Beyond Sparta
In Quest for the Local in Laconia

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Abstract

The following thesis investigates local identities in Laconia between the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period of ancient Greek history. These explorations are necessary contributions to the existing corpus of research on the region. The overwhelming historiographical focus on Sparta has overshadowed the local distinctiveness of smaller communities in the area.

By focusing on three specific locations – the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis in Messenia, political and religious affairs in Karyai, and the cults of Apollo Hyakinthos and of Alexandra-Agamemnon in Amyklai – the present research paper indeed shows that communities developed and performed specific strands of local identity. The historiographical focus thus shifts away from one that sees Sparta and its surrounding territories as one coherent and homogenous region; indeed, it argues that the more orthodox account is part of what scholars in the field have labelled the Spartan mirage.

The case studies reveal that expressions of distinctiveness varied based upon geographic distance from Sparta. The further a settlement was from Sparta, the less it concentrated on cultivating its unique identity. Glimpses of a community advocating for local identity are much more apparent in Amyklai than in Karyai or in Messenia. The present work fills a gap in the historical research on the Peloponnese; it substitutes a study on powerful cities for one on minute settlements, in an effort to better understand the ancient Greek world.

<u>Résumé</u>

Cette thèse se penche sur les identités locales en Laconie, entre l'Âge de bronze jusqu'à la période hellénistique de l'histoire de la Grèce antique. Le corps de recherche existant sur cette région justifie l'approfondissement des connaissances dans ce domaine. Les distinctions des plus petites communautés de la région ont été submergées par les recherches historiographiques focalisant sur Spartes.

En ce concentrant sur trois régions précises, soit le sanctuaire d'Artémis Limnatis en Messénie, les affaires politiques et religieuses à Karyès et le culte d'Apollon Hyacinthe et d'Alexandra-Agamemnon à Amyklai, cette recherche démontre bien que les communautés avaient développé et performaient certaines spécificités locales. Cette thèse déplace l'accent historiographique du mirage de l'homogénéité de Sparte. Des études de cas révèlent que l'expression de caractères distinctifs varie selon la distance géographique avec Spartes. Plus les colonies étaient éloignées de Spartes, moins elles avaient tendance à cultiver leur propre identité. Des communautés qui prône l'identité locale sont aperçues plus à Amyklai qu'à Karyès ou qu'en Messénie

Ce travail comble un vide existant dans la recherche historique sur le Péloponnèse; il propose non pas une étude sur les puissantes cités, mais sur de petites colonies, dans l'effort de mieux comprendre la Grèce antique.

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Introduction

So from Thermopylae may Sparta's shouts
Affright the ear of Asia! Haste, my friends,
To guard the gates of Greece, which open stand
To Tyranny and Rapine. They with dread
Will shrink before your standards, and again
In servile Persia seek their native seats.
Your wives, your sons, your parents, general Greece
Forbid delay; and equal to the cause
A chief behold: can Spartans ask for more?
-Richard Glover, *Leonidas*[1]

The boy was cold. Hungry.
It was his initiation. His time in the wild
He would return as a Spartan
... or not at all.
- Frank Miller, *300*[2]

The study of the ancient Greek world continues to be focused on— and indeed represented by— two central and dominating hubs: Athens and Sparta. This approach fuels the general misconception that all ancient Greek societies developed in similar socio-political or cultural fashion. The concept of panhellenism further cultivates this idea.[3] The danger of such an interpretation is that it overlooks the significant differences that existed between ancient cities. There has, however, been a move over the past few decades to revisit localities and write their individual narratives of place, brought about by a recent shift in focus to regional and micro histories. Although allowing for increasingly diverse narratives, this new trend in Mediterranean studies has only recently become the catalyst for a more elaborate study of regional diversity and of the micro realms of Ancient Greece.

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[1] Richard Glover, *Leonidas: A Poem.* (London: printed for R. Dodsley, 1737), http://name.umdl.umich.edu/004862285.0001.000.
[2] Frank Miller, *300,* (Dark Horse Books: Oregon, 1998), 1.
[3] The notion of "panhellenism" itself is flawed, as it assumes the existence of a social, political, or religious harmony throughout Greece and abroad, extending to colonies and places that can be, or have been, included in the equally elusive "Hellenic" world.

Historiographical Review

In one of the earliest written accounts on ancient Greece, Herodotus propagates the notion that those who dwelled in the Peloponnese were a vastly different "Greek" people. He singles out the Spartans as a divergent ethnic group with unusual customs, system of government, and values, so much so that that they might even be described as barbarians.[4] Herodotus draws a line between the North and South and, in so doing, assumes that all those living in the Peloponnese and in Laconia behave as the Spartans do. He thereby sets a firm standard for how Laconia will be conceptualized by the ancient authors that follow: one that is heavily Spartan-skewed. However, modern historiography has since challenged the traditional view that Spartan interests and affairs were deeply entrenched throughout the region, though it cannot be denied that the main source of power in Laconia disseminated from Sparta. Moreover, Sparta's political dominance and method of classifying neighbouring poleis as either helot or periodic undoubtedly played a role in shaping local daily life.[5]

Nevertheless, this does not mean that smaller rural communities always unquestioningly adopted Spartan principles. Through a closer examination of the small ancient towns, the character of Laconia gradually changes, as it is composed of many localities with their own individual particularities. Whether propagated in antiquity by Herodotus or not, Laconian scholarship has fallen victim to the "Spartan mirage." First coined by François Ollier in 1930, the term "Spartan mirage" outlines how history has grappled with Sparta; utilizing its power and

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[4] Hdt. 6.56-6.60. The term "barbarian" here is used in the ancient Greek sense of the word, which simply meant "non-Greek" However, this description needs to be scrutinized for personal bias. It is possible that his work is exaggerated and reflects a magnified misconception of southern Greeks.

[5] For additional information of the definitions and classifications of *helot* and *perioikic* communities, see Nino Luraghi and Susan E. Alcock, *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures*. (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2003).

prowess to form a fictitious idealized narrative.[6] According to Stephen Hodkinson and Ian Macgregor Morris, the post-Classical historical perspective on Sparta focused on the height of its power in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.[7] The discourse on Laconia was forgotten and a spotlight was cast — almost exclusively — on Sparta. Since the early Graeco-Roman period, scholarship on Sparta has overemphasized and glorified the city, idealizing it as a political utopia of domination while simultaneously vilifying it as a totalitarian regime of oppression.

The way in which Sparta has been studied has shifted throughout the centuries and in different European cultures. Scholarly perspectives changed from a positive to negative narrative. More specifically, the city's control over neighbouring towns, and its monopolization of agricultural and material goods from conquered lands, went from praised as political ingenuity to being criticized as oppressive. In the Middle Ages, within the political and cultural context of Medieval and Christian values, Lycurgus was revered as a prominent legal figure.[8] For instance, John of Salisbury, bishop of Chartres and prominent diplomat of the twelfth century CE, wrote, "Lycurgus, during his reign, laid down decrees affirming the obedience of the people to their princes and of the princes to rulership in accordance with justice; he abolished the use of hold, silver and all other wicked materials; he consigned the safeguarding of the laws to the Senate and the power of choosing the Senate to the people."[9]

From the seventh century BCE to the end of the eighteenth century CE, Sparta was praised as a leading example of republican society. During the Early Modern period, from about

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[6] François Ollier, *Le Mirage Spartiate: étude sur l'idéalisation de Sparte dans l'Antiquité grecque, de l'origine jusqu'aux Cyniques,* (PhD diss., Université de Paris, 1933).

[7] Stephen Hodkinson and Ian Macgregor Morris, *Sparta in Modern Thought,* (Wales: Classical Press of Wales, 2012), vii-1.

[8] Ian I. Macgregor Morris, "Lycurgus in Late Medieval Political Culture," in *Sparta in Modern Thought: Politics, History and Culture,* eds. Stephen Hodkinson and Ian I. Macgregor Morris (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2012), 1-43.

[9] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*: *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 34.

the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries CE, various political reform movements dominated European intellectual history. Within this context, historians, politicians, and philosophers invoked Sparta as an ideal model for the construction of a new political order.[10] Political writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, such as Machiavelli, viewed Sparta as an aristocracy. However, eighteenth-century thinkers, inspired by revolutionary France, viewed Sparta as a democratic republic, based on its egalitarian policy for landownership.[11] With the advent of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century and continuous tumults into the nineteenth century, new political thinkers and movements gained momentum.[12] This prompted a shift in the study of Sparta, and with it a new, negative, mirage— founded on oppression, subordination, and enslavement— took hold of the city's historiography. In this way, Sparta became symbolic as the epitome of negativity, a force poised against the liberal values of growing Western democracies.[13] It is significant to note here that the mirage was more than just a falsified modern myth of Spartan society—it simultaneously created a void in scholarly interest for the other locales of Laconia and perpetuated the notion that the entire region of Laconia was under Spartan hegemony. The study of smaller towns and cities was therefore lost to this modern emphasis on the all-powerful Sparta.

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[10] Hodkinson and Macgregor Morris, *Lycurgus in Political Culture,* x. Specifically with regards to the English Revolutions and Commonwealth period (1640-60), French Revolution (1789), and Napoleonic Era (1799-1815).
[11] Ibid., xiv.
[12] Many influential and revolutionary political philosophers discussed Sparta, including Voltaire, Rousseau, and Marx. With the rise of anti-imperialist, communist, and socialist thought, Sparta's mirage turn a negative turn. This is epitomized in the Nazi appropriations of Sparta, as discussed by Volker Losemann's chapter "The Spartan Tradition in Germany 1870-1945" and Helen Roche "The Role of Sparta in the Educational Ideology of the Adolf Schools" in *Sparta in Modern Thought: Politics, History and Culture,* eds. Hodkinson and Macgregor Morris, 253-343.
[13] Hodkinson and Macgregor Morris, *Lycurgus in Political Culture*, x.

A significant amount of extant sources after Epaminondas' invasion of Sparta and the battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE reveal either a distinctly pro- or anti-Spartan bias.[14] Therefore, it is important to look back to the earliest sources of archaeological and material evidence (concerning the localities of Laconia?). It is undeniable that, by the fourth century BCE, Sparta had a powerful influence on the development of local identities. The city's aggression towards, and dominance over, the regional communities— particularly through the Peloponnesian League— was instrumental in shaping their culture.

Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell have since shown that local nuances are vital in revealing the complex narrative of how Greek culture played out at the local level.[15] Geographic location, climate, population, and socio-political factors all contributed to the various ways in which early settlements, beginning in the Bronze Age, developed into city-states. These overlooked distinctions impacted how settlement developed throughout the regions of Greece. Some of these micro-distinctions are fairly obvious. For instance, when comparing Attica to the Peloponnese, it is possible to see a wide range of geographic diversity articulated through agricultural production, farming, and economic activity. It is within these differences that distinct local practices emerge. Through the examination of these regional differences, the Peloponnese is illuminated as a region of diversity that included fertile valleys, hinterlands, and the Achaean and Elean coastlines. One such sub-region within the Peloponnese is Laconia. Located near both Sparta and the fertile planes of the Eurotas valley— commonly labeled as Lakedaimonia in

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[14] Maria Pretzler, "Arcadia: Ethnicity and Politics in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BCE," in *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League*, ed. Peter Funke and Nino Luraghi (Washington DC Center for Hellenic Studies: Harvard University Press, 2009), 100.
[15] Nicholas Purcell and Peregrine Horden, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000).

ancient Greek— this region contained numerous cities distinct from Sparta, as well as towns controlled by Sparta, labeled as *perioikic* or *helot* at some time.[16]

When Sparta's territorial influence is cast aside, setting both the "Spartan mirage" and its hegemony aside for a moment, we begin to see evidence of local identities. The political situation in Laconia stemmed from Sparta's decision to make certain poleis *perioikoi* and others *helots*— a system that ultimately fostered localism. Laconia was divided in a manner that allowed local identities to flourish and develop in drastically different ways. These political titles, bestowed onto settlements, divided the region according to Sparta's perception of the poleis. Notably, this system only carried meaning in its relation to Sparta, as Sparta dictated the terms on which neighbouring poleis interacted with it. For this reason, the *perioikoi* of Sparta found themselves "among the great voiceless groups of Greek society" and it is only by looking past the "Spartan mirage" that we are able to once again hear these long lost voices.[17]

This study fits into the current re-examination of Laconia, and challenges the conventional perspective of a culturally homogeneous territory under the umbrella of Spartan influence. It examines the ways in which Laconian communities organized and carried out daily activities in order to rediscover local identities and social dynamics in areas that have been neglected by previous scholarship and historical trends. Evidence of early habitation from the

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[16] Many writers, both ancient and modern, have tried to document the history of Sparta, making the body of secondary literature expansive. Though no Spartan-originated source exists, the works of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plutarch, and others all discuss the region. The Spartan Mirage was created and propagated by François Ollier in *Le Mirage Spartiate* (1933), which was later discussed in Anton Powell and Stephen Hodkinson in their edited volume, *Sparta: Beyond the Mirage* (2002). For an introduction to Spartan history see Michael Whitby's edited volume, *Sparta* (1899) and Sarah Pomeroy's *Spartan Women* (2002). For specific information on Sparta and the Peloponnese, see: Paul Cartledge's *Spartan Reflections* (2001) and *Sparta and Lakonia* (2002) and Stephen Hodkinson, Ian Macgregor Morris and Paul Christesen *Sparta in Modern Thought* (2012). For political histories of the region, see Nino Luraghi and Susan Alcock's *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia* (2003) and Nino Luraghi and Peter Funke's *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League* (2009).

[17] Robert Parker, "Subjection, Synoecism and Religious Life," in *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League*, ed. Peter Funke and Nino Luraghi (Washington DC Center for Hellenic Studies: Harvard University Press, 2009), 184.

Archaic and Classical periods will be examined. Settlement trends, landscapes, shrines, sanctuaries, and material culture will also be used to illuminate local characteristics lost in the wide shadow of Sparta's enduring reputation.

Effectively, the thesis argues that Laconia was composed of an array of settlements that had unique and distinct cultures, activities, and behaviours. The Eurotas valley and its adjacent mountain territories are filled with expressions of individuality. Three locations from this region— Karyai, Amyklai, and Artemis Limnatis — will be presented as case studies. These particular sites have been selected for a variety of reasons, one being the richness of their material evidence from constant occupation from the Mycenaean through to the Classical period. They also maintained *perioikic* status and significant cult sanctuaries where local identity was created and solidified through performative acts of inclusion and exclusion. Each sanctuary had a particular relationship with Sparta as well as the parochial site on which it was constructed, which cultivated unique local flavours. Most importantly, the three sites were chosen based on their geographic distance vis-à-vis Sparta. Based on modern calculations, Messenia is an estimated eighty kilometers from Sparta, while Karyai is around forty, and Amyklai, ten. By extension, the existing historiography on the whole region of Laconia is called into question through a study of these nodal points.

From as early as the Archaic period of the eighth to fifth centuries BCE, unique cultural aspects of the small towns and cities within Laconia are distinguishable. This paper is intent on countering the traditional, Sparta-centric theoretical basis upon which study of the region of Laconia has previously been founded. It is for this reason that certain methodological issues need to be addressed in regards to the terminology and the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Conceptual Framework

The theory of "localism" is a complex notion, often with minimal meaning attached. However, the manifestation of localism in both real and imaginary spaces is a tangible and powerful force in shaping behaviour and identity. Localism contains three dimensions: the local, the locale, and the locality. These elements stand alone and each carries individual weight. But they also interact with one another to encompass the complete breadth of the human experience of localism.[18] To work effectively with broad "-ism" terms, they must be broken down into concrete and measurable parts. The main aspect of localism is "local". The local has a two-fold meaning, as it simultaneously refers to a geographic place, such as a town on a map, and imagined place in a metaphorical realm. The local itself can be further divided into the "locale" and the "locality".

This study defines a locale as a real, physical space that is geographically detectible and accessible. This is the space where individuals live and interact with one another and with nature. The second element of the local is locality, which does not manifest as a physical reality, but rather as a cognitive creation. Locality is rooted in the powerful foundational myths from which societies draw meaning, making it an essential part of identity formation. Though it exists simply in the mind as a metaphysical entity, the locality is as authentic and powerful as its physical counterpart. It is a person's understanding of the space to which they belong and which they share with their group. It also includes the "regional" space, and individuals have conceptions of the broader space outside their own community. Together, locality and the locale create and solidify bonds of alliance between people, as well as their attachment to specific places.

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[18] Hans Beck, "Localism in Ancient Greece," *Ancient History and Classics,* accessed January 10, 2017, http://www.hansbeck.org.

Another essential theme to this thesis is the idea of performative identity. In accordance with the modern philosophical field of performative theory, this project highlights how identity of place is created through outward behaviour and action. At its core, this principle argues that identity is formed through a series of repeated acts, behaviours, or habits. The degree of publicity, inclusion, and exclusion can vary based on social circumstances. However, a person's identity is formed at an individual level while also being displayed to others of the same or of a different group. According to Judith Butler, a philosopher of gender and identity, any aspect of a person's identity is only real to the extent to which is it performed.[19] Identity is not predetermined solely by geographic location. A person's external behaviour shapes their personal beliefs regarding whom they are and what local places and groups they choose to belong to. The opposite it also true, as space and environment impact one's opinions, behaviours and identity.

In order to analyze identity formation during pivotal public religious celebrations, Butler's work on performative theory will be applied to the three case studies that comprise this thesis. The Karyatis, the festival of Apollo-Hyakinthos, and the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, were all spaces where identity was stylized through the embodiment of particular behaviours, in a public setting where members of other groups are present.[20] In a sense, these three sanctuaries were theatrical stages that forced an individual to revise their assumptions and understandings of themselves. This introspective analysis in turn provoked a performative act meant to display their identity and communal ties to all present.[21]

Frederick Streng, a religious phenomenologist, expands the theory of identity formation by looking at sacred acts and mythmaking. In his work, *Understanding Religious Life,* Streng

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[19] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, (1988): 519-31.
[20] Ibid., 520-523.
[21] Ibid., 525.

states that the sacred realm, and its manifestation through the creation of religious sites, traditions, and myths, is essential to achieve freedom from the profane world of human experience.[22] According to this theory, the human condition is universally problematic, troubled by impurity, disorder, struggle, death, and so forth, which ultimately leads to frustration with oneself and with one's physical and social environment—but also stimulates the development of existential questions. The natural response to this frustration is an appeal to what Streng calls the sacred realm, which provides order, protection, and happiness by answering universal questions such as, Why am I here? Where am I from? Who am I? The sacred realm is thus achieved through the social processes of mythmaking and religious activity that incorporate order and meaning into human existence on both civic and personal levels.

Myth and ritual are creative forces that "make sense out of the profane world [through] duplicating mythically prescribed patterns of behaviour (sacred symbols) that will open the gate [to] sacred power."[23] Religious ritual is thus a powerful way to reinforce a community's self-identity through public expressions of language and gesture. It provides a participant with information on their community, and it is capable of being repeated.[24] Repetition adds power and potency into the equation, intensifying the bonds of community between participants. Simultaneously, it re-confirms and strengthens this group identity in the eyes of those excluded from the group.

Streng's comprehensive study aids in understanding how cults acted as mechanisms of identity formation. It was at these specific locations, during festivals dedicated to Artemis Limnatis, Artemis Karyatis, and Apollo-Hyakinthos, that participants enacted their rituals.

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[22] Frederick J. Streng, *Understanding Religious Life* (California: Wadsworth, 1985).
[23] Frederick Streng, "Creation of Community Through Sacred Symbols," in *Understanding Religious Life* (California: Wadsworth, 1985), 48.
[24] Ibid., 49.

According to Streng, dramatically acted-out representations of myths and repetitious communal symbolic action contribute to identity formation and groupism.[25] By participating in these rituals, individuals asserted that they belonged to a specific community. In reaction, the other members of the community understood and expected the ritual, and also recognized the actor as part of their group. This does not, however, imply that the meaning and performance of a ritual remained static. Changes in cult worship occurred in reaction to social, political, and cultural developments inside the groups who participated in them. However, what remains important is that myth and ritual, through outward public performance, curbed personal existential crises through the individual's incorporation into a social community.

Walter Burkert also argues that myth and rituals are at the very foundation of human communication. He identifies a connection between verbalized language and ritual, which together create and project a model of reality.[26] Ritual is a social phenomenon that creates identity: "it brings about reciprocal personal contact [and] determines who belongs to the group."[27] At its simplest form, myth is characterized by "its sustainability for telling and retelling."[28] The quality of repetition is important, enforcing a certain reality over time. Therefore, the activities played out at ancient Greek sanctuaries, including those in Messenia, Karyai and Amyklai, successfully construct cultural traditions and identity. As boldly stated by Burkert, "there has yet to be a community without ritual."[29]

The three localities explored in this thesis can further be explored through intersectionality theory.[30] Coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, this theory aims to

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[25] Ibid., 49.

[26] Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (California: University of California Press, 1983), 29.

[27] Ibid, 29.

[28] Ibid, 32.

[29] Ibid, 34.

[30] Olena Hankivsky, *Intersectionality 101* (British Columbia: The Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy,

understand how human identity is shaped by interactions held in public locations.[31] An important

aspect of intersectionality theory is the link between relationships and identity dynamics,

specifically in social settings. At the sanctuaries in Karyai, Amyklai, and Messenia, both

intersectionality and performative theory can be used to gain a better understanding of how

feelings of local belonging emerged through lived religious experiences.

Christoph Ulf has examined the motivations behind the consolidation of population

assemblages, concluding that primordial ethnic groups emerge through socio-political cohesion.

They do not exist a priori, but must instead be generated through unstable negotiations.[32]

According to Ulf, a second phase of "ethnicization" occurred, categorized by attempts against a

centralized great power. The construction of smaller ethnicities can be seen "being mustered in

opposition to the claims of Sparta and Athens" beginning in the sixth century.[33] In the later fifth

and fourth centuries BCE, this was done through the creation of foundation stories and an

exploitation of genealogical claims to land and power.[34] According to Ulf, the "(re)-formulation

of myths connected to a single location can serve the purpose of discrediting or at least disputing

the claim of tales that bind together larger regions."[35]

Territorial claims and boundaries were not always physical. In fact, the metaphorical

ownership of a particular land, region, or city often had profound political and ethnic

implications. Ulf highlights that every clan, including those tied by kinship, marriage, or family,

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2014).

[31] Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, (1991): 1241-99; see also Hankivsky, *Intersectionality 101*, 3-4.

[32] Christoph Ulf, "The Development of Greek Ethne and their Ethnicity," in *The Politics of Ethnicity and the Crisis of the Peloponnesian League,* ed. Peter Funke and Nino Luraghi (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies Harvard University Press, 2009), 216.

[33] Ibid., 236.

[34] Ibid., 237.

[35] Ibid., 239.

had a designated territory it claimed at its disposal.[36] Furthermore, territorial ownership was a key factor in the consolidation of power, cohesion, and the creation of genealogical myths, all of which are necessary components of group formation. Ulf further notes that political formations "require a local point of reference."[37] It is at these points that unifying bonds develop through symbols and ceremonies centered in a particular physical space.

The development of Greek societies from the Dark Age into the early Archaic Age all followed this trend. Whether they succeeded and became powerful and dominant poleis, like Athens and Sparta, or failed as rural towns and were absorbed by larger entities, the process of settlement formation was similar; they may have all shared a sense of identity, a key element that contributed to the establishment of every polis. In light of this, even though Karyai and Amyklai never became large thriving cities, they each still had a distinct and discernible local identity—which this thesis aims to expose.

An important factor in the formation of a local identity is the creation and diffusion of a local myth related to the foundation of the city. Maria Pretzler discusses this in her study of ethnicity and politics in fifth and fourth century Arcadia.[38] Pretzler argues that the development of an Arcadian identity necessitated an adaptation of the mythical history of the region, a "process that should be expected in the context of an emerging and perhaps expanding ethnic identity."[39] Local identity became a highly monopolized element in the later fourth and third centuries. For example, as with most Greeks, Arcadians had "more than one identity to choose from," which meant that they would have used "whichever label seemed to be most

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[36] Ibid., 218.
[37] Ibid., 224.
[38] Pretzler, *Arcadia: Ethnicity and Politics,* 86.
[39] Ulf, *Development of Greek Ethnicity,* 89.

advantageous or prestigious in a particular context."[40] This is important, as it suggests that a regional identity— one that is shared in an external or "global" way— can co-exist with a local identity.

The acknowledgement of an official cult also had a recognizable impact on a city's inhabitants. Cults required the construction of designated sacred spaces of worship, be they altars or sanctuaries, which physically changed cities' appearances. This not only would have been a costly endeavour, demanding public financial obligations, but also one that both created and affirmed communal religious consciousness. Further, the creation of an official cult evoked broader questions of possession and belonging. In theory, any sanctuary built in a city belonged to the "whole people" and thus is indicative of a "more conscious ideal of unification."[41] However, these sites were indeed accessible to the public and, most interestingly, frequented by Spartans.

Identity and Memory

The process of identity formation is complex, yet two elements, memory and myth, are always present. Anthony Smith best explains this stating "there can be no identity without memory (albeit selective), and no collective purpose without myth."[42] Despite being difficult to define, it is crucial to understand both how identity was manifested in Laconia as well as the impact it had on individuals' daily lives.

In the ancient world, questions of community and belonging were at the forefront of religious, political, and cultural matters. Identity, as both a real and imaginary phenomenon, played a key role in an individual's daily life. It was tied to "individual self-respect [and] in part

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[40] Ibid., 93.
[41] Parker, *Subjection, Synoecism and Religious Life*, 194.
[42] Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 2.

a function of socialization experiences in the historic culture-community."[43] It also took physical form, through artistic symbols and architectural construction, gaining value through the mythologies that expressed a shared heritage. The creation of material goods can be interpreted as a physical representation of partnership or belonging within a community.

Smith identifies the following elements as requirements of ethnicity: collective name, common myth of descent, shared history, distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity.[44] He also makes use of the concept of ethnicism, defined as "a collective movement, whose activities and efforts are aimed at resisting perceived threats from outside [while] renewing a community's forms and traditions."[45] While obvious that ethnicism divided the Greeks from the Persian "barbarians," it is less evident that there was an internal differentiation among the regions of Greece. It is here that ethnicism can be used to examine the differences that existed between Athens and Sparta and, further, to examine the local tensions between Sparta and the *perioikic* communities. This sort of analysis implies that a certain degree of communal consciousness existed as ethnicism and was also, in part, a defensive act in response to a threat on the locale's individuality.

Athens versus Sparta

Athens and Sparta stand out amongst the estimated 1,035 poleis that existed from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods.[46] These two cities set the dual standards on the formation *polis-chôra* relationships in ancient Greece.[47] To set the stage in hunting traces of local nuances in Laconia, the political situation in Sparta must first be reviewed. It is also important to understand the ways in which Spartan affairs affected the development of smaller settlements. In

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[43] Ibid., 14.
[44] Ibid., 22-23.
[45] Ibid., 50.
[46] Hansen and Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis,* 574.
[47] Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2003), 13.

about 1000 BCE, after the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization, the Dorian race moved southward into the Peloponnese and settled in and around the Eurotas Valley. By around 800 BCE, Sparta had become the most civilized community in the region. The city's social organization is attributed to Lycurgus and his legal reforms. The laws shaped the development of the Spartan State, as Lycurgus writes, "banished the unnecessary and superfluous arts", resulting in the lack of sanctuaries within Sparta itself.[48] The unique way in which the city developed stood in polar opposition to Athens. Athenian power in mainland Greece was concretely showcased – the hilltop Parthenon overlooking the city, multitude of theatres, sanctuaries, and its agora. Meanwhile, in the south, Sparta's lack of urbanization, presence of civic buildings, or sanctuaries, was astoundingly unreflective of its domination over the region and of its military prowess throughout all of Greece. Further, the heart of the Spartan state itself was not clearly demarcated with fortified walls. The city's aesthetic was not discernable in physical constructions, but rather political and military ideology. According to King Agesilaus the Great, "When someone else wished to know why Sparta was without walls, he pointed to the citizens in full armour and said, "These *are* the Spartans' walls."[49] Upon visiting Sparta, Thucydides notes that the polis showed no signs of urban planning, had no shrines or temples. He described Laconia as,

> …desolate and nothing of it left but the temples and floors of the buildings, I think it would breed much unbelief in posterity long hence of their power in comparison of the fame. For although of five parts of Peloponnesus it possess two and hath the leading of the rest and also of many confederates without, yet the city being not close built and the temples and other edifices not costly, and because it is but scatteringly inhabited after the ancient manner of Greece, their power would seem inferior to the report. Again, the same things happening to Athens, one

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[48] Plut. Lyc. 9.3.
[49] Plut. Ages. 1.29

would conjecture by the sight of their city that their power were double to what it is. We ought not therefore to be incredulous [concerning the forces that went to Troy] nor have in regard so much the external show of a city as the power.[50]

Today, the current the region could attest to the validity in Thucydides' prediction. One could drive right by Sparta and not see any visual markers of its past power, aside the poorly preserved remains of the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia and the modern statue of Leonidas. However, the actualization of Thucydides' prophecy is entirely contingent upon how the borders and territorial boundaries of the city are conceived. The exact space defined as inclusive to the "Spartan city" is critical, and it is with this debate that the theme of localism arises.

Sparta, a *True* Polis?

The analysis of locality in Laconia is tied into the longstanding debate of labeling Sparta a "polis" in the first place. Taking into account all of its socio-political particularities, does Sparta fit the criteria of a polis? If so, where can it be located and how does one draw its borders? The issues surrounding locality become very interesting if Sparta itself does not fit the requirements of a city. According to Cartledge, Sparta fails to fulfill the entire checklist of what constitutes a city, as it lacks a truly urban center.[51] In order to answer this, the key defining features of a polis must be identified. What constituted a polis was an issue also debated amongst ancient Greek historians. For instance, Thucydides emphasized that cities must necessarily have civic buildings and evidence of urban planning. On the other hand, Pausanias does not classify monuments as a necessary feature of a polis. In his description of the city of Panopeus, he writes,

> …if one can give the name of city to those who possess no government offices, no gymnasium, no theater, no market-place, no water descending to a fountain, but live in bare shelters just like mountain cabins, right on a ravine.

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[50] Thuc. 1.10.2
[51] Cartlegde, *Spartan Reflections*, 24.

Nevertheless, they have boundaries with their neighbors, and even send delegates to the Phocian assembly. The name of the city is derived, they say, from the father of Epeius, and they maintain that they are not Phocians, but were originally Phlegyans who fled to Phocis from the land of Orchomenus.[52]

This passage proposes that physical constructions alone are not enough to determine if a specific location constitutes a city. Pausanias' criterion encompasses the "invisible" city, referencing political and managerial entities that are intangible. Sparta had a dual kingship, regulations governing citizenship and property, the obligation of communal dining for Spartiates, an education system (*agoge*), a council (*gerousia*), an assembly (*ekklesia*), and an elected council (*ephors*). It designed treaties with surrounding poleis that classified them under various degrees of servitude. Though no primary source materials document these "invisible" institutions, they are concrete evidence that prove that Sparta was indeed a polis. Notably, Spartan society and the physical landscape of the city likely underwent significant modifications from the time of Thucydides' writing to Pausanias. The city's influence is further supported by Herodotus who notes that, as of the 530s BCE, the Spartans had "subjugated most of the Peloponnese."[53]

Chapter Outlines

The first case study will examine the relationship between Messenia and Sparta, and examine how local identity developed on a volatile border. This was case at the liminal sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, which became a battleground for Messenian and Spartan identity. The well-known political clash between these two cities reveals that Messenia fought for independence from Sparta for nearly seven centuries. Rather than a retelling of this story, local identity formation will be explored through an analysis of the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis. This

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[52] Paus. 10.4.1.
[53] Hdt. 1.68.

chapter will focus on how the oscillating political possession of the sanctuary between Messenia and Sparta affected communal ties and feelings of local belonging.

The second examination will be on Karyai, an attested Archaic settlement that was destroyed intentionally by Sparta during the Classical period. Modern historians cannot determine with certainty where it was located, though sources suggest it was situated approximately four kilometers west of Vourvoura.[54] Ancient sources claim it was located close to a main road that linked Sparta with Tegea.[55] In many ways, Karyai remains an enigma as it ceased to exist at some point during the Classical period, with evidence pointing towards intentional ruin. Vitruvius claims that this destruction was punishment for the treachery and medism of the people, as they sided with the Persians in the Graeco-Persian wars of the fifth century BCE.[56] While the town never reached full *polis* status, it retained its vital role in the celebration of Artemis Karyatis. This involved the participation of Laconians from various towns and inspired the famous Caryatids-styled column and the story of Spartan sacrifice on the local Karyatis walnut tree. The prominent cult activities at this sanctuary shaped the Karyaian community and, in turn, impacted their sense of identity.[57]

The final chapter focuses on the settlement of Amyklai, located in the Eurotas Valley. Amyklai is a significant site as excavation reveals early Bronze and Iron Age artefacts, which highlight a long history of occupation. Anthony Snodgrass and Vincent Robin d'Arba

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[54] Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 574.

[55] Thuc. 5.55.3; Xen. Hell. 6.5.25 and 7.1.28.

[56] Vitr. 1.1.3-4. The somewhat margin of ambiguity in this statement must be recognized. Vitruvius was writing in the first century BCE and does not specify which Karyai in the Peloponnese he is referencing. If taken to describe the case study in question here, this passage adds an interesting dimension to the character of Karyai. Paul Cartledge interprets Karyai's medism as a phenomena related to the broader conflict between Sparta and Argos (see Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History, 1300-362 BC* (New York:Routledge, 2002), 176). At this time, many perioikic communities aligned with Argos and detached from their Spartan allegiance. Nevertheless, the issue of medism in Karyai is later investigated to see if it spurred any particularities that would make it distinct from other regions.

[57] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Desborough have identified a distinct form of Laconian pottery derived specifically from excavations at Amyklai.[58] It is important to note that, unlike Attica, material remains in Laconia from the early Mycenaean period are scarce.[59] By extension of this, the fact that Amyklai was so rich in archaeological data immediately flags it as a significant settlement. Similar to Karyai, Amyklai was located on an important road that connected it to Sparta, the Hyakinthian Way. Amyklai also hosted the festival of Apollo-Hyakinthos, important to both the Spartan and Amyklaian people.[60] Ancient sources confirm that this festival was the central annual celebration in the area, yet was under the authority of Amyklai. This opens broader inquiries into the distinctions that existed between Amyklaian and Spartan identity as well as the relationship between these two cities. Notably, even after its absorption into Sparta as its fifth constituent, the Hyakinthos continued to remain an explicitly Amyklaian affair. The section examines how a sense of locality transferred and developed over time within a space of no more than five kilometers. From the Mycenaean palatial structure of the Menelaion, to the city of Amyklai, which would eventually become a part of Sparta, this chapter analyzes how both the Menelaion and Amyklai were able to assert and maintain a distinct local identity despite political changes.

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[58] Vincent Robin d'Arba Desborough, *Protogeometric Pottery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), cited in Anthony M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece: An Archaeological Survey of the Eleventh to the Eighth Centuries BC* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[59] Anthony M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece: An Archaeological Survey of the Eleventh to the Eighth Centuries BC* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[60] Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History, 1300-362 BC* (New York:Routledge, 2002), 91-93.

<u>**Chapter 1**</u>

Localism on the Fringes: The Case of Artemis Limnatis

There is a sanctuary of Artemis called Limnatis (of the Lake) on the frontier of Messenia in which the Messenians and the Lacedaemonians alone of the Dorians shared. According to the Lacedaemonians their maidens coming to the festival were violated by Messenian men and their king was killed in trying to prevent it.

Pausanias 4.4.2

In searching for local distinctiveness in Laconia, the present chapter adopts a microhistorical perspective to analyse the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis in Messenia. The sanctuary held particular importance for several reasons. First, it stood on a highly disputed border between Messenia and Laconia. This contested land created and affirmed distinct local identities. Secondly, the sanctuary was the setting for the catalyst of the Messenian Wars, when the alleged rape of Spartan maidens and the murder of the Spartan King Teleclos supposedly took place.[61] These events, fuelled by the longstanding rivalry between Sparta and Messenia, are said to have occurred at the sanctuary during a festival to Artemis.[62] Lastly, the material remains and archaeological data from Artemis Limnatis can be compared to other Artemis sanctuaries across the Peloponnese to uncover the degree of connectivity between various locales.

I.   Topography

The geographic characteristics of Laconia played a vital role in shaping how socio-political and cultural affairs played out in specific locales. One of the key features that impacted the relationship between the Messenians and the Spartans – the Laconian topography – is

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[61] Paus. 4.4.4. Pausanias recounts the history of the Messenian Wars, 743-724 BCE (4.4.4). He states that the first attack on the Messenians by the Lacedaemonians occurred in the second year of the 9th Olympiad (4.5.9-10), and ended by the fourteenth Olympiad (5.13.7).
[62] Paus. 4.4.2.

epitomized at Artemis Limnatis. Mount Taygetos dominates the southern Peloponnese, slicing through the Mani Peninsula and dividing the Laconian and Messenian plains. The northern section of these plains extends to the Arcadian settlements. The southern section, on the other hand, called Dentheliatis, was fertile land and produced the famous Denthis wine, after which the region was named.[63] The Dentheliatis was particularly important because it was the gateway from Laconia to access the Messenian plain. It held strategic value, located at the junctions of the roads that connected Laconia, Messenia, Arcadia, and Sparta. This roadway was quickly monopolised by Sparta as a means to direct authority throughout Laconia, while simultaneously functioning as a defense mechanism to protect access into the city.[64] Archaeological remains of the sanctuary to Artemis Limnatis are found in this southern zone, attributed to the Dentheliatis. Strabo and Pausanias write that the sanctuary was established at this highly contested border between Laconia and Messenia.[65]

Laconian topography was also a factor in the convoluted development of political affairs in the region during the late fourth century BCE. The two looming mountain ranges created low valleys, in which only certain places could sustain effective and flourishing communities. Because of this, Messenia had a long history of occupation and was one of the rare regions in Greece "in which the Bronze Age is much better represented and has attracted much more research."[66]

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[63] Socrates Koursoumis, "Revisiting Mount Taygetos: The Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis," (Lecture, British School at Athens, December 5, 2011), 1-3.
[64] Ibid., 3.
[65] Paus. 4.4.2, 4.31.3 and Strab. 8.4.9.
[66] Nino Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 50.

II.   The Spartan-Messenian Conflict

The sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis is much better known from literary sources than from its archaeological remains. It was located near the Neda River, in the Volimos valley. It was also close to the Langada Pass, a cliff on the mountain peak, impossible for travelers to navigate. Volimos was located on an ancient pathway connecting Laconia and Messenia. Notably, this road is still used today to connect Laconia and Sparta to Kalamata.

Temples and Shrines in Messene [67]

Both Strabo and Pausanias argue that the political conflict between the Messenians and Spartans was initiated at the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis.[68] Their rivalry dates back to the eight century BCE, when a group of young Spartans and King Teleclos were assassinated during the annual

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[67] Jelle Abbenes. "Messene." *The Pausanias Project.* http://www.pausanias-footsteps.nl/english/start-eng.html.
[68] Strab. 8.4.9.

celebration of the Panegyris. The story, which became mythicized in the memories of both Laconian regions, had two sides. According to the Spartan narrative, a group of Messenian youth raped Spartan maidens, who had travelled from the city to the sanctuary in order to participate in the festival. In reaction to this crime, the Spartan King Teleclos came to the maidens' defense and was then murdered. The Messenian narrative claims that the Spartan girls were in fact young beardless men in disguise.[69] They had entered the sanctuary under false pretence, but had ulterior motives to kill the Messenian magistrates at the festival. In retribution, King Teleclos was not murdered, but justly assassinated for this plot.

However fictitious or contested this myth may actually be, both Strabo and Pausanias credit the incident as the catalyst of the First Messenian War and of the eventual conquest of Messenia by Sparta. The region of Messenia remained under Spartan domination from the eight century BCE until its liberation by Theban general Epaminondas, in 369 BCE. However, the possession of the fertile Dentheliatis valley and of the Artemis Limnatis sanctuary remained highly contested. For instance, after Philip II's conquest in 338 BCE, the valley was given to the Messenians. Yet in 270 BCE, it once again became part of Spartan dominion. In 222 BCE, following the battle of Selasia, Antigonos Doson gave the land, and sanctuary, back to Messenia, and following the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, Octavian and Marc Antony offered it to Sparta. Finally, under Emperor Tiberius, the region was given back to the Messenians.[70] Tacitus best summarizes the oscillating possession over the sanctuary,

> Then a hearing was given to embassies from the Lacedæmonians and Messenians on the question of the temple of Diana in the Marshes. The Lacedæmonians asserted that it had been dedicated by their ancestors and in their territory, and appealed to the records of their history and the hymns of

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[69] Paus. 4.4.2-4, Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 80-82 and 158.
[70] Koursoumis, *Revisiting Mount Taygetos*, 4.

poets, but it had been wrested from them, they said, by the arms of the Macedonian Philip, with whom they had fought, and subsequently restored by the decision of Caius Cæsar and Marcus Antonius. The Messenians, on the contrary, alleged the ancient division of the Peloponnesus among the descendants of Hercules, in which the territory of Denthelia (where the temple stood) had fallen to their king. Records of this event still existed, engraven on stone and ancient bronze. But if they were asked for the testimony of poetry and of history, they had it, they said, in greater abundance and authenticity. Philip had not decided arbitrarily, but according to fact, and king Antigonus, as also the general Mummius, had pronounced the same judgment. Such too had been the award of the Milesians to whom the arbitration had been publicly entrusted, and, finally, of Atidius Geminus, the prætor of Achaia. And so the question was decided in favour of the Messenians. [71]

Evidently, the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis itself was considered a prize, and whoever held it in its possession, be it Sparta or Messenia, had won over the opponent. As well, the quote highlights that both the Spartans and Messenians had established their own – albeit opposite - hymns and mythologies that they believed were reflective of their past. These preserved distinct local histories of each group.

III.   The Artemis Cult in Laconia

The cult of Artemis was most prominent in the Peloponnese. As with many of the Greek gods, her origins remained obscure, though strongly connected to the East, "watering her horses at the river Meles" in present day Asia Minor.[72] Her features and character are recorded in the Homeric Hymn to Artemis. She is described as a virgin goddess of the hunt, equipped with a bow and golden arrows. She is the twin sister of Apollo and active in childbirth. Some time in the

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[71] Tac. *Ann.* 4.43.1-2.
[72] HH 9, HH 27.

Classical period, Artemis became associated with the moon and lunar cycles, emphasizing her connection to women. Her link to fertility also extended to the natural world. Overall, she was worshipped as the virgin goddess of hunting and nature.[73]

The earliest reference to Artemis appears in Linear B texts discovered at the Mycenaean Palace of Pylos.[74] Interestingly, her name appears next to the name Orthia, the patron deity of Sparta. Later on, the liberation of Messenia by Epaminondas also caused a diffusion of Artemis cults across Laconia. The deity took on many epithets, including Phosphoros, Oupesia, Eleia and Limnatis. Her sanctuaries were erected in remote areas that were territorially disputed, confirming her role as the deity of boundaries. Strabo writes of the Limnatis cult in Sparta, "It is after this Limnai [a village and shrine of Artemis in Lakedaimonia], also, that the Limnaion, the temple of Artemis in Sparta, has been named."[75] Pausanias also describes the sanctuary in the city, "Here [at Sparta] are sanctuaries of Poseidon Hippokourios and of Artemis Aiginaia. On returning to the lounge you see a sanctuary of Artemis Issoria. They surname her also Limnaie, though she is not really Artemis but Britomartis of Krete."[76]

IV.   Contested Localism: The Case of Artemis Limnatis

The ability for settlements to shape a local character and maintain a degree of independence against Sparta is apparent in Thucydides, who states that because Sparta had not been synoecised, each of the five constituent villages retained their own degree of independent

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[73] Mark Morford, Robert J. Lenardo and Michael Sham, *Classical Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 227-239.
[74] Marie Louise Nosch, "Approaches to Artemis in Bronze Age Greece" in *Acta Hyperborea: From Artemis to Diana, The Goddess of Man and Beast* ed.Tobias Fischer-Hansen and Birte Poulsen (Copenhagen: Museum of Tusculanum Press: 2009), 21-35.
[75] Strab. 8.4.9.
[76] Paus. 3.14.2.

identity.[77] This argument is evident at the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, where the contested localism between Sparta and Messenia from the Archaic to Roman period shone. The temple of Artemis Limnatis was, quite literally, a sanctuary "at the limit." It was set in a politically charged space where community identity, allegiance, issues of inclusion and exclusion, as well as land ownership were debated. By proxy of its liminal location, whoever won authority of the sanctuary also gained possession of its surrounding land. In this respect, oscillating between the hands of Messenia and Sparta for six centuries, the sanctuary was a location on the fringes of conflicting identities.

During the Archaic and Classical periods, the Messenian region was roughly confined to the southwest corner of the Peloponnese, west of the Taygetos mountain range and below the Neda River. The proximity of the gulf, agreeable climate, and fertile soil made it an attractive area for agricultural activity and settlement. The Taygetos created a natural border between Sparta and Messenia, yet hardly hindered Sparta's conquest of the territory. Since claiming ownership of the mountains themselves was not feasible, the Spartans utilized the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis as a political pawn to visually assert foreign occupation.

V.   Excavation and Archaeology

The location of the Artemis Limnatis sanctuary is first identified on the Rigas Pheraios Balkan Chart published in 1797.[78] In 1835, excavations at the site began under Pericles Zographos when he uncovered a small church at the site of Volimnos. An inscription found on a wall was used to identify it as the location of the Limnatis Sanctuary, which had later been

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[77] Thuc. 1.10.2.
[78] Rigas Feraios, Charta, *in Geography as Utopia: From the Rigas Pheraios Map to the Division and Establishment of Borders in the Balkans*, by Irini Stathi, Eleftherios Tsouris, and Nikos Soulakellis. Proceedings of the Conference: "Studying, Modeling and Sense Making of Planet Earth", University of the Aegean, 2008. http://www.aegean.gr/geography/earthconference2008/papers/papers/c02id121

transformed into the church. Other inscriptions found on the church, which attest to it having previously been the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, include the epithet BOPOIA. This was used to invoke Artemis in Sparta and Messene.[79]

Remains from the Sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis [80]

Though very few remains exist from the Artemis temple itself and little architectural evidence has been found *in situ* from the original sanctuary, the discoveries made nonetheless reveal clues into the political strife of the region. Shards of Protogeometric pottery and a horse figurine dated to the Late Geometric era attest to the presence of the cult at this early time. Other finds from the nearby chapel of the Panayia Volimiotissa confirm the sanctuary's location. Inscriptions on the walls of the chapel confirm that its stones were taken from the original sanctuary. The sanctuary was continuously used to worship Artemis into Hellenistic and Roman

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[79] SEG 29.395 and Koursoumis, *Revisiting Mount Taygetos*, 11.

[80] Stefan Feuser, Petros Themelis and Detlev Wannagat, "Die Bedeutung des Heiligtums der Artemis Limnatis in Messene für Stadt und Landschaft", *Kiel University Classical Archaeology*, https://www.klassarch.uni-kiel.de/de/personen/prof.-dr.-stefan-feuser/forschungsprojekte/die-bedeutung-des-heiligtums-der-artemis-limnatis-in-messene-fuer-stadt-und-landschaft.

times, as inscriptions revealed that, "at least in the Imperial period, games were held in honour of Artemis Limnatis."[81]

The discoveries at the church in Volimnos date from the early sixth and fifth centuries BCE and carry inscriptions in the Laconian alphabet. One of these is a bronze mirror dated to the early fifth century BCE with an inscription by a Messenian woman who dedicated the mirror to Limnatis. It was accompanied by an image of a woman wearing a peplos, identified as Artemis.[82] Warrior figurines from the Hellenistic period were also found. Material evidence from the Archaic period, including lion and snake miniatures, as well as items made of bone, have been compared to similar finds from the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta.[83] Moreover, an inscription dated to the 1st century CE bears the epithet Orthia. This suggests that by the Roman period, the sanctuary had become much more closely associated with Artemis Orthia and Sparta.[84] Notably, items from Volimnos show evidence of craftsmanship from both Laconian and Messenian workshops.[85]

VI. Temples, Shrines, and Identity Formation

Notably, the absence of religious shrines and temples impacted life for the Spartans, who left their city and travelled to another locale to participate in cult worship and festivals. It is precisely here that the theme of localism in Laconia arises. What happened to local identity when Spartiates were confronted with peoples outside their city? How did Spartan reliance upon subjugated poleis for hosting religious festivals impact their reputation as dominating masters? The ever-important features of geography and the space of a city, coupled with identity

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[81] IG V.1 1373-8 and SEG LXX.338 bis.
[82] Koursoumis, *Revisiting Mount Taygetos*, 8.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 11.
[85] Ibid., 9.

performance and people's behaviour, work together to create a unique character of place. Therefore, the fact that Spartan citizens needed to travel to religious buildings and shrines elsewhere had a direct impact on how individual culture developed there in opposition to Spartan control. It is at these specific sacred, physically constructed, tangible, and real sites that identity is formed. It was multifaceted, encompassing both a global Hellenic identity amongst all Greeks who worshiped the same gods, as well as a local one formed between members of the same community. Religious activity brought members of the community together. One would participate in these pre-determined scheduled events alongside people they knew by name and had personal relationships with. Celebrations included one's friends, neighbours, even the butcher who sold meat at the market. This fostered strong bonds of inclusion and communal alliance amongst the local people. Simultaneously, a wider Hellenic identity was being fostered, connecting each town's members to the rest of Greece, through the observance of customs, festivals, and common gods. Further, the reoccurring annual cycle of religious festivals ensured that these two identities could be repeatedly reinforced in relation to one another. Sparta did not possess any such temple or shrine within its city's delineation. By extension, Sparta needed to rely on other places for its cultural affairs, ceding a degree of power to the locales that possessed temples in their own territory. This allowed a strong, local character to develop, outside any reliance or association to Sparta.

VII.   Sister Sanctuaries: Limnatis, Orthia, Karyai and Kombothekra

According to Nino Luraghi, the cult of Artemis had a strong Laconian association.[86] This is because "Limnai" was the term applied to the Spartan district where the sanctuary of Artemis

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[86] Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 22.

Orthia was located.[87] Furthermore, Luraghi argues that the majority of other cults dedicated to Artemis Limnatis in the Peloponnese were connected with Sparta; it is thus highly probable that the epithet "Limnatis" simply meant "the Artemis of Limnai", referring specifically to Sparta's Artemis Orthia. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that a later inscription uses the epithet Orthia for the Artemis of Volimnos.[88]

Interestingly, the term "Limnai" itself is important as it reveals insight into the ways in which Artemis was worshipped based on the unique features of Laconian politics and territory. Strabo states that the Limnaion in Sparta took its name from Limnai on the Taygetos.[89] Luraghi argues that this was done in an attempt to reverse the relationship between the sanctuary of Volimnos and the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta.[90]

> The temple of Artemis at Limnai [in Lakedaimonia], at which the Messenians [historically] are to have outraged the maidens who had come to the sacrifice, is on the boundaries between Lakonia and Messenia, where both peoples held assemblies and offered sacrifice in common; and they say that it was after the outraging of the maidens, when the Messenians refused to give satisfaction for the act, that the war took place. And it is after this Limnai, also, that the Limnaion, the temple of Artemis in Sparta, has been named.

This is noteworthy, as archaeological evidence reveals that the two sanctuaries were connected through similar material remains, yet Strabo suggests that there was an attempt in the written tradition to distinguish between the two.[91]

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[87] Claude Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Maryland: Lanham, 1997), 140-45.
[88] IG V1.1376 and Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians,* 54.
[89] Strab. 8.4.9.
[90] Strab. 8.4.9.
[91] Though Sparta did have one sanctuary to Artemis (Artemis Orthia) it was used in a political fashion, as the location where the young Spartan boys would undergo their training to become Spartan citizens. Because of the fact that it was only used for this purpose and not a public shrine, this essay will not consider it as a religious temple and maintain the argument that Sparta had no sanctuaries in its own city.

Thierry Chatelain explains that the Limnatis title serves to link Artemis with water, in particular with swampy wetlands. Chatelain adopts Sinn's argument that this association with humid, marsh environments is actually very frequent. In fact, in the inventory of sanctuaries to Artemis, all are located in marshlands.[92] Thierry reveals that Artemis Limnatis had a very strong association to water and aquatic elements. Pausanias further defines the epithet in Limnai or Limnaion in his description of the sanctuary to Artemis Orthia in Sparta, which was erected in a swampland, "The place named Limnaeum (Marshy) is sacred to Artemis Orthia (Upright)."[93] There are three archetypal locations with specific topographic elements, all related to water, where sanctuaries to Artemis Limnatis were erected: (1) valleys with marshlands or lakes (2) the countryside (*chôra*) (3) a peak or mountain summit with high humidity.[94] Overall, "limnae" can be understood as reference to a geographical space with aquatic features. More specifically, it is a political or imagined border that is delineated by a presence of water.[95]

The Artemis cult was also prominent in Karyai, Amyklai, and Messene, described in detail by Pausanias. Notably, it did not carry the epithet "Limnatis", as these locales were neither borderlands nor wet, marshy places near rivers. On Karyai, Pausanias writes, "Karyai is a region sacred to Artemis and the Nymphai, and here stands in the open an image of Artemis Karyatis. Here every year the Lakedaimonian maidens hold chorus-dances, and they have a traditional native dance."[96] Interestingly, the Laconian-Messenian conflict once again arose during the celebration of an annual festival, where Messenian troops "lay in wait by day for the maidens who were performing the dances in honour of Artemis at Karyai, and capturing those who were

[92] Thierry Chatelain, "Artemis limnatis ou la recherché du "juste milieu" in *Philologos Dionysios, mélanges offerts au professeur Denis Knoepfler* ed. Nathan Badoud, 392-96. Receuil de travaux publies par la faculte des letters et sciences humaines de l'Universite de Neuchatel (Genève: Librarie Droz, 2011).
[93] Paus. 3.16.7
[94] Ibid., 399-400.
[95] Paus. 2.7.6.
[96] Paus. 3.10.7.

wealthiest and of noblest birth, carried them off to a village in Messenia."[97] Though many sanctuaries to Limnatis existed in the Peloponnese, the one at the Taygetos was of particular importance. The Taygetos Mountains were sacred to the Artemis cult, and this particular sanctuary stood at the highly contested borderland between Laconia and Messenia. It was also at the junction of the main road network that connected Sparta, Laconia and Messenia. This affirms Artemis' role as protector of boundaries. As Luraghi states, "the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis was a true icon of Spartan power and Messenian Freedom."[98]

There is also a sanctuary of Artemis in Kombothekra in Triphylia, which shows evidence for an interesting link to the Spartan-Messenian conflict. At the sanctuary, a late Archaic mirror was found, with a dedication to Artemis Limnatis.[99] Julia Taita argues that the letters of the inscription have an association to Laconian or Arcadian forms.[100] Further, the Artemis sanctuary at Kombothekra was erected on a route that connected Sparta to Olympia.[101] Interestingly, the foundation of Rhegium as described by Strabo is related to the aftermath of the First Messenian War and displacement of the Messenian people.[102] Following the incident at the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis and killing of King Teleclos, some Messenians wanted to make amends for transgressions against the Spartans. They travelled to Makistos in Triphylia and sent a delegate to Delphi to seek advice from Artemis and Apollo. Luraghi notes that the Messenians choice in moving to Makistos may be related to the sanctuary of Artemis at Kombothekra, which carried the epithet Limnatis. Luraghi suggests that the Messenians sought to re-establish themselves near a sanctuary similar to the one they were leaving behind in their homeland, "as suppliants of the

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[97] Paus. 4.16.9.
[98] Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 23.
[99] SEG 31.356.
[100] Julia Taita, "Confini Naturali e Topografia Sacra. I Santuari di Kombothekras, Samikon e Olimpia."*Orbis Terrarum: Journal of Historical Geography of the Ancient World* 7, (2001): 110.
[101] Paus. 5.6.2-4
[102] Strab. 6.1.2 and 6.1.5-8.

goddess."[103] The relationship between religion and local identity is once again apparent in this narrative. The manifestation of political events at sanctuaries cannot be ignored; the Spartan-Messenian conflict began during a festival at Limnai and ended with the migration of the Messenians, who joined the Chalcidians en route to Rhegium. The result, possibly a new Messenian, Chalcidian and Rhegian community and merged identities, highlights that issues identity construction and community belonging were volatile and complex, and these concepts were brought to the forefront at religious sanctuaries.

VIII.   Limnatis and Local Identity

Despite the vague association with marshland, what is certain is that "Limnatis" implied the temple was located on a border, a politically contested space that affected local identity by virtue of positionality. Frederik Barth's study on the relationship between boundaries and their impact on ethnic groups and social organization is applied to understand the impact of Artemis Limnatis within the Messenian locale.[104] According to Barth, ethnic boundaries are more than imaginary or concrete lines that define a specific territory. They are complex systems, where local individuals would expect certain actions and beliefs to be abided by, creating a shared community. The ability to recognize and participate in these expected behaviours was an outward signal of identification, inclusion, and belonging. The element of inclusion also evokes a counteraction of exclusion, which further strengthens the local identity.

Barth's argument can be directly applied to understand the impact of Artemis Limnatis on local senses of identity. The fact that it rested on the periphery of contested land implies that an individual, whether consciously or not, needed to assert his Messenian origin and belonging to his

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[103] Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 157-158.
[104] Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1998), 5-11.

local community. When present for a festival, Artemis Limnatis provoked one to face and accept his local identity through an outward performance of belonging. Both the Messenians and Spartans would have felt and engaged with the contested ownership over the temple. Each group had their own mythical foundation story that formed the basis of their collective identity, from which sentiments of belonging were drawn. Within the public space of Limnatis, identities were formed and engrained through the inclusionary and exclusionary physical action of individuals who associated themselves with specific locales. Artemis Limnatis represented an "ambiguous zone of shifting allegiances" where an "emergence, development and reaffirmation of identity" occurred.[105] Luraghi confirms that the temple itself was a powerfully "decisive factor of ethnic self-consciousness."[106]

IX. Conclusion

Overall, the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis is a tool used to examine how identity developed on a volatile border between Messenia and Spartan territory. The political clash between these two cities reveals that Messenia fought for independence from Sparta for nearly seven centuries. The struggle for a local Messenian identity manifested at the sanctuary itself. As summarized by Luraghi, "by the second half of the fourth century, the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis at Volimos had become a symbol of the age-old conflict between Spartans and Messenians." [107]

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[105] Luraghi, *The Ancient Messenians*, 15.
[106] Ibid., 15.
[107] Ibid., 25.

Chapter 2

Localism on the Frontier: Karyai

*The third branch from the straight road is on the right, and leads
to Caryae (Walnut-trees) and to the sanctuary of Artemis. For Caryae is a
region sacred to Artemis and the nymphs, and here stands in the open an
image of Artemis Caryatis. Here every year the Lacedaemonian maidens
hold chorus-dances, and they have a traditional native dance.*

- Pausanias 3.10.7

The history of the early Archaic settlement of Karyai in north-eastern Laconia is difficult

to untangle. The city is only mentioned in passing by ancient Greek authors, if at all.

Archaeological and literary evidence depicts Karyai as an insignificant settlement, unworthy of

investigation, as it never attained full *polis* status. Such minor interest in Karyai – by both

ancient and modern writers – is furthered only by cursory references in the writings of Pausanias

and Vitruvius.[108] A close textual analysis of these passages can shed a much-needed light on the

settlement. At present, the treatment of Karyai by historians does not place enough emphasis on

the locality and on its important sacred festivals and political defection. In this chapter, Karyai is

presented as a town shaped by its own unique cultural traditions.

The popular historiographical trend of the twentieth century, which focused almost

exclusively on Spartan prowess, has cast a large shadow over Karyai.[109] The "Spartan mirage"

model outweighs the study of other vibrant political and cultural centers and, in the process,

hides their histories. Laconia cannot be described in the same terms as Sparta and its auxiliary

poleis. Instead, Laconia was a collection of distinct localities, of which Karyai is but one

example. This chapter will thus delve into the characteristics that made Karyai unique: its

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[108] Paus. 3.107, 4,16.9, Vitr. 1.1.5.

[109] For more information on the *Spartan Mirage*, see the relevant section of this paper, and Ollier, *Le Mirage
Spartiate*. (1933).

location in Laconia, its religious festivals, and its place in the broader political framework of the Persian and Peloponnesian wars. To do so, this chapter will analyze Karyai from three distinct angles using an approach inspired by three ancient authors who each provide a unique window into the city: Xenophon's description of Karyai's geographical features, Pausanias' concern with the cult of Artemis Karyatis, and Vitruvius' allegations of Karyaian medism. These three works, and the narratives they present, attest to the intriguing history of Karyai, which has long been neglected.

Though textual and archaeological evidence remain inconclusive, consensus among historians is that Karyai was situated between Mount Parnon and Mount Taygetos.[110] The city lay just off the slope of the Parnon mountain range, which provided natural protection along its eastern border. Despite the mountainous terrain surrounding it, the topography of the city itself was predominantly flat. This created a natural pathway, facilitating travel southward into the Laconian heartland. Karyai was thus a tactically advantageous settlement, at the crux of a direct access route to Sparta. Its geographical characteristics – including mountains, fertile plains, rivers, and the nearby sea – were also vital to the socio-political development of settlements in the region from the Dark Age into the Archaic and Classical periods.

Moving away from topography, Karyai's locale is also interesting because of the annual festival at the sanctuary of Artemis Karyatis. One of the pivotal moments of the ritual celebration was the performance of the virgin maidens. Interestingly, this performance included women from Karyai and Sparta both dancing together. It necessarily follows that some form of council or governing body must have existed in Sparta that had authority over selecting which virgin girls would travel to Karyai, as well as oversee the organization and management of the journey.

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[110] For a more extensive analysis on the settlements of Laconia and specific description of Karyai, see: Hansen and Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, 569-597.

Further, the reoccurring nature of the Artemis Karyatis implies that Karyai's religious affairs held importance for Sparta, appearing on the Spartan festival calendar year after year. Indeed, Karyai was a physical place with important religious authority in Laconia. [111] The Artemis Karyatis also included a number of other uncommon elements, diverging from the generic form of ritual practices in the region. Such local particularities included virgin suicides on the branches of the local nut trees, and Karyaian shepherds participating in the chorus.[112]

Finally, an unusual passage by Vitruvius mentions medism as the justification for the city's destruction. It suggests that the Karyaian people were traitors to their fellow Greeks because they surrendered loyalty and land to the Persian Empire. This autonomous decision reflects the city's defiance and factionalism. Vitruvius' reference to the disobedience of local women will also be analyzed to further grasp Karyaian identity.

I. Physical Locality: The Geography of Karyai by Xenophon

In a comprehensive inventory of Greek poleis, Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen's delineation of Laconia includes all areas under the control of Sparta and the Lacedaimonians. [113] However, Laconia's exact boundaries within the Peloponnese have fluctuated over time, as a result of various wars, treaties, and political agreements. This chapter will utilize the limitations of Laconia as it is known to have existed within the Archaic and early Classical periods: a region separate from both Messenia and the Arcadian plain, including the lands east of the Taygetos, west of the Parnon, and south of Parthenion Mountain. Despite the ever-shifting nature of its outermost borders, the Laconian heartland lay roughly forty kilometers

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[111] Paus. 3.107 and 4.16.9.
[112] Claude Calame, Derek Collins and Janice Orion, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Function* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 150.
[113] Hansen and Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis,* 571.

from the shore, at the centre of the fertile Eurotas valley where the Eurotas River flows into the Laconian gulf. This had significant political consequences, limiting human mobility and communication within Laconia, while also affecting the expansion of Spartan politics over the region. Karyai was located in northern Laconia along the main road that ran southward from Argos. Notably, it thus stood out as the most efficient – and arguably, the only – way to gain access into Sparta from the north.[114] The mountains surrounding the city were of critical importance, offering a means of protection while simultaneously encouraging constant human traffic and activity in the city, as travelers were obliged to pass though the city.[115]

According to Paul Cartledge, the city was a perioikic settlement found southwest of the Analipsis and in the vicinity of modern day Arachova.[116] Similarly, K. Rhomaios placed Karyai just south of the Analipsis Hill, an estimated four kilometers west of Vourvoura. Rhomaios' research led to the discovery of archaeological data that confirms human presence as early as c.900 BCE.[117] The city was located at the junction of the road that connected Sparta to Tegea and the Thyreatis and continued northeast to Petros—a critical location where region-wide road networks converged.[118]

Multiple ancient historians make tenuous references to Karyai. Theopompus, writing in the fourth century BCE, places Karyai within the region he calls "Lakonike".[119] Thucydides similarly states that Karyai was a town on the periphery of Laconia.[120] The later Roman author

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[114] Michael Whitby, *Sparta: Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 1-3.
[115] Xen. Hell. 6.5.24.
[116] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia,* 6.
[117] The data from Rhomaios' survey revealed geometric styled pottery, archaic terracotta figurines and small lead wreaths, which confirm human occupation from very early on in Laconian history, see Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia* 188.
[118] Ibid., 188
[119] Theopompus, f. 238 in BNJ, translation by Stephanos Byzantios, *Ethnica,* s.v. Καρύα ed. A. Meineke, *Stephan von Byzanz: Ethnika,* 1849.
[120] Thuc. 5.55.3.

Pausanias, writing in the second century AD, conversely describes Karyai as a region rather than a town, situated on the frontier between Laconia and Tegea, delineated by the Alpheios River.[121] The current scarcity of archaeological evidence further compounds the challenge to accurately locate the ancient settlement. Regardless of these inconsistencies, its recurrent mention in multiple texts across multiple time periods indicates that Karyai undoubtedly was a settlement with consistent occupation from the Archaic to Classical periods.[122]

Notably, navigation throughout Laconia was of utmost importance to Sparta. The kings and Spartiate citizens needed to access their subservient perioikic communities to collect dues.[123] The most efficient way to exert control was to monopolize the only route that granted access to the region on its vertical axis, stretching northward from the Eurotas River to the Kleissoura Pass. This main road then branched east and west, creating multiple diverging road networks. The western route passed through Pellana and ended in Belmina at the foot of Mount Chelos, while the eastern road cut through Sellasia and ended in Karyai. From this point the Karyaian road began, providing access into the Thyreatis. This route was also the only way for Spartans and other Laconians to cross the Parnon range towards the Gulf of Argos. It is clear then, that Karyai must have been a place that the Spartans frequented.[124]

Much like today, travelling to northern Laconia would have been a difficult endeavour for the ancient Laconians. The terrain was rough and lacked a significant fresh water supply. However, amidst the rough landscape, Karyai stood out as a peculiarity. It was not far from a water source where travelers could drink and rest, nor was it too close to the rugged mountain slopes. Travelers were thus naturally ushered through the city, as it was "the preferred way to

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[121] Paus. 3.10.7, 8.54.1.
[122] Hansen and Nielsen, *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis,* 575.
[123] Hdt. 6.57.4.
[124] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 186.

reach Tegea."[125] Karyai was a key nodal point in the network of connectivity and exchange around Laconia. For these reasons, it was the location selected by Epaminondas for both his invasion of Laconia and his subsequent attack on Sparta in 371 BCE.[126] A coalition of five forces from across Greece – Thebans, Argives, Boeotians, Arcadians, and Eleians –convened in Karyai as a united force against Sparta.[127] The Argives came through Thyreatis, while the Boeotians arrived through Sellasia, along the Sarandapotamos River, both passing through Karyai. The Arcadians came from the West and after establishing a garrison at Nodamodeis and Oion, where they went to join the Thebans and Argives at Karyai. Finally, the Eleians passed through Belminatis, following an eastern route through Sellasia across the Eurotas Valley. Later, a garrison was set up at Pellana by Sparta, in order to protect this passage into Laconia.[128]

> But when people had come from Caryae telling of the dearth of men, promising that they would themselves act as guides, and bidding the Thebans slay them if they were found to be practising any deception, and when, further, some of the Perioeci appeared, asking the Thebans to come to their aid, engaging to revolt if only they would show themselves in the land, and saying also that even now the Perioeci when summoned by the Spartiatae were refusing to go and help them-as a result, then, of hearing all these reports, in which all agreed, the Thebans were won over, and pushed in with their own forces by way of Caryae, while the Arcadians went by way of Oeum, in Sciritis[129]

The significance of Karyai's location can best be understood through Irad Malkin's application of modern network theory to the Archaic Greek world.[130] The frequency, popularity, and purpose of the road undoubtedly impacted human activity in Karyai and presumably bolstered a meaningful local identity. Malkin's approach provides an interesting perspective, more

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[125] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia,* 188.
[126] For a complete historical account on Epaminondas, the battle of Leuctra and the defeat of Sparta, see George Law Cawkwell, "The Decline of Sparta" in *Sparta: Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World*, ed. Michael Whitby (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 236-258.
[127] Xen. Hell. 6.5.25-32, Diod. 15.63.3-65.5, and Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 253-55.
[128] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia,* 254.
[129] Xen. Hell. 6.5.25.
[130] Irad Malkin, A *Small Greek World, Networks in the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

specifically, his "strength of weak ties" argument.[131] This principle, borrowed from network theory, underpins the argument that distance between the Mediterranean and Black Sea actually served as a unifying force that formed Hellenic identity. The mobility of ancient peoples through migration and colonization created a globalized "small Greek world" and fostered a Hellenic identity. According to Malkin, by moving outward the Greeks formed a more cohesive inward identity. This is directly applicable to an understanding of Karyai and the ever-important road that passed through the city. Karyai was a central nodal point for inland travels across the Peloponnese, as the entry point of the single road leading to Sparta. Additionally, new people were being hosted in Karyai for a number of days before the execution of the assault on Sparta. The Argives, Eleians, and Arcadians would have been in at least some degree of social contact with the Karyaians. It is not too far reaching then, to suppose that this led to a high degree of social activity, communication and (perhaps even) exchange. It is in this context, in which identity became an outward performance, that local nuances could be revealed.

On a political level, contemporary sources also suggest that by the time Epaminondas was organizing his attack, Karyai was already opposed to Spartan political control. Karyai played a large part in the destruction of Spartan hegemony over the region. As Michael Whitby says, "the key to Spartan decline was external, the growing professionalism of warfare in other parts of the Greek world and in particular the brilliance of the generalship of the Theban Epaminondas."[132] Notably, soon after the decisive battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE, Sparta's allies in Arcadia, including the perioikic towns in the Belminatis, Skiritis, and Karyatis, began

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[131] Weak ties exist in low-density networks, and together they act as links between clusters of strong nodes. For a social system to be successful, it must rely on weak ties to facilitate communication and exchange between nodes. Greek settlements across the seas were connected in this manner, which created a decentralized network and a Hellenic, Greek identity over time. For more information in this see, Malkin, *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 26-34.

[132] Whitby, *Sparta: Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World*, 234-35.

defecting. These cities, along with others on the northern frontier of Laconia, committed their loyalty to the Arcadian League.[133]

Ultimately, Karyai's location on major roadways led to many people passing through the settlement. The constant visits of foreigners might have impacted the Karyaians' own sense of community and locality. According to Bruce Malina and Jerome Neyrey, dyadic personality and group-oriented identity was the norm in the ancient Mediterranean world.[134] Dyadic personality is a characteristic of individuals whose self-identity is based on how others perceive them. It is therefore largely derived from the groups they associate with, be it family, community, or city.[135] In this way, the ancient self-identity was formed from constant interaction with members of an individual's village, thus fusing identity and local setting together. However, an individual needed to assert their identity only if and when it was challenged by the presence of a foreigner. Karyai's central location meant that people often passed through, leaving the villagers regularly confronted by individuals from outside their community. In the presence of others, a Karyaian's conceptions of self and community would therefore have been distinguished and aggrandized from the foreign visitors.
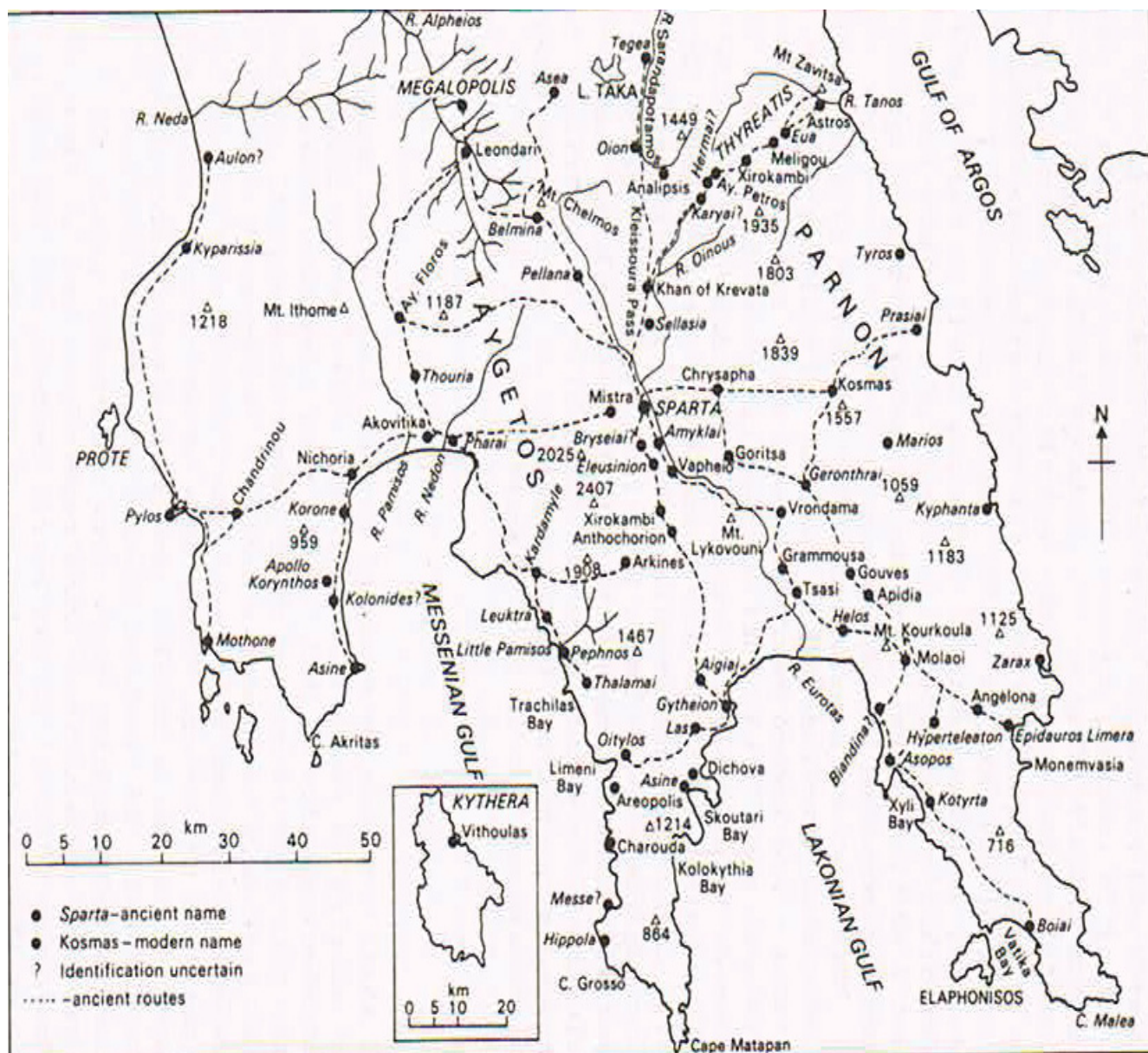
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[133] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 152.
[134] Steven Muir, "Religion on the Road in Ancient Greece and Rome" in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, ed. Philip A. Harland (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 31.
[135] Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 8-79.
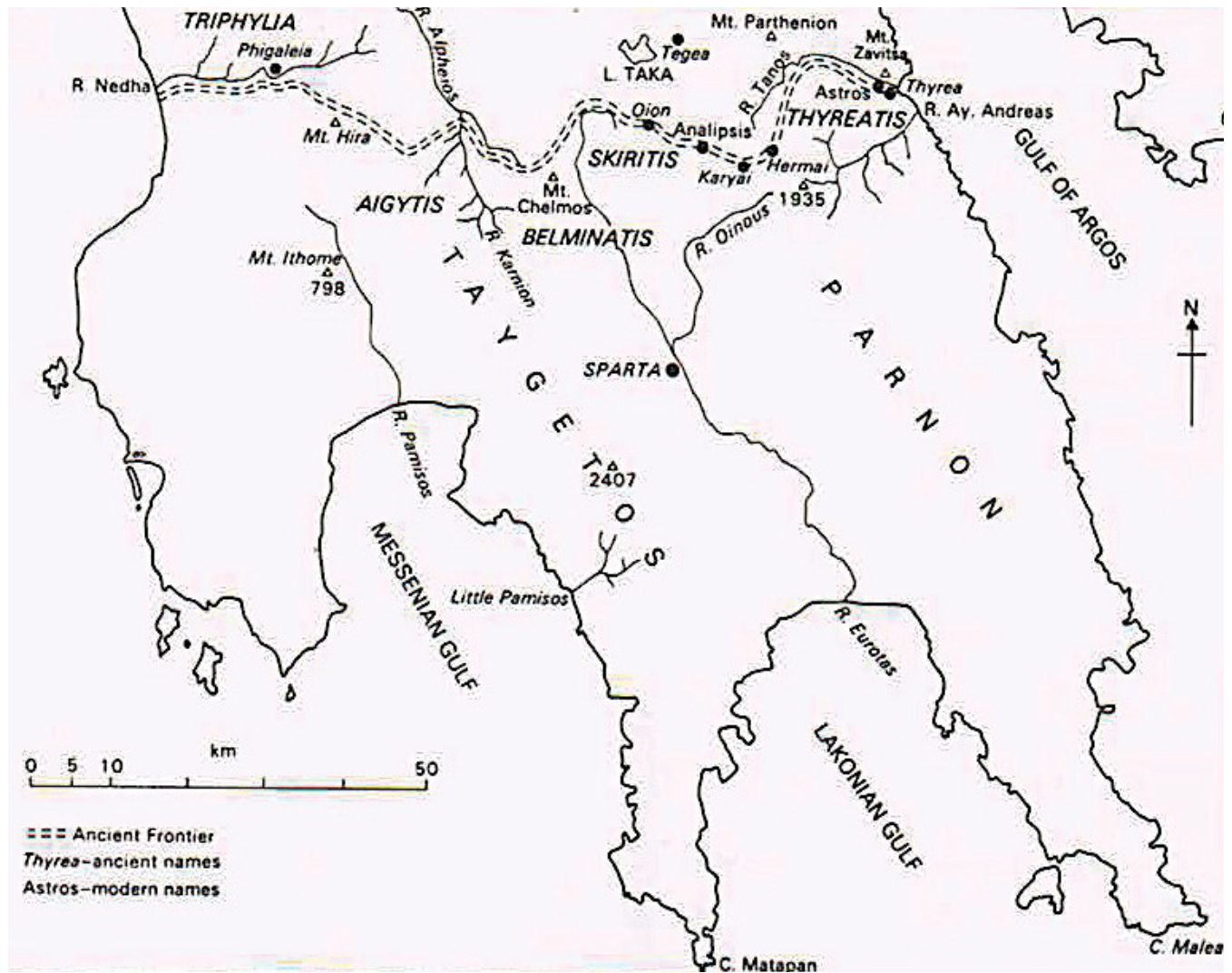
[137] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 186.

II. Karyaian Culture: Pausanias and Cult of Artemis Karyatis

As a locality, Karyai is intriguing for reasons far beyond its geographical parameters. While no extant primary sources from writers in the settlement have survived, the limited anecdotes that did make their way to us are highly revealing. This section focuses on two passages by Pausanias that discuss the Artemis Karyatis, a local celebration that also involved Spartan women. The fact that Spartans would travel so far north for the festival – not only as spectators, but also as vital participants – speaks to the importance of the locality as the parochial festival was important enough to call their attention. By being the permanent host city for the festival, Karyai maintained a relative degree of gravity in Spartan affairs. Pausanias documents the festival:

> The third branch from the straight road is on the right, and leads to Caryae (Walnut-trees) and to the sanctuary of Artemis. For Caryae is a region sacred to Artemis and the nymphs, and here stands in the open an image of Artemis Caryatis. Here every year the Lacedaemonian maidens hold chorus-dances, and they have a traditional native dance. On returning, as you go along the highway, you come to the ruins of Sellasia. The people of this city, as I have stated already, were sold into slavery by the Achaeans after they had conquered in battle the Lacedaemonians under their king Cleomenes, the son of Leonidas.[138]

> After waiting only for the wound to heal, he was making an attack by night on Sparta itself, but was deterred by the appearance of Helen and of the Dioscuri. But he lay in wait by day for the maidens who were performing the dances in honor of Artemis at Caryae, and capturing those who were wealthiest and of noblest birth, carried them off to a village in Messenia, entrusting them to men of his troop to guard, while he rested for the night.[139]

In order to fully grasp the significance of these passages, it is important to first review the history and significance of the Artemis Karyatis. The sanctuary of Artemis in Karyai was located near the city and close to the mountains that separated Laconia and Arcadia.[140] The excavation of an

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[138] Paus. 3.10.7.
[139] Paus. 4.16.9.
[140] Calame, Collins, and Orion, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient*, 149.

Archaic sanctuary near Karyai in 1985 resulted in the discovery of black painted pottery, sixth-century inscriptions on slabs, and Archaic terracotta with images of a gorgonian.[141] The image of the gorgonian is especially significant because it suggests a cultural connection to Sparta's sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, as well as to Messenia's celebration of Artemis Limnatis. This connection can be explored using intersectionality theory. As previously mentioned, identity has at least three levels: self-identity, attachment to a common community, and a broader sense of ethnicity. The gorgonian iconography and its association to Laconian cults for Artemis reveal the dual nature of Karyai's identity. By adopting the image of the gorgon, Karyai participates in artistic trends of the time period. Simultaneously, the settlement incorporated the gorgon in a space that was exclusive to the city, where the Artemis Karyatis was celebrated. In this way, Karyai is juxtaposing two identities, that of distinct locality and a broader sense of "Greekness" or "Hellenicity". Notably, these ideological negotiations on belonging occurred within the physical location of the sanctuary to Artemis. Artemis was not only a PanHellenic deity, but was particularly prominent in southern Greece. Therefore, the fact that the various poleis of Laconia all collectively celebrated Artemis does not imply, nor take away from, the existence of a local individuality.

Due to proximity near the road, the sanctuary was accessible to all incoming and outgoing travellers in the region. According to Pausanias, the Spartans frequented this sanctuary to participate in an annual feast and make sacrifices.[142] The main event at the sanctuary was the annual worship of Artemis, accompanied by a feast, choral song, dance, and ritualized sacrifice. The element of female human sacrifice in this festival is particular. According to Burkert, the function of ritual killing was to solidify group dynamics. Ritual sacrifice gave society a sense of

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[141] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia,* 162.
[142] Calame, Collins, and Orion, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*, 150.

community and solidarity through cooperative organization and collective aggression.[143] Burkert highlights that in antiquity, killing, sacrifice and bloodshed were tools used to finalize an oath or alliance. In this respect, the virgin suicides can be seen as an act of loyalty to Artemis. This was not a small event, as the dance of the maidens at Karyai earned great fame in Laconia and throughout Greece. Pausanias further explains that the whole site of Karyai was dedicated to Artemis and the nymphs, thus providing valuable insight to the local character and nature of the city.[144] This dedication suggests that Karyai was a settlement devoted to the exclusive worship of Artemis, a hypothesis reinforced by the scarcity of archaeological remains in the area. The lack of grand civic structures such as an agora, a theatre, or sites of economic and material production emphasizes Pausanias' claim that the Karyatis was the primary affair of the people.

Claude Calame, Derek Collins, and Janice Orion investigate the popularity of the Karyatis cult from the linguistic angle. They argue that the development of the word *Karyatides*, used specifically in reference to the maiden dancers at the ritual, implies that a permanent chorus developed and became attached to Artemis Karyatis, much in the same way that the Deliades were exclusive to Delos.[145] The widespread circulation of the term *Karyatides* emphasizes that this local cult became a distinguished celebration throughout Greece. It stands as powerful evidence for the importance and prominence of Karyaian religious and cultural activity, both within the locality as well as throughout Greece.

The ritualistic elements of the Karyatis cult incorporated cultural elements from both the local settlement and Sparta. For instance, a chorus sung by local shepherds accompanied the dancing Spartan maidens.[146]

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[143] Burkert, *Homo Necans,* 35.
[144] Paus. 3.10.7.
[145] Calame, Collins, and Orion, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece,* 150.
[146] Ibid.

In addition to the dance, the Karyatides also sang. This at any rate is reported in the sources that explain the origin of bucolic poetry by the replacement, in the time of the Persian wars, of the traditional chorus of maidens by local shepherds. Latin writers explain that the day on which the chorus of adolescent girls was to sing the traditional hymn in honour of Artemis Karyatis (eo die quo solutus erat chorus virginum Dianae Caryatidi hymnum canere), shepherds sang a pastoral, becoming substitutes for the girls who has fled terrorized by the war.[147]

Caryae skilled to raise the hymn that wins Diana's applause.[148]

Also, the ritual concluded in a fashion similar to that of Artemis Limnatis, which was celebrated on Mount Taygetos in Messenia on the other side of Laconia.[149] In both cases, the celebrations ended with ritualistic suicide. For the Karyatis, anecdotes from Lactantius state that the chorus of maidens, fearing an unfortunate fate of rape or abduction, fled to the walnut trees grown in the Karyaian region and hanged themselves. He also adds that the Greeks henceforth called this specific type of tree "Carya", and the Goddess' sanctuary took its name from this tree.[150] The origin of the name of the local walnut tree, which became known throughout Greece as "Carya", confirms a preservation of the settlement's parochial identity.

III. The "End" of Karyai: Vitruvius and Medism

One of the most interesting particularities of Karyai is that it was ultimately destroyed for yielding to medism. This highlights a significant degree of independence from the Spartan alliance and a definite mark of local identity. Interest in Karyai is rekindled by its mention in Vitruvius' *On Architecture*, the only surviving record pertaining to the settlement's destruction:

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[147] Plut. Art. 18.1, Poll.1.104, Luc. Salt. 10
[148] Stat. *Theb*. 4.223
[149] See the first chapter of this thesis, which examines the cult of Artemis Limnatis in relationship to the sanctuary's contested location and political strife between Sparta and Messenia.
[150] See Stat. *Thebaid*, 4, 223 cited in: Calame, Collins, and Orion, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece*, 152. Though Statius is a later source writing in the first-century AD source, his statements regarding the Karyatis cannot be ignored nor deemed to be invalid as he sheds insight into the conceptual understanding of the Karyatis and origin of the Carya walnut tree as late as the 4th century CE. Note also that Carya is an alternate and later spelling for Karyai.

A wide knowledge of history is requisite because, among the ornamental parts of an architect's design for a work, there are many the underlying idea of whose employment he should be able to explain to inquirers. For instance, suppose him to set up the marble statues of women in long robes, called Caryatides, to take the place of columns, with the mutules and coronas placed directly above their heads, he will give the following explanation to his questioners. Caryae, a state in Peloponnesus, sided with the Persian enemies against Greece; later the Greeks, having gloriously won their freedom by victory in the war, made common cause and declared war against the people of Caryae. They took the town, killed the men, abandoned the State to desolation, and carried off their wives into slavery, without permitting them, however, to lay aside the long robes and other marks of their rank as married women, so that they might be obliged not only to march in the triumph but to appear forever after as a type of slavery, burdened with the weight of their shame and so making atonement for their State. Hence, the architects of the time designed for public buildings statues of these women, placed so as to carry a load, in order that the sin and the punishment of the people of Caryae might be known and handed down even to posterity.[151]

Curiously, Vitruvius begins his ten-volume work with a reference to Karyai discussing how an architect's education must include a wide knowledge of political, cultural, and artistic history. He then proceeds to justify this statement through his own knowledge of Karyaian history. This passage raises a number of questions, including the behaviour of Karyaian women, the consequences of medism, and Karyai's position in the broader political framework of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars.

To begin, this anecdote helps to counteract the long-held assumption, propagated by both ancient and twentieth-century scholars, that Sparta held total hegemony over the settlements in Laconia. Though Vitruvius states that Karyai was destroyed on account of medism, this may actually be merely an accusation put forward by the Spartans to justify the town's demolition and conceal a deeper motive. Herodotus' account of the invasion of Greece reveals that Sparta had difficulty asserting power throughout the Peloponnese during 480 BCE, as well as in maintaining allegiances within the Peloponnesian league. Herodotus confirms that certain poleis were acting

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[151] Vitr. 1.1.5.

suspiciously and medizing.[152] However, the specific issue concerning Karyai's alleged medism, having been cited only once by Vitruvius, needs to be regarded with caution. Cartledge suggests that the allegations of Karyai's medism appear more evident when linked to the broader conflict between Sparta and Argos, where the *proxenos* of perioikic communities detached from Sparta and formed an alliance with Argos.[153] Sparta's fear of widespread medization was thus a real fear. Greece was not a cohesive, unitary force that resisted Persia, but rather individual poleis remained divided as according to David Graf, "many of them viewed compromise with the foreign invaders an attractive means to achieve supremacy over their rivals."[154]

Before addressing Karyai's potential for committing medism, the political alliance between Sparta and Karyai must be reviewed, with particular focus on the particularisms of the settlement of Karyai itself. The tension between Greece and Persia has a longstanding history. In his comprehensive evaluation of Greek collaboration with Persia from the Archaic to Hellenistic periods, David Graf states that treason was never an aberration of Greek political life. For example, the number of states engraved on the Delphic Serpent column reveals that, during the Persian wars, Greek opposition to the Persians was not unanimous, but rather "an impressive list of traitors and deserters to the Greek cause can be compiled from the ancient sources for the conflict."[155]

It is difficult to contextualize Karyai's loyalty to both the Spartan and broader Greek cause, given that the sources speaking to these issues are limited. Graf argues that even in the Archaic period local villages and poleis had "concrete expressions of patriotic duty and communal responsibility [and that] this localism normally overrode any larger regional

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[152] Hdt. 9.77, and Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 205.
[153] Ibid., 185.
[154] David Frank Graf, *Medism: Greek Collaboration with Achaemenid Persia.* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1979), 6.
[155] Ibid., 2-5.

subdivisions or cultural concepts".[156] His argument about inter- and intra-state strife provides a context in which invited defection can be directly applied to analyse the relationship between Sparta and Karyai. The Greeks had specific terms to identify the states that were collaborating with Persia: phrases like "siding with the Medes" and "leaning toward the Medes, Medism" appear in ancient sources much in the same way that the terms "Atticizing", "Laconizing" and "Boeotianizing" were used in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC.[157] As early as the fifth century, "Mede" was used as an idiomatic term, embedded in Archaic language.[158] The use of medism therefore had a negative connotation, evoking the lavish and excessive luxury of the Eastern Persian courts, kings, and satraps. This gave medism a particularly offensive connotation as it contrasted sharply with the attitudes and ideology of the Greek West.[159] Notably, by the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the significance of "Mede" changed. It was no longer used as a derogatory term, but rather was used to denote sympathetic attitudes to Persia, something that must be taken into account while reading Vitruvius' passage.[160]

Graf's assessment of Karyaian medism is part of the larger trend in Laconia and the Peloponnese, where expressions of pro-Persian sympathy have been found in the signs of disenchantment and alienation among the Arcadian allies of the Peloponnesian league during Xerxes' invasion. In 481 BCE, the villages in the central Peloponnesus supplied more than double the number of hoplites for Leonidas at Thermopylae than did the rest of the confederate members put together. After the disaster at Thermopylae, all Arcadians were supposedly represented with the rest of the Peloponnesians in preparing for the defense of Isthmus.[161]

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[156] Ibid., 3.
[157] For the use of these terms, see Thuc. 3.62.2, 3.64.5, Xen. Hell. 4.4.2, 5.4.34, 4.4.2.
[158] Graf, *Greek Collaboration with Achaemenid Persia*, 12-14.
[159] Hdt. 6.49.
[160] Strab. 14.2.17, Diod. 30.5, 17.25.6; Graf, *Greek Collaboration with Achaemenid Persia*, 40.
[161] Hdt. 7.202, 8.72.

However, there seems to be a lack levies acquired from Arcadia. It was perceived that those absent were guilty of intrigue with Persia. Graf explains that "the lack of promptness of these Arcadian levies alone cannot provide a serious basis for any hypothesis of widespread medism in the region" and that Karyai was implicit in this medizing trend.[162] Karyai's medism might have had less to do with an outright rejection of Sparta, and more to do with influences from Arcadia - or perhaps both. However, this still reveals a great deal about the local people in Karyai, as they evidently chose to align themselves with Arcadia over Sparta. Though the reasons for this may never be known, it is perhaps likely, (or at the very least possible to hypothesize) that this alliance developed because they had a greater bond and could benefit more from their ties with Tegea, Arcadia, and the towns of Northern Laconia.

Vitruvius also provides a reason for the nomenclature of *Caryatides*—the columnar marble statues in the form of long-robed women. This architectural style informs us that the Peloponnesian city of Karyai medized during Xerxes' invasion and that, after the Greek victory, the allies conducted a punishment campaign against the inhabitants of the town, killing their men and enslaving their long robed women. As a result, architects of the period commemorated the event by replacing the columns with marble statues symbolizing the Caryatid women, who, by bearing the weight of the structure, were viewed as a token penalty for the medism of the state. This marks the emergence of an art form explicitly associated with the Karyaian locality. Much in the same way that the settlement's local walnut tree became known as the "Carya" tree through Greece (and the Karyatides became an institution tied to the choral dance at Artemis Karyatis), a local name reflective of Karyai's society is given to this type of architectural style.

[162] Graf, *Greek Collaboration with Achaemenid Persia*, 202.

IV. Conclusion

In summation, Karyai is an enlightening case study in the survey of local distinctiveness in Laconia. This chapter has argued that a specifically Karyaian identity is revealed in three features: geographic location, the cult of Artemis Karyatis, and political independence via accusations of medism. Karyai was situated in a highly strategic place where the main road networks to and from Laconia and Sparta passed. Because of this many people would have traveled through the settlement. This influx of people from other villages would have fostered a Karyaian identity by means of a binary opposition between local and foreign. Karyai was also the single most strategic location for Epaminondas' invasion of Laconia in 370 BC, which brought the Argives, Eleians, Thebans, Boeotians, and Arcadians into Karyaian territory. A study of the cult of Artemis Karyatis reveals that the annual celebration would have been of utmost importance for the people. The village not only had to prepare for the worship, but also hosted a cult that included local shepherds and Spartan maidens alike. Furthermore, the virgin suicides on the walnut tree that grew locally in Karyai lent itself to naming the tree "Carya" across Greece. Karyai also stands out in Laconian history as a place that medized and was consequentially destroyed. Although the political reasons may never be known, it is likely that its northern allies, including Arcadia, influenced Karyai's political actions. Furthermore, Karyai's medism is particularly interesting because it gave way to a new architectural style – columns known as "*Karyatides,*" which depict the long-robed women of the town. We are left with an impression of a distinctly, characteristically "Karyaian" locality. Karyai's local history was so prominently spread that it even appears in the discourse of second and third century AD authors, like Vitruvius and Lactantius. These also help to deconstruct the misconception that, from the Archaic to Classical period, Laconia was under the veil of Spartan power and hegemony. Rather

than being a uniform region compliant to Spartan authority, these individual and local particularities change our conceptual understanding of Laconia.

When analyzed side-by-side, the writings of Xenophon, Pausanias, and Vitruvius provide the ultimate counterpoints to the "Spartan mirage." They shine a light on a number of often-overlooked historical realities and force us to doubt our long-held assumption of Spartan cultural hegemony over the region. Together, then, they bring Karyai's rich and significant position in Laconian history to the forefront. Karyaian identity can be understood through the concepts of performance identity and intersectionality theory. The festival of Artemis Karyatis was undoubtedly an important festival that propagated a "Panhellenic" sense of duty and participation throughout Laconia. It is important to give credence to the exact geographic location where the festival took place. The temple was located outside the nucleus of Sparta, implying that the Spartans had to travel to another city to join in the celebration. The arrival of the Spartans in Karyai was important for Spartan politics, as it ensured that the people of Karyai felt a Spartan presence on an annual basis. The sanctuary was a ground where one's allegiance, be it to Sparta or to the local Karyaian community, was called into question. The interesting claim of medism against Sparta implies that the people of Karyai perhaps felt detached or "outside" from Spartan groups. The medism allegation can be interpreted from a cultural standpoint, as it suggests that Karyai's political defection was motivated by sentiments of local differentiation and a unique, individual feeling of identity.

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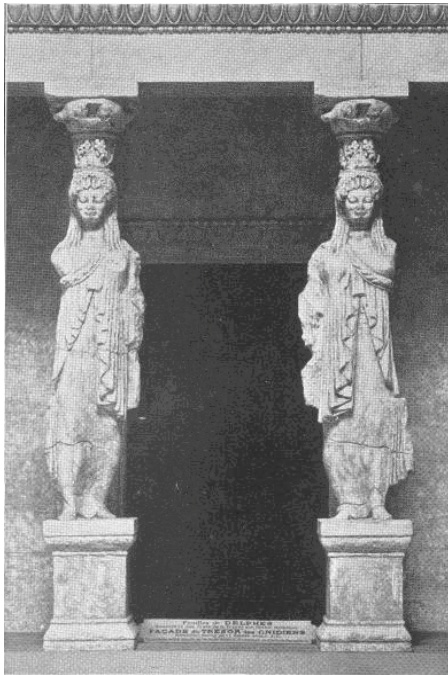
[163] Morris Hicky Morgan, *The Ten Books on Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 6.

Chapter 3

Shifting Localities: From the Menelaion to Amyklai

The cult of Apollo-Hyakinthos remained a pre-eminently Amyklaian
affair, in contrast to the Spartan cult of Orthia. This may have been
a part of the price Sparta had to pay to persuade Amyklai, or
rather its leading aristocrats, to come over quietly
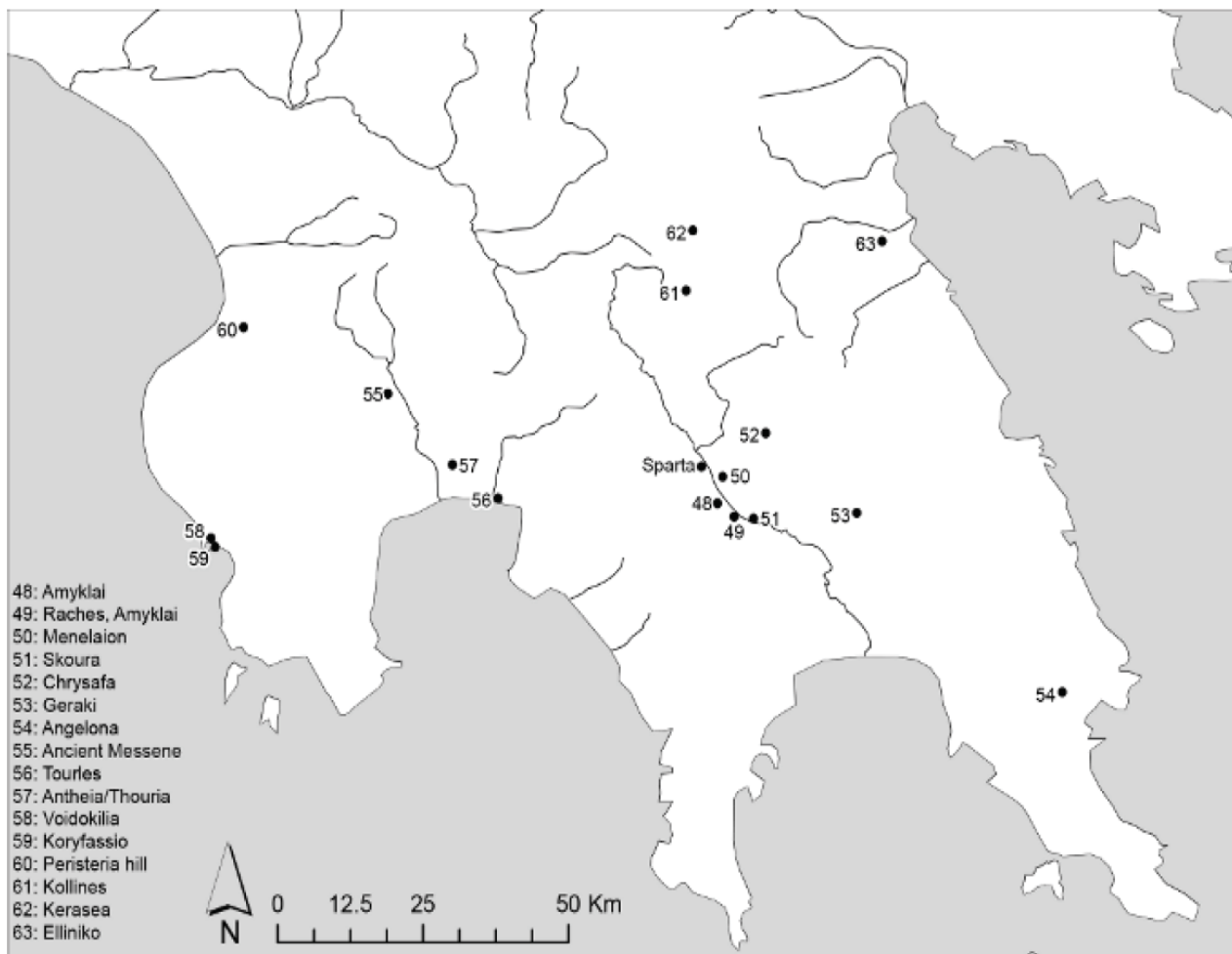- Paul Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia: A Regional History* [164]

Diving deeper into the heartland of Laconia, the pursuit for distinctiveness will presently focus on the city of Amyklai. Uncovering an Amyklaian identity of place is quite a different task compared to the identities of Karyai and Artemis Limnatis in Messenia. The city's particular proximity to Sparta impacted the development of its political, social, and cultural structures. Amyklai's own long-standing history in Laconia makes it a unique polis that underwent complex and extensive changes traceable from the Neolithic to the Hellenistic era and well into the Roman periods of antiquity.

The present chapter will examine Amyklai through two interrelated spheres: local cults and the transfer of local power. The first focuses on unearthing and documenting Amyklai's distinct character and local history. This will be achieved through a study on the cults of Agamemnon-Alexandra and Apollo-Hyakinthos. The second will examine the procedure of settlement formation. Amyklai represents a perfect case study to investigate how the ancient Greeks experienced the phenomenon of physical (urban development) and conceptual city formation. The argument formulated in this section centers around what I introduce and call the "shifting locale" paradigm. It will be used throughout the chapter as a tool to describe transfers of local power in Laconia during the interim period between the Mycenaean and Archaic periods. It will retrace how Sparta emerged as a superpower in Laconia from early settlement

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[164] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia,* 108.

building in the region. The shifting locale paradigm argues that settlements changed and transferred across three centres: from the palatial structure of the Menelaion, to the thriving village of Amyklai, and finally to the capital city of Sparta. Even though Sparta successfully claimed ultimate authority over Laconia, Amyklai retained an assertive and strong command over its unique local identity, distinguishable from Sparta. This is highlighted through the worship of Agamemnon-Alexandra and the Hyakinthia, which was an Amyklaian festival.

Map of Laconia denoting Amyklai, Sparta and the Menelaion with location of Terracotta discoveries [165]

48: Amyklai
49: Raches, Amyklai
50: Menelaion
51: Skoura
52: Chrysafa
53: Geraki
54: Angelona
55: Ancient Messene
56: Tourles
57: Antheia/Thouria
58: Voidokilia
59: Koryfassio
60: Peristeria hill
61: Kollines
62: Kerasea
63: Elliniko

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[165] Gina Salapata, *Heroic Offerings: The Terracotta Plaques from the Spartan Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Kassandra* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 397.

I. Pre-History: Amyklai and Laconia

To begin, it is important to review the broader process of settlement formation in Laconia and at Amyklai from its earliest pre-Greek history. The city of Amyklai was occupied from the Bronze Age straight through the Roman period. It is located in the center of the Laconian Valley at an estimated four kilometers south of Sparta.[166] According to Pausanias, the name "Amyklai" is derived from the mythical character Amyklas, son of Lakedaimon and descendent of Lelex.

> According to the tradition of the Lacedaemonians themselves, Lelex, an aboriginal was the first king in this land, after whom his subjects were named Leleges. Lelex had a son Myles, and a younger one Polycaon. Polycaon retired into exile […] On the death of Myles his son Eurotas succeeded to the throne […] he left the kingdom to Lacedaemon[…] Lacedaemon was wedded to Sparta, a daughter of Eurotas […] Amyclas, too, son of Lacedaemon, wished to leave some memorial behind him, and built a town in Laconia. Hyacinthus, the youngest and most beautiful of his sons, died before his father, and his tomb is in Amyclae below the image of Apollo. [167]

Amyklai is a special case, as very few settlements existed in Laconia in this early period, and even less sustained any continuous or profitable occupation. Unlike central Greece, the Peloponnese was slow to develop, and only truly began to emerge and participate in manufacturing and trade relations during the late Bronze Age. By comparison, written testimonials from Homer to Herodotus provide few explicit descriptions or names of settlements in the region. Many of the small villages listed in Homer's Catalogue of Ships or referenced by later Archaic and Classical sources were lost or abandoned, never achieving polis status.[168] Though the reasons for the decline in occupation remain unknown, it must be highlighted that the

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[166] Xen. Hell. 6.5.27-30 situates Amyklai further away from Sparta, close to the right of the Eurotas. However, Polybius (Plb. 5.19.2), writing on the invasion of Laconia by Philip V in 218 BC, places Amyklai in very close proximity south of Sparta.
[167] Paus. 3.1.1-3.1.3. Apollod. 3.10.3.
[168] Hom. Il. 2.494-759.

Laconian valley remained largely uninhabited with negligible evidence of human activity beyond Amyklai.

It is with this understanding of the land in mind that Amyklai's local importance emerges. From its earliest occupation in the Mycenaean period, Amyklai stands out as an oddity, a special case. Not only did the city have the longest uninterrupted occupation in the history of Laconia, but it also produced the largest quantity of archaeological data of a superior quality in comparison to its neighbours. In order to fully grasp the unique phenomenon of Amyklai's prosperity, it is important to understand the broader context of the region.

The present study rejects the view that ancient Greece can be analysed as one homogenous land. Recalling the work of Horden and Purcell, human activity in the Mediterranean developed in a micro-regional way. The relationship between people and their natural environment had a profound and direct impact on community development.[169] The topographic attributes of different Greek regions vary so greatly that it is better practice to examine the mainland and its surroundings in geographic segments. This regionalism has a powerful influence on the settlement trends and type of human activity that occurred in a given area. Archaeologist Anthony Snodgrass notes that even in the pre-Greek periods, regional diversity in mainland Greece affected settlement patterns.[170] For instance, in Thessaly, an estimated one thousand Neolithic sites have been identified.[171] The regions of Thebes, Eutresis, Tiryns, and Manika show high degrees of social and economic organization, specialized craftsmanship, and advanced architecture.[172] If erosion were responsible for the lack of objects at

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[169] Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea, A Study of Mediterranean History* (Wiley-Blackwell: New Jersey, 2000).

[170] Anthony M. Snodgrass, *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 158-59.

[171] William Cavanagh, Joost Crouwel, Richard W. V. Catling, and Graham Shipley, *The Laconian Survey: Continutiy and Change in a Greek Rural Landscape* (London: British School at Athens, 2002), 126.

[172] Ibid., 128-30.

Laconian sites, then it would have been consistent with the findings at other sites. Instead, it is more plausible to suggest that the lack of material objects found in Laconia was due to the significantly lower status and function of the settlements. The fact that there was almost no moment of non-occupation in Central or Northern Greece further emphasizes the existence of a north-south divide.[173]

A survey of prehistoric Laconia reveals that the area was largely unpopulated, and the few settlements that did exist failed to sustain any human or animal activity. Further, little to no material culture was found during excavations.[174] Instead, attributing the absence of remains to the fact that Laconian settlements were of lesser status and function than the rest of Greece is more plausible. However, Amyklai broke this mould and is singled out as a continuously populated and powerful village, competing first with the Menelaion, and then with Sparta, for maximal power over the Laconian valley. A key reference denoting Amyklai's longstanding history in the otherwise sparsely populated Laconian Valley comes from Homer's Catalogue of Ships, where he lists by name the cities of the Achaean army that fought at Troy.[175] The Catalogue is highly important for ancient Greek scholars, as it provides one of the earliest historical backgrounds for ethnic identities and explicitly names rulers and settlements in each region of Greece. With regards to Laconia, Homer uses the term "Lakedaimon" to identify all the peoples dwelling in the region. However, the Catalogue also explicitly names certain cities within the Lakedaimon territory, including Amyklai, Laas, Oitylos, Helos, and Messe.[176] This suggests that these were the prominent villages in the region. However, archaeologists have only

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[173] Ibid., 128.
[174] Ibid.,123.
[175] Hom. Il. 2.494-759.
[176] Hom. Il. 2.581-587.

been able to physically locate four of these sites: Laas, Oitylos, Messe, and Amyklai.[177] Moreover, only Amyklai has yielded material remains dated earlier than the Archaic period.[178]

In Laconia's early Neolithic period, a progressive shift from small homesteads to more extensive living arrangements occurred. By the late Neolithic period, medium-sized villages began to cultivate and use the land, and archaeological evidence for the presence of possible religious centres has been discovered.[179] The emergence of more cohesive village structures was provoked by larger cultural and economic developments. First, throughout Greece, developments in metalworking allowed for greater contact between settlement sites. Second, the shift from irrigated to grain-fed agricultural methods resulted in a greater and more efficient use of the land.[180] Overall, by the late Neolithic period, reciprocity and exchange between villages with regard to agriculture and animal husbandry caused the development of larger village clusters.[181]

The transition into the Bronze Age stood out as a highly profitable and beneficial period in Southern Greece. Archaeological remains reveal that the steady augmentation in settlement formation resulted in the significant advancement of economic affairs throughout the region. More specifically, collaboration with the Mycenaean peoples led to economic growth and an increased level of prosperity in Laconian towns and villages. The region was integrated into the Mycenaean culture and affairs, and by extension, into a redistributive economic infrastructure of trade networks.[182] Excavations of burial tombs in Crete and Laconia attest to this connection. It was also in this period that the quarries of Southern Laconia were first used, which led to the manufacture, popularization, and exportation of the fine stones *lapis lacedaemonius* and *antico*

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[177] Cartlegde, *Sparta and Laconia,* 337.
[178] Ibid., 338.
[179] Cavanagh, *The Laconian Survey*, 122-28. Excavations near Areopolis strongly suggest that the site of Alepotryna was a place of special cult worship, distinguished from the settlement.
[180] Curtis N. Runnels and Tjeerd H. Van Andel, "The Evolution of Settlement in the Southern Argolid", *Hesperia*, 56 (1987): 303-34.
[181] Cavanagh, *The Laconian Survey*, 122.
[182] Ibid., 147.

rosso to Crete and the Argolid, Pylos, and Messenia.[183] Excavated objects dated to the Bronze Age also reveal contact with Minoan Crete, which leads us into the beginning of the Mycenaean culture.[184] During the Mycenaean period, human activity and occupation was clustered in five locations: the Menelaion complex, Amyklai, Karaousi, Agios Stephanos, and the Anthochorion, located in West Vardhounia. Amongst the small Laconian farmsteads struggling for survival, Amyklai tells a different story with its prosperous and uninterrupted occupation. Further, of the five locations previously listed, only Amyklai and the Menelaion were rich in archaeological material. [185]

The Menelaion emerged in the Bronze Age and was the principal Mycenaean palatial structure ruling over Laconia.[186] Its strategic geographic location gave it enormous power. It was well protected on a hilltop, overlooking the wide Eurotas Valley on one side, and sheltered from invaders by the Parnon mountain range on the other. Judging from its sheer unparalleled size, its degree of fortification, and its location, it is undisputed that the Menelaion was an administrative center in Laconia. There is no conclusive evidence to determine the scope of its domination or which Laconian villages fell under its authority. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that Amyklai was not absorbed under the Menelaion's power. This is significant and must be explored deeper; in a region that was slow to develop, Amyklai was the settlement with the earliest and longest occupation. When Laconia eventually prospered under the Mycenaeans, who ruled from their hilltop fortress, Amyklai retained its independence. In fact, not only did Amyklai keep its local administrative and cultural structures, but also the village posed a threat to the Menelaion's authority, sparking hostile relations and competition between the two places.

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[183] Ibid., 147.
[184] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 40.
[185] Ibid, 65, 130-32.
[186] Cavanagh, *The Laconian Survey,* 149.

II. The Shifting Locale Paradigm

The chapter will briefly steer away from Amyklai and describe the usefulness of the shifting locale paradigm. This allows not only for an exploration of the human struggle — the trial and errors in settlement formation — but will set the basis to make the assertion that throughout all historical periods, Amyklai constantly retained an individual and clearly defined local identity regardless of the broader socio-political affairs occurring in Laconia.

The shifting locale examines how and why centers of power oscillated from one location to another. In the present case, the displacement of authority can easily be traced from the Menelaion, to Amyklai, and finally to Sparta. Notably, this did not only involve a geographic change, but also one of political organization, as the alteration went from royal palatial structure, to prosperous village, to finally a capital city.

The paradigm is also particularly interesting in regards to its connection to Amyklaian localism. This is because even when the Laconian epicenter shifted permanently to Sparta, Amyklai continued to hold exclusive jurisdiction over the Hyakinthia, one of the most important festivals.[187] The shifting locale argument suggests that, as Sparta and Amyklai increased their individual socio-cultural and political affairs, the two neighboring locales were competing with each other for power. Yet despite the fact that Sparta seized power away from Amyklai, the latter's claim over the Hyakinthia highlights that a unique sense of community and locality continued to exist, detached from Sparta. Ultimately, though it lost a substantial part of their political power to Sparta, Amyklai retained cultural significance, exemplified by the predominance over local cults and religious festivities.

In the northwest region of Laconia, political development grew out of a process of authority relocation. Interestingly, Amyklai existed and developed contemporaneously with both

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[187] An in-depth discussion of the festival of Apollo-Hyakinthos can be found on page 79 of this chapter.

the Menelaion and Sparta. This is because amongst the three locales, Amyklai had the longest and earliest history of habitation. By extension, it was in competition with both centers for power within Laconia. During the process of settlement formation, Amyklai was competing with its neighbors: with the Menelaion during the Bronze Age, and with Sparta during the Archaic period. The power struggle manifested itself through claims over religious cults. The ability to secure authority over a cult or sanctuary brought prestige to a city and grandeur to the polis' reputation. Amyklai and the Menelaion battled over the cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra and Sparta challenged Amyklai over the cult of Apollo-Hyakinthos. In both cases, Amyklai emerged as the victorious polis, as it had the sanctuary for Agamemnon-Alexandra and was recognized as the patron of the Hyakinthia festival. Amyklai's claim over the Hyakinthia and the cult of Apollo is tied into its ancestral history, as demonstrated by Pausanias.[188] Evidence highlights that Amyklai did not cede complete dominance neither to the Mycenaean kings nor to the Spartan elite. The city retained its cultural relevance through its hegemony over the cults of Apollo-Hyakinthos and Agamemnon-Alexandra. Thus, it is evident that Amyklai was a unique social, political, and cultural sphere of its own, dominated by neither the Mycenaean royals nor the Spartan elite.

III. Amyklai, The Menelaion, and the Cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra

To begin, the shifting power between the Mycenaeans and Amyklai during the Bronze Age, and the contestation over who had authority over the worship of Agamemnon-Alexandra will be analyzed. The Menelaion was the base of Mycenaean control over the Laconian Valley. This implied that the nearby villages were subjugated under the single rule of one Mycenaean

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[188] Paus. 3.1.1-3.1.3.

powerhouse, who exercised control over production and exchange within the territory.[189] However, there is no evidence that attests to the extent of its power, nor to a list of settlements that fell under its authority. Archaeological evidence suggests there was conflict between locales, as Anthony Snodgrass' interpretation of the material data reveals, "the interests of the Menelaion's community may have clashed with those of Amyklai."[190] For example, material remains from Amyklai strongly suggest that the city had a thriving religious cult, its own manufacturing industry, and that it engaged in communication with the Argolid. According to Paul Cartledge, there was an "observable increase either in population or perhaps cultic activity" only at Amyklai, while continual external contact is shown by a fragment of a wheel-made terracotta statuette, decorated in the "close style" of the Argolid.[191] Additionally, aside from the Menelaion's hilltop, the only other evidence for occupation in Laconia at this time was confined to the area at the historical sanctuary of Apollo at Amyklai.[192] This is significant, as the region with the densest occupation in the Archaic period was the location where the great Amyklaion sanctuary was erected.

Yet, even in as early as the Mycenaean period, the specific territory of the later constructed sanctuary had a strong religious association. Through an in-depth survey of Linear B tablets, Susan Lupack affirms that the Helladic characteristics of Mycenaean religion was indeed a close precursor to the later Classical Greek religion.[193] The tablets indicate that religious officials were a prominent part of the palatial elite. The large number of cult sites with abundant in material deposits confirms the importance of religion in civic and political life.[194] Also, the

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[189] Snodgrass, *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece,* 200-05.
[190] Cavanagh, *The Laconian Survey*, 149.
[191] Ibid., 68.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Susan Lupack "Mycenaean Religion." in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean (ca. 3000-1000 BC)* edited by Eric H. Cline, 263- 273. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 273.
[194] Ibid, 266-270.

wanax or chief ruler of the Mycenaean state gained his power and prestige from his role in religious matters.[195] Evidently, the relationship between religion and society was a strong: one's role in the community and identity was constructed in part by religious activity, and this connection continued into the ancient Greek world. Paul Cartledge notes that in the late Helladic period a sanctuary undoubtedly existed in this space, confirmed by the large number of terracotta figurines of stylized goddesses and animals of Mycenaean style.[196] Though it is difficult to state anything with certainty regarding Mycenaean religion, "Amyklai is one of the places where the evidence has seemed to justify a bolder hypothesis [on the] "Dorianizing" of Lakonia."[197]

Gina Salapata examines the religious local traditions of hero cults in Laconia.[198] Her study on Amyklai extrapolates significant information on the two main cults analyzed in this chapter. Her evidence is derived from the discovery and excavation of an immense number of decorated terracotta plaques from the site of Agia Paraskevi at Amyklai. This excavation was conducted over three seasons from 1956 to 1961 by the Sparta Museum. The sanctuary was dated as early as the Geometric period.[199] The sheer number of materials collected was astounding, totaling around ten thousand items. The objects ranged from vases of regular and miniature size, metal objects, tiles with inscriptions, figurines, and a collection of terracotta votive plaques.[200]

Terracotta plaques were found and are dated from the seventh to the fourth centuries BCE. The imagery represented includes riders, warriors, and powerful masculine figures. Notably, these themes coincide with hero-type imagery, reinforcing the assertion that they were

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[195] Ibid., 264.
[196] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 66.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings: The Terracotta Plaques from the Spartan Sanctuary of Agamemnon and Kassandra,* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014).
[199] Ibid.,122.
[200] Ibid., 11-24.

offered to the cult of Agamemnon worshipped at the Amyklaion.[201] In technique, style, and iconography, they formed a homogenous group unlike any other found elsewhere in Greece. They reveal a manufacturing trend and skill specific to Amyklai, and a stable, vigorous coroplastic tradition in Laconia from the early Archaic to Classical periods.[202] Salapata determined that the terracotta plaque offerings were associated with the worship at the cult of Agamemnon and Alexandra. This cult emerged from a local variant of the mythical tradition of Agamemnon and Kassandra, which placed their murders in Laconia, rather than the Argolid.[203] Notably, the very act of establishing a hero cult was intrinsically tied to the distinctiveness of a community's identity, as a "hero cult is a collective ritual action at specific locations" making the act and behavior of heroic worship itself, a local activity.[204]

The cult of Agamemnon and Alexandra was one of the earliest hero cults in Laconia, dating from the Mycenaean period. Notably, it developed in conjunction with, and was comparable to, the cult of Menelaos and Helen at the Menelaion. This is interesting as it indicates that Amyklai and the Menelaion as locales developed in synchronicity with each other. The mythical tradition also preserves parallels between the two cults, as Menelaos and Agamemnon were brothers. However, the relationship between the two settlements was categorized by political and cultural competition and, according to the Shifting Locale paradigm, Amyklai emerged victorious.

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[201] The snake appears in many terracotta plaques and was an icon tied to Laconia, though the reasons for this and ideology remains obscure. On several plaques, the snake is depicted with a beard, and bearded snakes appeared on Laconian vases from the sixth century BCE. This was likely borrowed from Egyptian art. Interestingly, Pausanias 6.20.2 links the snake image with heroes. Also, large quantities of plaques depicting riders were found. Horse ownership was associated with elite status, wealth, and warriors or hunters. Therefore, the rider plaques are fitting to have been heroic offerings and appropriate imagery of Agamemnon. See Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 200-03.
[202] Ibid., 2-9.
[203] Ibid., 2.
[204] Paus. 3.18.6; Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 4.

The cult itself confirms a strong local trend specific to Laconia that is manifested in Amyklai.[205] Salapata convincingly shows that Alexandra was the Amyklaian equivalent of Kassandra from the Homeric Epic. In the Homeric version, Kassandra was a Trojan princess, priestess to Apollo and given as a war prize to Agamemnon. Following the battle and upon their return home, Agamemnon and Kassandra were both murdered by Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra.[206] The Homeric tradition places the murder of Agamemnon and Kassandra in the Argolid. However, the Laconian variant, supported by Lyric poets and historians, situates the same story, death and burial of Agamemnon and Alexandra in Amyklai.[207] Pindar's work places their death in Amyklai:

> But the man who breathes close to the ground roars unseen. He himself died, the heroic son of Atreus, when at last he returned to famous Amyklai, and he caused the destruction of the prophetic girl, when he had robbed of their opulent treasures the houses of the Trojans, set on fire for Helen's sake. [208]

Pindar also states that Orestes was active in Amyklai, and he was the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra.[209] The placement of Orestes in Laconia adds credence to the legend that Agamemnon and Alexandra were murdered and buried there. There are also passages in Homer that situate Agamemnon in southern Greece. In his Catalogue of Ships, Homer implies that Agamemnon, lord of Aigialeia, was also ruler over seven cities in Messenia and around the gulf, later offering this land to Achilles.[210]

Interestingly, the names Kassandra and Alexandra are quite similar. Etymologically, Alexandra meant "she who averts men" and in myth, Kassandra rejects any advances made by

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[205] Paus. 3.19.6.
[206] Hom. Od. 2.419-426.
[207] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 20-28.
[208] Pind. P. 11.30-33.
[209] Pind. N. 11.34.
[210] Hom. Il. 2.574-575.

men and remains a virgin priestess. Furthermore, the names were used interchangeably in the ancient literary tradition. For instance, the poet Lykophron wrote *The Alexandra*, which tells the same story of Kassandra.[211]

As previously mentioned, possession of the cult became a main point of conflict and competition between the Menelaion and Amyklai. Both locales were in constant dispute over the location and possession of Alexandra's grave.[212] Pausanias also confirms the rivalry between the Mycenaeans at the Menelaion and Laconians at Amyklai over the tomb:

> In the ruins of Mycenae is a fountain called Persea; there are also underground chambers of Atreus and his children, in which were stored their treasures. There is the grave of Atreus, along with the graves of such as returned with Agamemnon from Troy, and were murdered by Aegisthus after he had given them a banquet. As for the tomb of Cassandra, it is claimed by the Lacedaemonians who dwell around Amyclae.[213]

The theme of disputed gravesites is important to the present analysis of Amyklaian localism, as according to Salapata, "claims by two or more communities to possess the grave of the same hero [reflects] the emphasis on the local character of the help and highlight the political importance of heroic relics."[214] The ability to claim the grave of a prominent mythical character granted them immense political advantage and an enhanced reputation.

A combination of material evidence, inscriptions and literary sources confirms that as of the early seventh century BCE, Agamemnon-Alexandra was the main recipient of religious offerings at the Amyklaion. In his description of Amyklai, Pausanias mentions his visit to the sanctuary of Alexandra. He also states that the local peoples believed Alexandra to be Kassandra,

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[211] Lycophron of Chalcis, *Alexandra*.
[212] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 22.
[213] Paus. 2.16 6-7, see also Plut. *Agis*. 9.2 and Plut. *Cleom*. 7.2.
[214] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 23-28.

daughter of Priam and prophet to Agamemnon.[215] This confirms that Laconia had its own

divergent, local narrative that is different from the Homeric myth of Kassandra and

Agamemnon.[216] Interestingly, the way in which Pausanias describes that the Amyklaian believed

they were the authentic location for this cult and had the tomb of Agamemnon emphasizes their

sense of place:

> Amyclae was laid waste by the Dorians, and since that time has
> remained a village; I found there a sanctuary and image of Alexandra
> worth seeing. Alexandra is said by the Amyclaeans to be Cassandra,
> the daughter of Priam. Here is also a statue of Clytaemnestra, together
> with what is supposed to be the tomb of Agamemnon. [217]

The discovery of a marble stele with an honorary decree from the second century BCE also

confirms cult worship to Alexandra. Interestingly, the decree was written to glorify three

Amyklaian magistrates who served the town justly.[218] Since the offering was made at a time

when Amyklai was a *kome* of Sparta, this suggests that although Amyklai was politically

absorbed by Sparta, it retained its local cultural power through the possession of important cults

and persistent activity at the Amyklaion.[219]

The cult's great success is reflected in its prominence and longevity until the Roman

period. For instance, one of the votive offerings excavated at Agia Paraskevi was a throne

bearing an inscription that explicitly stated it was dedicated to Alexandra, by a member of the

gerousia named Banaxeus. The fact that the *gerousia*, Sparta's esteemed council of elders, was

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[215] Paus. 3.19.6.

[216] The fact that two clear variants of the same myth existed, one in the north and one in the south, confirms the north-south divide that cut across Greece in antiquity.

[217] Paus. 3.19.6.

[218] IG V.1,26, Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 19 and 26.

[219] There is another interesting myth related to Amyklai's role in the colonization of Taras, apparent in the terracotta plaques. Amyklai and Taras are linked though the iconography of the dismounted rider. Gina Salapata highlights that though the mounted rider is a common icon in art throughout Greece, representations of the dismounted rider are very rare (Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 202-203). Aside Amyklai, the majority of evidence for a dismounted rider come from Taras. According to Salapata, this reflects an artistic and cultural exchange in the fourth century when Taras renewed contact with the mother city. For more information regarding the argument of Taras settled by Amyklaians, see Malkin, *A Small Greek World*, 234-59.

active at the Amyklaion is significant. It highlights that Spartan officials recognized Amyklai's

authority over the cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra. The fact that it was not Sparta who had claim

over the cult confirms that Amyklai was an important locale that had its own powerful religious

structure. Notably, this object was dated to the first century CE, which confirms that Alexandra's

cult lasted until the Hellenistic and into the Roman period.[220]

 Overall, the cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra was a variation of the myth, unique to

Laconia. It was specifically worshipped at the Amyklaion, through the use of terracotta offerings.

The distinctive, fabrication of these plaques by Amyklaian artisans adds another local touch to

the cult. The fact that both the Menelaion and Amyklai competed for the location of Agamemnon

and Alexandra's burial exhibits the importance of the cult. As stated, Amyklai ultimately

emerged as victorious in this battle for cult power, as proven by evidence from excavations at

Agias Paraskevi and the Amyklaion. [221]

The final shift in political power, from the Mycenaean palace to Amyklai occurred at the

end of the Bronze Age. At this point, during a widespread desertion of sites, Amyklai actually

increased in size and power. The moment of political shift away from the Mycenaean past was

"marked by the relocation of the prime settlement from the Menelaion's to the low ground",

where it amalgamated and remained in Amyklai until the rise of Sparta.[222] Notably, this also

involved a political transformation from a royal house to an early polis administration. Snodgrass

has suggested that the Classical polis, defined as an autonomous unit that incorporated a town

and territory, emerged from the Menelaion, stating that the polis' "only plausible ancestor as a

state-organization on Greek soil [was] the Mycenaean Kingdom."[223] Attributing the Menelaion

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[220] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 19.
[221] Ibid., 2-9.
[222] Snodgrass, *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*, 202.
[223] Ibid.

as the ancestor of the Greek city-state and highlighting that the Mycenaean political organization set the foundations for the polis structure confirms the validity of the Shifting Locale paradigm.

The Bronze Age ended with a mass cessation of previously prosperous Mycenaean centers. However, this decline did not affect Amyklai. Not only was the city continuously occupied with the incoming Dorians, but there was also a continuation of Mycenaean culture as the Hyakinthos cult was still active.[224] After the collapse of the Menelaion and decline in Mycenaean culture, Amyklai, for however brief of a moment, was the most powerful polis in Laconia. This would not last, as authority would shift once again from Amyklai to Sparta. Literary sources provide two diverging narratives for the arrival of the Dorians in Amyklai. The first is the mythical narrative of the return of the Herakleidae to Laconia, while the second states that in the eight century BCE, under the reign of the Spartan king Teleclos, Amyklai was added as the fifth *kome* of Sparta.[225]

IV: Amyklai, Sparta, and the Cult of Apollo-Hyakinthos

In the same way that the Menelaion and Amyklaion were rivals, Sparta and Amyklai also competed for power. According to Cartledge, "Achaean Amyklai and Dorian Sparta were locked for centuries in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation [and] in the reign of Telekos, son of Archelaos, Amyklai at last fell to Sparta through treachery and armed attack."[226]

Interestingly, the transfer of power from Amyklai to Sparta also occurred through the cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra. Just as Amyklai monopolized the cult to acquire agency above its Mycenaean competitors at the Menelaion, the Spartans created their own mythical narrative of the cult to aggrandize their rule over Amyklai. From the seventh century onward, Sparta began to

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[224] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 75-76.
[225] The four original *kome* included Pitana, Kynosoura, Limnai and Mesoa. Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 15.
[226] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 106-07.

exert more control over the villages in Laconia. Justification found a religious dimension with the city's appropriation of the Agamemnon-Alexandra narrative. To validate its dominance over the region, Sparta associated itself with the place where the great Greek warrior, hero, and revered priestess to Apollo were murdered.[227] Sparta manipulated the cult to strategically trace their ancestral heritage back to Agamemnon, the great Achaean king of the all-powerful House of Atreus. At this point in time, Laconia did not have many strong cities aside from Sparta and Amyklai. Initially, the Spartans possessed less legitimacy in the region because their polis developed at a later date than Amyklai, and emerged from the arrival of a foreign people. Due to the Dorians arrival in Laconia, they needed to draw on mythical ties to gain prominence and legitimacy. Thus, they forged a legacy with one of the strongest kings of the most powerful mythical narratives.

The Spartan variant of the Agamemnon-Alexandra myth enhanced local power, validating that the Spartans were the rightful rulers of Laconia. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that Sparta began promoting the cult through the erection of a building where a large number of offerings and plaques were made for Agamemnon.[228] The latter quickly became used by the Spartan state as a model for its dominance in the Peloponnese. Ultimately, Sparta was able to take authority away from Amyklai and became the primary locale, a hegemon, in Laconia. Within the shifting locale pattern, political legitimacy was intimately connected with religion, and as such, the cult of Agamemnon figured into Sparta's ascendency to power.

The Spartan attachment with Atreus and Agamemnon not only benefitted their foreign policy and political advancements over neighboring poleis, but also may have strengthened Sparta internally by creating a sense of community and unity amongst the people. The

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[227] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 29.
[228] Ibid., 216.

exploitation of myth for local empowerment continued, when Sparta acquired the alleged bones

of Orestes from Tegea and placed his grave in their Agora. According to Pausanias:

> There is also dedicated a colossal statue of the Spartan People. The Lacedaemonians have also a sanctuary of the Fates, by which is the grave of Orestes, son of Agamemnon. For when the bones of Orestes were brought from Tegea in accordance with an oracle they were buried here. Beside the grave of Orestes is a statue of Polydorus, son of Alcamenes, a king who rose to such honor that the magistrates seal with his likeness everything that requires sealing. [229]

Applying the shifting locale pattern here, political legitimacy is intimately connected with

religion and the possession of a cult that held reputable importance throughout Laconia. The

most important sanctuary in Amyklai was that of Apollo-Hyakinthos, located on the hill of Agia

Kyriaki.[230] Interestingly, these two very different divinities had their cult in the same sanctuary

and were celebrated together. Hyakinthos was the "aboriginal" god of Amyklai, brought into the

region by Indo-European speakers from the third millennium BCE. The name denounces his pre-

Hellenic origin, indicated by the use of the suffix "-nth".[231] After Amyklai had become the fifth

constituent village of Sparta, the cult of Apollo co-existed with that of Hyakinthos. Whereas

Apollo was a celestial god of the Olympian Pantheon, Hyakinthos stood in contrast to him as a

vegetation god of earth-bound worship.[232] The fact that two polar-opposite deities, one being of

the heavens and the other of the earth, were celebrated together is highly reflective of an

exclusive, Amyklaian-specific local adaptation of religious deities. The unique amalgamation of

Apollo with Hyakinthos, a pre-Greek and pre-Dorian vegetation god, demonstrates how the

people living in Amyklai adapted Hellenic culture in a way to serve the local needs of the

community.

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[229] Paus. 3.11.10.
[230] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings*, 14.
[231] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 80.
[232] Ibid.

Hyakinthos was integrated with Apollo when the Dorians settled in Laconia and the Mycenaean culture was in rapid decline.[233] Cartledge argues that it was the incoming Dorians who were responsible for joining the pre-existing Bronze Age cult of Hyakinthos with that of Apollo, "sometime after the inauguration of the non-Mycenaean, Dorian culture into Laconia."[234] According to the myth, Hyakinthos was a lover of Apollo and Zephyr, a deity of the Western wind. One day, while playing discus, Hyakinthos tried to impress Apollo by jumping for the discus but fell and died.[235] Following this, Hyakinthos was worshipped alongside Apollo. The Hyakinthia became an important Spartan festival held annually for three days in the summer. On the first say, Hyakinthos is mourned, and the following two days were consecrated to Apollo.[236] A description of the sanctuary appears in Pausanias,

> The pedestal of the statue is fashioned into the shape of an altar and they say that Hyacinthus is buried in it, and at the Hyacinthia, before the sacrifice to Apollo, they devote offerings to Hyacinthus as to a hero into this altar through a bronze door, which is on the left of the altar. On the altar are wrought in relief, here an image of Biris, there Amphitrite and Poseidon. Zeus and Hermes are conversing; near stand Dionysus and Semele, with Ino by her side. On the altar are also Demeter, the Maid, Pluto, next to them Fates and Seasons, and with them Aphrodite, Athena and Artemis. They are carrying to heaven Hyacinthus and Polyboea, the sister, they say, of Hyacinthus, who died a maid. Now this statue of Hyacinthus represents him as bearded, but Nicias[1], son of Nicomedes, has painted him in the very prime of youthful beauty, hinting at the love of Apollo for Hyacinthus of which legend tells. Wrought on the altar is also Heracles; he too is being led to heaven by Athena and the other gods. On the altar are also the daughters of Thestius, Muses and Seasons. As for the West Wind, how Apollo unintentionally killed Hyacinthus, and the story of the flower, we must be content with the legends, although perhaps they are not true history.[237]

The interesting combination of Hellenic, Olympian gods with more obscure deities is well reflected by this passage. It also highlights the uniquely Amyklaian take on the Apollo-

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[233] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings,* 13-15.
[234] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 80.
[235] Notably, in one variant of this narrative, Zephry was driven by jealousy and caused a strong gust of wind to move the disc far away, provoking Hyathinos' death. For the myth, see Apollod. *Bibliotheca*, 1.3.3, 1.16, 3.16, Lucian *Dialogues of the Gods*, 14, 17. Philostratus the Elder, *Images*, 1.24, Ovid *Meta*. 10.184. Paus. 3.1.3, 3.19.1-5.
[236] Colin Edmonson, "A Graffito from Amyklai", *Hesperia* 28, no. 2 (1959), 162-64.
[237] Paus. 3.19.3-3.19.5.

Hyakinthos cult. Notably, emerging poleis struggled for autonomy and independence over political administration, trade and material production. Having an important sanctuary or religious temple was a key feature of a polis. By extension, the fact that the Amyklaion sanctuary, where the dual cult of Apollo Hyakinthos was worshipped, was located within the territorial bounds of Amyklai emphasizes that it was a powerful location that did maintain a degree of individuality and independence from Sparta. Even though the Hyakinthia became an important Spartan celebration, the cult remained " a local Amyklaian affair rather than a Spartan festival."[238]

Notably, even though Amyklai was a *kome* of Sparta, the city retained the right to exercise full authority over the Hyakinthia. As suggested by Cartledge, "the cult of Apollo-Hyakinthos remained a pre-eminently Amyklaian affair, in contrast to the Spartan cult of Orthia. This may have been a part of the price Sparta had to pay to persuade Amyklai, or rather its leading aristocrats, to come over quietly."[239]

V. Conclusion

Overall, once the veil of Spartan dominance is cast aside, the local history, culture and prosperity of Amyklai is revealed. The reader is left with an impression that Amyklai was a strong, important and powerful locale from the pre-historic period until Roman era. Not only was it one of the few and earliest occupied sites of Laconia, but it left an abundance of material evidence that remains critical to understanding Laconian history. Amyklai was an important religious center that housed both the cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra and Apollo-Hyakinthos. Interestingly, it engaged in cultural competitive rivalry between the Mycenaean royals at the

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[238] Cartledge, *Sparta and Laconia*, 80.
[239] Ibid., 108.

Menelaion as well as the Dorian Spartans to achieve dominion over the cults. Amyklai's political history has been traced through the Shifting Locale paradigm, designed explicitly for this chapter. It reveals that the nodes of power in Laconia shifted from the Menelaion, to Amyklai, and finally ascended to Sparta. It also highlights that the ability for one locale to claim authority over a cult was the most effective way to harness control whilst developing a unique sense of community. This is explicitly revealed in Amyklai's combination of Apollo with the local vegetation deity, Hyakinthos. Amyklai also monopolized the Laconian variant of the Agamemnon myth, building a dual sanctuary to Agamemnon and Alexandra within its vicinity. These two actions allowed the city to perpetuate its individual power and retain a sense of communal independence in face of both the Menelaion and Sparta, which each had their own dominance over the Laconian Valley. Amyklai can henceforth be understood as a *polis* that contributed greatly to the history and development of Laconia. One cannot fully understand the Peloponnese, Laconia, nor the great city of Sparta without discussing the local community and religious structures of Amyklai.

The formation of a distinct Amyklaian identity can be explained through performative theory and intersectionality. First, the very existence of the variant cult of Agamemnon-Alexandra demonstrates how the Menelaion wanted to craft and generate its public image. The cult was in fact, a performative act with ulterior motive to claim and legitimize political authority and power in the region. By extension, the individual and collective recognition and acceptance of this foundation story created precedence for identity. In the same vein, the sanctuary of Apollo-Hyakinthos was itself a stage where Amyklai performed, for itself, and in face of the Spartans, a local identity. Identity Performance theory suggests that that because the polis was located so close to Sparta, the Amyklaians needed an explicit way to distinguish their identity

from the Spartans. They achieved this through a firm affirmation that even if they were to be politically associated with Sparta, the celebration of Apollo-Hyakinthos had been and would remain an Amyklaian affair.

Terracotta Plaque Offerings of Seated Man and Warrior Iconography, Rider and Horse [240]

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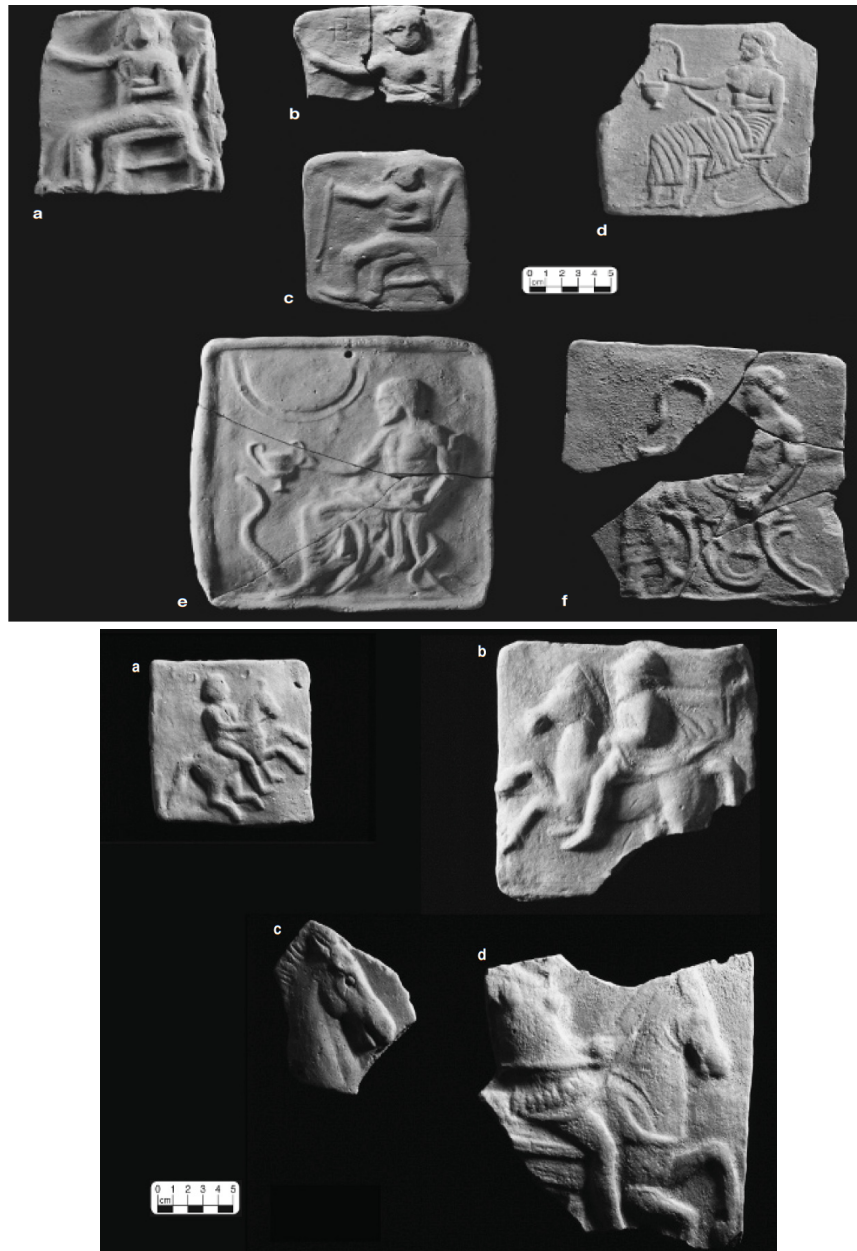
[240] Salapata, *Heroic Offerings,* 399 and 423.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The ancient and modern historiography on Laconia is overwhelmingly centered on the city of Sparta. However, the area was rich in other settlements, which thrived from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period of ancient Greek history. Examining Sparta alone cannot provide a comprehensive picture of human activity in Laconia. Therefore, this thesis searches for evidence of various local distinctions and particular engagement in identity construction. The three case studies selected – the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis in Messenia, Karyai, and Amyklai – indeed show that communities grappled with the concept of individuality.

These three locations show that communities were neither vigorously constructing nor avidly propagating a unique character. However, glimpses of local expressions are nonetheless apparent. Firstly, the political affairs between Sparta and Messenia manifested themselves at the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis. In Karyai, the festival of Artemis Karyatis, the development of the Caryatid column style, and the allegations of medism accentuated local distinctions. Finally, religious activity in Amyklai and the explicit claim over the festival of Apollo Hyakinthos makes the strongest case for an outward claim of local identity as being necessarily different than Sparta.

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