also stood a temple of Athena *Ergane*[68] and of Athena *Ophthalmitis*, commissioned by Lycurgus to commemorate his loss of an eye during an assault by Alkandros, a

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58 *IG* V 1, 5, 15 (… εἰς τ[ὸ] / [ἰ]ερὸν τᾶς Ἀθάνας τᾶς Χαλκιοίκου…). See also Lo Monaco 2009, pp. 673-674.

59 Paus. 3, 17, 5.

60 Paus. 3, 17, 6.

61 Paus. 3, 18, 1.

62 Paus. 3, 17, 5.

63 Paus. 3, 15, 10.

64 Paus. 3, 17, 4.

65 Gagliano 2017.

66 Dickins 1907, p. 145.

67 The Acropolis has also produced a bronze poppy head, that were especially associated with Artemis in the central Peloponnese; Lamb 1927.

68 Paus. 3, 17, 4.

young aristocrat who revolted against his laws.[69] Maybe one of the corresponding shrines can be identified with the mentioned minor temple south of the peribolos wall on the Acropolis.

Question arises on how this plurality of gods, semi-gods, heroes and *pathemata* interacted, what were the pertaining target audiences and ritual actions. The connections between the goddess owner of the sacred district and the other gods and heroes here worshipped is not always easily comprehensible or, rather, becomes understandable only if the peculiar Spartan environment is duly considered.

For instance, if the link between the polyadic Athena and his father Zeus is a quite widespread phenomenon throughout the whole Greek panorama (see for example the Athenian Acropolis), the roots of the association with the military Aphrodite are apparently more obscure instead.

On the Acropolis, the patron goddess is concerned with her polyadic role, but, on the whole, her cult is distinguished by a polysemantic significance. Athena emerges as the protector of the productive activities of metalworkers and, in general, of artisans, and she is strictly involved in the military sphere – this last aspect is here partially shared with Aphrodite.

The Bronze House hosted a cult statue depicting a warrior Athena with spear and shield, as it can be inferred, *inter alia*, from its reproduction on imperial coins issued on the 3rd cent. AD portraying the Archaic simulacrum[70] made by the famous sculptor and bronzesmith Gitiades (late 6th cent. BC), mentioned twice in Pausanias' Periegesis.[71]

The goddess Athena was probably worshipped as *Promachos*, indeed. An archaic marble statue of Athena *Promachos* ("who fights in front"), with an Amazonomachy depicted on her shield, is documented by several fragments recovered from the Acropolis.[72]

Moreover, among the findings, several bronze statuettes of the warrior Athena have been found. In the 1907, a bronze figurine of the *Promachos* came to light (fig. 10).[73] The figurine of the goddess, 12 cm

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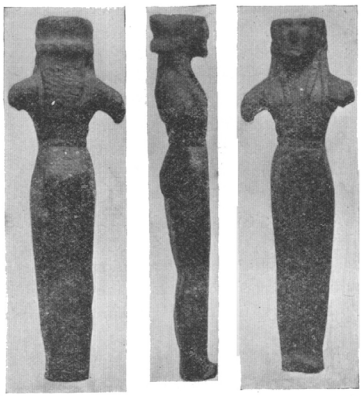
69 Paus. 3, 18, 2.

70 Grunauer von Hoerschelmann 1978, LVI R 6; LVII R 1-6; LX R 5.

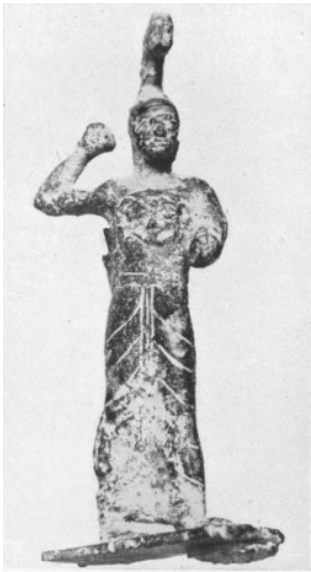
71 Paus. 3, 17, 2.

72 Palagia 1993, pp. 167-175.

73 Dickens 1907, pp. 147-149.



(above) Fig. 10. Bronze statuette of Athena *Promachos*, 6th cent. BC (© BSA; Dickins 1907).



(on the right) Fig. 11. Bronze statuette of Athena *Promachos*, beginning of 5th cent. BC (© BSA; Lamb 1927).

tall and dating back to the Archaic period, stands upright, wearing a helmet and having the legs close together and the arms stretched out wards, probably holding a spear and a shield. It possibly reiterates the pose and gesture of the cult statue by Gitiades kept inside the temple.

Later on, in 1927, another bronze statuette of Athena *Promachos* has been identified (fig. 11). 9 cm tall, dating to the early 5th cent. BC, she wears a high helmet (from beneath which her hair seems to fall in a straight mass cut square at the base), a chiton with a *gorgoneion* on her breast; her right hand originally held a spear, her left a shield.[74]

At the end of the century, another similar bronze statuette, 14 cm tall, was produced (fig. 12), wearing a heavy peplos and provided with a helmet inscribed with the name of the goddess (fig. 13).[75]

The festivals of the *Promacheia* are documented by Sosibos, who states that: «In this festival the boys from the countryside [i.e. boys who were *perioikoi*] are crowned with wreaths of reeds or with a tiara, but the boys from the *agōgē* [i.e., who are participating in the system of education for Spartan youths] follow without wreaths».[76]

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74 Lamb 1927, pp. 85-86.

75 Lamb 1927, p. 87.

76 Sosibios *FGrH* 595 F 4, cited by Athenaeus 674a-b.

(on the left) Fig. 12. Bronze statuette of Athena *Promachos*, end of 5th cent. BC (© BSA; Lamb 1927).

(above) Fig. 13. Detail of the inscription incised over the helmet of the bronze statuette Athena *Promachos*, end of 5th cent. BC (© BSA; Lamb 1927).

The connection between Athena *Chalkioikos* and the military field is further testified by the information, delivered by Polybius, about the murder of the ephors occurred in 220 BC while they were engaged in performing a traditional sacrifice on the altar in front of the Bronze House.[77] The author states that, during this ancestral celebration, all the citizens of military age proceeded armed in a procession towards the temple of Athena of the Bronze House, while the ephors remained

[77] Plb. 4, 35: «The party, however, at Sparta who were the original instigators of the outbreak could not make up their minds to give way. They once more therefore determined to commit a crime of the most impious description, having first corrupted some of the younger men. It was an ancestral custom that, at a certain sacrifice, all citizens of military age should join fully armed in a procession to the temple of Athene of the Brazen-house, while the Ephors remained in the sacred precinct and completed the sacrifice. As the young men therefore were conducting the procession, some of them suddenly fell upon the Ephors, while they were engaged with the sacrifice, and slew them. The enormity of this crime will be made apparent by remembering that the sanctity of this temple was such, that it gave a safe asylum even to criminals condemned to death; whereas its privileges were now by the cruelty of these audacious men treated with such contempt, that the whole of the Ephors were butchered round the altar and the table of the goddess» (trans. by E.S. Shuckburgh [Shuckburgh 1962]).

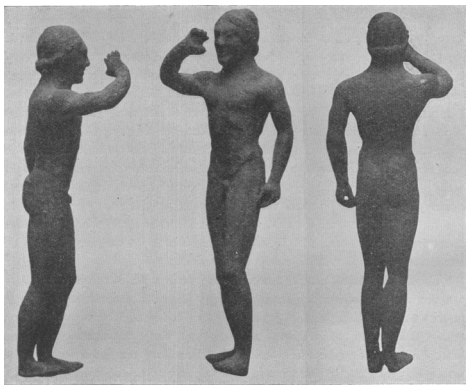

Fig. 14. Bronze statuette of a musician (© BSA; Dickins 1907).

in the sacred precinct to carry out the sacrifice – thus documenting the existence of an ancient, periodical rite involving armed adults and ephors. It is possible, although not certain, that this celebration coincided with the *Athenaia* mentioned in the Damonon stele, including horse-races.[78]

The military connotation of the Spartan pantheon in general and of the warrior goddess of the sanctuary in particular, justify the presence on the Acropolis, through a temple located to the left of the Bronze House, of the Muses, who, in the Lacedaemonian *polis*, are specifically connected with the battlefield because, as Pausanias states: «the Lacedaemonians used to go out to fight, not to the sound of the trumpet, but to the music of the flute and the accompaniment of lyre and harp».[79] Moreover, the Spartan Muses were the dedicatees of a sacrifice to be performed before the battle, proofing their involvement in the military affairs.[80]

In the Acropolis sanctuary, a singular bronze statuette of a musicians,[81] maybe a trumpeter, has been recovered in 1907 (fig. 14).[82] The 13 cm tall figurine, which dates back to the 5th cent. BC, stands upright with both knees slightly bent, and the left foot a little to the

78 Richer 2012; Dickins 1908.

79 Paus. 3, 17, 5.

80 Plu. *Mor*. 458E, Plut. *Lyc*. 21, 7.

81 Whibley 1909, pp. 60-62.

82 Dickens 1907, pp. 146-148.

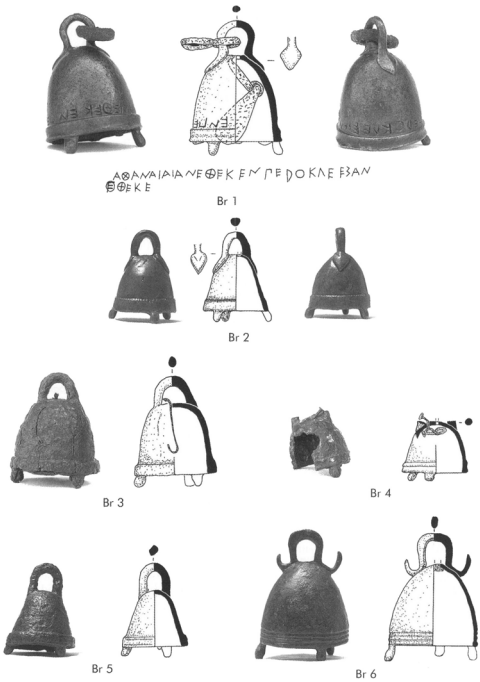

Fig. 15. Bronze bells from the sanctuary of Athena *Chalkioikos* (© BSA; Villing 2002).

front. The left arm hangs by the side, the hand holding a tubular object, now missing; the right arm is bent upwards to the mouth, where it held a larger tubular object, perhaps a musical instrument, perhaps a trumpet or an aulos (like those fluted during the war?). The inflation of the chest and flatness of stomach suggest the action of blowing.

Notwithstanding the proven connection with the battlefield of the Spartan Athena, quite widespread throughout all Greece, her political role as protector of the *polis*, of its civic identity and of its social order as well as her link with the productive activities are equally important in the Laconian context.

Information on the relevance of the Spartan Athena's patronage over manual activities can be convincingly inferred from the archaeological evidence.

Among the discovered items, it is noteworthy to mention the unusual abundancy of votive clay and especially bronze bells,[83] dedicated from the 7th cent. BC onward and remarkably during the 5th cent. BC. Their

[83] Villing 2002, pp. 223-295.

impressive amount in the *temenos* – more than thirty bronze bells, seven of which bearing dedicatory inscriptions to Athena (fig. 15), and more than one hundred analogous clay specimens – almost represents a unicum in the panorama of ancient votive offerings, exception made for the Samian *Heraion*, where thirty specimens are documented.[84]

Interestingly, an inventory list from a sanctuary (whose divine owner is discussed) at Torricella (Taras) exactly mentions a "new bell" among the belongings of the deity and a trumpet,[85] thus stressing once again the impact of the Spartan influence on the colonies.

The bells have been variously interpreted. Among the possible explanations, their connection with the sound caused by the weapons in the battlefield has been hypothesized; similarly, an apotropaic significance aimed at ensuring protection for women and children has been theorized,[86] given that names of female offerors are inscribed over some items. Alternatively, their relationship with the metalworking activities has been underlined,[87] further documented by the exceptional and unexpected amount of bronze items in the *temenos*, from the cult statue to the panels over the internal wall of the *neos*, till the huge quantity of dedications, starting from the two bronze statues of the king Pausanias; besides anthropomorphic figurines, bronze statuettes of animals, including lions, bulls, rams, frogs, horses, have been recovered as well (fig. 16).[88] Therefore, the Athena of the Bronze House also rises to the role protector of manual workers and especially of metalsmiths, whose working sounds are echoed by the rings of the bells.

In relation to the military affairs, the goddess Aphrodite *Areia*, who is the owner of a *neos* containing an "ancient *xoanon*" on the Acropolis,[89] is complementary to Athena. Furthermore, again on the Acropolis, the goddess is also worshipped as *Basilis* ("Queen") as indicated by the epigraphs incised or painted on eight fragmentary vases dating back

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84 Villing 2002, pp. 261-266; Cartledge 1982, pp. 243-265.

85 Gagliano 2017, pp. 94-95.

86 Villing 2002.

87 Gagliano 2017, p. 105.

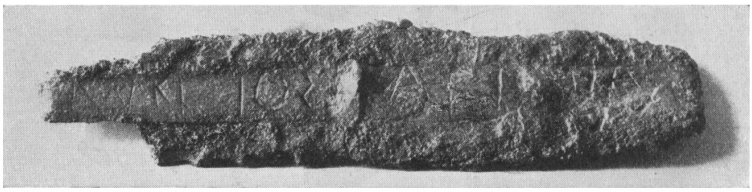
88 Lamb 1927.

89 Paus. 3, 17, 5.

(above) Fig. 16. Bronze dedications in the shape of animals from the Acropolis sanctuary (© BSA; Lamb 1927).

(on the right) Fig. 17. Bronze statuette of Aphrodite *Areia*, 4th cent. BC (© BSA; Dickins 1908).

(below) Fig. 18. Iron blade with bronze mid-rib bearing a dedicatory inscription to *Areia* (© BSA; Woodward 1930).



to the archaic age,[90] and as *Ambologera* through a statue placed next to the *bomos* of Athena.[91]

In addition to the literary sources, the cult of the goddess is correspondingly testified by the archaeological evidence. A bronze statuette of the armed Aphrodite, dressed in Doric peplos, was recovered during the excavation carried out in 1907,[92] 12 cm tall and

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90 Some fragmentary inscriptions on vases from Sparta (*SEG* 2, 133-136. 151; 11, 670) mention the epithet *Basilis*, to be attributed to Aphrodite; Osanna 1990, pp. 86-87.

91 Paus. 3, 18, 1.

92 Dickins 1908.

dating back to the 4th cent. BC (fig. 17). The same type of statuette has been also found in the Spartan colony of Thera,[93] hence acting as al element testifying the Spartan impact over the colonies' network.

Moreover, an iron blade, with a flat bronze mid-rib, bears an incised a dedication from a certain Lykeios to *Areia* (fig. 18).[94]

The patronage of the sanctuary over war activities, jointly protected by Athena *Chalkioikos* and Aphrodite *Areia*, is finally corroborated by the recovery of a relief bearing images of hoplites, an actual shield and a miniaturistic one.[95] The latter is typically found inside sacred areas owned by Zeus,[96] whose presence on the Spartan Acropolis, as already mentioned, is recorded by ancient authors, both as *Hypatos* aside the Bronze Houseand as *Cosmetas* towards the southern portico, in front of the tomb of the mythical king Tyndareus,[97] also a recipient of cultic actions with strong identitarian significance.

In this regard, the presence of the cult statue (the most ancient one preserved in bronze according to Pausania)[98] of Zeus *Hypatos* next to the Bronze House is rare but not unprecedented, as we find this specific epiclesis of the god also on the Acropolis of Athens, in the Erechteion area,[99] in close connection to the *Polias*. It is noteworthy that the similar cult of Zeus *Hypsistos* (1st-2nd cent. AD) is found in the Doric Gortyn as well, where an impressive altar stands in the Praetorium district.[100]

Again, the association between Athena and her protégé Herakles is extensively attested in the Hellenic world, starting from Athens. The Athena/Heracles couple is documented in Sparta itself: next to the *dromos* there was a shrine of Athena *Axiopoinos*, whose construction was traced back to Herakles, who, as we already observed, was

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93 Dickins 1908.

94 Woodward 1930, p. 252.

95 Woodward 1928, pp. 99-100.

96 At Samos, at Olympia, at the Ida cave and in Gortyn; Sassu 2014, pp. 90, 96, 205.

97 Paus. 3, 17, 4.

98 Paus. 13, 17, 6: «the oldest image that is made of bronze. It is not wrought in one piece. Each of the limbs has been hammered separately; these are fitted together, being prevented from coming apart by nails. They say that the artist was Clearchus of Rhegium, who is said by some to have been a pupil of Dipoenus and Scyllis, by others of Daedalus himself» (transl. by W.H.S. Jones, H.A. Ormerod [Jones, Ormerod 1918]).

99 Paus. 1, 26, 5.

100 Di Vita 2010, pp. 205-209; Rizzo 2004, pp. 603-615.

depicted while performing the twelve labours over the bronze panel of the *Chalkioikos*.

Finally, also the cult of the Dioskouroi can be referred to the Acropolis, on the basis of a relief (fig. 19) dating back to the Augustan age but probably reiterating a previous model, found in Sparta in an

Fig. 19. Relief maybe depicting Athena holding bells and flanked by the Dioskouroi, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta (Gagliano 2017).

unknown spot, showing the two brothers flanking the image of Athena holding a series of bells. Since exactly these bells, as we have just observed, appear to be a typical object of dedication for the goddess of the Acropolis, it is highly probable that the relief was originally dedica

ted on the hill,[101] praising Athena *Chalkioikos* together with Castor and Pollux, whose relevance in the education system of young Spartans is widely known.

So, the Acropolis acts as a stage where the different needs of the Spartan society are answered through a composite set of gods, semigods, heroes and *pathemata*, who are multifariously connected to the political realm as well as the urban identity and social order of the *polis* (Athena *Poliouchos*, Zeus *Hypatos* and *Cosmetes*, Tyndareus), to the military field (Athena *Promachos*, Aphrodite *Areia* and the Muses), the protection of children, the education of the young Spartans as well the

[101] Gagliano 2017, pp. 103-104.

passage to adulthood (Artemis and the Dioskouroi), the productive activities and more specifically the metalworking (Athena *Chalkioikos* and *Ergane*).

Therefore, the two warrior-goddesses Athena and Aphrodite emerge as the two main female deities of the sacred area, both turned into a Spartan environment deeply mixed with the specific internal necessities of the local society. Dualism is indeed a key-element for the proper appreciation of the Spartan religious system: Two are the kings, who are at the same time the two chief statal priests; two are the all-pervasive divine brothers (Apollo and Artemis and, even more, Castor and Pollux) on which the education process relies; often two are the owners of the main sanctuaries where the relation god/hero and hero/hero can be explored. As for the latter, exemplificatory case studies are offered by the *temene* of Menelaus and Helen and of Agamemnon and Kassandra.

In the heroic instance, the predominance of one cult over the other can change over time. In the *Menelaion* at Therapne,[102] Menelaus and Helen, having their graves in the sanctuary, were worshipped since the 8th cent. BC through offers and sacrifices,[103] but the heroine, patron of the growth of the girls and of their ritual passage to mature life as wives, was the possessor of the *neos*, the recipient of the *Heleneia* festivals[104] and soon became the main receiver of the dedications.[105] Equally, in the *temenos* of Agamemnon and Kassandra at Amyklai, the heroic couple, addressee (from the 7th cent. BC) of offers (consisting mainly Laconian heroic reliefs), register a gradual increase in the prominence of the female figure,[106] till the point that a Hellenistic decree from the Spartan *gerousia* incised on a marble throne only mentions the heroine,[107] as also Pausanias subsequently does.

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[102] Catling 1992, pp. 429-431; Cavanagh, Laxton 1984, p. 30; Catling 1986a, pp. 205-216; Catling 1986b, pp. 75-76; Catling 1977a, pp. 408-415; Catling 1977b, pp. 24-42; Catling 1976a; Catling 1976b; Catling, Cavanagh 1976, pp. 145-157; Dawkins 1910, pp. 4-11; Droop, Thompson, Wace 1908-1909, pp. 108-157. On Helen at Sparta: Hdt. 6, 61.

[103] Paus. 3, 19, 9.

[104] Parker 2016.

[105] Golino 2021; Calame 2001, pp. 191-202; Calame 1977, pp. 333-350.

[106] Salapata 2014.

[107] Delivoirrias 2009; Delivorrias 1968, p. 44. The throne is provided with an inscription dedicated to the heroine, but not to her male counterpart.

Divine brothers: Apollo and Artemis, Castor and Pollux

The central role held by Apollo in the *polis* is testified by the widespread worship reserved to the god by the Spartans, who praised him, *inter alia*, as *Karneios* and, in the *Amyklaion*, as *Hyakinthios*; he was also the addressee of the renown festival of *Gymnopaidiai*.[108]

Apollo *Karneios* was the holder of two sacred areas inside the city, respectively located inside the *agora*, where a shrine stood,[109] and on a hill, to the west, near a *dromos*, where he was worshipped with Eileithyia and Artemis *Hegemone*.[110]

The cult of the Spartan Apollo, particularly with the epithets *Karneios* and *Hyakinthios*, turns out to be a paramount element in the wider frame of Sparta international relations. The identitarian value attributed to the cult of the god is for instance reflected on the colony of Taras, where it is attested by literary sources and by several archaeological items, such as: an early-5th cent. BC acrolith (pertaining to a not-identified temple) in local tufa (carparo);[111] a conspicuous series of clay statuettes of Apollo *Hyakinthios*[112] mainly (but not exclusively) recovered at Castel Saraceno sul Mar Grande and in contrada Carmine;[113] the tumulus, sited outside the Temènide Entrance, eloquently dedicated to *Hyakinthos* or Apollo *Hyakinthios*.[114] As we shall see, in Taras a Laconian cup depicting the local festival has been recovered, too.

Furthermore, in the Doric Gortyn of Crete, the *Amyklaion* mentioned in the Great Inscription was situated, once again, just outside the city – thus corroborating the local tradition conceiving Gortyn as a Spartan colony.[115] Similarly, the Spartan cult of Apollo *Karneios* was imported in the colony of Thera and subsequently from Thera to Cyrene.

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108 The festival took place in the theatre (Hdt. 6, 67) or in the *agora*, inside a place known as Chorus (Paus. 3, 11, 9).

109 Paus. 3, 13, 3-6; see also *IG* V 1 497.

110 Paus. 3, 14, 6.

111 Todisco 1992, p. 89. The head of the acrolith is preserved in the National Archaeological Museum of Taranto (n. 3881).

112 Kingsley 1976, p. 11.

113 Capano 2017, pp. 187-214.

114 Plb. 8, 28. See also Castelnuovo 1991, pp. 64-79; Stazio 1965, pp. 158-164.

115 Lippolis, Caliò, Giatti 2019, p. 36. Sporn 1996, pp. 83-93.

The *Amyklaion*, located 6 km south of the Acropolis and dominated by the huge statue of Apollo armed with a helmet, a spear and a bow, was indeed one of the most relevant Spartan sacred areas, till the point that public decrees, such as the one concerning the Peace of Nikia, were here exhibited.

The famous colossal statue, almost 5 m tall, stood on a pedestal acting also as an altar and as the tomb of Hyakinthos.[116] In fact, inside the sanctuary, that marks the establishment of the territorial area of influence of Sparta south of the city, the god was associated to the hero, his mythical *heròmenos*,[117] recipient of a series of ritual acts, the principal one being the *enagismos* to be performed before the *thysia* for Apollo during the *Hyakinthia*. The difference in the type of sacrifice mirrors the difference in status between the god and the hero and expresses the two-part structure of the cult.

The important fact is that, from the 8th cent. BC onward, the whole population of Sparta gathered in a cult jointly focused on Hyakinthos as a hero and Apollo as a god.[118] Hero and god represented a fundamental opposition: Although many details in their respective ritual patterns could be similar, there were some crucial differences, the most substantial one being the sacrificial practice. For the Olympian god there was a *bomos* from which the smoke rose to the sky, while for the hero the sacrifice was directed downward, with the blood of the animal poured into a *bothros* or an *eschara* located inside the massive altar, in a space accessible through a bronze door.

Meaningfully – and once again emphasizing the distinguishing plurality of cults synchronously honoured in Sparta – the altar[119] was also decorated with images of Amphitrite and Poseidon, Zeus and Hermes, Dionysus and Semele, Demeter, Kore, Hades, Aphrodite, Athena, Artemis, Herakles and the Moirai, the Muses and Polyboia, sister of Hyakinthos,[120] who turns out to be a model for the young Spartan (and Tarantine) girls[121] and the reference heroine for the female

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116 Paus. 3, 19, 3. See also Faustoferri 1996; Prontera 1980-1981, pp. 215-230; Piccirilli 1967, pp. 99-116.

117 On the mythological tale concerning Apollo and Hyakynthos: E. *Hel*. 1469-1475.

118 Pettersson 1992, p. 28.

119 The recovered remains of the altar date back to the mid-6th cent. BC (see Amykles research project: https://amyklaion.gr/en/monuments/throne/).

120 Paus. 3, 19, 3-5. See also Möbius 1951, pp. 290-298.

121 Richer 2012, pp. 348-349.

rites of passage. Moreover, as Hyakinthos is associated with Apollo, so Polyboia is associated with the divine sister of the god, Artemis. The heroine plays a crucial role in the female initiations in Taras as well.

The tale narrated by the images of the altar concerns the passage from childhood to adulthood and, at the same time, from death (the death of Hyakinthos accidentally caused by Apollo) to eternal life – the death and resurrection sequence symbolizing the shift of status of the initiands. This theme has a plurality of meanings. First of all, it explains the presence of chthonic deities such as Demeter, Kore, Hades and the Moirai, while the subject of the apotheosis can be elicited by the presence of Herakles and Dionysus. But the deep meaning of the co-existence of this wide range of superhuman beings goes beyond this.

Given that the ascertained female participation in the *Hyakinthia* was likely connected with rituals of initiation aiming at the preparation of the girls of the marriage, the presence of the triad Demeter, Kore and Hades (besides being linked to the death of Hyakinthos) can be considered also under this light and hence be referred to the rites of passages concerning the maidens, symbolised by Polyboia, as previously mentioned. The abduction of Kore by Hades means the shift from *parthenos* to *gyne*, from daughter to wife, from an asexual to a sexual sphere.[122] This reflection can also provide a further explanation for the presence, over the altar, of Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite: the virgin goddesses symbolize the life of the girl before marriage, while, after the wedding, the girl enters the domain of Aphrodite, goddess of love, sexuality and fertility.[123]

The *Hyakinthia*,[124] already codified in the 8th cent. BC,[125] combined initiatory features with the concept of renovation of the society, of the individual, of the fields. The festival played a primary role in staging a global renewal of the Spartan society, in defining the passage of young citizens to adulthood and in the periodical establishment of the common identity as well as in the cyclic strengthening of the social bonds among the members belonging to the Spartan collectiveness, by

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122 Pettersson 1992, p. 39.

123 Pettersson 1992, p. 39.

124 Flower 2018, pp. 438-439; von Hedvig 2015, pp. 351-364; Richer 2012, pp. 343-382; Richer 2004, pp. 71-102; Pettersson 1992, pp. 9-42. See also: Antioch., *FGrHist*, 555 F1.

125 Pettersson 1992.

fostering group cohesion. The celebration is embedded with a strong agrarian significance,[126] justifying the mentioned presence of Demeter and Kore.

As is common with religious practices connected to hero cult, a segment of the festival coincides with the mourning and commemoration of the death of the young hero.[127] This period probably lasts till the moment when the funerary chthonic sacrifice is performed, most likely at sunset. After the end of this "sadness period", probably coinciding with the first part of the festival, the rejoicing moment starts, with the procession involving all the Spartan community,[128] exhibiting, through a parade, all the different articulations of its society,[129] and moving from the city to the peri-urban *temenos*. This step was accompanied by the performance of songs, dances, spectacles and horse-races, involving all the local community, including its female members.[130] At this point, wreaths made of ivy, that were prohibited during the "sorrow phase", were worn by the worshippers.[131]

As for feminine participation to the cult, as the Athenian *ergastinai* weaved a peplos to be given to Athena *Polias* on the occasion of the Panathenaic festival, so the Spartan girls prepared a robe to be offered to Apollo during the festival.[132] Moreover nocturnal rituals performed by women during the *Hyakinthia* are attested by literary sources[133] and girls' involvement in the agons is epigraphically recorded.[134]

The moment of joy caused by the apotheosis of the hero culminated with the sacrifice on the altar of Apollo in the sanctuary and envisaged the consummation of a common meal, including all the Spartans and attended even by the slaves.[135]

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126 Nilsson 1952, pp. 134-135, 140.

127 The mourning of Hyakinthos resulted in certain prohibitions imposed on the participants: the wearing of wreaths, the eating of bread and cakes and singing the paean were forbidden.

128 Polycrates *apud* Atheneos, IV, 139F. See Richer 2012, p. 362.

129 Brulé 1992, pp. 19-38. See also, on the *pompe*, Ovid, *Metam*. 10, 219.

130 Calame 1977, p. 310. Their duration (three or at least ten days) as well as their institution is debated (see Richer 2012 for a summary of the different proposed explanations).

131 Macrob. *Sat*. 1, 18, 2.

132 Paus. 3, 16, 2. Pettersson 1992, p. 11.

133 E. *Hel*. 1465-1475.

134 *IG* V 1 586, 587.

135 The nature and organisation of the festival has been handed down by Polycrates

The death and the divine elevation of Hyakinthos marked the death and the renaissance of the Spartan society[136] in an everlasting periodical sequence and, at the same time, indicated the end of the harvest season and the incipient beginning of a new agrarian period.

The representation of the *Hyakinthia* is apparently depicted over an archaic (540 BC) Laconian cup recovered at Taras (National Archaeological Museum of Taranto n. 20909, fig. 20),[137] where a banqueting Hyakinthos[138] faces and citharist Apollo; on their left, two

Fig. 20. Laconian cup, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Taras (Richer 2012).

figures are about to throw the disc, maybe recalling the game that unintentionally killed the hero. In the inferior sector, five dancers flank a huge vase containing wine, in an evidently Dionysiac setting. Hence, the three main actors of the sacred complex are evoked in the *kylix*, i.e. the two gods Apollo and Dionysus,[139] whose joint presence of has a crucial precedent in Delphi, and the local hero Hyakinthos.

(*FGrHist* 588; Atheneus IV 139D-F.

136 Richer 2012, p. 363.

137 Pelagatti 1955-1956, p. 38; Stibbe 1974, p. 23.

138 The banqueting figure has been interpreted as Hyakynthos (Richer 2012, p. 379) or, alternatively, Dionysus (Lane 1933-1934, p. 158).

139 Stibbe 1991, pp. 1-41.

The other divine and semi-divine beings worshipped in the sanctuary appear to be revered in a secondary, yet indispensable, position, that can be read under multiple perspectives.

The divine sister of Apollo, Artemis, protector of the youth, often concerned with the passage from adolescence and childhood to mature life, held a main role in the Spartan pantheon too. In fact, the local religious system reserved a special attention to the preparation to adulthood and therefore to full citizenship and many of the festivals for the goddess can be ultimately regarded as passage rites in the broadest sense.

The goddess is worshipped as *Hegemone* near the *dromos*;[140] as *Limnatis* ("guardian of the borders") in the sacred area at the boundaries with Messenia; as *Pellane*;[141] as *Corythalia*, with Kourotrophic features in a sanctuary located between Sparta and Amyklai; but above all as *Orthia* (alias "who makes things straight") in the prominent sub-urban sanctuary whose celebrations – including the whipping of the boys at the altar as a test of endurance and strength and the ritual inversion of the commonly accepted values, order and hierarchy – preserved the tradition of social order, established by Lycurgus and ordered by the Delphic Apollo.

The sacred precinct[142] was provided with its first all-stone temple in the first half of the 6th cent. BC, exactly when it became a chief locus for the rites of passage and initiation that were connected with the public upbringing of the young, both male and female. Even in this case, the *xoanon* depicted an armed goddess, with spear in the right hand and a bow in the left one. Here too, Artemis is associated with Eileithyia (the latter's sanctuary was located next to the one of *Orthia*).[143]

Once again, the Laconian cult of Artemis finds parallels in the Spartan colonies. In Taras, several terracotta figurines document periodical ritual actions implemented for Artemis,[144] especially venerated as *Bendis*,[145] but emblematically, the cult of the Spartan

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140 Paus. 3, 14, 6.

141 Plb. 8, 28, 2. See Spyropoulos 2002, pp. 24-25.

142 Luongo 2017; Lloyd Rosenberg 2015; Muskett 2014; Cartledge 2003, pp. 308-311; Kopanias 2009; Dawkins 1929.

143 Paus. 3, 17, 1.

144 Lippolis 1982, p. 114.

145 Lippolis 2005, pp. 91-102.

Artemis *Hyakinthotrophos* is documented at Taras[146] and a Cnidus,[147] possibly another Spartan colony.

As far as the Dioskouroi are concerned, their cult had a great military, social and political value, being the twins an emblem and guarantee of the Spartan dual kingship. Moreover, their respective features mirrored the basic Spartan values, connected to the education of young males: Castor is a soldier and a knight, Pollux is an athlete and an ephebus.[148]

The divine brothers, already mentioned in the Iliad,[149] are intrinsically connected to the Spartan horizon, till the point they are defined by Pindar as «the intendants of Sparta».[150] Their cult is already attested in the Laconian city in the 7th cent. BC by the Spartan poet Alkman.[151]

As for the military meaning associated with them, the Spartan kings – who were, *inter alia*, priests of Zeus,[152] worshipped in Sparta also as *Agetor* ("who leads the army") – were entitled to carry images of the Dioskouroi to the battles, so to ensure their support to the army which brought them. The battle itself was preceded by sacrifices offered to the divine brothers, who happened to appear in epiphany during several wars to bring victory: for instance, they appeared to Lysander at Aegospotami – that's why they were represented in the monument offered at Delphi to commemorate the event.[153]

From Sparta, the cult rapidly and widely spread in the colonies and, through them, to other adjacent territories. In addition to Thera, the military tradition connected to them is soon brought from Sparta to the Italian peninsula: to Taras, as we are going to observe shortly, but also to Epizephyrian Locris, which apparently defeated Croton due to their appearance in the battlefield,[154] and finally to the Latium Region, as the Roman victory at Lake Regillo indicates.

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146 Pugliese Carratelli 1989, pp. 463-469. See also: Lippolis 1982, pp. 81-135 and Pugliese Carratelli 1973, p. 134

147 *Iscr. di Cos* 77, III- II; *SEG* 38, 812A; *IKnidos* 220.

148 Lippolis 2009, p. 143.

149 Hom. *Il*. 3, 236-239.

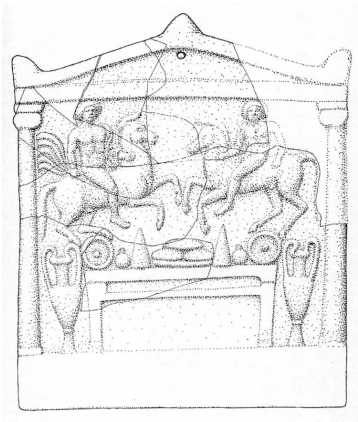
150 Pind. *N*. 10, 52.

151 *POxy* 2389, fr. 3a; Page 1962, p. 11.

152 Richer 2012, pp. 27-28.

153 Plu. *Lys*. 12, 1; 12, 18; Cic. *div*. 1, 75; Paus. 10, 9. See Shapiro 2002, p. 107.

154 Strab. 6, 1, 10; Ius. 20, 3, 8-9.



(on the left) Fig. 21. Tarantine *Pinax* depicting a *theoxenia* scene, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Taras (Lippolis 2009).

(below) Fig. 22. Tarantine *Pinakes* depicting the Dioskouroi standing (left), on horseback (middle), lying over a *kline* (right) (Lippolis 2009).

The ritual actions performed in their honour were numerous and dislocated in several spots of the city: they were venerated as *Apheterioi* ("who foster the starting", "Starters") at the entrance of the *dromos* for the races;[155] a tomb of Castor was located next to the Skias and in the surroundings of the *agora* they were worshipped as *Amboulioi* ("Counsellors"); at Therapne, next to the *Menelaion*, there were a spring and a sanctuary consecrated to Pollux, connected to a temple of the Dioskouroi in the *Phoibaion*,[156] probably a sanctuary dedicated to Phoibe, one of the Leukippides sisters married by the Dioskouroi, where the ephebes performed sacrifices to Enyalios.

The *theoxenia*, comprising an offer of a meal to the sacred guests, was the commonest form of ritual performed in their honour (fig. 21). The scene, frequently depicted on Laconian vessels and reliefs, is usually marked by the presence of two amphorae, whose ritual usage

[155] Paus. 3, 14, 7.

[156] Paus. 3, 20, 2.

is a peculiarity of the Spartan religious practice and has been variously explained[157] as a reference to the funerary sphere, to the domestic dimension[158] or even to the agonistic victory.[159] The two amphorae are so intimately linked to the twin sons of Zeus that they ultimately become a metaphor of their divine presence.

In Taras, the cult of the Dioskouroi is a widespread phenomenon as well, revealing the eternal bonds between the Western colony and Sparta. In the Magna Graecia city, eighteen votive deposits contained *pinakes* representing the divine brothers (fig. 22), either standing, or on horseback, or lying over a *kline*. More rarely, they appear standing in front of the horses, hunting the Kalydonian boar, raping the Leukippides, leading a chariot, during the *theoxenia* ritual, in front of or next to a *trapeza*.

Meaningfully, in three cases the findings are associated to even numbers of amphorae: the fact that the amphorae are dedicated in couples should not be underestimated, being a sign that the two vases actually acquire a religious meaning precisely in reference to the couple of brothers.[160] Not only couples of amphorae have been recovered from many sacred deposits, but they are also frequently depicted on Tarantine and Spartan supports (vessels, reliefs and *pinakes*), symbolising the two Dioskouroi.

Another element connecting the Laconian tradition with the Tarantine one is the recurring presence, on the scenes (depicted over the vessels, on the reliefs of Sparta and on the *pinakes* of Taras) of the wooden elements known as *dokana* (two wooden pillars linked by one or more transversal timbers), that in Sparta, according to Plutarch, represent the brothers themselves and their *philadelphia* ("brotherly love").[161] So, in Sparta as in Taras, aniconic images of the Dioskouroi could be provided by couples of amphorae and by *dokana*, and in both places the main ritual took the form of a *theoxenia*, showing a phenomenon of clear cultural derivation and ethical adhesion to the Spartan model.[162]

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157 A summary of the different positions can be found in Lippolis 2009, p. 138 and Le Roy 1961. See also Nista 1994.

158 On the possible chthonian significance cf. Hermary 1986; Nilsson 1906, p. 417.

159 Sanders 1993; Sanders 1992.

160 Lippolis 2009.

161 Plu. *De fraterno amore*, 478.

162 Lippolis 2009, pp. 147, 149.

Spartan distinctive religion as the basis for an international network

What's novel and uncommon in the Spartan religion[163] is the capacity of the citizens to reshape the traditional gods turning them into super-natural beings with strong native features, rooted in the city's ethical, educational and military mindset.

So, the panhellenic deities Athena, Apollo, Artemis, are introduced into a strongly Spartan dimension, that provides them with a unique local connotation. This is clearly reflected, for instance, in a meaningful passage of the Lysistrata by Aristophanes,[164] where a Laconian chorus is set. Here, in contrast to the divinities of panhellenic scope invoked by the chorus of Athenians, the gods hymned by the choral voice of Laconia are all reduced to the local pantheon: Amyklaian Apollo, Athena *Chalkioikos*, the Dioskouroi sons of Tyndareus who train along the Eurotas, Helen daughter of Leda etc.

Another peculiarity of the Spartan religion is the success of armed statues of the gods, till the point that Plutarch claims that all the statues of Spartan gods and goddesses were armed, so to inspire courage and braveness to the mortals.[165] Besides the mentioned armed statues of

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163 Flower 2018, pp. 425-450.

164 Ar. *Lys.* 1296–1312:
«Leave in your turn pleasant Taygetos.
Come, Laconian Muse,
come glorify the god of Amyklai, worthy of our regard,
and the mistress in the temple of bronze,
and the noble Tyndaridai,
who sport along the Eurotas.
Come, enter the dance,
come, with light bounds,
that we may sing of Sparta
that loves the choruses of the gods
and the beating of the dancing feet,
when, like fillies,
the girls leap beside the Eurotas,
raising the dust with the rhythm of their feet;
their hair tosses
like that of the Bacchantes
frolicking as they wave the thyrsus.
The daughter of Leda, holy, heads them,
splendid chorus-leader.»
(Transl. in Powell 2018, p. 178)

165 Customs of the Spartans 28 = Mor. 239a: «They worship Aphrodite in full armour, and they make statues of all the gods, male and female, holding spears, on the grounds that they all possess the excellence that pertains to war». Sayings of the Spartans, Charillos 5 = Mor. 232d: When someone asked why all of the statues of the

Athena *Chalkioikos*, Aphrodite *Areia*,[166] Apollo *Hyakithios* and Artemis *Orthia*, in Sparta also Dionysus was represented holding a bow;[167] the cult statue of Herakles was armed as well;[168] in the sanctuary of Morpho/Aphrodite, the wooden cult statue was equipped with helmet, spear, and shield. The whole Spartan *ethos* and system of values is verily condensed in the image of the armed god.

Exactly some of the Spartan religious peculiarities, that make its sacred system somehow unique, were exported outside the city, playing a key-role in weaving the international network of Laconian colonies.

The bronze revetment of the Acropolis Bronze House of Athena is replicated, no doubt with an identitarian implication, in the temple of Zeus of Cyrene. Taras is also marked by the presence, epigraphically recorded, of bells and trumpets, similarly attested, in this case on an archaeological base, in the Spartan sanctuary of Athena *Chalkioikos*, then hence turns to be a reference cult for the Spartan political and religious-based network.

The *Amyklaion*, being one of the outmost relevant shrines of the city, is replicated in the Doric Gortyn and the same cult of Apollo *Hyakinthios* is testified at Taras, too, both by the literary traditions and archaeological materials,[169] as previously observed.

Likewise, the festival of the *Hyakinthia* were celebrated in Cnidos as well as in Thera and the Spartan Artemis *Hyakinthotrophos* is venerated in Taras and in Cnidus.[170] Polyboia, sister of Hyakinthos, is the recipient of cult actions performed by young women in Taras, as the consistent number of clay statuettes (fig. 23) coherently demonstrate.[171]

Apollo's epiclesis *Karneios* is to be found in the colonies of Taras and Thera, too, and in the sub-colony of Cyrene as well.

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gods that are set up among them have weapons, he (Charillos, a king ruling in the 8th cent. BC) said «So that we may not ascribe to the gods the reproaches that are spoken against men because of their [men's] cowardice, and so that the young may not pray to the gods while they [the young men] are unarmed».

166 Powell 2018, p. 434.

167 Macr. *Sat.* 1, 19, 1-2.

168 Paus. 3, 15, 3.

169 Clay figurines of Apollo *Hyakinthios* and Polyboia have been recovered in Taras in the Castel Saraceno stipe and in the contrada Carmine one; Lippolis 1982, pp. 115-118.

170 Pettersson 1992, p. 10 (on Thera); *I. Knidos* 220, K (= *SEG* 38, 812B) (on Cnidus).

171 Lippolis 2001, p. 233; Lippolis 1982, p. 115.

Fig. 23. Clay statuettes of Polyboia, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Taras (Lippolis 2001).

The Acropolis of Taras rises as the hearth of the religious polyadic system of the colony,[172] being the area richest in *anathemata*,[173] and seems to closely duplicate the cults of the corresponding Spartan Hill.[174] In fact, the monumentalization of the Tarantine Acropolis starts in the first quarter of the 6th cent. BC by replicating the main cults of the Mainland:[175] that of Athena is documented together with that of Aphrodite *Basilis* (which is epigraphically attested in Sparta, as previously noticed); likewise, that of Herakles seems to be located on the cliff,[176] where the colossal statue authored by Lysippus stood, before being transferred to Rome in 209 BC. The Tarantine devotion to the Spartan Athena is further stressed by the dedication of a bronze statue of the goddess by the western colonists in the sanctuary of Poseidon in the *metropolis*.[177]

Moreover, a vase bearing an inscribed dedication to Artemis *Orthia* has been discovered in the area sited between the Acropolis and the isthmus; a cult of Zeus *Agoraios* is recorded, too.[178] In other words, in

[172] Lippolis 1982, p. 84.

[173] Str. 6, 3, 1.

[174] Lippolis, Garaffo, Nafissi 1995, pp. 37-38.

[175] Lippolis 2002, pp. 119-169.

[176] Lippolis 1982, p. 92.

[177] Paus. 3, 12, 5. See also Lippolis 1982, p. 91.

[178] Lippolis 1982, p. 131; Wuilleumier 1939, p. 474.

the sacred field, Taras turns out to be a mirror of the founding city, cementing its link with the latter primarily through the religion.

Furthermore, the Spartan Aphrodite *Basilis* is duplicated also in Satyron, in the territory of Taras, where her cult is explicitly mentioned in a gloss by Hesychius[179] and by the dedicatory inscription incised on a fragmentary vase attributed to Exekias.[180] So, the royal and warrior Aphrodite of the Spartan Acropolis is placed in the strategic settlement of Satyron with the aim of organizing the colonial territory, guaranteeing its ownership achieved through military victorious efforts led by the goddess.[181]

Similarly, the omnipresent cult of Spartan Dioskouroi, with their military and educational meanings, becomes a widespread phenomenon in Taras, where its pervasive nature is documented by the aforementioned presencen of twin amphorae symbolising the twin brothers abundantly recovered in all the territory of the Western colony.[182]

Although each of these single cases need further in-depth investigation to fully measure the impact of the Spartan legacy over external settlements, they anyway clearly demonstrate the influence of the *polis* over its colonies and sub-colonies and, in general, on the Doric religious tradition.

So, the articulated arrangement of cults defines the Spartan *polis* both from a cultural-religious perspective and from a topographical standpoint, identifying internal sacred areas in the inhabited space, tracing the bounders of the *asty* through peripherical sanctuaries, defining the city's impact over the *chora* by means of extra-urban sanctuaries.

In conclusion, the characteristic features that distinguish the Spartan religious system and ritual practice from the rest of the Helladic world, and that are ultimately embedded in the Spartan ethical mindset and behavioural pattern, act as key-factors in the establishment of the *polis*' identity and in the creation of stable relations with other cities and, above all, with its colonies and sub-colonies. The latter indeed express their adherence to the Laconian model through the religion and the adoption of the Spartan "uncommon" elements.

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179 Hsc. s.v. βασιλίς. Osanna 1990, pp. 87-88; Santoro 1989, p. 82; Lippolis 1982, p. 92.

180 Lo Porto 1977, pp. 730-731.

181 Osanna 1990, p. 91.

182 Lippolis 2009.

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Heroic cults at Sparta between mythological past and supranational relations

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Keywords: Sparta, heroes, mythology, Achaean tradition, *Menelaion*.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Σπάρτη, ήρωες, μυθολογία, αχαϊκή παράδοση, Μενέλαος.

Abstract:

This paper examines the development of heroic cults in Sparta and the establishment of a communal identity reached through a policy of expansion. The general spread of hero-cults followed steps, rituals and cults that are common to the whole Greek world; nonetheless, the Spartan "appropriation" of some specific Pan-Hellenic entities resulted in the formation of a peculiar system of heroic cults established on the creation of a mythical ancestry of founders, trying to relate Sparta's recent history to a more ancient mythical past.

Η παρούσα εργασία εξετάζει την ανάπτυξη των ηρωικών λατρειών στη Σπάρτη και τη δημιουργία μιας κοινοτικής ταυτότητας που επιτεύχθηκε μέσω μιας πολιτικής επέκτασης. Η γενική εξάπλωση των ηρωικών τελετών ακολούθησε βήματα, τελετουργίες και τελετές που είναι κοινές σε ολόκληρο τον ελληνικό κόσμο- παρ› όλα αυτά, η σπαρτιατική «οικειοποίηση» κάποιων συγκεκριμένων πανελλήνιων οντοτήτων είχε ως αποτέλεσμα τη διαμόρφωση ενός ιδιότυπου συστήματος ηρωικών λατρειών που εδράζεται στη δημιουργία μιας μυθικής καταγωγής ιδρυτών, προσπαθώντας να συνδέσει την πρόσφατη ιστορία της Σπάρτης με ένα αρχαιότερο μυθικό παρελθόν.

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Spartan heroes: an overview

Heroes' cults in Sparta had a long institution from the late 8th or early 7th cent. BC until Roman period.[1] These supernatural entities – mythological and epic characters, historical people, warriors, political leaders, city founders and healers – were both worshipped in monumental sanctuaries in Sparta's *chora*, or in lesser-monumentalized shrines located within the borders of the *polis*, creating a multifaceted scenario that results in a sort of "Spartan religion", under many respects different from the Hellenic one.

The spread of hero-cults involved the whole Hellenic world since the 8th cent. BC; despite the lack of a univocal opinion, it has been pointed out that this phenomenon may have arisen from a series of joined factors such as the gradual birth of the first Greek *poleis*[2] – that needed founders, mythological ancestors and a recent history – occurred after the end of the Dark Ages;[3] the spread of Homeric works and the transmission of epic poetry in written form;[4] the continuous veneration of Bronze Age ancestors and tombs between the 9th and 8th cent. BC, sometimes substituted and reused for new cults by the local inhabitants.[5]

The development of heroic cults was also accompanied by the growth of ritual practices and the belief in the power of heroic relics, whose possession was thought to grant prosperity and protection to the *poleis* from external attacks. Nonetheless, the ownership of hero bones often resulted in a constant competition among the cities and in attempts to discover the secret places where the sacred relics were preserved.[6]

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1 Recent studies on the topic: Greco 2014, pp. 50-58; Ekroth 2007, pp. 100-114; Ekroth 2002; Ekroth 1999, pp. 145-158; Hall 2007, pp. 331-354; Antonaccio 2005; Antonaccio 1999; Antonaccio 1995; Antonaccio 1994a; Antonaccio 1994b; Nagy 1999; Hall 1997; Hägg 1996; De Polignac 1995; Scullion 1994, pp. 75-119; Snodgrass 1988, pp. 19-26; Malkin 1987; Burkert 1985, pp. 136-139, 190-215; Burkert 1983.

2 Whitley 1988; Antonaccio 1995; Ekroth 2002.

3 Snodgrass 1971.

4 Ratinaud-Lackar 1999.

5 Whitley 1988; Ekroth 2002. C.M. Antonaccio provides a thorough analysis of the phenomenon that particularly affected Argolid, Messenia, Laconia, Boeotia and Crete; Antonaccio 1995, pp. 11-197.

6 Larson 2007, p. 200.

The way in which these supernatural entities were perceived in the Greek world varied according to geographical regions and societal values; therefore, a characteristic of heroes and hero-cults is their heterogeneity, both in relation to the nature of the heroes themselves, the organization of their sacred places and, to a lesser extent, the cult practices.[7]

As previously stated, the worshipping of this category of super-human beings developed in Sparta peculiar features:[8] by way of example, the Spartans sacralized and established shrines destined to some abstract concepts and bodily passions, called *pathemata* (namely Fear, Modesty, Sleep, Death, Laughter, Love and Hunger);[9] according to Plutarch the cult statues of the gods were armed,[10] stressing the military aspect of the *polis*; finally, some important historical personalities, who obtained a sort of posthumous heroization, received cults, such as the mythical lawgiver Lycurgos,[11] the Spartan kings[12] – especially Leonidas – and the war-dead (fig. 1),[13] in particular the deceased at Thermopylae.[14]

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7 Ekroth 2007, p. 110; Ekroth 2002, p. 21.

8 If heroic cults may be intended as local phenomena, it is possible to formalize a Spartan *polis*-centric approach through which these cults can be discussed in their peculiarities. See Richer 2012; Richer 2004; Flower 2009.

9 Richer 2012, pp. 45-129.

10 Plu. *Mor.* 239a. See also Hodkinson 2000, pp. 37-50.

11 Parker 1989, p. 148; Flower 2009, p. 193.

12 X. *Lac.* 15, 9. R. Parker argues that the passage of Xenophon is only meaningful of the great rites reserved to the Spartan kings; Parker 1989, pp. 9-10. C*ontra* P. Cartledge agrees with the literary translation meaning that kings were effectively honored as heroes; Cartledge 1987, pp. 339-343.

13 Tyrtaios and Simonides attest a sort of celebration of the war-dead, respectively during the Second Messenian War and the Persian Wars (Tyrt. fr. 12 West; fr. 531 Page, *PMG*). These verses have led some scholars to interpret the poems as evidences of heroic cult to this special category of deceased, nonetheless it is important to take into account that both Tyrtaios and Simonides' poetry derive from Homeric use of praising and elevating someone's status through metaphorical use of words. See Boedeker 1998, pp. 234-242; Stehle 2001, pp. 117-118. C*ontra* Pritchett 1985, p. 246; J.N. Bremmer have interpreted their composition as metaphorical allusions and no facts; Bremmer 2006, pp. 21-22.

14 Paus. 3, 14, 1. Differently from other *poleis*' behaviors, Spartan war-dead were buried at the battlefield since the Battle of the Champions (c. 550 BC); the deceased at Thermopylae, whose name were incised on a stele located near the temple of *Athena Chalkioikos* on the acropolis – and probably buried there – represent an exception. See Nafissi 1991, pp. 277-341; Hodkinson 2000, pp. 237-270; Lupi 2017, pp. 149-155.

Fig. 1. Grave marks of war-dead (© Archaeological Museum of Sparta; photo by the author).

Between the 7th and 5th cent. BC, Sparta's social system turned into a more organized community; this is also reflected in a general monumentalization of some of the main early heroic cult places, such as the *Menelaion*, located in the ancient region of Therapne; the sanctuary of Agamemnon and Alexandra/Kassandra and the *Amyklaion*, both at Amyklai; the tombs of Orestes and Tisamenos in the Spartan *agora*, erected during the 6th cent. BC. These sacred places all acquired a special importance to the Spartan community, for both their religious and social significance, because they were representative of the whole Spartan population, with no distinction of social classes and gender.

Nevertheless, the shortage of archaeological remains prevents an overall reconstruction of the Laconian heroic sites, not only from an architectural point of view, but also in the survey of the ritual aspects related to the cult of the heroes.[15] Therefore, a consistent part in analyzing the dynamics of the phenomenon relies on the investigation

[15] During the last century, the British School at Athens brought to light many of the archaeological discoveries in the Acropolis' area and the Sanctuary of Arthemis *Orthia*; in the 80's further excavations in ancient Sparta and her surroundings have been carried out in the scope of the *Laconia Survey*. For the results of the British School in Laconia see Catling 1998 and for those of *Laconia Survey* see Cavanagh et alii 1996.

of literary *testimonia*,[16] epigraphical and iconographical sources,[17] besides the exam of other material data.

In this regard, the information that can be elicited from the authors of the 7th-6th cent. BC, noticeably Tyrtaios[18] and Alkman[19] (although their Spartan identity is matter of dispute), proved crucial for the recognition of the particular significance of some local heroic cults.[20]

More than a century later, the Spartans committed to another poet, Simonides, the celebration of Spartan deeds during the Persian war. Finally, additional information on Spartans' religious beliefs was provided by the historians of the classical period, namely Herodotos[21] and Thucydides,[22] and other following authors, such as Xenophon,[23] Plutarch[24] and especially Pausanias.[25]

Mythological tradition

Sparta's origins are embedded in myth. Archaeological evidences attested that the acropolis was difficulty inhabited before the 10th cent. BC,[26] when the urban community was born throughout the synoecism of a series of villages or *komas*[27] (Limnai, Cynosoura, Mesoa, Pitane) that continued to retain their separated identities, to which Amyklai was later annexed in the 8th cent. BC – by the Aigeidai (or king Telekos).[28] This ongoing "independence" of the five villages resulted in the diarchy

16 A brief overview of the literary *testimonia* is in Lupi 2017, pp. 32-38.

17 Few epigraphical sources pertain to archaic and classical period, while the most consistent *corpus* is related to Roman period.

18 Meier 1998, pp. 229-234.

19 Calame 1977.

20 Lupi 2017, p. 32.

21 Herdotos' work basically covers the period between the last quarter of the 6th cent. BC and the 478 BC, particularly focusing on the events of the Persian wars.

22 Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian war covers in detail the years between 431-411 BC, with few digressions related to the previous period.

23 Xenophon's *Hellenica* describes Spartan history between 411 – which means the end of Thucydides' account – and 362 BC – the Battle of Mantinea.

24 Plu. *Lyc.*; Plu. *Moralia* 208a-242d.

25 Paus. 3, 1-13.

26 Nafissi 2009, pp. 117-118; Kennel 2010, p. 30.

27 Cartledge 2002, p. 80. Thucydides (1, 10, 2) describes Sparta as a *polis* settled in five villages located around the citadel. On the organization of Sparta *kata komas* and the related historiography see Lupi 2014, pp. 103-108.

28 Paus. 3, 2, 6.

of Agiad and Eurypontid families, according to myth both descendant of Herakles and hence equal in authority.[29] The demigod had a special relevance in Spartan pantheon,[30] because he restituted Sparta to king Tyndareus – previously overthrown by Hippocoon, killed by Herakles – so that the *polis* was in turn passed down to his heirs.[31] Therefore, this Achaean Sparta was the prelude and the justification to Dorian Sparta.

Indeed, as stated in ancient legends, the Spartans were descendants of the Dorians, a community who invaded Greece and acquired dominion over the previous local inhabitants.[32] Several of these Dorians, named Herakleidai,[33] shared a mythical lineage with Herakles and supposedly rushed at the Peloponnese from north, conquered at least a part of Laconia, deposed its previous rulers and founded the city of Sparta at the northern edge of the Eurotas plain, on the western bank of the river.[34] This conquest was supposed to have taken place around the 12th cent. BC.[35]

Nevertheless, this Herakleid-Dorian myth may be interpreted as a story that aims to explain various populations' movements in the Peloponnese[36] and should legitimize not only the kingship, but also the acquisition of lands and especially the Spartan domination of Messenia.[37]

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29 Cartledge 2002, p. 106.

30 Herakles' labours were represented in the major temple of Athena *Chalkioiokos* on Spartan acropolis, as stated by Paus. 3, 17, 3. Other references on Herakles' role in Sparta are discussed in Rita Sassu's contribute.

31 Lupi 2017, pp. 21-23.

32 The legend of the Dorian invasion varies according to ancient authors. The most detailed accounts are provided by Diod. 4, 57-88; Apollod. 2, 8, 1-5, who rework some version of the myth dated back to the 4th cent. BC.

33 The earliest reference to the Herakleidai comes from Tyrt. fr. 2 West and other references to the story are attested in Hdt. 9, 26, 2-27, 2; Th. 1, 9, 2; Diod. 4, 57-58. Herodotos in particular stresses the physical connection to the myth of Herakles and traces the lineage of the Spartan kings continuous back to him. The topic is thorough discussed in Hall 1997, pp. 55-67.

34 The most compact account of the Dorian invasion of Lakedaimon is given by Ephor. *FGrHist* F 117, 118, 16; Hdt. 4, 145-149; Paus. 3, 1-2; 7, 1-4, although their accounts diverge. For a detailed discussion of the traditions concerning Spartan conquests, see Kõiv 2003, pp. 69-140.

35 Kõiv 2015, p. 26.

36 Lupi 2017, p. 23; Malkin 1994, pp. 34-43.

37 Malkin 1994, pp. 34-35.

Foreign politics and myths appropriation

In this regard, the first Messenian war marked a first attempt of Spartan expansion at the middle of the 8th cent. BC, enduring for three centuries and resulting in the complete conquest of Laconia region.[38] Therefore, from the 8th cent. onwards, Sparta started a foreign politics of subjugation, which included the colonization of new territories oversea[39] and a new expansion outside Laconia, northwards in Argolis and Arcadia, aiming to conquer the whole Peloponnese.

Among these military campaigns, it is particularly interesting the conquest of Tegea, in Arcadia, occurred in the middle of the 6th cent. BC.[40] The wars against Tegea were supported by the religious order of the oracle of Delphi, on whose behalf Orestes' bones were finally stolen by the Spartans in order to obtain the conquest of the *polis*,[41] after the previous humiliation in the "Battle of the fetters".[42] Orestes' relics were then translated and re-buried in the Spartan *agora*, likewise the bones of Theseus in Athens, a location generally dedicated to the founder of the *polis*.[43]

Nevertheless Orestes, differently from Theseus, was not the founder of Sparta; in addition, Strabo[44] argues that the first founders were Eurysthenes and Procles, although they never gained the title of *archegetes*; finally, the "national" Spartan hero remained Lycurgos.

It is noteworthy that Orestes, son of Agamemnon, was not the first Atreid to be included in Spartan genealogy. His insertion was the

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38 On Messenian wars: Paus. 4, 4-23; Tyrt. Fr. 5 West; Funke-Luraghi 2009, pp. 110-134; Luraghi 2008; Cartledge 2001. The annexation of Messenia determined the favorable socio-economical conditions that allowed the hegemony of Sparta in the Peloponnese and in the Greek world. Indeed, it is noteworthy that Sparta's downfall during the 4th cent. BC coincided with the loss of the control over Messenia.

39 Malkin 1987; Malkin 1994.

40 Hdt. 1, 66-68.

41 A thorough account of the prediction of Delphic oracle is in Nafissi 2014.

42 Hdt. 1, 67-68. Spartan army was defeated in the "Battle of the Fetters", after which they were enchained with their own wooden fetters, reduced to slavery and forced to measure the entire plain of Tegea. These fetters were then exposed by Tegeans in their temple of Athena Alea, visited by Herodotos.

43 Fragkaki 2016, pp. 285-302. As previously stated, the possession of some heroic relics clearly gave power to the *polis* in which the hero was allegedly buried, so communities tried to acquire bones in order to strength their political position over the neighborhoods. See also Ekroth 2002, p. 125.

44 Str. 8, 5, 5.

peak of a sort of research of an Achaean past that had started at least a century before, with the creation of the Spartan cult of Agamemnon; moreover, Agamemnon's brother, Menelaos, had already a Spartan tradition since the late 8th cent. BC.

The reason may be searched in the ancient ethnic tradition of Laconia: the Achaeans were the first inhabitants of the Peloponnese before the arrival of the Dorians; thus, the Dorians probably tried to recover the continuity with the past in order to legitimize the right of the Spartan kings to proclaim themselves as descendants of the (epic) Achaeans too.[45] This could have suggested the idea of adding new Achaean/Homeric heroes to the "proper" Spartan heroes:[46] Agamemnon, Orestes, Tisamenos and Menelaos.

The Achaean tradition: the *Menelaion*

Menelaos is mentioned as king of Sparta by Homer, therefore among the earliest[47] heroic cult places in Sparta's *chora* there is the *Menelaion*.

The sanctuary is located in the ancient region of Therapne,[48] on a narrow plateau c. 5 km south-east of the modern city; its institution comes back to the 7th cent. BC, although a Mycenaean settlement,[49] regarded as the Palace of Menealos, was already present.

Stratigraphic analyses of the *Menelaion* attested three main architectural stages.[50] The first phase included the foundation of the sacred *peribolos* and the altar between the end of the 8th-early 7th cent. BC. The second phase is dated back to the archaic period and it is linked to a general monumentalization of the entire area. At this stage, the shrine known as the "Old *Menelaion*" consisted in a small cella

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45 Lupi 2017, pp. 89-90.

46 Greco 2014, pp. 52-53.

47 Bravo 2009, p. 13; Antonaccio 1995, pp. 155-166; Antonaccio 2005, p. 102; Catling 1976, p. 34.

48 Paus. 3, 9; Plb. 5, 14, 21.

49 Catling 1992, pp. 429-431; Catling 1976, p. 34. Because of the Mycenaean settlement in the area surrounding the *Menelaion*, this shrine was probably deliberately established in an area of Mycenaean worship, which can be dated from the 14th to 12th cent. BC. Furthermore, H.W. Catling also identified a gap in the finds of c. 500 years, which ranges from the end of the Mycenaean activity on the hill, up to the founding of later cult.

50 Catling 1976; Catling 1977a; Catling 1977b.

made of porous rectangular stones and was provided with a pediment, a roof with terracotta tiles and akroteria; at the same time the so-called Great Pit,[51] where the majority of the votive offerings was recovered, was cut few meters north-east of the temple. Its nature and function are unknown, nonetheless the pit was supposed to provide access to Helen and Menelaos as heroes-chthonic beings and it was probably regarded as a sort of door into the world of Helen's brothers, the Dioskouroi, who were said to have lived under the earth at Therapne.

The edifice was in use up until the 5th cent. BC, when it was demolished in order to be substituted by another one, whose remains are still visible today. This Classical period *Menelaion*, also renamed "New *Menelaion*" was provided with a large crepidoma, a monumental altar, statues or a *naiskos*.[52] This suggests that honors were dedicated to the patrons of the shrine.

The "New *Menelaion*" was one of the largest monumental buildings in Laconia; not long after the classical shrine's initial construction, a buttressing conglomerate terrace in ashlar was built on the east and south sides of the retaining wall, with the aim of increasing the structure's ground plan, which reached the measure of 25.5 x 19.5 meters, providing additional space for major dedications. The cutting of a cistern near the north wall of the shrine dates back to this period; its fill contained many of the extant structural fragments of the "Old *Menelaion*", as well as an inscribed dedication to Menelaos found during 1970's excavations.[53]

The earliest mention related to the cult's recipients of the *Menelaion* comes from the 7th cent. BC author Alkman;[54] another reference is given by Herodotos[55] and the history of the deformed girl who was turned

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[51] Its nature and function are unknown, but the pit may have probably served as a door into the world of Helen's brothers the Dioskouroi, who were said to live in the *Phoibaion* underneath the shrine (Paus. 3, 20, 2; Pind. 11, 61-2; Plb. 5, 18, 21).

[52] Catling 1976, p. 24. During this phase the shrine was rebuilt on the top of a rectangular earthen mound, surrounded by a retaining wall of ashlar blocks, with a ramp that led to the monument, while a buttressing wall was constructed in order to improve the stability of the edifice, mined by the erosion phenomenon. Catling 1976, p. 42 has indeed plausibly suggested that the Classical shrine was built in the aftermath of the Persian Wars (499-479 BC); alternatively, the shrine may have been built in the aftermath of the earthquake of 464 BC (Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, p. 112).

[53] Catling, Cavanagh 1976.

[54] *PMG* fr. 14.

[55] Hdt. 6, 58-61.

into the most beautiful girl of Sparta by Helen herself, after her nurse brought her at the "temple of Helen" at Therapne, located above the *Phoibaion*.

It is noteworthy that, although the name refers to the male character of the couple, under many respects here Helen was the main recipient of cult, as attested by the Spartan *Heleneia* and other rituals and festival in her honor.[56]

In this regard, the votive deposit recovered at the site restituted a great quantity of offerings dedicated to the couple, particularly to Helen, i.e. a bronze *aryballos* with incised a boustrophedon inscription reciting «Deinis offered to Helen, wife of Menelaos»; a bronze *harpax* dated to 570 BC, with the name of the worshipped heroine, "Helen". During the excavations, both expensive votives in refined materials – items in gold, silver or gilt silver, ivory and bones,[57] bronze rings,[58] pins,[59] miniature vases,[60] a female statuette,[61] fibulae,[62] bronze vessels[63] – and cheap lead figurines (figs. 2-3) were recovered. Furthermore, the dedications include sundry paste dedications, like beads and several pierced scarabs, as well as iron implements, including two ploughshares and fragments of assorted weaponry.[64]

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[56] Parker 2016, p. 1. The presence of a festival in her honour seems supported by literary evidence, since Helen led a chorus of young girls in E. *Hel.* 1465-78 and in Ar. *Lys.* (1296), a manifesto of Helen's association with young girls. Literary evidence may also provide some information regarding the performance of festivals at the site. Besides the processions and festival mentioned by Theokritos' *Epithalamion of Helen*, Hesychios reports that maidens were carried to Helen's place in *kannathra*, wicker carriages, sometimes decorated with representations of deer and vultures. *Kannathra* are previously mentioned by X. *Ages.* 8, 7 as carriages used for festivals in Sparta to transport maidens to Amyklai on the occasion of the *Hyakinthia*. But also Plu. *Ages.* 19 references *kannathra* and specifies that young girls ride in them during processions. Furthermore, he explicitly mentions the Laconian festival *Heleneia*, probably connected with the urban sanctuary and performed at springtime at Sparta, during which the maidens anointed the plane tree with olive oil. See Calame 2017, pp. 177-201; Pomeroy 2002, p. 145; Zweig 1999, p. 163.

[57] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, pp. 142-144.

[58] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, pp. 144, 146, 148.

[59] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, pp. 144, 146, 148.

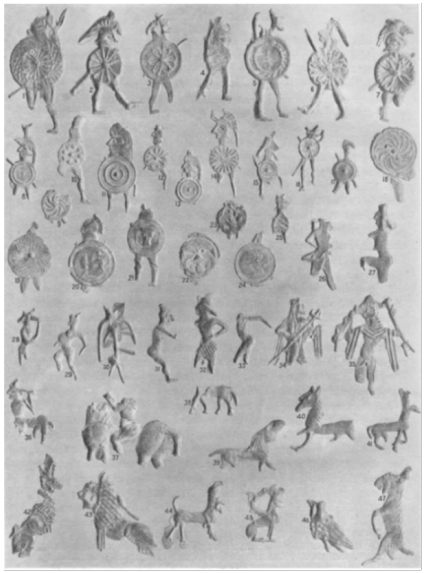
[60] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, p. 146.

[61] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, p. 146.

[62] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, p. 147.

[63] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909; Catling 1976, p. 38; Catling 1986, p. 211.

[64] Catling 2009, pp. 265-266.



(above) Fig. 2. Lead figurines representing lions and sphinxes (© BSA; Wace et alii 1909).

(on the left) Fig. 3. Lead figurines representing warriors and horses (© BSA; Wace et alii 1909).

Besides the abovementioned votive objects, hundreds of terracotta figurines (fig. 4) representing lions, female figurines, horse and rider, *protomai*, and others, were discovered during the excavation carried out at the beginning of the last century;[65] the archaeologists also brought to light a large quantity of pottery[66] which includes samples dating from

[65] Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, pp. 116-126. One of the most remarkable terracotta items is the fragmentary house model with a porch *in antis*, recovered in the Mycenaean area of the site, which could provide a reconstruction of the houses present in the settlement during the Late Bronze Age. See Catling 2009, pp. 276-278.

[66] On Laconian pottery see, Lane 1934, pp. 99-189; Stibbe 1998, pp. 64-74; Pipili 2018,

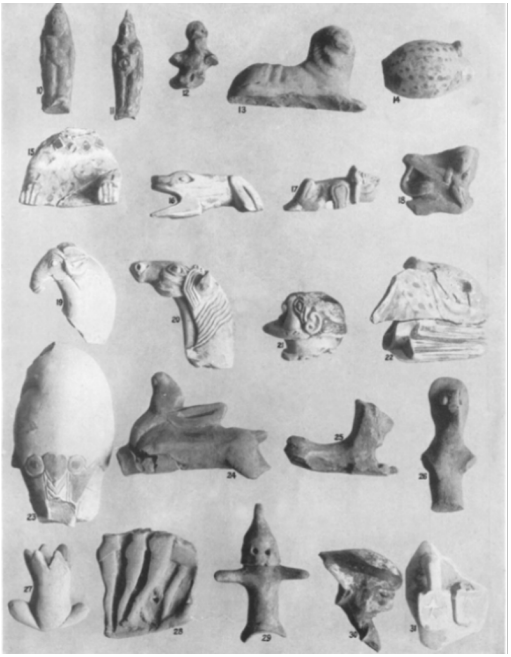


Fig. 4. Terracotta figurines from the *Menelaion* (© BSA; Wace et alii 1909).

the early 7th cent. onwards, such as *lakainai*, kraters, *kantharoi*, *skyphoi*, mugs, tripods cooking pots,[67] fragments of panathenaic amphorae.[68] Instead, the discovery of thousands of lead figurines deserve a separate discussion: widespread since the 7th cent. BC. and similar to those found at the sanctuary of Orthia,[69] mainly representing animals, mythical creatures, flautists, dancers, warriors and horses, they may validate the hypothesis of some sort of rituals performed at the site.[70]

All these votives reflect the whole Spartan community, with no distinction of social classes and gender. The site was primarily used by the people of Sparta and the inhabitants of the adjoining neighbourhoods; the variety of votives found at the site suggests that

pp. 124-153.

67 Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, pp. 150-157; Catling 1976, pp. 38-41.

68 Dawkins et alii 1908-1909, p. 114; Catling 1976, p. 41.

69 Dawkins 1929; Pomeroy 2002, p. 115.

70 For the complete analysis of the lead figurines recovered during 1970's excavations see Cavanagh, Laxton 1984, pp. 23-36.

it was used by men and women indistinctively, differently from the severe separation of gender activities of Spartan society.

The huge quantity of votive offerings, the elaborate architectural program attested by reconstructive analyses,[71] the longevity of the site's activity, reveal that the *Menelaion* was one of the most important religious centres in Sparta, together with the sanctuary of Orthia and the *Amyklaion*, which share similar kinds of votives.

Helen and Menelaos were considered heroes elsewhere, but material, epigraphical and literary evidences show that their cult in Sparta was expressed in a similar manner as those cults that belonged to supernatural beings, receiving a kind of adoration that is somewhat distinct from that dedicated to "common" heroes. They were known for their mythological past, focused on Helen's abduction by the Trojan prince Paris and her recovery by her husband Menelaos, but neither of their cult site at Sparta refers to this incident; Helen and Menelaos of Therapne have completely abandoned Troy and their past, and they are celebrated as new entities with supernatural features. This doesn't mean that Helen and Menelaos were not regarded as heroes in Sparta, since Pausanias states that they were allegedly buried at the *Menelaion*; on the contrary, their cult demonstrates how flexible Greek religion was and how the boundaries of heroic/divine could be crossed.

Therefore, it seems that the role of the *Menelaion* was that of a ritual temple or monument, that may have been one of the most important sites in Spartan society due to its size and position overlooking Sparta, a place where all the inhabitants could express their devotion and perform ritual practices regardless their social status.

The *Menelaion* ceased to function around the 4th cent. BC, together with the gradual decline of Sparta, although its fame and remains lasted so long that Pausanias could gather information about it.

The cult of Agamemnon

An important complex, especially in Archaic period, is the sanctuary of Agamemnon and Alexandra, which was the local name of Kassandra, the daughter of king Priam of Troy.[72]

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71 Catling 2009.

72 Farnell 1921, p. 321. Alexandra was identified by the locals as the daughter of Trojan king Priam, thus she was undoubtfully the Trojan princess Kassandra; because

The site of the sanctuary in which the heroic couple was worshipped is located in modern Amyklai, about 6 km south of Sparta, in the middle of the Eurotas plain. While Xenophon[73] and Polybios[74] provide information about the location of the village of Amyklai, the position of the shrine dedicated to Agamemnon and Alexandra is noticed by Pausanias.[75] More specifically, he quotes a temple dedicated to Kassandra, an alleged grave of Agamemnon in the nearby and also a statue of Klytaimnestra.[76]

According to archaeological evidences,[77] the heroic cult was practiced since at least the early 7th cent. BC, although the sanctuary itself has not yet been excavated; thus, the cult's age could be even earlier,[78] and may have developed together with the other hero-cults in Laconia, and more generally, in Greece.

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she was the sister of Paris, also called Alexander, the shift of her name seems quite natural, because as Alexandra, she was the sister of Alexander.

73 X. 6, 5, 27-30.

74 Plb. 5, 19, 2.

75 Paus. 3, 19, 6.

76 Pausanias mentions an *agalma* of Alexandra in her *hieron* at Amyklai. According to G. Nagy, Klytaimnestra's image might have functioned as a reminder of the couple's violent and unfair death. Nonetheless, this was presumably a sculptural work of a different kind from the statue of Alexandra, with no cultic function. It might have been erected to facilitate the impression that Amyklai had been the seat of Agamemnon, disputed also by Mycenae; but, on the other side, her representation could have been part of a sculptural group depicting the murder of Agamemnon and Kassandra, according to myth; moreover, there are no evidences of ritual practices or cults performed in honour of Klytaimnestra, nor at Amyklai, nor anywhere in Lakonia; Nagy 1999, p. 21. See also Salapata 2002a; Pirenne-Delforge 2008, pp. 275-278.

77 In 1955, the discovery of a great number of terracotta objects led to the investigation of an area located north of the church of Agia Paraskevi, in the southern part of the village. The then *ephor* of antiquities, C. Christou, carried out the excavations between 1956 and 1961. A large deposit was discovered and inside it thousands of objects were retrieved, dating from the early 7th to the 4th cent. BC; among these items, a dedicatory inscription on a 5th cent. BC vase disclosed the names of the recipients of cult, Agamemnon and Alexandra, establishing that such a deposit consisted of votive offerings related to a specific place for their cult. Moreover, a second deposit, similar to the first, was discovered in 1998 excavation. According to these archaeological evidences, the period of greatest activity has to be placed between the 7th and 6th cent. BC, but the shrine continued to be in use also afterward. See Hope Simpson 2009, p. 320.

78 Antonaccio 1994b, p. 104; Salapata 2011, p. 52; Salapata 2014. In particular Phillips 2003, p. 314: «the memory of Agamemnon as an Achaian king could have been maintained through the Dark Ages with a local cult practiced there by the Amyklaians, newcomers to the polis, in order to counteract their new status and assert their antiquity and legitimacy». *Contra* an earliest dating is, for example,

Fig. 5. Hellenistic honorary decree (© Archaeological Museum of Sparta; photo by the author).

As noticed by Pausanias, Kassandra was here celebrated as the main owner of the sanctuary, probably for the violent death she suffered, murdered with Agamemnon by his wife Klytaimnestra and her lover Aegisthus. Indeed, Greeks had special fear of those who suffered a violent and unavenged death and worshipped these special deceased with unique ceremonies.[79]

The importance acquired by Kassandra is formally stated by a Hellenistic decree (fig. 5) and a marble throne that explicitly mention a "temple of Alexandra", besides the large quantity of votives to the heroic couple. These offerings, mainly terracotta plaques locally produced – probably in or near Sparta – could be dedicated

Finglass 2007, p. 103, who argues for an original cult at Amyklai dedicated to Agamemnon, worshipped as Zeus, and Alexandra, subsequently transformed in the cult of Agamemnon and Alexandra. This hypothesis would also legitimate the correspondence with the cult of Zeus/Agamemnon cited by Lycophron (*Alexandra*), although this was probably a pure invention of the poet (Salapata 2011). On the contrary, other scholars suggest that Agamemnon was a Laconian character, only in a later time "exported" into the Argive myths; Hall 1997, pp. 89-93, and Malkin 1999, pp. 41-50.

79 Larson 1995, p. 132.

(above, on the left) Fig. 6. Terracotta plaque with snake and seated man holding *kantharos* (© Archaeological Museum of Sparta; photo by the author).

(above, on the right) Fig. 7. Terracotta plaque with seated man, snake and attendant (© Archaeological Museum of Sparta; photo by the author).

(on the left) Fig. 8. Terracotta plaque with seated man holding *kantharos*, attendant and snake (© Archaeological Museum of Sparta; photo by the author).

to Kassandra alone or to Agamemnon (fig. 6) and show the typical iconography of the Laconian hero-relief, i.e. the seated couple[80] (figs. 7-8), which is particularly spread around the 6th cent. BC.[81]

The figure of Amyklaian Agamemnon is also enigmatic. It is noteworthy that throughout the "appropriation" of an Achaean hero such as Agamemnon, who was traditionally buried at Mycenae,[82] the

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[80] From the early 5th cent. BC, an evolution of this iconographical typology led to the gradual disappearance of the female figure, leaving the scene to the alone seated male. The male-seated figure is often holding a cup of wine, sometimes accompanied by a female figure seated by the male or standing before him. A snake, sometimes bearded, may be also present, together with tiny worshippers in the act of approaching the heroic couple.

[81] Salapata 1993; Salapata 2011; Salapata 2014; Salapata 2015.

[82] Homer generally situates Agamemnon at Mycenae, but a passage from *Od.* 4, 512-47 describes him as running into a storm off Cape Malea (the peninsula located on the

Spartans tried, on one side, to relate their recent history to a pre-Dorian past, since Achaeans were the inhabitants of Peloponnese before Dorian invasion; on the other side, this could be viewed as an attempt to the construction of a communal identity in order to strengthen the Spartan hegemony over the Peloponnese and also outside Laconia.[83] Furthermore, the Spartans probably tried to establish a cultural and political continuity between Achaean and Doric tradition and the Spartan diarchy; in particular, this may justify the presence of a shared kingship between Agamemnon and his brother Menelaos.[84]

This association would have involved the manipulation of traditions and myths, attempting to create legendary connections with the surroundings through heroic ancestors,[85] creating a sort of new "Achaean policy" founded on the common mythical descendant, particularly promoted during the 6th cent. BC by Chilon.[86] Nonetheless, it is also possible that the Laconian cult of Agamemnon arose and spread aside from strictly political motivations; likewise, the Spartans may have adapted a pre-existing local tradition associating it with a new cult.[87]

The different reports on the location of the graves of Agamemnon and Kassandra may depend in part to early variations in the literary tradition concerning the place in which they were killed. The tragedians Sophocles[88] and Aeschylus[89] locate their death in Argolid, respectively

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southern shore of Laconian region), suggesting the existence of an alternative early tradition whereby, on his return from Troy, Agamemnon landed not to Argolid but to Laconia. Therefore, the Atreides received cult in two Peloponnesian towns, Mycenae and Amyklai, equally claiming for being the site of his tomb. As Salapata 2011, p. 39 argues, these claims reflect the local character of the hero-cult and, at the same time, they show the political importance of the heroes' relics.

83 Hall 2007.

84 Pucci 2015, p. 36. L. Sbardella underlines the similarity between the military diarchy led by Agamemnon and Menelaos, and the military and religious Spartan diarchy institution; Sbardella 2005, pp. 101-102. This is also supported by the diffusion of the Laconian version of the history of Agamemnon and Orestes since the 7th cent. BC.

85 Salapata 2014.

86 On Chilon's ideology see Stibbe 1985, pp. 11-16.

87 Salapata 2002b; Salapata 2014. This thesis is also supported by J.M. Hall who places the Laconian tradition of Agamemnon before the Argolid one, thus confirming that there were not political reasons for the introduction the Laconian version; Hall 1997, pp. 90-93.

88 S. *El.*, beginning of the 5th cent. BC.

89 A. *Ag.* written between the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th cent. BC.

at Mycenae and Argos,[90] while Euripides[91] varies on both these *poleis*; on the contrary, Stesichoros and Simonides,[92] in their respectively *Oresteia* place the death of the heroes in Laconia. In addition, Pindar,[93] at the middle of the 5th cent. BC, specifically mentions Amyklai as the place of the murder,[94] a narrative that may confirm the formalization of the Laconian version at that time,[95] probably promoted by the Spartans themselves for their aspiration of becoming the sovereigns of Peloponnese.[96]

In this regard, it is worthy to mention an event described by Herodotos.[97] Immediately prior to the Persian invasion of Greece, the Spartans sent an embassy to Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse, requesting assistance. Gelon accepted, but only on the condition that he would assume the supreme command of the Greek defence; nevertheless, the Spartan Syagros, delegate at Syracuse, claimed that «the Pelopid Agamemnon would wail greatly if he learned that the Spartans had been robbed of hegemony by Gelon and the Syracusans», attesting the great importance acquired by Agamemnon in Spartan tradition of 5th cent. BC.[98]

In any case, the Atreid heroes would have played an important function as symbols of local history and identity,[99] therefore their propagandistic use by the Spartan community may have served to counteract the recent historical events happened in the territory, going

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90 Hall 1997, pp. 92-93. Mycenae generally benefited from the Homeric promotion of Agamemnon, though his importance never supplanted that of Perseus: while the latter was the recipient of a hero cult by at least the third quarter of the 6th cent. BC, Agamemnon had to wait until the resettlement of Mycenae in the Hellenistic period.

91 Euripides's *Iphigenia Taurica*, end of the 5th cent. BC.

92 Fr. 276 Page.

93 Pi. *P.* 11, 31-33.

94 D.D. Phillips argues that this Laconian version spread parallel to the expansion of the Peloponnesian League. See Phillips 2003, pp. 314-315.

95 Prag 1985, pp. 78-79

96 Hall 2007. J.M. Hall promotes the hypothesis concerning an earlier tradition related to Agamemnon and Alexandra at Amyklai, instead of Mycenae, because according with the author the local Mycenaean tradition would have favored Perseus lineage, rather than the Atreides' one.

97 Hdt. 7, 159.

98 Translation of Salapata 2002b; see also Salapata 2014.

99 *Contra* the propagandistic use of Menelaos and Agamemnon's cult see Malkin 1994, pp. 31-33.

back to an ancient heroic past.[100] Sparta needed a tradition founded on solid mythical/historical bases, and Agamemnon was the leader of a Panhellenic army, therefore he could be used as mythical model of Spartan leadership in the Peloponnese.[101]

Orestes and Tisamenos

Besides Agamemnon and Menelaos, other members of Agamemnon's family were worshipped in Sparta. Nonetheless, no archaeological remains, nor votives, are associated to the heroic cult places in the Spartan *agora* dedicated to Orestes and his son Tisamenos; indeed, the evidences are represented by the accounts provided by Pausanias[102] and Herodotos,[103] and a *corpus* of tragedies written by Stesichoros, Simonides, and later authors which testify the general prominence of the cult in honor of the Achaean heroes in Laconia.

In this regard, ancient authors' description of the incident of Oreste's bones and their translation to Sparta may provide a clarification about the importance acquired by Agamemnon's son in the *polis*. According to Herodotos, slightly before the middle of the 6th cent. BC, the Spartans had defeated in war each enemy, excluding the Arcadian Tegeans.[104] Spartan army had collected humiliating defeats over the Tegeans, thus they enquired the oracle of Delphi to receive divine protection in order to beat the enemies. The god finally replied that the Spartans would win, but he would grant them only Tegea and not the entire Arcadia region.

Moreover, the Pythia enigmatically explained that, in order to succeed, they would have to bring to Sparta the bones of Orestes, without specifying where to find his remains. At this point of the history, Herodotos argues that this "repatriation" of Orestes' bones seemed compensate for a sort of lack of honor towards the hero, who has not been adequately worshipped by the Spartans: accordingly,

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100 Antonaccio 1999, p. 117; Malkin 1994, pp. 32-33.

101 Salapata 2014.

102 Paus. 3, 11, 8.

103 Hdt. 1, 67-68.

104 Spartans probably intended to helotise Tegea as they did in Messenia. See on the topic Phillips 2003, p. 301; Cartledge 1972, p. 137.

they attributed the previous defeat to the anger of some supernatural beings.[105]

Few years later, probably around 560 BC, Sparta launched a Second Tegean War under kings Anaxandridas and Ariston. The Spartans felt still unable to discover Orestes' tomb, therefore they newly asked to the oracle of Delphi where to find it, finally receiving the astonishing news that the bones of the hero were somewhere in Tegea.[106]

The Spartan Lichas discovered by chance the remains of the Atreides, thanks to the naïve advisory of a Tegean blacksmith, and used trickery to steal the bones from the Arcadian *polis*. Moreover, with the recognition of Orestes' relics, Sparta finally defeated Tegea.[107]

Following Herodotos' account, the bones were then re-buried in a grave in the Spartan *agora*, thus creating a hero-cult place in the focal administrative and political area of the city.[108] This sacred place was preserved as late as the 2nd cent. AD, when Pausanias could still see the grave.[109]

By gaining Orestes' bones, Sparta had taken possession of an important artefact, whose supernatural power was highlighted by the huge size of the hero's bones.[110] On the contrary, the Tegeans, who had left their power, did not merely accept the superiority of their enemies,

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105 Hdt. 1, 67-68; Nafissi 2016, p. 633; Nafissi 2014, pp. 299-301; Camassa 2011, pp. 24-25.

106 M. Fragkaki suggests taking into account that other poleis ignored Sparta's supposed political or hegemonic claims based on Orestes; nonetheless, a local Tegean cult of Orestes could exist at that time; Fragkaki 2018, p. 288. In addition, G. Camassa argues that it could be possible that a Spartan cult of Orestes could have been invented *a posteriori*. The interpretation and analysis of an eventual Tegean cult of Orestes is in Camassa 2011, pp. 27-33; Pucci 2015, pp. 40-41.

107 Hdt. 1, 65 provides as a probable dating for the end of this second war against the Tegeans the year 546 BC. In Herodotos, the account of the conflicts between Spartans and Tegeans and of the foundation of Orestes' cult, it's the peak of a retrospective excursus linked to the drafting of the alliance with king Cresus, under the reign of kings Anaxandridas and Ariston. Indeed when Cresus, king of Lydia, sent an embassy to Sparta requesting alliance in that year, Sparta had already subjugated the greater part of the Peloponnese, as stated at the beginning of the account (Hdt. 1, 68). Therefore, the topic of this excursus is the growth of Sparta, and the recovery of the bones of Orestes are viewed only as a practical measure in order to reach the goal. Reference in Phillips 2003.

108 As G. Salapata notes, since Orestes, as husband of Helen's daughter Hermione (Paus. 1, 33, 8), succeeded Menelaos on the throne of Lakedaimon, the recovery of his bones and their reburial in Spartan soil would have seemed legitimate. See Salapata 2014; Phillips 2003, pp. 311-312.

109 Paus. 3, 11, 8.

110 Huxley 1979, pp. 145-148.

but rose up against them for the sacrilege perpetrated, being newly defeated.[111]

While the affair of Orestes' bones has been described such in detail by ancient authors, the recognition of the relics of his son Tisamenos has attracted less attention. The evidence, in this case, is provided by Pausanias,[112] who gives an explanation of Tisamenos' history in the section concerning the description of Achaia. Following his account, Tisamenos had been buried by the Achaeans in Helike,[113] but afterwards the Spartans, at the request of the Delphic oracle, relocated his bones to Sparta. As for his father, his grave was still visible during the 2nd cent. AD, in a place near the Spartan *agora* where the Lacedaemonians took the common dinner called *Pheiditia*.[114]

This large number of cult places consecrated to Agamemnon (and Alexandra), Menelaos (and Helen), Orestes and Tisamenos, and the important value associated to these locations by the Spartan community, may suggest, on the whole, that the Spartans tried to establish a cultural and political continuity between Achaean and Doric tradition and the Spartan diarchy, formally justified by the presence of a shared kingship between the two brothers Agamemnon and Menelaos.

Two interpretations could be provided in this respect: on one side, this geographical manipulation of traditions and myths should have improved the connection with the surroundings throughout their common ancestors, creating an Atreides' Laconian tradition; on the other side, the possibility that the Spartans adapted a pre-existing local tradition and associated it with a new cult should not be ruled out. In any case, the Atreid heroes may have played an important function as symbols of local history and identity, counteracting the Spartan recent history in the territory and going back to an ancient pre-Doric heroic past. Therefore, this sort of propagandistic use of the Spartan

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111 Fragkaki 2018, p. 295.

112 Paus. 2, 18, 6-8; 3, 1, 5-6; 7, 1, 7-8.

113 The most common tradition is that with the return of the Herakleidai, Tisamenos led the Achaeans to Peloponnesian Achaia, leaving Laconia. There in Achaia, in the *polis* of Helike, he was defeated and finally killed by the Ionians. This tradition is particularly attested by Ephor. *FGrHist* F 18b-c., Plb. 2, 41, 4, Pausanias, Strab. 8, 7, 1, while Hdt. 1, 145 does not mention the hero but only the defeated Ionians refugee at Helike. Instead, according to Apollod. 12, 8, 3, Tisamenos was killed by the Herakleides while they were crossing the gulf of Corinth.

114 Paus. 7, 1, 8.

community, mainly formalized in the Archaic period, was finally strengthened by the "repatriation" of the bones of Orestes and his son Tisamenos in the period of the major Spartan expansion outside Laconia, also supported by a religious tradition that was at the base of the recovery of their supposed relics, aiming to justify the conquests.

Conclusion

The cult of Agamemnon could have been established to furnish a justification to political acts, in order to conciliate the Spartan recent history with a more ancient mythical past. The cult of Orestes strengthened this tradition and acts as a revenge for the death of his father Agamemnon, unfairly murdered. The bones of Tisamenos, besides creating relationships with the Achaeans or exhibiting their subjugation to the power of Sparta, were used to placate the anger of his father Orestes, accomplishing a second revenge for his murder. By founding a cult in honor of Tisamenos, his avenged father was also honored.

However, the shortage of information doesn't help in recognizing a precise moment for the translation of the heroes' relics to Sparta: while Orestes' bones recovery could have occurred around the middle of the 6th cent. BC, after the Second Tegean War, as noticed by Herodotos, the "repatriation" of Tisamenos' relics may have followed that of his father, most likely due to another oracular order.

Thus, it is possible that, after bringing Orestes' bones to Sparta, the Spartans aimed to strengthen their hegemony over the northern and southern Peloponnese, by "taking possession" of both his son Tisamenos and his father Agamemnon, giving them a special relevance during the 6th cent. BC. Furthermore, an ethnic significance has been also proposed[115] for this political action performed in a warfare regime: by establishing a cult in honor of Orestes, who would had ruled not only at Mycenae, inherited by his father Agamemnon, but also at Sparta, an inheritance of his uncle Menelaos – obtained through the marriage with Hermione, Menelaos and Helen' daughter – he would have been able to reunify in his person the northern and southern Peloponnese hegemony of Sparta.

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[115] Phillips 2003.

At the middle of the 4th cent. BC this operation was finally completed, leading to a twofold interpretation of the appropriation of the Achaean myth: on one side there was the will of creating a relationship with the pre-Dorians, on the other side there was the wish of a continuation and expansion of an existing politics, thus completed throughout the assimilation of Agamemnon's family with Sparta.

Therefore, on the whole, it is possible to assume that Spartan heroic cults follow the general pattern of development and the overall chronological growth of the phenomenon elsewhere documented in the Greek world, with a significant evolution in the Archaic and Hellenistic period. Nevertheless, these hero-cults assume in Sparta a specific social and political connotation that distinguish and set them apart from the rest of the other Greek *poleis*, creating a unique local tradition which is attested in Sparta only.

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Themistocles must be destroyed: Sparta confronts a rising Athens

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Keywords: Themistocles, Sparta, Grand Strategy, Thalassocracy, Hetoemaridas.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: Θεμιστοκλής, Σπάρτη, Υψηλή Στρατηγική, Θαλασσοκρατία, Ετοιμαρίδας.

Abstract:

In this article, we evaluate Spartan views about Themistocles. We argue that Themistocles, via a grand strategy that he conceived and impeccably implemented, not only established the foundations for the Athenian empire, but furthermore fathered a "Thalassocratic" theory of victory against which the Spartans had no counter strategy, spare domestic constitutional and economic reform (internal balancing) and an alliance with Persia (external balancing). However, constitutionally rigid and averse to domestic political reform as they were, the akratic and rigidly continentalist Spartans opted for a risky, second-best strategy that would necessitate Athenian mistakes. Consequently, they aggressively targeted Themistocles – the man whom they had once honored as the savior of Greece – by defaming him and supporting his domestic opposition, the pliable philo-Laconian aristocrats who called for risky Athenian campaigns against Persia. With Athens imperially overstretched by undertaking offensive operations against Persia in Asia minor and beyond, the

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Lacedaemonians hoped that this prototypical divide et impera strategy would sustain Spartan hegemony over Hellas.

Σε αυτό το άρθρο μελετούμε τις εκτιμήσεις των Σπαρτιατών για τον Θεμιστοκλή. Ο Θεμιστοκλής με την στρατηγική του τέχνη δεν έθεσε μόνο τα θεμέλια της Αθηναϊκής αυτοκρατορίας, αλλά πολύ περισσότερο αποκρυστάλλωσε μια θαλασσοκρατική θεωρία νίκης απέναντι στην οποία οι Σπαρτιάτες δεν είχαν απάντηση, εκτός και αν μεταρρύθμιζαν την εσωτερική πολιτική και σοσιο-οικονομική τους τάξη (εσωτερική εξισορρόπηση), και συμμαχούσαν με τους Πέρσες (εξωτερική εξισορρόπηση). Όντας όμως συνταγματικά δύσκαμπτοι και πολιτικά αντιμεταρρυθμιστικοί, οι Σπαρτιάτες επέλεξαν μια συντηρητική αλλά υποβέλτιστη στρατηγική η οποία για να είναι επιτυχής προαπαιτούσε Αθηναϊκά λάθη. Οι Σπαρτιάτες λοιπόν συκοφαντήσαν τον Θεμιστοκλή – τον άνδρα που είχαν προηγουμένως τιμήσει ως σωτήρα των Ελλήνων – και υποστήριξαν τους πολιτικούς του αντιπάλους, τους φιλολακωνικούς Αθηναίους αριστοκράτες οι οποία πρότασσαν επικίνδυνες αντιπερσικές εκστρατείες. Με την Αθήνα σε αυτοκρατορική υπερέκταση εξαιτίας των επιθέσεων εναντίον της Περσίας στην Ασία, οι Λακεδαιμόνιοι ήλπιζαν ότι αυτή η πρότυπη στρατηγική του διαίρει και βασίλευε θα συντηρούσε την Σπαρτιατική ηγεμονία στον Ελληνικό κόσμο.

Paul Rahe, a renowned modern historian of ancient Sparta, recently declared that Themistocles' most pivotal strategic foresight was not the warning about the vengeful return of the Persians post-Marathon, but rather the alarm concerning Sparta's decision to crush Athenian power after the end of the Persian Wars.[1] What made Athenian power so fearful to the Spartans after Salamis, and what role did Themistocles play in founding that power and accurately realizing that the Spartans would eventually decide to turn against their former ally? In this article, we trace the tension and unfolding events between thalassatocratic Athens and resentful Sparta in the early aftermath of the Persian Wars. We explore Spartan views of Athenian power and offer a strategic interpretation of historical evidence in order to evaluate Spartan responses to the rise of Athens in the immediate aftermath of the Persian wars. We begin with a presentation of Themistocles' strategic accomplishments in setting the foundations of Athenian power, providing an overview of his theory of victory against Persia. We argue

[1] Rahe 2022; Rahe 2021.

that the same theory of victory based on a strategy of "Thalassocracy", which was used to defeat Persia, was indeed sufficient to prevail against Sparta, a threat that the Spartans had become apprehensive of immediately after the end of the Persian Wars.

We then explore Sparta's strategic debate concerning optimal responses to this Themistoclean "Thalassocracy". Instead of emulating Themistoclean strategy and fighting the Athenians at sea as it was originally proposed, the Spartans decided to target Themistocles himself, namely, to destroy his political influence in Athens.[2] They consequently conspired with his political enemies in Athens – the aristocratic coalition led by Cimon – to achieve that goal. Unlike Themistocles, who wanted to recalibrate Athenian strategy by focusing Athens' strategic attention on the imminent Spartan threat, Cimon – a philo-laconian – supported an ambitious and aggressive strategy of "Athenian imperial overextension" against Persia in Asia.[3] While successful in the short-term (as Spartan machinations did indeed drive Themistocles out of Athens and turned Athens against Persia), Sparta's strategic choice constituted a suboptimal response; its success was not based primarily on Spartan strategic agency, but instead on the uncertain if not tenuous hope that Athens would abandon Themistocles' strategic prudence and commit strategic blunders.

Themistocles and the rise of Athenian Thalassocracy

To understand the threatening strategic environment that Sparta faced after the end of the Persian Wars, one needs to first consider the radical power redistribution which Athenian military victory had brought to the Hellenic interstate system. The key agent in achieving this restructuring of power was Themistocles.[4] The importance of Themistocles as the savior of Hellas cannot be overstated.[5] Thucydides himself admired Themistocles for his outstanding capacity to lead

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2 Emulation is a concept widely used in Kenneth Waltz's Theory of International Politics. The father is German historian Otto Hintze; Waltz 1979; Hintze 1975.

3 In fact the Athenians would eventually suspect Cimon's unreasonable favorability towards Sparta and ostracize him in 461 BC; Connor, 1992, p. 59. Kagan makes it clear that Cimon openly argued for an «aggressive war against Persia accompanied by friendship with Sparta»; Kagan 2012, p. 62.

4 Platias, Trigkas 2022.

5 For a summary on the available literary and archeological resources pertaining Themistocles see Podlecki 1975; Lenardon 1978.

Athens not only in times of war, but most crucially in times of peace, that is, by setting the strategic foundations for victory and empire long before Salamis. In Thucydides' words, Themistocles «thought that becoming seamen gave the Athenians a great advantage in the acquisition of power (indeed he was the first person bold enough to tell them to stick to the sea) and he directly helped to establish the empire».[6] In fact, Themistocles is the only individual appearing in all three sections of Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian war: the Archeology, the Pentekontaetia, and the Peloponnesian war.

In Archeology (that is, an account of Greek prehistory: 1, 2-19), Thucydides develops an abstract model for power generation (δυναμις) that consists of four material components: a navy, wealth, walls, and hegemony/empire.[7] According to Thucydides, cities which turned to the sea and developed strong navies increased their relative power *vis a vis* their competitors. By turning to the sea, naval power (ναυτικον) could defend the city or project power abroad; in the latter case, naval power permitted unobstructed trade and therefore granted access to accumulating wealth (περιουσία χρημάτων). Those accumulated financial resources (the wherewithal for defense) could then be employed to develop fortifications (τείχη) capable of ensuring adequate defensive capability, which would in turn provide core security.[8] With fortifications completed and thereby its existential security assured, the sea power state could use its naval power to extend its reach by consolidating an empire (αρχή). This seemingly natural continuity emerges because as the hegemonic power grows, smaller states would recognize that their own security interests lay in voluntary submission to the maritime hegemon, yielding a climate conducive to power band wagoning. Hegemony thus generates tribute in return for security assurances. As these tributary states contribute to the hegemon's treasury, the hegemon's financial resources grow rapidly. This relationship ultimately yields a virtuous circle of ever-increasing power and influence.[9] As wealth and naval power encourage commerce, while secure walls limit the existential security risk, the upward cycle of power seems potentially unlimited. This

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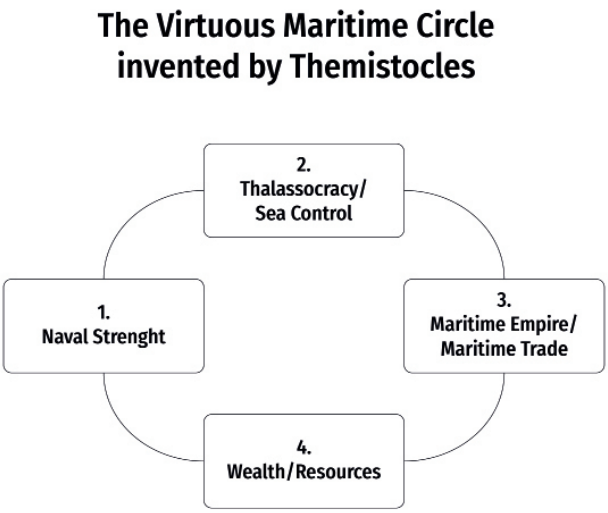
6 Th. 1, 93.

7 Kallet-Marx 1993.

8 Th. 1, 15, 2.

9 Romilly 1963; Ober 1978.

positive feedback operates as a flywheel of a navy, commerce, tribute, and the wherewithal for war, all able to sustain the rising empire.[10]



The Spartans debate responses to Athenian Thalassocracy

This exemplary model of Thalassocracy (i.e., command of the sea being the architectonic element of hegemonic power) did not occur naturally; according to Thucydides, its conception and implementation can be sourced directly to Themistocles' stellar strategic agency (Table 1). Themistocles had foreseen the Persian threat and moreover saw in Thalassocracy the ultimate theory of victory for Athens to defeat Persia.[11] Yet, the power that Themistocles generated turned out to be a double-edged sword for the Spartans.[12] On the one hand, it was Thalassocracy that saved them (and all of Hellas) from the Persians. On the other hand, however, the relentless growth and hegemonic momentum of Athenian Thalassocracy weakened Sparta's relative power position *vis a vis* Athens in the Hellenic inter-state system. Immediately after the Persian retreat, the Spartans and their allies realized that the power with which the Athenians defended the Hellenic coalition would itself be hard to defend against.

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10 Nash 2019, p. 100.

11 Th. 1, 93; Plu Them. 4.

12 Powell 1988, pp. 107-109.

Moreover, Thucydides and Pseudo-Xenophon (echoed by Plutarch) introduced an important insight concerning the very nature of Thalassocracy: that it is to be perceived as inherently "offensive". This conclusion springs from both the virtuous maritime cycle just described and the atypical civic *ethos* that seamanship cultivates.[13] In fact, in 435 BC at the crucial assembly of the Peloponnesian league before the outbreak of the major Peloponnesian war, the Corinthians described the Athenians as daring and relentlessly expansive.[14] In the words of the Corinthian representative, the Athenians

> are revolutionary, equally quick in the conception and in the execution of every new plan; (...) They are bold beyond their strength; they run risks which prudence would condemn; and in the midst of misfortune they are full of hope. (...) With them alone to hope is to have, for they lose not a moment in the execution of an idea. This is the lifelong task, full of danger and toil, which they are always imposing upon themselves. None enjoy their good things less, because they are always seeking for more. To do their duty is their only holiday, and they deem the quiet of inaction to be as disagreeable as the most tiresome business.[15]

Overall, the structural shift in the balance of power coupled with the indefatigable nature of Athenian character frightened the Spartans to such a degree that they were prepared to initiate a preventive war in order to destroy Athenian Thalassocracy as early on as 475/4 – much earlier than the outbreak of the first Peloponnesian war in 460 BC and the major one in 431 BC.[16]

As Diodorus Siculus observed, in 475/4 BC – just five years after the battle of Salamis – the Spartans were resentful for having lost the command of the sea to the Athenians, witnessing more generally the rapid decline of Spartan leadership over Hellenic affairs. At a meeting held at the Spartan council of the elders (Γερουσία - Gerousia), the initial and overwhelmingly popular proposition was that Sparta should wage an outright offensive against Athens so that Sparta could

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13 Pse.-X. 19. Also see Romilly 1975.

14 According to political philosopher Seth Jaffe, Themistocles personifies the Corinthian portrayal of the Athenians; Jaffe 2022.

15 Th. 1, 70.

16 The argument is valid even if one considers the date of the so-called "first Peloponnesian war" at 460 BC. See among others, Rahe 2019, pp. 61-65.

"regain the command of the sea".[17] Although Diodorus does not provide any further historical details about the plan, the most plausible scenario would be for Sparta to build a navy of its own and seek out a decisive battle at sea against Athens. Indeed, Diodorus recounts that the Spartans were thrilled as they imagined the newly founded wealth that would flow into their city.[18] It seems, then, that the Spartans had well understood the close connection between Thalassocracy and self-sustained imperial wealth – the very flywheel between wealth and power described above. A purely land-based offensive would be difficult to achieve, as by 475 BC Themistocles had already built strong fortifications (walls) around both Athens and the Piraeus port. If the Spartans were to simply march against Athens and seek out a decisive land battle, it is highly improbable that the Athenians would take the challenge and fight on land, a situation that many decades later the Spartan king Archidamus also predicted when he examined the Athenian potential response to Sparta's land invasion of Athens before the outbreak of the major Peloponnesian war.[19] With Piraeus impenetrable behind its sturdy walls, the Athenian navy could support Athens throughout a prolonged siege while simultaneously attack the shore of the Peloponnese, perhaps even inciting a revolt of the Helots in Sparta. It seems, therefore, much more likely that the originally popular Spartan strategy in 475/4 was a clear strategy of emulation, that is, the birth of a Spartan Thalassocracy achieved by building a navy which would seek a decisive battle against Athens at Sea.[20]

However, during the crucial debate in the Spartan Senate, Hetoemaridas, a respected member of the gerousia, rejected the idea

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17 Diod. 11, 50.

18 See the excellent analysis Hornblower 2011, p. 10.

19 To be sure in 460 BC the Spartans did march against Attica and the Athenians overestimating their power offered them battle at Tanagra which the Athenians lost. That was not a decisive battle, however. The Athenians seems to have learned from that mistake and since then, they never attempted to fight the Spartans on land. For a comprehensive analysis of Athenian - Spartan typology of grand strategies during the Peloponnesian War see Platias, Koliopoulos 2010.

20 The debate was to be repeated in 432 BC with Archidamus making the argument that Sparta should prepare for naval war against Athens and Sthenelaidas arguing in favor of a land campaign. In 432 it seems that the option to divide and rule by supporting a philo-Laconian domestic political group was not available as Athens had by then signed a peace treaty with Persia, and crucially, bipartisanship that Sparta was the enemy had been established in Athens' domestic politics; Hornblower 2011, p. 10.

of a preventive war at sea, an approach which would necessitate architectonic and herculean preparations on the Spartan side.[21] Hetoemaridas went against the tide of popular opinion, Diodorus argues, and ultimately still won the argument.[22] Although Diodorus does not describe in detail Hetoemaridas' counterargument to Thalassocracy, Spartan behavior post 474 BC implied that Hetoemaridas argued for a strategy of *divide et impera*, a strategy which could work only if Themistocles were driven out of Athenian politics.

It seems that Hetoemaridas and his associates had done their homework about Athenian domestic politics.[23] After the end of the Persian Wars, the perennial divide between the *hoi polloi* (democrats) and the aristocrats persisted in Athens. Themistocles remained in charge of the democrats while Cimon was in charge of the aristocratic coalition.[24] Crucially, the two leaders differed radically in the respective strategy that they proposed for Athens after the end of the Persian Wars.[25] Cimon was an unadulterated imperialist who sought imminent expansion for the Athenian empire to the East, urging a direct clash with Persia under the promise of prompt enrichment (immediate gratification). To that end, he was willing to undertake prolonged naval campaigns in Asia Minor and beyond. Moreover, Cimon was pathologically attached to the Spartans.[26] He had named one of his children Lacedemonius (after the name of Sparta/ Lacaedemon) and admired the Spartan oligarchic polity (perhaps had he had the power himself, he could have enforced oligarchy in Athens, too).[27] Themistocles, on the other hand, was fully cognizant of the very real dangers of far-flung naval campaigns close to the heart of Persian power. He knew that as long as Athens had command of the sea over

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21 Diod. 11, 50. Diodorus dates the debate to 475, but some historians are skeptical, dating it earlier: 478 or 477 BC. This doesn't affect the strategic argument in this paper as both the walls and the Amphictyonic council had already happened by 478/7; Green 2006, p. 111.

22 For a discussion about the historical accuracy of the 475 BC Spartan assembly see Kagan 2012, pp. 378-379.

23 Plu. Them. 20, 3; Frost 1980, p.174.

24 For a discussion of the political developments in Athens during this period see Smith 2021, pp. 183-195.

25 Grundy 1948, p. 163.

26 Grundy 1948, p. 163; Plu. Cim. 16.

27 Cimon was also acting as the honorary Spartan proxenus (ambassador) to Athens. That screams of a "conflict of interests".

the Aegean, Persia would be hindered significantly in initiating a new offensive campaign against Greece after the former's decisive defeat at Salamis. But, Persia was fully capable of concentrating an invincible force in Asia, a force which Athenian expeditionary forces would be unlikely to defeat. For Themistocles, the clear and present danger after Salamis was not Persia but Sparta.[28] For Themistocles, a lasting peace among the Greeks could only be achieved if Sparta was weakened.[29]

It is thus almost self-evident that between Themistocles and Cimon, Hetoemaridas could easily see that the latter figure, if empowered, could offer Sparta a victory without a war.[30] Cimon looking to the East would overstretch and weaken Athens, draining Athenian resources to fight Persia in its own powerhouse. Then, the most probable outcome would be a stalemate that would weaken both Athens and Persia, thereby allowing Sparta to sustain its unrivaled hegemony over mainland Greece.[31] We can thus imagine Hetoemaridas concluding his speech in the gerousia by the following words: "Themistocles must be destroyed". In fact, the Spartan mistrust of Themistocles personally, and Themistocles' reciprocal mistrust of Sparta, were deep and long. Three bilateral strategic interactions during and immediately after the Persian Wars made this mutual distrust fully evident: a) allied strategy before and at Salamis, b) the Athenian fortification project after the end of the Persian Wars, and c) the Amphictyonic Council of Hellenic states in 478 BC.

A. Disagreement about allied defense strategy: Sparta passes the buck at Thermopylae and confronts Themistocles at Salamis

After Themistocles had drastically reformed Athenian domestic polity and set up the foundations for naval power, he turned to external balancing: the formation of an anti-Persian coalition. However, success in that endeavor was far from ensured. The majority of the Greek city-states in Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Central Greece, and the Aegean had decided to bandwagon toward the Persians instead of balancing against them. To counter this Persian advantage, Themistocles

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28 de Ste Croix 1972, p. 176.

29 Meiggs 1972, pp. 319, 387.

30 For a brilliant analysis demonstrating the contrast between Themistocles and Cimon see: Rahe 2019, pp. 94-109.

31 In fact, for the Spartans the Aristocrats in Athens had long been seen as more amenable to Spartan interests; Grundy 1948, p. 232.

doubled-down on an Athenian alliance with Sparta. In that allied relationship, however, he would have to carefully navigate issues of prestige, resolve Athenian disputes with Spartan allies, and constantly remain vigilant to Spartan buck-passing to Athens.

And so he did. Themistocles ended the prolonged confrontation that Athens had with the island of Aegina, an ally of Sparta but a geo-economic competitor to Athens. Crucially, despite being himself the shaper of the Hellenic alliance in the first place and although his home state Athens had by far the largest navy in the Hellenic world (approximately two thirds of the combined Hellenic fleet), Themistocles willingly surrendered command of the coalition, including command of the naval force, to the Spartans. By keeping a low profile and deferring to Spartan prestige, he preserved the cohesion of the Hellenic alliance at a critical moment. Themistocles subordinated the prestige of his city in order to maximize the odds of victory, all by keeping the Greeks united. To maintain the indispensable coalition with Sparta, he had to spend his own political capital at home to persuade the Athenians who contested Spartan command over the Athenian fleet.[32]

Moreover, Themistocles had to muster all of his diplomatic craftiness to manage divergent strategic interests between the Athenians and the Spartans, especially as the latter attempted to "pass the buck" to the former. Originally, the Hellenic coalition had drawn the first defensive line at the Tempe vale in Northern Greece.[33] That line was hardly a defensible location and eventually the Greek coalition forces (still under the guidance of Themistocles) decided to pursue a joint effort: forming an amphibious defense line farther south at the narrow passage of Thermopylae and the straits of Euboea (Artemision).[34] The new location was ideal for combined arms operation.[35] The Spartans would provide the land force at Thermopylae whereas the Athenians would mostly provide the naval force at Artemision. Though historiography has immortalized the dauntless contribution of the Spartans with the 300 hundred warriors and King Leonidas falling heroically after the betrayal of Ephialtes, in fact, Athens pulled

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32 Plu. Them. 7, 3.

33 Hdt. 7, 173.

34 Burn 1962, p. 362; Green 1996, p. 94.

35 For an analysis of advantages of Artemision from the perspective of Themistocles see Hignett 1963, pp. 153-155.

its own weight; Themistocles had wholeheartedly committed a fleet of 180 ships and approximately 36.000 men to fight the Persian fleet at Artemision.[36]

The large discrepancy in the material contribution of the two allies speaks volumes about their respective strategic priorities. Apparently, the Peloponnesians were suspicious of this line of defense which involved sending their contingents so far north, and according to some historians, they yielded only under pressure from the Athenians who threatened to secede.[37] In fact, it seems that the Spartans had – on religious pretexts – intentionally dispatched a limited land force instead of a major army.[38] After Sparta's halfhearted effort at the battle of Thermopylae, the pass was predictably lost – sooner than expected – and nothing could stop the Persians from marching South to invade Attica and destroy Athens. Considering the events of Thermopylae and Sparta's aversion to commit a large force outside of the Peloponnese, as Thucydides reports, the Athenians complained bitterly to the Spartans about allied burden-sharing and openly accused them of buck passing:

> We maintain that we gave you more help than we received. You provided your support from cities that were still your homes and that had every intention of continuing to inhabit in the future. You did so fearing more for yourselves than for us – at any rate you failed to come forward while we were still undamaged. We on the other hand set forth from a city that no longer existed and risked our lives for one surviving as a slender hope, and so played our part in saving you as well as ourselves. But if we had gone over to the Persians at an earlier stage, as others did, in fear for our territory, or if we had later lacked the courage to embark on our ships believing ourselves to be defeated, no further sea battle would have been required, since you would have had insufficient ships and the enemy would then have furthered his cause just as he wished without recourse to arms.[39]

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[36] Herodotus calculated a total commitment in Thermopylae of 3.100 hoplites from the Peloponnese, mostly Arcadian peasants, including a bare 300 Spartans, which is astonishingly few by comparison with the 23.800 hoplites who fought in Plataia, Hdt. 7, 202; 9, 28. As Plutarch mentions, Pindar in fact recognized that Artemision not Thermopyle was the most important of the two early battles; Plu. Them. 8, 2.

[37] Grundy 1901, p. 270.

[38] Green 1970, p. 111.

[39] Th. 1, 73.

Yet Themistocles, having foreseen Sparta's limited commitment to a northern defensive line, had already meticulously prepared for this contingency. With the so-called Themistoclean decree issued before the Battle of Thermopylae and Artemision, he was ready to take the Athenians afloat.[40] The Themistoclean strategy to evacuate the city and relinquish it into the hands of the enemy with the hope of regaining it at sea remains one of the boldest strategic maneuvers ever recorded. It furthermore highlights the difficulty that Themistocles faced in making the Spartans wholeheartedly commit to the defense of Athens.

After the evacuation of Athens, Themistocles insisted that the allied coalition fight a naval battle at the straits of Salamis close to the southern shores of Attica.[41] The Spartans and their Peloponnesian allies, however, planned to move out of the straits of Salamis and fight in the open seas closer to Isthmus (the thin land corridor connecting Attica to the Peloponnese) where the bulk of the Greek ground forces were stationed. Themistocles sharply dissented to the Spartan plan, arguing that ships could save the Greeks not at Isthmus but at Salamis, offering lucid operational and tactical advantages in his explanation.[42] The Spartans, however, were hardly persuaded. Heretofore, navies had played no decisive role in the military affairs of the Greek world. Moreover, the agrarian, land-locked Spartans who commanded the Hellenic coalition could not grasp the full potential of naval power and its complex operationalization. Most of all, the conservative Spartans were blinded by their anti-Athenian ideology, for they were not keen to trust their fate in the hands of the poor, landless Athenian rowers that manned the majority of the Greek fleet.

Confederate deliberations on the location of the battle became heated. The Spartan commander Eurybiades, who had only minimal naval experience, became enraged by Themistocles' vocal dissent. He verbally insulted Themistocles and moved to rap him. Themistocles, however, kept his calm and, in a phrase that has since become legendary, he told Eurybiades, "smite but hear me",[43] as he continued to argue unfeignedly in support of choosing Salamis as the optimal

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40 For a discussion about the arguments associated with the Themistoclean Decree see Fornara 1967, pp. 425-433.

41 Strauss 2005.

42 In fact Herodotus makes it clear that had the Greeks fought at Isthmus the Persians could had easily bypassed the land forces; Hdt. 7, 139, 3-4; 8, 60.

43 Plu. Them. 11, 3.

location for the battle. Additionally, Themistocles responded with calm decisiveness to the personal insult promulgated by the Corinthian admiral Adeimantos that a «man without a country was not endowed to an opinion about war strategy».[44] Rarely in Greek history has a powerful statesman shown deference to issues of status and prestige.[45] Yet, Themistocles did just that and in doing so decisively glued the Hellenic alliance together. All the giants of ancient historiography, Herodotus, Thucydides, Diodorus, and Plutarch, credit Themistocles single-handedly for creating and defending the strategic conditions that gave the Hellenes the opportunity for victory against the Persians.

In short, the strategy of Themistocles found triumphant attestation in Salamis. Athens stood supreme as the savior of Greece – soon to become known as the "school of Hellas". With this victory in hand, the seeds for the Athenian Empire had already been planted. However, one important lesson that the Athenians learned from the Salamis campaign was that, in any future Hellenic coalition, all of the strategic, operational, and tactical decisions must be made by the Athenians themselves, so as to avoid the traumatic and counterproductive allied deliberations under Spartan supreme command. To be sure, after the Battle of Salamis the Spartans honored Themistocles with the highest honors ever given to a non-Spartan. Decades later, on the eve of the Peloponnesian war, Thucydides reports that Athenian ambassadors to Sparta did not forget to remind the Lacaedemonians that Themistocles had once saved their city in a time of danger:

> … the three most valuable contributions to the [Hellenic coalition] cause came from us: the largest number of ships, the shrewdest of the generals and the most wholehearted commitment. Towards the total of four hundred ships we contributed a little less than two-thirds. Themistocles was the commander and the man largely responsible for the policy of fighting in the straits, which was undoubtedly our salvation and the reason why you paid him greater honour than any other foreign visitor.

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[44] At the time the conversation took place the Persian's had already burnt Athens to the ground and the Athenians had fled and were thus "stateless"; Hdt. 8, 61. This incident highlights the inefficiency and the fragility of the allied command structure and the continuing inter-city strife within the Hellenic alliance that Themistocles had to constantly manage with prudence.

[45] In fact, in the Heliad, the foundational epic of Hellenic civilization, the struggle for prestige between Achilles and Agamemnon drives the narrative of the Greek inability to fight united. The search for glory and recognition was central in the Hellenic cultural code.

> And we showed exceptional nerve and commitment: when there was no one to help us on land and everyone right up to our borders was already enslaved, we were the ones who made the decision to abandon our city and sacrifice our property; but not even then did we desert the common cause of our remaining allies, nor did we withdraw our services by dispersing; instead we resolved to embark on our ships and face the danger, without resenting the fact that you had earlier failed to come to our aid.[46]

While Thucydides reports the honors given by the Spartans to Themistocles, other historical sources mention the Spartan strategic motives behind this seemingly kind gesture. Diodorus claims that the Spartans wanted to satiate Athens' pride after Salamis because they feared her naval power.[47] In the aftermath of Salamis, the Spartans exerted their influence over their allies through decisions of awarding (or withholding) prizes of valor. However, neither Athens nor Themistocles won any prize, an omission which apparently enraged the Athenians. Accordingly, the Spartans were concerned that Themistocles, who enjoyed much popularity among the Greeks, would soon find a way to retaliate against them. Therefore, they eventually bestowed upon him double the numbers of gifts and honors than was given to those whom had first won the prizes for valor immediately after Salamis.[48]

The clear theme describing Spartan-Athenian relations during the Persian Wars is that their alliance was very much uneasy. The Spartans were already apprehensive of Athens' naval power as well as the strategic boldness of its leadership. Those concerns would only intensify in the years immediately after the end of the Persian Wars.

B. The Spartans oppose Themistocles' Athenian fortifications project

After the decisive naval victory at Salamis and the withdrawal of the Persian forces from mainland Greece, Themistocles doubled down on naval primacy by strengthening the Athenian fleet of triremes (via a naval construction project of twenty new triremes annually).[49] To complement this naval expansion, he expanded Athens' land

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46 Th. 1, 74.

47 Diod. 11, 27.

48 Diod. 11, 27.

49 Diod. 11, 43.

fortifications.[50] To be sure, Athens' naval power could prevent a renewed Persian offensive; so then why did Themistocles go to such great lengths to fortify Athens on land? Being an impeccable forecaster (ἄριστος εικαστής), Themistocles foresaw that Athens' walls would neutralize the Spartan advantage over land warfare. Having realized that Sparta's formidable land armies could invade Attica at any time, just as they had in fact done in 510 BC to interfere in Athenian domestic politics and establish regimes friendly to Sparta (basically, to turn Athens into a quasi-satellite state), Themistocles spared no effort to prevent such an eventuality. However, the Spartans did not fail to notice.[51]

Even as far back as in 493 BC when Themistocles became the top elected leader (ἄρχων) of Athens (three years before the Battle of Marathon), he had advocated for the building of a wall to fortify the newly established port of Piraeus.[52] He initiated the project, but he did not complete it due to fierce opposition by the conservative aristocratic landowners who foresaw the impact of a fortified port on shifting the socio-economic center of gravity of Athens away from land and towards maritime commerce. As Thucydides narrates, Themistocles fully understood the immense strategic value of Piraeus: «he thought that Piraeus was more valuable than the upper city... because he considered the place to be exceptional with its three natural harbors... and would advise the Athenians, if a day should come when they were hard pressed by land, to go down to Piraeus in order to defend themselves from any attack with their fleet».[53] The Athenians indeed paid a heavy price in 480 BC for having rejected Themistocles' earlier advice to build the walls. When the Persians invaded Attica, Athens was defenseless. The Athenians, to be sure, followed Themistocles' contingency planning and abandoned the city as the Persians razed it to the ground. But after the stunning defeat of Xerxes' mega-fleet at Salamis, Themistocles was empowered politically and thus did he renew his efforts to have the fortifications finally built. This time, however, the opposition came from abroad.

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50 Th. 1, 93, 8; Diod. 11, 42-43.

51 In fact for the Spartans the Aristocrats in Athens had long been seen as more amenable to Spartan interests; Grundy 1948, p. 232.

52 Th. 1, 93.

53 Th. 1, 93.

Thucydides describes that the Spartan allies – presumably those at the Saronic Gulf: Aegina, Corinth, and Megara – took their concerns about Athenian fortifications directly to Sparta.[54] The Spartans realized that an all-powerful Athenian navy in tandem with an impenetrable port would prevent the Spartan armies from invading Attica for a repeat of regime change à la 510 BC. As Thucydides describes: «realizing Athenian intentions (to build the walls), the Spartans sent an embassy to Athens... They recommended to the Athenians not to build walls but rather to join with them in demolishing all the walls surrounding cities outside the Peloponnese that were still standing. They did not reveal their true objectives in this or the suspicions they harbored towards the Athenians».[55] Seeing the imminent danger of a preventive Spartan invasion, Themistocles once again resorted to his typical methods as a sterling statesman: persuasion, deception, and a fait-accompli. Indeed, he personally paid a visit to Sparta to reassure the Spartans that the Athenians had no fortification plans. Meanwhile, he had already given clear directions to the Athenians for a speedy and intensive wall-building program that would mobilize every Athenian, including women and children (πανδημεί). When the walls reached a height which was defendable, Themistocles revealed the fait-accompli and duly informed the Spartans that Athens should be treated as an equal and not a subordinate state.

> ... Themistocles went to the Spartans and told them openly then and there that his city was now well enough walled to protect its inhabitants and that if the Spartans or their allies wanted to send envoys to them they would in future be dealing with men who had a clear sense both of their own interests and of the general good. He said that when they had decided to abandon the city and take to their ships they had taken this bold decision without involving the Spartans, while in all their joint consultations the Athenians had proved themselves second to none in terms of judgment.... they could only have a similar or equal voice in the common counsels from a position of matching military strength.[56]

The Spartans, as Thucydides put it, «did not express any open signs of anger against the Athenians... Nonetheless they did feel secretly

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54 Th. 1, 90.

55 Th. 1, 90.

56 Th. 1, 91.

embittered...».[57] As Themistocles was both the mastermind and the executioner of the ambitious Athenian fortification project, it was he that naturally drew the Spartan wrath.[58]

The strategic implications of Themistocles' insistence on land fortifications were profound, so the Spartans had every reason to feel frustrated. Athens had rendered irrelevant the main source of Spartan power, the awesome phalanx. The walls could afford the Athenians a place of refuge should the Spartans ever stage an invasion of Attica by land. Protected behind their walls, the Athenians would not need to undertake a painful evacuation such as in 480 BC. Moreover, with unfettered access to the sea, the Athenians would not need to defend the agricultural land of Attica outside the city walls, defenses that might otherwise entail risky land battles against superior Spartan ground forces. Finally, with a well-protected port, Athens was no longer dependent upon the agricultural production of Attica (and hence its landowners and its farmers), but rather upon the navy and its crews who kept the sea-lanes of communication open for the importation of food (and other goods) into Piraeus. As long as Athens controlled the sea, food supplies could be imported and the Athenians could hold out against any Spartan invasion of Attica. Athens, in essence, was transformed from a defenseless agricultural city at the mercy of Spartan phalanxes to a well-defended island and a commercial superpower.[59] The Themistoclean walls therefore become the cornerstone of the growth of Athenian power. Athens' walls were a «breakout strategy that rendered Sparta's traditional strategy of dominating Greece in decisive land battles».[60] Beyond any doubt, the Spartans had become enraged with Themistocles for these impressive strategic accomplishments. The events that followed at the Delphic Amphictyonic convention in 478 and Themistocles' decisive diplomatic intervention there would be the last straw.

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57 Th. 1, 92.

58 One may criticize the Athenians for their overreaction seeking prestige, yet it is known that the Spartans treated other Greeks disrespectfully; Hornblower 2011, chapter 13.

59 See the excellent analysis of C. Constantakopoulou; Constantakopoulou 2007, chapter 5.

60 Hanson 2013, p. 36.

C. Sparta and Themistocles at the Amphictyonic Conventions of 478 BC

At the first Amphictyonic convention that occurred after the end of the Persian Wars, discussions about the *antebellum* order in the Greek world were fervent. The Spartans, thinking strategically but hiding their true motives behind a veil of morality, «introduced motions that all cities which had not taken part in fighting against the Medes had to be excluded from the Hellenic alliance».[61] Against this ploy, Themistocles realized that if the Spartan motion were to pass, then it would give Sparta a useful diplomatic instrument by which to exclude major city-states in Thessaly, as well as the Argives and the Thebans, from the Hellenic league. The Spartans would then be capable of overwhelming the decision-making process and "carry through their own wishes". Decisively and persuasively, Themistocles intervened against the Spartan motion, going on to become the champion of the smaller city states against Sparta.[62] Themistocles demonstrated that only thirty-one Greek city-states had actively taken the side of the Greeks during the Persian Wars, and that the majority of these were quite small. Excluding the vast majority of the Greek city-states from the Hellenic league would entail that the league «be at the mercy of the two or three largest cities».[63] In fact, as Plutarch argues, this particular intervention of Themistocles made him extremely obnoxious to the Spartans and their plans. The Spartans, Plutarch goes on to say, therefore «tried to advance Cimon in public favor, making him the political rival of Themistocles».[64] Here, Plutarch makes it fully evident that the general direction of Spartan strategy had already moved towards a policy of infiltration of and influence in Athenian domestic politics. For the Spartans and their goals, the aristocrats in Athens should be empowered and Themistocles had to be destroyed.

Sparta turns against Themistocles

Given Themistocles' strategic acuity and his decisiveness in neutralizing Spartan leverage over Athens, it is not really surprising

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61 Plu. Them. 20, 3.

62 Badian 1993, p. 122.

63 Plu. Them. 20, 3.

64 Plu. Them. 20, 3.

that the Spartans turned against him.[65] Thucydides mentions that Themistocles was ostracized from Athens probably around 472/1 BC. Upon his departure, he first took residence in Argos, a powerful Spartan enemy in the Peloponnese which Themistocles had protected at the Delphic Amphictyonic conference of 478 BC. Themistocles, according to Thucydides, began «to take frequent trips in other parts of Peloponnese too», apparently promoting anti-Spartan views and sentiments.[66] These trips may have included Laconia and Messina, which together constituted the geographical area where the Helots were in a numerical majority and thus prone to revolt.[67] Furthermore, Themistocles managed to promote democratic reforms in Elis and Mantinea, thereby undermining Spartan influence in these cities. He was also the probable architect of an anti-Spartan axis bringing together the cities of Argos and Tegea.[68] The Spartans responded to these various provocations by doubling down on their strategy to destroy Themistocles fully and forcefully.[69] To that fervent end, they promoted a conspiracy theory that Themistocles had colluded with Pausanias – a Spartan traitor – to betray the Hellenic coalition to the Persians. As Thucydides reports: «Arising from this Medism of Pausanias, the Spartans sent envoys to Athens to accuse Themistocles of complicity too, which they had discovered in their investigations into Pausanias, and they recommended that he be punished in the same way (death penalty)».[70]

Thucydides does not provide any further details on the evidence that the Spartans presented against Themistocles, nor does he make any comments as to why the Athenians were so easily persuaded by the Spartans. We know only from Diodorus that the only charge made against Themistocles by the Spartans was that Themistocles had not made public what allegedly Pausanias had revealed to him about his treasonous designs.[71] Plutarch argues on similar lines.[72]

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65 Rahe 2021, pp. 20-21.

66 Th. 1, 135.

67 Powell 1998, p. 109.

68 Rahe 2019, pp. 100-105.

69 Kagan 2012, pp. 52-55.

70 Th. 1, 135.

71 Diod. 11, 54-55.

72 Plu. Them. 22-23.

No primary source, however, presents any adequate evidence that directly implicates Themistocles in Pausanias' treasonous medism. Nevertheless, the Spartans enacted quite effectively an operation to defame and destroy Themistocles by promoting this conspiracy theory and colluding with his political rivals in Athens – the Aristocrats.

As Paul Rahe has rightfully argued: «It is conceivable that, when the Spartans charged at Athens that Themistocles was complicit in Pausanias' plot, they were lying. He knew who Athens' real enemy would be… If I am right, had he had his way, the great conflict between Athens and Sparta that erupted in 461 and burst forth again in 432 and 414 would have begun in 470 or soon thereafter».[73] It is now clear why the Spartans set forth to destroy the architect of Athenian power and the founder of Athenian hegemony in the Hellenic world: with Themistocles steering the Athenian ship of state, Spartan hegemony had an expiration date.

Yet, although the Spartans managed to have Themistocles ostracized from Athens and eventually even persecuted him from all of Greece, Themistocles had imprinted the inalienable DNA of thalassocracy all over Athens: the strategically located port of Piraeus, the awesome fleet of triremes, the impenetrable city walls, the mobilization of the Athenian population to a degree no other Greek city had achieve before, the flow of tribute to Athens, and overall, the fundamental momentum of thalassocracy that set in motion the everlasting increase of Athenian power. Themistocles, moreover, had left behind a crucial theory of victory by which Athens would remain invincible as long as it continued to command the seas and prudently avoid imperial overextension. Indeed, it would be exactly the strategy that Pericles would pursue against Sparta when the major Peloponnesian war erupted in 432 BC.[74]

Conclusion: Why not Spartan Thalassocracy?

The state makes war and war makes the state, a renowned scholar of political theory once declared upon studying the evolution of

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[73] Rahe 2022.

[74] Platias, Koliopoulos 2010, pp. 35-60. For a very recent discussion of Themistocles' exemplary leadership see: Kissinger 2022, pp. 16-18.

European polities.[75] The aforementioned bellicist argument is as follows: successful states that win wars become models which other states emulate. However, this process of emulation is not deterministic. Rather, it necessitates reformist leadership that is able to confront powerful domestic vested interests and often radically reshape the very polity of a state.[76] This prerequisite is in fact something that Themistocles paradigmatically accomplished in 5th cent. Athens by singularly setting the foundations for thalassocracy and the consequent "thalassocratic" theory of victory against both Persia and later Sparta. Although Herodotus and Thucydides have referred to thalassocracy as a strategy born in truly island states (namely, Polycrates of Samos being the historical founder of thalassocracy, while King Minos of Crete being the legendary one), Themistocles went even further.[77] He combined wealth, a navy, and walls to turn a backwater, non-insular city-state into a true naval superpower. The walls at Piraeus and the larger city turned Athens into a quasi-island.[78] Athens would then enjoy both the defensive and commercial benefits of its artificially created insular geography in addition to the extant advantages of contiguity with Attica's landmass.[79] Overall, this virtuous cycle of naval primacy, accumulating commercial wealth, imperial expansion, and ever-increasing power naturally made the Spartans extremely apprehensive. Yet, why is it the case that the Spartans did not even attempt to emulate the Themistoclean thalassocratic model of power generation?

The 475 BC debate at Sparta makes it evident that they at least considered it, only to be dissuaded by Hetoemaridas, as previously discussed. The Spartans apparently realized that to achieve thalassocracy would require significant socioeconomic changes and would even require political or even constitutional reforms. In addition, the *ethos* of seamanship required to run a naval state could radically alter the civic

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75 Tilly 1990.

76 Platias, Trigkas 2022.

77 Thucydides mentions that Corinth was the first Greek city state that built triremes. However, the Corinthians only copied the Athenian combination of navy and walls and did not establish it first; Constantakopoulou 2007, pp. 154-155.

78 Themistocles had envisioned the long walls connecting the city with the port of Piraeus (which he had himself founded). It was Pericles that ultimately completed the long-walls and turned Athens into a *de facto* Island.

79 Th. 1, 43, 4.

DNA of the city, just as it did in Athens when it empowered the lower classes to the contentious detriment of rich aristocratic landowners. Moreover, the Spartans faced a unique domestic challenge: they were significantly outnumbered by the Helots whom they had kept enslaved and utilized as the pillar of their agricultural economy; any naval campaigns abroad would create a deficit of Spartiatai at home, thus significantly increasing the risk of a catastrophic Helot rebellion.[80] For Sparta to become a sustainable thalassocracy, the Helots would have to somehow be brought in and incorporated as free citizens of Sparta, reshuffling the very socio-economic and constitutional foundations of the "Lycurgian" Spartan state.[81] These necessary reforms would be so radical that only a rare leader of Themistoclean caliber could initiate and implement them. Simply put, the Athenians were on a Silver standard; the Spartans on Iron standard. Therefore, the Spartans, however, not only lacked such a definitive transformational leader in 475 BC, but whenever a Spartan leader with promising reformist qualities arose, the Spartan establishment (its deep state) opposed him. From Cleomenis to Leotychidas to Brasidas to Gyllipus to Lysander to Xanthipus, reformists leaders in Sparta, one way or another, were vehemently undermined.[82]

However, even if the Spartan had decided to pursue Thalassocracy in 475 BC by initiating disruptive domestic reforms, they clearly lacked the domestic financial resources to fund a naval force able to challenge Athenian naval primacy.[83] The Spartans could either extract tribute from their Peloponnesian allies or reach out to Persia for funding via an alliance. Both options were not easy to pursue. The Peloponnesian

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[80] In fact, one of the reasons why the Spartans were even averse to undertake even faraway land campaigns was exactly that fear of inviting a Helot rebellion in Sparta.

[81] Hornblower excellently frames rowers as a disruptive "naval mob"; Hornblower 2011, p. 10. On the impact of Helots in Spartan grand strategy see Grundy 1948, p. 221. Koliopoulos argues that the class that would be much empowered had the Spartans decided to pursue Thalassocracy would be that of the Perioikoi (Περίοικοι) as those resided close the Gythion port and had long engaged with commerce and trade; Koliopoulos 2001, pp. 134-135.

[82] To be sure, Brasidas died at the battle of Amphipolis in 422 BC while still on good terms with the Spartan establishment. We know, however, that he was despised for his accomplishments and it is highly possible that had he survived his impressive northern campaigns, the Spartans would have eliminated him politically.

[83] It is a fact that the silver discovered at mines of Laurion at the South of Attica in the 490s, provided a crucial financial source for Athens to fund Themistocles' naval project. See Platias, Trigkas 2022.

league was not a tributary system and any attempt from Sparta to extract tribute could challenge its authority in the league. An alliance with Persia just four years after Plataea and at a time when Greek city-states in Asia minor and the Aegean continued to face the Persian threat would delegitimize Spartan leadership over the Hellenic league. It is hard to imagine that Sparta in 475 would easily acquire the wherewithal to challenge Athenian thalassocracy.[84] That's how Polybius described the Spartan predicament:

> But once they began to undertake naval expeditions and to make military campaigns outside the Peloponnese, it was evident that neither their iron currency nor the exchange of their crops for commodities which they lacked, as permitted by the legislation of Lycurgus, would suffice for their needs, since these enterprises demanded a currency in universal circulation and supplies drawn from abroad; and so they were compelled to be beggars from the Persians, to impose tribute on the islanders, and exact contributions from all the Greeks, as they recognized that under the legislation of Lycurgus it was impossible to aspire, I will not say to supremacy in Greece, but to any position of influence.[85]

It is thus not surprising that Hetoemaridas won the debate of 475 BC by arguing for a cautious and conservative strategy that would sustain the status quo at home and meanwhile attempt to destroy Themistocles politically in Athens. As Themistocles' opponents, the Aristocrats, had shown their preference for far-flung campaigns against Persia, the Spartans could hope that *divide et impera* would eventually make its miracle and sustain Sparta's hegemony over Greece. To be sure, some would argue that this strategy ultimately paid off. The Athenians not only ostracized Themistocles, but in the long term they tragically abandoned his prudent hegemonic strategy and became imperially overstretched. Opportunistic naval campaigns brought major defeats in Egypt in 455 BC and, crucially, in Sicily in 413 BC that drained imperial Athens of all the pool of power that Themistocles had created, thereby delivering ultimate victory to Sparta. But when Hetoemaridas argued in 475 BC, there was no certainty or strong indication that the Athenians would commit those self-inflicted strategic blunders.

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[84] See the excellent comparative analysis between Spartan and Athens in Doyle 1986, pp. 67-73.

[85] Plb. 6, 49.

Instead of attempting to reform internally and pursue a first-best strategy, the akratic Spartans squarely gambled their hegemony by hoping that the Athenians would do all the wrong things and lose theirs. Any strategy that does not seek the aleatory minimum is *prima facie* suboptimal.[86] To be sure, the Spartans might have foreseen that the expansive nature of Athenian power and its relentless ambition – and the mad arrogance and hubris accompanying it – could only survive as long as prudent Athenian leaders tamed it. Themistocles and later Pericles proved that that would indeed be the case. Pericles, however, died by the plague and his successor, the most imprudent of political leaders Alcibiades, eventually crashed the ship of state in Sicily.[87] Themistocles, as we established, was eliminated by Spartan conspiracy and the betrayal of the Athenian aristocrats. The Spartans succeeded in their strategy only because the Athenians permitted them to succeed, namely, by betraying their greatest patriot in 472/1 BC and abandoning his theory of victory which could have – perhaps irreversibly – incapacitated the Spartans as early as the 470s BC. Yet, from a wider historical perspective, Spartan hegemony would not live much after. With its inability to politically reform when the next major challenge arrived from the North in the 4th cent. BC, Spartan hegemony over Hellas ended irrecoverably.[88]

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[86] In that evaluation we radically differ with Kagan's belief that Hetoemaridas in 475 made a moralist argument in support of a Spartan-Athenian "yoke-fellowship" as long as Athens was led by philo-Laconian Aristocrats. In fact, even when Themistocles had been completely eliminated from Athenian politics and Cimon was unrivaled, later in 465-3 BC, Sparta was planning to strike Athens which had then been overextend besieging Thasos in Northern Greece. As Grote has argued this Spartan behavior signifies "unprovoked and treacherous hostility". Hetoemaridas argument was strategic, it was about *divide et impera* not about an entente with Athens; Kagan 2012, pp. 51-52, Grote 2009, p. 41. For an alternative view which sees the battle of Eyrymedon as an inflection point for Spartan Grand Strategy see Rahe 2019, pp. 114-115.

[87] See the brilliant analysis in Romilly 2019.

[88] It seems therefore that internal balancing may be the most crucial dimension of strategy. This becomes even more consequential today when major superpowers like China and the United States are strategizing under conditions of Mutually Assured Nuclear Destruction (MAD). There has been a lot of ink spilled on Thucydidean analogies of Sino-US relations. For a comprehensive analysis see Platias, Trigkas 2021.

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Sparta's rise and fall: a critical analysis from the spectrum of neoclassical realism

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Keywords: Sparta, international relations, neoclassical realism, strategy, ancient Greece.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Σπάρτη, διεθνείς σχέσεις, νεοκλασικός ρεαλισμός, στρατηγική, αρχαία Ελλάδα.

Abstract:

The 5th cent. BC was marked by dramatic events for the Greek city-states. In this long period, Sparta rose as the hegemonic power in Greece and, after the victory in the Peloponnesian War against Athens, exhibited its ambitions to build an empire. However, in only a few years, Sparta's invincible forces were crashed in the battlefield by Thebes and its superior position was lost. This research proposes that the source of decay was hidden within the very growth of its power. Using the analytical tools of Neoclassical Realism, the research explains how the intervening variables of state-society relations and the corruption of institutions – as a result of sudden wealth and power increase affected social cohesion, while consecutive wars distorted the structural baseline of demographics, leading to the irreversible decline of Sparta.

Ο 5ος αιώνας π.Χ. σημαδεύτηκε από δραματικά γεγονότα για τις ελληνικές πόλεις-κράτη. Σε αυτή τη μακρά χρονική περίοδο, η Σπάρτη αναδύθηκε ως η ηγέτιδα δύναμη της Ελλάδας και ιδίως μετά τη νίκη επί της Αθήνας στον Πελοποννησιακό Πόλεμο, εξέφρασε τη φιλοδοξία να χτίσει μια

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αυτοκρατορία. Ωστόσο, μέσα σε λίγα χρόνια, οι αήττητες στρατιωτικές της δυνάμεις συνετρίβησαν στο πεδίο της μάχης, όπου έχασε και την πρωτοκαθεδρία μεταξύ των Ελλήνων. Η παρούσα μελέτη υποστηρίζει ότι ο σπόρος της παρακμής βρισκόταν μέσα στην ίδια τη διαδικασία ανάπτυξης της σπαρτιάτικης δύναμης. Χρησιμοποιώντας τα αναλυτικά εργαλεία του νεοκλασικού ρεαλισμού, η έρευνα εξηγεί πώς παρεμβαλλόμενες μεταβλητές όπως οι σχέσεις κράτους-κοινωνίας και η θεσμική διαφθορά, που προέκυψαν από την αιφνίδια εισροή πλούτου και ισχύος, επηρέασαν την κοινωνική συνοχή, ενώ οι συνεχείς πόλεμοι αλλοίωσαν τη δημογραφία της πόλεως, καταλήγοντας στην ανεπίστρεπτη κατάρρευση.

Introduction

For many international readers, ancient Sparta is seen as a militaristic city-state, relying primarily on the force of its army to achieve political objectives. Art and film productions reflect this popular view when they depict the Spartan hoplite as the ultimate warrior who knows best how to win. Nevertheless, a thorough look at the interstate (international) relations of the 5th cent. BC destroys that stereotype, in the sense that Sparta was not a monolithic entity. It is evident from the ancient sources that Sparta was fully conscious of the limits of its army and it used carefully to apply a multidimensional foreign policy.[1] More specifically, in many crises of the aforementioned period, it considered cautiously political and economic parameters, while in the period before the thirty years' war with Athens, Sparta displayed flexibility in the use of essential diplomatic relations with third parties, like Persia, consolidating security and sovereignty on its "Lebensraum", the Peloponnese, to best serve its broader aspirations.

On the other hand, a significant part of bibliography suggests that Sparta, by tradition, had not expressed cosmopolitan character, similar to Athens, but it was culturally isolated in the Peloponnese.[2] While it is prudent to believe that changes in the balance of power toward Persia and rapidly developing Athens raised the security dilemma – calling to some sort of preventive action –, this is not enough to explain the expansionist policy towards the Aegean and Asia Minor coast that followed the final victory in the Peloponnesian War. Neither have been thoroughly examined the reasons for Sparta's sudden decline in the

1 Dolgert 2012; Shipley 2000; Cawkwell 1983.

2 See, for example, Figueira 2003.

late 4th cent. BC. Thus, the central purpose of this chapter is to define the causes of Sparta's rise and fall, studying specific outcomes within the scope of international relations. As it will be displayed below, the time span under examination begins with Sparta's engagement in the Persian Wars and ends with the battle of Leuctra.

The following pages explore which factors, domestic and international, shaped the attitude of Sparta, leading to the revision of isolationism and its evolution into an imperialist power. The research presents a critical analysis of Sparta's grand strategy in the regional sub-system of southern Greece during the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, investigating whether the case was derivative of the systemic structure or a product of domestic political processes. Using the analytical tools of neoclassical realism, the paper shall attempt to draw useful theoretical conclusions for the study of international relations with an emphasis on foreign policy decision making.

Sparta and the international system

The science of International Relations has developed contending theories to analyse the political phenomena. In the recent decades, a major intersection has emerged between systemic theories, which understand international politics based on the nature of the international system, and domestic theories, which emphasize the behaviour of agents, like states, and the processes taking place within them. A notable distinction between these two levels of analysis is, on the one hand, classical realism which stresses human and domestic variables, and, on the other, neorealism which focuses on how the international system's structure influences state behaviour. This paper argues that although the international system remains anarchical and the balance of power produces security questions, the answers states give are not shaped by default; it is rather the outcome of perceptions and, more importantly, domestic variables, such as the political system, the economy and the interests of political elites.

The present analysis argues that the interstate (international) system in which Sparta flourished and declined was interdependent but differed essentially from the post-Westphalian network, as we know it today. Despite the differences, foreign policy making was not affected only by macrostructures (systemic), but also by intermediate level institutions (intra-state); for this reason, the paper proposes a

"via media" between the above two realist standpoints; a productive reconciliation effort has been attempted by neoclassical realism, suggesting a relative causal importance of systemic and domestic variables.[3]

According to neoclassical realism, a state's foreign policy capacity is heavily influenced by the structural forces of Realpolitik, yet it is informed by its relative material power, consisting of military capabilities and economic potential. More importantly, the pressure this power produces has only indirect and complicated impact on policy-making since systemic pressures must be translated through multiple intervening variables, such as leader images, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions.[4] For this, neoclassical realism suggests the study of connections between power and policy in a thorough assessment of both international and domestic contexts in which foreign policy is developed and applied.

Methodologically,[5] the research forms the hypothesis that the very rise of Sparta in an "empire," in the aftermath of the victory against Athens, contained the seed of decay; the new role of Sparta as the leader of the Hellenic world and the efforts to balance previous promises to its allies, stressed its political and socioeconomic capabilities beyond its actual limits, causing exhaustion and, eventually, irreversible decline. To inspect this approach, the thesis determines a structural realist baseline: in this case, Sparta's reliance on the power of its army rather than soft power. The dependent variable used here is depopulation (ὀλιγανθρωπία). Indeed, after so many wars the demographic problem of Sparta became critical over the course of the late Classical and Hellenistic years. Considering population as a structural modifier,[6] the scarcity of *Spartiatai* – in army and economy alike – became the biggest problem in the aforementioned period. Last, the research used two intervening variables: (a) in the mid-term, the patterns of state-society relations, and (b) in the long-term, the performance of domestic institutions.

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3 Kitchen 2010.

4 Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell 2016, p. 8.

5 The paper follows the methodology and research design of Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell 2016.

6 Snyder 1996, p. 169.

The rise and fall of Spartan supremacy

Sparta had manifested, early enough, the need to establish its dominance in the regional sub-system of the Peloponnese: firstly, with the conquest of Messenia in the 7th cent. BC and later, by 490 BC, with the integration of the majority of the cities of the Peloponnese – with the exception of Argos in the northeast – in a "Peloponnesian Alliance". This expansion served strategic objectives such as the consolidation of security in the west, and the same time, the rapid advancement of the economy, as the Helots became the locomotive of Laconian production.

The occupation of Messenia did not come without a price, though. The constant fear of revolt by the Helots caused a serious shift to the state's security problem, turned the question of order from external to internal, and called for a robust and permanent solution. The Spartans' response was the development of a horizontal military structure, with the creation of a "professional" army of citizens. Stephen Todd emphasizes the evolution of training system under the control of the state, to keep the Spartans militarily fit.[7] He observes that all citizens were receiving the same education, which was designed to produce victors. All in all, it was that social formation that curved and defined the idiosyncrasy of Lacedaemon the next several centuries.

With the confidence of its army, Sparta expanded its network of allies overseas. Although the geostrategic concern focused primarily on the Peloponnese, Sparta was not isolationist. Instead, it had secured allies across the Aegean, in Macedonia and later in Thrace, aiding geopolitically its dominance in its direct surroundings. When an official alliance was not possible or beneficial, *Spartiatai* pursued to exert political influence by intervening to the domestic affairs of other states. Thucydides records that Sparta favoured and facilitated the establishment of keen oligarchic regimes among allies and competitors.[8] The most characteristic intervention was the one that took place against the tyrant of Athens, Hippias (one of the two Pisistratids), in 510 BC. King Cleomenes I, invaded Attica, and after besieging the Acropolis he forced Hippias to leave the city.

Twenty years later, the Persians attacked Greece asking for land and water. The Hellenic League, an alliance consisting of numerous Greek

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[7] Todd 2005, pp. 73-74.

[8] Th. 19, 1.

cities, called to arms and succeeded a decisive blow to the Great King in the notorious Marathon battle. Sparta, however, was missing from that battlefield, due to some astronomic superstitions that allegedly prevented the army from exiting the city. It is more plausible though that this reluctance stemmed from Sparta's initial strategic choice to participate in the coalition merely in defence of the Peloponnese. When it became apparent that abstaining from the developments would either move the war to the South, posing a direct threat to Sparta's existence (if the allies were defeated), or Athens would take the credits and the leadership of Greece (if the allies won), the Spartans decided to participate actively, taking also command of the allied forces.

Studying these events, A. Roobaert concluded that Sparta's foreign policy towards the common defense, albeit cautious, revealed a broader hegemonic tendency, paving the road for the imperialist attempt it would pursue in the early 5th cent. BC.[9] More precisely, the successful outcome of the defense against the Persians adjusted the strategy of Sparta, which considered itself to be the rightful leader over Greece since it had placed itself – without doubt – at the head of the allied army. On the other hand, Sparta did not win alone; Athens came out of the war much stronger and with high morale, having provided half of the ships of the Greek fleet. With these ships Athens was now opening new maritime trade routes across the Aegean, the Hellespont and the Pontus (Black Sea), bringing wealth in the city's coffers. The economic rise of Athens and its intention to rebuild the city's fortifications alarmed the Lacedaemonians who eventually decided to go to war.

The three-decades conflict between Athens and Sparta (431-404 BC) is a milestone in the history of western civilization. Based on the renowned work of Thucydides, scholars of international relations have tried to analyze the conflict through various theoretical models with most prevailing that of preventive war. J.S. Levy defines preventive war as «a strategy designed to forestall an adverse shift in the balance of power and driven by better-now-than-later logic».[10] That being said, the Spartan perception of the threat went beyond the implementation of its grand strategy and the domination of Greece; above all, it was the very independence of Lacedaemon at stake, had Athens emerged as a superpower undistracted. Therefore, Sparta feared that unless it

9 Roobaert 1985.

10 Levy 2008.

improved the balance of capabilities vis-à-vis Athens and its allies, it could end up under the political influence of its competitor. Be that as it may, before entering the war, Sparta cultivated the reputation of the champion of freedom, opponent of tyranny and heir to Agamemnon who had united the Greeks in the Trojan War.[11]

It is worth to mention that the rivalry between Athens and Sparta has been the archetype of realist thought ever since. Recently, the eminent American political scientist Graham Allison used this scheme, which he calls "the Thucydides' trap", as a measure to examine the escalating US-China relationship. The book entitled *Destined for war: can the US and China avoid Thucydides' trap?* addresses the steady increase of Beijing's power which has already distressed Washington to such an extent that it is likely – according to the author – to seek a preventive war, comparable to the Peloponnesian, to stem its tide.

An important part of the war was communication. Sparta declared that the struggle would take place in the name of freedom of Greek cities from Athenian imperialism. That way, it expressed a panhellenic ideological pretext, proclaiming itself the liberator – and guarantor of freedom – of the Greeks. The war was long and uneasy for both camps, but the Athenian disaster in Sicily opened a window of opportunity for Sparta to intensify the attack to the enemy. It took advantage of Persia's hostility to Athens and signed a treaty with the King (412-411 BC) for assistance in the war.[12] Darius II agreed to send a fleet at the expense of the control over the Ionian cities in the Asian coast. This was far from an ideal agreement, since Sparta had declared a war for the sake of liberty, but now it had to give up its role as liberator of the Greeks at the most critical turn of the war. The final victory over Athens (404 BC) however, justified the causes and inspired Sparta to pursue again to increase its gains in Eastern Aegean. In one sense Sparta "unchained" Greeks from Athenian hegemony but concurrently it imposed itself as the new leader. With Athens no more in place, Sparta patronized Greek cities with the imposition of a considerable tax and, on occasion, the installation of a Spartan commissioner with a guard.[13]

The next step would be the Greeks of Asia, but the alliance with Persia, which had contributed to victory against Athens, had stalled

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11 Rahe 2015, p. 28.

12 Roberts 2017.

13 Levy 2008, p. 373.

Spartan ambitions. The ideal moment was given when a civil war broke out in Persia. Cyrus revolted against his brother, King Artaxerxes, and invited the Spartans to help him capture the throne. Sparta took the risk considering that it had one more chance to gain influence over the Greek cities of Minor Asia and establish an empire in both coasts of the Aegean. In 401 BC they sent a military unit of ten thousand men, but Cyrus got killed in battle and the campaign ended abruptly. Even so, the developments did not discourage the Spartans who decided to send additional men to unite with the remaining mercenaries and resume the war. They aimed to restore control of the eastern Aegean coast and protect the Ionian colonies from Satrap Tissaphernes' vengeance. In 396 BC, King Agesilaus campaigned against Persia with a strong force, he raided the inland and finally defeated Tissaphernes.

To force the Greeks leave Asia, the King Artaxerxes exploited the discontent of some of Sparta's allies back home. More precisely, he supported a revolt by Thebes and Corinth that led to the Corinthian War (395-386 BC). Sparta, being unable to fight in two fronts, given that Athens and Argos had been added to the opponents list, recalled Agesilaus in 394 BC. Persia had successfully altered the terms of the fight moving the theatre of war from Asia to Greece. In 386 BC, Artaxerxes intervened again in the Greek affairs (concerned about the impressive victories of Athens) imposing peace (Antalkideian Peace) on the weakened cities. That treaty maintained Sparta in hegemonic position among the Greek city-states, albeit this time it was more a symbolic than a pragmatic title. The very fact that Sparta respected the foreign-designed agreement for a while, was a clear mark of its own weakness especially because it had lost many men in the consecutive wars. Athens, and more importantly Thebes, were well aware of the emerging situation and in the following years tried to shape the balance of power on their own terms.[14]

Unable to find a modus vivendi, Thebes and Sparta confronted one another in the Battle of Leuctra (371 BC). This battle changed the route of Greek history as Sparta was crushed for the first time, losing significant forces. Subsequently, Thebes' invaded the Peloponnese, liberated Messenia, and founded the city Megalopolis in a strategic crossroad. The outcome of the battle had dramatic consequences for Sparta: (a) it lost a great number of elite warriors weakening its army

[14] Baltrusch 1998.

decisively; (b) it lost its prestige as the "undefeatable" power, which was standing since the Persian Wars; and most crucially (c) it was impossible to recover the defeat and thus it fell to the rank of a second-class power.

Sparta's decay from the neoclassical realist perspective

In Neoclassical Realist approach, domestic intervening variables condition how states respond to systemic pressures and shape their foreign policy. They explain not only the constraints but also the causal mechanisms of decision making by pointing out the interactions among societal groups. That means that social relations matter because they influence distribution of power and political harmony. As noted above, the thesis uses as its structural realist baseline Sparta's reliance on the power of its army. Therefore, it was imperative for the city to secure the resources that could help it maintain a reliable army.

Furthermore, two clusters of variables are considered, (a) state-society relations and (b) domestic institutions. Firstly, state-society relations were always a sensitive issue for Sparta. The constant fear of a revolt by the Helots had shaped a conservative attitude with basic purpose to keep them in submission. Up to a point, accordingly, the city pursued a cautious foreign policy with primary objective to ensure the security of the Peloponnese. The constant state of war, however, encouraged the Spartans to upgrade the status of some of the Helots, setting them free, under the condition that they would join the army. This group of *Neodamṓdeis* (new citizens) was employed the critical period of expansion, between 421 and 369 BC, when they were mostly needed.

Beyond the Helots, the gradual growth of Sparta had severe impact on state-society relations. The sharp increase in power and wealth the years after the Peloponnesian War, tempted the balancing bodies to quest for the increase of their relative power. This wealth was not equally distributed in the society and as a result, corruption depraved the city leading in the gradual decay of institutions. General Gylippus, for example, whose contribution in Sicily against Athens was notable, was accused of corruption and fled to self-exile.[15] Sudden prosperity became the apple of discord in a city famous for its austere way of life,

[15] Christien 2005, p. 279.

with executives focusing on how to enjoy benefits instead of adjusting the political system to its new challenging duties.

In the long run, the widening of poverty and inequalities alienated a significant number of Spartans who ended up losing their political rights.[16] According to P. Carthledge, one of the leading scholars of ancient Sparta, this was one of the main factors for the decline, as the land came to be held by a small portion of Spartans.[17] J.S. Levy mentioned the economic factors that weakened the city and more particular, the system of land ownership and inheritance, which contained also the seeds of men shortage (*oliganthropy*) and social decline.[18] In 490 BC, Sparta numbered 8000 citizens, while in 360 BC, after the defeat at Leuctra, less than 1000.[19] This observation leads to the dependent variable of the analysis, which is the population. The period of the study, state entities were relying exclusively upon manpower, either for economic (agriculture, trade, craftwork) or for defense purposes. Apparently, the economic and institutional developments had consequences on the demographic condition of Sparta, despite the laws encouraging having many children. Personal ambitions and protection of interests of a small, privileged elite exposed the city to fatal dangers.

Secondly, state structure and domestic institutions determine policy formulations. Sparta was run by a complex system, consisting of two kings, five custodians (*éphoroi*), and twenty-eight senators. Governing the city effectively, demanded good cooperation and transparency in decision making. That system proved sufficient as long as the strategic objectives were limited in the Peloponnese but it was overstretched when the war moved to Asia. Polybius says that Sparta had a mixed political system which was working well until it started expanding its sovereignty beyond the Peloponnese: «For when the Lacedaemonians endeavoured to obtain supremacy in Greece, they very soon ran the risk of losing their own liberty».[20] Interestingly, J. Christien adds that Lysander, the fleet commander who fought in Asia, had a political vision for organizing the Asian Greeks but this did not prosper due to

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16 Noethlichs 1987.

17 Carthledge 2002, p. 271.

18 Levy 2008, p. 402; see also Carthledge 2002, pp. 264-266.

19 Arist. *Pol*. 1270a.

20 Plb. 6, 48-50.

the course of events.[21] Even if Lysander had understood the necessity to implement an innovative governing style for the Greek commonwealth overseas, it was not yet comprehended in the metropolis what would take to build a sustainable kingdom. It would take several decades before Philip and the Macedonians took over the leadership of Greece, for such a new model to be implemented.

Conclusions

Scholars of international relations have studied Sparta focusing on the rivalry against Athens and archetype of a bipolar division. This paper tried to assess the rapid decline of Spartan power, being informed by the analytical tools of neoclassical realism which makes a strong argument for the inclusion of unit-level analysis. Focusing on observable empirical information, including the international system of the time and Sparta's sociopolitical characteristics, it studied specific outcomes for each and every case that falls within the scope of the theory under investigation. In the period between the end of the Persian Wars and the battle of Leuctra, Sparta found itself in a state of ascent. Based on its solid military superiority, but also exploiting the peripheral balance of power, it aspired to hegemonize the Greek world in Europe and Asia, and even threatened Persia. Sparta's martial efficiency and pride was unique among the Greeks and became evident in many occasions. However, the political system of Sparta was not fit for such an extravagant attempt, nor was it adaptable to change. The sudden economic growth brought corruption into the city, resulting in the growth of inequalities and, in the long run, the decline of the Spartan model. Stagnant state-society relations combined with incessant involvement in wars caused the demographic shrinkage of Sparta.[22] Thus, the political structure of the city was inflexible and could not get in shape for the new demands of an empire. The emergence of Sparta as a hegemonic power was doomed to fail from the outset for political reasons and only a few years after reaching an apogee, the city relinquished its premium position in the peripheral system of Greece and Asia Minor.

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[21] Christien 2005, p. 280.

[22] Todd 2005, p. 116.

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Spartans in the service of Ptolemies: the case of Hippomedon son of Agesilaus

Apostolos Papiomitoglou *

Keywords : Ptolemies, Sparta, Hippomedon, Samothrace, Peloponnese.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Πτολεμαίοι, Σπάρτη, Ιππομέδων, Σαμοθράκη, Πελοπόννησος.

Abstract:

It is well known that the rulers of Egypt wanted to secure Ptolemaic bases in mainland Greece and the Aegean and through them to control the sea lanes, reduce the influence of their opponents and recruit mercenaries. Sparta joined these plans of the Lagides when the growing power of the Macedonian navy led Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283/2-246/5 BC) to the Chremonidean War (267-261 BC). Sparta realized the advantages of such a war, since historically aimed at maintaining its supremacy in the Peloponnese region. The relations of the Spartans with the Ptolemies seem to have continued, when the successor of Philadelphus, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246/5-222/1 BC), took over the throne of Egypt. One of the few texts that inform us about these contacts is the honorary decree of the Samothracians for a distinguished Spartan, Hippomedon son of Agesilaus. The high position he held in the hierarchy of the Ptolemaic military and administration system, on the one hand proved to be beneficial for the Samothracians, on the other hand enriches our knowledge of the increased responsibilities that had been taken over by important personalities of Sparta during the Hellenistic period. The purpose of this article is to outline the action of the Spartan Hippomedon through the examination of this important inscription from Samothrace.

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Είναι γνωστό ότι οι ηγεμόνες της Αιγύπτου στόχευσαν στην εξασφάλιση βάσεων στην ηπειρωτική και νησιωτική Ελλάδα, ώστε μέσω αυτών να ελέγχουν τους ναυτικούς δρόμους, να μειώνουν την επιρροή των αντιπάλων τους και να στρατολογούν μισθοφόρους. Η Σπάρτη εντάχθηκε σε αυτά τα σχέδια των Λαγιδών, όταν η αυξανόμενη ισχύς του μακεδονικού ναυτικού οδήγησε τον Πτολεμαίο Β' Φιλάδελφο (283/2-246/5 π.Χ.) στον Χρεμωνίδειο πόλεμο (267-261 π.Χ.). Η Σπάρτη αντιλήφθηκε τα πλεονεκτήματα ενός τέτοιου πολέμου, εφόσον ιστορικά πάντοτε είχε το όνειρο της πρωτοκαθεδρίας και της υπεροχής στον χώρο της Πελοποννήσου. Οι σχέσεις των Σπαρτιατών με τους Πτολεμαίους φαίνεται ότι συνεχίστηκαν, όταν ανέλαβε τον θρόνο της Αιγύπτου ο διάδοχος του Φιλαδέλφου, Πτολεμαίος Γ' Ευεργέτης (246/5-222/1 π.Χ.). Ένα από τα ελάχιστα τεκμήρια που μας πληροφορούν γι'αυτές τις επαφές είναι το τιμητικό ψήφισμα των Σαμοθρακών για έναν διακεκριμένο Σπαρτιάτη, τον Ιπποπέδοντα Αγησιλάου. Η υψηλή θέση που κατείχε στην ιεραρχία της πτολεμαϊκής στρατιωτικής διοίκησης, αφενός αποδείχθηκε ευεργετική για τους Σαμόθρακες, αφετέρου εμπλουτίζει τις γνώσεις μας για τις αυξημένες αρμοδιότητες που είχαν επωμιστεί σπουδαίες προσωπικότητες της Σπάρτης κατά τη διάρκεια των ελληνιστικών χρόνων. Στόχος του παρόντος άρθρου είναι να σκιαγραφήσει τη δράση του Σπαρτιάτη Ιπποπέδοντα μέσα από την εξέταση αυτής της σημαντικής σαμοθρακικής επιγραφής.

The references in the modern bibliography about the relations of Sparta with the rulers of Ptolemaic Egypt are few and related to the events of the Chremonidean war (267-261 BC), when after his victory against Pyrrhus of Epirus in 272 BC Antigonus Gonatas (276-239 BC) undertook to restore the power of the kingdom of Macedonia.[1] This conjuncture was a threat to Ptolemaic interests in the Aegean, which during the first decades of the 3rd cent. BC belonged firmly to the sphere of interest of the Antigonids and the Ptolemies.[2] Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283/2-246/5 BC) attempted to destabilize Antigonus Gonatas by building an anti-Macedonian alliance in Greece, in

[1] For the Chremonidean war, see Paus. 1, 1, 1; 1, 7, 3; 3, 6, 4-6; Just. *Epit.* 26, 2, 1-8. For an overall assessment of the Chremonidean war, see Heinen 1972, pp. 95-213. For issues of dating, see Hauben 1992, p. 162.

[2] Regarding the activity of the Ptolemies in the Aegean, W. Fellmann argues that the Ptolemaic naval rule in the Aegean was maintained until the end of the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246/5-222/1 BC); Fellmann 1930, p. 63. The view that the naval battle of Andros in 246 BC reduced Ptolemaic naval power in the Cyclades adopted by historians W.W. Tarn and M. Clary; Tarn 1924, p. 141; Cary 1959, p. 403. For the Ptolemaic presence in the Cyclades, see Merker 1970, pp. 141-160; Reger 1994, pp. 32-69; Constantakopoulou 2012, pp. 49-70. For the Egyptian domination in the Aegean during the years of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222/1-205/4 BC), see Costanzi 1911, pp. 277-283.

which Athens, Sparta and their allies participated. The so-called Chremonidean decree, an Attic inscription dating to the end of August 268 BC, informs that Philadelphus had already made an alliance with Sparta, as well as with Athens, before the declaration of war.[3] It is worth noting that this decree reflects the dynamic role played by Sparta in the international developments of the early Hellenistic period, as the joint references to Areus I (309/8-265 BC), the Agiad king of Sparta, and to the Lacedaemonians, the state entity he represents, are frequent, while at the same time they indicate the special position, in terms of personal promotion beyond the Spartan borders, which the king himself sought.[4] The same kind of self-promotion can be seen in the coins minted by Areus, for the first time in Spartan history, but also in the statues erected in his honour by his allies in the Peloponnese (by the Orchomenians in Arkadia, by the Eleians and by Ptolemy II in Olympia), which date to the eve of the war or to its very early stages.[5] The epigraphic testimonies, such as an inscribed base of a statue of Areus, found in the pronaos of the sanctuary of Mesopolitis Artemis in Orchomenos, dating to 266 BC, underline the king's favor (εὔνοια) to the ruler of Egypt and to the city of Orchomenos or even to the ξύμπαντας Ἕλληνας (all Greeks), as revealed by another inscription of the period 285-265 BC, which describes the assignment of Ptolemy

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3 *IG* II³ 1 912, ll. 21-23 (=*IG* II² 686 + 687 - *Syll.*³ 434/5).

4 *IG* II³ 1 912, ll. 25-26, 28-30, 40, 54-55.

5 Paschidis 2008, pp. 256-259. On the aims of Areus' numismatic policy, see Cartledge, Spawforth 1989, p. 35 («to sell an image of Areus on the open market of Hellenistic conceptual and dynastic exchange»); this apt formulation should nonetheless be mitigated on account of the very small number of surviving specimens, see Mørkholm 1991, p. 149. On Areus' coinage, see also Palagia 2006, pp. 206-208. For Orchomenians, see *ISE* 54. For the people of Elis, see Paus. 6, 12, 5 and 15, 9. For Ptolemy II in Olympia, see *IvO* 308; Bringmann, Von Steuben 1995, n. 58. G. Marasco leaves the possibility open that the statues of the Eleians and the Orchomenians date to 280 BC; Marasco 1980, p. 130, n. 143. As far as the statue set up by the Orchomenians is concerned, this is unlikely, because the honours for Areus were clearly parallel with the honours for the Athenian ambassadors, see *ISE* 53; Paschidis 2008, p. 258, n. 6; as for the statue set up by the Eleians, P. Paschidis sees no reason to date it so early; Paschidis 2008, p. 258, n. 6. H. Heinen believes that the honouring of Areus by Ptolemy at Olympia may have been irrelevant to the Chremonidean War, and that it could be dated anytime between 272 and 265 BC, while K. Buraselis does not rule out the possibility that the honours may even have been posthumous; Heinen 1972, p. 130; Buraselis 1982, p. 156, n. 3. Both suggestions are plausible, but the eve of the war remains the period when this propaganda tool would have made better sense, see Paschidis 2008, p. 258, n. 6.

Philadelphus to Olympian Zeus in honor of Areus.[6] If, then, one wants to outline the image that Areus promotes of himself - and consequently of the Spartans of his time - on the eve of the Chremonidean war, its basic elements would be leadership in the common struggle of the Greeks against the Macedonians and the prestigious place in the international affairs of the Hellenistic world, through the special favor of king Ptolemy. In other words, the propagandistic purpose of the statue of Areus in Olympia is further emphasized if we accept Dittenberger's assumption that it was erected next to the statues of Ptolemy I Soter (306/5-283/2 BC) and his wife Berenice I of Egypt, which had been dedicated to the pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Olympia by Kallikrates of Samos, admiral of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.[7] If this was the case, Areus was presented not only as an honoured ally of the king, but as associated with the deified ex-royal couple. Also, the dedication of the Orchomenians strengthens this conclusion about the image of Areus, especially if one compares it with the parallel honoring of the Athenian ambassadors who invited the Orchomenians to join the alliance.[8] The differences are characteristic: the Athenians received proxeny and the status of euergetes, with no reference to Ptolemy, while Areus received a statue with a note that he was well disposed towards Ptolemy.[9]

Despite the final outcome of the conflict which gave a clear victory to the Macedonians of Antigonus Gonatas, it is worth noting that the participation of Athens and Sparta in the Chremonidean war was imperative, since Athens could now hope to regain control of Piraeus, who was undoubtedly under constant Macedonian influence from 294 BC, while Sparta realized the advantages of such a war, since historically always had the dream of supremacy in the Peloponnese area. In other words, between 280 BC and the eve of the Chremonidean war, and despite the anti-Macedonian policy of Hellenistic Sparta, it is unlikely that the geopolitical plans of the Spartans would extend beyond the survival of their military machine.[10]

As is well known, the son and successor of Philadelphus, Ptolemy Euergetes (246/5-222/1 BC), continued his father's expansionist policy

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6 *ISE* 54 (Orchomenos); *IvO* 308 (Olympia).

7 *IvO* 306-307.

8 *ISE* 53 (266-263 BC).

9 *ISE* 53, ll. 1-5. For the inscription of Orchomenos, see n. 6.

10 For Athens, see Habicht 1979, pp. 95-112. For Sparta, see Paschidis 2008, p. 257, n. 5.

and increased the possessions of Egypt through the annexation of Cyrene after his marriage with Berenice II in 246 BC.[11] After his victory in the Third Syrian War (246-241 BC), this Egyptian monarch became the ruler of several important cities in Syria and Central Asia, while he made new friends in Greece.[12] In this context, one reasonably wonders whether any of Sparta's contacts with Egypt continued. The sources that answer this question are scarce, and therefore the modern historian needs to turn his attention to the study of individual cases of prominent Spartans, who are active within the international system of the Hellenistic kingdoms. Most bibliographic references to relations between Sparta and Ptolemaic Egypt after the reign of Philadelphus are consumed in the well-known case of the Spartan Xanthippus, the reformer of the army of Carthage and largely responsible for its successful resistance for 14 years to the Roman invasion, during the First Punic War (264-241 BC).[13] After his successful career in Carthage, he was forced to leave the city fearing for his life due to the envy and hostility of native officials. In 245 BC, according to *Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period*, Ptolemy Euergetes hires Xanthippus as commander of an Egyptian province and is often regarded as the great Spartan and military reformer of the Carthaginian army, without further information being saved.[14]

The gap created by this hypothetical and precarious view of Xanthippus and his relations with Ptolemy III, completes a little studied inscription of Samothrace, which dates to the period 228-225 BC and includes the honorary decree of the Samothracians for Hippomedon, son of Agesilaus, from Sparta.[15] The text begins with the reference to Hegesistratus, unknown from other sources, who holds the titles of eponymous archon (βασιλεύς) and *eisegetes* of the Samothracian decree for Hippomedon.[16] Hippomedon is presented as

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11 For the annexation of Cyrene, see Hölbl 2001, pp. 46-47.

12 For an overview of the Syrian wars, see Heinen 1984, pp. 412-445. For the Third Syrian War, see Hölbl 2001, pp. 48-51; Gehrke 2009, pp. 155-156.

13 For Xanthippus, see Dantas 2017, pp. 141-159.

14 BCHP *(Babylonian Chronicles of the Hellenistic Period)* 11 (*Invasion of Ptolemy III Chronicle*) Obverse, l. 12. For a full commentary, see *Ptolemy III Chronicle*: Comments to 5'6, 8'; ll. 1-14 Obverse and 1-15 Reverse; Summary of Month X. Dantas 2017, pp. 155-156.

15 *IG* XII 8 156.

16 *IG* XII 8 156A, l. 1. For βασιλεύς, as the person responsible for proposing the

a general in the service of Ptolemy with jurisdiction over the regions of the Hellespont and Thrace.[17] He is honored for the piety and donations he made to the sanctuary of the Great Gods in the Thracian Perea, the care for securing a military expedition for the safety of the sanctuary, the loan for the repayment of the mercenaries recruited by the city, and because he satisfies in general all the expectations of the city, following the will of the king.[18] Then the ambassadors of Samothrace, who may later announce the decree to Hippomedon, as reflected in the extremely fragmentary part of the second side of the column, will ask him to allow grain to be exported from the Chersonese to be bought by the Samothracians, to contribute to the fortification, in all probability of the Samothracian Perea, but also to contribute to the settlement in royal estates of the people of Samothrace, who will offer part of their harvest to the sanctuary, in order to make sacrifices for the royal couple, obviously in honor of the king Ptolemy and his wife Berenice II of Egypt.[19]

It is easy to understand that the Spartan Hippomedon holds a very important position, in a vital area of Greece with an extensive geographical range. These are essentially the territories described by Polybius that were occupied by Ptolemy Euergetes during the Third Syrian War (246-241 BC).[20] It is unknown when Hippomedon took the office and for how long he kept it. The preface of the inscription concludes with a reference to the close relationship of the Lacedaemonian general with the religious life of the city. From this passage is confirmed the existence of a place of worship in Perea, but also the initiation of Hippomedon in the mysteries.[21] It is reasonable for the Samothracians to take advantage of the fame acquired by the sanctuary of the Great Gods in the 3rd cent. BC and consequently to seek close contacts with the governors of the surrounding areas, such as

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Samothracian decrees, at least during the Hellenistic years, see Habicht 1994, p. 72, n. 16; Rhodes, Lewis 1997, p. 288.

17 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 2-4.

18 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 4-17.

19 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 1-23.

20 Plb. 5, 34, 7-8.

21 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 4-7. For this sanctuary and the adjacent former royal land that had been donated to Samothrace during the reign of Philip Arrhidaeus (323-317 BC) and Alexander IV (323/322-309 BC), see McCredie 1968, pp. 220-221.

Hippomedon, son of Agesilaus, from Sparta.[22] Possibly Hippomedon's involvement in the mysteries of the Great Gods was the result of a personal desire, although one might assume that it may have appear as a result of his beneficial policy on the affairs of the city.[23]

Of particular interest is the next point of action of the honored person, as Hippomedon takes care of the safety of the place. Perhaps this second benefit of the honoree reflects the possible attack of the Samothracian perea by a neighboring barbarian tribe. According to the decree, Hippomedon took all the necessary measures to protect a region called χωρίον, probably a fortified village of the Samothracian Perea. To protect this district, he sent a military force consisting of infantry, cavalry, missiles and catapults, while he also took care of the pay of this mercenary army.[24] Although the strength of the military corps is not known, its varied composition may indicate that it was numerous. If this hypothesis is correct, then it is very likely that the danger that threatened the security of the area was quite serious. In addition, it is possible that the sums offered by the Spartan general were used to pay mercenaries from Tralles who were in the service of the city. Maybe they had the role of a garrison in the village of Perea. It is known from the sources of the literary tradition that mercenaries from Tralles often fought, achieving great successes, on the side of Alexander's troops, but also of most Hellenistic rulers, such as Philip V (221-179 BC), Antiochus III (222-187 BC) and Eumenes II the Savior, ruler of Pergamon (197-159 BC).[25] The favorable attitude of the Spartan commander towards the city reappears in the Samothracian inscription in the following lines, although here no special benefit of Hippomedon is mentioned, except for the general and usual formulation, which wants the honoree to be favorable to the *demos* and to every citizen, who asked for his help, always satisfying the requests according to the royal wish.[26] Next, the part of the inscription in which the prices for Hippomedon were written is completely destroyed and cannot be read.

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22 Jähne 1998, p. 314.

23 Cole 1984, p. 22.

24 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 8-12.

25 Alexander (336-323 BC): D.S. 17, 65, 1. Philip V (221-179 BC): D.S. 33, 4, 4. Antiochus III (222-187 BC): App. *Syr*. 32; Liv. 37, 40, 2. Eumenes II (197-159 BC): Liv. 37, 40, 11; 38, 21, 2. It is worth noting that Titus Livius calls the Trallians Illyrians, see Liv. 27, 32, 4. For mercenaries from Tralles, see Robert 1935, pp. 426-427; Magie 1950, p. 129.

26 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 13-17.

The only points that survive are the praise that the honoree will receive, the obligation of the *agonothetes* to announce the prices during games, the writing of the decree in a column and the consequent assignment to the sanctuary of Athena.[27] However, one can assume that the prices that the city would give to Hippomedon would be proportional to its multifaceted action. This conclusion reflects the sufficient number of lines that cannot be read, and which would include the prices for the great Spartan.[28] Admittedly, such prices were an important incentive for the envoys and citizens of Ptolemaic Egypt. Moreover, honorary decrees do not get tired of repeating in a stereotypical way that praise is given to make it clear to all, citizens and foreigners, that the city gratefully recognizes the offer of the benefactors, and thus to motivate others to follow the example of justice, virtue, piety, honesty, charity and favor they showed.

The second part of the inscription consists of twenty-three lines. However, the significant damage it has suffered does not allow safe reading to the first fourteen lines. Very interesting and important information can be found in the saved part of the eight lines, which based on content is divided into two thematic sections, strengthening the already very close relations of Samothrace with the Ptolemaic administration. Therefore, the first lines, which enrich our knowledge of the action of Hippomedon, refer to the re-sending of an embassy to the honoree, probably after the repulse of the enemies. The Samothracian ambassadors asked the Lacedaemonian commander to give them permission to export grain from Chersonese and possibly other nearby towns without paying the tax that had been set.[29] This fact possibly indicates the serious economic and food problems facing the island, which were probably increased due to the past attacks in Samothracian Perea. The question remains as to who was able to obtain

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27 *IG* XII 8 156A, ll. 17-21; *IG* XII 8 156B. l. 1; ll. 8-10.

28 This is a reasonable conclusion for the decrees related to the action of officials serving the Ptolemies. The most important, and of course most visible praise for the Ptolemaic officials, was the assignment of a statue to a sanctuary or a public place, see *SEG* 33, 682. For different types of statues, see Zanker 1995, pp. 251-273; Chaniotis 2009, p. 24. For similar cases from the Cyclades region, see *IG* XII 5 1061; *IG* XII 3 1291; *IG* XI 4 649; *IG* XII Suppl. 306; *SEG* 33, 682; *IG* XII 4 1:135= *Iscr. di Cos* ED 129; *IG* XII 5 481; *IG* XII 5 1004. On the phenomenon of *benefaction*, see Bringmann 1993, pp. 7-24.

29 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 15-17. For the history of Thracian Chersonese from the Trojan War Until the Time of the Roman Conquest, see Tzvetkova 2008.

untaxed wheat. In other words, if Hippomedon's permission allowed only the Samothracians or traders from other cities.[30] The last request of the ambassadors reflects the importance of the office of Hippomedon and the scope of his jurisdiction. His responsibilities were not limited to simply maintaining order in his area of responsibility, but also extended to financial matters. He is a commander who, to a certain extent, replaces the king by serving Ptolemaic interests with his actions and decisions.[31]

The embassy of the city, in addition, requested the support of Hippomedon for the resettlement of its citizens in Perea. The mainland possessions of Samothracian Perea were part of the territory of Samothrace and it seems that they were used for sending settlers-citizens. In fact, the phraseology of the text, which describes all these citizens, indicates the clear rural orientation they had.[32] The creation of a *cleruchy* on the Thracian coast confirms the food problems faced by the island, which, obviously, would be attempted to be addressed by land supply and sending citizens. Unfortunately, there is no information on when the citizens were originally sent, where they settled and what their number is. Only if one takes into account that the Samothracian ambassadors ask Hippomedon to take care of the fortification can safely assume that the forthcoming site was fortified.[33] The absence of any other identification does not help its safe placement on the map. The only clear fact, then, is that this is a fortified city inhabited by settlers. This is probably the same location that referred to as a village (χωρίον) on the first side of the inscribed column.[34] Perhaps the small walled settlement that has been located in the city of Mesembria-Zone was the fortress in which the citizens of Samothrace settled.[35] However, such a case is not entirely certain, as evidence of fortifications has been found in Makri, west of Alexandroupolis.[36] The help they ask from Hippomedon may be due to the fact that attacks on the area continued to exist. As Samothrace was weak militarily and

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30 Bagnall 1976, p. 165.

31 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 14-15.

32 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 18-20.

33 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 17-18.

34 *IG* XII 8 156A, l. 8.

35 For Mesembria-Zone, see Kallintzi, Tsatsopoulou, Zekos 1998.

36 Kallintzi 1992, pp. 587-593.

financially, with the help of the Spartan official repulsed the invaders, while with a new mission of ambassadors asks for the alliance of Hippomedon with the city for the safe repatriation of citizens. This assistance may have taken the form of keeping troops in the area. What is certain is that the danger was not completely averted. In order to achieve their goal, the city authorities also offer a motive to Hippomedon. Part of the agricultural production from the successful settlement in Perea would be intended for sacrifices in honor of the royal couple.[37] The offering of cultic honors to kings by city-states is one of the features of the Hellenistic world. The offer of such prices would give the opportunity to the general of Ptolemy III to connect Ptolemaic Egypt with Samothrace even more closely, a fact that would consequently increase the prestige of Hippomedon. The following lines of the inscription are lost, but it is most likely that the Spartan general of the Hellespont and Thrace would satisfy the demands of the city. Such a conclusion, moreover, is reflected from the first side of the column, where the honoree is presented as a man who generally does what the city asks him to do.

But who was this Spartan official who, in his service to the Ptolemies, carried out such an extensive action? It is noteworthy that Hippomedon from Sparta is not known only through the honorary decree of the Samothracians. The honoree belonged to the royal family of Eurypontids. His father Agesilaus was the uncle and the chief adviser of Agis IV, king of Sparta for the period 245-241 BC, during the latter's attempt to proceed with his social reform in Sparta. With the arrest of the king, Agesilaus, Hippomedon and several other prominent supporters of the reform managed to escape, as Plutarch informs.[38] Hippomedon found a shelter in the Ptolemaic court, where in a short time gained important positions in the Ptolemaic hierarchy and became one of the guardians and advisers of Ptolemy Euergetes, but also a general of the Hellespont and Thrace, as saved by the Samothracian inscription and by the narration of Teles of Megara, a cynical philosopher of the 3rd cent. BC, fragments of which are preserved in the *Anthology* of Joannes

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37 *IG* XII 8 156B, ll. 21-23.

38 Plu. *Agis* 16, 3. Hippomedon, a successful military officer popular with Sparta's youth, was more favourably disposed to the king's reform plans; when the counter reform faction of Leonidas seized power in 241 BC, Hippomedon managed to save his father from certain death. Immediately afterwards, father and son self-exiled, see Paschidis 2008, p. 259. On the date, see Marasco 1981, pp. 656-657.

Stobaeus, author of the 5th cent. AD.[39] Hippomedon remained in his position even after the death of Ptolemy Euergetes (222 BC), as he is mentioned in a papyrus that includes the list of high-ranking officials of his successor, Ptolemy IV Philopator (222/1-205/4 BC), which dates in the period 219-218 BC.[40] The king of Sparta at this time is Lycurgus, a non-famous king of disputed origin, although two sons of Archidamus and grandchildren of Hippomedon were alive, but also Hippomedon himself. This course impresses and surprises Polybius and one can easily assume that Hippomedon was in Sparta. In other words, the phrase of Polybius «But these were all passed over, and Lycurgus was appointed king, none of whose ancestors had ever enjoyed that title», which explicitly states that the succession to the royal line was disrupted by the election of Lycurgus as king of Sparta, may lead to the conclusion that although Hippomedon and his descendants were in Sparta, a king was elected «who, with a present of a talent to each of the Ephors was named a descendant of Hercules and king of the Lacedaemonians».[41] Such a hypothesis, however, contradicts the content of the papyrus, which wants Hippomedon to be, now older, in the court of Ptolemy Philopator. The most logical explanation is that the honoree of the Samothracian decree, despite his high position in the hierarchy of the Ptolemaic court, was still informed about the political developments of his particular homeland and became involved in them.[42] It is known that the citizens of a city who happened to have a long career at a royal court often maintained their political ties with their homeland, not only to leave the possibility of their return open, but also to enhance their status by serving as intermediaries between the king and their home city.

The high position of Hippomedon at the side of Ptolemy III (246/5-222/1 BC), his noble origin, but also the case that wants this official to have kept in touch with political developments of Sparta, may be the factors that make possible the involvement of Hippomedon in the

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39 Stob. *Flor*. 23.

40 *SB* 14.11943, ll. 47, 54. Bagnall 1976, pp. 160-161; Paschidis 2008, p. 259.

41 Plb. 4, 35, 13-14.

42 According to P. Paschidis, «Theoretically, one could still suppose that Hippomedon was general of Thrace from 241 to 219 BC and then returned to Sparta. It is unlikely, however, that Hippomedon (then in his sixties) returned to a city which had been crushingly defeated at war, a city, moreover, which his employer had abandoned in 224 BC»; Paschidis 2008, p. 259, n. 5.

alliance of Cleomenes III, king of Sparta for the period 235-222 BC, with Ptolemy III and his funding from the ruler, most likely in the winter of 226/5 BC.[43] It is worth noting that the alliance between Sparta and Egypt was widely advertised throughout the Peloponnese. Like Areus, Cleomenes received an honorific statue at Olympia by Euergetes.[44] It is possible that Hippomedon was sympathetic to Cleomenes' attempt to expand the reform program of Agis IV (245-241 BC).[45] Moreover, the probable involvement of Hippomedon in the relations between Cleomenes and Ptolemy would not only serve the interests of the Ptolemies in the Peloponnese, but also the personal career of the honored general of the Hellespont and Thrace. Antigonus III Doson (229-221 BC) had just returned from the expedition of Caria (227 BC), which was without a doubt a move aimed at striking Ptolemaic rule at sea and then take control of the sea passages. This fact alone will lead Ptolemy Euergetes to emphasize, in every possible way, the supremacy of his own kingdom. The creation of a feint in Greece, which would keep the royal house of the Antigonids busy, was not only a constant Ptolemaic tactic, but also a vital move for Hippomedon, the general of the Hellespont and Thrace.[46] In short, in the case that Hippomedon contributed to the alliance of Cleomenes III with Euergetes, he also served the interests of his homeland, the interests of Ptolemy, but also of himself, both as a Spartan and as a royal official, who had taken over the administration of a great for the interests of the Ptolemaic Egypt position. From the analysis so far, the only thing that is certain is that these events took place within twenty years, from 240 to 221 BC, during the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. Most historians are content with these time limits without further specification, while some scholars limit the years a little between 239-223 BC.[47] However, the dating that it is close to 240 BC can be easily discarded. Hippomedon found a shelter in Egypt this year, so it is impossible for him to assume such an important position as general of Hellespont and Thrace before

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43 Schmitt 1969, p. 208, n. 505; Hölbl 2001, p. 52; Paschidis 2008, p. 260; Gehrke 2009, p. 162 (Ptolemy III Euergetes ceased financing Aratus and the Achaian *koinon* and started financing Cleomenes).

44 *IvO* 309. Bringmann, Von Steuben 1995, n. 59.

45 Paschidis 2008, p. 260.

46 For the expedition of Caria (227 BC), see Plb. 20, 5, 4-11.

47 Bagnall 1976, p. 160; Carusi 2003, p. 191 (240-221 BC); Bakalakis, Scranton 1939, p. 456 (239-223 BC).

gaining the trust and showing his worth to the king. The development of close relations would require a long period of time with the self-exiled Spartan, logically, taking first positions of lesser importance.

In conclusion, Hippomedon was a very important member of the Ptolemaic prosopography, as he is one of the generals who took over the commission of areas that were influenced by the Ptolemies.[48] The duties of Hippomedon, as evidenced by the Samothracian inscription, highlight the ability of Sparta to train generals of international prestige at a time when the Spartan war machine has admittedly lost its former glory, while the inability of the army to adapt to the new military developments brought by the Hellenistic world is also obvious. However, the Spartan art of war offered the great Hellenistic kingdoms mercenaries and generals, as they needed a trained military force, in order to "equip" their guards, to avoid the raids of the barbarians, to control indigenous peoples, but also to carry out military operations in rival kingdoms. From this point of view, one would say that Hippomedon continued the tradition of the successful generals of Sparta, who offered their services at the international level, a tradition that begins in the 5th cent. BC and includes the Spartan general Kleandridas, who became the military leader of the Pan-Hellenic colony of Thourii in Southern Italy and using unique stratagems he managed to defeat several times the hostile indigenous Italic peoples (like Lucani, Brutii and others), the Spartan general Gylippus, the commander of the Syracusan defence against the Athenian invaders in Sicily, and the famous Spartan general Clearchos (commander of the famous Ten Thousand mercenaries of Cyrus the Younger), who used to command his soldiers «with the sword in one hand and the stick in the other» according to Xenophon.[49]

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[48] Ptolemy II had installed a Pamphyliarch in the area of Pamphylia, but the nature and character of his responsibilities have not been precisely determined today. It is possible, however, that these responsibilities of the Ptolemaic Pamphyliarch covered the wider area of Pamphylia, extending as a narrow strip along the Pamphylia Gulf (or Gulf of Attaleia), between Lycia to the west and Cilicia to the east, bordering to the north with Pisidia, see Meadows, Thonemann 2013, pp. 223-226. Hippomedon should have been such a type of official. The difference is that in the case of Hippomedon, information about his responsibilities and duties is saved. As briefly argued by G. Hölbl «Ptolemy III appointed the strategos Hippomedon to administer Thrace and the Hellespont and in this capacity the latter's authority extended over both military and economic matters and he even managed the public finances in his region»; Hölbl 2001, p. 60.

[49] For a brief biography of Kleandridas and Gylippus, see Clough 1870, pp. 316-318,

On the Spartan side the benefit was obviously economic, especially in the case of the kingdom of Ptolemies, which was served by the Spartan Hippomedon. It is a common assumption that in Ptolemaic Egypt there were no delays in the payment of mercenaries, a situation which was quite common in Greece. The army was so necessary to the Ptolemies that it should be treated at all times with care and probably with generosity, confirming the words that Thionichos utters in the 14th idyll of Theocritus, when he wishes and admonishes Aeschines: «I would indeed thy desire had run smooth, Aeschinas. But if so be thy mind is made up to go thy ways abroad, I'll tell the best paymaster a freeman can have; King Ptolemy».[50]

779. For Clearchos, see D.S. 13, 51; 13, 98; 14, 12; 14, 22; 14, 26; Plu. *Alc*. 28. 31; Plu. *Art*. 8. 18; Th. 8, 8; 8, 39; X. *An*. 1, 1, 9; 1, 2, 3; 1, 2, 9; 3, 1, 10; X. *HG*. 1, 1, 16; 1, 1, 35; 1, 3, 15.

[50] Theoc. *Id.* 14 *(The Love of Cynisca)*, ll. 57-59.

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— 7 —

Political and military developments in Hellenistic Sparta

Miltiades Michalopoulos *

Keywords: Sparta, political development, military development, revolution, reforms.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: Σπάρτη, πολιτική ανάπτυξη, στρατιωτική ανάπτυξη, επανάσταση, μεταρρυθμίσεις.

Abstract:

Around the middle of the 3rd cent. BC what was left of Sparta's glorious past was a mere shadow of it; politically and military weakened and with huge inner social problems. Its biggest problem was the scarcity of men, as Aristotle had aptly pointed out. But this problem was not the only one. Sparta had also become a plutocratic society of 700 citizens of whom only 100 owned land and kleros, while most of the others were indebted to the 100 privileged Spartans. This study examines the political and military developments of Sparta during this period in order to shed light to the fact that behind all reforms was a revolutionary movement that sprang from Sparta's traditions, was influenced by them, and in turn wove the legend of Sparta in the following centuries.

Στα μέσα του 3ου π.Χ. αιώνα η Σπάρτη ήταν σκιά του παλιού εαυτού της. Πολιτικά ήταν περιθωριοποιημένη, στρατιωτικά ήταν ανίσχυρη και στο εσωτερικό της είχε μεγάλα κοινωνικά προβλήματα. Το μεγαλύτερο πρόβλημά της ήταν βεβαίως το δημογραφικό, η ολιγανθρωπία,

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όπως πολύ εύστοχα είχε επισημάνει ο Αριστοτέλης. Ταυτόχρονα όμως η Σπάρτη είχε εξελιχθεί σε μια πλουτοκρατική κοινωνία 700 Σπαρτιατών, από τους οποίους μόλις οι 100 είχαν γη και κλήρο. Στόχος αυτής της εργασίας είναι μέσα από την επισκόπηση των πολιτικών και κυρίως των στρατιωτικών εξελίξεων να αναδειχθεί η σύνδεση αυτής της επαναστατικής κίνησης με την τελευταία αναλαμπή της Σπάρτης και να επιχειρηθεί μια αποτίμησή της.

Around the middle of the 3rd cent. BC what was left of Sparta's glorious past was a mere shadow of it; politically and military weakened and with huge inner social problems. Its biggest problem was the scarcity of men, as Aristotle had aptly pointed out.[1] But this problem was not the only one. Sparta had also become a plutocratic society of 700 citizens of whom only 100 owned land and *kleros*, while most of the others were indebted to the 100 privileged Spartans.[2]

The Spartan territory was now confined to Laconia while a new power, the Achaean League was claiming the hegemony of the whole Peloponnese in Sparta's place. Under these circumstances the prospects for Sparta seemed ominous. Against all odds, the last Spartan rulers decided not only to resist but even reclaim for themselves the hegemony of southern Greece. They realized that in order to revive Sparta's former glory, it was necessary to proceed to a radical social and political re-structuring of their city. To achieve this, they implemented a number of unprecedented revolutionary reforms.

This study examines the political and military developments of Sparta during this period in order to shed light to the fact that behind all reforms was a revolutionary movement that sprang from Sparta's traditions, was influenced by them, and in turn wove the legend of Sparta in the following centuries.

It all begun in 241 BC with king Agis IV of the Eurypontid House. He was the first to conceive a complete reform program that would cure the chronic problems of his city. His program had two parts. First to increase the number of Spartans by adding *perioikoi* and *hypomeiones* to the citizen body. This meant a redistribution of land so that the

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1 Arist. *Pol*. 2, 1270a.

2 Plu. *Agis* 5, 4. David 1981; Hodkinson 2000.

new citizens would acquire a *kleros* without which nobody could have citizenship. It also meant a cancellation of debts. In fact, debt cancellation and land redistribution were the main demands not only of the Spartan citizens, but of the whole population in Peloponnese at the time.[3] The second part of Agis' reforms was the re-organization of the Spartan army, with an emphasis on the military education (*agoge*), and the restoration of the common messes (*syssitia*). King Agis didn't manage to realize his vision for Sparta. The ruling class, represented by King Leonidas II of the Agiad House, reacted violently and King Agis was eventually hanged. Morally speaking, this came as a terrible blow to the age-old institution of dual kingship as for the first time in Sparta's history a king was condemned to death.

Ironically, the one who implemented Agis' revolutionary reforms was king Cleomenes III, the son of Agis' bitter enemy, king Leonidas II. Not wanting to suffer the same end as Agis, Cleomenes was clever enough to move about secretly. First, he made sure that his position was strengthened. Having done that, he carried out a bloody coup killing, among others, four of the five Ephors. In order to fully consolidate his power, Cleomenes proceeded with two more radical moves: he abolished the institution of the Ephors and overthrew the other royal House, raising his brother Eucleidas to the throne as second king. Being in charge of the situation, Cleomenes was now free to implement his reforms. The results were immediate: the number of Spartan hoplites increased to 4.000. In addition to reviving the *agoge*, Cleomenes imposed radical changes to the Spartan army. The outdated hoplite phalanx was upgraded according to the standards of the powerful Macedonian army; the new phalanx now consisted of deeper and denser formations of men; the 2.5 m spear of the Spartan hoplite was replaced by the 6 m long *sarissa*. Soon the new army would be tested on the battlefield with great success. Indeed, under the inspired leadership of Cleomenes, it prevailed in all conflicts over the forces of the Achaean League. Cleomenes soon restored Sparta's control over Arcadia, Corinth, Argos, and much of Achaea. And when the Achaeans invited Sparta to enter negotiations and resolve the issue, Cleomenes claimed the *hegemony* of the Peloponnese. However, it was down to a twist of fortune that Aratus, the leader of the Achaean League, turned

[3] See Fuks 1966, pp. 437-448.

to Macedonia for help. Macedonian King Antigonus Doson seized the opportunity and the tide of war turned against Sparta.

The change of dynamics deprived Cleomenes of a large number of his supporters in Peloponnese. There were those who thought that Cleomenes' force was no match for the formidable Macedonian army. There was also another reason. The poor and landless population had hoped that Cleomenes would extend "land redistribution" and "debt cancellation" to other cities as well, as he had done in Sparta. When people realized that his reforms were limited to only to Sparta, they abandoned him, with Argos being the prime example. As Antigonus, at the head of a strong Macedonian force, was invading Peloponnese, Cleomenes found himself in a dire situation. To continue waging war against the combined forces of his enemies he desperately needed men to increase his army and also to raise money. In order to face this new challenge, he turned to the helots. He emancipated them for the price of 5 attic minae and so managed to collect 500 talents. 6.000 helots were emancipated and enlisted in the Spartan army of whom, 2.000, obviously the strongest, reinforced the Spartan phalanx. Needless to say, Cleomenes did not give helots citizenship so that they wouldn't be members of the political body of Sparta. The emancipation of the helots was an emergency measure and nothing more.[4]

The great battle was finally fought in Sellasia in the early summer of 222 BC where, despite his problems, Cleomenes managed to raise an army of 20.000 men, half of whom were the heavy infantry of the phalanx. It was certainly an impressive achievement if we consider that the last time a similar size of Spartan force mentioned in history was in the battle of Plataea two and a half centuries before. But again, the Spartan army fell short of its opponents' combined forces. The allied force of the Macedonian monarch Antigonus Doson reached almost 30.000 men and of these, 13.000 were the Macedonian phalanx, the best infantry of the time. In the conflict that followed, the numerical superiority of the Macedonians prevailed and the Spartan phalanx was encircled and annihilated. The battle of Sellasia is the greatest catastrophe in the history of Sparta and it definitely put an end to the ambitious plans of Cleomenes. But not to the plans of his successors.

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4 See Michalopoulos 2016, p. 208, n. 228.

Only three years later, in 219, king Lycurgus tried to regain the lost ground.[5] His "army" was a meagre force that could not be compared to that of Cleomenes, as the heavy infantry had perished in the battle of Sellasia. Nevertheless, King Lycurgus put the Achaean Confederation in a difficult position and forced it to turn to Macedonia again for help. King Philip V of Macedonia accepted the challenge and moved quickly against Sparta. In the conflict at Menelaion in 218, king Lycurgus carefully chose the battlefield so that the attackers would have to move on muddy ground and be exposed to flank attacks by the Spartans at the same time. However, despite Lycurgus' clever stratagem, his army was not much for its Macedonian counterpart and was easily dispersed.

Ten years later, the heavy infantry of the phalanx reappeared to the ranks of the Spartan army. The new leader of Sparta, Machanidas,[6] also followed the policy of his predecessors and turned against the Achaean League. He was successful and managed to regain some territory in the northern borders of Laconia. But in the meantime, the army of the Achaean League had been revitalized. General Philopoemen had reorganized the cavalry and especially the infantry of the Achaean League according to the standards of the Macedonian phalanx. He even dared to face Machanidas, without the help of the Macedonians. The critical battle took place in Mantineia in 207 BC. It was a fierce and ambiguous conflict; Machanidas attacked vigorously and repulsed his opponents, but due to poor coordination the battle ended in a catastrophic defeat for the Spartans. The losses in Mantineia were enormous: according to Polybius, more than 8.000 warriors died, most of whom were heavy infantry of the phalanx. Machanidas was killed on the battlefield too. This second catastrophe completed that of Sellasia, leaving Sparta literally at the mercy of its enemies.

At this critical moment appeared the last great leader of Sparta, Nabis. The imperative problem he had to resolve was the replenishment of human resources. For this purpose, he did not hesitate to recruit the helots as Cleomenes had done before him. Nabis did not limit himself to using them exclusively for the strengthening of his army,

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5 Lycurgus had superseded the Agiad king Agesipolis by 217, thereby ending the dual kingship in Sparta; see Michalopoulos 2016, p. 220, n. 34.

6 Machanidas was not a king. He was probably the guardian of Lycurgus' underage son Pelops; Walbank 1967, p. 255; Oliva 1971, p. 272; *contra*: Cartledge 2002, p. 65.

but instead moved further to include them in the political body of Sparta. The number of Nabis' new "Spartans" reached 10.000 men. Navis also started the systematic fortification of Sparta, enclosing four of its five *kome* with a complete perimetric wall that included a moat and crossings. Finally, he placed a lot of emphasis on the creation of a strong fleet, transforming Sparta into a naval power; this was an unprecedented phenomenon in the city's long history. In exerting power, Nabis ruled as an absolute monarch. He appointed no second king to co-rule with him and lived in a luxurious palace. His regime did not differ in any way from the other Hellenistic monarchies of his time. In his foreign policy, Nabis followed the policy of his predecessors, but with much greater success. With a combination of military operations and clever diplomatic maneuvers, he succeeded in extending the influence of Sparta from Arcadia and Argolis to the Aegean and Crete. A feature of his policy is that, unlike Cleomenes, Nabis successfully played the role of a social reformer, extending his social reforms beyond Sparta. As a result, he attracted the poor populations in the cities of the Peloponnese. When with a clever diplomatic maneuver, he succeeded in annexing Argos to the territory of Sparta, his first action was to confiscate the property of the rich and distribute it to his Argive supporters. The result was that Argos remained on the side of Sparta until the end. The fact is, that at a time when giant state formations were fighting with each other for domination in the Mediterranean, Sparta emerged as a force to be reckoned with and remained a protagonist on the political scene for fifteen years. With subtle political maneuvers, Nabis not only managed to keep his country away from catastrophic wars, but also to be on the side of the victors as an ally.

However, this balance on a tightrope could not last for long. In 195 BC, under the pretext of overthrowing the tyranny, Rome decided to actively interfere in the Peloponnesian cause. The Roman Proconsul Flamininus, marched against Sparta at the head of a large military force of 50.000 men. But Sparta was now fortified and determined to resist. Confident of the numerical and qualitative superiority of his army, Flamininus tried to capture it with a raid. The Spartans defended their city stubbornly. When at some point the Roman legions managed to invade the city, the Spartans set fire to the houses next to the wall and after fierce street battles they repulsed the invaders. The repulse of the Romans was perhaps the last heroic moment of Sparta; but the Spartans had reached the limits of their endurance. On the contrary,

Flamininus' army not only had already encircled the city but also owned the equipment to proceed with a siege. In the face of the overwhelming superiority of the enemies and in order to avoid the holocaust, Nabis chose to capitulate on terms and ensure the independence of his homeland. For three years Sparta continued to exist as an independent political entity. But 192 BC found Nabis assassinated and Sparta forcibly subjugated to the Achaean Confederation. From this time until the Roman conquest of Greece, it ceased to exist as an independent city-state.

In conclusion, in order to stand up to the military challenges of the time, Sparta proceeded to revolutionary reforms which called for the restructuring of its political and social structures, as well as the modernization of its army. With these reforms it managed to stay on the political scene for three decades. I would like to emphasize the consistence of the policy followed among the last three leaders of Sparta as far as their reform programs were concerned. Agis envisioned the first socio-political program, Cleomenes implemented Agis' vision and Navis evolved it to include even more radical reforms than those of his predecessors. Even in the turbulent fifteen years between Cleomenes and Nabis, Cleomenes' basic ideological principles and objectives were maintained: the foreign policy of Lycurgus was anti-Achaean, anti-Macedonian and, despite the most obvious military weakness of Sparta, firmly committed to the recovery of Spartan territory. Similarly, Machanidas followed the same policy.

We can therefore say that there is a distinct thread that connects the drastic reforms of Agis and Cleomenes leading to the complete revolution of Nabis. To the ever-increasing challenges of the times, the leaders of Sparta responded with increasingly radical reforms. For the implementation of these reforms, but also because of their implementation, ancient institutions were abolished or lost their importance. The closed society of the Spartan citizens (*homoioi*) opened up to include neighboring populations (*perioikoi)*, mercenaries and helots in it. In this way, the character of the city changed so much that the price for Sparta's survival was to renounce itself. By the end of the 3rd cent., Sparta had been transformed into a small Hellenistic style kingdom, which had little to do with the traditional Sparta. The paradox here is that in the conscious of the Spartans this new kingdom

was identified with their Ancestral Polity (*patrios politeia*).[7] The Spartan Chimera, this deceptive charm that still surrounds Sparta, has its roots in the Spartan Revolution of the 3rd cent. BC.

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7 Michalopoulos 2016, pp. 135-150; Kennell 1995, Figueira 2004, Flower 2002.

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— 8 —

The so-called Roman *stoa* of Sparta: a *status quaestionis*

Lavinia Del Basso *

Keywords: Spartan topography, *stoa,* substruction, urban layout, Roman Greece.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: τοπογραφία της Σπάρτης, στοά, υποδομή, αστική τοπογραφία, ρωμαϊκή Ελλάδα.

Abstract:

The article reexamines the Roman *stoa* of Sparta, taking into account its layout, materials, building technique and suggests that it combines elements from the Roman building traditions with features of local craftsmanship. Moreover, an analysis of its location and a parallel with other buildings of similar function and date constitute further evidence for the location of the Spartan *agora* on the Palaiokastro Hill, with the Roman *stoa* being a substruction on its S and E side that encloses the urban main square and enhances its monumentality, following a trend found in several *agorai* of Roman Greece and Asia Minor in the Imperial period.

Το άρθρο επανεξετάζει τη ρωμαϊκή στοά της Σπάρτης, λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τη διάταξη, τα υλικά, την τεχνική δόμησής της και προτείνει ότι συνδυάζει στοιχεία από τις ρωμαϊκές οικοδομικές παραδόσεις με χαρακτηριστικά της τοπικής δεξιοτεχνίας. Επιπλέον, η ανάλυση της θέσης του και ο παραλληλισμός με άλλα κτίρια παρόμοιας λειτουργίας και χρονολογίας αποτελούν περαιτέρω στοιχεία για τη θέση της σπαρτιατικής αγοράς στο

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λόφο Παλαιόκαστρου, με τη ρωμαϊκή στοά να αποτελεί υποκατάστατο στη Ν και Α πλευρά του που περικλείει την αστική κεντρική πλατεία και ενισχύει τη μνημειακότητά της, ακολουθώντας μια τάση που συναντάται σε αρκετές αγορές της Ρωμαϊκής Ελλάδας και της Μικράς Ασίας κατά την Αυτοκρατορική περίοδο.

Despite a growing interest in recent years, the topography of Roman Sparta remains largely unknown.[1] A noteworthy monument that deserves further attention is the so-called Roman *stoa*,[2] a substruction of sizable dimensions located on the SE slope of the Palaiokastro Hill, behind the modern stadium (fig. 1).

The building was investigated for the first time in 1906 by a British mission led by R.C. Bosanquet.[3] The excavations focused on one of the two central rooms (today known as room XI[4]), on one of the 22 lateral rooms, where the ground level was reached, and on the SE corner, where the Roman *stoa* meets the eastern section of the Late Roman fortifications. The archaeologists identified the Roman *stoa* as a commercial building on the southern side of the Spartan *agora*.[5] The British mission also investigated the brick structures near the so-called circular building,[6] and interpreted them as an extension of the Roman *stoa* on the W side.[7]

In 1942, during the Nazi occupation of Greece, researches on the Roman *stoa* were carried by a German mission led by P. Knoblauch. According to the short report in the *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, the

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1 Cartledge, Spawforth 1989, pp. 117-131; Stibbe 1989, pp. 61-99; Musti, Torelli 1991; Gengler, Marchetti 2000, pp. 57-86; Kourinou 2000, pp. 97-129; Baudini 2006, pp. 21-35; Cavanagh 2018 pp. 61-92. For the ideological reasons behind this delay Greco 2016, pp. 115-118. For the history of Roman Sparta Lafond 2018, pp. 403-422.

2 Despite its inaccuracy, the name "Roman *stoa*" is widely used in the bibliography and will be adopted in the following pages, following Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 378.

3 Bosanquet 1906, p. 278; a short report was published by R. Traquair in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*; Traquair 1906, pp. 415-417.

4 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 386.

5 Dickins 1906, pp. 431-434.

6 E. Lippolis identifies the so-called circular building as a political structure, an interpretation accepted by E. Greco and O. Voza; Lippolis 2011; Greco, Voza 2016; *contra* C.P. Dickenson who identifies it with a religious space; Dickenson 2017, pp. 103-105.

7 Dickins 1906, p. 432.

excavators found traces of a portico in front of the visible remains of the building.[8]

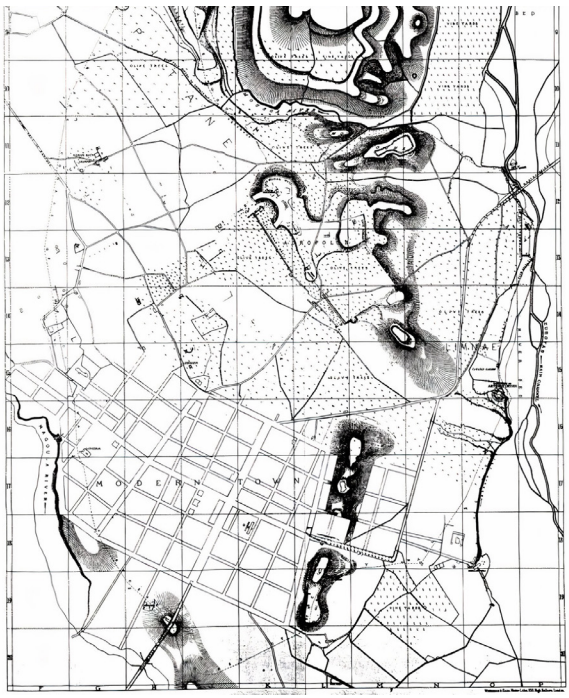

Fig. 1. Sparta, plan of the city (© BSA; Waywell, Wilkes 1994).

Between 1988 and 1991, the British School at Athens resumed the excavations of the monument, led by G.B. Waywell and J.J. Wilkes.[9] They opened three stratigraphical surveys (fig. 2): the first one in the two central rooms XI and XII, the second in room XXIV (RSC 1-3 trench) and the third in the brick structures near the circular building (RSW 1-3 trench).[10] The archaeologists tentatively identified the monument with

8 Walter 1942, pp. 156-157; the photographic documentation mentioned in the report could not be located in the Athenian or central archives of the *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut*. For the interest in Sparta during the Nazi period Rebenich 2018, pp. 692-700.

9 The results were published in three preliminary reports: Waywell, Wilkes 1993, pp. 219-220; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 377-432; Waywell, Wilkes 1997, pp. 401-434. For an overview of the British excavations at Sparta Catling 1998, pp. 19-27.

10 Waywell, Wilkes 1993, pp. 219-220; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 385; at the time, the sheer size of the building, its massive landfill and the lack of permission from landplots' owners didn't allow the British excavators to investigate the entire monument.

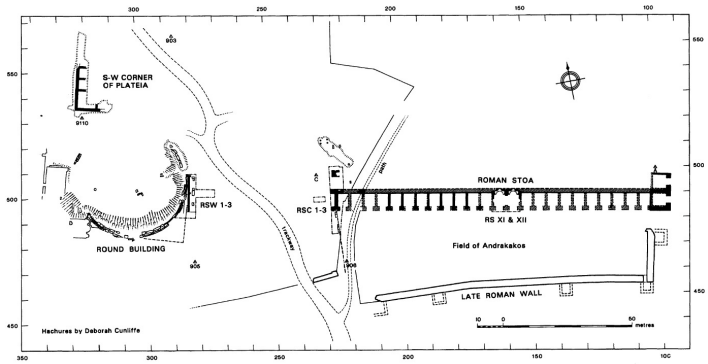

Fig. 2. The British excavations in 1988-1991 (© BSA; Waywell, Wilkes 1994).

a restoration of Hadrianic period of the famous Persike *stoa* (5th cent. BC),[11] still mentioned by Pausanias as the most remarkable building of the Spartan *agora.*[12]

Since then the Roman *stoa* has not been further investigated, despite being mentioned in all the subsequent discussions on Spartan topography, especially those concerning the disputed location of its *agora*.[13]

The building

The so-called Roman *stoa* is a substruction located on the SE slope of the Palaiokastro Hill, in front of a well preserved section of the Late Antique fortifications. The building lays on a steep slope that decreases gradually from N to S, regularized by its own construction. It consists of 24 rooms (lenght 114 m), numbered from E to W with Latin numbers: 22 rooms of identical shape and size and two central rooms with bigger dimensions and a different layout (XI and XII).

Each of the 22 lateral rooms faces S and is covered by a barrel vault; it measures 4.15 m of width and 5.25 of lenght and is divided from the

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11 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 414.

12 Paus. 3, 11, 3; the building is also mentioned by Vitr. 1, 1, 6 and D. Chrys. 47, 17. For Pausanias as a topographical source for the Spartan *agora* Stewart 2013, pp. 240-243; Greco 2016, pp. 113-128.

13 Musti, Torelli 1991, pp. 192-193; Stibbe 1989, p. 71; Waywell 1999, pp. 14-15; Kourinou 2000, pp. 109-114; Baudini 2006, pp. 21-35; Greco 2011, p. 53; Fouquet 2019, pp. 199-204.

adjacent rooms by a wall of 0.90 m of width; the rear wall has a width of 1.80 m.[14] In 1906 the excavators reportedly reached the ground floor in one of them; it was located at 3.27 m from the vault springers and made of quadrangular bricks.[15]

In the middle of the *stoa* there are two communicating rooms (XI and XII) of bigger dimensions (width 5.40 m), with cross-vaulted ceilings and an apsis in their rear walls (fig. 3).[16] Each apsis has a diameter of 3.54 m, and contains three niches: in the central ones there is a circular hole while in both the lateral niches of room XI there is a rectangular hole at the same height; according to the British excavators, they originally contained water pipes.[17] Below the niches there are semicircular benches (width 35 cm), interpreted as supports for basins that collected water from above.[18] In both rooms fragments of marble *crustae* upon a layer of cocciopesto were found, the latter usually employed for waterproof claddings.[19] Despite these evidences, the presence of *nymphea* inside rooms XI and XII remains uncertain, since no runoff system has been found so far.

The recent British excavations cleared some aspects of the building's layout. In the RSC 1-3 trench the archaeologists found that the W wall of room XXIV is the W limit of the Roman *stoa* (fig. 2). It runs transversally from the rear wall towards S and has a larger width (1.20 m) than the other dividing walls of the building (0.90 m); it ends with a pillar lined with bricks that encloses the entrance to room XXIV.[20] The RSC 1-3 trench was extended further to the S, in order to find traces of the porch mentioned by the German excavators; however, the unexpected finding of a section of the Late Roman fortifications did not allow to reach the ground floor and to fully understand how the area in front of the monument was arranged.[21] On the N side of the

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14 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 384; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 387. In the recent excavations, the British archaeologists also found the lower edge of a rectangular niche in the E wall of room XI while the upper part of a rectangular niche is visible in the W wall of room XII; both structures have yet to be investigated.

15 Traquair 1906, pp. 415-417.

16 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 384.

17 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 384.

18 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 384-385.

19 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 387.

20 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 391; the same pillars enclose the entrances of all the lateral rooms of the building.

21 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 391-392; Frey 2016, pp. 104-106.

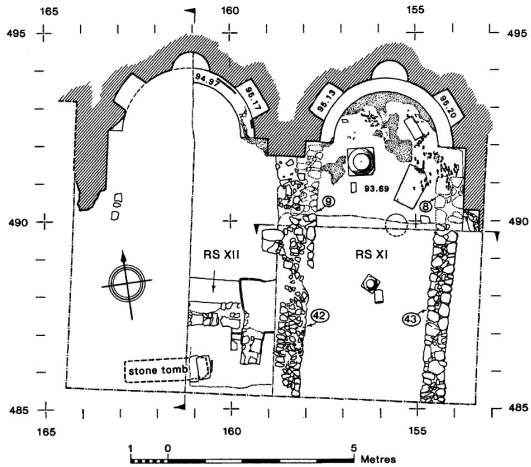

Fig. 3. Plan of the central rooms XI and XII (© BSA; Waywell, Wilkes 1994).

RSC 1-3 trench a large concrete platform was found, interpreted as the foundation of a porch that opened towards the Palaiokastro Hill; with this addition, the total width of the building was measured as 14.50 m (excluding the presumed portico on the S side).[22]

The vaulted rooms seem to disappear beyond room XXIV, where the natural slope rises abruptly. However, near the so-called circular building (RSW 1-3 trench) there are concrete walls covered with bricks, so similar in layout and materials to the main monument that they are usually considered an extension of the Roman *stoa* towards W (fig. 2).[23] Since these remains are placed at a higher level than the 24 rooms, the British excavators suggested that they were part of the first floor of the building, reaching a total lenght of 188 m on its upper level.[24]

At the SE side of the Roman *stoa* there are two rooms (5.5 x 5 m) opened towards E, known as rooms 1 and 2;[25] their combined width is 14.50 m (including their walls), the same found on the W side of the building.[26] Room 1 leans on the E wall of room I, even though the stratigraphical relationship between the two is still unclear; the rear wall of room 2 leans directly on the ground behind. The walls are made

[22] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 392-393.

[23] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 393-396.

[24] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 393-396.

[25] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 384.

[26] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 405.

of concrete and are covered with limestone blocks up to the springers, probably to strengthen the corner of the building, and with bricks for the barrel vaults.[27] These rooms were probably planned together with the rest of the Roman *stoa*; it is not known whether they extended further and enclosed the E side of the Palaiokastro Hill, because the construction of the Late Roman fortifications cancelled all the potential evidence.[28]

On both the S and E sides of the building there are large holes (28-31 x 34 cm), coated with bricks and placed at the same height, at a distance of 56 cm from each other (fig. 4).[29] They were probably used for timber beams that supported a porch running in front of the visible remains, whose traces were mentioned by the German archaeologists but could not be recovered in the subsequent excavations.[30]

Gathering all the evidence, the British excavators proposed that the Roman *stoa* was a two-storey building; the lower floor was a 24 rooms substruction leaning on the ground behind, with a Doric portico facing S, that regularized the shape and height of the Palaiokastro Hill; the upper level, which included the brick structures in the RSW 1-3 trench, with a double porch divided by a Corinthian colonnade, whose N side opened directly on the Palaiokastro plain (fig. 5).[31]

Before the Roman *stoa*: the previous building phase

The arrangement of the SE slope of the Palaiokastro Hill before the construction of the Roman *stoa* is unknown; the only evidence of a previous building phase comes from the RSC 1 trench (fig. 2). Here, the excavations found a pebble foundation running N-S, upon which there were two layers of limestone blocks and a layer of marble ashlars.[32] The associated ceramic materials date between the end of the 2nd cent. BC and the Augustan era.[33] When the Roman *stoa* was built, this wall was

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27 Traquair 1906, pp. 418-419; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 384; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 408.

28 Frey 2016, p. 101.

29 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 407-408.

30 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 407-408.

31 Gengler, Marchetti 2000, pp. 60-61 point to some difficulties in this reconstruction, that cannot be further assessed without a proper architectural study of the building.

32 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 391.

33 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 401.

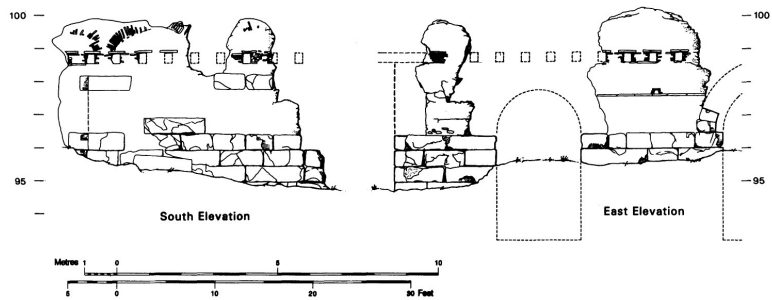

Fig. 4. Elevation of the S and E side of the Roman *stoa*, with holes for timber beams (© BSA; Waywell, Wilkes 1994).

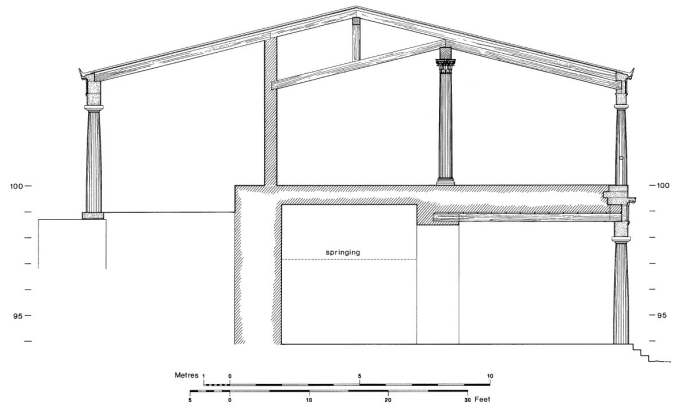

Fig. 5. Reconstructed elevation of the building on the S side (© BSA; Waywell, Wilkes 1994).

covered by the concrete foundations of the upper portico, enclosing the esplanade of Palaikastro.[34] The use of marble points to a relevant building but its scant remains do not allow to understand whether it was a predecessor of the Roman *stoa*.

After the Roman *stoa*: the subsequent phases

Traces of reuse have been found everywhere, but the clearer evidences come from the RSW 3 trench (brick structures near the circular building) and from the two central rooms XI and XII.

In the RSW 3 trench, the conspicuous findings of amphorae and jugs (early 5th cent.) suggest the presence of a hydraulic structure

[34] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 391.

nearby and a probable change in use of the monument or of its W side in Late Antiquity (storage?).[35]

In the two central rooms (fig. 3), at first the marble cladding was replaced with an *opus spicatum* floor and a *signinum* layer on the walls, probably converting the rooms into cisterns (4th -6th cent.).[36] Subsequently, the rooms were abandoned for a long period; when they were occupied again (10th cent.) the landfill accumulated in the meantime was cleared along with the potential dating materials. A new building was built in front of the extant remains of the Roman *stoa*, that incorporated the two central rooms but separated them with a mudbrick wall running N-S, partially covered with frescoes, reproducing an *opus sectile* in the lower part and two draped figures in the upper section.[37] In the SW portion of the trench a tomb was found, covered with concrete slabs, with the remains of seven individuals, deposed in two different phases.[38] The British excavators think that the building had a religious function, because of the layout, the internal burials and the iconography of the frescoes, and plausibly identify it with the monastery of Aghios Nikon Metanoites.[39] The last ceramic materials and coins found in this trench date to the second half of the XIII, after which the building was definitely abandoned, probably when the population of *Lakedaimonia* (the name of Sparta in the Byzantine period) left the city in the plain for Mystras.[40]

Materials

The Roman *stoa* was built in *opus caementicium* and covered with triangular bricks, cut from quadrangular *pedales* (27 x 27 x 3 cm);[41] *pedales* of the same size have been found only in Sparta,[42] but not in

35 Pickersgill, Roberts 2003, pp. 589-596.

36 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 387, 397-400.

37 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 386-388.

38 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 388-389, 397-402.

39 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 388-389, 397-402, 424-429; Armstrong 2008, pp. 358-365.

40 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 424-429. For the abandonment of *Lakedaimonia* Nicol 1998, pp. 157-158.

41 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 412.

42 For *pedales* reused to cover a drain, of unknown date see Cook, Nicholls 1950, pp. 284-285.

other sites of Roman Greece or elsewhere.[43] Every ten bricks there is a layer of *bipedales* (55 x 55 x 5-6 cm),[44] which are also used whenever there is a need to reinforce the structure or to even a surface.[45] *Sesquipedales* (44 x 44 x 4,5 cm), whole or fractured, are used in the vaults.[46] In 1906, the excavators found a floor made of quadrangular bricks (31 x 31 cm) in one of the lateral rooms,[47] that could be either the original floor or a later refurbishment; a comparison with similar floors points to the latter option.[48]

The choice of bricks is what sets the Roman *stoa* apart from other buildings of the same tipology.[49] Bricks are sparsely used in Roman Greece, where they failed to replace the traditional stone masonry, and are highly unusual for substructions; therefore, they have been interpreted as a way to replicate materials and techniques that were in fashion in Rome.[50] However, the Roman *stoa* shows continuity with local building traditions with its use of *pedales*, a measure almost unknown outside Roman Greece;[51] moreover, the intact side of the bricks faces outwards and not inwards, another peculiarity of the *provincia Achaia*.[52] However, since no brickstamps have been found so far, it is impossible to shed light into the economic and social dimensions of brick production in Sparta.[53]

The British scholars applied mensiochronology to the building, using the nearby Arapissa complex as a term of comparison but

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43 Aupert 1990, pp. 629-636. For *pedales* of slightly bigger dimensions in Gortyn (first half of the 2nd cent.) see Livadiotti 2000a, p. 170.

44 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 412.

45 For *bipedales* used to encase the beam holes on the SE corner and probably to support the floor laid upon the beams on the second level of the *stoa* see Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 412. On the use of *bipedales* to ensure the stability of concrete walls Lugli 1957, pp. 570-572; Vitti 2010, p. 316.

46 Vitti 2016, p. 192.

47 Traquair 1906, pp. 416-417.

48 Aupert 1990, p. 636.

49 For building of the same tipology but reveted with stone ashlars see Cavalier 2012.

50 «The decision to use bricks may have been as much about imitating similar land exploitation strategies used in Rome as about imitating the building methods of the capital»; Lancaster 2015, p. 196.

51 Ginouvès 1972, p. 223; Vitti 2016, p. 204.

52 Vitti, Vitti 2010, p. 277, n. 41.

53 Manacorda 2000, pp. 127-154. For Spartan brick production and its meaning Cartledge, Spawforth 1989, p. 158; Spawforth 2012, p. 123; Lancaster 2015, p. 196.

reaching different outcomes:[54] A. Wace suggested that the Roman *stoa* was built at the beginning of the Imperial period,[55] while G.B. Waywell and J.J. Wilkins placed its construction in the first half of the 2nd cent.[56] Since no comprehensive study of brick walls in the *provincia Achaia* exists, the only *terminus post quem* for the Spartan monument is the use of *bipedales*, employed with greater regularity from the Domitianic period onwards, initially in Rome and the Italian peninsula and gradually in the provinces.[57]

The central rooms XI and XII display clamps to fix marble cladding on the walls and ceilings; during the excavations some coloured marble *sectilia* were found, placed upon a thick layer of cocciopesto,[58] and sourced for the most part from local quarries.[59] Fragments of cipollino marble were found in room XXIV, stripped from their previous settings in Late Antiquity; according to the archaeologists, they decorated either the room itself or the porch in front of the building.[60] Even though it is not known whether some or all the lateral rooms had marble decorations, the conspicuous use of marble highlights the economical investment and finds comparisons with other major monuments of the same period in Greece and elsewhere in the Roman Empire.[61]

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54 On this method and its limits Giuliani 2004, pp. 21-22. The lack of measures makes it impossible to use the density coefficient method used by the French mission at Argo and replicated by several scholars in other sites of Roman Greece (on this method Aupert 1990, pp. 593-614).

55 «If we apply the usual test of date for Roman brickwork, we find that in the first period the proportion of brick to mortar is as three to two, and in the second about the same. In the Stoa of the Acropolis [i.e, the Roman *stoa*] the proportion is as four to one. Thus, if the Stoa is of the early imperial period, these baths would be of the later second century», Wace 1906, p. 414; same date proposed by Dodge 1987, p. 107.

56 «The Augustan date for this building [i.e. the Roman *stoa*]... seems too early; the measurements of the brickwork are close to those of the Arapissa-complex (Susan Walker, pers. comm.)», Cartledge, Spawforth 1989, p. 218, n. 18.

57 Lugli 1957, pp. 570-572; for the adoption of *bipedales* in Roman Greece Vitti 2016a, p. 204.

58 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 387.

59 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 412; for Laconian quarries Christien 2018, pp. 626-642.

60 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 412; on cipollino marble and its trade Chidiroglou 2010, pp. 51-53.

61 Yegül, Favro 2019, p. 558.

Building technique

The building techniques have been discussed in detail by the British excavators and, for the vaults, by P. Vitti (2016); therefore, only the major points will be touched.

The vaulted ceilings are realized with a solid brick shell forming the intradox, upon which concrete is poured; this technique is employed in the Roman East and particularly in the *provincia Achaia*, instead of the wooden centerings adopted in Rome or the West.[62] In this way, a lighter but sufficiently strong core could be obtained even without puteolanic ashes.[63]

The barrel vaults in the lateral rooms are built with *sesquipedales* placed radially, broken in the lower section (from the impost to 70 cm), to allow indentations with the concrete core, and uncut for the rest of the ceiling.[64] The four holes underneath were used for the timber centering. A similar building technique was adopted for rooms 1 and 2 on the E side, albeit with stone wedges in place of the brick shells[65] and a recess to support the centering in place of the holes.[66]

The same building technique is adopted for the cross vaults of rooms XI and XII, with *sesquipedales* placed horizontally up to 1.40 m and radially in the remnant section. As for the apsis, the brick shell is made with *pedales* placed horizontally, with a keystone of vertical bricks;[67] the lack of holes suggests that it was built with a centering posed on the ground.[68] Similar vertical keystones are found in residential buildings of Ephesus and in a drain in Sardis, frequently using stone wedges instead of bricks, to strengthen the vaults in their weakest point.[69]

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62 On this building technique Lancaster 2015, pp. 39-69; for its use in Greece Vitti 2010, p. 303; Vitti, Vitti 2010, pp. 285-287; Vitti 2016.

63 Lancaster 2015, p. 45.

64 Vitti 2016, p. 192.

65 For a similar building technique in the Athenian *odeion* of Herodes Atticus see Vitti 2010, p. 304.

66 Traquair 1906, pp. 418-419.

67 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 387; Vitti 2016, p. 192.

68 Vitti 2016, pp. 193-194. On the necessity of timber centering for this kind of vaults Livadiotti 2000b, pp. 809-823; Lancaster 2015, pp. 58-60.

69 Lancaster 2015, pp. 60-64.

The architectural decorations

The study of the architectural decorations of this building, and of the whole city of Sparta, is undermined by the lack of a comprehensive survey of the materials found during the various excavations or reused in later monuments, briefly mentioned in reports and frequently dispersed.[70]

According to the British excavators, the two-storey Roman *stoa* employed the Doric order for the exterior colonnades on both levels and the Corinthian order for the interior colonnade on the upper floor (fig. 5); it is the only Spartan building featuring a mixture of two architectural orders, following a Hellenistic fashion.[71]

The reconstruction comes from the findings of some architectural elements,[72] among which a Corinthian capital, column and base from the so-called Round Building,[73] an unfluted column shaft in the RSC 3 trench, attributed to the lower S portico, and a Doric capital of big dimensions, found in a Byzantine layer in room XI, alongside a fragment of a column shaft and a rectangular marble slab, probably pieced together as a table.[74] The British scholars suggested that the Doric capital was part of the inferior colonnade on the S side; however, in order to adjust it to the proposed height of the building the length and diameter's proportions of the columns should be bigger than what expected for the Doric order.[75] The capital has a wide echinus with a profile of Archaic appearance, similar to those associated with Apollo's

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70 For a brief mention of some reused materials in the Late Antique fortifications see Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 421; Frey 2016, pp. 85-127; see also Doulfis 2019 (unpublished PhD thesis on the capitals found in Sparta and Laconia).

71 Doulfis 2019, p. 152.

72 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 421; during the excavations of room XI a smaller Doric capital was found, not mentioned in the reports (visible in fig. 4).

73 Dickins 1906 p. 423; G.B Waywell and J.J Wilkes think that the capital belongs to the upper floor Roman *stoa* instead of the Round Building; Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 411. Its present location is unknown.

74 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 388-389, p. 410. Measures: abacus' lenght 71,4 cm; abacus' thickness 11,5 cm; total height 26,5 cm; echinus' lower diameter 41 cm.

75 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 410; the proportions between the column's dimensions and the elevation of the building roughly calculated from the data is c. 9.5; however, any discourse on the height of the building is marred by the fact that the data are not given.

Throne at Amyklai.[76] The surface polishing and the smooth necking[77] suggest a Roman date, even though it is not possible to find exact matches for the echinus profile.[78] However, two recently found Doric capitals near Sparta (Late Archaic period) also show a smooth echinus, that could be interpreted as a peculiarity of the local Doric style since its earliest phases.[79] While the date of the capital and its belonging to the Roman *stoa* are still doubtful, it could be a rare example of the Doric order used in a secular building of Imperial time[80] a period when it is linked with strong ideological values and used to show continuity with the Classical past.[81]

Date of the building

The British excavators date the Roman *stoa* to the second quarter of the 2nd cent. because of the building's typology and technique; as of now, the materials from the excavations cannot confirm or further clarify the proposed date,[82] since the study of the local ceramic productions, that make up most of the findings, is still in its early phases.[83] In the RSC 1-3 trench a long uninterrupted sequence of ceramic sherds has been found (2nd cent. BC-7th cent. AD), many of which residual;[84] the Late Hellenistic fragments could be associated with the architectural

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76 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 388; Waywell, Wilkes 1998, p. 414. P. Armstrong suggests that the capital came from *Amyklai* in the late 10th cent., when several *spolia* were carried from the countryside to Sparta to build the monastery of Aghios Nikon Metanoeites; Armstrong 2008, pp. 362-364.

77 Rocco 1994, p. 115.

78 Vasdaris 1987, pp. 385-437.

79 Kokkorou, Alevra 2016, pp. 297-298.

80 Coulton 1976, p. 168; Rocco 1994, pp. 108-119; however for the frequent use of Doric in buildings of the same tipology see Cavalier 2012.

81 On the ideological use of the Doric order in Roman times Rocco 1994, pp. 112-113, 118-119; see also Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, pp. 100-103 for the Doric order in the Augustan phase of the Spartan theatre Spawforth, Walker 1986, pp. 100-101; Mitchell, Waelkens 1988, p. 54. G.B Waywell and J.J. Wilkes suggest that the Doric order was used to blend the Roman *stoa* with its surroundings or to replicate the architectural order used in the previous building phase (identified by the scholars as the famed *Stoa Persike*); Waywell, Wilkes 1998, p. 414.

82 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, pp. 386-388; much of the evidence was lost in the cleaning operations before the remodelling of the central rooms in the early 10th cent.

83 Bailey 1993; Sanders 1993; Pickersgill, Roberts 2003.

84 Bailey 1993 p. 249.

remains of the previous phase found under the Roman *stoa* in the same trench.[85]

Typology, functions and urban context

The Roman *stoa* is an example of the so-called "portiques à sous-sol adossé", two or three storey substructions that that regularize the sides of an *agora* placed on a sloping ground, of which several examples are known in Asia Minor from the Hellenistic period onwards.[86] Even though their layouts vary depending on the peculiarities of each context, these buildings have some distinctive features: a lower level leaning on the ground behind and overlooking a street, used to stock goods or to house shops; an upper freestanding level facing the *agora*, with commercial or public functions.

The Roman *stoa* shows similar features: the 22 lateral rooms in the lower level can be interpreted as shops inside a porch, as already suggested in 1906.[87] The first British excavators found the remains of an unpaved road running in front of the building,[88] that they identified with the «street towards west», mentioned by Pausanias as he moved from the theatre.[89] In fact, the opening on a street is a basic requirement for buildings with a commercial functions, as seen for the shops that borders the *agorai* of Thessaloniki[90] (fig. 6), Philippi[91] or Smyrna.[92]

Even though the most recent British excavations failed to locate the remains of the porch and of the street running in front of Roman

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85 Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 391.

86 Cavalier 2012. For similar buidings in Roman Greece Dickenson 2017, pp. 348-350 (Thessalonike).

87 Dickins 1906, pp. 431-434.

88 «A roadway which was discovered at the south-east angle of the fortifications appeared to be turning in through the blocked-up gate in front of the Roman *stoa*, and accordingly a trench was dug right across, from the *stoa* to the fortification wall, in hopes of finding the road surface inside. This, however, we were unable to find. There is a network of drain pipes and of a beaten earth surface at various levels down to the virgin soil at 4,70 m but we found no paving»; Traquair 1906, p. 432.

89 Paus. 3, 14, 1; for the road section in front of the theatre see Traquair 1906, pp. 432-434; Cartledge, Spawforth 2012, p. 128.

90 Dickenson 2017, pp. 348-350.

91 Dickenson 2017, pp. 343-346.

92 Cavalier 2012, p. 247.

stoa,[93] several factors point to their existences: the fact that the Late Roman fortifications weren't built on top of the building but in front of it, disregarding any economical or poliorcetic norms, suggests the need to preserve a clear area, probably to preserve the viability of this urban sector;[94] the finding in 1906 of a door between room 1 on the SE side and the first fortification tower of the Late Roman fortifications, that could be an entrance to the city and to the road located in the same occasion.[95]

The Spartan *stoa* differs from buildings of the same typology for the material employed (bricks instead of limestones ashlars) and for the presence of two central rooms XI and XII, with a different layout and a lavish decor. Their planimetry is similar to some *nymphea* of the same period[96] and the presence of fountains is not unknown in substructures, such as Todi[97] or Assos;[98] however, since no hydraulic system has been securely identified so far, their function as *nymphea* cannot be established. The two central rooms also share similarities with the central room of the "absides de Beulè", the substructures that enclose the Byrsa Hill at Carthage: larger dimensions, an apsis with a lower bench, rectangular niches in the lateral walls and revetments of *opus signinum* and marble *crustae* on its floor and walls (fig. 7).[99] Unfortunately, the purpose of the Carthaginian structure is still unclear,[100] providing no clues its Spartan counterparts.

However, the position of the Carthaginian "absides de Beulé" offers a significant point of comparison: they were located at the end of the *decumanus maximus* and delimited the lower residential areas and

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93 For the unexpected finding of a section of the Late Roman fortification, running N-S across the RSC 1-3 trench and interrupting the possible road in front of the building see Frey 2016, pp. 104-106; its date and relationship with the nearby structures are still unclear.

94 Traquair 1906, p. 428; J.M. Frey points to the difference with rooms 1 and 2 on the E side that were incorporated into the Late Roman fortifications, exploiting already extant structures and reducing the costs; Frey 2016, p. 101.

95 «Between this (*scil.* room 1 on the E side) and the south-east angle is an opening leading into the street in front of the Stoa, flanked to the south by a square tower, now built up»; Traquair 1906, p. 420.

96 Walker 1979, pp. 208-211 (Butrint's *nymphaeum*).

97 M. Todini also points to the use of fountains inside substructures in order to drain the soil behind; Todini 1989, pp. 74-79.

98 Cavalier 2012, p. 243.

99 Gros 1985, pp. 34-38.

100 Gros 1985, pp. 34-38.

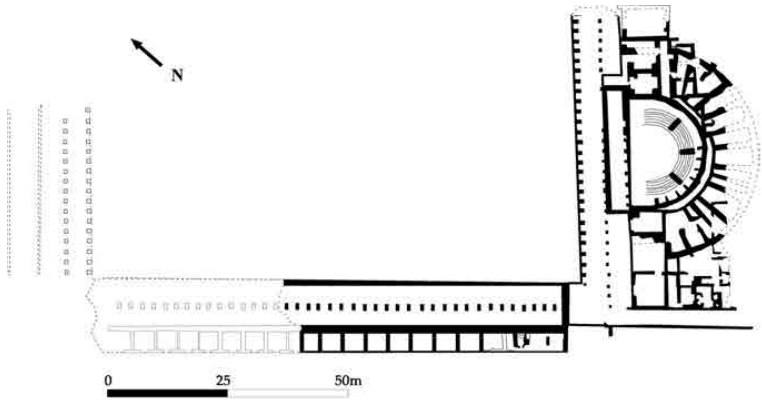

Fig. 6. Thessaloniki, plan of the *agora* (Dickenson 2017).

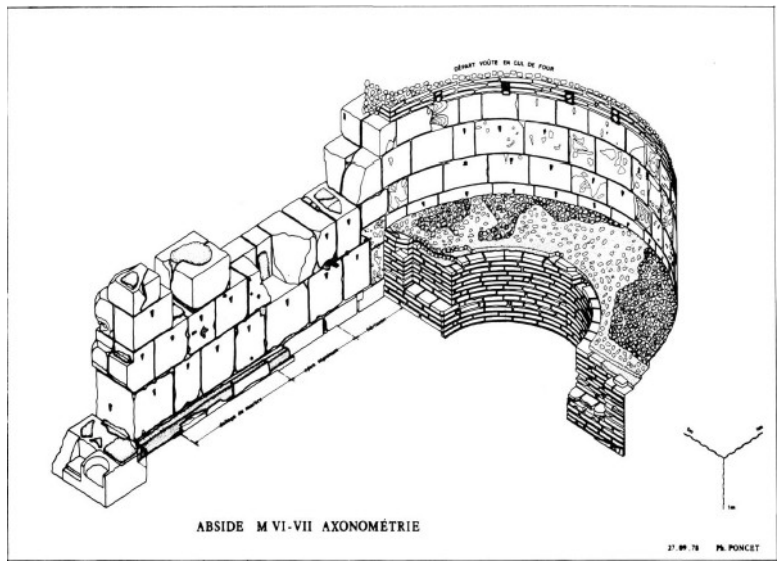

Fig. 7. Carthage, the central room of the "absides de Beulé" (Gros 1985).

the upper public and sacred spaces on the Byrsa Hill. Similarly, the Spartan building lays between a contemporary residential area, located under the modern stadium,[101] and the upper Palaiokastro Hill, that nowadays most scholars identify with the Spartan *agora*.[102] Thus, the Roman *stoa* didn't have just a practical purpose of regularizing the

[101] Cook, Nicholls 1950, pp. 282-298; Waywell 1999, p. 8.

[102] Musti, Torelli 1991, pp. 192-194; Gengler, Marchetti 2000, p. 59; Baudini 2006; Greco 2011; Greco 2016.

sloping ground but also remodelled in a monumental way a crucial point of the urban topography in a monumental way. Thus, the building follows the 2nd cent. trend of enclosing the main square of the city with one or more colonnaded buildings, probably following the typology of the Roman imperial *fora,* as seen in several *agorai* of Roman Greece and Asia Minor of older times (Athens, Argo) or built anew (Philippi, Thessalonike, Smyrna; fig. 6).[103]

Bearing these comparisons in mind, the location of the Roman *stoa* really seems to land credit to the placement of the Spartan *agora* on top of the Palaiokastro Hill, of which the substruction would be a regularizing as well as a monumentalizing element on the S and E sides. Thus, Sparta could be inserted among the up-to-date cities whose monumentality was enhanced by the enclosing of the main square with lavish and undoubtedly costly colonnaded building, highlighting the vitality of the Laconian capital. Unfortunately, it is not known whether the Roman *stoa* was financed by the city itself or by one or more generous private citizens; even though the name of G. Iulius Eurykles Herculanus is frequently mentioned in connection to the building,[104] so far there is no proof of his involvement.

Last but not least, it is important to discourage from the temptation to identify the Roman *stoa* with monuments mentioned in the literary sources, such as a refurbishment of the *Persike stoa*,[105] that can more plausibly be identified with the 5th cent. *stoa* on the W side of the Palaiokastro Hill.[106]

Conclusions

The Roman *stoa* of Sparta is the result of a massive investment, as shown by its sheer dimensions and its lavish decor; it also features up-to-date materials and building techniques from the West combined with elements of local craftsmanship, resulting in a synthesis of both architectural languages. Moreover, it is placed in a highly important

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[103] C.P. Dickenson also argues that the enclosure of the *agora* did not necessarily mean a drop in its vitality, as frequently assumed by scholars; Dickenson 2017, pp. 343-358.

[104] Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 419.

[105] Paus. 3, 11, 3. Waywell, Wilkes 1994, p. 414. On the limits of such identifications Gengler, Marchetti 2000, pp. 62-63; for Pausanias as a topographical source for the Spartan *agora* Stewart 2013, pp. 240-243; Greco 2016, pp. 113-128.

[106] For a plausible identification of the *stoa Persike* see also Greco 2011, pp. 67-73.

location on the S slope of the Palaiokastro Hill, that is not only regularized but also enhanced by its construction; it can be argued that the two storey substructions are an integral part of the remodelling of the whole area nearby in a monumental direction. Even though several architectural features are still unclear, the comparison with other buildings of the same typology strongly supports the idea that the Roman *stoa* enclosed the S and E side of the Spartan *agora*, that can be identified with the plain on the Palaiokastro Hill.

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— 9 —

The statues near Lycurgus in the theatre of Sparta

Giulia Vannucci *

Keywords: theatre, statue base, Publilius Optatianus, Anatolius, Lycurgus.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: θέατρο, βάση αγάλματος, Πουβλίλιος Ὀπτατιανός, Ἀνατόλιος, Λυκούργος.

Abstract:

This paper aims to analyse two statue bases which Sparta dedicated to two proconsuls of Achaia in the 4th cent. AD in the theatre near the statue of Lycurgus. After a brief description of the theatre and its building phases, the paper focuses on the lives and careers of the two honorands: Publilius Optatianus and Anatolius. The last part attempts to underline the significance of setting up these two statues of provincial governors in the theatre, near the one of mythical lawgiver. This choice will be analysed in relation to their place of exhibition and to their socio-cultural context. In late antiquity, it was common in the province of Achaia to set up statues of imperial officials and local personalities in association with statues or monuments from its Greek past.

Σκοπός της παρούσας εργασίας είναι η ανάλυση δύο βάσεων αγαλμάτων που αφιέρωσε η Σπάρτη σε δύο προξένους της Αχαΐας τον 4ο αι. μ.Χ. στο θέατρο κοντά στο άγαλμα του Λυκούργου. Μετά από μια σύντομη περιγραφή του θεάτρου και των οικοδομικών του φάσεων, η εργασία εστιάζει στη ζωή και τη σταδιοδρομία των δύο τιμώμενων: Πουβλίλιος

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Ὀπτατιανός και Ἀνατόλιος. Το τελευταίο μέρος επιχειρεί να υπογραμμίσει τη σημασία της τοποθέτησης αυτών των δύο αγαλμάτων επαρχιακών διοικητών στο θέατρο, κοντά σε εκείνο του μυθικού νομοθέτη. Η επιλογή αυτή θα αναλυθεί σε σχέση με τον τόπο έκθεσής τους και με το κοινωνικοπολιτισμικό τους πλαίσιο. Στην ύστερη αρχαιότητα, ήταν σύνηθες στην επαρχία της Αχαΐας να στήνονται αγάλματα αυτοκρατορικών αξιωματούχων και τοπικών προσωπικοτήτων σε συνδυασμό με αγάλματα ή μνημεία από το ελληνικό παρελθόν της.

The theatre

The theatre, known to travellers since the 18th cent., is located north of modern Sparta on the southern slopes of the ancient acropolis below the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos (fig. 1).[1] Archaeological investigations were carried out by the British School at Athens from 1906 to 1910 under the direction of R.C. Bosanquet and later R.M. Dawkins[2] and from 1924 to 1927 under the direction of A.M. Woodward.[3] After the excavations from 1960 to 1963, carried out by C. Christou[4] at the expense of the Archaeological Society, the investigations were again undertaken by the British School at Athens with G. Waywell and J. Wilkes starting in 1992.[5]

The building of the theatre has been dated back to the late 1st cent. BC, probably to 30-20 BC,[6] «when C. Julius Eurikles was ruler of Sparta, which now received highly-favoured status having supported Octavian-Augustus at Actium».[7] The ancient writers (Hdt. 6, 67; X. 6, 4, 16; Plu. *Agis* 29, 2)[8] record a *theatron* in Sparta in the Classical period,

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1 Bulle 1937; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998; Walker, Waywell 2001; Waywell 2002; Sear 2006, pp. 405-407 with bibliography.

2 Bosanquet, Wace, Dickins et alii 1905-1906 [Dickins], pp. 394-406.

3 Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, pp. 119-158 [Woodward]; Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 175-209; Woodward, Droop, Lamb 1926-1927, pp. 3-36 [Woodward]; Woodward 1928-1930, pp. 151-240.

4 Christou 1960, p. 230; *Arch. Delt* 17, 1961/1962, B', p. 84 [Christou].

5 Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, pp. 437-455.

6 Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995 [Waywell, Wilkes]. The date is suggested by the style of the theatre and its architecture and by the pottery fragments «recovered from the mud-brick that forms the artificial make-up of the cavea»; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 99.

7 Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 100; see also Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 440, 449-451 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell 2002, p. 247.

8 For the literary references on the theatre see Bosanquet, Wace, Dickins et alii 1905-

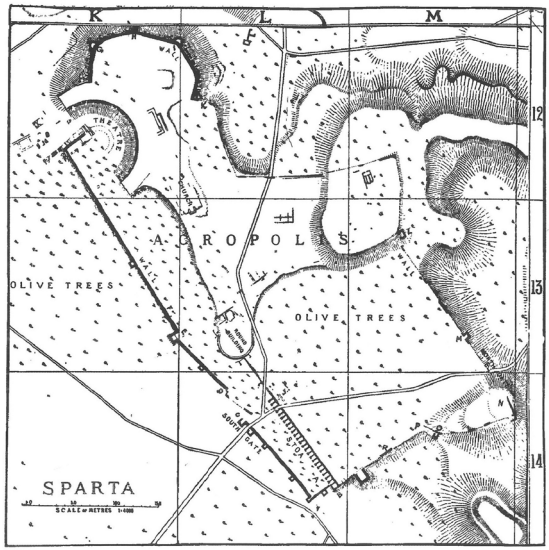

Fig. 1. Sparta, plan of acropolis (© BSA; Bosanquet, Wace, Dickins et alii 1905-1906).

but «Il est difficile de comprendre quel sens précis donner au terme, celui, général, d'un lieu de spectacle, ou celui d'un édifice spécialement destiné à accueillir des représentations théâtrales».[9] In the latter case, it is unknown whether the classical theatre was on the same site as the Augustan one.[10]

The theatre was a marble-faced construction (Paus. 3, 14, 1)[11] and had a horseshoe-shaped orchestra (diameter m 25.52) and a hollow

1906 [Dickins], p. 395.

9 Richer 2005, p. 239.

10 According to F. Bölte, ancient authors with the term *theatron* referred not to a real theatre but to the theatrical setting for religious festivals in the *agora* and at the Amyclaeum; Bölte 1929, cols. 1365-1366. According to P. Cartledge «at some time in the third century Sparta acquired its first built theatre of normal Hellenistic type. It would not, I think, be entirely fanciful to associate this development with the new Hellenism of Areus I and the influx of funds from his potent ally Ptolemy II»; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 34. See also Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 192-193; Woodward 1928-1930, pp. 152-156, 240; Dilke 1950, pp. 48-51. On the contrary, F. Kolb hypothesises that the earliest theatre was in the *agora*; Kolb 1981, pp. 79-81.

11 The use of marble for a theatre is an innovation not only for Sparta but for Peloponnesian theatres in general. In addition, it has been underlined the unusual mixed building tecquique employed at Sparta: layered mud-brick and rubble-concrete for the foundations, stone and marble for the construction; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 100; Waywell 2002, pp. 247-248.

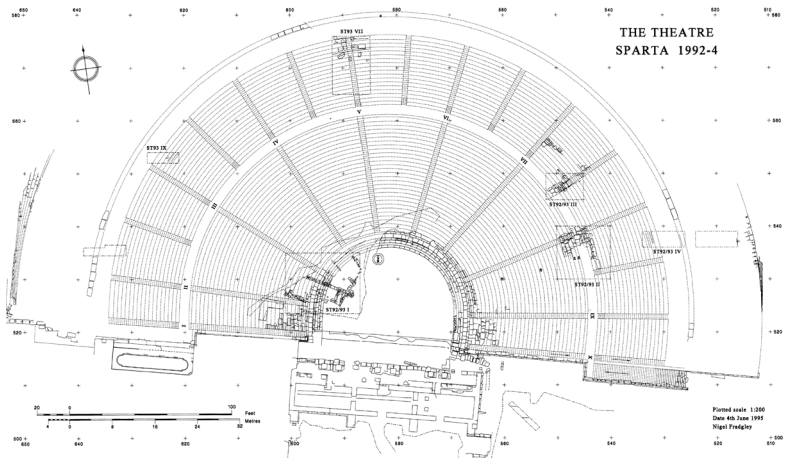

Fig. 2. Sparta, plan of the theatre by N. Fradgley (© BSA; elaboration from Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995).

(diameter m 114) whose central part rested on the hill, whereas its two side were supported by two massive retaining walls (fig. 2). The *cavea* was divided horizontally by a central gangway (*diazoma*) and 10 staircases divided the lower hollow into 9 *kerkides* with 31 rows of seats, whereas 17 staircases divided the *epitheatron* into 16 *kerkides* with 17 rows of seats.[12] In addition, it has been hypothesized that there was a colonnade of Doric order around the top of the upper *cavea*.[13] The theatre was accessed from east by an open stairway with 55 steps which led to the *diazoma*.[14] The peculiar feature of Sparta theatre is its wooden sliding-stage. Investigations by the British School at Athens in the late 1990s confirmed Bulle's hypothesis: the stage had rested on iron-cladrollers and was moved along a triple stone aisle. The mobile scene was slid between the orchestra and the *skanotheke*, the structure in the west *parodos* where this scene was stored when it was not in use.[15]

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12 Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 240-244 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, pp. 442-444; Waywell 2002, p. 247.

13 Colonnades at the top of theatres were considered a Roman feature, but the Spartan example has shown that it is a phenomenon of the late Hellenistic Greeck theatres; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 100; Waywell 2002, p. 248. Sparta's theatre is similar in size to the classical Greek theatres at Epidauros and Megalopolis and shows some similarities with the latter which is considered the inspiration for Sparta, Buckler 1986, pp. 433-436; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 98; Waywell 2002, p. 247.

14 Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, p. 440 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, pp. 97-103.

15 Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, pp. 103-108; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, pp. 452-454;

It has been suggested that the mobile scene was necessary in order to create free space when the theatre was used for assemblies, dances and contests during worship rituals. Part of the Gymnopaediae may have taken place in the theatre and during Sparta's other main festival, the Hyacinthia, «ἄλλοι (παῖδές) δ᾽ἐφ᾽ ἵππων κεκοσμημένων τὸ θέατρον διεξέρχονται» (Ath. 139e).[16] In addition, the theatre was also the place where the *sphaireis* game marking the transition from youth to adulthood took place. This was an annual tournament between five teams of twenty-year-old ballplayers (*sphaireis*).[17] Although only athletic competitions are attested for the Caesarea, which was almost certainly founded in the Augustan age, the building of the theatre under Augustus led P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth to hypothesise «a new beginning of a kind consonant with institution for the first time of regular dramatic contests».[18] Finally, the Uranian games, founded in 97 or 98 AD, in honour of Zeus Uranius, were celebrated every five years and included athletic and musical contests and theatrical performances that took place in the stadium or theatre.[19]

The discovery of an inscription (*IG* V 1 691) engraved on an epistyle block testifies that in the 78 AD the Emperor Vespasian gifted a steady Roman *scaenae frons*.[20] The stage-building had a façade on two-storey with three projecting porches and had three internal rooms.[21] The stage

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Waywell 2002, pp. 250-253. The mobile scene was subject of controversy among the scholars: A.M. Woodward interpreted the grooved channel blocks which formed a line in front of the stage as rain-water channels; Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, pp. 148-149 [Woodward], Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 190-191. W. Dörpfeld suggested that they could belong to a trackway and he was fellowed by H. Bulle who hypothesised that the grooved blocks belonged to a trackway for a mobile scene; Bulle 1928, Bulle 1937, pp. 5-34. This hypothesis was strongly criticised by C. Buckler; Buckler 1986, pp. 431-436.

16 Brulé 1992; Pettersson 1992; Richer 2005; Vannini 2020.

17 Woodward 1951, pp. 197-199; Kennel 1995, pp. 59-61; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 190; Lafond 2018, pp. 409-410.

18 Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 171.

19 Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, pp. 171-172.

20 According to P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth, Vespasian probably donated funds for building work in the Spartan theatre «when he responded to requests for aid from provincial cities damaged by earthquake» (77 AD); Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 96.

21 Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 444-445 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, pp. 444-446; Waywell 2002, p. 248. For the Corinthian phase of the theatre see Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, pp. 108-111. The discovery of many architectural fragments in Doric order led scholars to hypothesise «a permanent Doric marble colonnade fronted the movable stage», see Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, pp. 100-103; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, p. 454.

platform of these two early phases was perhaps a wooden construction on uprights.[22] S.E.C. Walker underlined the coincidence in date of the gift by the emperor Vespasian with the start of the practice of engraving the names of Spartan officials on the retaining wall of the east *parodos*.[23] The third phase of building work at the theatre, attested at the beginning of the 3rd cent. AD, saw the construction of both a *nymphaeum* in front of the western *parodos* and a new marble *scaenae frons*. A fragment of its architrave bore a dedication to the tetrarchic Caesars Constantine and Maximian (293-305 AD; *SEG* 11, 850). Perhaps these construction works were carried out due to earthquakes which could have occurred in Sparta on several occasions.[24] Two public decrees testify to renovations in 359 supervised by the proconsul Ampelius, and a base with an epigram in his honour was found in the theatre (*IG* V 1 729).[25] The last refurbishment of the *scaenae frons* as evidenced by an inscription engraved on an epistyle took place under Honorius and Theodosius.[26]

In the early 5th cent. AD, the theatre was incorporated within the late Roman defensive wall that enclosed the acropolis of Sparta.[27] It was suggested that after the construction of the wall, the theatre continued to be a place of assembly, albeit in a state of disrepair. This is due to the fact that many blocks of the stage-building and the *cavea* were reused to build the city wall.[28] After a period of abandonment and infilling of the orchestra and part of the *cavea*, the theatre area was occupied by

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22 Waywell, Wilkes 1999, p. 444.

23 Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 108. P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth underlined the economic significance of this "epigraphic habit"; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 96. In Sparta, 170 lists of magistrates were inscribed on *stelai* or public buildings in public spaces such as the *agora*. A third of them was engraved on the wall of the eastern *parodos* and on the slabs of the drain that circled the orchestra in the theatre. Although this practice began under Augustus and continued until the 3rd cent. AD, it flourished under Trajan, Hadrian and Pius. From the Trajanic period, the inscriptions of *cursus honorum* of magistrates began to be inscribed also in the theatre, and according to P. Cartledge and A. Spawforth they had an honorary and political function, i.e. to represent the oligarchy; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, pp. 144-145.

24 Waywell, Wilkes 1999, p. 444; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 112; Deligiannakis 2013, p. 125.

25 Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, pp. 285-287, n. 24, 25.

26 Woodward 1928-1930, p. 215, n. 5.

27 Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 115.

28 Waywell, Wilkes 1999, p. 445.

a medieval settlement from the 9th to the early 14th cent. AD and most of the marble seats and some of the *poros* foundations were reused for building purposes.[29]

The honorific statues of Publilius Optatianus and Anatolius

During the Roman period, it was common to set up honorific statues in theatres, and Sparta is an example.[30] The archaeological investigations brought to light many statue bases carrying dedications, but it is worth underlining that they were not found *in situ*, except for one; therefore, they could come from elsewhere.[31] The first to receive such an honour were Lucius (*SEG* 11, 761[32]) and Gaius Caesar (*SEG* 11, 762[33]), not many years after the building of theatre, probably between 3 BC and 4 AD.[34] The theatre in Sparta also housed a statue of the Emperor Hadrian[35] as well as of a victorious athlete at Olympia[36]

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29 On the medieval occupation of the theatre see Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 445-447, 451-457 [Waywell, Wilkes].

30 Waywell, Wilkes 1999, p. 445.

31 Some fragments of honorific statues were found in the theatre: a portrait head of an elderly woman (a priestess?), 160-180 AD; a fragment of a bearded male head, c. 180-210 AD (11323); headless draped female statue, 3rd cent. AD (5105); a life-size male head, 300 AD (4856); a late male portrait-head (3964); a bearded male portrait head, c. 375-400 AD (11322). For the bibliography on the statues found in the theatre see Woodward, Droop, Lamb 1926-1927, pp. 22-32 [Woodward]; Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 457-460 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Deligiannakis 2013, pp. 125-128; Oikonomou 2014, pp. 26-31.

32 Inv. 2764; H. = 39 cm, W. = 44 cm, D. = 26 cm. Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, p. 205, n. 3 [Woodward].

33 Inv. 2793; H. = 47 cm, W. = 50 cm, D. = 20 cm. Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, p. 206, n. 4 [Woodward].

34 During the same investigations they were found «Small portions of two marble statues, rather over life-size, in particular the left feet, standing with the heels raised from the ground, which clearly formed a pair» and they have been referred to the two honorific statues of the *principes*, Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, pp. 154, 206 [Woodward]. See also Hanson, Johnson 1946, p. 393, n. 14; Rose 1997, p. 149, n. 81; Sawiński 2015, pp. 85-86.

35 *Arch. Delt* 30, 1975, B', pp. 79-80 [Steinhauer]; Højte 2005, "Hadrian 266", p. 442.

36 Woodward, Robert, Woodward 1927-1928, p. 41, n. 64 [Woodward] (= *SEG* 11, 829): a fragment of a statue base, found east of the stage, records only an ethnic and so it could refer to an athlete.

Fig. 3. Statue base with honorary inscription for Publilius Optatianus (drawing by G. Rignanese).

and above all, circa twenty statues dedicated to illustrious personalities who belonged to the upper class, including many who had held posts in Sparta, particularly in the 2nd and 3rd cent. AD.[37]

Of all the honorary monuments in the theatre of Sparta, the ones which stand out are the statues of Publilius Optatianus and Anatolius, as they are the only sculptures whose inscriptions indicate where they were erected: that it to say, "near Lycurgus". Furthermore, the statue base in honour of Anatolius was the only one found *in situ*, at the western angle of the bastion of the eastern outer stairs. This information is crucial for locating the statues of Publilius Optatianus and Lycurgus and speculating on this *ensemble*.

The statue of Publilius Optatianus

The plain base of an irregular shaped greyish marble (fig. 3) in honour of Publilius Optatianus was found, not *in situ*, «at deep level, in 1927, in front of the front seats, near the foot of staircase No. VII».[38]

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[37] *SEG* 11, 778 (P. Augurinus Prifernius Paetus, Trajanic age); *IG* V 1 483 (Aristokrates son of Kamillos, 1st-2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 776 (C. Iulius Charixenos, 1st-2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 802 (P. Aelius Damokratidas, 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 779 (C. Iulius Eurycles, 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 806 (M. Aurelius Xenarchidas, 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 780 (C. Pomponius Alcastus, 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 498 (C. Iulius Boiotios, 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 627 (Hygeinos son of Hygeinos, second half of the 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 30, 407 (group of statues honouring Tib. Claudius Aristocrates, his wife and their son; second half of the 2nd cent. AD); *IG* V 1 576 (Claudia Damostheneia; end of the 2nd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 800 (M. Aurelius Philippus; 2nd-3rd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 799 (M. Aurelius Nicephorus; 2nd-3rd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 807 (Q. Aufidenus; early 3rd cent. AD); Woodward, Robert, Woodward 1927-1928, n. 57 [Woodward] (C. Pomponius Panthales Diogenes Aristeas; 3rd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 803, *IG* V 1 556 (P. Aelius Alcandridas, 3rd cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 810 (Publilius Optatianus; 4th cent. AD); *SEG* 11, 773 (Anatolius; 4th cent. AD).

[38] Sparta, Arch. Mus. 2924. H. = 31 (on the left) - 22 (on the right) cm; W. = 84 cm; D. = 47 cm. Woodward, Robert, Woodward 1927-1928, pp. 35-37, n. 58 [Woodward] (*editio*

Ἡ πόλις
τὸν διὰ πάντων εὐεργέτην καὶ σω-
τῆρα τῆς Λακεδαίμονος, τὸν λαμ(πρότατον) ἀνθ(ύπατον)
Πουβλίλ(ιον) Ὀπτατιανόν, Λυκούργῳ κατὰ τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὴν
πρᾶξιν ὁμοιοῦσα ἀπ' ἴσων, ἔστησεν παρὰ τῷ Λυκούργῳ,
προσδεξαμένου τὸ ἀνάλωμα Μάρ(κου) Αὐρ(ηλίου) Στεφάνου
τοῦ διασ(ημοτάτου) ἀρχιερέως τῶν Αὐγούστων, τοῦ
προστάτου τῆς πόλεως.

The city | has erected (a statue of) the benefactor in every way and saviour | of Lacedaimonia, the most illustrious proconsul | Publilius Optatianus, considering him similar to Lycurgus equally in character and | deeds, next to (the statue of) Lycurgus; | undertook the expenses Marcus Aurelius Stephanus, | most venerable high priest of the Augusti, | chief of the city.[39]

The text, as is typical of honorary inscriptions from late antiquity, is very brief and only provides essential information: the honorer in nominative, the honorand in accusative and the reason for the dedication, which is, however, so general that it is not possible to identify the honorand's deeds and works.

This inscription is peculiar because it has two honorers: the *polis* in nominative and M. Aurelius Stephanus in genitive absolute. The text only records the rank and a single title of the honorand, whereas in the case of the honorer, his *perfectissimus* rank and his two offices (high priest of the imperial cult and chief of the city) are specified. The presence of two honorers emphasises the cooperation between several spheres in obtaining permission to set up an honorific statue; social and political influence was necessary to overcome many burocratic stages and this procedure gave greater prestige to the honorary monument.[40]

The honorand, Publilius Optatianus, has been identified with Porfyrius, a Latin poet, famous for his *carmina figurata* who lived between 3rd and 4th cent. AD.[41] Unfortunately, we do not know

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princeps); Roussel 1931, p. 216; *AnnEp* 1931, 6; *SEG* 11, 810; Groag 1946, pp. 25-26; Robert 1948, p. 21; Chastagnol 1962, pp. 80-82, n. 33; Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, pp. 284-285, n. 22; Di Napoli 2007, p. 334, E AA 8; Gehn 2012, LSA-6; Oikonomou 2014, p. 34; Wienand 2017, p. 136.

39 Translation by the author; for other translations see Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, p. 285 (French); Gehn 2012 (English); Wienand 2017, p. 136 (English).

40 Wueste 2016, pp. 59-88.

41 For the bibliography on Optatianus's biography see Wienand 2017, p. 121, n. 2;

anything about his background and family of origin; however, he was a senatorial newcomer.[42]

Under Maxentius, he was already member of the wealthy senatorial aristocracy, as shown by an inscription (*CIL* VI 41314) found in Rome during the building of the Galleria (today Alberto Sordi) in Piazza Colonna and dated between 306 and 312.[43] The text lists the names of seven members of the senatorial *elite*, who according to E. Groag would have been part of a priestly college honoured perhaps for having financed the building or restoration of a public edifice in Rome, perhaps a temple.[44] However, when the power changed in 312, Optatianus' career came to a halt and stalled for over a decade, unlike that of other aristocrats who had also held posts under Maxentius. He could not rely on a powerful family or a network of clients and connections within the imperial *elite* to claim a term for himself in the ranks of the aristocracy after the regime change; his only weapon was his poetry.[45]

Between 319 and 322, probably in 320 when he was a member of the emperor's *entourage* in Illyricum during the campaign against the Sarmatians, he delivered at least two letters to the emperor containing some of his poems.[46] However, these epistles aroused little interest on the part of the emperor, who only advised him to continue writing such *carmina*.[47] On the other hand, Optatianus' attempt to win Constantine's favour perhaps clashed with the rivalry of other aristocrats, which may

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Pipitone 2015, pp. 18-21.

42 It was suggested to identify Optatianus with Anonymus 12 whose horoscope was reported in Firm. 2, 29, 10-20; *PLRE* I, Anonymus 12, pp. 1006-1008. Although T.D. Barnes had just underlined that this identification was impossible, many scholars accepted this hypothesis attributing the details of Anonymus 12 life to Optatianus; Barnes 1975, p. 174; *contra* Polara 2004, pp. 25-26; Perono Cacciafoco 2011, pp. 20-27; Pipitone 2012, pp. 19-21. For the summary of the question see Wienand 2017, p. 141, n. 71. The also presumed African origin of Optatianus - until recently supported - appears difficult to be confirmed, see Pipitone 2015, p. 19; *contra* Wienand 2017, p. 122, n. 4.

43 Rome, Capitolin Museums, NCE n. 63; Fornari 1917, p. 22. E. Groag was the first to connect the inscription with the life of Optatianus, see Groag 1926-1927, pp. 108-109; Wienand 2017, pp. 141-148 with bibliography.

44 Groag 1926-1927.

45 Wienand 2017, pp. 122-124.

46 According to R. Van Dam, Optatianus send a panegyrical poem to Constantine when the emeperor entered Rome after the battle at the Milvian bridge, Van Dam 2011, p. 159.

47 Wienand 2017, pp. 148-155; on the *epistulae* see also Pipitone 2012-2013.

have been "the cause" of his exile.[48] We know neither the accusation that earned Optatianus the punishment of exile from 322/323 to 326 nor the place of his retirement.[49]

In 326, perhaps on the occasion of the festivals of Constantine's *Vicennalia*, Optatianus sent the emperor a collection of *carmina* that earned him both a recall from exile and, above all, a fast-tracked political career.[50] J. Wienand has recently shown that Optatianus, politically insignificant for many years, had a career thanks to his codex, which was of extraordinary political importance because «The poetry book(s) celebrated the harmonious, integrative transformation of the Roman monarchy into the aureum saeculum of a Christian empire, governed peacefully and justly by a potent new dynasty under the aegis of Constantine».[51] Indeed, after his return from exile, the codex, enriched

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[48] Porfyrius stated in his *carmina* that he was exiled by "a false accusation"; indeed, at that time it was common «for a member of the Roman aristocracy to fall into the emperor's disgrace on account of delatores»; Wienand 2017, p. 126; see also Van Dam 2011, p. 162. For a summary of the hypothesises on the cause of the exile see Wienand 2017, p. 125, n. 16.

[49] J. Wienand underlines that «Evidence in Carm. 6 allows us to place Optatian in Constantine's *entourage* in 322, when the emperor was conducting a protracted campaign against the Sarmatians along the middle course of the Danube. This poem was composed to celebrate Constantine's victory, and it indicates how Optatian witnessed the expedition in person (although perhaps only the *profectio* of the troops from Sirmium in the summer and their triumphal return in late autumn 322). The triumphal celebrations for Constantine's Sarmatian victory were performed at Sirmium in 322, from 25. November to 1. December, so around this time the poem was composed. However, the poem also indicates that Optatian was already in exile when he finished the piece.24 The banishment can thus be dated quite precisely to the late autumn of 322 or the winter of 322/323»; Wienand 2017, pp. 126-127.

[50] S. Jerome, *Chron. Ann. Const. XXIII*: «Porfirius misso ad Constantinum insigni volumine exilio liberatur». S. Jerome indicates 329 as the year Optatianus was recalled from exile, but all scholars agree that the year is wrong and that he returned from exile before 329; see Seeck 1908, p. 281, Kluge 1924, pp. 326-327, Polara 1974, pp. 118-119, Barnes 1975, p. 175; Chastagnol 1960, p. 404; Pipitone 2015, p. 20. Scholars suggested that some of Optatianus's friends, members of Constantine's *entourage*, supported his request for clemency and they delivered the volume to the emperor. According to E. Kluge, the intermediary could have been Sex. Anicius Faustus Paulinus, on the other hand, according to J. Wienand he could have been M. Ceionius Iulianus (the Ceionii and the Optatians would have been linked by marriage relations) or an unidentified Bassus, the addressee of Carm. 21; Kluge 1922, pp. 91-92; Wienand 2017, pp. 130-131.

[51] According to J. Wienand, the poetry book of 326 comprised a selection of poems from the 31 ones that the manuscript tradition attributes to Optatianus («only a collection of 'blueprints': they were written on simple paper, without (or with only minimal) ornamentation, using black ink for the base text and red ink for the versus intexti»). It was only after his return from exile that, «Optatian fulfilled his vow and presented Constantine with a magnificently executed version of his poetry book» to which

by other *carmina,* was spread because it encapsulated the «manifesto for the Constantinian 'revolution'».

Due to the political importance of his work, Constantine promoted Optatianus' career, who between 326 and 329 was proconsul of Achaia, as indicated by the Spartan inscription. Optatianus' proconsulate has been variously dated by scholars: T.D. Barnes places it before 306 (before Maxentius' rule over Rome and Italy), A.M. Woodward in 330 or 334 (immediately after his urban prefecture).[52] Recently, J. Wienand pointed out that the presence of the statue base in the theatre of Sparta, perhaps in its original location, until the Byzantine era – when it was reused as building material – would testify that Optatianus was proconsul of Achaia after his exile; otherwise his statue would have been removed.[53]

The city of Sparta, and thus its council, dedicated a statue to Optatianus as the benefactor (*euergetes*) and saviour (*soter*) of the city. Unfortunately, we do not know his acts of euergetism: whether he financed the construction of a public building in Sparta or supported a petition to the emperor on behalf of the city. Recently, G. Deligiannakis suggested that when Optatianus was proconsul of Achaia, he may have dedicated a statue of the god Helios in nearby Gytheum. The life-size marble head is the only part of the statue which has been preserved and dates back to the end of the 3rd cent. AD. The statue, which was either set up in the theatre of Gytheum, where the head was found, or in the nearby *Kaisareion*, was a way of honouring the emperor, who was associated with the god Helios.[54] In Optatianus' poems the god Helios

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he would add the poems written before his exile, including two carmina where he praises Crispus, now condemned to *damnatio memoriae*, and the two *epistulae* sent to Constantine; Wienand 2017, pp. 132-135. On the book of 326 see also Pipitone 2015.

[52] Barnes 1975, pp. 175-176; Woodward, Robert, Woodward 1927-1928, p. 36 [Woodward]; cfr. Wienand 2017, p. 136.

[53] Wienand 2017, pp. 138-139. In 2013, C. Davenport collocated Optatianus' poconsulate between 324 and 329, the year of his first prefecture, because M. Aurelius Stephanus is defined ἀρχιερεύς τῶν Αὐγούστων instead of ἀρχιερεύς τῶν Σεβαστῶν and this change of the title would be appeared after, when Constantine tried «to reconcile the imperial cult with a Christian imperial ideology through the use of Αὔγουστος, a title less intimately linked with emperor worship»; Davenport 2013, pp. 232-233. According to J. Wienand, however, Constantine could have already assumed the title of ἀρχιερεύς τῶν Αὐγούστων after the Peace of Serdica (317), when Achaia became part of his dominion, consequently Optatianus could have been proconsul also between 317 and 322, the year of his exile; Wienand 2017, pp. 137-138.

[54] Deligiannakis 2017.

is mentioned «in an allusion to Constantine's rulership. Along with these poetic allusions, in one of Optatianus's picture-poems dedicated to Constantine the enigmatic solar symbol that we saw on the coin of Thessalonica appears once again».[55]

The Spartan inscription also testifies to the close ties between the proconsul and M. Aurelius Stephanus, who paid for the statue of Optatianus. M. Aurelius Stephanus was the last known Spartan high priest of Imperial cult in Achaia.[56]

By imperial will, Optatianus reached the highest rank of office. He was *Praefectus urbi* twice, albeit for short periods: from 7 September to 8 October 329 and from 7 April to 10 May 333.[57] These are the only certain dates available regarding Optatianus' life. The timeline of his death could be placed between 333, the year of the last urban prefecture, and 335, because there are no references to Constantine's *Tricennalia* in his *carmina*.

The statue of Anatolius

In 1926, during archaeological investigations in the theatre, a columnar base-statue was «found *in situ*, on a rough foundation of small fragments, at the W. angle of the bastion carrying the external stairway of the E. retaining-wall».[58] The base, roughly carved from a rectangular block, bore an honorary epigram to the proconsul of Achaia Anatolius (fig. 4).

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55 Deligiannakis 2017, p. 344.

56 According to F. Camia and M. Kantiréa, he held office under Constantine, probably between 325 und 329 AD; Camia, Kantiréa 2010, p. 393; whereas according to A.S. Bradford, M. Aurelius Stephanus was high priest of the imperial cult between 329 and 333 AD; Bradford 1977, ΜΑΡ(ΚΟC) ΑΥΡ(ΗΛΙΟC) CΤΕΦΑΝΟC (11). It has been suggested that he could be perhaps a descendant of the homonym *eques* in the Severan age attested by *IG* V 1 596; Spawforth 1984, p. 280, n. 15; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 114; Camia, Kantiréa 2010, p. 393. See also *PLRE* I, Stephanus 4, p. 853.

57 *Chron*. 354., a. 329 and a. 333.

58 Sparta, Arch. Mus. 2831. H. = 86.5 cm; diam. = 62 cm; letters 3-4 cm. Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 245-247, n. 35 (*editio princeps*), pp. 185, 208; *AnnEp* 1929, 23; *SEG* 11, 773; Groag 1946, pp. 57-58; Robert 1948, p. 63; Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, p. 288, n. 26; Di Napoli 2007, p. 335, E AA 9; Gehn 2012, LSA-357; Oikonomou 2014, p. 35.

Fig. 4. Statue base with honorary epigram for Anatolius at the western angle of the bastion stairway of the eastern retaining-wall (© BSA; Woodward 1925-1926).

Ἀντολ[ί]η πολύολβε,
σέθεν καλὸν οὔνομα
ἔδεκτο
ἀνθύπατον Ῥώμης
ἄνθος ἐϋκτιμένης.
Ὡς ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ἐὼν πάν-
των ἀπὸ κῆρας ἐρύκει
Σπάρτην τ' εὔανδρον τεῦ-
ξεν ἐρειπομένην,
ἣ οἱ δῶκεν ἄγαλμ<α> κατᾶ
πτόλιν ἄγχι Λυκούργου,
ὄφρα πέλοιτο βροτοῖς
αἰὲν ἀοιδότατος·

Blessed *Antolie* (East), | your beautiful name | has received | the proconsular flower | of well-built Rome. | Indeed, in his goodness, | he saves all from adverse fate | and rebuilds Sparta, rich in men, | in ruins, | which dedicated to him a statue in | the city near Lycurgus, | so that among human beings he would always be | celebrated.[59]

The base on which the dedication was inscribed carried an earlier epigram, which was erased to make room for the new text.[60] In late

[59] Translation by the author; for another translation see Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, p. 288 (French).

[60] The editor records the remains of the previous epigram, but they are not comprehensible; Woodward 1925-1926, p. 246. B. Oikonomou hypothesises that

antiquity, dedication inscriptions often took the form of epigrams with classicising and magniloquent phrases. Honorary epigrams, as in this case, provided few details about the life and deeds of the honorand.[61]

The honorand, the proconsul Anatolius,[62] could be Ἀντόλιος Ἑλλάδος ἀνθύπατος, the Proconsul of Achaia,[63] who dedicated a bronze portrait statue[64] to the prefect of Illyricum (Sextus Petronius) Probus in Athens (*IG* II² 4226).[65] The statue base was found, not *in situ*, in the Plaka north the Tower of the Winds in 1869.

In turn, Sparta honoured Anatolius with a statue, because as proconsul he had rebuilt the ruined city. According to E. Groag, the proconsul would have funded the reconstruction of Sparta, but D. Feissel and A. Philippidis-Braat pointed out that the text does not necessarily imply that Anatolius financed the works of reconstruction.[66]

The chronology of the inscription found in the theatre is unknown, but the reference to the prefecture of Probus in the Athenian text along with the allusion to destruction in the Spartan epigram may provide useful chronological clues. According to the editor, the inscription could refer to the great earthquake of 375 (Zos. 4, 18, 2). The allusion to the devastation of the earthquake provides a *terminus post quem* for Anatolius' proconsulate of Achaia, which has, however, been

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the base was reused, but the statue was that of the previous honorand; Oikonomou 2014, p. 35. According to some scholars, the late Roman bearded male portrait head (11322), found in fill of orchestra drain, could belong to the statue of Anatolius, but there are not certain elements for this attribution; Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, p. 459 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Oikonomou 2014, pp. 30-31.

61 Deligiannakis 2013, pp. 129-130; Smith 1999. G. Deligiannakis underlines the similarity between such honorary epigrams and panegyric orations, the same ones that were pronounced for the erection of honorary statues; Deligiannakis 2013, p. 130.

62 *PLRE* I, Anatolius 8, p. 61.

63 The term Ἑλλάς was used to refer to the Roman province of Achaia and in the 4th cent. AD it was used as an official term in inscriptions; Corsten 1997, pp. 117-122.

64 It seems «that for bronze statues, petitions to the emperor were necessary, and for less ostentatious marble statues in the provinces, the right to grant permission was up to local authorities»; Öğüş 2022, p. 237.

65 Dittenberger 1878, n. 639; Kaibel 1878, n. 902; Groag 1946, p. 57; De Ruggiero 1895, p. 30; Robert 1948, pp. 53-55; Sironen 1994, p. 30, n. 14; Sironen 1997, p. 69, n. 13. At the beginning, the editor of the inscription U. Köhler, followed by J. Kirchner, had identified Anatolius with a consul of 440, but this identification was not possible, because Probus was prefect of Illrycum between 367 and 375; Robert 1948, pp. 54-55. On Probus' career see *PLRE* I, Probus 5, pp. 736-740.

66 Groag 1946, pp. 57-58; Feissel, Philippidis-Braat 1985, p. 288.

variously dated to 376,[67] 380[68] or between 382/3 and the end of 384.[69] In particular, E. Groag pointed out that Probus, the Prefect of the Illyricum during the proconsulate of Anatolius, held four prefectures: from 367 to 376; from 379/380 to 381; from 382/3 to 384 and from 386/7 until his death after 389. According to the scholar, the first prefecture of Probus ending in 376 could not have given Anatolius enough time to rebuild the newly destroyed city. The second prefecture would also have to be disregarded, because in this case, Probus only ruled over the Pannonian diocese. Consequently, in his opinion, Anatolius would have been proconsul of Achaia during the third prefecture of Probus, between 382/3 and 384. This timeline implies a long period after the earthquake when the city could have been rebuilt.

Equally uncertain, apart from the chronology, is the identity of Anatolius. According to some scholars, this would be the Praetorian Prefect attested in a period from 397 to 399.[70] S. Mazzarino points out that it would be logical for the honorand to have held the prefecture in the same area after his proconsulate in Achaia, especially since his homonymous father, a native of Berytus, had also held the same post between 357 and 360.[71] However, this hypothesis is not unanimously accepted, and it has also been suggested that he would be either Anatolius, son of the homonymous governor of Phoenice in 361, native of Cilicia,[72] or the *vir clarissimus* who put an end to the abuses of the *cursus publicus* «per suburbicarias regions» in 365.[73]

In conclusion, apart from the identification of Anatolius and the chronology of his proconsolate in Achaia, it is worth emphasising here that for the city of Sparta, and thus for the council, Anatolius' role was so important (it is not known whether also a direct financial co-involvement) in supervising the reconstruction of the ruined city

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67 *PLRE* I, Anatolius 8, p. 61.

68 Mazzarino 1990, p. 256.

69 Groag 1946, pp. 57-58.

70 *PLRE* II, Anatolius 1, p. 83. Seeck 1906, p. 69; Groag 1946, p. 58; Mazzarino 1990, p. 25; Pietri 1975, p. 296.

71 *PLRE* I, Anatolius 3, pp. 59-60.

72 *C. Th.* XI I. 9α. For Anatolius, governor of Phoenice see *PLRE* I, Anatolius 4, p. 60; for his son *PLRE* I, Anatolius 9, p. 61. E. Groag suggested this hypothesis, but he rejected it as well as C. Pietri; Groag 1946, p. 58; Pietri 1975, p. 290.

73 *PLRE* I, Anatolius 6, p. 61.

that Sparta dedicated a statue in an emblematic public place, moreover close to the mythical lawgiver Lycurgus.

The statues near Lycurgus

In the 4th cent. AD two honorific statues dedicated to two proconsuls of Achaia were set up near the statue of Lycurgus, thus creating a group of at least three sculptures in the eastern *parodos*, in the proximity of the eastern staircase leading to the *diazoma*.

It is not possible to speculate on either the dating of the statue of Lycurgus or whether it was made to decorate the theatre - since statues of deities were commonly part of the sculptural apparatus of theatres - or whether it was moved here from elsewhere. It is unlikely, as has been suggested, that the statue could have been moved from its sanctuary.[74] Moreover, the Periegeta himself informs us that there was at least another portrait statue of Lycurgus in the city on one of the two bridges on the moat that surrounded the Platanistas where it was customary for the youths to fight (Paus. 3, 14, 8).[75]

As J. Ma states «Statues attracted statues; honourable statues were set up next to other statues, be they honourable monuments or cult-statues».[76] Thus, in the first three decades of the 4th cent. AD, probably between 326 and 329 or shortly thereafter, παρά (by the side/near) Lycurgus the *polis* set up the statue of the proconsul Optatianus. About thirty years later, the *polis* together with its chief and priest of the imperial cult, M. Aurelius Stephanus, enriched this *ensemble* with the honorific statue of another proconsul, Anatolius.

As J. Ma further states, «Physical proximity acted as a metaphor for abstract relationship. The content of this relationship varied. It could express simple alikeness ... In other cases, the relation was more complex».[77] It is likely, as has already been assumed in the past, that the proximity of the two statues to that of Lycurgus intends to attribute to the two proconsuls of Achaia the same judicial skills as the

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74 Deligiannakis 2013, p. 127.

75 See also Richter 1984, pp. 156-157. Lycurgus was represented wreathed and bearded on coin-issues of the triumviral period and perhaps this imaginary portrait was based on some statue of him; Cartledge-Spawforth 2002, p. 182.

76 Ma 2013, p. 118.

77 Ma 2013, p. 119.

mythical lawgiver, for laudatory purposes.[78] Regarding Optatianus, his relationship with Lycurgus is made explicit by the inscription itself, which compares his character and deeds to those of the mythical lawgiver; it is probable that his actions in the field of law are referred to here. A similar example is an honorary epigram from Ephesus, dated to c. 400 AD, which compares the legislative actions of the governor Ἀνδρέας to those of the three mythical lawgivers: Minos, Lycurgus and Solon (*Iv. Eph*. 1301).[79] Moreover, it is quite common in honorary inscriptions of the 4th cent. AD to praise imperial governors for their legislative action.[80]

Another characteristic of the late antiquity is that the «statues of imperial officials and local personalities were also erected in association with venerable reliquaries (whether statues, temples, or other monuments) of the Greek past».[81] The two Spartan honorary statues are, in fact, set up next to an older one, that of Lycurgus. In the mid-3rd cent. AD, Sparta had also dedicated an honorific statue to Heraclia, daughter of Tisamenus and his wife Aurelia Oppia, members of a learned and aristocratic family, παρὰ τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ Ὀρθίᾳ Ἀρτέμιδι (*IG* V 1 599). Her pagan piety had therefore earned her the honour of a portrait statue in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, beside the cult-image.[82]

In late antiquity, it was common, as testified by many inscriptions, to set up honorific statues παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.[83] In Athens, the sophist Apronianus dedicated a statue of the Praetorian Prefect of the Illyricum Herculius (408-410) on the Acropolis beside the colossal statue of Athena Promachos (παρὰ προμάχωι Παλλάδι Κεκροπί[ης]) (*IG* II^2 4225).[84] This honorary epigram is interesting because Herculius,

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78 Deligiannakis 2013, p. 127.

79 Keil 1942, pp. 194-196.

80 Smith 1999, p. 186.

81 Deligiannakis 2013, p. 131. According to the scholar, the statue of the governor Polycharmos was erected in Olympia near the temple of Zeus and probably «the statue of Polycharmos stood together with the antique statuary that had been transferred inside the "post-Herulian" fortification wall and plugged in between the columns of the south pteron of the temple, forming a museum of ancient artworks».

82 Kaibel 1878, n. 874; Robert 1970, p. 299; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 108; Deligiannakis 2013, p. 127, n. 121.

83 For the list of statues set up παρὰ τῷ θεῷ see Robert 1970, p. 299, n. 2.

84 Kaibel 1878, n. 912; Robert 1948, p. 41; Sironen 1997, p. 82, n. 23. The statue base was found near the *stoa* of Attalos. Herculius was honoured in Athens with another

described as «the defender of the laws» (τ]ὸν πρόμαχον θεσμῶν), is related to Athena, «the defender of Athens» for his "judicial virtues" just as in the Spartan text, where the proconsul of Achaia is related to the god (hero) Lycurgus.[85] And just as the Athenian inscription – through its location and its words – aimed, as G. Deligiannakis writes, «to elevate Herculius to an immortalised and sublime level», so probably the Spartan dedication – through its comparison and its place of erection – intended to immortalise Optatianus (as well as Anatolius) to the same level as Lycurgus. In Sparta, after a kind of heroisation for "public services", he was worshipped as a god and had a sanctuary, which according to Pausanias was located some distance from the theatre, near the Eurotas (Paus. 3, 16, 6; Hdt. 1, 66).[86]

Lycurgus is the *archēgētēs* of Sparta, he is considered the founding deity of the city together with Heracles. He established the rules of civic life and was considered «the good genius of civic life» until late antiquity.[87] Many inscriptions, mostly dated back to the 2nd and 3rd cent. AD, mention Lycurgus as "*eponymous patronomos*".[88] In summary, Lycurgus is both a god, the founder of the city and the magistrate *par excellence*. Therefore, it is not surprising that the two proconsuls of Achaia, the highest office in Roman Greece, were associated with Lycurgus. Furthermore, just as the latter was the founder of Sparta, so the two imperial governors could be considered the "re-founders" of the city: Optatianus is defined the city's saviour (σωτήρ) and Anatolius had rebuild the destroyed city (Σπάρτην τ' εὔανδρον τεῦξεν ἐρειπομένην). In Roman period, «Several texts show how the names of elite individuals can refer to figures of Spartan myth or remote history»,[89] but Optatianus and Anatolius seem to be the only ones in Sparta who were even referred to the "founder" Lycurgus.

The importance of the honorary statues of Optatianus and Anatolius is due not only to their proximity to Lycurgus, but also to their location in the theatre. In Roman times, theatres in Greece

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statue dedicated by the sophist Plutarchus (*IG* II² 4224; Robert 1948, p. 73; Sironen 1997, pp. 81-82, n. 22) and was similarly honoured by the city of Megara (*IG* VII 93; Robert 1948, p. 60). See also *PLRE* II, Herculius 2, p. 545.

85 Robert 1948, p. 42, n. 2. See also Deligiannakis 2013, pp. 115-116.

86 Parker 1989, p. 148; Lafond 2006, pp. 409-410; Flower 2009, p. 193.

87 Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 182.

88 Nafissi 2018, p. 95; Lafond 2018, p. 409.

89 Lafond 2018, p. 411.

were one of the places where the greatest number of honorific statues were set up, because as Vitruvius writes, the theatre was the second most important public place in the city after the forum (Vitr. 5, 3, 1). Furthermore, in the imperial era, theatres were not only the place for dramatic performances, but the place for political and legal assemblies.[90] In particular, imperial magistrates were honoured with portrait-statues in the theatre, mainly because it was the place where the community gathered to receive the proconsul of Achaia during his visit to Sparta and where public orations and festivities in his honour were held.[91]

Scaenae frons were usually decorated with statues of gods or of members of the imperial family. On the other hand, the aristocrats competed against each other for a position in the other areas of the theatre. Through their portrait statues – and especially the dedication inscriptions stating their virtues and deeds – they wished to gain the emperor's favour and consequently obtain high political offices from him.[92]

Since the Hellenistic period, honorific statues were placed within the theatre at the «visual chokepoints» in order to attract the view of a gathered crowd. One of these «visual chokepoints» was *parodos*. The sculptural *ensemble* of Lycurgus, Optatianus and Anatolius was unsurprisingly located in the eastern *parodos*, which was also the main entrance to the theatre. In addition, it is worth stressing that lists of magistrates, and the *cursus honorum* of individual Spartan officials were inscribed on the wall of the eastern *parodos* from the first half of the 2nd cent. AD.[93]

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90 Di Napoli 2010, pp. 259-261; Lafond 2018, p. 416.

91 Deligiannakis 2013, p. 113. For the honorary statues in the theatre of Corinth and Ephesus; Brown 2012; Auinger, Sokolicek 2016; Horster 2016.

92 Oikonomou 2014, p. 49.

93 Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, pp. 160-205 [Woodward]; Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 211-236; Woodward, Robert, Woodward 1927-1928, pp. 160-205 [Woodward]. Although Sparta in the 4th cent. AD «continued to enjoy a certain prominence in educated pagan circles as a "venerable metropolis of the past" and a minor centre of higher studies», the two inscriptions in honour of two proconsuls of Achaia - mentioning their direct interventions in the city life, especially in building activity - show that Sparta had lost part of its political autonomy; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002, p. 113. In addition, we should take into account the proconsul of Achaia Ampelius who financed building activity in the theatre.

In conclusion, the statue bases analysed here are peculiar because they are the only ones in the theatre of Sparta that make it possible to "recompose" the sculptural *ensemble* they belonged to and relocate them in their original place of display. The three statues were placed in the eastern *parodos,* probably along the wall of the staircase. As the eastern *parodos* was the main entrance to the theatre, the sculptural "group" was perhaps the first to be seen by the crowds of citizens and foreign visitors entering the theatre for performances or assemblies. Furthermore, they are one of the very rare examples of honorary monuments that suggest an equation between text and image: the comparison of the two proconsuls with Lycurgus is made explicit by the inscriptions as much as by the proximity of the three sculptures, a proximity that alone evoked a relationship between the two governors and Lycurgus. In this case, the comparison with a mythical lawgiver is not just a leitmotif, as in the Ephesus inscription, given the importance of Lycurgus in his city. In Sparta he was worshipped as a god and by placing the statues of Optatianus and Anatolius at his side, showed the city's desire to raise them to an immortal level, at least in memory.

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Sparta as a great power: a comparative analysis

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Keywords: Sparta, great power, international system, hegemony, alliances.

Λέξεις-κλειδιά: Σπάρτη, μεγάλη δύναμη, διεθνές σύστημα, ηγεμονία, συμμαχίες.

Abstract:

The present essay attempts to use ancient history as a tool for analyzing contemporary international politics. It argues that ancient Sparta provides a yardstick that one can use to assess the performance of contemporary great powers. After defining key concepts and setting the boundaries of the Greek international system, the essay compares Sparta with the contemporary great powers by using as indicators a state's longevity as a great power; its relative position in the international system; its possible regional hegemony; and the creation and management of its alliances. It transpires that Sparta does remarkably well in those categories and thus sets an enviable example for countries like the United States, China or Russia.

Το παρόν άρθρο προσπαθεί να χρησιμοποιήσει την αρχαία ιστορία ως εργαλείο για την ανάλυση της σύγχρονης διεθνούς πολιτικής. Υποστηρίζει ότι η αρχαία Σπάρτη παρέχει ένα μέτρο σύγκρισης που μπορεί να χρησιμοποιηθεί ώστε να εκτιμηθούν οι επιδόσεις των σύγχρονων μεγάλων δυνάμεων. Έπειτα από τον ορισμό των βασικών εννοιών και την οριοθέτηση του αρχαίου ελληνικού διεθνούς συστήματος, το άρθρο συγκρίνει τη

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Σπάρτη με τις σύγχρονες μεγάλες δυνάμεις χρησιμοποιώντας ως δείκτες τη μακροημέρευση ενός κράτους ως μεγάλης δύναμης· τη σχετική του θέση στο διεθνές σύστημα· την πιθανή ηγεμονία στην περιφέρειά του· και τη δημιουργία και διαχείριση των συμμαχιών του. Αποδεικνύεται ότι η Σπάρτη τα πήγε αξιοσημείωτα καλά σε αυτές τις κατηγορίες και έτσι θέτει ένα αξιοζήλευτο παράδειγμα για χώρες όπως οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, η Κίνα και η Ρωσία.

Introductory remarks

The concept of "great power" has proved useful to both historians and scholars of international politics.[1] A great power is a polity that (1) achieves a relatively high score at *every* indicator of state capabilities (territory, population size, economy, military power, population homogeneity and morale, quality of government); (2) has interests and exerts an effect coextensive with the interstate system as a whole; and (3) possesses an ability to pursue those interests by force.[2]

There are two issues we need to tackle before proceeding with our comparative analysis of ancient Sparta and the contemporary great powers. The first is the question of relative size and its potential impact on the validity of such comparisons. The second pertains to setting the boundaries of an international system in general, and the ancient Greek city-state international system in particular.

Contemporary great powers obviously operate on a scale far larger than their ancient counterparts. This presumably does make a difference in terms of staying power. No great power in modern history has been wiped off the face of the earth like Carthage was in 146 BC. Still, nuclear weapons having made complete annihilation of even the greatest contemporary power a distinct possibility, albeit with reciprocal annihilation of this power's enemies, it could be argued that in principle contemporary great powers are not much safer than ancient ones. Incidentally, for total devastation to be visited upon Carthage, the Carthaginians had had to lose three separate wars to Rome, totaling more than forty years of warfare. Athens was also threatened with a similar fate in 404 BC, but this came about only after a twenty-seven years' war, which had also been preceded by a "First Peloponnesian War" lasting another fifteen years (c. 460-445 BC).

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1 Kennedy 1988; Mearsheimer 2001.

2 Wight 1978, pp. 50-52; Waltz 1979, pp. 129-131; Morgenthau 2006, pp. 122-162.

Despite their relatively small size, the ancient great powers were not exactly brittle constructs.

Another difference is that international politics may appear to have been easier to conduct in the Antiquity than nowadays. Distances and military forces, friendly or enemy, were far smaller. This would arguably mean that it was easier to muster decisive force and deliver it straight to the enemy center of gravity. On the other hand, resources were also far scarcer than nowadays. The conduct of international politics, including the use of force, required far greater logistical effort, and the so-called loss-of-strength gradient was far steeper then than now; power dissipated far more quickly upon leaving its source.[3]

Moreover, the *qualitative* characteristics of great powers have remarkable continuity throughout the ages. For instance, the language used by Thucydides to describe the great-power relations of his time is eerily similar to contemporary language.[4] Thucydides talks about such things as power growth, hegemony, alliances – using those very terms. One need not subscribe to facile analogies and invoke the notorious "Thucydides's Trap" in order to realize that, although international politics has grown exponentially in scale since the Antiquity, it is still essentially the same animal as in Thucydides's time.[5]

The concept of the international system is a heavily analyzed one. A simple and useful way to define an international system is as an aggregation of diverse international actors that are united by regular interaction according to a form of control.[6] Thus, mainland Greece can be said to comprise an international system at least since the beginning of the 8th cent. BC, when the overall international situation had settled enough for interstate intercourse to take place on a regular basis (viz. the establishment of the Olympic Games in 776 BC). However, there is a crucial question regarding the boundaries of that system. It is indeed pertinent to ask whether, from the second half of the 6th cent. BC onwards, the mighty Persian Empire has also to be included in the Greek international system. Such an inclusion would change radically the context of any analysis of international politics in ancient Greece. Among others, it would render virtually pointless any talk of Greek

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3 Boulding 1963, pp. 78-79, 229-232, 245-247.

4 Platias, Koliopoulos 2010.

5 Allison 2017.

6 Gilpin 1981, p. 26.

states being "great powers"; even the largest Greek polity could not be in the same league as an empire stretching from Egypt to present-day Uzbekistan.

However, we need not be unduly concerned with this problem. Until Alexander the Great changed the rules of the game, Greece was nothing more than a frontier problem for the Persians.[7] Persian concern for Greek affairs waxed and waned, much as has historically been the case with Russian concern over Afghanistan; it could range from (mostly unsuccessful) attempts at conquest, to near total indifference. The Persians could and did exert tremendous influence in Greece whenever they chose to do so, but that did not happen very often and rarely on a sustained basis.

Thus, for most of the time until the mid-4th cent. BC, the state system of mainland Greece was self-contained, experiencing relatively little influence from the east and virtually none from the other points of the horizon. To the west, the Greek city-states of Italy and Sicily basically went about their own business, unless someone from Greece proper chose to meddle in western Greek affairs (viz. the Sicilian expedition of Athens in 415 BC). To the north-east, the Odrysian Thracians were potentially very disruptive,[8] but in fact almost never ventured southwards in any numbers. Finally, Egyptian interference in the affairs of mainland Greece would have to wait until the Hellenistic period.

Thus, mainland Greece can be safely treated as a more or less self-contained international system, until the radical transformation of Greek politics brought about by the rise of Macedonia and the advent of the Hellenistic age. We have also made the case for treating the most powerful among the polities of mainland Greece (the "poles" of the system) as bona fide great powers. Let us now consider the performance of Sparta as a great power according to some crucial indicators, namely its longevity as a great power; its relative position in the international system; its possible regional hegemony; and the creation and management of its alliances.

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7 Olmstead 1948.

8 Th. 2, 95-101.

Longevity

Some states manage to reach great-power status, only to prove unable to retain it for any significant amount of time. Sometimes this happens because the new-fangled great power rests on a rather shallow power base. Thus, Sweden's great-power trajectory lasted less than a century; by the most generous count, Sweden acquired great-power status after the battle of Breitenfeld in 1631 and forfeited it at the conclusion of the Great Northern War in 1721. The very fact that Sweden became a great power was remarkable, given that Sweden's population (including Finland) barely exceeded one million, while the country possessed little arable land.[9] The Swedes played their hand dexterously, but it was a weak hand to begin with. Sometimes a great power's career is cut prematurely short due to a catastrophic defeat in the hands of a far more powerful rival. Modern Japan was a great power for the relatively short time span of fifty years (1895-1945). Japan's power base was far more secure than Sweden's. However, a certain lack of political judgement made the Japanese statesmen embark on flawed policies that led to a catastrophic war against the vastly superior United States.[10] Defeat in the Second World War put an end to Japan's trajectory as a great power. The above examples demonstrate that retention of great-power status for a long time is no easy achievement. Let us see how Sparta and the contemporary great powers have fared in this respect.

Sparta cannot have become a great power had it been confined into the Eurotas valley. It was only with the conquest of Messenia that Sparta acquired the territory that was necessary for the maintenance of great-power status. Sparta conquered Messenia in two rounds. The first round ended by 715 BC, the Spartans having conquered central and northern Messenia. Those territorial gains were probably enough to turn Sparta into the largest Greek state (the potentially larger Greek polities of Thessaly, Epirus and Macedonia where at that time too fragmented and disorganized) – almost by definition a great power in ancient Greece. Spartan power grew even more after the completion of the conquest of Messenia c. 657 BC.[11] As a result, Sparta consolidated

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9 Kennedy 1988, pp. 81-85.

10 Record 2011.

11 Forrest 1968, pp. 35-39; Κολιόπουλος 2001, pp. 63-72, 82-91.

its position as a great power in the international system of ancient Greece.

For the next few centuries, Sparta would retain its great-power status without interruption. There were challenges aplenty, including a large-scale Persian invasion of Greece, long-standing rivalries with Argos and later with Athens, and a number of Messenian revolts. Still, the Spartans managed to weather all those storms. The end of the road for Sparta as a great power came after the Spartan army was heavily defeated by the Thebans at the battle of Leuctra in 371 BC. In the aftermath of their victory, the Thebans mustered a grand alliance with the Argives, the Arcadians and the Elians, and jointly invaded Sparta. The Theban campaign reached its culminating point in 370-369 BC with the foundation of the new city of Messene, which was to be the capital of a resurrected Messenia. Sparta lost Messenia for good and ceased to be a great power.[12] All in all, Sparta was a great power between 715-369 BC – an impressive record by any standard.

Let us now turn to the contemporary great powers. For the purposes of the present analysis, there are three great powers nowadays: the United States, China, and Russia.[13] The United States came to fulfil nearly all the prerequisites for great-power status by the late 1880s and was potentially the most powerful state in the world in 1890.[14] Actual international recognition of the United States as a great power came after its victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898.[15] In a sense this was a mere formality, since the United States did not really need to demonstrate that it possessed the requisite national capabilities – and its victory over a decrepit Spanish Empire was not exactly a "trial of strength". Nevertheless, the war of 1898 was crucial in demonstrating that the United States was willing to define its interests expansively and to resort to military force while pursuing those interests. Thus, the year 1898 has to be the starting point of the United States' great-power status. Accordingly, the United States has been a great power for about one-third of the time that Sparta has been. Clearly the United States has many decades ahead as a great power and might even surpass Sparta's longevity, but it is still way behind its ancient peer.

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12 Cartledge 1979, pp. 297-299; Hamilton 1991.

13 Mearsheimer 2001, pp. 360-402, 404.

14 Kennedy 1988, pp. 254-321.

15 Carr 1995, p. 103.

Although it has not fought, let alone won, a war for decades, contemporary China is indubitably a great power. It is not so easy to pinpoint when exactly China entered the ranks of the contemporary great powers. Of course, China had been a great power since its imperial unification in 221 BC, but it definitely ceased to be a great power sometime during the 19th cent., if not earlier. Plausible dates of China's re-emergence as a great power include 1949 (consolidation under Mao Tse-tung); 1953 (holding its own against the United States in the Korean War); 1964 (acquiring nuclear weapons and thus eliminating this particular weakness *vis a vis* the other great powers); and 1969 (holding its own in border clashes with the Soviet Union). Be that as it may, the year 1991 is a safe date to start counting China among the great powers.[16] Like the United States, China can in all probability look forward to a long career as a great power – and in addition has a great imperial legacy that surpasses anything similar in the world. Still, *contemporary* China has still to prove that it can actually be as long-lived a great power as ancient Sparta was.

Russia was recognized as a great power at the beginning of the 18th cent.; either in 1709, after its crushing victory over the Swedes at the battle of Poltava, or in 1721, after the victorious conclusion of the Great Northern War. Since then, Russia has gone through many vicissitudes, coming perilously close to dissolution in 1918-1922. However, with the possible exception of the period just mentioned, Russia has consistently remained a great power. This means that Russia is the only contemporary power to rival ancient Sparta in longevity. However, in contrast to the seemingly assured future of the United States and China as great powers, Russia's prospects are more uncertain. Of course, Russia is still the largest state in the world and a mighty military power that possesses several thousand nuclear warheads. On the other hand, Russia's population is about 45% of the United States' population and about one-tenth of China's – aside from the fact that Russia has about half the population of Indonesia and fewer people than Pakistan, Brazil, Nigeria and Bangladesh. In 2019 Russia's economy (measured in GDP) was a mere eleventh in the world, almost nine times smaller than China's and twelve times smaller than the United States'. This only shows how difficult it is for any state to surpass the longevity of ancient Sparta as a great power.

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16 Mearsheimer 2001, p. 404.

Tab. 1. Longevity as a great power.

State	*Great-power duration*	*Number of years as a great power (as of 2021)*
Ancient Sparta	715-369 BC	346
United States of America	1898-present	123
People's Republic of China	1991-present	30
Russian Federation (formerly Russian Empire or Soviet Union)	1709-present	312

Relative position

Becoming and remaining a great power is difficult enough. It is even more difficult to become the greatest power in an international system. Retaining that position for any significant amount of time is surely the acme of statecraft. Some great powers have simply not been up to the task. Thus, the so-called "Theban hegemony" in ancient Greece was a mere flash-in-the-pan, lasting less than a decade (371-362 BC). Thebes lacked the wherewithal for sustained great-power status, hence its hegemony vanished immediately after the death of Epaminondas, Thebes' leading statesman.

The contrast with Sparta could not be sharper. when Sparta became a great power at the late 8th cent. BC, Argos was the greatest power in ancient Greece – it is indicative that Homer used the very word "Argives" as a synonym for "Greeks".[17] Sparta was locked in a protracted rivalry with Argos, but the latter was more powerful and Sparta was initially worsted (viz. the great Spartan defeat at the battle of Hysiai in 669 BC). It was only after Sparta consolidated its Messenian conquest and Argos was troubled by internal divisions, that Sparta started getting the better of it. We cannot be sure when exactly this happened. However, the sources give the impression of continuous Spartan aggrandizement at Argive expense[18] during the first half of the 6th cent. BC. Thus, we may assume that by 600 BC Sparta had grown

[17] Hom. *Il*. 5, 787; 15, 503.

[18] Paus. 4, 5, 3.

more powerful than Argos and thus had become the greatest power in ancient Greece.

Sparta would retain this enviable position for more than a century, as testified by its unanimous acceptance as leader of the Greeks during the Xerxes's invasion (480-479 BC). However, shortly after the Persians were driven out of Greece, the Spartans abandoned the war and ceded the war leadership to Athens. The Athenians pursued vigorously the offensive and thus embarked on their empire-building that would change the balance of power in ancient Greece.[19] The Spartans immediately saw danger and in 475-474 BC (or more probably 478-477 BC) there was talk in Sparta about a preventive war against Athens, but cooler heads prevailed.[20] At any rate, by the year 475 BC Sparta could not unquestionably claim to be the top dog in the ancient Greek state system.

This state of affairs was to last until the Spartan victory in the great Peloponnesian War in 404 BC. It was then that Sparta recovered its traditional number one spot in ancient Greek international politics. There were still some ups and downs – especially during the Corinthian War (395-386 BC) – but all in all Sparta managed to remain the greatest power in mainland Greece until 371 BC. The disastrous defeat at Leuctra shattered all this, but in the meantime Sparta had managed to register some 150 years as the greatest power in an international system.

Such a feat is difficult to repeat. Hence it is no accident that only one of the contemporary great powers has managed to achieve something similar. As we saw above, the United States entered the ranks of great powers in 1898. Despite its enormous potential power, its limited military spending meant that it could not readily be classified as the greatest power in the international system at the time. However, upon entering the First World War in 1917 the United States started acquiring armed forces roughly commensurate with its overall power. By 1919 there could be no illusions as to which was the greatest power in the world. The United States has retained this position ever since, that is for more than a century. Neither Nazi Germany, nor the Soviet Union really came close to expelling the United States from the top position in the international system. It is conceivable that contemporary China

[19] Meiggs 1972.

[20] D.S. 11, 50.

might do better, though this is by no means certain; even if China's economy does overtake the economy of the United States in terms of Purchasing Power Parity within the present decade, China still has a long way to go till it can face the American military might on equal terms.

This is another way to say that China has not yet become the top dog in the modern global system (its imperial incarnation had achieved that in the self-contained international system of East Asia several centuries ago). At least, it can be said that China is making a serious and promising effort to capture the top spot. In the same vein, Russia has never done better than second place. Imperial Russia was indeed the second most powerful state in the world from 1815 till 1856. The same was the case with Soviet Union and then contemporary Russia from 1943 till about 2000, when it was presumably overtaken by China.

Tab. 2. Relative international position.

State	*Relative position*	*Duration*	*Years as number 1 (as of 2021)*
Ancient Sparta	1	600-475 BC, 404-371 BC	158
United States of America	1	1919-present	102
People's Republic of China	2	2000-present	0
Russian Federation (formerly Russian Empire or Soviet Union)	2	1815-1856, 1943-2000	0

Regional hegemony

It has been argued that every great power would ideally like to control its region, that is achieve the so-called regional hegemony.[21]

[21] Mearsheimer 2001.

This is something that ancient Sparta understood fully. Control over the Peloponnese was one of the chief concerns of Spartan grand strategy, second only to (and inextricably linked with) the maintenance of Spartan rule over Messenia.[22] To this end, Sparta had to keep the Peloponnese insulated; Argos isolated; and the Arcadians divided. The age-old Spartan alliance with Corinth ensured that no intruder would enter the Peloponnese. Corinth also exerted significant pressure on Argos, whose isolation was completed by the web of alliances Sparta had weaved throughout the Peloponnese (see below). Arcadia could at times be difficult to manage, but Spartan diplomacy could always play the two foremost local powers, Mantinea and Tegea, against one another. Peloponnesian hegemony gave Sparta a secure power base that could protect it from external threats and enable it to rule Messenia in perpetuity, while also providing a secure steppingstone for fighting enemies to the north of the Isthmus, be they Athenians, Thebans or even Persians.

Truth be told, this mechanism did not always work. Occasionally Sparta would find itself facing powerful hostile coalitions consisting of various combinations of former Spartan allies, with or without Argive support. Somehow the Spartan arms saved the day, as they did at the battle of Tegea (c. 470 BC), the battle of Dipaieis (c. 465 BC), and the battle of Mantinea (418 BC). The situation became even more serious when Corinth itself defected in 395 BC and Sparta came to face a grand alliance consisting of Thebes, Athens, Corinth, and Argos. Still, the victories of the Spartan army in 394 BC made sure that things would not get out of control in the Peloponnese – what would happen elsewhere was another matter entirely.[23] In the end, the Spartan system of Peloponnesian control collapsed entirely after Leuctra. The Thebans invaded the Peloponnese and then Laconia itself, finding willing allies in Elis, Arcadia, and of course Argos. Sparta itself was not captured, but the loss of regional hegemony brought about the loss of Messenia – and Sparta's great-power status.

As we implied at the introductory remarks, it cannot be determined whether controlling one's region is necessarily more difficult for contemporary great powers than it was for the likes of ancient Sparta; nowadays scale is larger, but so are resources. Be that as it may, most

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22 Κολιόπουλος 2001, pp. 118-119.

23 Hamilton 1979.

great powers, and certainly most of the contemporary ones, have found it impossible to exercise hegemony in their region.[24] The Russian Federation (or the Soviet Union or Imperial Russia) has not been able to control Northeast Asia, let alone Europe. China has not been able to control the vast area that can be called Greater East Asia and includes the central, eastern, and southeastern part of the Asian continent. Of course, the jury is still out on this one, and a future Chinese control of that area is not definitely out of the question.

The only great power that is also a regional hegemon is the United States. Its hegemony over the Americas is indeed a remarkable achievement. Although countries like Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Canada are by no stretch of the imagination puppets of the United States, they are not great powers. They do not pose an actual or even potential threat to the United States and can generally be counted upon to not harm core American security interests. One cannot overemphasize the leverage that this form of control has historically afforded the United States. Washington was free to intervene in two world wars and then wage a global Cold War, fully aware that no great-power threat could emanate from the Americas.

The same happens nowadays. The United States can cultivate strategic relationships with countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, and India, whereas China and Russia are reduced to the occasional arms deal and naval visit to the likes of Venezuela and Nicaragua. Regional hegemony is an area where the United States has much improved upon the early Spartan prototype.

Tab. 3. Regional hegemony.

State	*Region*	*Hegemony/No hegemony*
Ancient Sparta	Peloponnese	Hegemony, 560-369 BC (with several interruptions)
United States of America	The Americas	Hegemony, 1898-present
People's Republic of China	Great East Asia	No Hegemony
Russian Federation (formerly Russian Empire or Soviet Union)	Europe North East Asia	No Hegemony No Hegemony

[24] Mearsheimer 2001.

Alliance creation and management

No international actor, however powerful, has flourished without allies. It is true that the need for allies is inversely proportional to one's power, but in practice even the most powerful empires have found some use, political or military, for allied entities.[25] Thus, the management of alliances is the hallmark of a successful great power.

Sparta proved remarkably adept at alliance creation and management. From about 560 BC, the Spartans began to forge a web of bilateral alliances that eventually covered the greater part of the Peloponnese (save Argos). In the Antiquity this web was known as "the Lacedaemonians and their allies", whereas nowadays it is known as the "Peloponnesian Alliance".[26] Even though some measure of coercion may have been involved in the conclusion of at least some of those bilateral alliances, in general the Spartans were benevolent alliance masters. All Sparta asked for was allied troops in case of war, plus help in case of a helot revolt in Sparta. These were not onerous obligations, considering that until about 464 BC the wars of Sparta were almost invariably swift and always victorious, and helot revolts fairly rare. In return, Sparta granted its allies internal autonomy and offered them protection from extra-alliance attacks (i.e., attacks from Argos or Athens) and from internal subversion (i.e., coup attempts from would-be tyrants). Moreover, the fact that Sparta did not impose any kind of tribute on its Peloponnesian allies made alliance with Sparta almost a bargain. It is true that after Sparta got embroiled into a protracted conflict with Athens from mid-5th cent. BC onwards, Spartan wars became frequent and put increasing strain on allied manpower. Nevertheless, the Peloponnesian Alliance survived for an astonishing 200 years (c. 560-365 BC) before it was *amicably* dissolved.

The contemporary great powers have clearly realized the importance of alliance creation and management, at least in theory. However, things are less clear in practice. To start with, the United States has been the prime example of successful alliance creation and management after the Second World War. NATO, founded in 1949 and still functioning as the cornerstone of European security, has been an exemplary case of a permanent multilateral military alliance that among others

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[25] Luttwak 1976.

[26] de Ste. Croix 1972, pp. 96-124, 333-342.

institutionalizes the Euro-American security relationship. On the other hand, NATO is currently under severe strain. No number of corrective statements can make people on both sides of the Atlantic forget that a President of the United States was reluctant to explicitly endorse the mutual-help clause of the NATO treaty and claimed that the alliance was "obsolete",[27] or that a President of France has described NATO as "brain dead".[28] The future of NATO is unknowable, and Russia is doing its best to sustain it, but it seems a safe bet that it will not beat the Peloponnesian Alliance's record of longevity.

The other two contemporary great powers do not seem to be doing any better in alliance creation and management. The Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact died before reaching fifty (1955-1991), and Russia has little to show for its efforts to come up with something resembling an alliance between at least some of the former Soviet republics. The failure of the Collective Security Treaty Organization to protect Armenia against perceived aggression from Azerbaijan may be a case in point. China has arguably fared even worse, its only formal ally being North Korea. Indeed, the lack of meaningful alliances is definitely a weak spot of Chinese grand strategy. Unless the Sino-Russian *entente* becomes a full-blown alliance or the Shanghai Cooperation Organization becomes something akin to a collective security organization (an extremely unlikely scenario), China and Russia will miss out on the benefits of alliances – in contrast to their strategic adversary.

Tab. 4. Alliance creation and management.

State	*Primary multilateral alliance*	*Duration in years (as of 2021)*
Ancient Sparta	Peloponnesian Alliance, circa 560-365 BC	Appx. 195
United States of America	NATO, 1949-present	72
People's Republic of China	None	0
Russian Federation (formerly Russian Empire or Soviet Union)	Warsaw Pact, 1955-1991 Collective Security Treaty Organization, 1992-present	46 29

[27] Smith 2017.

[28] BBC 2019.

Conclusion

The present essay does not argue that Sparta is the greatest or the most efficient great power the world has seen. Rome (including Byzantium), imperial China and Great Britain have far better claim to such titles. However, the present essay does argue that there are certain indicators that one can use to assess the performance of great powers throughout history – and arguably improve the performance of contemporary ones. Sparta is used as an example of a great power that has performed really well according to those indicators. If anything, it performed far better than Athens did!

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The volume, jointly promoted by the Department of Classics of Sapienza University and the Institute of Sparta, intends to explore the multifaceted system of connections and interactions among ancient *poleis* by focusing on Sparta, which acts as an exemplary case study to understand the complex relations among Greek cities in the classical Hellenic world. The latter is indeed composed by an extended range of settlements based on specific jurisdictions, sets of laws and ethical principles, that are nevertheless connected by a common shared culture. The publication includes the Proceedings of the International Conference "International relations in Antiquity: the case of Sparta" held in Sparta in 2021 and further papers dealing with the ancient Laconian *polis*. The book aims to critically analyse the Spartan international network, through an open and constructive methodology, deprived of pre-arranged interpretative models. Moreover, it means to bring together scholars from different backgrounds and a variety of scientific disciplines (such as philology, epigraphy, history, archaeology, international relations) to foster a fruitful cross-sectorial dialogue, aimed at enabling a comprehensive understanding of ancient Hellas.

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